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Empowering Students Through Community Action

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EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of Pacific Lutheran University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts

In Education

By

Natasha Diane Yanez

August 2002

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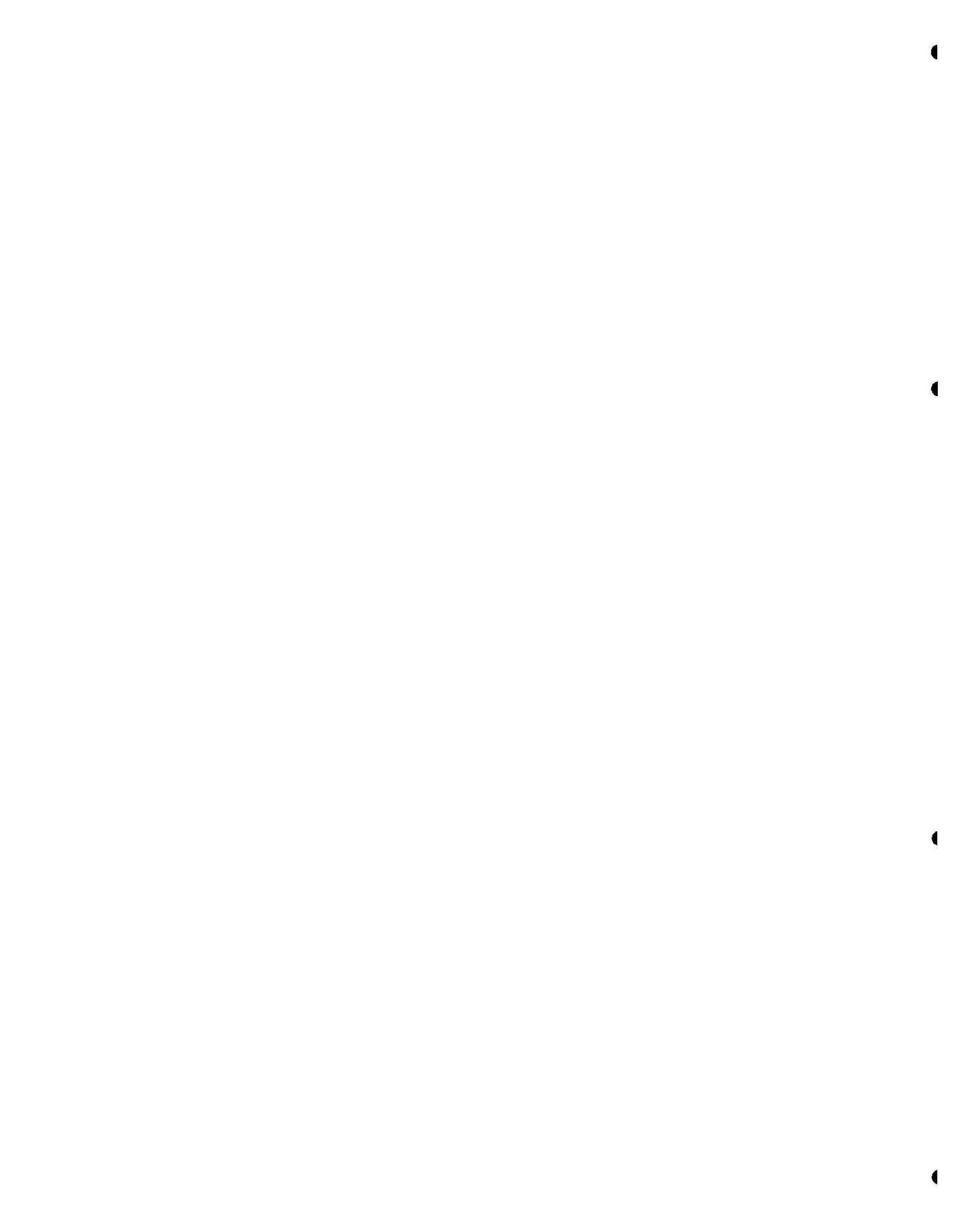
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EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

AN ABSTRACT

By

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Pacific Lutheran University, 2002

Chairperson: Louette L. McGraw

Service Learning is a pedagogy in which the student must participate directly in a service-oriented project, which addresses a real community need. This study focused on the effect of service learning in the curriculum. Research was conducted over service learning, its implementation, and its effects. In addition, the study looks at how one junior high school implemented service learning into their curriculum and the difficulties involved in creating a more intense program.

It was discovered that service learning was often not integrated into the curriculum as expected, teachers often did not require students to reflect on

their experiences, and teachers did not spend adequate time preparing for service projects. Each of these characteristics are viewed as requirements for the pedagogy of service learning, and in their absence the practice of service learning seems to have a lesser positive effect on the students.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A lion asleep in his lair was waked by a mouse running over his face. The lion seized it and was about to kill it.

The mouse begged for his life. "Please let me go," it cried, "and one day I will repay your kindness." The idea of so small a creature ever doing anything for him amused the lion so much that he laughed and let it go.

But the mouse's chance came, after all. One day the lion got entangled in a net which had been spread by some hunters; the mouse recognized his roars and ran to the spot.

It set to work to gnaw the ropes, and succeeded in setting the lion free. "There!" said the mouse, "You laughed at me when I promised I would repay you: now you see, even a mouse can help a lion!" (Aesop, n.d.; as cited in Larkin, 1994, p.30)

This well-known story teaches about the importance of doing things for others. This is an important message for people to learn. The moral of the story says that, "no good deed goes unrewarded" (Larkin, 1994, p.30). I like to believe this is true. While reading this story, it struck me how much it reminded me of my topic for this thesis. As I read the story, I think of the mouse as the students and the lion as the adults who seem not to realize how much our students can contribute

to our society. I will start by telling my story and how I developed this belief.

Problem Statement

As a child, I had a very sheltered life. I grew up in an upper middle class, primarily Caucasian area. We did not know much about the rest of the world (including what may have been right next door). All we knew was what we saw on TV, or possibly read in books - maybe from the newspaper. As teenagers, we knew the malls pretty well, and we knew what kind of cars everybody drove. It never occurred to me that this was not the same experience faced by other people my age around the world. When we thought of other places, it had nothing to do with their politics or current events, we were thinking about where we would like to travel to. We were very narrow minded and had but one thing on our minds - ourselves.

Fortunately, I was able to have an experience, which changed my life as a senior in high school. It was at that point that I was able to talk my parents into allowing me to study abroad in Latin America. At

first they were very hesitant, but eventually they agreed. I was looking for an adventure, not realizing what I was getting myself into.

In Costa Rica, I experienced a whole new way of life. There, the kids my age were not concerned about who was driving what, they were not concerned about malls, many were not even concerned with what they were wearing, due to the fact that we wore uniforms to school. No, things were very different. However, no matter how different things seemed to be, there were still many, many similarities.

In Costa Rica, nearly every household has a TV and many of the programs airing are popular ones from the United States. They were familiar with all our movies, our famous actors, and singers. They may not have known how to speak English, but they knew all the words to our popular music. I really did not feel too far from home. Then, my host family took me to visit some friends that lived out in the country. It was at this point that I had a real eye opener.

The family we visited was extremely poor and had nearly nothing in their possession. This family of six lived out by a bunch of pineapple plantations in a tiny little one-room cabin. The house was made of logs with gaping holes between them. They had no running water. Except for the mother and one six-year-old daughter there was no other girls. I found myself missing my privacy. There was a little pit made into an outhouse for a bathroom (away from the house - probably because it smelled so bad), and we took our "showers" with a bucket of water. At night we had to use bug nets over the beds, and no exaggeration, they were nearly completely covered with cockroaches and other bugs. This was an experience that I will never forget - and I never want to forget. This was an experience that I think a lot more children coming from a similar background to mine should experience. This was the beginning of my exposure to experiential education.

When I returned home, I found myself feeling a little out of place. I could no longer understand why my friends were concerned about the things which I found

petty and self-centered at that point. My whole outlook on life changed, and I found myself thinking often about how other peoples' lives differ from my own. At first, however, my thoughts were just on other countries. I still did not really come to the realization that there were people living just a few miles away who were lacking in the basic necessities of life.

To add to the power of this experience, I had an exceptional teacher upon my return, who mentored me through the completion of my only remaining class to complete for graduation - Contemporary World Problems. This teacher guided me in my search for a research project. Since I had missed all of the regular class assignments that the rest of the students completed while I was away, I was expected to do a major research project for my completion of the course. Between my teacher and myself, we came up with the idea of doing a project on US Intervention in Latin America. What a powerful end to my study in Costa Rica! I was able to make connections to this project with what I had experienced studying abroad, and I had a great desire to

learn more due to my new found curiosity of other lifestyles.

After very intense research, and long, demanding study, I was able to complete my project. In the end, my teacher invited me to school to present my project to all of her Contemporary World Problems classes. She was giving me an opportunity to share what I had learned. At first, I was a little nervous. However, I soon became very proud of what I had done, largely because the other students seemed to be amazed at what I was telling them! Much of what I had discovered in my research was new to them and they all seemed interested in what I had to say and just kept asking me endless questions (so it seemed). I felt so proud of what I had accomplished! As I stated before, this experience made me a true believer of experiential education!

As I grew older, I began to realize that many people who live right around me had many basic needs that were unfulfilled. That many communities had unfulfilled needs. I decided that "when I grow up" I want to help people, and that is how I came to the

realization that I wanted to become a teacher. Yet, I still had a strong curiosity of other cultures. In an attempt to prepare myself as best as I could for my future role (with my interests in mind) I first completed a four year degree in Spanish and Global Studies with a concentration in Cultural Diversity and a minor in English as a Second Language.

Along the way, I had a professor who required us to do service projects as part of our grade. I was very upset. I did not know how she thought that I was going to find time to complete a service project when I was trying to work, take care of a family, and go to school full time. I really did not see how doing a service project would benefit me at that point in my life.

I chose to do my service project in a bilingual classroom. At the time, I was still working on completing my courses in both Spanish and English as a Second Language. Due to this, I was able to take what I was learning in classes and apply it to a real-life situation. Through this experience I became aware of even more needs in our society, and I was able to draw

conclusions on how I believed these societal issues should and should not be addressed. In this particular instance I was able to observe how an English language learner faired in a "bilingual" classroom. In the end, I felt that I learned quite a bit from the experience and I was very glad to have the opportunity to help out.

I liked the opportunity so much, that when the chance presented itself again I was more than happy to help out. Throughout the past year, my boys and I have been participating in English as a Second Language classes held for the local community. I have experienced the feeling of accomplishment from helping others and I want to share this feeling with not only my own children, but my students as well. It is with this realization that I have come to where I stand now.

Importance of the Study

How can schools help students develop an understanding of the societal issues? How can they foster an "I can make a difference" mentality? Many students may not be completely aware of the societal issues surrounding them, or they may have heard about

specific problems yet do not realize how close these problems really are to them. Possibly, the students have heard about the issues and understand how important they are to their societies, but feel powerless to do anything about them. Cynthia Parsons (1999) said this:

What students most often learn from in-school elections is that "rule by the few" is the democratic way... Rule by the few is not an example of the democratic process. What it teaches children is that "someone else" is supposed to solve community problems and that their jobs as adults is to vote into office whoever they think will do this best. (p.136)

So, how do we empower students with the understanding that they can help build a caring society?

There are many ways that a school can attempt to do this. My focus will be service learning - not because it is the best, but because my experiences have made me a firm believer in the power of experiential education. John Dewey (1938/1997) realized this when he stated, "There is no discipline in the world so severe as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction" (p.90).

Service learning has become an interest nation wide as many politicians have been looking to this pedagogy

to help teach children to become "good citizens." This interest has been accompanied by two bills, which passed during the 1990's, in an attempt to increase the number of service learning projects in education. President George Bush passed the National and Community Service Act in 1990, which offered financial support to schools that provide service opportunities for their students. The Clinton administration passed a similar bill, The National Service Trust Act of 1993, which provides funding for service projects in which the participants are at least sixteen years old. Although educators have understood the importance of experience for a long time, it seems as though service has become more popular recently due to the current wave of patriotism.

Service learning is so much more than a way to teach people how to be "good citizens." This pedagogy helps build character among the participants and helps them develop an awareness of their surroundings. It can be used in so many ways, to encourage caring of so many different things. For this reason, service learning has become an interest in character education and

environmental education in addition to civic education. Service learning is a way in which we can empower the students to take on the problems that have developed in the world in order to attempt to build a new world for themselves.

Summary

This thesis will attempt to demonstrate the value of Service Learning and how it can potentially benefit the students. I will include a definition of Service Learning as well as an in depth look at the elements of the pedagogy. I see this as an effective tool to empower students with the understanding that they can make a difference in their society.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students are often unaware of the societal problems surrounding them. When they do become aware of these issues they often feel powerless to do anything to change the situation and do not realize just how important their contributions can be. Students often feel a lack of connection to the community. (Berman, 1997; Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993; Sigel & Hoskin, 1993). My concern is how to empower these students with the understanding that they can make a difference in their community. I realize that this can be attempted many different ways, however I will focus on service learning.

Service became my focus because I have become a firm believer in the experiential education described by John Dewey (1938/1997). I feel that each experience allows us, as humans, to draw connections to that experience from our prior understandings in order to understand a new concept. Service learning is a form of experiential learning, which is based on two principles:

the principle of continuity and the principle of interaction. The principle of continuity states that each event is affected by the events that precede them. In addition, these events will affect future events. The principle of interaction states that a person will be affected by interaction with other people or objects (their experiences), (Dewey, 1938/1997). Therefore, each experience that a student has will affect the student in one way or another. Out of experiential education came the idea of service, which eventually grew into service learning.

According to Lisman (1998), Berman (1997), and Fertman, White, and White(1996), service learning can be very beneficial to the student, the school, and the community. Yet, Bryan (1993), Wade (1997a), and Clause and Ogden (1999) claim that this pedagogy is not highly supported by educators, due to the fact that it can be very difficult to implement. This chapter will look at the research on service learning from many perspectives: What is service learning? Why is service learning important? What does service learning look like in the

middle school? What are the difficulties of service learning? How does the educator prepare for a service learning project?

What is Service Learning?

There seems to be a variety of opinions of what service learning really is and what it should consist of. Debated among many theorists are a variety of characteristics of service learning, many of which I will address in this chapter, however not every theorist found each of these characteristics to be extremely important.

Many sources recognize three types of service. These include direct service, indirect service, and advocacy service (Fertman et al., 1996; Johnson & Notah, 1999). Direct service is when the student works directly with the recipient, such as senior buddies, cross-age tutoring, or park restoration. Indirect service is when the student does not work directly with the recipient, such as food or clothing drives. Advocacy service is when the students work to educate others about a specific community concern, such as drug

and alcohol awareness or the effects of pollution. Though these projects vary greatly, each of them have important lessons to teach the students.

Fertman et al. (1996) and Burns (1998) claim that service learning should consist of four primary elements: preparation, service, reflection, and celebration or recognition. They claim that each of these elements is necessary in order to have an effective service learning project. Many others, such as Lipka (1997) recognize the importance of reflection, but did not acknowledge the importance of preparation and celebration.

Lipka (1997) claimed that service learning is built around only two elements: direct experience through community improvement projects and reflective thought (p. 57). Although these are both important elements, without stressing the importance of both the preparation and the celebration, in my opinion, the service program will be severely weakened. Reflection is very important in the equation of service learning, however I would argue that the preparation and celebration are equally

important. In my opinion, without preparation the lesson from the service project will be weakened and the celebration validates the students' service.

The purpose of the preparation of a service project is for the project to be completed as smoothly as possible. Just as anything else in life, a service learning project must be fully prepared before the project starts in order that the teacher, or coordinator, does not become overwhelmed with setbacks. I will go into this with much more detail in Chapter 5.

The action of service itself must be age appropriate, but challenging. Many of the sources seemed to express the importance of using service learning as a means to address community problems (Fertman et al., 1996; Johnson & Notah, 1999; Lipka, 1997; Lisman, 1998). However, for many this does not seem to be a necessary characteristic, or at least it was not mentioned.

Many sources cited the importance of reflection. There's good reason for this. The Giraffe Project Handbook (1995) states that, "Reflection helps students expand their experiences from individual, transitory

acts into meaningful, thoughtful action and long-term growth" (p.23). Fertman et al. (1996) claim that service, "serves to strengthen both the service and learning components" and "distinguishes service learning from volunteerism and community service activities" (p.33). Eyler and Giles (1999) claim that service learning reflection consists of the 5C's. These include: connection, continuity, context, challenge, and coaching.

Connection signifies the importance of the students connecting their service learning projects to the lessons in the classroom. The students should be able to use the skills that they have acquired in the classroom at their service site. Continuity shows that reflections should be continuous, each time the students perform the activity, not just every once in a while. Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1993) claim that this should happen 4 - 5 times a week (p. 146). The reflection on a service project should focus on a particular subject matter. Eyler and Giles (1999) suggest that context is important because students need to "think and learn with

the tools, concepts, and facts of the particular learning situation" (p.184). The project should be challenging so that during the reflection, the student is forced to think outside the box. Coaching is represented in reflection by providing students with emotional and intellectual support. It is important to understand that the reflection can appear in many forms, including discussions, journals, murals, etc. The fourth essential element of service learning is celebration.

The purpose of celebration is to develop a sense of pride and self-esteem in the students. In this way, they are being recognized for their accomplishments, and what they have done for the community. Bryan (1993) claims that:

This experience leads them to rethink values and principles and act with greater self-awareness and a more ethical conscience. It appears that they take a more appreciative and cooperative attitude toward community. They now consider themselves and others valued members of society, because their ideas and contributions have been heard and responded to with respect. (p. 250)

I believe that this small gesture to acknowledge their attempt to make a difference is sure to make an

impression on the student and in itself would be a valuable lesson.

Why is Service Learning Important?

Service learning has many benefits. This pedagogy allows for student growth, school growth and community growth. With the use of reflective practice, it is amazing what service learning can do! Through service learning, the students can grow personally, morally, intellectually, and socially.

Personal development. My research uncovered a large variety of possible results of the students' personal development after participating in service learning (Bryan, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fertman et al., 1996; Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993; Johnson & Notah, 1999; Lewis, 1995; Lickona, 1992; Lisman, 1998; Magner, 2000). Many theorists noted an increase in self-esteem, self-knowledge, responsibility, leadership, confidence, organization, and self-discipline. However, a study done by Cohen, Kulik and Kulik (1982) cited, "little or no growth in self-esteem for tutors and tutees" (Johnson & Notah, p.456). This may be a result of many things.

Possibly, the students involved in the study had very high self-esteem prior to their service learning experience. Or, perhaps, their reflection was not as beneficial as it could have been. Anyhow, theirs was the only study I encountered that questioned the benefits to a student's personal growth.

Moral development. Service learning has also been widely cited to benefit a student's moral development (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993; Johnson & Notah, 1999; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Lickona, 1992; Lisman, 1998; Parsons, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). Lickona claims that, "not to equip the young with a moral sense is a grave ethical failure on the part of any society" (p.19). According to these sources, service learning reinforces a student's relational or caring self. In addition, Lickona states that in a cross-age tutoring project, "older children are learning to care by caring; the younger ones are learning to care by being cared for" (p.314). Magner (2000) claimed that:

Schools can be a microcosm of society and as such can require of the students that which the community will require of them to succeed as adults - compassion, responsiveness to community needs,

charity, tolerance, concern for the elderly, responsibility, respect for others, and a willingness to share one's time and talents.
(p.93)

Each of these values or morals the students can reach through reflection activities, such as discussions and journals.

Intellectual development. Through service learning, students will develop intellectually (Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform, 1993; Claus & Ogden, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fertman et al., 1996; Johnson & Notah, 1999; Kunin, 1997; Lisman, 1998; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wade, 1997a). For many, this includes problem solving and critical thinking skills. The service learning project helps to make classroom study relevant, due to the fact that the students are able to take the skills they have learned in the classroom and apply them to real-life situations. In addition, in a service learning project, the students learn to take ownership of their own learning. Many, such as Kunin, argue that, "students ought to be active participants in their own learning" (p.153). In service learning, the educator take on the role of facilitator, while the

students take responsibility of the decisions to be made concerning their projects.

Social development. Many sources argued that by providing opportunities for the student to work directly with peers, the community and possibly the recipient of the service, service learning will promote the development of stronger communication, public speaking, team building, and collaboration skills. (Claus & Ogden, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fertman et al., 1996; Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993; Johnson & Notah, 1999; Lewis, 1995; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

In addition, these relationships may expose the student to new cultures. This, it is argued, will help them develop an understanding and appreciation of differences (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fertman et al., 1996; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Lewis, 1995; Rhoads, 1997). Kahne states that, "students and "clients" can learn from each other" (p.32) and argues that, "reflective activities (commonly in the form of journal entries and discussions) may only reinforce previously held beliefs and simplistic, if generous, conclusions" (p.37). I see

how this could be true, however I feel that it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep a watch out for these stereotypes and generalizations and shoot them down. Rhoads claims that the educator should, "help students confront otherness while challenging them to see the complexity and diversity of the other without resorting to simplistic explanations that conceal cultural differences" (p. 125). In addition, Lisman (1998) advises that, "we must be on the guard against portraying elitist attitudes in our service work" (p.40). It is through this that I believe that we can help the students overpower these stereotypes.

The student may also develop a stronger awareness of social and political issues, which may in turn create a new-found interest or possibly a change of perspective (Berman, 1997; Claus & Ogden, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fertman et al., 1996; Lisman, 1998; Parsons, 1999). Considering the unmet needs in the community and the students' lack of connection to them, Rhoads (1997) claims that society should use, "Dewey's work and the writings on critical education as a starting point for

framing community service that seeks not only to improve the lives of individuals in the short term, but also to bring about fundamental and lasting change through an emphasis on mutuality and community building" (p.227). Fertman et al. (1996) believe that this happens through a changing role among the students; he claims that, "youth become resources, problem solvers, and producers of goods and services rather than passive, consuming members of the community" (p.3). In this way, they become valued in their community, which will increase their self esteem and help make the community stronger.

Schools also grow through community service through collaborative decision making among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members. Lisman (1998) acknowledges the importance of the school and the community to collaborate in the education of the younger citizens. Berman (1997) sees schools as a vehicle for change among society. In addition, Fertman et al. (1996) claim that, "service learning is an ideal way for parents and families to become involved, because it is collaborative and interactive by nature" (p.80).

This would benefit not only the schools, but the families as well.

Due to this collaboration encouraged among school, family and community, service learning transforms the school into a cooperative learning environment. The teachers must work together to create an integrated curriculum which relates to the service project. The administrators and parents (and sometimes the community) must work closely with the teachers as the project develops.

Students and teachers must work closely as the students are learning to take responsibility for their own projects (Kunin, 1997). Teachers are taking on the roles, in a service learning environment, as facilitators and must learn to incorporate reflection activities into the curriculum (Fertman et al., 1996). The teacher is no longer seen as the dominant figure that holds all of the answers that the student needs to learn. They help the student reach their understandings through the use of reflection activities.

Kunin (1997) sees this pedagogy as a way to improve our nation's schools (p.153). The teachers are noticing changes in the behavior and learning habits of the students who are engaged in service learning. There have been claims of students being more on-task and engaged in the classroom (Fertman et al., 1996), students' scores improve and violence in schools declines (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999), and many have observed an improvement in student - teacher relationships (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Johnson & Notah, 1999). In any rate, it appears as though service learning positively affects school growth.

Communities also grow as students take on the initiative to address unmet needs. As the students attempt to address these needs, they are performing an important function for society. Because of this, society begins to realize the important contributions that young people can make. A report for the Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform (1993) states that, "young people and adults will learn to respect

each other" (p.71). As the generations begin to trust each other more the community will grow closer.

Many sources agreed with this theory (Fertman et al., 1996; Lewis, 1995; Rhoads,1997). Lewis claims that, "when people come together, neighborhoods are stronger" (p.3). Rhoads saw this as creating social change (p.228). Fertman et al. claim that, as a result, the students will feel more connected to society and eventually they will become lifelong active citizens. Each of these reactions would definitely help build a stronger society as well as raise the student's concept of self-awareness.

How Does Service Learning Look in the Middle School?

In service learning in the middle school, we must start by looking at the needs of adolescents. Fertman et al. (1996) outlined their needs like this:

1. Understanding the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty.
2. Self-acceptance.
3. Acceptance of and by others.
4. Acceptance, understanding, approval, and love from significant adults.

5. Learning responsibility to others (Learning self-control).
6. Learning to make decisions (facing the consequences of one's actions).
7. Learning to deal with feelings.
8. Developing a personal value system. p.14

I would argue, and my sources would agree that the majority of these needs for adolescents can be addressed through service learning projects, but not always through the students' daily curriculum.

So what does the middle school curriculum look like? Sources say that the middle school curriculum should be student centered. Service learning should provide students with opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom. Middle school curriculum also encourages the integration of different subject areas. Also, middle schools hope to build healthy teacher - student relationships. Service learning can satisfy these characteristics in the middle school curriculum.

Due to the reflection practiced in service learning projects and the role of the students controlling their own learning, the young people gain a greater sense of

self, which supports the student centered curriculum. Fertman et al. (1996) explain that, "middle schools provide a particularly favorable environment in which to create a culture of service that truly links service and learning." They add, "A culture of service can be especially strong here because middle schools promote experimentation, risk-taking, collegiality, and cooperation among administrators, teachers, and students" (p.1). Then how do middle schools promote these things through service learning?

Service learning does extend learning beyond the classroom, and often beyond the school building. Service learning stresses the importance of integrating the curriculum with as many subjects as possible, as does the middle school curriculum. In addition, Service learning helps to build strong teacher - student relationships. It appears as though middle school is the ideal time to include service learning in the curriculum.

I discussed earlier the relationship between students and the community. We've already established

that, "many young people do not experience a positive, empowered, and connected relationship with society" (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993, p.79). Sigel and Hoskin (1993) cite a lack of interest and enthusiasm (p.35). Lickona (1992) suggests that, "to solve the problem of youthful alienation is to give young people meaningful ways to participate in society" (p.316). This could be done through service learning.

I have addressed many possible outcomes if this practice is adapted to the students' curriculum. Fertman et al. (1996) suggest that service learning, "dramatically alters the roles of middle school students in both the school and the community" (p.3). Magner (2000) claims that service learning, "allows community-based organizations to reach out to young adolescents, creates a positive role at this critical point in the students' lives" (p.91). For these reasons, middle school is the ideal place to empower students with service learning.

Although there are many benefits of service learning, there are also many difficulties that cause

educators to shy away from using this pedagogy in their teaching.

What are the Difficulties of Service Learning?

Though service learning appears to be a very effective pedagogy, it is very difficult to implement. First of all, many people argue that service learning will take time away from the regular curriculum (Bryan, 1993, p.245), while others argue that it is a "time consuming add-on" (Wade, 1997a, p.303). I agree that service learning can be very time consuming, however I do not think that it has to take time away from the regular curriculum. In fact, service learning is supposed to be integrated into the curriculum. Wade (1997a) argues that, "this integration is vital to the longevity of service learning in public schooling" (p.308).

The traditional style of education does not support the practice of service learning. Wade (1997a) claims that communication and collaboration are discouraged in the traditional style of education. In addition, "the

public school structure makes collaboration difficult" (Wade, 1997a, p.302).

Many people believe that the reflection component of service learning can cause problems. As I stated earlier, it is believed that reflection can serve to reinforce preexisting beliefs. In addition, some people argue that "teachers are generally not skilled in facilitating reflective thinking and students are not skilled in practicing it" (Wade, 1997a, p.307).

Efficacy of service learning projects can be a concern. Will service activities have a long-term impact on social and environmental problems? These people are concerned that service learning is not as beneficial as people believe, but that the benefits observed are "'feel-good' additions" (Clause & Ogden, 1999, p.1), which do not have long term effects. These critics are concerned that the students could be taken advantage of. This would be why service projects should be built on mutuality. If the project is set up with mutuality in mind, both groups having a say in what they want or need, this can be avoided.

Service learning has also been criticized for "using the community as a laboratory" (Lisman, 1998, p.30). Some people are concerned that the students will be using those in the community strictly to fulfill a requirement, without thinking about the reasons of the project. This is a legitimate concern that leads me to look at mandatory service.

Some argue that by making service mandatory you take the educational value out of the experience. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) warn that we must, "caution schools not to approach service superficially ... not simply fulfilling a requirement or beefing up their resume" (p.59). Some argue that the students will lose interest in the program and think of it as just another hurdle they have to jump before receiving their diplomas. Wade (1997a) claims that, "mandating voluntarism will undermine students' caring and initiative to help others" (p.308-309). This mandatory service can lead to acts of charity by students, rather than an effort to make a change.

Kahne and Westheimer (1999) did a great job explaining the difference between acts of charity and efforts to make a change. They separated the data into three categories of growth as a result of service learning. The vertical axis looks at the difference in goals between charity and change.

Table 1

Service Learning Goals

	Moral	Political	Intellectual
Charity	Giving	Civic duty	Additive experience
Change	Caring	Social reconstruction	Transformative experience

Note:By Kahn & Westheimer (1999), p.29.

Lisman (1998) stresses the importance of "working to address and eliminate the root causes of many problems" (p.42), rather than merely doing acts of charity. For this reason, many people argue that an educator must take care to make sure that the students are practicing service learning and not community service.

So what is the difference between service learning and community service? "Service learning, although it may include a community service component, is a structured learning process" (Burns, 1998, p.39). Fertman et al. (1996) explain that, "reflection is essential in service learning ... (it) distinguishes service learning from volunteerism and community service activities" (p.33). The Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform (1993) adds that;

Community service becomes service learning when there is a deliberate connection made between service and learning opportunities, which are then accompanied by conscious and thoughtfully designed occasions for reflecting on the service experience. (p.71)

So we see how important the reflection component is in service learning. Without the reflection, the experience becomes an act of charity, rather than trying to find ways to eliminate community problems.

Another concern of service learning is the logistics involved in setting up a program. The concerns are on issues such as transportation, liability, funds, supplies, organizing scheduling, and volunteer staff. These things are very difficult for an

educator to deal with alone, and often a teacher trying to start a service learning project will not receive a lot of help from the school or district.

How Does the Educator Prepare for Service Learning?

Starting up a service project is more than just picking an activity and having the students complete it. There is a lot more involved. When beginning to put a project together one often does not think about having to write proposals or possibly even set goals. In addition, he may not think about who will provide the funding, or who is going to take care of keeping records on the projects. People do not realize how much is put into a project - even before it gets off the ground.

First we need to look at what is done to set up a service program. The instructor must first come up with a plan. In this plan there needs to be an idea of what the activity will be, the essential academic learning requirements to be addressed, and the goals of the project. This can be done in two ways. "One is to start with a particular service focus and work toward a specific learning outcome; the other is to start with a

specific learning outcome and work to develop a related activity" (Fertman et al., 1996, p.28). Either way, there must be a plan at the very start - a focus for the whole project.

It is necessary that the students are involved in creating this plan. Fertman et al. (1996) claim that, "if students are given a choice in a service project, they will have a real investment in their learning" (p.20). By giving students a sense of ownership of the project, they may have more incentive and interest to get involved.

First of all, service learning should address real needs. This should be an obvious part of the plan. Service learning is the perfect setting for the students to practice collaboration, leadership, and reflective skills, and to gain an understanding and acceptance of differences. In addition, service learning should be interdisciplinary, allowing each subject to relate to a central theme. With these things in mind, the teacher should come up with a vision of what the project will look like.

My sources also had an idea of how these plans should look. Fertman et al. (1996) claim that by setting the goals of a service learning project you need to make a "clear statement of: what you want to accomplish, for whom, and with what effect" (p.104). The Giraffe Project Teaching Guide (1995) claims that if your vision is strong enough, "it acts as a powerful magnet, helping attract the resources and people you need to get the job done" (p.165). Once you have created a vision of your project, you need to analyze the obstacles and resources.

Unfortunately, the obstacles are often what keep many educators from incorporating service learning projects in their curriculum. These obstacles usually make service learning a very demanding, time consuming "add-on," as some people call it. This is so unfortunate, because the practice of service learning has so much to offer our students. Some of these obstacles may include funding, paperwork, transportation, and liability.

Many people are concerned with how service learning will be funded. There is not usually a lot of extra money floating around a school district to pay for "extras" such as this type of program. The funds may pay for such things as transportation or supplies. There are grants for service learning that the educator can apply for. These may be competitive or based on population. However, this is not the only way to get funding for your program.

There are businesses within the community that support your cause and would be willing to provide the funding. For this reason, Fertman et al. (1996) suggest that you "market your service learning widely throughout the community ... let people know what you are doing, why it is important, and what you need in the way of resources, both financial and human" (p.94). This suggestion is very helpful, however as many argue, it can be very time consuming. Seo (2001) claims that, "having a reliable organization behind you assures the school that your project will be legitimate, well organized, and a good experience for everyone involved"

(p.56). It would be wonderful to already have an organization behind you from the start, however this is not always realistic.

The paperwork involved in a service project can be very time consuming. Before the project even begins, the educator must write out proposals to various organizations in order to receive support on the project. Once the project is on it's way, someone will need to keep track of - well, everything. This will help eliminate liability issues. Then all of the information collected will need to be analyzed to figure out what was efficient and what didn't work so that if the project is used again, the teacher will have a good idea of what needs to change. In addition, it can give the teacher an idea of what would need to change while he is preparing another service learning project. Lastly, this information is important for when the project comes to the end and you get to the celebration stage. In order to acknowledge the students' accomplishments, you must have some type of record for them. The paperwork issue can be solved through the

formation of an advisory board for service learning projects, or possibly through acquiring volunteers.

Another obstacle to a service learning project could be transportation. As I mentioned earlier, funding may help this problem. However, the teacher still must figure out how the students will get to the service site, whether this is through district vehicles or private ones. If, for whatever reason, the teacher decides to transport the students through a personal vehicle, a special type II driver's license must be obtained. This license allows school officials to transport students in personal cars. In addition, there are many things that the teacher should keep in mind, such as getting parent permission, always driving more than one student at a time, and liability.

If the teacher is driving students to and from a placement site in his personal vehicle, the students will most likely not be covered under the insurance policy. In fact, the liability issue is one that should be considered throughout the whole project. Fertman et al. (1996) provide a list of things to consider while

thinking about liability. He claims that in order not to be found negligent:

- Make sure everyone is aware of where the students are serving.
- Make sure you get parent permission, or release forms signed.
- Make sure there is clear and adequate supervision and training when needed.
- Make sure that all drivers are covered by insurance required by the district.
- Make sure that there is clear rationale for pairing students up with the individuals they will be helping.
- Make sure there is clear safety / risk management training.
- Make strong links to the academic curriculum.

p.100

Liability may become a major obstacle, but the educator must be willing to deal with the risks in order move on with the project.

Chances are the educator will not be able to eliminate all the risks. This must be accepted as he moves on with the plan. The Giraffe Project Teaching Guide (1995) asks, "Do you accept these risks? And are you ready to give the time and effort it will take? If

your answer is 'Yes,' then commit yourself to doing this project" (p.165). Now is the time to make the commitment and set up the specific goals for the project.

While setting the goals, keep in mind that the more people are involved in these decisions, the more people will feel comfortable with the project. Having a sense of ownership in the project will make strong supporters out of them. Rhoads (1997) claims that both parties, the service provider and the recipient, need to be included in developing a project (p.150). In addition, there should be, "a joint action involving equal decision making and offering benefits to all parties" (Rhoads, 1997, p.151). This is very important so that both the students and the placement site feel as though they are a valued part of the project as the students work towards the goals that were set jointly.

So what should the goals of service learning look like? The goals look a lot like the outcomes that my sources described. This is the point that the teacher will make specific goals directed at the project that

they are preparing. Fertman et al. (1996) sum the subject up when he claims that these goals may relate to intellectual, moral, social, basic skills development, or personal growth. They may also address multicultural understanding and career preparation (p.8). Once these goals have been set, it is time to move forward with the project.

I have discussed how service learning should integrate subjects into a central theme, and how it should allow students the opportunity to practice collaboration, leadership, and reflective skills, and to gain an understanding and acceptance of differences. In addition, "one of the most important elements of the program is that the students are always interacting with people and not just doing isolated tasks that would soon become meaningless for them" (Magner, 2000, p.92). After the project is complete, the teacher must remember to acknowledge the students' achievements. This should not be compromised.

Summary

Service learning can be very beneficial to the student, the school, and the community. Yet, this pedagogy is not highly supported by educators, due to the fact that it can be very difficult to implement. In this chapter I answered many questions about service learning.

- Service learning is a pedagogy that teaches students by combining the required school curriculum with community service.
- An effective service learning program consists of four essential elements: preparation, implementation, reflection, and celebration.
- Service learning is important because it helps students grow intellectually, morally, socially, and personally. Service learning also promotes collaboration between the school and community, as it addresses unmet community needs.
- Due to the characteristics of middle schools, service learning is highly successful there.
- There are many problems faced by service learning, these may include, but are not limited to, time, funds, and training.
- Preparing for a service learning project is a very long and difficult task that requires a lot of time and commitment.

With an understanding of each of these points, implementation of a service learning project should become more successful. This pedagogy seems to be very difficult, but has many benefits for the students. Seo (2001) encourages, "while you may not change every mind in that school, you could be the turning point for someone - even if it's just one student, that one young person could go on to really change the world" (P.58-59). This is wonderful incentive for applying service learning in the curriculum. In fact, this quote leads us back to the original question - How do we empower students with the understanding that they can help build a caring society? British writer William Makepeace Thackeray said it best when he wrote:

Sow a thought and you reap an act;

Sow an act and you reap a habit;

Sow a habit and you reap a character;

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

This is what I want to teach my students!

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

My study starts with the question, "How do we empower students with the understanding that they can help build a caring society?" I realize that there are many ways to attempt to address this need in the curriculum, but, personally, I see service learning as being very valuable. For this reason, I chose to focus on service learning.

First, I needed to figure out what service learning really is. Once this question had been addressed, I began to look deeper at service learning. I needed to find out what is service learning?, why is service learning important?, what does service learning look like in the middle school?, what are some of the problems faced by service learning?, and what is involved in preparing a service learning project? Each of these questions is essential in understanding service learning.

With these things in mind, I conducted my research. In my placement school, I attempted to use my research

to set up two service projects of my own. I have connections to two well-respected organizations within the neighboring community, which I felt would provide excellent learning opportunities for my students. However, I did not realize how difficult it would be to actually organize a program. To set up these programs, I was involved in a lot of extra time and paperwork. In addition, I needed to work with other teachers, as well as community members.

I have also provided an evaluation of the program that already exists in my placement school. To attempt to evaluate the school's service learning, I needed information on what kinds of programs were included in their curriculum, in addition I needed to talk to some of the students and teachers about these programs. This is how I framed my study.

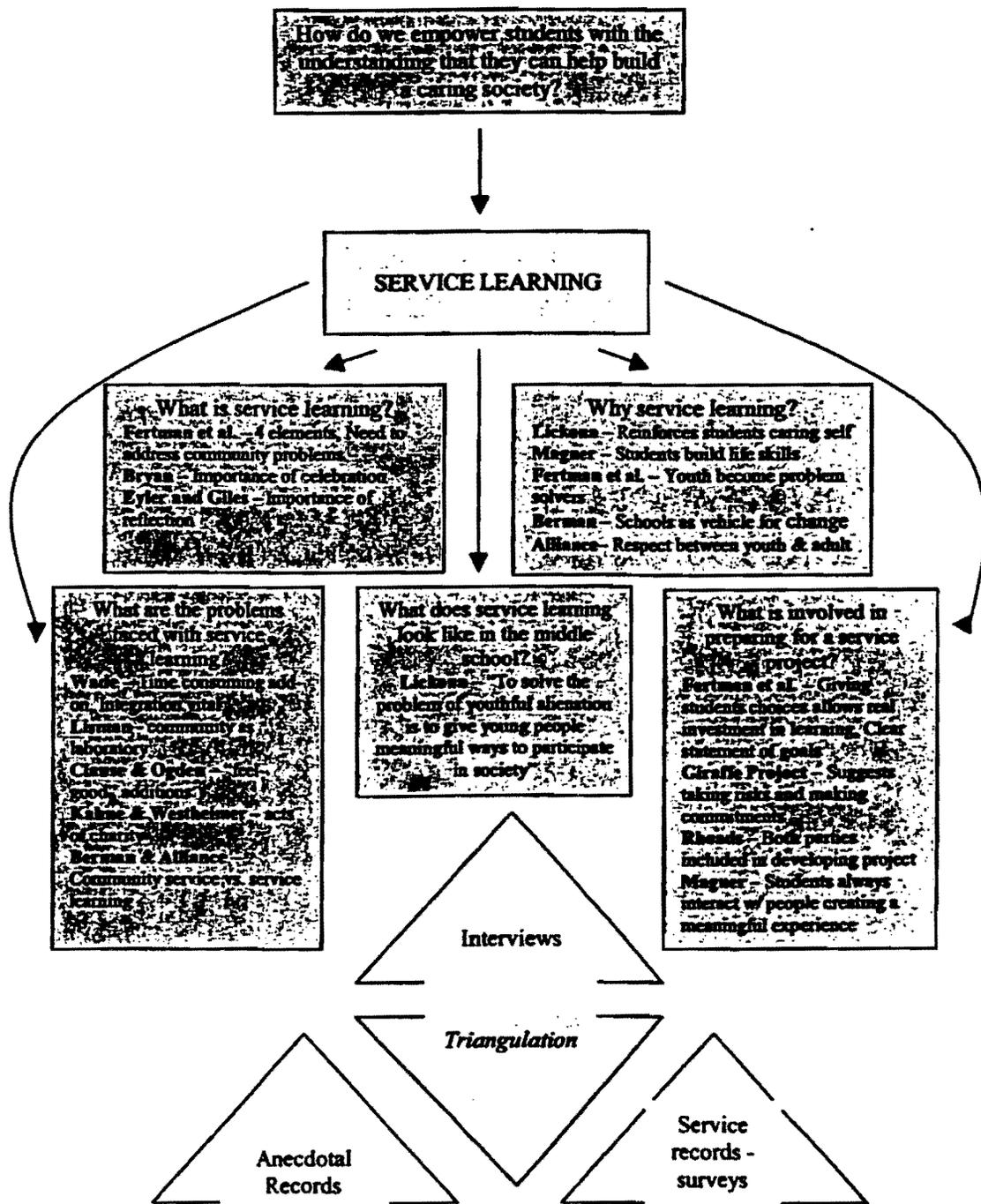


Figure 1. Conceptual framework representing this thesis project.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

In an attempt to describe a way to empower students with the realization that they can make a difference in society, I have chosen to focus on service learning. As an educator, I hope to inspire students to take charge in their world and dare to help make changes for the better. It is my belief that service learning prepares students to take on this leadership role in their community and makes them aware of the contributions that they can make.

In order for me to conduct my study, I needed to develop a good understanding of what service learning is and what characteristics are necessary to develop an effective program. My methodology will show how I came about finding the answers that I needed for my research. To do this, I will discuss the nature and characteristics of qualitative inquiry, followed by a discussion of the methods used in collecting and analyzing data.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative inquiry, described by Elliot Eisner (1998) in The Enlightened Eye, is essential to my thesis, or inquiry project. It is through qualitative inquiry that I conducted my research and formed my analysis. Here, I will present a description of the features and characteristics as they relate to my inquiry project.

Qualitative inquiry has various features. The first feature Eisner (1998) presents is the importance in having "qualities" present. These "qualities," he continues, present an active experience using the sensory system. Eisner (1998) claims that in order to have a quality experience there must be an "act of mind" (p.21), or as Dewey (1938/1997) explains, "observation alone is not enough. We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear, and touch" (p.68). This is why I see service learning as being so valuable. The nature of service learning provides that the students get involved in an activity. They become one

with the lessons that are meant to be learned. As a result of this sensory input resulting from the experience of service learning, the students' experience the "qualities" necessary for qualitative inquiry. As I engaged myself in the school's service projects, I also experienced these "qualities."

Eisner (1998) also explains how qualitative inquiry is not only about things beyond our control, but also about situations we create, such as the opportunity for service. This method of inquiry focuses on the quality of thought put into any experience, whether planned or by chance. My research often shows a lack in the quality of reflections by students (as well as teachers). It is apparent that this is a skill that needs to be developed.

It is through written text, Eisner (1998) argues, that qualitative inquiry takes on its most significant role. "A writer starts with qualities and ends with words. The reader starts with words and ends with qualities" (Eisner, 1998, p.22). Therefore, my experiences, while preparing this thesis, have been

transformed into words on a page. It is my hope that these words will present to the reader a vivid picture of my experience. Each of these features helps to make inquiry qualitative. In addition to these features, Eisner (1998) explains that qualitative inquiry has six primary characteristics.

The first of these characteristics is the idea that qualitative inquiry is field focused. I conducted observations of both animate and inanimate objects in a variety of settings throughout my inquiry project. Although the settings varied, my inquiry was continuously focused on the concept of service learning. However, in qualitative inquiry, Dewey (1938/1997) claimed, the goal should not be merely observing, but interpreting or describing what we have observed.

The second characteristic that Eisner (1998) presents is the idea that the researcher uses the self as an instrument. Here the observer tries to make sense of the experience. Eisner (1998) explains how each person will interpret an experience in a different way - based on past experiences. This personal insight is

seen as a positive thing in educational criticism. However, he states that, even though the researcher is encouraged to use personal insight, this researcher still "must provide evidence and reasons" (p.35). Therefore, throughout my research, I was the instrument through which each of my observations was analyzed. I determined what was important to my inquiry, as well as what I perceived as having lesser value, and through reasoning and evidence I was responsible for passing this information on to my readers.

The third characteristic of qualitative inquiry is an interpretive character. This can have two meanings: why something is taking place and how each person will interpret a situation differently. This seems to build on the second characteristic. Dewey (1938/1997) supports this theory when he wrote, "in unfamiliar cases, we cannot tell just what consequences of observed conditions will be unless we go over past experiences in our mind, unless we reflect upon them and by seeing what is similar in them to those now present, go on to form a judgement of what may be expected in the present

situation" (p.68). Dewey (1938/1997) also claims that, "humans learn: they bring with them memories and interpretations of past events" (p.36). Duckworth (1996) adds that, "words that people hear -- are taken into some thoughts that are already in their minds, and those thoughts may not be the ones the speaker has in mind" (p.22). According to Eisner (1998) this is a response to the personal insight that each person applies as they try to make sense of a situation.

The fourth characteristic states an importance in "the use of expressive language and the presence of voice in text" (Eisner, 1998, p.36). Eisner (1998) explains that this helps to make what has been written understandable to the reader. Duckworth (1996) warns, however, that the words must be carefully chosen. She warns, "some people can dazzle us with elaborate words when they do not really know what they are talking about" (p.17). She continues, "at other times, words can be so poorly chosen that they mask what is really a good idea" (p.17). This is more often the case for me. Therefore, I could see that the words needed to be

carefully chosen, as well as carefully interpreted while preparing my thesis.

The fifth characteristic points out the importance of the "attention to particulars" (Eisner, 1998, p.38). Eisner (1998) argues that once you get into statistics you lose particulars. He states, "perception is still central, but beyond that, the ability to render those distinctive features through text is required" (p.38). Without including these features, much of the research will become abstract. In order to give my inquiry project the "umph" it needed to make it more believable, I tried to hold onto these particulars and include them in my written text.

The sixth characteristic that Eisner (1998) presents is concern for coherence, insight, and instrumental utility. He claims that, "quality inquiry, like conventional qualitative approaches to research, is ultimately a matter of persuasion, of seeing things in a way that satisfies, or is useful for the purposes we embrace" (p.39). This is where the reader is persuaded through reason. It is for this reason that examples

must be presented in my inquiry project. Through the examples that I present, my readers will be better able to understand the reasoning behind my work.

Nel Noddings (1986) also expressed the importance of qualitative inquiry. She claims that, "In qualitative research, we often chat with our subjects, share food at coffee breaks, and generally build trusting relationships" (p.507). For this reason, I worked throughout my research on creating relationships with those people who helped me gather information. Much of this information was provided by students or teachers with whom I had built relationships of mutual respect.

The sample of students that I chose to work with was not a random sample. Many of the students I chose to work with were students that I knew personally. Therefore, I would find it easier to contact them if I had questions regarding their projects.

Procedures

With the understanding that qualitative inquiry was central to my research, I formed the methodologies for

my thesis. In doing so, I needed to look closely at each question I was attempting to answer and visualize the types of data that would need to be collected to answer these questions. Hubbard and Power (1993) provided me with many tools that could be used in my data collection and analysis.

Data Collection

While analyzing the data collected, Lillian Hellman (1973) expressed the importance of "seeing and the seeing again" (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p.65). Hubbard and Power claim that, "Patience, a willingness to make mistakes, and playfulness can lead us to a deep "seeing" of the underlying patterns beneath surface appearances" (p.66). These passages show the importance of working with you data until it holds true against various theories presented.

Yet, Hubbard and Power (1993) warn that "it is critical, however, that you weave data collection and analysis together throughout your study" (p.67). If the researcher was to first collect immense amounts of data, but was to put off the task of analyzing this data, the

latter task could become unbearable. For this reason, I worked to analyze and organize my data as it was collected.

While collecting data for my inquiry project, I used a variety of tools described by Hubbard and Power (1993). These tools include observations and field notes, interviews, and artifacts. Each of these tools became useful for various tasks in my research.

Note taking was essential to my research as I make observations of student and teacher participation in service projects. What did they seem to get out of the projects? Was this evident in changes in their behavior? Which students seemed more likely to participate in service learning? Does participation in service learning seem to be somehow connected to their personalities? The questions could continue infinitely, but observations and note taking helped me address these kinds of issues.

I observed teachers as they gave lessons that included service learning into their curriculum. In addition, I took multiple notes while dealing with

community organizations while planning the projects.

However, Hubbard and Power (1993) claim that, "a researcher frantically scribbling in the corner can change the way people around her interact" (p.13).

Therefore, most of my field notes were not written down on the spot, but at a later time.

After collecting each of these notes, they needed to be analyzed. Hubbard and Power (1993) call these raw and cooked notes. They describe cooking notes as "the process of reflecting on what you are seeing shortly after you first write your notes" (p.17). They claim that by cooking the notes the researcher was more able to focus on changes. I felt as though I was able to get an extremely large amount of my data after "cooking" my notes. This data was very helpful throughout much of my research.

Another tool presented by Hubbard and Power (1993), that I found to be very useful were interviews. My research included both formal (See Appendix A) and informal interviews. Throughout my research I interviewed teachers, students and the community

organization representatives that I had been working with to organize my programs. These interviews were used to supplement the data collected and expand on it to clarify information collected through other forms.

Many of the interviews that I conducted were done outside of class time, because, as Hubbard and Power (1993), warn, "the research you do should never be at the expense of your teaching; it should inform and enhance your performance as a teacher" (p.12). Most of my interviews were informal interviews, in that "They are often spontaneous, born of daily interactions in your classroom" (Hubbard & Power, 1993, p.28). However, due to the nature of my project many of the interviews did not take place in the classroom, but in the "field."

My formal interviews were presented in the form of surveys. Surveys were sent out to all the students at the school in an attempt to collect information on service projects that each of the students participated in throughout the school year. The student service records compiled as a result of this survey were

essential in defining what service learning looks like in the middle school.

In addition to the field notes and interviews, I collected many artifacts while organizing my projects. Many of my artifacts represent either steps taken in preparing service projects or the difficulties faced during preparation. I became an expert in identifying these difficulties as I worked to set up service projects for the students. My artifacts are physical evidence of the time and effort put into preparing an effective service learning program.

As in the process of "cooking" my notes, I found it necessary to analyze each of my other forms of data collected as well. It is no use going through the pains of collecting the data if it is not to be used, and the data is of no use until it is analyzed. In all, my findings are supported by the method of triangulation, because I have used multiple sources to gain information.

Triangulation

Through the observations and interviews conducted, as well as the artifacts and field notes collected, my study is supported by the concept of triangulation. Eisner claims that, "when you use multiple sources to support your findings, you can build a compelling case for what you have discovered" (p.92). By using a variety of sources, my analysis has more validity.

Ethical Consideration

While conducting my inquiry on the topic of Service Learning, I found it important to consider the codes of ethical conduct as described by Nel Noddings. Noddings claimed that, "Researchers have perhaps too often made persons (teachers and students) the objects of research. An alternative is to choose *problems* that interest and concern researchers, students, and teachers..." (p.506). She claims that, "Such research would be genuine research *for* teaching instead of simply research *on* teaching" (p.506). For this reason, I chose to focus on the idea of service learning, and not the people involved in my research.

While collecting the data to support my inquiry project, it was also necessary to take into account the privacy of the students and their families. For this reason, I have made great attempts to collect information for my inquiry project, yet at the same time worked to protect the names of the students and school involved.

In addition to this, I found it important to inform the students and their families that I am a university student in the process of researching and writing about service learning and that I would like to include their experiences anonymously in my paper. Each of the responses that I received was positive and many students were excited to be included.

In the process of preparing my service programs, I took into consideration logistical issues as well. I found it difficult to make the decision to transport a half a dozen (or more) students a day from the school to the service site without the proper insurance. It would be necessary to always transport more than one student at a time, and though I had the proper license, I was

told that my personal insurance would not cover the students in the case of an accident. They claimed that this would apply even with the proper forms filled out. It would be necessary to use a district vehicle, which I did not have access to. I was very unhappy to find this out near the end of the school year. Unfortunately, this ultimately terminated the formation of my service learning programs. However, all together these experiences made me much more aware of what is involved in the pedagogy of service learning.

Summary

This chapter has described the methods and procedures I have used in my data collection process. While keeping a focus on qualitative inquiry, I collected information through observations and field notes, informal interviews, formal interviews in the form of surveys, and the collection of artifacts. Each of these forms of data collection provided information that was invaluable to my research. However, in collecting this data it was very important for me to keep in mind certain ethical considerations. I found it

important to focus on the pedagogy of service learning, including the implication, and benefits for the students rather than focusing on the participants themselves. In doing this, I feel that my research provided me with very useful information.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Throughout my research I have come to a very strong understanding of the concept of service learning. By what I have experienced, I firmly believe that service learning can be very beneficial for schools, communities, students, and even their families. However, I have seen many concerns about implementing service learning in the curriculum. Yet, I still believe that service learning can be used to empower the students with the understanding that they can help to make a difference in our society. These beliefs were developed by the findings that came out of my research.

My Placement

My experience took place in a junior high school of approximately 800 students, between seventh and ninth grade. I spent the school year working in two classrooms. I would spend three hours a day in a Pacific Rim/Washington State History class. We started off the school year as Pacific Rim Social Studies where the students focused on Asian countries. At semester,

we moved to Washington State History where we looked at the westward movement and the many people involved, such as trappers and traders, missionaries, Native Americans, etc. This curriculum was brand new to the seventh grade Social Studies curriculum in the district and the whole year was a trial period as we strived to find meaningful ways to present this material to the students. In addition, I spent the other two hours a day working in two first year Spanish classes. In these classes, we spent the year introducing the students to the Spanish language, vocabulary and grammar.

My placement school was located in a middle class to upper middle class area where the students were accustomed to a comfortable lifestyle, in which they had access to "things" stereotypically associated with the United States; nice yarded homes, cars, TVs, stereos, telephones, etc. For their free time, these teens enjoyed shopping at the mall and going to movies. I was very familiar with their lifestyle, because I grew up in the same neighborhood and went to the same school not

too many years earlier. They were picture children for middle class American teen-agers.

These students had very blessed lives and each of them had so much that they could offer to others. I saw service learning as being an excellent way for these students to learn about those situations or lifestyles surrounding them in their world while they take what they have to offer and share it with others.

To apply this pedagogy, I first needed to get an idea of what service learning is. After doing tons of research on the subject, I turned to the school to see how their views of service learning compared to my resources. I walked down the hall to the classroom of the service learning coordinator at the school, and the very first thing that I noticed as I entered her room was giraffes - giraffes of all colors and sizes everywhere. These giraffes have been given to her as gifts throughout the previous years, because she is a strong supporter of a program called the Giraffe Project.

The Giraffe Project works to make students aware of "unsung heroes" in the community surrounding them. Through these lessons, the students begin to realize that regular people (of all ages) within the community can make a difference in others' lives. The students were then encouraged to go out into the community and help others. Through the Giraffe Project this teacher tried to get the students to understand the importance of service learning. I observed this teacher on multiple occasions as she applied the Giraffe Project to her curriculum. These observations helped to give me a better understanding of what service learning is.

I was aware that this one teacher was responsible for keeping track of all of the service learning activities that the students engaged in. This appeared to me to be an overwhelming task for one person in a school with approximately 800 students. Nevertheless, she was a very strong supporter of service learning and devoted to the task. This teacher claimed that, "Yes, it's a lot of work, but it's sure worth it!" She added, "I love seeing all of the services given by the

students. It helps me realize that all of this work is worth while in the end" (interview, 6/15/2002). This would be the reason that Clause and Ogden (1999) caution that service learning is a "feel-good" pedagogy. Yet, I would argue that it is so much more than that.

The service learning coordinator explained, in her own words, what service learning is. She claimed that, "service learning is a way to teach students morals and citizenship and give them the tools to go out to the community and use these things they have learned as they grow older" (interview, 9/25/2001). She claimed that the goal is that these students will learn from their experiences with the community and the lessons will make them stronger leaders. I agree that this is a desirable goal, however, I did not always see this being pursued in the service projects acknowledged by the school.

While there was a large number of service projects that presented a large potential for growth among the students, there were also many projects that seemed to force a person to stretch their imagination to come up with a way to integrate the service project into the

students' curriculum. Wade (1997a) claimed that this was a requirement of service learning. Without integrating the service into the curriculum and allowing the student time to reflect on the experience, it becomes community service - that "feel-good" pedagogy where nobody can pin point what the student learned (including the student).

The Survey

Early in the school year, the service learning coordinator sent out a survey explaining that service learning is "a teaching / learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility" and requesting information on service projects addressed throughout the school year. Each of the students received this survey and was expected to record their service learning experiences. At the end of the year, these were collected and the students were rewarded for their accomplishments.

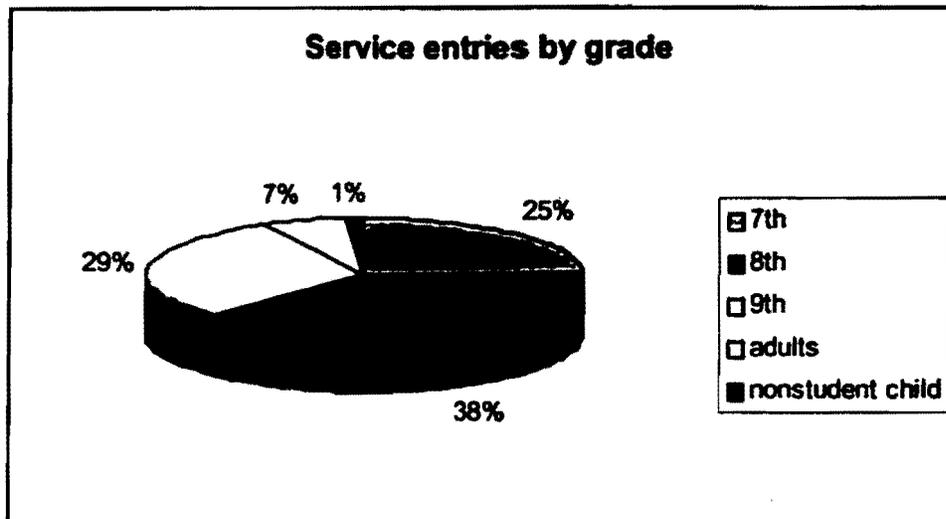


Figure 2. Service entries, separated by grade (or status), that had been received throughout the year as a result of the survey presented on service learning.

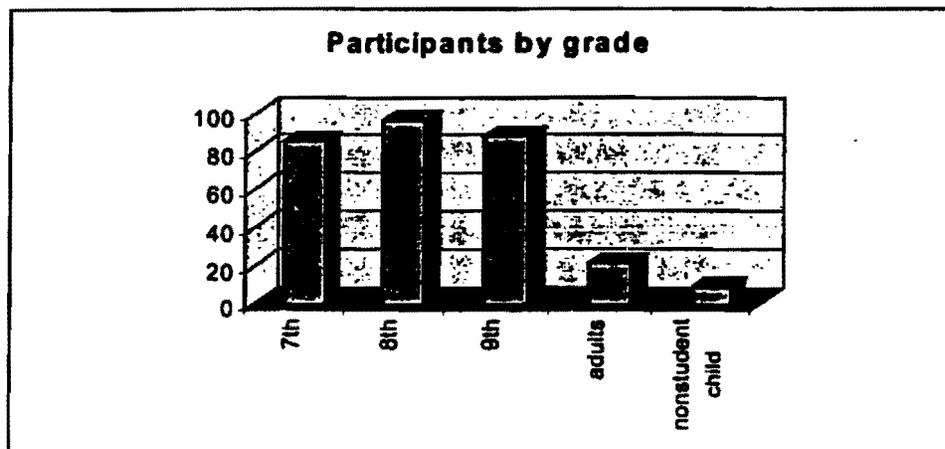


Figure 3. The amount of service learning participants that represent each grade (or status) as a result of the service learning survey.

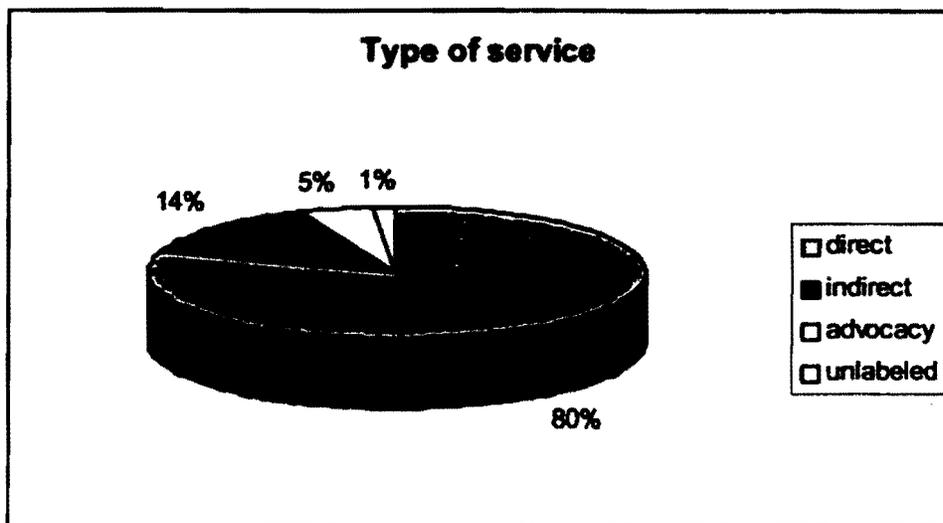


Figure 4. Types of service learning projects practiced at my placement school.

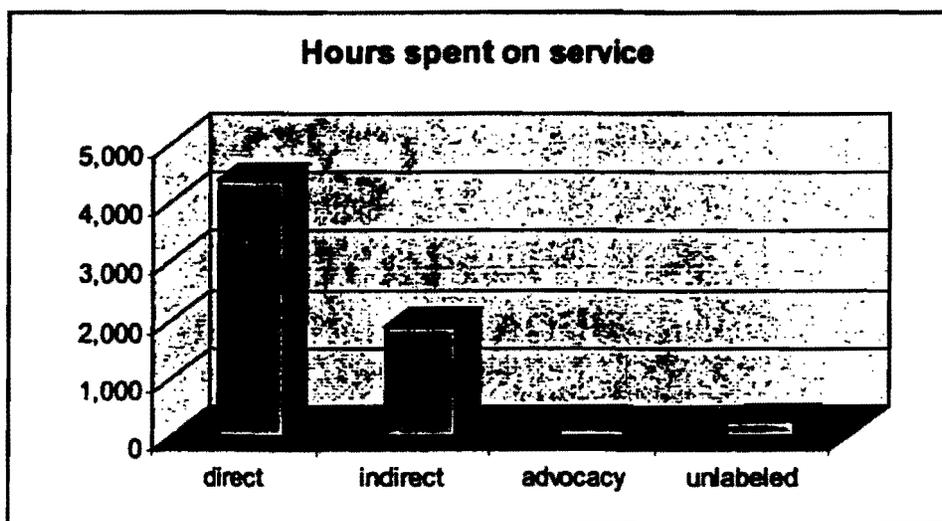


Figure 5. Hours spent on the various types of service learning represented at my placement school.

The information collected from the students in this manner was invaluable in providing information about the service learning projects acknowledged at my placement school. While looking at what service learning is, I took the information that the students turned in and analyzed it to find out what types of activities the teachers at the school accepted as service learning activities.

While analyzing my data, the first thing that I noticed was that 260 entries out of 922 were from students (143 out of 295 who participated in service learning projects) who participated in the school's major fundraising activity of the school year. The students dedicate their time parking cars on the school grounds for a major community event.

My first reaction to this finding was - How can this be considered service learning? I noticed from the data collected that many students did not complete a reflection for this activity (197 out of 260 entries). Those who did reflect on this activity often either described the activity (9 out of 260), writing "flagging

cars" or "there were a lot of cars that needed to be parked," or else they wrote generic reflections (12 out of 260), such as "even though it was very hot, it was fun," or "the sun feels good." It appeared to me as though the students were not quite sure what was expected of them when they were asked to reflect on their service activity. In addition, even though my sources showed reflection as a necessary element of service learning, many of the teachers did not seem to be treating it that way.

When I questioned a few teachers about this, they responded by explaining that they were trying not to take more time than necessary from the classroom in order to fulfill the service requirement. I found this interesting, because Wade (1997a) showed that not only was the reflection required in service learning, but so was integration into the students' curriculum. However, they did inform me that they would be more willing to take time out of the class in order for the student to reflect on an activity if they felt that the activity had a higher educational value than parking cars.

Another activity that I felt did not quite meet the criteria of service learning as described by Wade (1997a), but was included in the data collected on the schools' service learning projects was the school play.

Again, I found this activity questionable as one to be included in service learning. Another requirement of service learning, according to Wade (1997a), was that the service needed to address a real community need. I was not completely convinced that the school play did this. However, these students were sponsored by a teacher to receive service learning hours for this project.

I did see one very prominent outcome from this activity. It was apparent through student observations and field notes that the students involved in the play seemed to have strong leadership abilities. However, it is not clear whether this is a reaction from participating in the school play or whether the school play just seems to attract kids with this personality. I would imagine that it is a good mixture of the two.

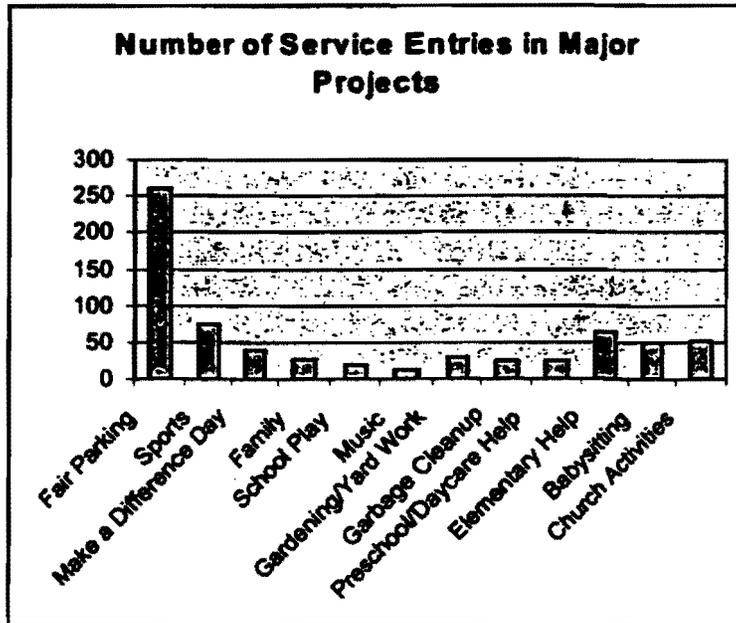


Figure 6. Number of service entries recorded in the most popular activities.

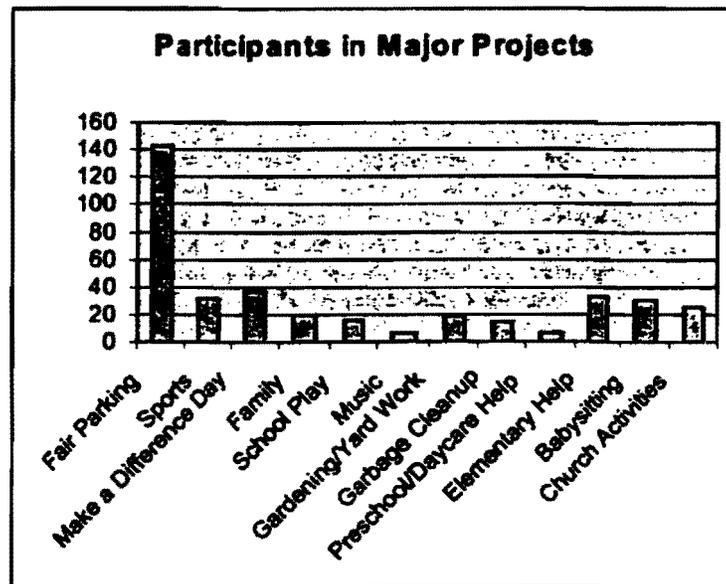


Figure 7. Number of participants in the most popular service projects.

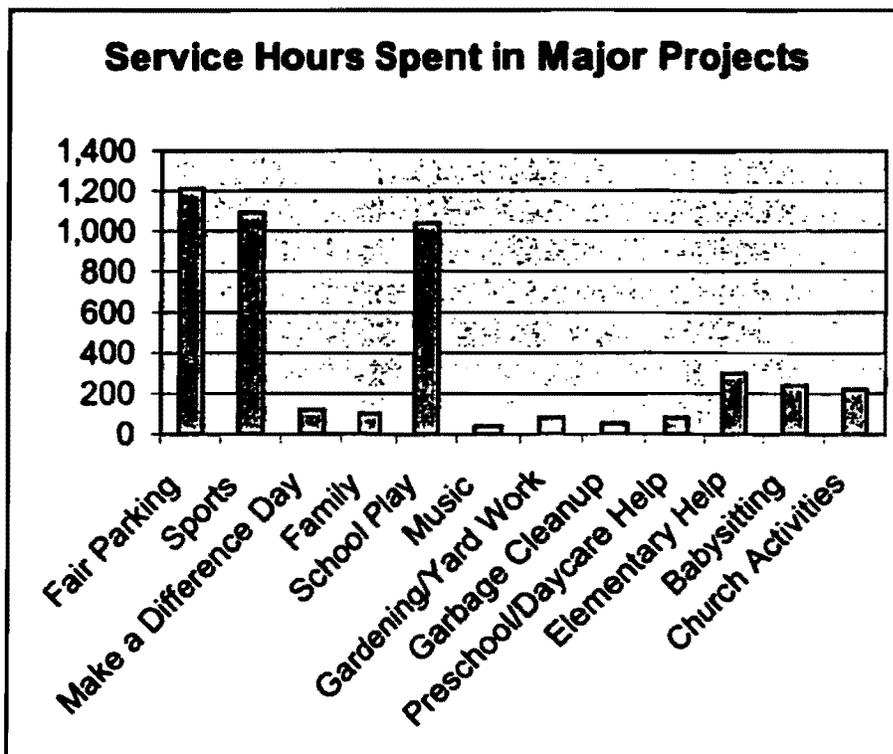


Figure 8. Service hours spent in the most popular projects at my placement school.

One of my students received a certificate for 112:40 hours of service learning. Eighty one of these hours were from participating in the school play. Like many other students involved in the school play she was very active in ASB, and participated in all of the fundraisers for the school as well as school wide events such as Make a Difference Day, Booster Club, and school sports. In addition, she was very active in her

family's church. She was definitely developing into a leader in her own community, but it is hard to say what was the cause of this growth.

Out of the 922 total entries, only 20 of them were for the school play, a total of 1,043 and a half hours. Although only 6 out of the 20 entries included reflections, one reflection stands out in my mind. One student claimed that, "it gave me a sense of courage to be able to stand in front of so many people and perform." From this response I could see how the activity would be very valuable for the students. However, I did not see it as meeting the criteria for service learning. This goes to show how each of the teachers, as Fertman et al. (1996) suggested, seemed to have a different definition of service learning.

There were other service projects that I found very inspiring. There were many students working with younger children, both in childcare situations and cross age tutoring. There was one teacher who included garbage clean-up in his science curriculum, and another science teacher who included planting and weeding in her

curriculum. However, one service project that I was really impressed with was sports highlights videos made by students in the computer tech class.

Not only did these students create highlights videos for our school's teams, but they also made videos for four other schools in the district. When I talked to one of these students about the tapes, he told me "It felt good - bein' able to help another school. Just the other day we were tryin' to kick their ... well, ya know" (interview, 1/09/2002). Even though I see this as a great activity it still comes a little short of my view of service learning, as described in my research.

The activity was connected solely to the students' computer tech class, when according to Wade (1997a) the activity should be integrated into as many subjects as possible. This requires a lot of collaboration among teachers (across disciplines). This is another discrepancy that I saw in service learning at my placement school from my research. Fertman et al. (1996) showed that there are four main elements in service learning. By evaluating the list of service

projects at the school and a few interviews, I attempted to determine the importance of these elements.

Elements of Service

By analyzing the data collected on each of the service learning activities presented by the students, I was able to determine how effective each element may be in the process of service learning. This was determined by looking at which elements were present in a relatively small sample of service learning activities and determining the value of these elements according to the effectiveness of the activity overall, taking into consideration the student and teacher responses of these activities. The students' reflections (or lack of) included in this data helped to provide an understanding of how important each of these elements are. However, after looking at the reflections I realized that more information was needed. Therefore, I began to question students and teachers about the importance of each of the elements, particularly the preparation and reflection.

Preparation

Many of the activities that the students were engaged in did not include a lot of preparation by the teachers at the school. They were strictly activities that the students decided to volunteer for outside of school and were sponsored by a teacher to receive service learning hours. These activities often included church related activities, or other activities that the student was regularly involved in. Many other activities were prepared by teachers, such as cross age tutoring, or garbage clean up. Both of these types of activities could be effective if they were well planned.

This planning includes not only preparing something for the students to do at their placement site, but also finding a way to integrate it into as many subjects as possible. In addition, the preparation of a service project includes planning out how and when the students will be expected to reflect on their project. The preparation of a service learning project is very intense and time consuming. In theory it really sounds

cut and dried, but in reality it can be very difficult. I will go into this later on in this chapter.

It became apparent that many activities practiced in my placement school did not seem to include a significant amount of preparation, especially in the way of integrating the activities to the curriculum and reflecting on the lessons presented. After participating in activities such as parking cars or serving food at school sporting events, the students wrote very generic reflections if any at all. This leads me to believe that since the activities were not carefully planned out, the reflections are weak. It is possible that the weak reflections show that the students did not put a lot of thought in the activities, and therefore there was not a lot of personal growth as a result. Even after questioning a few students about their activities, many could not express what they learned from them. Seeing only a few reflections that included some thought, yet many other activities held very positive reflections, I have come to the conclusion that preparation is important in service learning.

Service

I have already discussed how the service component of the service learning projects acknowledged often do not fit the criteria for service learning, so I'll move on to reflection. Out of the 922 service learning entries that were acknowledged at the school, only 478 of them included reflections, or about half. If the reflection element is so critical to service learning, this statistic is not a good one.

Reflection

Many of the reflections included in the data I found to be incomplete. I found it necessary to contact a number of students and interview them on how their service project affected them (or others). Their responses to my questions often gave me a good idea of whether they had truly thought about the activity that they had participated in. This was necessary not only in looking at the importance of reflection, but also in looking at the benefits of service learning and why service learning is so important.

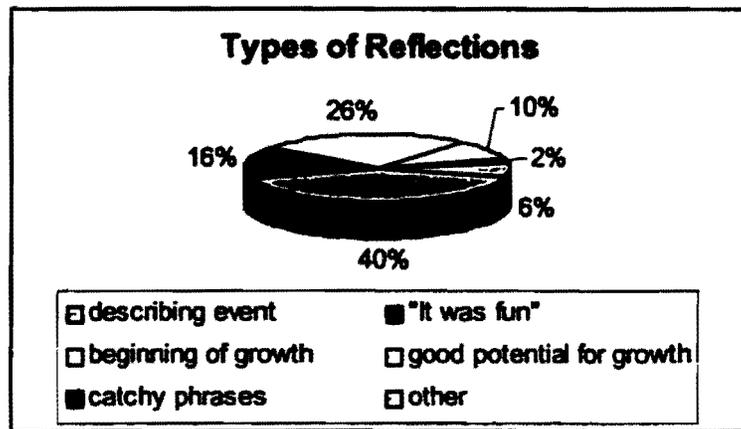


Figure 9. Types of reflections noted among the service projects recorded at my placement school.

By looking at the data collected, I came up with five primary types of reflections. The first was just a description of what the student did, such as "helped at stadium concession stand" or "helped with youth group." These reflections often did not appear to have much thought behind them initially. These made up 194 of the 478 reflections.

The second type of reflection was the generic "it was fun" or "very interesting." These reflections consisted of 74 out of 478. Like the description, this type of reflection does not present much evidence of growth at first sight.

The third type of reflection hinted at the beginning of growth in the student. I included 123 reflections in this category. After spending a few days as a teacher's assistant in another school, one student said, "teaching is a lot harder than it looks." It appears from her reflection that there was more to it than what she included in her entry. In addition, this included feelings about specific aspects of the student's activity. For example, one student spent some time helping his grandparents. His reflection stated that he, "felt good to help with heavy lifting." His reflection showed that he had spent time thinking about his experience, however, there is still no real sign of extensive growth.

In the fourth type of reflection, I saw a real potential for growth. These consisted of 47 out of 478 reflections. An example of this is when a student spent some time helping in a hospital. In her reflection she wrote, "It was hard work, but I knew that what I was doing was helping other people so it was worth it." After spending 10 hours working in a food pantry

(feeding the homeless) another student wrote that she began to realize that "not everyone has what I have in life." Because of my background, I find this to be a very important lesson for her to learn knowing that she comes from an area that lives relatively comfortably in comparison to many of the surrounding communities. A third student spent some time playing with a neighbor who is physically challenged. In his reflection he stated, "everyone needs to be accepted by others." I see a great potential for growth in all of these students.

The fifth type of reflection that I noticed was what I called catchy phrases. There were not many of these, only 11 out of the 478 reflections. In these reflections the student responded with what appears to be a phrase that was probably heard before. After spending an afternoon parking cars, multiple students wrote, "never give up," "it's a team effort to get the job done," or "it pays to help out." The most interesting thing is that each of this type of reflection was in response to parking cars, where the

students spent hours standing and talking as they were working. I myself helped out with this event and many times I had heard students make these types of remarks during the day. It appears as though these "catchy phrases" got "caught" in the students' minds.

Although I have neatly separated these reflections into five categories, and labeled them as promoting growth within the student or not, just because a student initially responded with one type of reflection does not mean that the student actually put thought into their experience or not. The categories were solely a way for me to divide up the reflections so that I could understand better what their use was for the students.

Depending on the activities, some of the students were able to expand on their reflection when questioned. One student wrote that she "spoke in front of the city council about Gift Makers," a program that her family is involved in. When asked what she learned from the experience she claimed that "the experience sure gave me a lot more confidence in speaking in front of people ... Yeah, I was scared, but if I can do that I can do

anything. Right?" (interview, 12/03/2001). Another initial reflection stated, "phone calling for levy election." When I questioned this student, she stated, "I found that lot of people care about what's happening to the community. The citizens in our community are working hard to commit themselves to students" (interview, 4/06/2002). Neither of these students explained how they were affected by their activities initially, however when questioned at a later date they were clearly able to describe how they benefited from their service. When students provide such positive reflections it is easy to see how service learning can be beneficial to the student.

Celebration

Each of the students at my placement school who participated in service learning projects received an award for validation. The fourth element of service learning is celebration. This element is important in showing the students how important their contributions are to society.

Implementation

After talking with other teachers about service learning, it was apparent to me that very few of the teachers at my school included service learning in their curriculum. I was only able to uncover 3 teachers in the school who included service learning. From many reactions, service learning did not seem to have a lot of support from many of the other teachers. I received a lot of comments such as, "Well, it seems like a nice idea, but I'm afraid that it is a lot more difficult in practice than it is in theory." This I learned the hard way throughout the course of the year.

As the students and teachers become better at integrating service learning and reflecting on activities, the school will also benefit. I believe that service learning is also beneficial to the community, however after talking with the representatives from the two community organizations that I was trying to set up service learning programs with, I seemed to run into mixed views about how service learning would affect them.

My Efforts

After learning the possible effects of Service Learning, I longed to benefit my students with an extremely positive experience with high potential for learning and growth. After considering the connections that I had to offer to the students, I decided to set up two service projects that I felt could be very educational. I had access to two community organizations that I felt could benefit the students greatly. Therefore, I worked to set up service learning projects with these organizations. I felt that my connections would help to make the planning for the programs easier, however I soon found out that there was much more involved than I had initially anticipated.

The first organization was a non-profit organization set up to help the Spanish speaking community gain skills in order to enter the work force within a neighboring community. This organization was located approximately twenty minutes away from our school. I had spent much of the school year volunteering with this organization in their evening

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The students were very friendly and very devoted to learning the language. These people would attend classes regularly, four nights a week after spending a long day at work. In addition, many of the students in the ESL class had children, but did not have anyone to provide childcare so they brought the kids along.

I attempted to start a program connecting these ESL classes to my Spanish language classes at my placement school. The school had three Spanish classes offered to ninth grade students. This past school year I participated in two of these three classes, however I presented the opportunity to all three classes. For our project, I had envisioned us making up a schedule to provide my Spanish students with an opportunity to help Spanish speakers learn to speak English. I thought that my students could also work with these children, many of whom speak Spanish as well as English. Therefore, they could get field experience with the Spanish language and Home Economics.

The organization that I was working with was very supportive of the idea. They are used to having volunteers around, through volunteers they got a good percentage of their work done. For this reason, the ESL teacher was very accepting of the idea, and she suggested that I help her put together some activities that my students and her students could work on together to help build the language skills of both groups of students. While I found this to be a wonderful idea, she and I had a very difficult time getting our schedules together in order to complete this task.

Nevertheless, the teacher saw value in the idea of service learning. She recognized how it could be beneficial to not only my students and her students, but also to society in general. My students were from a middle class society where not many people had to do without. Her students were from a neighboring community, a lower class society where there are many more hardships. We both saw this as an opportunity to cross cultural barriers and to teach the students about the other culture. This cultural understanding could be

beneficial to the community as well as the students and school.

The second organization prides itself on being an educational facility for the community. They work to educate the public about animals and their environments, as well as animal conservation, and the affects of pollution on our environment. This organization was much more hesitant about the idea of service learning. However, I had worked for the organization for four years and I was hoping that this background could give me some leverage. They were a big money organization that did use volunteers, but the process of becoming a volunteer with this organization was very competitive. Yet, regardless of their strong connection with volunteers and my background with the organization, when I presented my idea to my superiors they had to take time to think about it.

When they did get back to me, they informed me that absolutely no research can be conducted on grounds unless I type up a formal proposal. I really was not surprised with this request, but I realized that it was

just another time-consuming hoop that I would have to jump through to reach the goal. I took the guidelines that they provided me on what the organization requires in their proposals and went to work. Once completed, my proposal explained how I hoped to bring selected students to the grounds so that they can assist me in providing classes for the visitors or they can do informal animal interpretations (or informal speeches) for the visitors (See Appendix B). These activities would benefit the community in two ways, by helping to educate the community and by building strong leadership skills among community members.

I remembered visiting this same organization when I was a teenager and explaining to my family about some of the different animals. Other visitors would hear me talking and start asking questions, which I was able to answer because I had done a lot of research on these particular animals. I came to find out later that the other visitors thought that I was working there and did not realize that I was just another visitor with my family. I felt that this experience was very beneficial

for me by providing me an opportunity to build public speaking skills and by developing a sense of pride and accomplishment for what I had just done. Possibly this experience led me to work for this organization many years later. I wanted to provide my students with this opportunity as well.

I felt that these would be wonderful educational opportunities for my students, however I had already run into quite a few road blocks and there were still more to come. I found it relatively easy to find students interested in participating in the project to the ESL classes. I sent out permission slips (See Appendix C) and talked to parents about our plans. I had quite a few parents who were very excited about the program. I had a more difficult time finding students for the second project.

These organizations did not always connect to my classes. I often did not speak to students at school about animals or science issues. I was placed in two beginning Spanish classes and three Pacific Rim History classes. In order to find students with a strong

interest in animals or interested in participating in my program, I found it necessary to turn to the school's life science teacher.

I was hoping to present the opportunity to her classes allowing everyone the opportunity to participate, the way I did in the Spanish classes, but she preferred to just single out a handful of students. These students were also given permission slips intended to explain the project and to get an idea of who is interested in participating and has their parents' permission (See Appendix D). When this teacher chose the students to participate, they happened to be students that I did not know and she never provided me with a list of names of students that were interested. She and I had a difficult time coordinating our efforts.

Like many others, this teacher was not extremely supportive of my plan from the beginning. Early in the year I went to the principal of our school with my proposal for my thesis research. I told him that I was interested in setting up a couple service learning projects and he told me "that's a great idea." However,

he never really seemed to have the time to support my efforts - granted he is a busy man.

I found it very difficult to get information about the necessary school district forms that needed to be sent home for parent permission of student participation of these projects. In addition, I was not informed that I needed a special type of driver's license to transport children to and from the service site until February. I attended the first class available after receiving this information, but I still did not receive my Type II driver's license until the beginning of March.

When I received my license I noticed that the expiration date on the card was incorrect. The card had expired before I even received it. Therefore, I contacted the transportation department and they agreed to reissue me a new card. However, by the time I received the new card in the middle of April, I only had a few weeks before school was out for the year. This did not allow me much time to include many students in the service projects. Furthermore, we were warned on the night that we took the class for the Type II license

that driving students in your personal vehicle is not safe no matter whether you have a Type II license or not.

The teacher claimed that the students are most likely not going to be covered under your insurance policy. This idea scared me and I was unable to gain access to a district vehicle, being that I am not a district employee. I kept running into one hurdle after another, until suddenly my time ran out. As I looked back on my attempts throughout the year, I realized that mine was a perfect example of everything that can and will go wrong in preparing a service learning project.

Summary

I found my experience with preparing service learning projects to be extremely difficult. Each decision I made seemed to lead me to another dead end. I was very disappointed to come to the end of the school year without getting my service projects off the ground. Yet, all these challenges helped to prepare me for working with service learning in the future. Next time around I will know first hand where to expect the

hurdles and I will have many ideas on how to get around them. I see this as being a very positive outcome of my service learning projects, because I do intend to attempt service learning again. I am more convinced now than ever of the benefits that service learning can have.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS

I went into this inquiry with the frame of mind that service learning would be a powerful tool to teach students morals, develop character, and prepare them to be active participants in the community surrounding them. While I still believe this to be true, my inquiry has shown me that it is not quite that simple. This chapter will focus on my mistakes and hopes for future implementation of service learning with my students, as well as how this inquiry has made me a better teacher and what other can learn from my experiences.

I would be the first person to admit that my inquiry had not gone as well as I would have liked. I strongly believe that service learning can be very beneficial to students, schools and communities if the projects are well planned out. The job of the teacher is to be the facilitator of growth within the students. Though I saw this in a few activities throughout the school year, it seemed as though many of the teachers could not seem to agree on a definition for service

learning. It was evident to me that in order for service learning to be more successful, the teachers needed to become more educated on the pedagogy. They need to become aware of the importance of the different elements, which I found to be largely overlooked in many cases. I saw this most often within the reflections presented by the students on their service projects.

As I found in my research, the reflection is a required element in service learning. Reflection is vital in defining the difference between service learning and community service, allowing the student to think about what was experienced and grow from it. I was amazed with the data on service projects within my school. Why were there so many reflections absent from students when the paperwork handed out by the service learning coordinator clearly stated the importance of reflection? It seemed to me that either the teachers did not concern themselves with reflections or were not skilled in teaching students to reflect.

While reflection was an important element in the implementation of service learning, educators would also

need to learn to integrate subjects. Service learning requires that the project is integrated into the curriculums of as many subjects as possible. This practice helps the students draw connections between what is learned in each of their classes. Integration would further require collaboration among teachers, as well as community partners, students and families. While creating my service learning projects, I ran into many difficulties, which I feel could have been avoided.

First of all, when trying to set up my programs I did not find a lot of support. Although I found many students and parents interested in the service program connected with my Spanish classes, I felt as though I was trying to take on an overwhelming task - alone. I believe that in order for service learning to be most effective, the teachers need to work together to build a support system. In my experience, many educators look at service learning as a time consuming pedagogy that takes valuable time from other practices, which are much easier to implement. However, I would argue that through collaboration among teachers, the load would not

seem so heavy for each person and the practice of teaching through service learning becomes more bearable for each person involved.

Secondly, a lot of time was spent trying to prepare paperwork while organizing my programs. This paperwork included writing up proposals for the projects, writing up letters to be sent home with the students and organizing the replies to these letters, going through the motions to prepare for adequate funding and transportation for the program. On top of each of these things, the coordinator needs to allow time to deal with problems or set backs that result from these paperwork issues. In my experience each of these things presented another hurdle to face as I was striving to deal with other issues presented in the classroom. This made it necessary to juggle my time between preparing for classes and preparing service (in addition to all the additional responsibilities in my life), making it quite clear why many educators chose not to get involved with service learning. However, this experience also strongly

validated the necessity to build a support system among educators.

In addition, I have determined that the preparation of service learning projects needs to start long before trying to implement the program. I was aware, while organizing my projects, that I was quickly running out of time to put them into action. This awareness added to the stress of trying to get everything set up. As a result, I found it very difficult to organize my projects. However, the projects that I chose were very aggressive, perhaps they could have been more successful if I would have started with smaller projects - as a beginner. I probably should not try to change the world in one day. Yet, I believe that in order for the students to have powerful understandings about their experiences, the experiences themselves must be challenging, such as community problems. Once the students learn that they can do something about these problems, they will be completely filled with a new sense of pride and self-esteem.

As part of the paperwork organized while preparing for a service learning project, cooperating teacher(s) need to develop a list of questions that will direct the study and make it meaningful. In addition, a service learning project must be linked to specific learning outcomes. These only add to the amount of paperwork, which I feel need to be completed prior to implementing the program.

It is necessary that coordinating teacher(s) allow the schools, communities, and students to be involved in developing the service projects. I believe this helps to provide for a sense of ownership among each group. If these groups feel as though their ideas are valued in this development they will be more likely to continually support the program. I tried using this practice while developing my projects.

The organization preparing to work with my Spanish classes was very open to the idea and willing to work with me to create a curriculum. However, the other organization did not seem to understand the importance of service learning and was so short handed that there

was nobody available to help coordinate the program. Yet, being an employee of that organization I suppose I would have been the representative. Perhaps this is partially why I felt as though I was carrying the load for multiple people.

Without using this practice, schools can be criticized for using the community as a classroom. Without including the community in the decision making, the coordinator(s) may lose focus of their goals. Service learning is supposed to address real community needs. Without the input of the community, these programs can just become acts of charity rather than attempts to solve community problems at the root. This is what I observed in many of the service activities observed during my inquiry.

Even though my experience did not turn out as I had imagined it would, I feel as though it was very valuable. I learned just how important the practice of service learning is and how it benefits the students. At the same time I learned the importance of each of the elements and I learned the hard way that the coordinator

can not skip over these elements (or even try to use a quick version), because it just seemed to cause difficulties. It is necessary to take your time and carefully work through each of the elements allowing for reflection and discussion for students to learn the lessons that had been previously planned out by the coordinator(s).

I found this pedagogy requires a tremendous amount of preparation, but in the end it could be very valuable to the students, school, community, and families. The many potential benefits of using service learning made all the difficulties worthwhile to endure. Though I did not reach my goal this year I know that I have much more experience in implementing service learning and I plan to build on this experience and acquired knowledge as I move forward and prepare for my next service project.

I would love to have a second chance at completing what I started this past year. By starting earlier in the school year, and because I understand better the steps that must be taken to prepare for the projects, I

have no doubt that my students would benefit greatly from the programs that we finish developing.

Despite my difficulties in preparing service learning projects, I believe that they can be extremely beneficial to other teachers and their students as well. For this reason, I would hope that more educators work to overcome these difficulties to build a support system for service learning in order to benefit their students. However, I also feel that service learning can be beneficial for the cooperating teacher as well. The teacher will benefit by developing collaboration, integration, diversity awareness, leadership, and reflection skills.

The teachers develop collaboration and integration skills as they work together to plan and prepare service learning projects. In addition to collaborating with other teachers to integrate the students' lessons, the teachers must also work to collaborate with students, families, and community organizations. These lessons would then be transferred to the students.

The teachers can develop diversity awareness by developing projects where the students will work with a culture slightly different from their own, this could mean ethnically, economically, by age, or by physical ability. Again, the students would benefit from these experiences as well.

The teachers will develop leadership skills as they collaborate with community organizations. This is something outside of the expected role of the educator, but it can be very beneficial for everyone involved. As the students, unlike their peers, become more involved in the community, they too will develop leadership skills.

Last but not least, the teachers will develop reflective skills. Teachers are often not skilled in facilitating reflective thinking, and students are not skilled in practicing it. For this reason, it is necessary for the teachers to develop this skill in order that the project reaches its fullest potential. As a result, the students will also develop this skill.

Service learning can be an invaluable tool to help students understand the complex issues of their community. In addition, it can help them build confidence in their ability to do something about these issues. They are no longer "just a kid," they have become a productive citizen trying to help make our society a better place. In the process they are learning new skills and developing new interests. Most of all, they are becoming empowered with the understanding that they can make a difference in their community. For this reason I believe that service learning is a very valuable tool that educators should strive to implement as they work to overcome the obstacles.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What grade are you in?
3. Where did you do your service project(s)?
4. How many hours were involved?
5. What did you do/see during your service project?
6. How did you feel about participating in this activity?
7. What do you like about volunteering or participating in the community?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your project?

APPENDIX B

Proposal

Section One: Name and Title of Principle Investigator

Natasha Yanez
Education Service Aide at _____

Section Two: Purpose of the Research

My research project will work to address how service-learning affects a student's character. Many of the students that will be involved have done research projects, which focus on endangered species. These students will be prepared to talk about conservation, as well as habitats and behaviors. One of the ___'s goals is to educate the community about animals and conservation. What better way to send the messages than to empower our younger generation with the task.

Section Three: Methodology

Through a series of observations, field notes, and interviews I will attempt to determine the effects of service on the students, the organization, and the community involved.

Section Four: Time Line

Start Date – March 1 or ASAP

Completion Date – around mid June (Thesis will be written up by August)

I plan to bring students to the zoo two to four at a time on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays to ...

- accompany me in doing interpretations about the animals that they have researched in front of the animals' exhibit.
- work in the education building to introduce visitors to artifacts or running games or craft projects with visiting children. Here, they may also be able to share stories that they have written about their endangered species.
- accompany me in running the sea snoozes.

Section Five: Budget

As an employee of the ____, I would be willing to do the set up and clean up of my students on my own time. However, it may be nice to have access to art supplies while in the education building – clay, paper, glitter, glue, etc.

Section Six: Statements by the Researcher

- I will be willing to submit a draft of my thesis to the Research Committee prior to submission of the paper.
 - I will be willing to submit a copy of the final version of my work to the Research Committee.
 - I will adhere to the ____'s policy on authorship and ownership of data.
- March 3, 2002

APPENDIX C

Letter for Participation in ESL Classes

Hola!!!

March 11, 2002

My name is Senora Yanez. I am currently a student teacher at _____ Junior High, working towards a Master's Degree in Education. Thanks to your children I have had a very pleasant experience so far. I am very excited about the opportunity to take over in many classrooms as the primary educator, and I hope that your children are equally enthusiastic. I am writing this note to present a wonderfully educational opportunity that I will be offering the Spanish students at _____, both those in my classes as well as those in Mrs. _____'s.

I have been working this past year with a non-profit organization in Tacoma called _____ (literally translated as _____). It is an organization, which helps the Spanish speaking population in the area adjust to the language and cultural needs of our society. I am looking for students to help out in the English as a Second Language classes. This opportunity could be positive for both our students at _____ who are working so hard to learn the Spanish, as well as the students at _____ who are working to learn the English. This program is part of my thesis project for Pacific Lutheran University, which addresses character education and how service learning affects the students' character. This form of education can have lasting effects as the students work within their community to address a variety of important societal issues, and learn through doing service for others.

I will be setting up a schedule for students to join me in the classroom at _____. At this point, I plan to be going to _____ on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The class runs from 6:00 to 8:00. I will be scheduling two to four students at a time. I will also be able to provide transportation to and from the class, unless you choose to provide your own transportation, which is great as well. I can provide a map. It is not necessary for the students to make a long-term commitment as we understand that they have other responsibilities to tend to. However, if they so choose, we may be able to set up a more "regular" schedule. (A one-time deal is O.K. too. It's the experience that counts!)

I hope that you will seriously consider this opportunity for your child. It gives them an opportunity to give back to the community – a very powerful message to send to our youth. If you have any questions about this opportunity, please call me at _____ before or after school, or between 11:00 – 12:15 at 841-8729. You may also reach me at home at 471-3510. Hope to hear from you soon! In order to allow your child to participate I must have a signed permission slip.

Thank you! - Mrs. Natasha Yanez

I give my child _____ permission to participate in the service learning program with Mrs. Yanez.

- I understand that this program will be used as research for Mrs. Yanez' Master's thesis and give my permission to have my child's experience used as part of the data for this thesis.
- I understand, also, that this experience may also include photographs that may be taken of my child, to be used either for the thesis or for Mrs. Yanez' professional portfolio.
- In addition, I prefer ...
 - to provide my child's transportation.
 - Or
 - to have my child ride with Mrs. Yanez.

Signed –

APPENDIX D

Letter for Participation in Animal Interpretations

Hello!!!

March 11, 2002

My name is Mrs. Yanez. I am currently a student teacher at _____ Junior High, working towards a Master's Degree in Education. Thanks to your children I have had a very pleasant experience so far, and I am very excited about the opportunity to take over in many classrooms as the primary educator. I am writing this note to present a wonderfully educational opportunity that I will be offering _____ students who are interested in working with animals or sharing their knowledge of animals with other people.

In addition to my student teaching at _____, I work part time in the Education Department at _____. I am looking for students who would be interested in spending time at the ____, talking with visitors about the animals, sharing artifacts, and possibly even opening up a classroom where they can help younger children make art projects related to the animals that they speak about. This opportunity could be positive for both our students at _____ who are so passionate about what they have learned about animals, as well as for the community, and those people who visit the _____. This program is part of my thesis project for Pacific Lutheran University, which addresses character education and how service learning affects the students' character. This form of education can have lasting effects as the students work within their community to address a variety of important societal issues, and learn through doing service for others.

I will be setting up a schedule for students to join me at _____. At this point, I plan to be going to _____ on Wednesday afternoons and weekends. I will be scheduling two to four students at a time. I will also be able to provide transportation to and from the ____, unless you choose to provide your own transportation, which is great as well. I can provide a map. It is not necessary for the students to make a long-term commitment as we understand that they have other responsibilities to tend to. However, if they so choose, we may be able to set up a more "regular" schedule. (A one-time deal is O.K. too. It's the experience that counts!)

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Thank you! - Mrs. Natasha Yanez

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- I understand, also, that this experience may also include photographs that may be taken of my child, to be used either for the thesis or for Mrs. Yanez' professional portfolio.
- In addition, I prefer ...
 - to provide my child's transportation.
 - Or
 - to have my child ride with Mrs. Yanez.

Signed –
