

G2G

A report from



Growing to Greatness 2010

THE STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING



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Service-Learning by the Numbers

<p>\$37.5 million Annual federal funding for Learn and Serve America programs, 2007¹</p> <p>1.1 million Number of students participating in Learn and Serve service-learning programs, 2007¹</p> <p>\$340 million Funding request for Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), 2007²</p> <p>458,000 Number of high school students serving as cadets in Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTCs³</p> <p>75 Percentage of 17 to 24-year olds unable to enlist in the United States military (mainly due to failure to graduate from high school, a criminal record, or health issues)⁴</p> <p>34 Percentage of youth who say they would fight in a war "under no conditions"⁵</p> <p>37 Percentage of youth who say they will volunteer for a year to serve their country in something like AmeriCorps or Peace Corps⁵</p> <p>20 Percentage of schools in low-income areas that offer service-learning⁶</p> <p>27 Percentage of schools not in low-income areas that offer service-learning⁶</p> <p>41 Percentage of low-income 6- to 17-year-olds who report having opportunities to help others⁷</p> <p>65 Percentage of high-income 6- to 17-year-olds who report having opportunities to help others⁷</p>	<p>20 Percentage of boys reported by their parents to be engaged in school⁷</p> <p>39 Percentage of girls reported by their parents to be engaged in school⁷</p> <p>50 Percentage of students who report that they are engaged in school⁸</p> <p>47 Percentage of high school dropouts who say they left school because classes were not interesting⁹</p> <p>64 Percentage of students who say that service-learning could have a big effect on keeping students in school⁹</p> <p>83 Percentage of students saying they'd enroll in service-learning if their school offered it⁹</p>	<p>20 Percentage of elementary schools that offer service-learning⁶</p> <p>35 Percentage of secondary schools that offer service-learning⁶</p> <p>24 Percentage of U.S. schools that offer service-learning⁶</p> <p>68 Percentage of U.S. schools that offer community service⁶</p> <p>52 Percentage of social studies programs that report having service-learning⁶</p> <p>42 Percentage of science programs that report having service-learning⁶</p> <p>34 Percentage of language arts programs that report having service-learning⁶</p> <p>15 Percentage of math programs that report having service-learning⁶</p>
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1 Learn and Serve America. (2008). Learn and Serve fact sheet. Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service. www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/factsheet_Isa.pdf.

2 Office of the Secretary of Defense (February 2006). Operation and maintenance overview fiscal year (FY) 2007 budget estimates. www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2007/fy2007_overview.pdf.

3 Websites of the Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTC.

4 Mission: Readiness. (2009). Ready, willing, and unable to serve. Washington, DC: Mission: Readiness.

5 Girl Scout Research Institute (2010). Good intentions: The beliefs and values of teens and tweens. New York, NY: Girl Scouts of the USA.

6 Spring, K., Grimm, R., & Dietz, N. (2009) Community service and service-learning in America's schools, 2008." *Growing to Greatness 2009*. St. Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council.

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Growing to Greatness 2010

THE STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

A report from the National Youth Leadership Council

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First-grade students at St. Thomas Day School in New Haven, Conn., kick off the school year with jazz improvisation for their school community, reflective of the role of the arts and service-learning in their curriculum. The school's mission is "to educate children broadly by cultivating intelligence while engaging heart and spirit." The school seeks to motivate children of diverse races, creeds, and backgrounds to become independent thinkers who appreciate, understand, and serve others.

Unless otherwise noted, photographs throughout are courtesy of Bruce Silcox.



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About NYLC

The National Youth Leadership Council has been at the helm of advancing service-learning and supporting its practitioners—young people and adults—for more than 25 years. Whether developing model programs, convening practitioners, training, publishing curricula and research, or advancing legislation, NYLC is at the center of quality service-learning practice.

National Service-Learning Conference

Since 1989, NYLC has convened youth and adults interested in service-learning, drawing thousands of participants from across the United States and more than 30 other countries. Over three days, in activities range from interactive workshops and service-learning projects to dynamic keynote presentations to the annual Gathering of Elders.

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Quality Service-Learning Practice

NYLC has led the national effort to define quality service-learning practice. A highlight of this work is the release of the evidence-based K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice, eight attributes of effective service-learning that now drive research and training efforts nationally and internationally. Our publications, research, youth initiatives, urban initiatives, public policy efforts, and international leadership all focus on helping young people gain important academic knowledge and skills while they become active in their communities as partners, leaders, and advocates.

Generator School Network

This national service-learning professional development community links teachers and administrators interested in improving their service-learning practice. Visit gsn.nylc.org to join and connect with other educators, share your experiences with service-learning projects, download curricular resources, participate in professional development activities, and improve student and community outcomes.

Visit www.nylc.org to learn more.

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Special thanks go out to Harris Interactive and Suzanne Martin of Martin Research,

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Most of all, we owe a debt of gratitude to the State Farm Companies Foundation for continued support of Growing to Greatness.

Susan Root, Ph.D.
Research Director
National Youth Leadership Council



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Dear Reader,

Welcome to *Growing to Greatness 2010*, an annual report on the state of service-learning from the National Youth Leadership Council. State Farm Companies Foundation has proudly supported NYLC's efforts to document the current state of service-learning research, policy, and practice since 2003. *Growing to Greatness* remains an essential resource for anyone interested in high-quality service-learning.

Ensuring an excellent education for all our children is one of our core values. The educational opportunities we provide students must align with what the research tells us about the characteristics and needs of learners, and service-learning goes to the heart of what we know about student needs. That's why State Farm works to seed and sustain service-learning initiatives nation-

wide. Service-learning, as a teaching strategy, engages young people and often provides the relevance that some do not find in a standard classroom-based curriculum.

We need to fundamentally change how we educate our young people and help them be ready for the challenges of a global world. We believe that service-learning, with its emphasis on the best of learning and the best of what we believe about community—a focus on achievement, service, collaboration, teamwork, and excellence—can help young people rise to the challenge. It can help young people apply their knowledge, hone their skills, and become more valued members of their communities throughout their lives. It can also inspire community members to reengage with schools in meaningful ways.

We are proud to partner again with NYLC and the many service-learning teachers, administrators, community educators, researchers, and students who are willing to share their work to improve the quality of service-learning and the opportunities available to all young people. We hope you find ideas in here to strengthen your practice, inspire new projects, and engage young people in the important task of learning.

Sincerely,

Kathy Payne
Senior Director – Education Leadership
State Farm Insurance



Introduction

Reclaiming the Learning in Service-Learning

JAMES C. KIELSMEIER

National Youth Leadership Council

NYLC's founder Jim Kielsmeier has committed his life to transforming the roles of young people in society—building youth-adult partnerships that help young people grow from recipients of information and resources to valuable, contributing members of a democratic society. Jim currently serves as co-chair of Service-Learning United, a national policy group. He has advised the Obama and Clinton administrations and three Minnesota governors, helped write state and federal service-learning legislation, and testified before the Minnesota House and Senate as well as the U.S. House of Representatives. He has written numerous articles, coauthored two books, and presented on youth and service issues nationally and internationally.

Service-learning has been used to describe a wide range of activities that involve some mix of students and contribution to community. Skeptics denounce service-learning as an add-on burden that strays from schools' core mission to educate, while others point to the academic benefits of this way of teaching and learning. While the cooperative development of service-learning has been a great strength in building a wide movement, the path forward for service-learning must bring clarity and balance.

The hyphen in service-learning is symbolic of the equal relationship between the twin concepts that form this powerful idea: carefully tying academic objectives to meaningful service enriches both student learning and communities. To refresh and realize the compelling vision for service-learning we must temper this balance by deepening the connections to relevant and vital learning while continuing to expand practice. With a supportive public policy, a well-developed research base, and an expanding set of tools and resources, tremendous opportunity for growth exists. When young people bring the power of their hearts, minds, and hands to

bear on the pressing issues in their world, the result is authentic learning, engaged students and community members, and stronger communities.

Despite the thousands of strong examples of service-learning that take place in schools across the United States, it hasn't captured the imaginations of schools and the public in the way that those of us who are its strongest advocates envision. As we discussed in depth in last year's edition of *Growing to Greatness*, the percentage of schools engaged in the pedagogy of service-learning has fallen to 24 percent, while the number of schools

Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S FEBRUARY 4, 1968, SERMON AT THE EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH IN ATLANTA

engaging students in community service has continued a slow but steady rise to 68 percent.

As service-learning supporters demonstrate in their communities every year through their own activities, service is important. Under the leadership of Barack and Michelle Obama, the White House has raised national service up as a responsibility of citizenship. Within President Obama's first 100 days in office, Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, with broad support from Republicans and Democrats alike.

This act has much for us to celebrate: It calls for high-quality service-learning practice and curriculum that is rooted in evidence-based standards and encourages ongoing professional development. A new Summer

of Service program for middle and high school students offers educational benefits for young people who participate. The law also creates new Youth Engagement Zones for school and community programs in neighborhoods with the most need, and funds an extensive longitudinal study on the impact of service-learning on achievement.

Unfortunately, federal funding for service-learning through Learn and Serve America has remained flat and, in real terms, declined over the past decade. Additionally, Learn and Serve America's focus has leaned strongly toward the service and volunteering side of the service-learning equation, with few connections to the U.S. Department of Education.

For service-learning to advance it must extend its platform beyond valued relationships with Learn and Serve and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

As I proposed in 2009 at the National Service-Learning Conference in Nashville, the following steps would solidify the movement and bring service-learning to its rightful place in the education agenda. The timing is of particular interest as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is being considered for reauthorization:

- **Remember that quality matters.** Service-learning will not see the outcomes we

claim for students without fidelity to best practice standards. In Obama's service agenda, he cites the need to "develop national guidelines for service-learning and give schools better tools both to develop programs and to document student experience." The *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice* published in 2008 by NYLC helps meet this need.

- **Support service-learning professional development and teacher education.** Ongoing, systemic professional development is key to successful classroom and school reform, as well as increased student achievement. Teacher preparation must include a focus on high quality service-learning practices. NYLC's Generator School Network offers such access to online and face-to-face professional learning communities that enrich teaching.
- **Push for accountability, outcomes, and evidence.** President Obama has called for measurable results in education. Service-learning can and should demonstrate credible principles and practices through evaluation. Higher education can be our partner on this front. A system for measuring youth contributions must be developed as a counterpoint to the usual deficiency-oriented measurement systems. A partner-

ship between NYLC, the University of Minnesota, and Search Institute is evolving to measure youth contributions, and we need the collective help of the movement.

- **Engage the disengaged.** Service-learning is a strategy for engaged learning that has proven successful among the most disengaged students and least successful schools, particularly those in urban communities. Service-learning can play a significant role in school improvement if infused and advanced in these communities. NYLC’s Generator School Network is purposely constructed around a structure of urban schools to offer resources for high-quality practice.
- **Break through “glass floors” and “silos.”** The belief that service-learning is *not* appropriate for younger students must change. The fact that students in low-

income schools are offered fewer opportunities for service-learning ignores unique benefits of this pedagogy and fails a generation of students. And service projects that disregard the genuine needs and desires of service recipients and other partners risk dividing rather than uniting school and community. Service-learning is a practice for all ages in all disciplines. We must forge new connections among nonformal education, youth development groups, and higher education, as we strengthen our partnerships with community education and charter schools.

- **Cross the federal service/education divide.** We must make every effort to link the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service in shared goals that enhance quality teaching and learning through

What these students come to discover through service is that by befriending a senior citizen, or helping the homeless, or easing the suffering of others, they can find a sense of purpose and renew their commitment to this country that we love. . . . Because we must prepare our young Americans to grow into active citizens, this bill makes new investments in service-learning.

Key Assumptions and Principles for the Growing to Greatness Initiative

- A major structural shift in human development has occurred and will continue, extending the period between childhood dependency and full adult responsibility.
- Transition into adulthood has become particularly problematic for young people and their communities, as reflected in extensive measurement surveys.
- Nearly all systematic collection of information on adolescents measures their deficits, not their positive participation in society.
- Most resources directed at this age group support traditional education, employment, and entertainment—with mixed results.
- Emerging approaches that authentically engage young people as citizens contributing to communities—especially when linked with well-designed learning and youth development content—are a credible structural response to issues of adolescent dissonance and community decline.
- The Growing to Greatness project is a systematic strategy for measuring engagement of young people in service-learning and youth development programs and defining the passage to adulthood as a period of engaged citizenship and active learning.

service-learning. Other departments such as Agriculture, the Interior, and Homeland Security should consider establishing youth engagement offices.

In short, the federal legislation is just the beginning. Our goal should be to reach every student, every year—from kindergarten through college—with opportunities for service-learning. This universal vision calls because, at heart, service-learning that connects real learning to meaningful contributions from students is simply good teaching.

With these steps in mind, *Growing to Greatness* this year gathers thinking on two themes: teacher quality and breaking down barriers.

Improving Teacher Quality

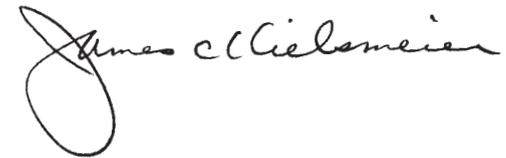
We know that teacher quality is among the strongest predictors of student success, and so we need to help teachers doing service-learning raise the level of their practice. We look at professional development for educators at every level of practice: from teacher candidates in our schools of education, to experienced teachers in schools looking to improve their practice, to administrators who want to encourage service-learning across their schools and districts.

Breaking Down Barriers

The other key to reaching our goal is moving beyond the barriers that exclude students from opportunities to engage in service-learning. Whether age, socioeconomic status, family situations, or other perceived obstacles prevent schools from doing service-learning, we collect the latest thinking on methods to expand partnerships and participation. Whether it is through national service as a gateway for low-income individuals to make educational gains, the potential of parents as community partners for schools, or reorienting our perceptions of youth contribution, we seek to inspire creative practices that build new bridges.

This is the moment to strengthen the L in service-learning. Our message should be that service-learning is a way of teaching and learning across the disciplines that, if done well, will improve education at all levels for all children.

The real turning point for the service-learning movement and education reform is in our collective hands, and the time to act is now.



We know the difference this kind of learning makes. We all know. We've seen it. We know that students become more engaged in what they're learning and more aware of the world around them. We know that their writing and critical thinking skills improve, and so do their GPAs.

—MICHELLE OBAMA SPEAKING ON SERVICE-LEARNING AND NATIONAL SERVICE TO FLORIDA CAMPUS COMPACT;
OCTOBER 15, 2009



The Role of Professional Community for Teachers in Service-Learning Programs

KAREN SEASHORE

University of Minnesota

Karen Seashore is a professor in the department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Her main area of research interest and expertise includes improvement in K-12 leadership and policy over the last 30 years, particularly in urban secondary schools.

When the editors of *Growing to Greatness* asked if I would be willing to write a short article illustrating the connections between service-learning and teacher-learning. I quickly agreed because the topic seemed important.¹ A few weeks later, I panicked: *How in the world, I thought, would I be able to develop a clear story that linked my research on teacher development with a service-learning agenda, which typically focuses on providing students with experiential learning opportunities that intentionally foster academic growth and civic engagement?*

The storyline leapt out at me as I belatedly watched the PBS series on John and Abigail Adams. The series depicts the second president of the United States as a man who constantly struggled with his growing sense of commitment to the common good, with his willfulness and the conviction that he knew the “right way” to do things, and with his deep engagement with other fine minds who influenced his personal and intellectual development. In the series, we see Adams as a man whose life exemplified service informed by learning. While many of Adams’ beliefs and finest ideas came from within and through self-reflection, they were

honed in discussion with his peers, including the likes of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. In contrast, when Adams plunged into settings where opportunities for collaborative thought were limited and politics demanded obvious winners and losers, he became retentive and irritable. In other words, he served best when he was in community.

What struck me most about Adams was that he (and the other Founding Fathers portrayed in the series) demonstrated the intense individualism that we know as a fundamental part of the American value system

tempered by a strong connection to peers. This connection was not only intellectually stimulating but personally supportive. The Adams biography reinforces what we have known for a long time about adult learning—namely that adults learn by processing their experience in groups, even though individual reflection is required for personal development (Krupp, 1983). This is the same assumption underlying the distinction we make between community service and service-learning. Service alone may provide services and assistance to the community, and for some students it is sufficient to create the inner drive for civic engagement over a lifetime. But, as evaluations of service-learning have shown, community service experience alone does not necessarily lead to academic learning outcomes, while effectively implemented service-learning, with its emphasis on academically grounded group problem-solving, can (Billig, 2000; Furco, 2002).

While we realize the value inherent in service-learning programs, we also know through a variety of studies that quality programs that fuse experience and academics are often temporary features of the institutional landscape (Gray, Ondaatje, Fricker, & Geschwind, 2000; Melchior, 1998). In other words, service-learning produces the student outcomes that we want in both K-12 and higher education but is typically pushed to

the side when new priorities become apparent (Spring, Grimm, & Dietz, 2008). This was brought home to me this summer when I was teaching a course in policy analysis to a group of doctoral students who work in international schools. Two of the students—each of whom already had community service and service-learning requirements in their school settings—chose to focus on service-learning policies. The issues limiting their schools were a lack of interest and inadequate knowledge of standards of best service-learning practice. Implementation was weak, few teachers were involved, and parents, students, and faculty did not widely share an understanding of the value of service-learning.

This limited personal observation is corroborated by the 2008 study commissioned by the National Corporation for National and Community Service. The study found that interest in community service remains strong in schools, yet there is a decline in the number of schools that integrate experience into the academic curriculum (Spring, Grimm, & Dietz, 2008). In other words, although we have had several decades of accumulating knowledge about the value of high-quality service-learning, we fall short in implementing the fundamental principles. This is where I find a strong connection between the potential of professional community and service-learning.

What Is Professional Community?

The unremitting concentration on structural and curriculum reform in education has been joined in recent years by a new emphasis on improving the social organization of schools. Buoyed by increasing evidence that leadership and school climate have a significant effect on student achievement (over and above the curriculum and the contributions of individual student characteristics), researchers are paying more attention to how adults work together to create effective learning environments in schools. One of the most promising approaches is what's known as professional community, largely because it builds on the natural strengths of schools and educators and requires a rearrangement of existing resources rather than an infusion of a lot of new money.

The idea of professional community is an effort to integrate two previously distinct concepts: professionalism (which is based on specialized knowledge and a focus on serving client needs) and community (which is based on caring, support, and mutual responsibility within a group). There is substantial agreement about the core characteristics of a professional community (Roy & Hord, 2006). First, professional learning communities, or PLCs, involve *collective work*—teams and, in smaller schools, the whole staff—in which

Teachers need both their own individual experience and reflection, but they also need others to arrive at the best thinking about what to do next.

leadership and responsibility for student learning is widely shared. The work of groups of teachers (and administrators) *focuses on reflective inquiry and learning*, with an explicit emphasis on how knowledge *improves student learning*. While there is room for diversity of opinions, there is a core of *shared values and norms* that influence how daily decisions are made in halls and classrooms. Sharing involves the development of *common practices and feedback* on instructional strengths and weaknesses. Educators agree that for these characteristics to persist, schools must address the conditions that support or impede the work of PLCs, including the use of time, the use of rewards, and the development of a positive culture.

For most teachers, this sounds like heaven on earth. Who wouldn't want to come to work every day in a school that had such coherency and direction? But schools exist for a larger goal than adult job satisfaction, and one of the main reasons that education professionals value professional community is because it focuses teachers' collective attention on the links between their own practice

and student learning. This pays off in the hard currency of student test results: Teachers' experience of professional community has been shown in several well-designed studies to be associated with improved instruction and student learning (Langer, 2000; Louis & Marks, 1998; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). I have increasingly come to see professional community as a place where teachers can process and absorb new ideas and exchange fruitful lessons from their classrooms. It is the crucible in which teacher leadership emerges. Like John Adams, teachers need both their own individual experience and reflection, but they also need others to arrive at the best thinking about what to do next.

Professional Community and Service-Learning: What Do They Have in Common?

Over the past decade, a growing consensus about the elements of service-learning that are most important has emerged and is crystallized in the National Youth Leadership Council's K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice, released in 2008. What

is striking about the emerging consensus in the service-learning literature is the degree to which core principles and elements are similar to those identified in professional community literature. Both emphasize:

- The importance of clarifying and talking about common *values*, while acknowledging that there will be individual differences.
- That learning must involve both content/curriculum/formal knowledge and experience. Neither by itself will be sufficient to produce change.
- The role of reflection and voice: No single person is privileged as “the leader,” and an environment to question, brainstorm, and express emotional and intellectual responses is encouraged.
- The importance of identifying authentic problems and needs—in the community or the classroom—rather than accepting a charge or a task delegated by an “authority.” Discovering problems is part of the process.
- The importance of honest conversations and feedback and of providing a safe environment for constructive criticism, under the assumption that we all learn best from “small failures.”²

Service-learning and professional community also share less desirable characteristics. One of the ongoing issues facing both professional community and service learning programs is that they often fail to find a stable home within a school or district. In the case of service-learning, it appears that a small minority of districts have a well-established policy that promotes the integration of service and academic learning. Accountability pressures and a focus on “results” may lead administrators and teachers to view service-learning, like art education or recess, as expendable. Time for professional communities to meet may fall to the wayside if districts are required to cut costs.

Impermanent leadership and a failure to establish supportive infrastructure may also contribute to the transience of both professional community and service-learning programs. A single “champion” is often responsible for launching service-learning, arranging for placements and proselytizing the approach among colleagues, administrators, and parents. If that person leaves or burns out and no supportive policy or operational activities have been put in place, service-learning programs may disappear. Existing professional communities are often disrupted when a new administrator arrives and changes school priorities and committee structures.

Another common problem is weak adjudication of competing interests, often around scheduling. An effective service-learning activity may demand that students be available during times when other teachers want them in class, and authentic service-learning doesn’t fit well with the school schedule of quarters or semesters. Scheduling is also frequently regarded as the single greatest impediment to the development of strong professional communities in high schools, where complex student schedules make it difficult for teachers, who need to work around curriculum or pedagogy to meet regularly during the school day for extended periods of time.

Many teachers may be intrigued by the idea of service-learning but don’t know how to incorporate it into their classes, or they do so inauthentically, providing weak connections between academic content and experience. Similarly, I recently interviewed the director of professional development in a large city, who confessed that professional community initiatives were proving more difficult to implement than he had expected. He said, “We thought that teachers already knew how to work together around curriculum. They don’t.”

How Does Professional Community Support Service-Learning?

Differences exist between a high-quality service-learning program and an outstanding professional community. Professional communities are, in one way or another, a permanent feature of a school’s culture: Individuals may come and go, but the processes and expectations for participation are relatively constant. Service-learning activities in a school are, on the other hand, time-bound experiences for the students, who pass through in cohorts. Service-learning, because it is a formal component of the curriculum, requires structured adult guidance and support, no matter how much initiative is given to students to help shape their own experiences. Professional communities, in contrast,



have a more organic quality, and their focus and energy may vary over time. Professional communities have permeable boundaries—teachers may belong to one that is centered in their department, another that focuses on a project or initiative, and a third that involves teachers from multiple schools or settings. Service-learning needs to have clear membership and obligations for all involved—at least in most public school settings. So why look to professional community as a vehicle for supporting service-learning rather than focusing on district policy, schedules, professional development, and other procedural solutions to address the problems noted above?

First, professional communities are the best settings in which to raise issues of values (how does service-learning fit into our idea of what students need to experience and learn before they leave our school?) and to discuss them in depth. Processing value questions takes time, which goes against the grain of the typical school, where daily challenges need to be solved immediately. Without the time and space to reflect rather than do, schools will always relegate service-learning to a small contingent of believers.

Second, professional communities are places where teachers can think about how to change their work in order to share new

demands and to prioritize common tasks. It is the vehicle for distributing leadership and mutual influence so that important work gets done. This does not always mean changing formal job expectations. It could simply be agreeing on how to get from current practice to best practice.

Third, professional communities are places where people can learn from each other. Few teachers see themselves as “expert” in service-learning, so it is a safe topic to stimulate learning from small mistakes or to admit a collective need for more reading, additional professional development, or other fresh ideas. It may be a useful entry to a broader discussion about how to infuse more engaged and experiential learning into a formal school curriculum that appeals only to a small segment of a school’s student body.

Finally, professional community is a place where teachers can practice with each other many of the skills they need to create an effective service-learning environment—listening rather than organizing and controlling, understanding real experience and uncertainty rather than expecting superficial rapid learning, and caring for group learning rather than individual excellence. Teachers who experience real professional community are able to transfer many of the skills that they learn to their pedagogy, which accounts

for the association between professional community and student learning.

In other words, professional communities are the places where teachers can, through dialogue and experimenting with ideas, internalize the commitment and improve the classroom practices that are necessary to make service-learning work well.

What Are the Next Steps?

Developing a professional community with sufficient integrity to address the implementation issues that often confront service-learning is not a simple matter. All too often, introducing a “professional learning community” is treated, like service-learning, as a program that administrations can mandate. When this happens, the focus is typically on increasing professionalism, while ignoring the element of community.

A number of studies have concluded that creating *structures* that support professional community—such as giving teams time to meet, giving teachers more influence and responsibilities (distributed leadership), and creating more opportunities for feedback on performance—is important to sustaining activities that are core to professionalizing schools (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996). However, the results of efforts to restructure have often

been disappointing and exhausting. On the other hand, the same studies—and many others—conclude that the shaping of school *culture* has the greatest impact on supporting and sustaining PLCs. Bringing culture back in demands that we balance professionalism and community—and, I would argue, creates an environment in which service-learning is more likely to earn a secure place at the table.

PLCs and service-learning are, in themselves, a shift away from what many have described as a core assumption of teachers' work: a focus on constant and busy adaptations to classroom activities and individual students. Instead, they emphasize sustained collective attention to recurring patterns of student learning and to how an individual teacher's behavior affects it. The most obvious cultural shift is away from individualized routine and its concomitant teacher isolation toward an emphasis on an evolving consensus about teaching practice. However, other underlying structures must be in place to support professional community/service-learning.

It is not hard to find schools that are characterized by significant pockets of naturally occurring professional community or involvement with service-learning—although these may not overlap. The more vexing question

is how to develop and sustain professional communities and a focus on service-learning where their manifestations are scattered and weak. School leaders cannot manage a school's culture in the same way that one can ensure that discipline is maintained and students are assigned to the right classes in order to graduate. A simple list of "to dos" is a sign that the writer has not actually tried to understand, shape, and change the culture of a school. Nor can culture be permanently altered in a short timeframe—a school year, for instance. However, several elements of a school's culture that will help to balance professionalism and community are particularly amenable to influence by a principal or other school leader: commitment, trust, promoting organizational learning, and consistent tailoring of the work to the particular school and the people who are in it. These are not easy challenges but may be fundamental to sustaining an interest in service-learning under conditions where all eyes are on student test scores and curriculum content standards.

NOTES

- 1 I am grateful for Susan Root's comments on an earlier draft. Of course I remain responsible for remaining errors of commission and omission.
- 2 These comparisons were stimulated by <http://www.youthcommunityservice.org/index.php?topic=sl>.

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Professional Development for Service-Learning

A Roundtable Discussion Among Leading Providers

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In fall 2009, *Growing to Greatness* invited experts in professional development for service-learning to participate in an online roundtable discussion on preparing teachers for service-learning. They were asked to discuss several questions over the course of a few weeks. Their thought-provoking responses are here.

Moderator: *Studies show that effective professional development involves active learning opportunities for teachers, such as observing demonstrations of practice, peer observation and providing feedback to other teachers, and analyzing student work. What opportunities for active learning do you include in your professional development activities?*

Joan Liptrot: Active learning implies that participants are *doing* something rather than sitting passively listening to a lecture. Active learning, however, goes beyond physical movement (even though we know that keeps oxygen flowing to the brain!). It includes emotional engagement, addresses multiple senses, and integrates multiple memory types in ways that allow learners to discover, pro-

cess, analyze, and apply information. Basically, active learning requires those leading professional development to act as “facilitators of learning” rather than “instillers of knowledge.”

We use a variety of active learning methods to engage as many learning styles, memory types, and critical and creative thinking strategies as possible throughout a workshop or training. Case studies, games, role plays, simulations, group problem solving, and peer teaching are a few of the active learning strategies we use most often in our service-learning professional development.

We always begin with a quick assessment, such as having participants place themselves along a continuum, creating a mind map, or

About the Participants

As the Executive Director of IGESL, **Joan Liptrot** provides training and technical assistance to schools, higher education institutions, community- and faith-based organizations, and national service programs. She helps youth and adults develop, expand, and enhance their service-learning practice and recently led a national group of experts in creating *The Service-Learning Trainer's Toolkit*.

Jim and Pam Toole have spent their careers working with young people involved in creative problem solving, leadership, and service. They are co-directors of Compass Institute and teaching fellows at the University of Minnesota. They are creators of the Service-Learning Providers' Network (www.slprovidersnetwork.org), a global online network and resource center for service-learning professional development.

Michael VanKeulen has been a school administrator, teacher (K-16), and school board member in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. He helped establish five K-12 schools in the area, three of which include service-learning as an essential component. At NYLC, he helps guide the Project Ignition program and leads online professional development efforts within the Generator School Network, a network for K-12 educators to improve their service-learning practice.

Director of Grants & Special Projects for Ionia County Intermediate School District for the past ten years,

Deborah Wagner also serves as a service-learning consultant for both public and private schools. Her professional development work has included offering workshops, seminars, institutes, classes and book studies, peer discussion and study groups using face-to-face, virtual and blended communications, materials, and media tools. She is the creator of *The Box*, a professional development kit in service-learning.

writing two expectations for the session. They identify where they are (level of knowledge and understanding) before we begin, so they are able to assess how much they have learned at the end of the experience are actively engaged from the beginning.

Ideally, participants who are new to service-learning can work collaboratively, identifying a topic that they will use throughout the rest of the training to apply newly acquired skills and understanding. Often we ask teachers who have been involved with a service project to use that project as their foundation. Either way, whether we are teaching the IPARD process or the service-learning standards, we introduce a concept and then have participants apply it to their own example.

The learning experience always includes opportunities for participants to explore a topic (working in a group to match service activity cards with learning goal cards, for example), using group problem-solving and discussion to analyze and apply the concept of connecting service and learning.

We employ “Each One Teach One” strategies that allow participants to learn a new piece of information and then connect with others to gather additional pieces that make up a whole concept. This concept can then be explored further throughout the training. Simulations help participants experience

what a real needs-assessment can entail—participants conduct walkabouts, media searches, interviews, and create surveys as part of the professional development experience.

Reflecting on and debriefing the activities allow participants to identify how they could apply these same endeavors to their own classroom practice. Creating real, practical tools that can be used as part of a current or future service projects is an effective way to meaningfully engage participants. Professional development often includes leading learners through the process of creating their own guiding questions, student assessment tools, work plans, or evaluation surveys.

If we are showing a video, “Bring Learning to Life” from Learn and Serve America, for instance, we give participants focus questions to help them identify key points about service-learning. If there is a time during a professional development experience that participants are not actively engaged in the learning (such as listening to a panel), it's important to plan for active reflection so the new information can be processed.

Finally, when providing a multiday training or institute, nothing can provide a better, more meaningful active learning experience than having participants engage in real service experiences. Whether it is done at the beginning, middle, or end of the training, it

can provide a wealth of firsthand experiences for participants to draw on and tie into the material covered in the training session.

Jim and Pam Toole: A dear friend of ours pursued her school administrative license at one of the top education colleges in the country. In one class, she was part of a group of five friends that collectively had 120 years of experience working in schools. As they walked out of class one day, she turned to her colleagues: “You know. He wouldn’t have to teach any different if we were Cocker spaniels!”

Our friend would appreciate Joan’s many examples of how teachers can integrate more active learning into their classrooms. We agree with Joan that active learning is a nebulous term, but a critical ingredient to good education.

Joan mentions practical and helpful examples of case studies, games, role-plays, simulations, group problem solving, service projects, and peer teachings. In presenting “training of trainers” for many years, however, we have seen many people lead participants through such engaging learning experiences, only at the last moment to switch from being “a guide on the side” to a “sage on the stage.” The temptation is sometimes too great and we may not notice what we have done.

Our core point here is to support what Joan said and to add a caution. We know that you can be hands-on without being “minds-on.” That is a caution not only for the larger field, but for each and every one of us. Trust the process whereby learners’ individually and collectively make sense of the world.

Proximity to Practice

Moderator: *Research shows that traditional approaches to professional development, such as classes, are less effective than those, such as coaching, that involve “proximity to practice”: helping teachers link what they have learned directly to their work in classrooms. How do you counteract the problem of distance from practice to provide professional development that supports teachers’ ability to connect service-learning professional development directly to classroom practice?*

Jim and Pam Toole: Our experience over the past 20 years teaches us that there are four critical factors necessary for professional development to impact classroom practice. It must be results-driven, developmental, ongoing, and job-embedded. While we make a case for each component below, we have found few systems commit the time, resources, and political will to make them all happen. Those that do are amply rewarded in improved teacher performance and student outcomes.

1. Good professional development

is results driven: Design professional development by beginning with the end in mind.

We ask ourselves three successive questions when designing professional development experiences: What will students need to know and be able to do? What will teachers require to support these student outcomes? And what professional development is necessary so that teachers can do this? The whole process necessitates qualities not often mentioned in curriculum planning: patience, integrity, creativity, humility, and listening.

Sample strategies:

- Encourage teachers to observe each other in classroom settings.
- Showcase a teacher panel presentation (so that teachers can see credible people in their own setting who are successful).
- Build in individualized curricular planning time (with peer review).
- Bring local community organizations in for a workshop or fair to explore possible classroom partnerships.
- Invite local youth to lead teachers in a service project (great for convincing people of the capabilities of youth).

2. Good professional development

is developmental: See workshops and coaching as part of a developmental continuum. We never want to debate the value of workshops/classrooms versus coaching (it would be like throwing half our career out the window!). A more fruitful lens is to think of teachers moving reiteratively through a series of stages from awareness to information to early use to routine use to refinement and extensions. The question then becomes: What kinds of professional development are appropriate at each stage?

Sample strategies: We love workshops and at the same time know their limitations. They serve the information stage very well. We use videos of exemplary practice, a student and practitioner panel, many concrete examples, and always a live service project. The impact is that newcomers get to explore core concepts and the moral purposes behind service-learning. But when people move into early and routine use, different strategies are needed.

3. Good professional development

is ongoing: Make follow-up the breakfast of champion practitioners. We often ask teachers if they can predict who else in their school might respond favorably to service-

learning. The answer is always a resounding yes. Why? Because service-learning is not only about becoming technically competent; it is also about people's assumptions, beliefs, and values about themselves, students, education, and the world. In his doctoral dissertation, Jim found that teacher beliefs were what separated the "doers" from the "non-doers." Adoption therefore is a highly personal and deep process that every person must negotiate individually, and it will take time, reflection, and collegial support.

Sample strategies: Teachers learn about service-learning incrementally, and their beginning experiments inevitably feature both setbacks and successes. For that reason, one of our favorite strategies is an ongoing or occasional afterschool study group. Teachers bring either project plans or existing projects for peer feedback (What do you like? What could you do to make it even better?) These sessions naturally involve trading experiences, peer coaching, idea testing, brainstorming, and new insights. We also offer Level II workshops for those already practicing to update and refine their skills. Finally, we find that offering follow-up coaching meetings to workshop participants (for free) greatly increases the likelihood that they will use service-learning and use it well.

4. Good professional development is job-

embedded: It takes a village to raise a successful practitioner. Teachers are working in contexts that are culturally, politically, socially, and institutionally diverse—and who understands you better than those in your own building or district?

Job-embedded professional development means that most of teachers' learning happens during the workday in their own workplace. A huge advantage is that everything can be connected to a common set of local initiatives, goals, and standards. For this to happen, an essential ingredient is to build professional learning communities based on social trust. Jim's dissertation showed that the relationship among faculty was the defining characteristic in their ability to move the whole school forward in service-learning.

Sample strategies: We have seen many successful job-embedded models. One district paid an honorarium to service-learning mentors in each building to work with colleagues. We also have done trainings of trainers so districts have an "in-house" person to lead more frequent training sessions. Our favorites are the many forms of professional learning communities (e.g., study groups, book clubs, and collaborative planning).

Many teachers leave beginning workshops still lacking the confidence, energy, or details to make service-learning happen in their unique classroom setting.

Mike VanKeulen: Pam and Jim, you make the professional development process very clear and make strong points. The essential components you list—results-driven, developmental, ongoing, and job-embedded—are both based in research and born of your 20 years of experience.

Your point about workshops as a valued aspect of developmental progress in PD is well taken; the question I have is how to move from workshops to a next developmental stage with teachers. Do you have suggestions on how to move teachers from that information stage to the early implementation stage?

Jim and Pam Toole: How to move teachers from the information stage to the early implementation stage is where the rubber hits the road. Many teachers leave beginning workshops still lacking the confidence, energy, or details to make service-learning happen in their unique classroom setting: “Loved the workshop, but . . .”

Who are these teachers that can use an extra push? Schools possess both pedagogical “pio-

neers” and pedagogical “settlers.” Those who initially use service-learning are by nature pioneers. Jim found in his doctoral dissertation that service-learning users were 2 to 5 times more likely to be involved in 15 different forms of professional development about education generally. It is not surprising then that service-learning practitioners are more likely to implement a range of new practices. They are more willing to roll up their instructional sleeves and experiment. This begs the question of how we reach the settlers.

If I’m a settler, I might be asking myself two questions: What are my incentives to implement? What kind of support will I get?

There are many types of potential incentives and supports, but we’ll focus on one—creating an environment supportive of service-learning implementation. If I’m a teacher sitting on the fence, I’d take the temperature of the larger school climate. Does service-learning fit with the larger purposes and strategic goals of our school? Are leaders publicly supportive? Are resources provided? Are there supportive policies?

Schools can address these questions in many ways. At one school, the principal scheduled a faculty meeting each spring (“From the Horse’s Mouth”) where every teacher who had completed a service-learning project made a short staff presentation. At another school, teachers who participated in a beginning workshop were given \$200 to implement their service-learning project. At a middle school, an AmeriCorps volunteer was available to drive students to offsite projects. These are all enablers and incentives for moving people from the information to the early implementation stage.

Car salesman love to have potential customers take a test-drive. At one elementary school, the core service-learning teacher group put together a schoolwide service-learning project for their whole staff each year to “test-drive” the pedagogy. They created grade-appropriate lessons and planned all the logistics including an end-of-day celebration. This made a strong impact by bringing people together and generating fresh dialogues about the academic and development benefits of service.

Deb Wagner: The essential components Jim and Pam list are the components that have increased participation in service-learning and have led to sustainability in the Michigan districts I work with.

I have used many of the sample strategies and found that they work well. You are right on with the limitations of workshops. Workshops do work well to get teachers thinking about the use of service-learning in their classroom, but teachers often need more before implementation will take place. Implementation requires providing both information and the time to process and work. I have found that bringing teachers together over time, providing timely instruction and resources, tying into existing initiatives, allowing them to network and bounce ideas off each other, will move them along the continuum of deepening their service-learning practice.

In 2008, a four-day workshop was held on the new high school Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) for teachers. Teachers spent time examining the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice, unpacking Grade-Level Content Expectations in the new MMC, examining both formative and summative assessment in service-learning, and writing a unit or lesson that incorporated a service-experience.

After the workshop, teachers collected initial data on students (pre- and post-test on the unit or lesson content), reviewed the unit or lesson against the service-learning standards, and met with an experienced practitioner who had been assigned as a coach. The coach and teacher visited together three times throughout the service-learning experience. At the final visit, coaches reviewed with the teacher the final project outcomes against the service-learning standards, student essay reflections, pre- and post-test results, and recorded the positives aspects and ideas for change. As a result these teachers deepened their practice in service-learning, collected data on the impact of service-learning on their students, and brought their colleagues along.

In 2009, 35 new teachers participated in the program at the urging of those teachers who had participated in 2008. We continue to provide support for these teachers through books studies (for example, *Differentiated Instruction, Habits of the Mind*), workshops, work days, individual coaching, online resources, and courses. We have also encouraged them to present at teachers' meetings, administrators' meetings, and to their school board their results.

Mike VanKeulen: I have felt that the amount of pre-workshop efforts (one-on-one meetings with key leaders, pre-reading, a list

of educators most likely to connect to the ideals of service-learning, my own awareness of issues key to the school, previous recent workshops we can build from) matter significantly. Yet it is a cloudy area, and any thoughts you might have on how to move a school to the "tipping point" in institutionalizing service-learning would be appreciated.

Pam and Jim Toole: There is an obvious laundry list of elements that schools desiring a long-term commitment to service-learning would like to have—supportive policy, a line-item budget, ongoing professional development, and a service coordinator. These all clearly make a big difference and should be pursued. But these structural elements are not sufficient for institutionalization! A 1999 U.S. Department of Education survey showed that even in schools that possessed all of these elements, only 24 percent had a majority of their students involved with service-learning.

So what is the "X" or missing factor to explain institutionalization? Jim's dissertation pinpointed the level of professional learning community as being the key variable. This finding fits well with the emerging wisdom about school change. It is always about both restructuring and reculturing. Individual teachers can implement service-learning in their classrooms in spite of the larger school. But institutionalization requires

going through the heart of relationships in the building. Schools that have strong collegial collaboration are capable of creating building-wide initiatives/ institutionalization around anything. Jim found that faculty to faculty trust was overwhelmingly correlated with service-learning institutionalization ($r = .45^{***}$), and that trust between the principal and the faculty was also a highly significant variable ($r = .21^{**}$).

Coherence and Alignment

Moderator: *One characteristic of effective professional development that poses a challenge is coherence. Coherent professional development aligns with content standards and district and school learning goals. In addition, professional development is coherent when it is consistent with teachers' goals for their own and student learning (Desimone, 2009; Elmore & Burney, 1997; Firestone, Mangin, Martinez, & Polovsky, 2005). What challenges have you encountered in aligning professional development in service-learning with districts' and schools' goals for student learning, and how have you overcome these challenges? How do you work to ensure that professional development is consistent with teachers' goals?*

Deb Wagner: The largest challenge has been demonstrating that service-learning is an instructional strategy that can meet the rigor that schools need. There are several strategies we have used to overcome this barrier:

- Sharing research with both teachers and administrators on a regular basis
- Doing action research with teachers
- Providing venues for them to present and discuss their results
- Building it into their curriculum development work
- Aligning service-learning to their school improvement plans
- Educating teachers on good assessment practice (formative and summative) and how to incorporate those practices into their service-learning practice

We discovered that to foster change, you must build a culture, structures, and teaching and assessment practices with the teachers and schools. This means offering a coherent, demanding, and high-quality program of professional development. Unless you do this, implementation of a service-learning model that is sustainable and realizes significant improvement in student learning will not happen.

When teachers and administrators can see the connections between what they need to accomplish in terms of student achievement and service-learning, you open the door to institutionalizing a service-learning strategy.

We meet with teacher focus groups, review school improvement plans, and talk with administrators to obtain their input for professional development. We also offer a variety of venues for professional development to meet learners' needs and time constraints.

Our plan to increase teacher knowledge and improve instruction focuses on:

- Developing teachers' knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes for global citizenship.
- Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue.
- Highlighting ways teachers can seize opportunities for integrating service-learning into their classroom practice—and help them identify what activities they can replace or deemphasize.
- Encouraging knowledge sharing among communities of practitioners, using face-to-face, virtual, and blended communications.
- Enabling service-learning professional learning communities for teachers that model the kinds of classroom learning that best promotes skills for students.

- Delivering professional development that includes institutes, seminars, and workshops, and peer discussion groups using face-to-face, virtual, and blended communications, as well as online courses and study groups. The variety of venues allow for active learning, networking, in-depth study, and modeling.

Peer discussion groups or study groups bring together teachers from each participating school on a monthly basis after the school day to provide opportunities to explore teacher-identified topics, develop lesson plans, model instruction, and use peer education. These groups expanded knowledge and skills that teachers gained from professional development venues to the challenge of the classroom. They also increase teacher collaboration and promote the sharing of best practices, mentoring, and team-teaching.

Teachers benefit and the quality of education improves in participating classrooms. This approach has worked well for us in meeting the challenges and teachers' goals for integrating service-learning into a school or district. It is often not what we see in other service-learning programs. I think the question becomes "How do we transfer these strategies into other school buildings and districts so there is coherence in professional development for service-learning?"

Professional Learning Communities

Moderator: *Karen Seashore notes that Professional Learning Communities provide "a place in which teachers can practice with each other many of the skills that they need in an effective service-learning environment—listening rather than organizing and controlling, understanding of real experience and uncertainty rather than superficially rapid learning, and focusing on caring for group learning rather than individual excellence." How do you build opportunities for teacher collaboration and learning community into your professional development? Can learning about and implementing service-learning stimulate the formation of a professional learning community in a school or district and if so, how?*

Mike VanKeulen: A very important piece of building collaboration among teachers and other professional development participants is to move away from a leader-and-consumer relationship. If participants feel like they are coming to a presentation, being sold an idea, or being trained, they may fall into the role of consumer—deciding if the experience is something they will be interested in, if they buy it, or if it will change who they are. When a workshop feels like a training, participants who look like they are ready to change too easily, who act like a promoter in the training, seem to have little sway among peers. They come across as too eager, being needy in some way.

Professional development professionals need to be in right relationship with participants. This means that we have shared goals, we care about these goals generally to the same degree, and that new ideas are given time to be embedded into current ideals, practices, and resources. Collaboration implies that everyone has a clear self-interest, these self-interests are known to one another, and as a group we are able to apply our efforts to address everyone's interests—typically best done in a cooperative supportive community. So beyond cooperation, clarity for myself and others, why I am here, what I am able to get and give in this experience, are equally important.

You asked, Can learning about and implementing service-learning stimulate the formation of a professional learning community in a school or district and if so, how? I would perhaps ask instead, Can service-learning and professional learning communities stimulate one another? My point is that this flows both ways. The more one learns about service-learning, its complexities, capabilities, and the social nature of the experience, the more one can recognize the benefits of a professional learning community. Conversely, a professional learning community is an excellent method to introduce and improve the quality of service-learning practices.

A professional who commonly engages in service-learning benefits from a professional learning community if the goal of the professional learning community is, at least in part, to sustain and improve quality service-learning practices. Just as being a member of professional learning community is a way of life, a way of being professional, similarly, applying service-learning as a vital practice suggests a way of life, a way of being an educator. This way of being professional should be chosen, be based in deep values and interests of both the professional and the community.

Deb Wagner: I agree with you that an important piece is building a collaborative community among the educators, whether this is a single event or an ongoing service-learning community of learners. I have found that shared goals and shared responsibility for ongoing learning and dialogue leads teachers to feel supported. And they also work together to deepen their service-learning practice. I met with teachers recently to discuss what's happening in their buildings and what type of support might be needed. I do this periodically. The teachers had a request for holding peer-feedback sessions. These teachers feel comfortable enough to bring their units/lessons that incorporate service-learning before their peers for feedback. I do not think most

teachers would request or participate in this activity without having built a community first.

I believe professional learning communities can be essential to the growth of practice and sustainability in a school building or school district. Often educators need education on setting individual and community goals, organizing and targeting to meet those goals, encouraging personal and professional accountability in a nonthreatening manner, sharing leadership and organization, and

sustaining these efforts over a period of time. I'm not sure that educators come prepared to be part of a professional learning community but when time is taken to educate and implement a service-learning PLC, the results are tremendous.

Jim and Pam Toole: In addressing how to build opportunities for teacher collaboration and community into professional development, here are five points we want to add to the discussion.



1. Design Constructivist Lessons: There is a world of difference between training and professional development (even though we typically use the phrases interchangeably). It is possible to “train” people how to perform technical skills because they are linear and predictable. Teaching, however, is a craft that requires constant and inventive decision-making in an ever-changing environment. Since wisdom can’t be told, professional development must find ways for people to grow their own judgment.

How is this done? Professional development design is everything. There are both weak and strong forms of collaboration. What is it that teachers are actually doing with each other? Because teaching is a craft, it is best learned through activities that are exploratory, social, self-directed, and problem-based. For instance, we never start a beginning workshop by telling people the definition of service-learning. Instead, we give small groups short descriptions of four projects and ask them to label each. They collaboratively construct distinctions between community service and service-learning. These will be remembered because participants are acting as “the architects of their own learning.” This is the type of constructivist learning experience that needs to be at the heart of professional development design.

2. Encourage Cognitive Conflict: We agree with Mike and Deb that it is critical that PLCs possess a common purpose. That is what makes them different from schools where individual agendas predominate and where there is no shared vision to guide decisions.

Jim asked teachers in his research whether “service-learning addresses some of the most important needs of our students.” If a school had found a common and compelling purpose, they spent their time figuring how (not if) to do service-learning. But if they didn’t agree, they continually debated whether to do service-learning. That made progress very difficult.

As important as a common purpose is, we want to take Mike and Deb’s comments a step further. We would argue that PLCs must successfully integrate both consensus and conflict. Shared purpose, in a sense, must be continually earned through dialogue and debate. Part of the rationale for professional learning communities is that teachers are able to engage in authentic cognitive conflicts about what constitutes effective educational goals and strategies. Deb points to this in her example where teachers in a strong PLC desired more feedback from each other.

Such dialogue and debate is particularly essential to the health of service-learning

practice. Real pedagogical change always involves surfacing and challenging people’s invisible assumptions and beliefs. Without cognitive conflict, service-learning may represent only a pedagogical dogma or orthodoxy where people put new wine (service-learning) into old wineskins (outmoded beliefs and assumptions).

Jim found in his dissertation, for instance, that non service-learning users were much more likely to agree that “My students cannot be trusted to work together without supervision” and “Students may be highly motivated by educational experiences in the community, but there is little they can learn from these projects.” PLCs can serve as a cauldron where people can reexamine and dispute such conclusions. Healthy PLCs hunger for such authentic dialogue because it gives teachers permission to raise objections based on the complexities of their particular classroom realities and prior experiences.

3. Honor Teachers’ Existing Knowledge: Teacher collaboration rests on the often unstated assumption that even people new to service-learning possess an immense storehouse of knowledge about children, classrooms and the world. Teacher engagement is fed when facilitators recognize, honor, and build on that knowledge. This is what we call

“inside-out” learning—that there is great wisdom lying within the participants and our role is to create platforms for that to come out. Our whole workshops are set up this way. We might, for instance, place people in role groups (for example, by grade level or subject matter) to get feedback on curricular ideas or to share how they already foster reflection in their classes.

Another sample strategy with experienced users is to place eight flip charts spread across the wall, each with the title of one of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. People then circulate around the room and write up the questions they have about the different elements. We then walk around the room and the group themselves does most of the answering and teaching.

Another favorite way is to engage experienced and beginning practitioners with each other. We sometimes teach separate Service-Learning 101 (beginning) and 201 (experienced) groups next door to each other. A highlight is having 201’s share their experiences and coach those new to service-learning. Teachers (just like students) are hungry to be useful!

4. Assess Progress: When Learn and Serve grantees come together in one state, they bring detailed portfolios of their work for in-depth

sharing and self-assessment: “This is where we are strong.” “This is where we need to improve.” This and similar tools for self-assessment and group feedback are powerful designs to foster meaningful teacher collaboration.

5. Pay Attention to Group Building: Stanford’s Milbrey McLaughlin and Joan Talbert found that every teacher in their large national study that was creating innovative strategies to reach today’s students was a member of some sort of PLC. There were no exceptions. Teaching is a very personal affair, but it shouldn’t be a private one! But as Mike and Deb’s comments show, PLCs require both powerful learning strategies and social trust to feed them. If you want collaboration, professional development must be designed to foster healthy human relationships as well as pedagogical knowledge.

To build those relationships, we often start with some type of fun mixer to introduce people and “break the ice.” We also not only frequently utilize dyads, triads, and small groups, but continually switch people around so they talk with different participants. Anytime two people meet and talk for the first time, you open up new possibilities. Keep them moving!

Can learning about and implementing service-learning stimulate the formation of

a professional learning community in a school or district and if so, how?

We agree that service-learning can stimulate the formation of a professional learning community, but it also has the power to tear it apart. Here’s why.

We have called service-learning a “relationship-rich pedagogy” because it has the potential to increase the amount of teacher collaboration, create new bonds between the school and the community, and encourage teachers and students to redefine their roles in the learning process. All of this can feed the formation of a learning community, but none of it happens automatically.

Implementing service-learning, like any school change initiative, is a highly political endeavor. Issues about inclusiveness, transparency, communications, and resource allocation can bring people together or pit them against each other. Jim found schools in which service-learning implementation increased distrust and poisoned professional relationships. In fact, service-learning in two of his seven research sites became an underground activity where teachers hid their practice from the administration. But he also saw how service-learning can foster common purpose, school pride, and increased collaboration.

Mike makes a great point that the relationships between service-learning and professional learning communities is dynamic and flows in both directions. People have long argued that service-learning is a tool to build civic society, and we would argue that we also need a level of civil society within the school to implement service-learning.

Professional learning community is therefore ideally both a precursor and a product of service-learning implementation. When

teachers take their students into a homeless shelter or nursing home, for instance, we have had educators tell us that they were initially more uncomfortable than their students. Teachers are more willing to tackle that steep learning curve if they already work in a strong professional learning community (PLC as a precursor). But their subsequent risk-taking and new learning would further feed the health of a vibrant learning community (product).

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Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education

An Overview of the Research

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What does service-learning look like in teacher education today? While it has much in common with service-learning in K-12 schools and in other disciplines at the university level, teacher educators face unique challenges with service-learning.

To prepare graduates to implement service-learning in P-12 settings, teacher education programs must go beyond using service-learning as a teaching method to provide students with explicit instruction in the use of service-learning pedagogy, and field experiences in which teacher candidates design, implement, assess, and reflect on service-learning while working closely with experienced K-12 teachers, their students, and community members (Wade et al., 1999).

An additional challenge unique to teacher education is the need to respond to different layers of accountability requirements, ranging from those imposed by No Child Left Behind to standards of national accreditation organizations, such as the National Council

for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Interstate New Teacher and Support Consortium (INTASC).

Despite these challenges, teacher education programs are well placed to facilitate service-learning in both higher education and P-12 environments. Being in four-year colleges and universities enables teacher educators to advocate for service-learning within their institutions. In addition, many have formed equitable, collaborative relationships with P-12 schools, and as a result, have the potential to establish service-learning partnerships that effectively address the needs of K-12 schools, along with the needs of teacher education programs (Harwood & Lawson, 2001).

Definition

The distinct challenges and possibilities of service-learning in teacher education have led proponents to argue for a definition that recognizes teacher education's position as a bridge between the higher education and P-12 systems:

Academic service-learning in preservice teacher education is a credit-bearing educational experience that involves teacher candidates in one of the following activities:

- *designing and facilitating service-learning experiences for K-12 students in order to learn about the use of service-learning as a pedagogy*
- *participating in a service-learning experience to better achieve course goals.*

In either case, teacher candidates work closely with the community to identify and address genuine community needs and engage in systematic reflection to accomplish course goals, enhance their personal and professional formation, and develop civic responsibility. Co-curricular service-learning is similar but is not tied directly to a credit-bearing course.

Implementation of Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education

A few studies have examined the status of service-learning in preservice teacher education. Anderson and Erickson (2003) looked at the prevalence of service-learning in preservice teacher education programs in the United States. Data were collected through a survey sent to all 754 institutional members of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and 120 randomly selected teacher education programs not affiliated with AACTE.

While 59 percent of those surveyed reported that their teacher education programs introduced teacher candidates to service-learning, only 24 percent indicated that all students participated in service-learning as part of program requirements. In a majority of teacher education programs in the study, only a small proportion of faculty used service-learning. In slightly over half the programs (51 percent), less than one-third of the faculty employed service-learning, while in only 4 percent of programs all full-time faculty used service-learning. Anderson and Erickson concluded that although service-learning had moved into the mainstream of teacher educators' vocabularies, it was not an integral component of core courses and practica that involve all teacher candidates and the majority of faculty.

Anderson and Erickson found that in those programs that included service-learning, 37 percent prepared teacher candidates to use service-learning as a pedagogy. Service-learning was most frequently incorporated in student teaching (86 percent), followed by English as a Second Language courses (32 percent), foundations (21 percent), and general methods courses (13 percent). In addition, some programs used a comprehensive approach in which service-learning was systematically infused throughout a series of courses.

Asked about faculty rationales for using service-learning, teacher educators supplied an average of four. The most frequent reasons included:

- “exposing students to the communities in which they would teach” (60%)
- “exposing students to diversity issues” (58%)
- “enhancing students’ personal development” (53%)
- “preparing preservice teachers to use service-learning as a pedagogy” (37%)

Despite the number of teacher education programs incorporating service-learning, some studies show that many teacher educators remain confused about the approach.

One source of confusion centers around the distinction between practica/student teaching and service-learning (Furco & Ammon, 2001; Anderson & Erickson, 2003). Although K-12 students, teachers, or schools may benefit from a candidate’s classroom activities during practice/student teaching, the primary focus of these activities is on the candidate’s professional development.

Impacts of Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education

Over 25 studies examine the impacts of participation in service-learning on preservice teachers. We’ve organized these studies into five categories, looking at impacts on: 1) academic learning, 2) understanding of and care for students, 3) knowledge of the teaching profession and professional skills, 4) understanding and appreciation of diversity, and 5) knowledge and skills needed to implement service-learning as a teaching method.

ACADEMIC LEARNING

A number of studies suggest that participating in service-learning can enhance the academic learning of preservice teachers (Shastri, 1999; Miller & Yen, 2003). For example, Miller & Yen (2003) randomly assigned students to direct service, indirect service, or non-service-learning sections of a child development

TABLE 1
Distinctions Among Community Service, Service-Learning, and Student Teaching in Teacher Education

Intended Goals	Community Service	Service-Learning in Teacher Education	Traditional Student Teaching/Internship
Structured academic learning opportunities	No	Yes	Yes
Benefit to the community	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Student voice	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes

course. Students who participated in direct service-learning had higher scores than students from the other two groups on midterm and final exams, and higher grades on an applied project.

Hart and King (2007) organized preservice teachers in a literacy assessment and instruction course into two groups. One completed a service-learning experience as tutors with elementary students at a community center, while a second group shared their knowledge of service with peers. Results showed that the service-learning group scored significantly higher on both a post-test of literacy content knowledge and a self-assessment of literacy and assessment skills than did the non-service-learning group.

UNDERSTANDING OF AND CARING FOR STUDENTS

Teacher educators have hypothesized that participating in service-learning can enhance preservice teachers’ positive orientations toward students, including their ethic of care (Noddings, 1988; 1993) and respect for students’ abilities. Studies of the effects of participation in service-learning on these outcomes have yielded mainly positive results (Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002; Strage, Myers, & Norris, 2002; LaMaster (2001); Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). For example, Potthoff and colleagues (2000) measured how faculty members, community agency staff members, and teacher candidates perceived candidates’ growth after performing service in community agencies. All groups perceived that students involved in service-learning achieved “definite to significant

growth” in “warmth and caring” and “willingness to serve others.” Root et al. (2001) discovered that 29 percent of preservice teachers who had been involved in service-learning reported gaining a better understanding of children’s needs, particularly for teacher care, attention, and support. Harwood, Fliss, and Goulding (2006) found that secondary candidates who completed a service-learning project with middle school students acquired a greater awareness of the needs of students this age (e.g., for motivation or emotional support) as well as respect for their abilities.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS

Engaging in service-learning in school settings can also help develop the professional attitudes and values needed for successful teaching (Root, 1997). For example, recent research provides support for the idea that service-learning influences preservice teachers’ sense of efficacy. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (p.3). Studies show that the greater their level of efficacy, the more time and effort teachers are willing to put in to their teaching, the greater their openness to new ideas, and the stronger their willingness to implement new pedagogy (Soodak & Podell,



1996). Wasserman (2009) compared changes in the efficacy of elementary candidates in two literacy courses taught by the same professor. The courses were the same except one included a service-learning component (teaching reading to elementary-age children) while in the other, candidates taught reading to peers. Wasserman found that teacher candidates in the service-learning course increased their self-efficacy to a much greater degree than the others and that this led to increased literacy course content implementation during the remainder of the course. Cone (2009) conducted a similar study focused on teacher candidates in different science methods courses. Teacher candidates in one course led inquiry-based science lessons for low-income

minority elementary students in a community center, while those in the other course implemented inquiry-based science lessons with their peers. Candidates who had participated in the service-learning were found to have significantly greater gains in personal self-efficacy about teaching science to diverse groups of students.

Studies have also shown impacts for service-learning on other professional dispositions and skills. For example, McKenna (2000) found that preservice teachers whose professors made explicit linkages between service and course content had their commitment to teaching as a career choice confirmed. Gonsier-Gerdin and Royce-Davis (2005)

discovered that special education candidates who engaged in service-learning showed growth in their leadership skills, commitment to advocacy and leadership roles, and professional role development. Finally, several studies have documented increased knowledge of community agencies and enhanced interest and skills in working with them among candidates who engage in service-learning (Ginn, 1996; Wade, 1998; Wade & Anderson, 1996; De Jong & Groomes, 1996; Miller et al., 2003; Stachowski, Bodle, & Morrin, 2008).

UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY

One of the most common goals held by teacher educators who incorporate service-learning is to prepare future teachers to understand and respond to the needs of diverse students and families. A number of studies have shown links between service with ethnically and economically diverse individuals and reduced stereotyping and increased understanding and acceptance of diversity among preservice teachers (Siegel, 1994; Vadeboncoeur et al., 1995; McKenna & Ward, 1996; Hones, 1997; Tellez et al. 1995; O'Grady, 1997; Potthoff et al., 2000; Root, Callahan, & Sepanski, 2002; Simon & Cleary, 2006; Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007; Domangue & Carson, 2008; and Meany, Bohler, Kopf, Hernandez, & Scott, 2008).

For example, Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) studied undergraduate teacher candidates' experiences providing literacy tutoring and motor skills instruction to K-12 students in a setting in which the teacher candidates were the minority in terms of ethnicity. They found that "service-learning experiences, unlike most clinical practica, foster in teacher candidates the autonomy for questioning existing practices and for further development of their own theories about teaching and learning." (p. 325). These authors concluded that service-learning experiences have the potential to assist teacher candidates to gain deeper understandings of diversity, and to empower them to confront injustices. Boyle-Baise (2005) found that preservice teachers who implemented an oral history project developed positive relationship with African-American elders and gained asset-based, culturally sensitive, justice oriented perceptions of the community. Other studies have shown that teacher candidates who participate in multicultural service-learning revise their attitudes towards multicultural teaching, becoming more aware of the need for multicultural curricula and teaching strategies adapted to diverse students (Siegel, 1994; McKenna & Ward, 1996; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Brown & Howard, 2005).

However, some studies show that a percentage of preservice teachers who participated in service-learning (including a few in the study by Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007) had their stereotypes of others from different cultures reinforced (Johnson & Button, 1996; O'Grady, 1997; Callahan & Root, 2003; Vadeboncoeur, 1996; Boyle-Baise, 1997; 1998; Fuller, 1998; Hones, 1997, 1998).

MOTIVATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT SERVICE-LEARNING

Engaging in service-learning during teacher preparation is also associated with teachers' capacity to implement service-learning in their own classrooms (Swick & Rowls, 2000). For example, in a survey of beginning teachers who graduated from four teacher education programs that had included service-learning, Wade and colleagues (1999) found that 35 percent had implemented service-learning in their classrooms, while 65 percent intended to use it in the future. Callahan and Root (2003) discovered that preservice teachers who engaged in service-learning became significantly more confident in their ability to design service-learning and reflection activities. Lake and Jones (2008) found that when teacher candidates in an early childhood education course designed and implemented service-learning projects with preschoolers, they gained the knowledge and

skills necessary to teach in a “constructivist manner.” Another study compared graduates of a teacher education program that taught service-learning as a pedagogy with graduates of a similar program that involved teacher candidates in community service but did not provide instruction in the use of service-learning (George, Hunt, Nixon, Ortiz, & Anderson 1995). Approximately 25 percent of both groups implemented service projects with their K-12 students during their first year of teaching. The teachers who had received preparation in the use of service-learning included reflection activities with the service projects and made direct links between the service and the academic curriculum, while those who had not received this preparation did not include reflection or tie the service to the curriculum.

Anderson, Daikos, Granados-Greenberg, and Rutherford (2009) described a preservice teacher education program that emphasizes preparing new teachers to use service-learning as a pedagogy with their future k-12 students. As a part of their preparation the preservice teachers partner with K-12 teachers and students to jointly design, implement, and assessment a variety of service-learning activities. The K-12 teachers reported that without the support of the preservice teachers, many of the service-learning projects would not happen at all, and those

that would still take place would be smaller in scale and limited in quality.

Moderators of Positive Outcomes

While participating in service-learning has a positive impact on future teachers and ensures they are more likely to use the method, certain aspects of the experience are critical moderators of outcomes. For example, Miller and Yen (2003) found that candidates who engaged in direct service-learning (interactions between teacher candidates and those with whom they are working) scored significantly higher on exams and projects than did candidates who performed indirect service (activities that did not involve contact with recipients). Bell, Horn, and Roxas (2007) determined that service-learning experiences that facilitated nontraditional power dynamics, took place in out-of-school contexts, and that were linked specifically to pedagogy were associated more complex understandings of diversity among preservice teachers.

Similarly, Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) concluded that preservice teachers who participate in service-learning with students who have backgrounds vastly different from their own experience cognitive dissonance that can be resolved with the support of instruction in the use of self-reflection, re-examining their assumptions, and the

teaching of social justice. Root and Callahan (2001) found that teacher candidates showed greater commitment to teaching and a greater tendency to gain new perspectives on students when their service-learning experiences included: strong voice in designing and conducting the service-learning project, activities that the teacher candidates perceived to be relevant to teaching, challenging tasks, and the opportunity to work with people of diverse cultures. Also, teacher candidates who experienced greater gains in teaching efficacy reported receiving more support for their service-learning efforts, including adequate training for tasks and assistance from an instructor or a placement supervisor in adjusting to the service-learning experience.

Trends in Service-Learning in Teacher Education

Since teacher educators began integrating service-learning into teacher preparation programs on a large scale in the mid-1990’s, several developments have lent credibility and support to the field. The National Service-Learning in Teacher Education Partnership (NSLTEP) was established in 1997 to build a national network to promote the integration of service-learning in teacher education programming and policy. Over its six-year history, NSLTEP provided training and

technical assistance to more than 100 teacher education programs, and directors helped move service-learning into the mainstream of teacher education by providing theoretical justification for its inclusion in preservice teacher education, principles of good practice, and research findings. In 2003, NSLTEP formed the International Center for Service-Learning in Teacher Education (ICSLTE) at Clemson University. Now housed at Duke University, ICSLTE is committed to sharing experience, practice, and findings on service-learning in teacher education with colleagues throughout the world.

A second positive trend has involved increased recognition for service-learning as an essential component of teacher preparation programs. For example, the National Center for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) recently identified service-learning as one potential feature of programs demonstrating the highest level of proficiency in the design, implementation, and evaluation of field experiences and clinical practice.

Conclusion

The growing interest around the United States in developing hybrid spaces in teacher education where academic and practitioner knowledge can merge with knowledge from the broader community in a manner that

Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education

In another approach to identifying elements of quality, Anderson and Hill (2001) conducted a Delphi Study to tap the wisdom of experienced practitioners about essential principles of good practice for service-learning in preservice teacher education. They engaged 75 service-learning practitioners and teacher educators from all regions of the U.S. in three rounds of surveys designed to assist them in reaching consensus. This process resulted in the development of 10 principles which the authors state “are not absolutes to be applied rigidly, but do raise issues that should be discussed thoroughly by those engaged in the design and implementation of service-learning in preservice teacher education” (p. 73).

1. Preservice teachers should prepare to use service-learning as a pedagogy by participating in service-learning experiences, as well as in-class study of good service-learning practice.
2. Teacher education faculty involved with service-learning should have a clear understanding of the theory and principles of good practice of service-learning theory and principles of good practice and model these principles in their use of service-learning as a teaching method.
3. Teacher education courses that include service-learning should be grounded in theories and practices of teaching and learning that are compatible with service-learning.
4. The design, implementation, and evaluation of service-learning activities should reflect all stakeholders' needs and interests, including those of preservice teachers, P-12 students, and other community members.
5. Reciprocity and mutual respect should characterize the collaboration among teacher education programs, P-12 schools, and the community.
6. Preservice teachers should participate in multiple and varied service-learning experiences that involve working with diverse community members.
7. Preservice teachers should participate in a variety of frequent and structured reflection activities and prepare to facilitate reflection with their future students.
8. Preservice teachers should learn how to use formative and summative assessment to enhance student learning and measure service-learning outcomes.
9. Teacher educators should align service-learning outcomes with program goals and state and national standards for teacher certification and program accreditation.
10. The teacher education program, institution, and the community should support service-learning by providing the resources and structural elements necessary for continued success.

respects the value of all these contributors to further the learning of teachers “represents a paradigm shift in the epistemology of teacher education programs” (Zeichner, 2010). These hybrid spaces, often referred to as “third spaces,” are growing in prominence and can help to transform preservice teacher education (Gutierrez, 2008). With a growing body of research that demonstrates their effectiveness in strengthening the knowledge and dispositions of teacher candidates, service-learning experiences have the potential to become exemplary third spaces. Service-learning in teacher preparation has the potential to assist prospective teachers to develop into knowledgeable, caring, responsive, and effective professionals, skilled at using this approach to help their students achieve academically and connect to the realities of their communities. With substantive progress in practice, research, and policy, service-learning can transcend its challenges and meet the needs of an increasing number of preservice teachers, their students, and communities.

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District Leaders and Service-Learning

Supporting Educators at the School Level

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In many schools and districts across the country, great teachers are providing opportunities for their students to engage in high quality service-learning. In many cases, district leaders (superintendents and school board members) support these teachers' efforts, recognizing the benefits to students, schools and the community. In other cases, district leaders may not be aware of either the benefits of high quality service-learning or the extent to which service-learning is practiced within the district.

As long as quality service-learning is occurring in classrooms, does district leadership even matter? A growing body of literature says yes. Through eight years of W.K. Kellogg-funded work, the Learning in Deed Policy and Practice Demonstration Project and the Anchoring the Investment initiative, the Education Commission of the States' (ECS) National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) investigated with five partner states (California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina) the elements necessary to integrate and sustain—or institutionalize—

service-learning policy and practice at the state and district level.

Not surprisingly the demonstration project and Anchoring the Investment initiative found “vision and leadership” to be one of the five elements needed to institutionalize service-learning (along with curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement). More recently, the Corporation for National and Community Service's November 2008 Issue Brief, “Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools,” addressed

Five Elements Needed to Institutionalize Service-Learning

1. Vision and leadership
2. Curriculum
3. Professional development
4. Partnership and community
5. Continuous improvement

the role of both district-level and school-level policies and supports for service-learning in its analysis of a survey of school principals from 2,000 K-12 public schools.

A key finding released in the report was that “when a principal knows that there is a district-level policy encouraging the integration of service-learning into the course curriculum, the school is three times more likely to have service-learning activities than a school where the principal knows that the district does not have a policy in support of service-learning. When a school principal does not know if the district has a policy, there is a similar relationship” (p. 20). The study also found that of those schools with service-learning activity, 39 percent of principals indicated that service-learning is part of their board-approved curriculum.

The CNCS findings “suggest that a district emphasis on service-learning could have a positive effect on the adoption of service-learning at the school level” (p. 20). This is consistent with the belief our five partner states had on the importance of district-level leadership to foster and support service-learning at the school level, and prompts the question, How can we increase the number of school district leaders who support and encourage service-learning within their districts and how can we better support those who already do?

A National Network of District Leaders

Recognizing the need for strong district leadership to create policies and encourage practices that support service-learning’s integration into schools’ climate, culture and curriculum, the ECS National Center for Learning and Citizenship, in cooperation with the National School Boards Association and the American Association for School Administrators, created the 100 District Leaders for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning in 2006.

Nicknamed the District Leaders Network, it was created to bring together district superintendents and school board members who were leading their districts in ways that directly, and publicly, supported and encouraged high quality service-learning

and citizenship education. The goal was that this network of district leaders would be able to come together, share challenges and strategies, deepen their knowledge and have access to tools and resources to assist them in being advocates for service-learning in their districts, states, and collectively—as a national voice of district leaders supporting opportunities for all students to participate in high quality service-learning.

Over the past three years, the Network has evolved. Its name has changed slightly, to the District Leaders Network for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning, recognizing how important the “network” opportunity is for district leaders. In the past year, Network members reevaluated and refined their mission and vision. The Network’s mission is to educate and support superintendents and school boards in designing policies and practices consistent with the civic mission of schools. Its vision is to ensure that every student in this country has access to quality civic engagement and service-learning experiences, in an effort to create generations of active, principled citizens.

By providing a “place” for like-minded superintendents and school board members to gather, both through in-person national and regional meetings and through virtual means, leaders are able to connect with other

leaders to deepen their knowledge, share strategies, and learn from one another. Member Dilafruz Williams, School Board Member in Portland, Oregon, says the network “brings together leaders in the region to share cutting-edge work on service-learning done in our schools. We learn from one another and feel connected. [The Network] ensures that our work continues to be robust and we can support one another.”

In this article, members of the District Leaders Network for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning share some of the ways they are able to utilize their leadership positions to support opportunities for service-learning throughout the district.

The Unique Roles of District Superintendents and School Board Members

District superintendents and school board members are in a unique position to ensure district policies and practices not only allow for, but support exceptional service-learning practice throughout the entire district. The establishment of district mission and vision statements, development of strategic and improvement plans, allocation of funds, and in-service professional development offerings provide support and can lead to service-learning’s long-term sustainability.

If service-learning is not supported as a component of regular, high quality instruction, it can appear as an “add on” or as extra work to those teachers and staff unfamiliar with service-learning.

If service-learning is not supported as a component of regular, high quality instruction, it can appear as an “add on” or as extra work to those teachers and staff unfamiliar with service-learning. District leaders are able to spread the message—verbally and through policy changes—that service-learning is simply great teaching. But unless administrators see service-learning as essential to the district’s goals, they will not, in a time of decreasing resources and increasing demands for student achievement, make room for service-learning.

Sustainability of service-learning is a key leverage point for district leaders. While a given school may currently have a principal who encourages and supports service-learning throughout the school, what happens if that principal leaves? Will questions about service-learning be included in the hiring process for a new principal? If not, it is conceivable that a new principal with no knowledge of service-learning might be hired. When district superintendents and other district administrators are knowledgeable

and supportive of service-learning, they are able to seek out candidates with service-learning experience who can build on the existing tradition of service-learning in the school in filling principal vacancies.

Similarly, a key role of the school board is hiring the district superintendent. As the top administrator in the district, hiring a superintendent knowledgeable and supportive of service-learning is an important step for district-wide sustainability of service-learning. When school district leadership—superintendent and school board members—truly value service-learning, it is only natural that they seek new leaders who also share that value.

“Our commitment to civic engagement and service-learning has been well established in the West Valley,” says Jim Williams, member of the West Valley School District #363 (Spokane, Washington) School Board and the District Leaders Network. The district serves approximately 3,800 students in Spokane. Its mission statement includes readiness for citizenship, and the corresponding

Strategic Plan includes “Actions Goals” in College, Career, and Citizenship Readiness. The Citizenship Readiness Action Goals directly support service-learning:

- Ensure each student’s participation in authentic school-wide service learning projects.
- Partner with local agencies on authentic service learning projects.

Jim states, “In interviewing for our new superintendent, the continued support and growth of this effort was a top priority for our board.”

Service-Learning Helps Districts Achieve Their Missions

Many school boards maintain mission or vision statements that include language about the importance of preparing young people for citizenship. Examples from selected District Leader Network districts include:

- “Richland School District Two, in partnership with the Columbia Northeast community, guarantees each student a quality education by providing appropriate and challenging learning experiences to equip each individual for life-long learning, responsible citizenship and productivity in an ever-changing world.” (Columbia, S.C.)

- “The mission of Kelso Public Schools is to prepare every student for living, learning and achieving success as a citizen of our changing world.” (Kelso, Wash.)

- “The mission of the Waterford Public Schools, a premier educational system within a community that fosters high aspirations, is to guarantee that each student acquire the skills and knowledge to become successful and a responsible citizen by setting high expectations and requiring excellence in an atmosphere of integrity and respect.” (Waterford, Conn.)

Service-learning, as one of the six promising approaches to civic education identified in *The Civic Mission of Schools* report, is a natural fit to help districts achieve their missions. Ada Grabowski, superintendent at Albion Central School District (Albion, N.Y.), asks, “How better to prepare students to become citizens than to give them real opportunities to make authentic decisions about genuine issues?”

Albion Central School District, in rural western New York, serves students in grades Pre-K-12 in three schools on one campus. Grabowski says service-learning is viewed as being infused throughout the district’s curriculum: “We align our service-learning programs based on our community and their needs as well as the needs of our students

and staff...the embedding of service-learning in our district and community helped us form our current vision, mission and values statement.” Albion does have a staff member whose responsibilities include coordinating the district’s service-learning efforts, including organizing staff development opportunities specific to teacher needs and requests to improve service-learning knowledge and implementation.

Jim Williams, of the West Valley School District #363’s School Board (Spokane, Wash.) noted that the Board felt so strongly that it “required that our superintendent endorse and has incorporated these efforts (civic engagement and service-learning) into our strategic plan. The preparation of our students to take their place as productive citizens is tied to everything we do.”

Academic success is clearly the primary focus of most discussions of American education. As the pressure mounts for increased scores on standardized assessments of student learning, some service-learning advocates fear the result might be fewer opportunities to integrate service-learning into the school day. However, Lou Ann Evans, School Board member for the State College Area School District (State College, Penn.), says that “service-learning is the ‘antidote’ to [No Child Left Behind], because students



learn the curriculum *and* the 21st Century Skills needed to be a contributing member of society.” Some schools in the State College Ares School District have been doing service-learning for well over ten years. Evans says, “As a district, we have committed to expanding service-learning projects into our curriculum K-12.” This commitment can be found in service-learning’s inclusion in the district’s 2007–2013 Strategic Plan.

As researchers, practitioners and the administrators in the District Leaders Network remind us, service-learning is an effective pedagogy to help achieve a district’s academic mission. Bill Cirone, Santa Barbara County superintendent of education (Santa Barbara, Calif.), says that “service-learning improves student success by engaging students in real life academics which is increasing both achievement and attendance.

The district gains a positive reputation in the community for this effort.” The County Education Office is an intermediate agency between the California State Department of Education and the 22 school districts that are located within the county’s boundaries, and provides programming and services to the district’s nearly 66,000 students, along with professional development and technical assistance to teachers and administrators.

Through service-learning and its inherent interaction and outreach to the larger community, schools and districts are able to positively impact their communities through service-learning. The Falls City School District in Falls City, Neb., serves students from five communities and the surrounding rural areas in the rich agricultural region of extreme southeastern Nebraska. Kathy Bartek, a 20-year member of the School Board and District Leaders Network member, reports that “On several occasions, board members have been invited to join the students in a project, which I believe is a great way to show our students, as well as our patrons, that we are united as a district in the belief that we’re all in this together.”

Even in larger communities, such as Tampa, Fla., school board members appreciate service-learning’s ability to bring the community and schools together. “I am certain that my

District leaders can support service-learning by clearly communicating its importance to staff and faculty, students and the community, even when specific board policies supporting those priorities do not exist.

role as a liaison between the community and schools will not only sustain service-learning projects, but will also increase them...The students of today are more socially conscious, more accepting of diversity, and offer our country a brighter future than ever before because of the School Board's insistence on community service-learning projects," says Carol Kurdell, Hillsborough County Public Schools Board Chair and District Leader Network member.

An important part of any district leader's job is communicating the district's vision and priorities. Certainly, the adoption of mission and vision statements that support and encourage service-learning, and integration of service-learning into the district's strategic or improvement plans make that communication more formal. But district leaders can support service-learning by clearly communicating its importance to staff and faculty, students and the community, even when specific board policies supporting those priorities do not exist.

Greendale School District, in the southwest metro area of Milwaukee, is home to more

than 2,600 students, and has a long tradition of integrating service-learning into its offerings. Bill Hughes, district superintendent points out the importance of district leadership: "The superintendent of schools must set the tone and support the expectation of citizenship education." Accordingly, Hughes leads a yearly workshop for new teachers in citizenship education and service-learning and also requires his principals to include a service-learning goal in their annual performance reviews. The district is also a member of the seven-district Southeastern Wisconsin Service-Learning Consortium, through which the districts share best service-learning practice, provide professional development, and advocate for service-learning.

Supporting Teacher Preparation and Professional Development: District Leadership's Role

Although district administrators are not typically directly involved in teacher preparation programs, they play an important role: hiring the graduates (new teachers) to teach in their schools. In both Greendale Schools in

Wisconsin and the Albion Central School District in New York, prospective teachers' knowledge of service-learning is a factor in the hiring process. Service-learning is so valued in each of these districts that teacher candidates are routinely asked questions about their familiarity and experience with service-learning as part of the interview process.

Professional development in service-learning practice is critical for teachers—both for teachers new to service-learning, as well as for those teachers experienced with service-learning. Supportive district leadership can help to secure the necessary time and resources so teachers can have the structured time to learn new skills, explore possible projects, share insights with colleagues, and develop integrated curriculum and assessments. When district leadership advocates for service-learning, the potential for powerful partnerships, such as the Southeastern Wisconsin Service-Learning Consortium, can help to deepen service-learning practice through access to tools, resources, and local professional development opportunities.

Professional development opportunities can come through formal in-service, summer or other scheduled events, or through more informal working time—where teachers are able to work collaboratively with each other,

across different grade levels or content areas, to identify ways their classes might jointly work on projects. It may also be allow veteran service-learning teachers to assist teachers newer to service-learning with their practice and planning.

District administrators are also able to utilize the district's professional development funding to support the deepening of service-learning practice throughout the district. Particularly in determining the focus and activities that will occur during in-service professional development days, district administrators can ensure that service-learning plays a prominent role.

Can service-learning grow and thrive in a school without this kind of district-level support? Sure. But with the encouragement and support of district administrators, policies, practices and schedules that seemed to be barriers in the past may be addressed in ways that make it easier for teachers to focus on their students, the curriculum and the service-learning projects of interest to them.

Administrators Need Professional Development, Too

Much of the literature on service-learning focuses on service-learning professional development for teachers, as the primary

leaders of service-learning projects in (and out) of the classroom. For teachers to guide a high quality service-learning project, they must know what high quality service-learning is. They must employ strategies that enable youth voice to guide service-learning opportunities. For many, this requires some form of initial professional development and continuing opportunities to enhance their skills.

But the need for professional development does not end with teachers. Administrators need service-learning professional development, too. For administrators to be effective champions for service-learning, they need to also understand the components of high quality service-learning—the barriers and challenges to implementing those components, and the benefits of service-learning.

In California, Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools and District Leader Member Bill Cirone reports that “in service-learning training, administrators become academic team members in student-centered learning and have the power to enable the school culture to engage students in academics and citizenship through real life problem solving, K-12.”

Just as for teachers, service-learning professional development for administrators can take many forms. The creation of service-

learning leadership teams (which typically include administrators, teachers, service-learning coordinators, community partners and students) within the district can serve as a great informal opportunity for administrators to become directly involved with service-learning in the district, and also provides first-hand knowledge of the challenges, successes and benefits of service-learning. These teams can also spur the development of new policies and practices in service-learning, or as a catalyst to change existing policies and procedures that inhibit or otherwise create challenges to service-learning.

The Education Commission of the States has had great success and positive feedback from administrators when administrator retreats were offered on service-learning. These retreats typically bring together administrators from multiple districts, include some formal training on high quality service-learning and what the latest research says, provide time to learn from other administrators and create a network among the administrators.

When planning professional development activities for teachers, staff and community partners, it is imperative to include school and district administrators, as well.

Professional Development Opportunities For Administrators

The District Leaders Network for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Join district superintendents and school board members from across the country who share the belief that district-level leadership is critical to service-learning's success. Network members meet in-person at least once annually, and have the opportunity to participate in regional District Leaders Network events, as well. Lou Ann Evans, Member of the State College Area Board of Education, says that "As a member of the District Leaders Network, I have gained the knowledge and skills to promote service-learning at the local, state and national level."

While there is no consensus among Network Members as to service-learning's future or prospects for widespread expansion of service-learning, the District Leaders Network provides a forum for members to discuss the current challenges facing service-learning and strategies to overcome them, including Network Members' roles in advocating for greater opportunities for all students to participate in high quality service-learning.

The District Leaders Network for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning accepts applicants (district superintendents and school board members only) throughout the year. For more information about the network's work, meetings and events, go to www.ecs.org/DLN.

The Administrators Academy

The Administrators Academy is an annual professional development event for K-12 superintendents, principals, and other school leaders at the National Service-Learning Conference. Featuring expert presentations and peer dialogue, the Administrators Academy seeks to help participating school leaders:

- Understand how high quality service-learning aligns with district and school goals
- Gain key insights and develop processes to create district coherence in supporting rigorous and engaged learning for all students
- Clarify how service-learning and youth voice can help districts gain greater traction in attaining their key district goals
- Help school and district leaders understand how their systems are positioned to support service-learning and the leadership opportunities and challenges inherent in this work
- Begin to build capacity for networked renewal, peer support, and ongoing professional learning

Topics covered during this event have included effective leadership and research, policies to support using service-learning to create a school climate that encourages student achievement, and school creativity and innovation.

To learn more about the Administrators Academy, visit www.nylc.org/conference

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Service-Learning in Elementary School

What's Developmentally Appropriate?

SUSAN ROOT
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Susan Root, Ph.D., is the research director at the National Youth Leadership Council. She was a professor at Alma College for over a decade and worked as a senior research associate at RMC Research Corporation in Denver before joining the Growing to Greatness project in 2008.

More than 200 students from Garfield Elementary in Santa Ana, Calif., conduct a “walkability” survey of the area surrounding their school, cataloging the obstacles, dangers, and nuisances they encounter and then present their results in bar graphs and charts to parents, police, and community leaders. Their effort sparks the city to clean up graffiti, repair sidewalks, and install new traffic controls and crosswalks.

At New Foundations Charter School in Philadelphia, kindergartners led the charge to replenish the Police Survivors Fund, which benefits the families of police officers shot in the line of duty. They raised thousands of dollars for the fund selling bracelets reading “I support Philly cops,” and organized a community event to recognize officers from the 8th Police District and the 37 officers who are parents of students at the school.

Although successes like these can be found every day across the United States, they are not as common as they ought to be. In fact, service-learning is less likely to be offered by elementary schools than by schools at any

other level, according to a 2008 survey by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Today service-learning is included in only 20 percent of elementary schools, but 25 percent of middle schools and 35 percent of high schools. One factor that contributes to this appears to be educators’ views on the developmental needs of elementary school children. In the CNCS study, 51 percent of elementary school principals said that their students were too young to benefit from service-learning.

This belief is unfortunate, because service-learning not only aligns with the needs children in this age group, it can also be a powerful force in fostering positive development.

Characteristics of Elementary School-Aged Children

Psychologist Erik Erikson believed that the key challenge for children of elementary school age is to establish a sense of personal competence. During the elementary school years, children strive for accomplishments that have objective value and are recognized by others. Their feelings of competence are influenced by their evaluations of their own abilities, as well as feedback from important others. In addition, social comparison—how they evaluate their appearance and abilities relative to those of others—becomes an important determiner of the sense of self in the elementary school years. Children who experience success in areas such as academics, social relationships, athletics, or the performing arts develop greater self-esteem and a willingness to take on new and challenging activities. In contrast, children with a history of failure or who feel that their backgrounds or others' low expectations limit their opportunities for success are at risk for developing feelings of inferiority, anger, isolation, and depression.

Elementary school children are also gaining new skills for thinking and learning. They acquire fundamental literacy and math skills in school. During this time period, children also grow able to reason more logically about

Peer relationships also become more influential during the elementary school years. Children meet diverse peers whose language, ethnic, and social backgrounds, and interests and abilities are different from their own.

physical and social events. Their understanding of cause and effect improves, as does the ability to think sequentially. Children acquire the ability to reflect on their intellectual functions and products and how they can be improved. And they master new strategies for paying attention, retrieving information, planning, and problem solving.

These inner changes occur in concert with children's entry into wider social worlds. In school, children face new intellectual tasks and demands for self-control. Whether they involve reading or waiting in line, these challenges occur in public, which brings children new opportunities for social comparison and competition. School introduces children to a range of new authority figures, such as teachers, whose interactions with them are defined by institutional roles rather than personal ties.

Peer relationships also become more influential during the elementary school years. Children meet diverse peers whose language, ethnic, and social backgrounds, and interests and abilities are different from their

own. New perspective-taking skills help them become more effective at interacting with these counterparts, including forming friendships. Friendships become more reciprocal, with children making a greater effort to respond to each others' needs and desires. And friendships are increasingly based on an attraction to others' inner qualities, such as humor or honesty, rather than the activities children share. Research shows that positive relationships with peers are critical to elementary school children's healthy development. Those who have good relationships with peers are less isolated and depressed, have fewer absences and enjoy school more.

Finally, for many children, the elementary school years offer a chance to take part in structured out-of-school activities, such as sports and Scouts, activities that are linked to positive psychosocial and academic outcomes.

Although important advances occur during elementary school, adults have traditionally viewed these years as a time of stability,

without the power of early childhood or adolescence to shape adjustment or to expose children to risk. However, recent studies contradict this view and show that achievement and behavior during the elementary school years uniquely predict success and well being in adolescence and adulthood. In addition, the environments available to elementary school children from different backgrounds vary in ways that can either aid or hinder their academic success and adjustment. For example, classrooms of low-socioeconomic status children tend to include more authoritarian discipline, less teacher support, and lower instructional quality than those attended by more affluent children. Children in low-SES families are also less likely to take part in organized out-of-school activities and spend more time in unstructured activities, such as watching television.

Apart from its effect on academic success, service-learning is especially apt to influence three aspects of development in elementary school children: school engagement, civic development, and moral development.

School Engagement

School engagement refers to children's involvement in school. Engagement has both a behavioral dimension, such as participating in school activities, and an affective dimension, such as feeling that one belongs

or is committed to the goals and norms of school. According to researcher Jeremy Finn, engagement is a “developmental process that may begin in the earliest years of school” (p. 2). In early elementary school, engagement takes the form of compliance with school goals, such as following directions and completing assignments. If children acquire habits of cooperation early on and experience a degree of school success, they are apt to progress to more advanced forms school engagement, including initiative-taking, participating in social and extracurricular activities, and playing a role in school governance, such as serving on an advisory committee.

Research supports the notion that engagement in elementary school is an important predictor of later achievement and healthy development. For example, one study found that school withdrawal and disruptive behaviors among fourth graders were associated with lower achievement. In another study, a low ability to adapt to school between the ages of 5 and 8 was linked to conduct problems in early adolescence.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT DECLINES WITH AGE

While children's tendencies to participate differ, engagement shows a general decline during the elementary school years. For some children, fading hopes for success are responsible. As they grow older, children

increasingly turn to objective data and the performance of others to estimate the likelihood that they can succeed in school. Those with a history of failure grow increasingly pessimistic about achievement and begin to withdraw from learning tasks.

In addition, children who feel discriminated against in school and who feel that adults and other children in their lives are denying them opportunities because of something about them over which they have no control are apt to experience a loss of interest in school.

Not only do success expectancies weaken in some children, but the perceived value of school learning shows a general decline. For example, Harter (1981) found a decrease with age in the intrinsic value of learning for children, including their curiosity about learning, preference for independent mastery, and desire to tackle challenging tasks.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

One factor that may lead to a lower perception of the value of school is lack of emotional support. Children who view their teachers and classmates as uncaring are apt to withdraw from school. In contrast, when belongingness needs are met, students achieve better academic and social outcomes. For example, one study of reforming schools

found that both school support (e.g., feeling safe in school, being listened to by teachers) and classroom support (e.g., high expectations and support for learning from teachers and peers) significantly predicted school engagement among elementary students. Other research indicates that children who have positive relationships with teachers like school more, perform better academically, are more engaged, and have fewer problem behaviors.

In addition to relationships, their typical role in classrooms may undermine children's sense of autonomy and motivation to be involved in learning. Studies show that when schools address their needs for competence and autonomy, children are more engaged.

ENGAGEMENT AND THE CURRICULUM

Finally, the elementary school curriculum may contribute to a decline in the perceived value of school learning. Critics such as Helen Marks have indicted elementary

schools for “providing meaningless instructional activities that disillusion students about the usefulness of school” (2000, p. 156). One study showed that school reform initiatives that included problem-centered learning activities that were personally relevant to students and connected to the world outside the classroom were linked to greater school engagement.

SERVICE-LEARNING CAN IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT

Service-learning activities include several features that can meet elementary students' needs for competence, belonging, autonomy, and meaning:

- Opportunities to apply and extend their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom
- Opportunities to connect with and receive support from classmates and community members
- Complex problems that have value in their community outside the classroom
- Student voice or control over the learning experience

Service-Learning and Civic Development

A second area of development that may be influenced by service-learning is citizenship. The National Council for the Social Studies identifies developing “informed and active citizens” as the central mission of social



studies education. Although districts typically situate civics courses in high school, the early childhood/elementary school years comprise a critical period for citizenship education. According to NCSS, “Unless children acquire the foundations of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in social studies in the important elementary years, it is unlikely that teachers in the junior and senior high schools will be successful in preparing effective citizens for the 21st century” (NCSS 1988).

Effective citizenship education addresses four areas:

1. **Knowledge**, e.g., understanding of core democratic principles, government and political institutions, and civic issues.
2. **Skills**, e.g., analyzing alternative courses of public action; using civic discourse, negotiation, and compromise; and improving the individual and public good (Patrick, 2003).
3. **Goals and plans** for civic involvement, such as monitoring the performance of public officials, taking a stand on issues, engaging in political advocacy, and performing public service (Civic Mission of Schools, 2003).
4. **Values and attitudes for constructive civic engagement**, e.g., commitment to the larger community, civic responsibility, respecting

others’ rights to freedom of thought and consideration in public decision-making, and willingness to deliberate with others to arrive at informed public decisions.

DEVELOPING CITIZENSHIP IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS

Under age 7, children have a vague awareness of political figures and the existence of a state, but they make no distinction between the political and nonpolitical and show little or no understanding of political roles or institutions. In the context of the groups to which they belong, such as the family, children begin to understand rules, authority, and personal agency—concepts that provide a foundation for an understanding of law, government, and individual rights.

Between the ages of 7 and 9, children begin to understand simple power hierarchies with a single authority figure. This understanding enables them to construct a general understanding of government and what government officials do; however, they do not yet differentiate officials’ names, titles, specific roles, or method of appointment. Their accounts of political institutions or people are typically personalized. For example, the government may be referred to as “he” or “she,” and its role as “helping people” or “taking care of us.

By age 10 or 11, the confusion and lack of specificity that characterize children’s knowledge about politics is replaced by more ordered and elaborate representations. Children differentiate between different governmental functions and associate specific political responsibilities with specific roles. Late in this stage, children begin to represent relations between multiple political actors, linking them (often incorrectly) in a hierarchy.

By middle to late adolescence, children are able to think holistically about political systems. A coherent system of political beliefs begins to be apparent in their thought, based on a capacity for abstract thinking that allows adolescents not only to connect politics to roles, structures, and policies but to abstract values, such as equality.

Thus, with increasing age, children show:

- An increased ability to use concepts such as political roles, institutions, and processes to interpret the political world.
- An increased ability to understand abstract political concepts and principles, such as liberty and equality.
- Greater organization and coherence in political-cognitive knowledge.
- Decreased egocentrism and an increasing ability to adopt alternative and multiple

perspectives, which offers the ability to understand collective needs and social goals and to analyze the consequences of political decisions for groups of people.

- A decreased emphasis on the coercive function of government and increased awareness of the reciprocal relationships between the citizen and the community and state, leading to increased awareness of the citizen's ability to influence government and the legitimate claims of the community and state on the person.

OTHER CIVIC CHARACTERISTICS

Although they have received less study, other characteristics associated with positive civic behavior, such as the ability to compromise and an understanding of law and individual rights develop during the elementary school years. For example, although they have limited knowledge about the legal system, even young children are more apt to support laws if they are nondiscriminatory and benefit a group.

Young elementary school children have some understanding of rights, such as freedom of speech. With increasing age and experience, they learn the institutional sources of these rights, and balance support for rights with concerns about the consequences of acting on them. Tolerance of the right to express dissenting beliefs increases with age.

A final important set of beliefs includes attitudes toward racial/ethnic differences. In the early elementary school years, children make distinctions between different racial groups based on observable characteristics and show more positive attitudes toward mainstream than minority cultures. However, even young elementary school children believe that excluding a person based on race is wrong. By the middle elementary grades, children have more elaborate understandings of the characteristics of different racial/ethnic groups and show a decline in out-group prejudice.

CURRENT TRENDS IN ELEMENTARY CIVIC EDUCATION

Although some elementary schools prepare children for lives of active, informed citizenship, many do not. Many states and districts, responding to pressure to raise reading and mathematics achievement under No Child Left Behind, have reduced their emphasis on social studies. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, between 1988 and 1998, the proportion of fourth-graders who reported taking social studies daily fell from 49 percent to 39 percent.

Even when they do offer social studies, elementary schools may use an ineffective curriculum. The Expanding Horizons model, which follows a progression from immedi-

ate, familiar environments to broader social worlds, has been the dominant approach in elementary social studies since the early 20th century. However, according to Rahima Wade, the model has no foundation in developmental psychology and is at odds with the experiences, interests, and learning abilities of contemporary elementary children. In addition, Wade and other social studies experts criticize the model as bland, redundant, and lacking in realistic civic and social content. The Expanding Horizons model may be one contributor to the lack of interest in social studies apparent in elementary schoolchildren.

Experts agree that elementary schools must offer more and better civic education. According to the Carnegie Corporation's *Civic Mission of Schools* report, the way that children "are taught about social issues, ethics, and institutions in elementary school matters a great deal for their civic development" (p. 12).

According to the National Council of the Social Studies, service-learning offers an effective alternative to traditional elementary social studies:

Service-learning provides essential opportunities for students not only to develop civic participation skills, values, and attitudes, but also to acquire first-hand knowledge of the

topics they are studying in the curriculum. Service-learning provides an authentic means for using social studies content and skills to investigate social, political, and economic issues and to take direct action in an effort to create a more just and equitable society.

Service-learning experiences can build on and expand elementary school children's civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. For example, because service-learning can take students out of the classroom as they pursue projects in their community, interacting with government officials, it can help children improve their understanding of social and political institutions and their functions. It can make the abstract more concrete.

Service-learning activities can address children's citizenship development. They:

- Stimulate a new understanding of the reciprocal relationships between citizens and society, rights and responsibilities.
- Provide additional and more concrete information about the roles of citizens and institutions in community and society.
- Provide contexts for teachers to introduce historical and political information that builds on children's early understandings of justice, law, individual rights.
- Introduce children to people different

from themselves and supporting more complex understandings of different racial/ethnic groups.

Researcher and school development consultant Bernadette Chi and her colleagues constructed a framework of expectations for civic growth for the East Bay Conservation Corps Charter Elementary School. The framework is organized around cross-age goals in three areas:

- personal responsibility, including responsible work habits
- caring for others and community, including respect for others and considering the needs of the group and community
- leadership; for example, taking initiative to benefit the group

In addition, the framework included developmentally appropriate goals for different elementary grades in civic knowledge, civic thinking skills, civic participation skills, and civic dispositions. Goals for students in second and third grades include knowledge of the community, decision-making skills to address needs in neighborhood organizations and community, and initiating communication with and creating a relationship with a community members. Service-learning is a critical element of the curriculum. According to the ECBB Elementary School Resource

Guide, the school views service-learning as a powerful means through which students can “become educated academically and as citizens” (p. 3).

Prosocial Development

A third intended goal of service-learning in elementary school is to enhance children's prosocial behavior. In prosocial behavior, individuals willingly behave in ways that benefit another person or group, such as helping or sharing. Personal characteristics, as well as environments, influence children's tendency to engage in prosocial behavior. For example, children who are securely attached, more outgoing, and better at regulating their emotions are more apt to show prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is also more common in cooperative rather than individualistic cultures.

Three characteristics that contribute to prosocial behavior and show important shifts during the elementary school years include empathy, prosocial reasoning, and distributive reasoning.

EMPATHY

According to William Damon in *The Moral Child*, empathy, the ability to understand another's perspective and share one's feelings, is one of the “primary emotional supports” of moral behavior (p. 14). High levels

of empathy are related to greater prosocial behavior, while low levels are related to aggression and antisocial behavior.

Children show empathy early in life by responding to others' distress. By the time they enter elementary school, perspective-taking skills enable children to differentiate their needs from those of others and provide appropriate forms of help. The elementary school years bring increased understanding of a variety of emotions and the ability to accurately interpret multiple and even conflicting emotions in others.

In addition, elementary school-aged children gain new empathy-based emotions, such as anger or feelings of injustice based on others' distress. In the upper elementary grades, abstract thinking skills enable children to experience empathy for others' history and

Adults influence children to be empathetic through direct instruction, modeling, and induction in which they explain the consequences of children's negative behaviors for their victims.

life conditions and to feel empathy for an entire social group.

Although empathy follows this general course, children differ widely, and experiences in families and schools play a powerful role in strengthening or suppressing sensitivity to others. Adults influence children to be empathetic through direct instruction, modeling, and induction in which they explain the consequences of children's negative behaviors for their victims.

PROSOCIAL REASONING

A second characteristic linked to prosocial behavior is prosocial reasoning, which involves the justifications individuals use when faced with a conflict between helping another and acting out of self-interest. Research shows that more advanced prosocial reasoning is associated with positive behavior and sympathy toward others.

In early elementary school, prosocial reasoning reflects a simple concern with meeting others' physical or other needs. At the next level, children's decisions are based on a desire for others' approval or to be seen as a "good" person. Many children's thinking remains at this approval or stereotyped orientation level; however, by late elementary school, some children begin to use more advanced prosocial reasoning,

based on perspective taking, empathy with others' humanness, or other "moral" feelings, such as sympathy or guilt.

DISTRIBUTIVE REASONING

A third characteristic that contributes to prosocial behavior is distributive reasoning, thinking about how material goods such as rewards should be shared within a group. Young elementary school children typically follow a rule of equality assigning everyone the same share regardless of circumstances. Between the ages of 7 and 9, children begin to consider merit and believe that a person who works harder should receive more rewards. In the upper elementary school grades, children begin to consider differences in individual needs.

As children grow older, contextual features play a greater role in distributive reasoning; for example, older children are more apt than younger children to take need into account when decisions involve friends rather than strangers.

Ultimately, empathic emotions, prosocial reasoning, and principles for distributing goods are integrated into a prosocial moral structure that includes prosocial emotions, motives, cognitive representations, such as plans for prosocial actions.

SUPPORTING PROSOCIAL MORAL STRUCTURE

Elementary schools and teachers can support the formation of children’s prosocial moral structures through comprehensive character education programs that include service-learning. One recent comprehensive approach, Integrative Ethical Education, provides a possible framework for the high quality integration of service-learning and character formation efforts.

According to Darcia Narvaez, who developed IEE, the goal of character education should be to help students acquire moral expertise. The notion of moral expertise is similar to prosocial moral structure: it recognizes that consistently ethical behavior is grounded in mental scripts of interconnected cognitions, emotions, and motives. People with moral expertise have the ability to identify moral needs, reason about the ethical response to those needs, prioritize actions based on values and feelings, and organize and execute ethical actions. In addition to emphasizing expertise, IEE views morality as inherently relational, developing within communities both inside and outside the classroom. According to Narvaez, “the importance of community in character development cannot be overstated. . . . One cannot become virtuous through watching television or reading books. One must learn through interaction with others in the community” (p. 15–16).

Teachers and schools can integrate service-learning and IEE to provide comprehensive, contextualized character education. Not only does service-learning give educators the chance to incorporate the community, but it provides opportunities for relationships that support ethical development, such as relationships with role models of community involvement and individuals and groups in need. In turn, IEE can provide a framework for structuring service-learning as ethical education. An IEE-based approach to service-learning might follow a sequence in which the teacher:

- Helps students to identify not only a community need, but the ethical issue(s) associated with it.
- Scaffolds children’s determination of the ethical response to the need, by prompting them to engage in more advanced prosocial and distributive reasoning.
- Seeks to elicit children’s empathy and empathy-based emotions, such as empathic anger, to underscore the importance of taking the ethical action.
- Teaches the skills needed to execute ethically informed service, such as taking the perspective of others or investigating sources of potential aid.

Conclusions

Although *Community Service and Service-Learning in America’s Schools, 2008* shows that elementary schools are less likely than schools at other levels to offer service-learning, this approach is short-sighted. Service-learning in elementary school can strengthen children’s functioning in three areas that predict adolescent and adult academic success and adjustment: school engagement, citizenship development, and prosocial behavior. Service-learning can promote school engagement by providing children with opportunities to exercise autonomy, build valued competencies, and form relationships with peers and community members. Service-learning offers an authentic, engaging medium for addressing the central goal of the social studies: developing civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Through appropriately designed activities, service-learning teachers can challenge and enrich children’s understanding of government, communities, and the roles of citizens and can enrich naïve concepts of justice and rights with historical and political background. Finally, if service-learning is integrated into a comprehensive character education program in elementary school, such as Integrative Ethical Education, it can strengthen prosocial characteristics such as empathy, prosocial reasoning, and distributive reasoning and can help children develop moral expertise.

Three Exemplary Service-Learning Programs in Elementary Education

Natalie Waters Seum

Spreading the News on Childhood Obesity

Third-grade students in Nancy Shega's classroom at Laura MacArthur Elementary School in Duluth, Minn., are tackling the issue of childhood obesity, a national epidemic that can lead to heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that the prevalence of obesity has increased dramatically since 1980: for children 2 to 5 years old, prevalence increased from 5.0 percent to 12.4 percent; for those 6 to 11 years old, it increased from 6.5 percent to 17.0 percent; and for those 12 to 19 years old, prevalence increased from 5.0 percent to 17.6 percent.

"Grade three is a time when students begin to take more responsibility for their learning and health. It is the perfect time for them to learn how a healthy lifestyle can promote health in the future," said Shega.

ACADEMIC AND LIFE LESSONS

One for All, All for One is carefully woven into nearly every curricular area in Shega's class—health, social studies, math, language arts, science and reading. Students count their steps with pedometers donated by local State Farm agent Barb Carr. They graph their steps and walk their way across a world map, estimating how far they'll get. Faith, one of Shega's students, said, "I think it is very stupendous that we might be able to walk around the world."

They learn about chronic health conditions in health class and the importance of regular exercise. "I like

learning about the ways to keep our bodies healthy," Alexis, another student said. In science class they learn about body systems and what makes foods healthy or unhealthy. They analyze nutritional information and evaluate different foods.

Shega brings in guest speakers, including a nutritionist, nurse and doctor who present information that the students document for their own future presentations. "They are very motivated to do their work. I don't have to encourage them. They are working together to do the best they can. And, importantly, they are making many connections to the outside world on their own," said Shega. Students reflect on a daily basis in their service-learning notebooks answering the question, "What did you learn?"

SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE

Students are taking their new knowledge and spreading healthy messages throughout their school, their neighborhoods and local businesses. In partnership with a local grocery store, students create healthy snack bags for other classrooms. They present to small groups of students and adults and hope to conduct an all-school assembly. With posters and brochures they designed in hand, they visit local businesses asking, "Are you as healthy as a third-grader?" A school and community health fair will be held in the spring. "They are learning both how to become neighborhood experts and live a healthy lifestyle," said Shega.

"Parents are starting to wonder as the information is being transferred home," said Shega. Laura MacArthur Elementary School is located in Duluth's West End, typically a lower income area of the city. According to Shega, there is a higher percentage of overweight residents and the need for education is great. Students are beginning to understand that childhood obesity is both a local and national crisis.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

"Most any community need could be addressed by any grade level—it is the teacher's responsibility to make the approach developmentally appropriate," said Kathy Bartsias, Duluth Public Schools Service-Learning Specialist. Student learning is directly tied to state standards in Shega's classroom. "If teachers are connecting to academic standards then we know the subjects are being taught at the right age," added Bartsias.

Bartsias continued, "The same concepts are there, the level of understanding is simply different at each level. Sometimes people believe that only high school students can make a difference. We know that's not true! They are often surprised at what a kindergartener (or a third-grader in this example) can do."



PHOTO COURTESY NANCY SHEGA

Penny Harvest at P.S. 15

“Children are never too small to make a difference,” explained Julie Cavanagh, a teacher at P.S. 15, an elementary school in Brooklyn, New York. That is the premise behind Penny Harvest, an all-school service-learning program that engages students in a yearlong philanthropic process.

Penny Harvest is a national program of the nonprofit Common Cents for students ages 4 to 24. At P.S. 15, it began six years ago as a community-building and community-impacting curricular activity. Common Cents believes that “even our youngest citizens can spark extraordinary social change—if we simply give them the support they deserve.”

GATHERING PENNIES

“We do a really good job of breaking down the process for children but leaving them in complete control,” said Cavanagh. The first phase of Penny Harvest begins as the school year does. Students simply collect pennies from their homes and their neighborhoods and bring them to their classrooms.

As the pennies pile up, curricular connections are made. At P.S. 15 students in kindergarten through fifth grade participate and lessons are directly tied to age-appropriate, grade-level standards.

Math lessons involve counting, sorting, and graphing the pennies. Students create bar graphs for their classrooms, keeping close track of the pennies collected. The concepts of community and community needs are discussed during social studies including the difference between local and global. Philanthropic concepts like giving of time, talent, and treasure are woven into classroom lessons using literature like *The Giving Tree* and the fable of the mouse and the lion.

GIVING GRANTS AND TAKING ACTION

In January, the penny collection phase ends. Students learn more about identifying local and global community needs. Each classroom designs a brick representing a single need that the classroom believes is critical for the school to address. The bricks are combined to create a Wall of Caring.

As the Wall of Caring is erected, a 12-student Roundtable is formed with one boy and one girl from each of the fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms. The students selected are often those who stand to benefit the most. “Inclusion is a critical component. When you give children with learning or behavioral difficulties trust and responsibility—it is amazing what they can do,” Cavanagh said. The Roundtable narrows the Wall of Caring down to three issues and entire student body votes in order to identify a single issue.

Led by Cavanagh, a trained Penny Harvest coach, and a special education teacher, the Roundtable is charged with researching and determining how the need should be addressed with gifts of time, talent, and treasure. They examine the need further and find out who is already working to address it, what is being done and how they can help. The need is then typically addressed with a grant and with student action.

“This is true service-learning, with students in control of the process,” said Cavanagh. The issue of environmental protection has been addressed with a green festival to education the entire school and its community. Stray animals have been helped with a donation to a local no-kill shelter where the students were invited back as dog walkers. World hunger has been touched with monetary and food donations to a local food shelf.



PHOTO COURTESY JULIE CAVANAGH

OUTCOMES

Penny Harvest and P.S. 15 realize outcomes in the social, civic, and academic realms. In a survey conducted by Columbia University researchers, Penny Harvest was shown to increase students’ self-confidence and the self-awareness that they can make a difference; sharpen their teamwork, communication, and leadership skills; and increase their effort academically. Teachers said they see students carry these positive impacts over time. In addition, teachers reported the program connects their schools to people and resources in the surrounding community and helps to get parents involved.

“There is something very powerful about what being in the role of giver does for children,” Cavanagh explained. Referring to the Roundtable portion that takes place over the lunch hour, “I have kids begging me to be a part of it.”

For more information about how you can bring Penny Harvest to your school, visit: www.commoncents.org.

Sign Language Buddies

Prospect Sierra is an independent K-8 school in the San Francisco Bay area of California, committed to developing the “heart, mind and community” of its students. Service-learning is integrated into the core curriculum at each grade level and also happens at schoolwide events. “It is a pervasive part of the school,” said Katherine Dinh, Head of School.

Students and parents alike look forward to third grade because of a unique yearlong partnership with the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness (CEID). CEID provides a wide range of services and supports for families to maximize the communication potential of children, from birth through age five, who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have severe speech and language delays.

For six years, students from both schools have been paired up as “buddies” for friendship and mutual support. Prospect Sierra students in the two third-grade classrooms learn sign language so that they are able to effectively communicate and bond with their buddies at CEID. During frequent small-group visits they are able to apply their new language skills immediately. “They get down on their knees so they can effectively communicate with the children,” said Dinh. “And they are able to instantly converse.” Prospect Sierra students are integrated into circle time and also do projects and performances together.

The project is woven into other third-grade curricular areas including science, when they learn about the anatomy of hearing, and humanities, when they learn the lifestyles and values of all types of Americans.

According to Dinh, “The program is absolutely remarkable as students gain such language, cross-cultural and empathy skills.” While Prospect Sierra children are learning sign language and other



PHOTO COURTESY KATHERINE DINH

lifelong skills, CEID’s toddler and preschool students are gaining school readiness and communication skills. They benefit from having strong role models and will often imitate their buddy in many beneficial ways. This contributes to their progress in areas such as speech therapy and occupational therapy.

MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

“The success of this program is because it happens to meet each group of students where they are at developmentally,” said Dinh. “Kids are very open to learning new languages at this age,” she said. As the third-graders learn sign language, they receive instant gratification in a very concrete way. At this age, students begin to feel like leaders who have something to offer younger children. In addition, the new language skills of the third-graders are at the

level of the preschoolers’—making the pairing a perfect developmental match.

To enhance the developmental appropriateness, teachers help create personal relevance and context by relating deafness and physical differences to the differences in learning styles and abilities they see in their classroom. Some students thrive on the social connection with a buddy; some enjoy creating performances together; and some simply love to learn a new skill. The students who need to be able to stand up and move and have a tactile experience.

MORE THAN BUDDIES

Throughout the years the partnership has expanded. When one student was unable to continue at CEID past his third birthday due to state and school

district funding issues, Prospect Sierra students raised funds for his tuition totaling \$25,000 through a bike-a-thon, bake sales, and family donations. According to Dinh, the students took ownership and are developing into philanthropic people. “They were just doing it out of the goodness of their hearts,” she said. Some third graders have deepened their connection to their buddies outside of the school day, by volunteering at CEID during summer months.

“This is a partnership that goes both ways though,” said Dinh. The teachers from both schools work together to develop meaningful activities and ensure that the visits are integrated into both curriculums. “It requires a commitment on everyone’s part,” she explained, as on any given week a small group of students are at CEID.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Prospect Sierra’s administrators and teachers believe that service-learning has an extremely high impact when there is a strong connection to learning. As a member of NYLC’s Generator School Network, Prospect Sierra is part of a community of schools joining together to learn from others and improve their own service-learning practice. In this spirit of continuous improvement, Prospect Sierra evaluates ongoing programs like the CEID project, despite it being a successful six-year-old partnership.

With input from teachers and administrators from both schools, they conducted an in-depth self-assessment and identified reflection and youth voice as two standards that could be improved. Together they developed an action plan for both areas, including strategies such as student and teacher journaling in order to expand reflection opportunities past simply discussion.

To increase the level of student voice, Prospect Sierra students are taking a lead role in developing curriculum tailored to their buddies. For example, the third-graders might design books for their buddies based upon what they know they like, at a level they can communicate in sign language.

Prospect Sierra has a strong social-emotional component to its curriculum. Above all, Dinh said, “We have really impacted one of the most important skills—empathy. We believe it is one of the most important skills in creating successful people in a different global environment.”

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Community Involvement and Social Incorporation of Young Adults

Lessons from Americorps

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The class divide in civic participation in the United States is no secret. People with lower incomes and lower levels of education are less likely than those with higher incomes or higher levels of education to participate in civic life (Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996). Much of the reason for the divide is that young people in low-income neighborhoods have fewer opportunities for engagement, fewer adults modeling engagement, and lower rates of civic knowledge and voting (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Brown, Moore, & Bzostek, 2003; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Skocpol, 2004; Wilkenfeld, 2009). In addition, schools with a high proportion

of students in poverty are less apt to offer effective civic education opportunities, including service-learning, than low-poverty schools (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). And young people with less education are less likely to be involved in civic activities such as voting and volunteering (Levinson, forthcoming). Parental education also influences civic involvement: Individuals with well-educated parents are more likely to be politically active (Verba, Burns, & Lehman, 2003).

The class divide in civic engagement reflects a larger divide—in the opportunity for young

adults to fully incorporate into society. Many people consider colleges, whether two-year or four-year institutions, to be the the setting most likely to guide youth as they transition into adulthood, but with only a minority of young people attending higher education, this assumption doesn't fit with reality.

Numerous obstacles limit or prevent disadvantaged youth from being incorporated into adult society through educational institutions. Higher education is expensive, and increasingly so. Even though more than 50 percent of students receive financial aid

and grants (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), families are expected to help shoulder the rest of the financial burden, and for many that's not possible. According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than half of all college students are employed (2008), adding an additional burden to students as they try to balance the demands of class and work schedules. Community college enrollees, too, are often employed and have family obligations (Sanchez & Laanan, 1998). These and other obstacles have widened the gap between disadvantaged and middle class youth when it comes to college access and graduation.

Many young people struggle financially as they establish a home away from their parents.

Non-college-bound youth, especially those from low socioeconomic status, face even greater perils in the transition to adulthood than those who are able to attend. Due to a changing economy, jobs for these young people have become more temporary, lower-paying, and with fewer benefits than before (Cook & Furstenberg, 2002). As a result, many young people struggle financially as they establish a home away from their

parents. With fewer institutional and familial supports, the number of disadvantaged 18- to 24-year-olds who can be considered “disconnected” is growing; 14 percent of those in this age group are unemployed, have no degree beyond high school, and are not enrolled in school or the military (Jekielek & Brown, 2005). Offering more structured opportunities to youth outside of their families, particularly for disadvantaged youth, is crucial to enabling the successful transition into adulthood and all its responsibilities.

Social incorporation—connecting young people with social and community structures and institutions—is the foundation for various forms of civic engagement in adulthood. As Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) show for adults in general, individuals are more likely to get recruited into civic activities when they are in settings where they are invited to participate by other people in that setting. For young adults, being in a two- or four-year college has this benefit. According to Pacheco and Plutzer (2008), attending a four-year institution was associated with a 10 to 14 percent higher voting rate for Hispanic, Black, and White students. The results for two-year institutions were even more dramatic: Community college attendance was associated with a 25 percent higher voting rate for White students and a 100 percent higher voting rate for Black students. In

addition, in college settings where lectures, readings, and discussions promote democratic citizenship skills, students were more likely to endorse democratic sentiments such as taking the perspective of others and appreciating group differences (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004). Non-college-bound youth, on the other hand, don't have these same opportunities for growth and are left to seek out their own opportunities to develop civic skills and competencies—a feat that amplifies the civic divide in young adulthood.

Bridging the Civic Divide through Service Programs

We believe that community service programs such as AmeriCorps may offer youth opportunities for social incorporation and simultaneously build their civic skills. Youth from disadvantaged backgrounds may particularly benefit. Results from the Corporation for National and Community Service 2008 follow-up study of AmeriCorps members are highly relevant in this regard: Eight years after involvement, AmeriCorps members are more likely than comparison individuals to be in careers in public service. And, for those from disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds, involvement has a long-term impact on employment and civic engagement. The combination of opportunities in AmeriCorps programs, such as practicing

Community service work may provide developmental opportunities for civic engagement as well as connect individuals to educational opportunities.

life skills and interacting with adult mentors, may be particularly beneficial for disadvantaged youth, who are less likely than their advantaged peers to benefit from a network of social connections, adult mentors, and institutional opportunities.

We believe community service work may provide developmental opportunities for civic engagement as well as connect individuals to educational opportunities. Community service work, then, not only connects people immediately to institutions that foster civic engagement, but it also fosters more opportunities for further engagement by increasing educational aspirations and attainment. The following section summarizes our results on educational attainment and civic engagement among young adults involved in service work.

Educational Attainment and Civic Engagement among Young Adults Involved in Service

We analyzed data from individuals transitioning to adulthood (ages 16 to 30 years old) who had either participated in AmeriCorps state and national service or who had investigated the program but chose not to

apply.¹ The nationally representative sample included over 1,700 full-time AmeriCorps participants and 1,500 comparison respondents. To distinguish between groups:

- **respondent** refers to anyone who answered the surveys (both AmeriCorps and comparison group members)
- **corps members** refers to AmeriCorps participants
- **comparison** refers to those people who investigated, but did not apply to AmeriCorps.

Details of the larger AmeriCorps study is summarized in reports prepared for the Corporation for National and Community Service (2004; 2008).

Data for these analyses are drawn from two waves—Wave 1 (baseline) and Wave 3. Baseline data were collected in the summer and fall of 1999, and Wave 3 data were collected four years later. Survey answers were attained over the telephone and included questions about education, employment, life skills, and civic engagement. The sample for this analysis was limited to disadvantaged participants;

anyone who did not report family income was excluded from the analysis. Disadvantage was determined by family annual income in the year prior to baseline. Those whose families earned \$40,000 or less were coded as disadvantaged. A \$40,000 cutoff was chosen because it aligned with the national median income in 1999 (\$40,816, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) and because, with the rising cost of postsecondary education and reduced grant supplements to cover these costs, families who earn less than median income are hard-pressed to afford their child's education. We included 1,002 respondents in our analyses.

Sample Characteristics

Demographic information was coded from the baseline survey. Of the total sample, 76 percent were female, 84 percent were single, and 27 percent were parents. Respondents were asked about their race and ethnicity, which was coded into the following seven categories:

- White: 50.2 percent
- Black/African American: 25.4 percent
- Hispanic 14.5 percent
- Multiracial: 5.1 percent
- Asian: 2.9 percent

- American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1.5 percent
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.4 percent

There were more respondents in the comparison group than the AmeriCorps group; 56.7 to 43.3 percent, respectively. We examined the AmeriCorps and comparison respondents separately in all analyses.

Educational Progress

Respondents were classified based on how much education they obtained during the four-year study. To distinguish between groups:

- **progress** refers to those who either had completed a college education at the first wave or who attained additional education during the four years
- **static** refers to the remaining people without a college degree and no educational progress within the four years

Among AmeriCorps participants, 52.8 percent were classified as *progress* and 47.2 percent were classified as *static*. In the comparison group, 70.1 percent were classified as *progress* and 29.9 percent were classified as *static*.

Challenges to Education

The respondents in this study sample had many of the educational challenges that

other young adults typically encounter. Family income, race/ethnicity, marital status and parental status impacted educational progress. AmeriCorps respondents were less likely to make educational progress if they were American Indian/Alaskan Native. Those in the comparison group were not as likely to make educational progress if they were Hispanic or African American or had become separated from their spouse during the four-year study. For both AmeriCorps and comparison respondents, young adults with children were less likely to make educational progress.

Civic Engagement

Based on evidence of the civic divide in participation, we examined whether educational progress was related to civic engagement (voting, volunteer service, civic media use) and civic attitudes (motivation to serve the community and reduce inequality). Two civic variables, voting and volunteer service, were asked at baseline and four years later. *Voting behavior* asked if the respondent had voted in the most recent national elections. *Volunteer service* was based on whether the respondent had volunteered prior to baseline and had volunteered in the three years prior to Wave 3. The remaining two civic constructs were measured at Wave 3 only. *Civic media use* was assessed by asking whether the respondent had accessed e-mail or the Internet for

information on current events. *Civic attitudes* assessed the personal importance an individual ascribed to contributing to the greater good by measuring two items—the motivation to serve one’s community and the desire to reduce inequality.

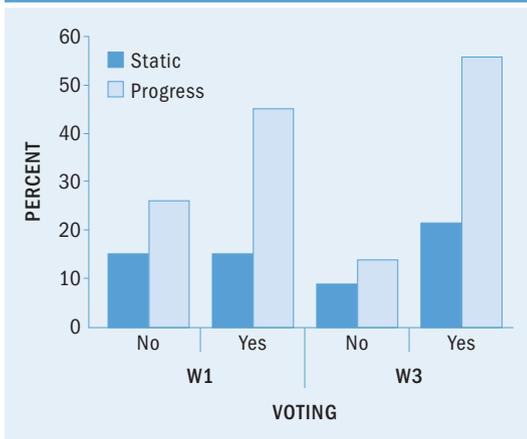
Results

For each analysis, we used the educational progress described above to categorize individuals based on whether they had made progress or had remained static in their educational attainment. The civic engagement variables were analyzed at each wave. All results reported were statistically significant at a $p < .05$ level.

NATIONAL VOTING

For AmeriCorps participants, no significant difference existed between *progress* and *static* respondents on their voting at Wave 1 or Wave 3. Comparison group respondents showed a positive link between educational *progress* and voting; those who made educational *progress* were more likely to vote than those who made no educational gains over four years. Figure 1 shows the educational *progress* and *static* groups for comparison group individuals at both survey points (Wave 1 and Wave 3). This supports previous research documenting the class divide in civic participation.

FIGURE 1
Relationship of voting at Wave 1 and Wave 3 and educational progress over four years for comparison group participants.

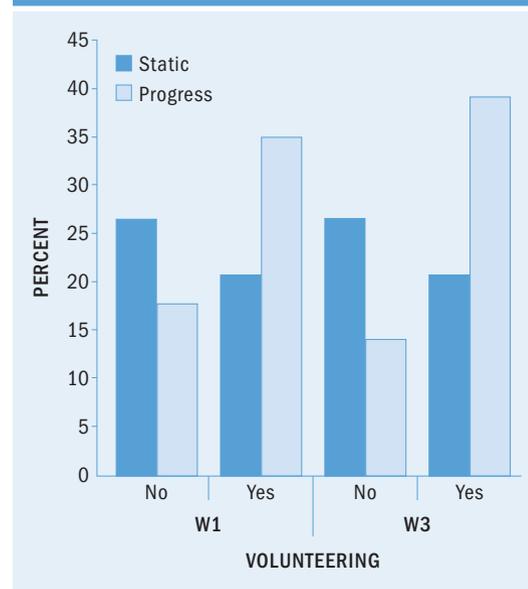


VOLUNTEER SERVICE

For AmeriCorps respondents, there was a positive link between educational progress and volunteer service. Respondents who made educational *progress* were more likely to volunteer at Wave 1 and at Wave 3 than those who were *static*. For comparison respondents, we observed the link between educational *progress* and volunteer service only at Wave 1. This research suggests that programs such as AmeriCorps, which keep young people engaged in service, may also keep them connected and motivated for ongoing continu-

ing education. The relationship between volunteer service and educational progress among AmeriCorps respondents is plotted at both time points in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2
Relationship of volunteering at Wave 1 and Wave 3 and educational progress over four years for AmeriCorps participants.

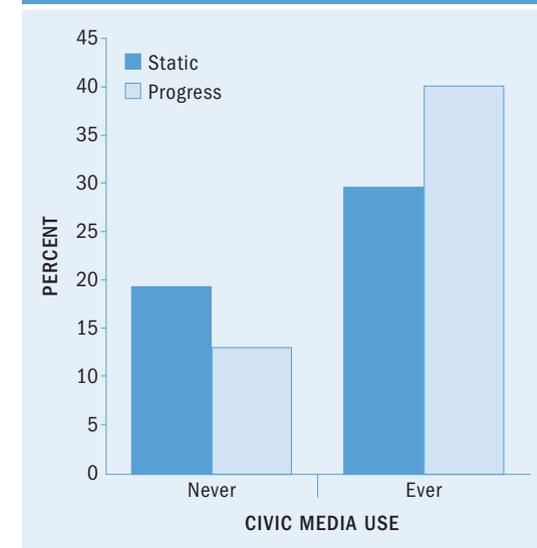


CIVIC MEDIA USE

The positive relationship between educational *progress* and civic engagement continued with civic media use for AmeriCorps and comparison participants. Young adults in the

static education group were more likely to say they never accessed e-mail or the Internet for information on current events. Although most respondents reported that they utilized media for civic purposes, those who said they never did were disproportionately comprised of young adults who had made no educational gains over four years. Civic media use by educational *progress* among AmeriCorps respondents is plotted in Figure 3. (N.B.: Civic media use was asked at Wave 3 only.)

FIGURE 3
Civic media use and educational progress at Wave 3 for AmeriCorps participants.

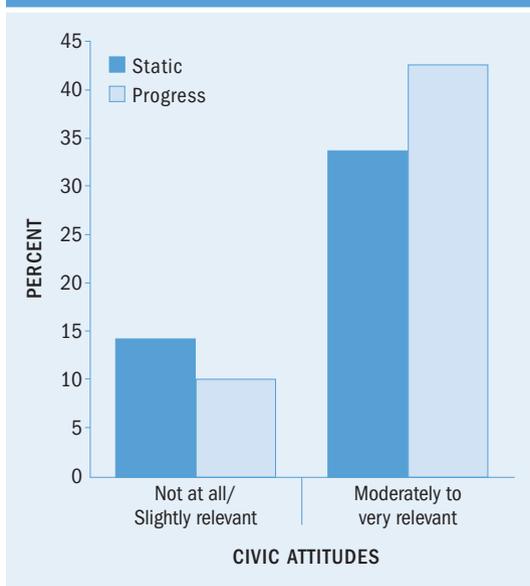


CIVIC ATTITUDES

Young adults from both AmeriCorps and the comparison group who made educational *progress* over four years were more likely to say they investigated AmeriCorps because they wanted to serve their community and reduce inequality (Figure 4). In other words, there was a stronger motivation for the “common good” among those young people who made educational *progress*. (N.B.: Civic attitudes were asked at Wave 3 only.)

FIGURE 4

Percentage of AmeriCorps respondents at Wave 3 who value contributing to the common good through a desire to reduce inequality.



Conclusions

Young adults face several challenges as they transition to adulthood, including coming from financially strapped families, changing marital status, and balancing school and parenthood. The competing demands of school, work, and family no doubt limit the ways individuals can participate in education and engage in civic affairs. Because race and ethnicity can have a bearing on educational progress, special attention must be paid to engaging people of color in educational and civic institutions.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In general, educational progress over four years was linked positively with civic behaviors and attitudes, whereas static education was linked with a pattern of civic disengagement. There are several possible interpretations to these results. First, motivated young adults may engage in both service and educational progress. Second, service may help connect youth to supportive adults and to educational and social institutions. Third, youth may also be more involved in service if they spend time in educational settings where they could be recruited into civic action and where an interest in civics is supported.

The relationship between social class and civic participation is well documented, and education has multiple direct and indirect effects on civic engagement (Verba et al., 1995). Educational institutions play an important role for young adults. They provide resources, opportunities for recruitment, and exposure to civic experiences. Sustained involvement in community service may also keep youth connected to supportive adults who can help them continue their education. Programs such as AmeriCorps can help keep youth connected and involved. Future research should focus on examining more closely the potential of sustained volunteer service for enabling the educational progress of youth as well as developing other civic behaviors and attitudes among young adults.

NOTES

- 1 AmeriCorps is a national service program composed of community-based service programs open to all Americans over the age of 16. While enrolled in AmeriCorps, participants receive a small living stipend and at completion of a year of service receive an educational award that can be used for vocational training or higher education.

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Parental Involvement and Service-Learning

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Parental involvement is essential for effective teaching and learning. The challenge is to create positive and productive working relationships among the home, school, and community. To be successful, schools and communities must work together to actively engage families. This can be achieved by developing programs that support families in helping their children succeed in school. These programs help parents feel more valued and empowered, which encourages their involvement in school. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Service-learning experiences can be an easy entryway into a school that may otherwise seem daunting to parents.

Current research reports a positive relationship between family involvement, academic achievement, and a student's positive attitude toward school. These benefits accrue to students of all ages, regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, or education level (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). To help develop positive relationships, schools can begin by creating a program that welcomes parent involvement, making more personal contact with parents, communicating regularly, and building on cultural values (Hoover-Dempsey

& Sandler, 1995). Service-learning opportunities that encourage parental involvement create another avenue of communication between schools and families and help family members build effective leadership skills (National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, n.d.).

Six Types of Parental Involvement

Joyce Epstein, founder of Network for National Partnership Schools, created a framework that defines six types of

parental involvement in partnership programs:

- **Parenting.** Schools can teach families parenting skills and show them ways to support their children’s learning at home.
- **Communicating.** Schools can communicate with parents regularly about school programs and student progress.
- **Volunteering.** Schools can provide volunteer opportunities that support both the school and students.
- **Learning at home.** Schools can teach parents how to help children with homework and other home learning activities.
- **Decision making.** Schools can invite parents to participate in school decision making as members of planning, advisory, or governance groups.
- **Collaborating with the community.** Schools can coordinate community resources for families and students while finding ways to serve the community (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001).

Epstein’s typology is used as a national model for engaging families. In fact, it is the standard for parental involvement in schools for the National Parent Teacher Association. Research shows that if schools develop and implement each of these six strategies for involving parents, parents will become more

involved with their children’s learning both at home and at school.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Getting parents involved can be difficult. Although parents may have good intentions and want to support their children’s learning, they may not feel qualified to do so or they may be unsure that their contributions would be welcomed. Cultural or language barriers can be problematic. Few school administrators receive training in how to engage parents, especially those in nontraditional families. Teachers report that they would like to get parents more involved, but don’t have ideas on how to do this most effectively.

To encourage more effective parent involvement, both teachers and school administrators need to do more to engage parents. Appealing to parents from a cultural perspective could be key in some service-learning projects. Connecting parents to their children’s learning and developing partnerships with businesses, agencies, and institutions could also help with this. One Chicago high school, for example, involved parents in service-learning through the Logan Square Neighborhood Association.

Well structured service-learning activities support, offer, and build culturally appropriate

home-school partnerships. By inviting parents to participate in service-learning, schools offer an additional setting for parents to get involved in their community, interact with their children, and learn more about school and schoolwork. The transfer of information from children to parents has traditionally been through a mixture of schoolwork, materials sent home from school, and parents overhearing or observing their children at home. Involving them in service-learning projects provides another robust avenue.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Service-learning offers schools an opportunity to connect and develop positive relationships with families. When parents volunteer alongside their children in the service activity, it can spark dialogue about the meaning of service within their family, culture, or ethnic group. Parents can act as liaisons between the school and the neighborhood or community organizations.

Involving parents in service-learning experiences can benefit both students and families by:

1. **Increasing connection to community, citizenship, and family capital.** In service-learning activities, students can observe parents addressing community issues and witness authentic concern for the community. They also see how community

impacts their family. When parents discuss current events with their children and model civic behaviors, children participate in more civic activities (Schine, 1996; Wang, Oates, & Weishew, 1995). Parents who discuss and are involved in community issues are more likely to positively influence the type of adult citizens their children become. Students and parents build and enhance community and family connections during shared service-learning experiences. When families work together to solve community problems, they learn problem solving and civic skills.

2. Improving interaction in parent-child relationships. Research shows that collaborative learning between parents and children while working together on a service-learning project can stimulate positive interactions, interest, and sharing of knowledge. Meaningful dialogue results when students and parents learn to mutually trust and respect each other in service-learning projects. In many families, communication tends to be one-sided, with parents usually acting as the experts. Service-learning helps change this dynamic. Activities where families investigate a problem and take action to improve their neighborhood and community can help parents and students shift roles. As parents express their beliefs about service,



children begin to build their own personal and social values. When parents participate in service-learning activities, it creates another way for parents to talk to their children about the benefits of service and community involvement, and about what they are learning in the process.

3. Improving parent support for student learning. Service-learning takes students out of the classroom and into the community. All families, including those with limited education and those with higher levels of education, can add value through service. During a shared service project, parents can encourage and empower their children to talk about what they've learned and express opinions and ideas.

Through this kind of support, students gain confidence in explaining their ideas to their parents, teachers, and other adults. This can have a positive impact on students' attitudes about themselves and their parents' attitudes about them. Finally, service-learning provides parents with greater access to teachers and other parents. It also allows them to view their impact as parents in a different way.

Effectively Engaging Parents Through Service-Learning

Although the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice emphasize collaborative, mutually beneficial partnerships,

Getting the Family Involved

Integrate family involvement goals and strategies in your service-learning curriculum by doing the following:

- Determine both the service project and the educational standards.
- Identify key goals and strategies for involving families. Invite family members to help you create strategies on how to get more family members involved with their student's service-learning project. Another option is to select these goals or strategies before involving families. Selected strategies may include learning at home or while participating in community activities.
- Develop a family friendly communication tool that explains the service project, educational standards, learning objectives, and how the family can support their children during the project. Include how much time the family should expect to spend on each part of the project. Because some of the materials will be translated into other languages, avoid jargon and complex terminology. Keep communication simple and to the point.
- Provide regular and timely project updates. These updates are a great way to ask for help or specific resources when you need them.
- Invite families to keep involved in the project from beginning to end. Encourage feedback throughout and celebrate accomplishments.

there are no specific guidelines for ensuring high-quality family involvement. Including the following indicators in the service-learning standards would go a long way toward increasing parent involvement in service-learning, and in their children's education in general:

1. Service-learning builds authentic partnerships between families and community. Projects increase positive relationships and build trust between the school, parents, and community. Service-learning projects provide many opportunities for families to choose how they want to be involved.
2. Service-learning allows family involvement to become a part of the curriculum and the students' service-learning experience. Throughout the project, parents receive information and resources to support their students' learning, including learning goals.
3. Service-learning includes effective communication with families as part of the service-learning experience. Schools and teachers clearly communicate service-learning activities so that parents are aware, understand and are given the opportunity to participate. Ongoing dialogue is encouraged between school and parents. Schools view service-learning as a way to improve family capital and facilitate communication between parents and community.

4. Service-learning honors cultural values by having schools and teachers provide activities that respect diversity and cultural differences among all participants. Families are encouraged to share their cultural and ethnic heritage with others throughout the project. Schools and teachers provide training and opportunities for both parents and students to learn more about the recipients of the service project.

Positive Contribution of Parental Involvement

There are a variety of options for parental involvement in service-learning activities. By participating in service-learning activities, parents can gain skills, knowledge, and confidence to better support their children's learning. Teachers need to take responsibility for communicating to parents the benefits of service-learning and how particular project might impact the children's attitude toward school and their learning experience. To get parents more involved, parents need to be asked to do more than just sign a permission slip. Parents should be invited to participate in the project. The sooner parents get involved in the project, the more vested they become.

Service-learning activities that include parental involvement must be thoroughly planned,

connected to the curriculum, and provide ways for both students and their parents to acquire knowledge and skills while making positive contributions.

Examples of ways to Involve Parents in Service-Learning Projects

ELEMENTARY SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT:

KnowH2O: Learning about Water Access while Strengthening Literacy: Elementary school children write and design a class book on water issues in Sub-Saharan Africa and hold a community awareness event to publicize the book and the issues.

Academic Objectives:

- Increase reading skills
- Increase comprehension skills
- Increase use of vocabulary
- Understand sentence structures
- Understand geography of water access

Family Involvement Typologies:

- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Collaborating with the community

Family Involvement Activities:

1. Students survey parents or other family members about water usage and local sources of water.
2. Teacher solicits parent volunteers to help students write a story and create illustrations for a class book projects to demonstrate what they've learned.
3. Family members participate in the community event where students present their books and help raise awareness about water access.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

Poetry is Not Just for Greeting Cards. Middle school students offer a poetry reading series with and for parents, presenting their own work.

Academic Objectives:

- Increase knowledge of poetical forms and traditions
- Increase writing skills
- Improve oral presentation skills

Family Involvement Typologies:

- Communicating
- Learning at home
- Collaborating with the community

Family Involvement Activities:

1. Parents revisit poetry through a learning experience with their children. Children and parents read or recite familiar poems to each other at home and then write their own poem to share at the poetry reading. Poem subjects are linked to other academic areas in the students' curriculum.
2. Students schedule readings to accommodate their families' schedules and to keep attendance small and comfortable for the students reading. Small groups readings a held every Friday throughout the school year so that all parents can attend a session with their students.
3. Parents as well as students reflect on the poetry readings before, during, and after the presentations.

HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT:

Community Mapping: A high school class investigated issues that directly impact young people in their community. To help determine community needs and decide what the specific service-learning project would be, they conduct a community mapping project.

Academic Objectives:

- Increase analytical thinking skills
- Increase decision-making skills

- Increase knowledge of physical and human characteristics of places

Family Involvement Typologies:

- Learning at home
- Collaborating with the community

Family Involvement Activities:

1. Students take a walk with an adult family member in their community. During the walk, student and family member talk about the positive and negatives aspects of their community. Encourage the family member to talk about the community’s history.
2. The student makes a list of the positive and negative aspects of the community and shares with a family member. They talk about the history of the community and identify additional information they’d like to know.
3. The student and family member discuss ideas for different service projects to improve their community.
4. The student writes a report of the community mapping activity and shares the report in class.

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Why Power Matters in Service-Learning

From Youth Development to Cultural Relevancy

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What is power and what does it have to do with service-learning? In a recent study, seven service-learning pioneers and seven service-learning emerging leaders were asked to respond to this two-pronged question (Yoder Clark, 2009). In this study, power was defined using the theoretical tradition of critical theory. Critical theorists examine relationships of power in society and document how power is shared and transferred between social groups (Darder, Baltadano & Torres, 2003).

Critical Theory, Power, and Service-Learning

According to Antonio Gramsci, a critical theorist, power is concentrated in institutions controlled by society's dominant groups. In his view, marginalized social groups are often exploited to maintain the power of ruling classes through social systems like schools (Gramsci, 1971). In this model, schools unintentionally reproduce social inequities by using academic tracking or by assigning district boundaries that group the students with the lowest socioeconomic status together in one school.

Many service-learning proponents contend that service-learning can overcome these social boundaries by providing opportunities for interaction among students from different social groups to work together toward a common goal (Billig, 2000). However, others caution against such broad generalizations of service-learning outcomes (Levine, 2008), noting that service-learning programs that do not follow quality standards fall short of such claims. If they are not well-designed, service-learning programs may perpetuate a “missionary ideological” approach, where one group tries to impose its ideas on another

group without examining the group's traditions, beliefs, and needs. Negligible positive outcomes or even negative consequences for students can be the result (Fine, 2003; Gasong, 2003; Weah, Simmons & Hall, 2003).

Service-Learning from a Missionary Ideology and the Role of Power

Service-learning enacted from a missionary ideology is often carried out by members of a socially dominant culture imposing acts of service for, to, or on a traditionally marginalized group (Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2003). When service-learning like this occurs, the service project rarely engages the group receiving service. The receiving group may perceive the service act as “a hand out,” or “charity.” These interactions can reinforce a myth of powerlessness within the community served while making it harder for historically oppressed groups to gain the necessary skills to solve social problems (Freire, 1970). This process results in what Gramsci would call the reproduction of social inequity. When there is no transfer of expertise or authority between groups, the powerful stay powerful, and the powerless stay powerless.

While there are more equitable service-learning projects (Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2003; Gasong, 2003) and new resources, such as the *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice* (NYLC, 2008), many people

doing service-learning find it difficult to fully incorporate community perspectives and goals. Unfortunately, few specific recommendations for managing power dynamics in the service-learning process exist. This study aims to develop recommendations that promote service-learning as a tool for social equity and justice and avoid missionary ideology.

Why Power Matters to Service-Learning Practitioners

The critical theorist Michel Foucault (1977) viewed power as a multi-directional interaction flowing through relationships, rather than a linear interaction from the powerful to the powerless. This study uses Foucault's concept of power to help combat social inequity, rather than reinforce it, in service-learning projects. Power is particularly important to consider given the many people involved in a service-learning project. Power dynamics occur constantly and simultaneously throughout the service-learning experience—from facilitator to students, from students to those served, from one social community to another, and from one socioeconomic class to another (Yoder Clark, 2009).

Pioneers and Emerging Leaders Identify Locations of Power in Service-Learning

To better understand how to use Foucault's notion of power in service-learning, we must first identify where to find the dynamics of

power within a service-learning experience. Power dynamics, balanced or imbalanced, are created through a person's actions. Being patronizing, condescending, and ignoring the contributions and value others bring to the service experience can lead to a lack of trust among service-learning participants and negatively impact the service-learning project as a whole. Ignoring such behaviors can undermine collaboration and the potential positive impacts of service-learning.

In this study, we interviewed two groups of leaders in the service-learning field, *pioneers* and *emerging leaders*, to determine where in a typical service-learning experience imbalances in power are likely to occur. We also set out to identify best practices to address imbalances of power. We chose the two groups of service-learning leaders because of their emphasis on social justice and equity.

We selected ten names of service-learning pioneers from the seminal text *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on its Origins, Practice and Future* (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). An email was sent asking them to participate in the study. Seven pioneers responded to the email recruitment letter.

The *emerging leaders* were recruited from among participants in the Service-Learning Emerging Leaders project funded by the Kellogg Foundation, an effort to increase

diversity within the service-learning field by providing professional development and support to a national cohort of diverse service-learning practitioners under 30. For this study, the emerging leaders selected needed knowledge of program and curriculum development to comment on best practices for addressing issues of power in the service-learning process. The seven emerging leaders who were engaged in creating service-learning programs or curriculum within their organizations were chosen to participate. All contacted agreed to participate and were eventually interviewed.

While both pioneers and emerging leaders are recognized as national leaders in the field of service-learning, there are important differences between them. In the pioneer group, there were two women and two who represented marginalized groups (one African American male and one Filipina). Of the seven emerging leaders, four were female, three were Hispanic, three were African American, and one was White. There were also differences between the two groups in how long they had been within their field and the focus of their service-learning work. Most pioneers worked with undergraduate students in university settings. Conducting service work for a community was a requirement. The emerging leaders, in contrast, were mostly employed within nonprofit organizations that work directly

with diverse communities. Only one emerging leader was a charter school teacher and administrator. Finally, the pioneers had much more experience in the service-learning field. All of the seven pioneers began their careers in service-learning as the field developed in the 1960s and 1970s and continue to influence the field today. The emerging leaders had an average of eight years of field experience.

Consistent with guidelines for narrative inquiry (Chase, 2005), open-ended questions, developed in advance, were asked. During the interview, questions were used to direct conversations, but not as a strict script. We conducted follow-up interviews when neces-

sary. During the process, personal stories were encouraged and recorded. Interview questions with emerging leaders addressed the concept of power in service-learning for, as well as best practices contributing to successful attention to power. We also explored the degree to which critical theory influenced the leaders service-learning practice and program development. We compared the two sets of interviews to identify emergent themes. Study findings were reviewed by interviewees and they provided consent to share their stories.

Results identifying locations of power in service-learning practice by each group of leaders are outlined in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Boundaries of Power in Service-Learning

Boundaries of Power in Service-Learning Identified by Pioneers	Boundaries of Power in Service-Learning Identified by Emerging Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A dominant group was employed to “serve” a disenfranchised group. – Differences in socioeconomic. – Patronizing terminology and behavior by those “serving” on those “served” – Community knowledge was valued less than those “serving” the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Imbalances between service-learning facilitators and students – Imbalances between socioeconomic classes and cultures – Imbalances between districts and schools – Imbalances between teachers and students – Imbalances between outside organizations doing service and the community – Imbalances between demands of funding agencies and the needs of the community

To validate the interview findings, we reviewed articles in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* from 1994–2007. Nine articles cited critical theory and used critical theory to inform power dynamics in service-learning practice. Table 1 outlines the power imbalances identified within the literature. Emergent themes from the literature were compared to emergent themes addressing power from the interviews (Table 1). We found that critical theoretical themes used to address power in the literature parallel the insights of the service-learning leaders (Figure 1), further validating the results. The research cited in Table 1 support the need for increased attention to power dynamics within service-learning (Deans, 1999; Liu, 2000; Taylor, 2002).

Six Strategies for Addressing Power in Service-Learning Practice

We asked service-learning leaders to consider how they have addressed imbalances of power in their practice. Leaders identified strategies that were grouped into six different principles for addressing power within service-learning (see Figure 2).

We constructed six principles of power to align with critical theory strategies identified in both interviews and in the literature. The following six principles are specific recommendations for strategies by the service-learning leaders and the literature on how to address power within service-learning practice.

1. DEVELOP PERSONAL POWER

With this principle, people closely examine their actions throughout the service-learning experience and reflect on it to get more out of the process. While all service-learning project participants interact through relationships involving power, to truly “empower” participants, conscious attention must be focused on developing their personal skills and abilities throughout the project. Identity formation exercises can help foster individual development. Participants have a chance to take time to explore the values and assets they bring to the service-learning experience. Participants can then consider their own sociocultural heritage and see how this might have affected their interactions with others in the service experience (Dunlap, et al., 2007; Green, 2001; Kiely, 2005; Madsen-Camacho, 2004; Pompa, 2002; Varlotta, 1996; Madsen-Camacho, 2004). Participants can reflect on similarities and differences with others in the service experience. By doing so, participants see firsthand how their abilities and skills add to and complement those of the other stakeholders (Varlotta, 1996; Green, 2001). Finally, all participants determine what skills they need to build to sustain long lasting benefits from the service experience (Varlotta, 1996).

TABLE 1
Emergent Themes in the Literature Indicating Boundaries of Power in Service-Learning Practice

Power Imbalance	Authors
1. Underserved group and dominant group	Madsen-Camacho (2004); Green (2001); Dunlap et al. (2007); Kiely (2005); Pompa (2002); Varlotta (1996)
2. Differences in socioeconomic	Madsen-Camacho (2004); Green (2001); Dunlap et al. (2007); Kiely (2005); Pompa (2002); Varlotta (1996)
3. Communication between those served and those serving	Varlotta (1996); Pompa (2002)
4. Imbalances between institution providing service and those receiving it	Madsen-Camacho (2004); Kiely (2005); Pompa (2002)
5. Imbalances in control of service project	Green (2001); Pompa (2002)

2. CREATE SPACE FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

With this principle, once the assets and needs of service providers and community members are identified, all involved stakeholders should be notified. The focus should be on helping participants gain needed skills while building on the community's skills and expertise. Finally, give indigenous leadership meaningful roles throughout the service process.

3. LEARN IN CONTEXT

With this principle, creating learning goals that include participants' social and cultural experiences can influence power dynamics in several ways. First, as practitioners relate the sociocultural experiences of those participating in the service project to the content of what is learned, students can analyze the potential risks for inequity associated with their project. For example, if the service project is about cleaning up a community, youth can see how science relates to the community's values and norms. They can then relate that back to how science has been used in similar communities and its role in achieving goals. To bolster the importance of science, examples of scientists from each social group involved in the service project should be provided. Examples should include information on how this community can use this knowledge to find their own power.

4. BUILD COMMUNITY OVER THE LONG TERM

With this principle, the organization instigating the service project should focus on building long-term equitable relationships to address potential imbalances in power. Service-learning leaders identified several steps to create these relationships including: fostering trust, valuing collaboration and cooperation, communicating openly with all stakeholders, advocating for community members, making long-term commitments to communities and respecting diversity in all its forms. This principle can help ensure that sustainable service projects are developed that outlast the involvement of the organization instigating service.

5. EXPLICITLY NAME POWER RELATIONSHIPS

With this principle, the process of respectfully acknowledging and confronting differences in power within the service experience can build trust among different groups in society. Working together toward more equitable power dynamics is an essential step in building truly reciprocal and collaborative relationships.

6. PRODUCE MEANINGFUL ACTION TOWARD TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

With this principle, transformational, long-term change can be accomplished in communities when participants are given roles that

have value, meaning and importance within the service project. Providing mentors ensures that progress won't end if the community members who began the project leave. Establishing collaborations and partnerships with additional community organizations achieves long-term community wide support for the project and access to additional expertise. To ensure that the project is on track, project goals should be regularly monitored and assessed.

The six principles of power represent an ongoing study into power dynamics in service-learning. The preliminary interview data gathered here will be used in future studies as the principles continue to be field tested and refined.

Is Power Relevant to Service-Learning?

Service-learning standards represent the fields' current measure of quality. The addition of the six principles of power provided here may help expand and deepen the existing standards to better address the needs of all participants in the service-learning process. The topic of power is especially relevant to historically marginalized social groups who struggle daily for access to power. Through identifying and naming these struggles for power as they play out within the service-learning experience, we may be getting closer to achieving equality in service-learning.

FIGURE 2
Six principles of best practice for addressing power in service-learning compared with K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice (Yoder Clark, 2009).

Principle for Addressing Power	Service-Learning Standards	Strategies from Critical Theory	Strategies from Service-Learning Pioneers	Strategies from Service-Learning Literature	Strategies from Service-Learning Emerging Leaders
1. Develop personal power	Youth Voice	Personal transformation through ideological clarity Acknowledge subjectivity	Lead through facilitation Employ emergent leaders in the community	Identity formation	Engage indigenous leadership Acknowledge and using student experience
2. Create space for partnership with all stakeholders	Youth Voice Diversity Partnerships	Acknowledge subjectivity	Develop community power and assets simultaneously Employ emergent leaders in the community	Identity formation	Allow youth voice Train in necessary skills and personal development
3. Learn in context	Link to Curriculum	Situate Learning in a Social Context	Acknowledge the role of context in all work Use culturally reflective mentorship	Mutual immersion model Mentorship in prison writing program and reading tutoring	Use relevant curriculum that builds off life and real world experiences Match peer-to-peer mentors by socioeconomics, culture, and age

Continued on next page

FIGURE 2 (continued)
 Six principles of best practice for addressing power in service-learning compared with K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice (Yoder Clark, 2009).

Principle for Addressing Power	Service-Learning Standards	Strategies from Critical Theory	Strategies from Service-Learning Pioneers	Strategies from Service-Learning Literature	Strategies from Service-Learning Emerging Leaders
4. Build community over the long term	Partnerships Diversity Duration and Intensity	Build connections through establishing community	Develop long-term organizational partnerships Become a member of the community Build community Act as advocates for community members	Relationship development Long-term sustainable projects	Build trust Partner with outside groups to work with youth Create collaborative cooperative relationships Foster open communication Build community
5. Explicitly name power relationships	Reflection	Name and engage manifestations of power	Explicitly address and naming power	Need to address power in service-learning	Implicitly address power relationships through program elements
6. Produce meaningful action toward transformational change	Meaningful Service Progress Monitoring	Encourage transformational change in the world	Encourage meaningful positive roles for youth	Action toward change	Offer meaningful opportunities for youth to create change Have high standards Connect curriculum to purpose and action Create opportunities for success

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Profiles of National Nonprofit Organizations and Service-Learning

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While much service-learning is planned and implemented by teachers and students in the K-12 classroom or institutions of higher education, service-learning is also increasingly becoming a part of the mission of national nonprofit organizations that serve young people. Community-based organizations have long been viewed as partners in service-learning with expertise in connecting young people to opportunities to meet genuine community needs. But as many school districts and communities look to extend the learning day for students, particularly economically disadvantaged students, these organizations are also leading the way in connecting out-of-school time with rich academic content.

The organizations profiled here represent a broad range of service-learning opportunities for young people outside the traditional classroom setting. Some, like National Council of La Raza, are relative newcomers to service-learning, developing focused pilot programs. Some organizations like Youth Service America and 4-H have a broad reach and focus. Others, like Earth Force, have a deeper focus with smaller numbers of youth.

While these profiles represent only a slice of the organizations working with young people on service-learning, they highlight some of the important educational opportunities young people have to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aspirations they need to succeed in school, grow to healthy adulthood, and contribute to their communities throughout their lives.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

Communities In Schools

www.cisnet.org

Communities In Schools helps connect existing community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. CIS is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, addressing the multitude of reasons that 1.2 million children drop out of school every year. It works by placing trained site coordinators in schools to work with teachers, principals, and parents in creating a comprehensive strategy to support the students most at risk. "Our goal is to ensure every child realizes his or her full potential," said Daniel Cardinali, CIS President.

THE COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

CIS helps communities assess the needs of their youth. Site coordinators then design plans for meeting those needs, using existing resources and pulling in the right strategies and best partners available. In some schools, services are made available to all students and their families. In other schools, CIS connects services with particular students in need, either on a one-time basis or as part of a case management system. CIS also brings community resources to students and families through afterschool programs.

Ultimately, CIS strives to provide every child with "Five Basics":

- a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- a safe place to learn and grow
- a healthy start and a healthy future
- a marketable skill to use upon graduation
- a chance to give back to peers and community

Service-learning is one strategy often used to address the fifth basic: a chance to give back to peers and community. "We want children to use their talents to be constructive in their communities. But children, especially children in poverty, don't often think of themselves as being transformational," said Cardinali. He added, "When a child is told that life is not just about receiving, it is about giving, a sense of purpose is created. There becomes a meaning behind talents. This work becomes more critical when outside forces have diminished the child's self worth. Service-learning breaks through the negative noise."

CIS aims for the integration of services, aligning service-learning with the reform measures already in place.

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN CIS

CIS serves 3,400 schools and education sites in 26 states and the District of Columbia, reaching the most economically disadvantaged families, with 91 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Service-learning is considered a critical strategy in 75 percent of the CIS schools.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Service-learning is a strategy often used to increase academic achievement. CIS evaluation data doesn't look at service-learning as a stand-alone strategy, but represents the outcomes from all of the organization's coordinated services. CIS reports the following academic outcomes: 79 percent of students tracked for academics showed improvement in academic achievement; 76 percent of students tracked for poor attendance improved their attendance; 81 percent of students tracked for suspension risk had fewer suspensions.

Service-learning is also a strategy to help young people stay in school: 88 percent of students tracked for promotion risk were promoted to the next grade; 83 percent of eligible CIS-tracked seniors graduated; 97 percent of students tracked as potential dropouts remained in school at the end of the 2007–2008 school year.

City Year

www.cityyear.org

City Year unites young adults (ages 17–24) of all backgrounds for a year of full-time service, giving them the skills and opportunities to change the world. Corps members serve in schools in a focused effort to help students

stay on track and get back on track to graduate. In the United States, a student gives up on school every 26 seconds. “We believe that national service organizations, like City Year, can address major national issues like the dropout crisis,” said Dr. Max Klau, Director of Leadership Development at City Year.

THE CITY YEAR APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning is utilized at City Year at two levels. Both the corps members and the students they serve participate in service-learning. Klau commented, “It is central to what we do—the purpose of what we do.”

“Our corps members are becoming ‘big citizens’ who take personal responsibility for their communities,” said Klau. The majority of City Year corps members serve full-time in schools providing academic support, running after school programs, and planning events—like schoolwide literacy days or parent engagement nights—that make the school environment more welcoming and supportive. Other corps members run out-of-school youth leadership programs, or plan large scale physical service projects that engage hundreds of volunteers in service. Corps members receive training focused on six civic leadership competencies, including working with children and youth, team leadership, project planning and management, civic knowledge,

communication, and community assessment. “They are trained to give powerful service,” said Klau.

In addition to corps members being engaged in service-learning, they also model that engagement for the students they serve. They teach students how to be active in their communities and make a difference. Teams of corps members lead activities and curricula which enable students to understand challenges facing their communities and take a role in addressing them. Klau explained, “Many of our afterschool programs include service-learning—we know it is good for corps members and good for their students.”

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN CITY YEAR

City Year has 20 locations within the United States and one in South Africa, with all 1,700 corps members participating in service-learning this year. While annual data on service-learning isn’t readily available, since 1988, City Year’s more than 12,500 corps members have served more than 1 million children; completed more than 20 million hours of service; and engaged more than 1 million citizens in service.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Data from a nationwide study reveals that corps members become active citizens.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY YEAR

Specific results include: when compared with the voting behavior of 18 to 40-year-olds in the national population, City Year alumni were 45 percent more likely to vote; nearly 70 percent of City Year alumni volunteer 10 hours a month, making them 65 percent more likely to be engaged in volunteer activities than similarly situated individuals in the national population; at least 90 percent of alumni reported that their City Year experience contributed to their ability to lead others; 75 percent of alumni reported that City Year contributed to their ability to solve problems in their communities; 81 percent of alumni completed additional school after City Year, including 83 percent of alumni

who came to City Year without a GED or high school diploma.

The impact of corps members in schools is currently assessed annually through surveys. Roughly 90 percent of principals reported that City Year had an impact on the academic performance of students tutored; 95 percent of teachers reported that corps members had a positive impact on student time spent on learning tasks; 83 percent of teachers felt that corps members helped improve students active engagement in learning; 81 percent of teachers reported that corps members have helped improve the academic performance of the students they are tutoring. In addition,

City Year is starting to measure student-level data around academic outcomes through location-based intensive academic studies.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY YEAR

Earth Force

www.earthforce.org

“Earth Force engages young people as active citizens who improve the environment and their communities now and in the future. We see service-learning as one of the most effective strategies for accomplishing our commitment to youth civic engagement,” said Lisa Bardwell, President and CEO of Earth Force. Earth Force trains and supports educators as they implement a six-step model for engaging young people. Students explore local community issues, and then develop and implement a service-learning project that addresses one of those issues.

THE EARTH FORCE APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

Local Earth Force offices and affiliates partner with schools and community-based organizations interested in using service-learning in or out of the classroom to address local issues. Typically the partnership is with a group of teachers, an entire school, school district, or organization rather than a single teacher. Earth Force focuses on building capacity with partners so that young people have multiple opportunities to authentically participate in their communities and practice the leadership skills that will drive sustained civic commitment and environmental stewardship.

“We do whatever it takes to embed service-learning and build capacity within the schools and community,” said Bardwell. The partnership may include training, curriculum materials, site visits, assistance with lesson planning and project coordination, program evaluation, identifying funding, local trainings and networking opportunities—local support that helps educators connect with the community and create hands-on learning experiences for young people.

The Earth Force approach involves training educators in a six-step service-learning process that guides the young people in initiating a community environmental inventory; selecting an issue; researching policy and community practice; identifying options for influencing policy and practice; planning and taking civic action; and finally, reflecting by looking back and ahead.

In training educators across the country in this process, Earth Force stresses the importance of youth voice. “Our commitment to the youth-driven aspect of service-learning is deeply embedded in our process, with opportunities for young people to practice making good decisions together,” Bardwell commented. Earth Force believes that ultimately, encouraging this kind of youth-led work is about changing our collective view of young people, from problems to resources, from

consumers to producers, and from clients to civic actors.

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Earth Force is present in 30 communities, working annually with 17,000 young people and 700 educators. All of those students and educators are engaged in service-learning. In addition to schools and school districts, Earth Force partners with community-based organizations, government agencies, and businesses nationwide. It operates six local offices throughout the country and supports partners doing Earth Force programming in another 24 communities. “We are very proud of our community-based focus and our ability to make change across the country through lasting partnerships,” Bardwell added.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Since 1997, Brandeis University has measured the impact of the Earth Force program on educators and students. Educator and student surveys over the past four years consistently show that taking part in Earth Force enhances students’ civic skills, attitudes, and knowledge. Specifically, Earth Force students make substantial gains in civic action and problem solving skills; Earth Force students show positive, statistically significant gains in attitudes related to civic involvement and environmental stewardship; and, Earth Force

educators are more positive about their own teaching, their students, and their commitment to use community and environmental issues in their classes.

According to Bardwell, Earth Force sees that as students gain civic skills they begin to think of themselves as civic agents in their communities. In addition, students achieve a

greater sense of self and step up as environmental stewards.

Furthermore, Earth Force aims to change how adults view and engage young people. Teachers change how they teach, realizing the importance of stepping back and allowing students to become leaders and guide their own learning. Likewise, community members

and partners learn to recognize and welcome the contributions young people can make.

“Our ultimate goal is to engage young people effectively in their communities,” said Bardwell. “They bring creativity, passion, and power and can be the driving force for unimaginable progress in our communities, if the adults can get out of the way!”



PHOTO COURTESY OF EARTH FORCE

Girl Scouts of the USA

www.girlscouts.org

According to its mission, “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” Allowing the organization to better meet its mission while simultaneously meeting the changing needs of girls, the organiza-

tion began raising the bar on its leadership programming in 2008, transforming decades of high-quality community service to service-learning that has measurable outcomes and community impact.

“Service-learning really resonates with the girls—they get excited about the endless possibilities,” said Karen Scheuerer, Manager of Global Action with Girl Scouts of the USA.

Service-learning comes to life in part through the New Girl Leadership Experience, a model that includes three keys—discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.

THE GIRL SCOUT APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

The first Girl Scout Troop was formed in 1912. Since then the organization has grown to 3.3 million Girl Scouts around the world—2.4 million girl members and 928,000 adult members working primarily as volunteers.

With a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to elevate its leadership programming and specifically the Take Action component, a major training initiative is underway; 76 of the 112 councils and regional offices and 1,700 volunteers have received the five-hour training in the new service-learning model. “This is a period of transition and transformation,” said Scheuerer.

How service-learning is implemented at the troop level varies greatly but is designed to be more inclusive and empowering. Three key components must be in place: troop members must be girl-led, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively. These three components look very different at each grade level, and the model provides tools and ideas for how to implement it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

Service-learning is also the foundation for the Girl Scout award program. The gold award is the Girl Scouts' highest honor and centers around the development and implementation of a service-learning project. Girls follow the award's standards of excellence by choosing an issue, investigating, engaging others, creating a plan, and taking action to address the root cause of the issue so that the solution has a measurable and sustainable impact. Finally, girls reflect on their work and inspire others by sharing it.

As an example of the kind of service-learning that Girl Scouts are engaged in, Malia, a Girl Scout in Los Angeles, Calif., researched a high-traffic area where trucks were repeatedly involved in collisions. While trucks loosely weren't allowed on the route, she learned that GPS devices were directing drivers to the hazardous area and that there were no road signs to warn drivers of the impending steep mountain area. She advocated for a law to ban trucks from the route

by letter-writing, petition-signing, public speaking, and testifying before the state legislature's transportation committee. After her research, another truck accident occurred, killing two people and injuring a dozen others. In August 2009, a law to ban trucks on Angeles Crest Highway was passed because of her efforts.

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

More than 8,500 Girl Scouts will be engaged in service-learning through the grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service by the end of 2011, but all Girl Scouts are engaged in some level of community service or service-learning.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

To develop this new model, the Girl Scout Research Institute reached out to various youth development experts, volunteers, councils, and national staff. From this collaborative, intensive effort, 15 short-term

and intermediate outcomes of the New Girl Leadership Experience were identified and are measured by troop leaders: girls develop a strong sense of self, girls develop positive values, girls gain practical life skills; girls seek challenges in the world; girls develop critical thinking; girls develop healthy relationships; girls promote cooperation and team building; girls can resolve conflicts; girls advance diversity in a multicultural world; girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally; girls can identify community needs; girls are resourceful problem solvers; girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally; girls educate and inspire others to act; girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

These outcomes are designed to meet the long-term outcome, "Girls lead with courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place."

4-H

www.4-h.org

“4-H has a very long history involving young people making a difference,” said Dr. Barbara Stone, Vice President of Partner Operations for the National 4-H Council. While 4-H focuses on the development of citizenship skills through service, not service-learning per se, students are certainly serving and learning when involved in 4-H programs. 4-H provides hands-on learning experiences and can be found in every county in every state, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and over 80 countries around the world. It is a program of the USDA, supported by the National 4-H Council, the national nonprofit, private sector partner of 4-H, and delivered by 106 land-grant universities across the country.

THE 4-H APPROACH TO SERVICE

The 4-H pledge describes what this youth development organization is all about: “I Pledge my Head to clearer thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service, and my Health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.”

Young people are guided by National 4-H curriculum in three core missions: science, engineering, and technology; citizenship; and,

healthy living. The citizenship component is most often found in 4-H Clubs where members choose one or more topics of interest on which to focus for an extended period of time.

Members conduct a wide variety of projects with service often an underlying theme. According to Stone, when students start a project, they ask themselves, “What will we learn? What will we contribute? How will we lead?” She added, “Contribution is an expectation when you are in 4-H.” Project topics are diverse and might range from rocketry to GPS mapping, from DNA analysis to public speaking, from photography to nutrition.

“The Club program is the highest form of youth development, where opportunities exist to belong, develop life skills and show generosity occur with the necessary duration,” said Stone. In addition to the Club program, 4-H is also offers school-day enrichment, afterschool programming, camps, and an online option.

4-H is partnering with the Corporation for National and Community Service to promote the MLK Year of Service for all of its members. January 18, 2010 marked the start of the year-long process. Through this initiative, 4-H offered a new toolkit and is becoming more intentional about documenting the number of service hours that members contribute to their communities.

THE SCOPE OF 4-H SERVICE

Approximately 6 million young people from every state in the country, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and over 80 countries around the world participate in 4-H, supported by 500,000 volunteers. Currently 2.9 million of those members are focusing on citizenship through 4-H.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

The National 4-H Council supports a longitudinal study, which began in 2001. Researchers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University have discovered that, when compared to other youth, 4-H members are 25 percent more likely to contribute to their families, themselves, and their communities; more likely to see themselves going to college compared to other youth; 41 percent less likely to engage in risk/problem behavior. “We’ve always known this,” said Stone. “Now we have real data to prove it.”

The study also shows that youth involved in high quality, structured out-of-school programs are more likely to develop competence, confidence, character, caring and connection. With these assets and as their participation in 4-H programs increase, they are more likely to be at the highest levels of contributions in their communities.

National Council of La Raza

www.nclr.org

The National Council of La Raza—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the country—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. To do this, NCLR supports nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations in the areas of education, assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, employment and economic status, and health. The NCLR Affiliate Network is divided into six single-state and multistate regions of the country: California, Texas, Far West, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast. NCLR Affiliates reach millions of Latinos each year in 41 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

THE NCLR APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning is new to NCLR. Having been funded by State Farm for many years in other education project areas, State Farm came to NCLR believing that the organization was in a good position to utilize service-learning to help fulfill its education-related goals. NCLR agreed and hired its first service-learning coordinator, Sarah DeCamps, in 2008.

DeCamps manages NCLR's service-learning pilot program, which seeks to address social

conditions that foster educational injustice through an established culture of service-learning and leadership development in three of its affiliated charter schools—Lighthouse Community Charter School in Oakland, California; East Austin College Prep Academy in Austin, Texas; and Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles, California—to provide a high level of technical support and training.

“The schools are doing a really good job of prioritizing and helping the students learn the process of service-learning,” said DeCamps. All three schools are launching service-learning through their advisory classes serving an entire grade level. From there, classrooms are developing projects.

As pilot sites, DeCamps intends to use their experiences in developing a service-learning and youth leadership curriculum that takes advantage of the advisory class and includes a strong youth voice component. “Helping schools integrate youth voice has been a challenging but critical piece of advancing service-learning in these schools. With service-learning, teachers are beginning to realize that they cannot plan lessons and service-learning projects without student support and buy-in,” said DeCamps.

Students at the three schools have initiated projects like planting an organic community garden and learning about healthy living; addressing local community needs such as teen pregnancy, mental health, and smoking;



PHOTO COURTESY OF NCLR



and identifying parts of their own school in desperate need of repair and beautification to enhance school pride.

In addition to school-based service-learning, NCLR has developed a youth leadership team with eight students from each school who were selected through an interview and application process. These students have received advanced NCLR service-learning

and youth leadership training. They participated in specially designed Youth Voice Institutes at their respective schools. They presented a workshop at the 2010 National Service-Learning Conference titled *Yo Soy De/I Am From: A Middle School Latino Service-Learning Project for Youth Voice and Leadership*.

SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

In its initial phase, service-learning at NCLR consists of the three pilot sites. At each middle school, students in one grade level are all participating in service-learning, approximately 200 total.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

The intended short-term outcomes of NCLR's two-year service-learning pilot program are centered around improving students' educational opportunities and skills through service-learning. "This pilot period is a chance to learn and gather data," said DeCamps.

With dropout prevention not being a critical issue in these college-preparatory charter schools, NCLR is focusing on the skills that Latino students need to succeed throughout their lives. In the fall of 2009, an evaluation was started via surveys and focus groups with participants. Results show gains in leadership and decision-making skills. Students reported feeling as though they are change agents working on issues they identified and are able to solve in their own communities. Teachers reported seeing academic and behavioral changes in their students. Teachers reported believing that service-learning has been a life-changing experience for their students.

Long-term outcomes of the program involve NCLR spreading the service-learning methodology to more Affiliates by creating a middle school leadership curriculum and national training model for service-learning implementation led by students and teachers in the network.

PeaceJam

www.peacejam.org

PeaceJam is an international education program that connects young people with Nobel Peace Laureates to learn about and address root problems in our world today. PeaceJam is built on three core components: education, inspiration and action. Participating Nobel Peace Laureates believe, according to Dr. Kate Cumbo, PeaceJam Director of Programs, “Young people need to use service-learning to address the complex issues we’ve created in our world. It is a necessity!”

THE PEACEJAM APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

PeaceJam’s service-learning process starts with education as kindergarten through university students are guided through age-appropriate, award-winning curriculum centered around the lives and work of participating Nobel Peace Laureates. Teachers are trained by PeaceJam to facilitate standards-based literacy, civics, and geography content; leadership development; conflict resolution; and character development. The lessons all relate back to the work of the Laureates.

Education is followed by inspiration. “Motivation is often lacking. We think that it is really important that young people see themselves as agents of change and feel as though they are part of something really important,” said Cumbo. This inspiration comes through

online social networking on the PeaceJam website as students inspire each other by connecting around a shared purpose. Cumbo added, “They start to feel as though they are part of a larger movement.” In addition, students are deeply inspired at regional PeaceJam conferences, as they interact with and present their work to Laureates. Students get to know each Laureate on a personal level, finding inspiration from their choice to dedicate their lives to peace, equality, justice and a better world.

Only after being properly educated and inspired, students respond to PeaceJam’s Global Call to Action, initiating projects designed to address the most pressing issues in our world. Students and teachers follow the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice as they implement widely-varied projects based on both local and global community needs. Students conduct research and seek to deeply understand the issue. They then develop and implement their plan and register their project on the PeaceJam website. The Call to Action comes directly from the participating Nobel Peace Laureates. The movement aims to create and track one billion projects that address ten of the most pressing problems in our world.

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Twelve Nobel Peace Laureates are working with youth around the world through Peace-

Jam’s global network of Affiliate offices. Each year, approximately 15,000 students from around the world participate in PeaceJam with more than 600,000 participating since the organization’s inception in 1996. Programs exist in academic or nonacademic settings ranging from traditional classrooms to afterschool programs to faith-based groups. It is often used as a schoolwide or districtwide program, integrated into core curriculum and electives.

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

PeaceJam’s goal is to increase students’ knowledge, inspiration and action. Academic outcomes include increased knowledge around social studies standards and the geopolitical issues of the Laureates’ work. Students better understand patterns and common themes in dealing with complex social justice, human rights, and environmental issues through increased critical thinking skills. Students better understand the roots of violence and strategies to address them. And finally, PeaceJam aims to create a change in behavior—an increase in action.

“Ultimately, our goal is support youth to gain the knowledge, skills, and passion to create world peace,” said Cumbo. “PeaceJam has embraced the academics of service-learning and combined that with movement-building. That is what needs to happen to make this a global movement.”

Youth Service America

www.ysa.org

Youth Service America is an international nonprofit resource center. It partners with thousands of organizations in more than 100 countries to improve communities by increasing the number and the diversity of young people, ages 5–25, serving in substantive roles. “We see youth engagement as a spectrum with many entry points,” notes Susan Abravanel, Vice President of Education at YSA. “Whether young people begin to express their voice and connect to service through a single activity, a school-based service-learning project, or an extended Semester of Service, YSA wants to ensure that they are encouraged and supported.”

THE YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA APPROACH TO SERVICE-LEARNING

YSA promotes and facilitates entry into service-learning through a variety of programs, each intentionally promoting the IPARDC model of service-learning: Investigation, Preparation and Planning, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration and Celebration. All service-learning participation is guided by the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

Most significant for service-learning, according to Abravanel, is YSA’s Semester of Service

concept which introduces and supports an extended service-learning framework. Semester of Service begins with Martin Luther King Day of Service in January, culminates on Global Youth Service Day in late April, and builds on the Duration and Intensity standard of the Service-Learning Standards. Incorporating two signature service events and the time in between them, Semester of Service provides students with multiple opportunities to comprehensively address a meaningful community need connected to intentional learning goals or academic standards. “We believe that this extends the service-learning project into a service-learning process,” said Abravanel. “A process more easily becomes a habit that can be sustained.” The Semester of Service concept is designed to be fluid and can occur at any point throughout the year, incorporating other “days of service” such as the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance.

YSA recognizes that educators and youth must take one step at a time towards implementing effective service-learning. “Events such as YSA’s Global Youth Service Day, the largest service event in the world, add value to the service-learning spectrum,” commented Abravanel. “Participation in Global Youth Service Day creates a level of excitement and the recognition that they, too, are part of a huge, global movement.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF YSA

Following the Semester of Service framework, STEMaster of Service supports middle school teachers, community partners, and students in a dozen high-dropout states as they plan and implement sustainable, environmentally-focused service-learning projects. This three-year program is designed to involve a total of 75 schools, (25 each year), using service-learning as a strategy to enhance learning and skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Grants and awards offered throughout the year encourage, support and motivate the engagement of youth in service-learning. YSA also provides planning and strategy guides, curriculum modules, and training opportunities to strengthen the capacity and enhance the quality of youth service and service-learning projects.

THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Over the past 23 years, YSA has introduced more than 40 million young people, in thousands of communities worldwide, to service and service-learning by working with partners in all sectors (youth-serving, education, national service, nonprofit, faith-based, and government).

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

YSA applies the following four outcome measures to assess all programs:

- Each YSA program is designed to increase the *scale* of the youth service movement and be replicable. Based on project reports submitted, in 2009 more than 1,000,000 youth around the world participated in YSA's campaigns. Of that number, 171,329 served in U.S. schools and communities; and 56,711 young people reported their engagement with YSA service-learning initiatives, making connections between standards-based learning and their community needs.
- YSA programs seek to incorporate *diversity* through intentional outreach to a diverse youth population including those not traditionally asked to serve. Almost 50 percent of those who participated in a YSA service campaign are children and youth of color, and 45 percent were identified as coming from low-income families.

- YSA measures the *impact of a program on the young person*, including student academic achievement, leadership development, and career/workforce readiness. Recipients of YSA's service-learning grants reported that 52 percent of students had a higher motivation to learn; 56 percent reported a greater understanding of the academic topics covered; and 75 percent of students demonstrated increased initia-

tive at the end of the service-learning experiences.

- YSA also measures the *impact of the youth service on the community*. In addition to the \$430,000 in grants that YSA invested to support youth engagement in communities in 2009, these young people contributed 1,827,962 hours of service, an estimated value of \$37,016,271.



PHOTO COURTESY OF YSA

More about Growing to Greatness

The desire to serve, to do meaningful work that is of value to other people, is universal. *Growing to Greatness* provides community leaders, educators, and policy-makers with critical information and resources to mobilize local people, including neighborhood youth[s], to solve local problems. It is an important overview of the service-learning field's progress to date in creating not only active citizens, but also future leaders eager to be the agents of change.

Dorothy Stoneman
President and Founder, YouthBuild USA

Growing to Greatness 2006 brought renewed power and insight to our shared commitment to service-learning and its impact and potential on “both sides of the hyphen.” Together, NYLC and State Farm are playing an important leadership role for the field—by making the case, pointing to what works, and reminding us yet again that we will only achieve the full promise of this great country when young people are viewed as important resources and partners in the work to be done.

Marguerite Kondracke
Executive Director, America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth

NYLC and State Farm are giving a great boost to the service-learning field with each annual publication of *Growing to Greatness*. The information is not only useful for those of us “in the business,” but it provides a compelling argument for young people, educators, elected officials, parents, corporate leaders, and anybody who cares about student achievement and the health of American democracy.

Steven A. Culbertson
President and CEO, Youth Service America

Growing to Greatness continues to offer some of the most valuable reading in the service-learning field. Whether you are a researcher, administrator, or practitioner, you will find timely, lively, well-documented information that will assist you in your quest to improve both schooling and community life.

Drs. James and Pamela Toole
Compass Institute and the University of Minnesota

Growing to Greatness is a wonderful resource on service-learning that fits well with strategies for school reform outlined in NASSP's *Breaking Ranks II* and *Breaking Ranks in the Middle*.

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
*Executive Director,
National Association of Secondary School Principals*

Growing to Greatness is a must-read resource for policy-makers, practitioners, and any member of the public interested in service-learning. It's practical, highly readable, and full of rich detail about this important and ever-changing field.

Shirley Sagawa
*Author; Consultant; Former Executive Vice President,
The Corporation for National Service*

By drawing together cutting-edge research and carefully documented practice, *Growing to Greatness* tells the compelling story of how service-learning is shaping the lives of young people, their schools, and their communities. Policy-makers, educators, and community leaders will find in these landmark reports the evidence and insight needed to propel this movement into the future.

Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.
President, Search Institute

Across this country our youngest citizens are stepping forward to shoulder the responsibilities of active citizenship through service-learning in ever-expanding number. Thanks to State Farm and NYLC, this pioneering movement comes to life through the pages of *Growing to Greatness*.

Harris Wofford
*Former U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania; Former CEO,
Corporation for National Service*

Growing to Greatness recognizes and celebrates the work done daily by dedicated young people, educators, and civic leaders to promote and expand service-learning in schools and communities across the country. The examples, profiles, and articles of this report are incredible resources for those of us committed to nurturing generations of engaged learners and active citizens ready to participate in our global community.

Nelda Brown
Executive Director, National Service-Learning Partnership

Growing to Greatness is an exceptional source of information and ideas about the status of service-learning. It provides perspectives on service-learning as a field of practice and subject of study; reports empirical evidence from survey research; presents profiles of practice in particular places; and features highly intelligent thinking about this work in the years ahead.

Barry Checkoway, Ph.D.
University of Michigan School of Social Work

State Farm and NYLC are to be congratulated for providing this important resource and for contributing to a deeper understanding of the service-learning movement. *Growing to Greatness* clearly documents the contributions service-learning is making to the intellectual, personal, civic, and moral development of students.

Ira Harkavy

Associate Vice President and Director, Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

Growing to Greatness documents how youth[s], families, and communities are working toward educational and social change, and is essential reading for anyone interested in youth development. *Growing to Greatness* provides fresh perspectives and intellectually stimulating arguments on the merits of service-learning.

Chris Kwak

Program Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

An excellent resource that answers questions many policy-makers, education leaders and other education stakeholders ask: What is the current status of service-learning across the country? What does quality service-learning look like? What are examples of policies for states and districts?

Terry Pickeral

Executive Director, National Center for Learning and Citizenship

An excellent source for up-to-date information on service-learning from across the nation, including information on programs, policies, and research.

Reed Larson, Ph.D.

Pampered Chef Ltd., Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency, University of Illinois-Urbana

Growing to Greatness demonstrates the importance of providing meaningful opportunities for youth[s]. It's an especially important resource for schools that have not invested in service-learning because it will convince them to get involved.

Patti Smith, Ed.D.

*Associate Director, Secondary School Redesign
The Education Alliance, Brown University*

Growing to Greatness is the best available resource on the state of K-12 community service and service-learning in this country. The evidence presented overwhelmingly supports the reach of this work, and includes research findings, policy information, and state and program profiles in clear, easily digestible summaries.

Jeffrey Howard, Ph.D.

*Associate Director for Service-Learning at the University of Michigan's
Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning*

Growing to Greatness offers readers essential information to understand and advance service-learning. Long-time practitioners will feel a sense of pride at the state of service-learning. For people new to the field, G2G captures the meaning and value of service-learning for young people and teachers, provides encouraging research results, gives you lessons on ways to implement service-learning, as well as helpful resources.

Carol Kinsley, Ed.D.

*Corporation for National and Community Service, Board of Directors,
National Service-Learning Partnership, Chair, Board of Directors*

We know that young people's hope, passion, and energy can provide vital fuel to community efforts to improve. *Growing to Greatness* not only offers a comprehensive scan of the "how, what, where, and when" this exciting work is taking place, it also paves the way for the movement's continued growth by organizing information for policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, and anyone who cares about youth[s] and change into a true one-stop shop.

Karen Pittman

Executive Director, The Forum for Youth Investment

Engaging youths in the advancement of civil society is a fundamental component of the promotion of positive youth development. This landmark report documents the important contributions being made by community-based, service-learning organizations in enhancing the lives of our nation's youths.

Richard Lerner, Ph.D.

*Director, Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development,
Tufts University*

Growing to Greatness documents the power of learning that engages young people as active citizens in their communities. An excellent resource for educators, policy-makers, and community activists.

Rachel B. Tompkins, Ed.D.

President, Rural School and Community Trust

Growing to Greatness is an excellent resource for learning about the state of service-learning in the U.S.A. and for getting a bird's-eye view of the research that is needed for its progress.

Don Eberly

President, International Association for National Youth Service

About Growing to Greatness

Combining classroom instruction and community service helps students make meaningful connections between academics and life outside the classroom. My 23 years as a high school math teacher taught me the importance of those connections. Service-learning brings learning to life, generates energy and creativity, and cultivates caring citizens. And when we do that, everyone wins.

Dennis Van Roekel
President, National Education Association

Timely, informative and thoughtful, *Growing to Greatness* is a clarion call to America to enrich the tapestry of our ethos with the fabric of service learning. It is clear that NYLC and State Farm are leading from the front in showing that our young people are civic assets and that service learning provides them the vehicle for significant contribution and transformation.

Rob Gordon
Chief People and Program Officer, City Year

Growing to Greatness confirms, yet again, the importance of making teaching and learning matter in the everyday lives of youth. Page after page, this report reaffirms the work of great educators across the nation, especially those that have seen their way clear to use service-learning as a way for students to learn through doing and to serve while learning.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, San Francisco State University

Growing to Greatness is an essential resource. By documenting how youth, schools, and communities can successfully work together for social change, it provides indisputable evidence of the value of service-learning. As both a parent and education professional, I am deeply grateful to NYLC for 25 years of leadership and support.

Don Helmstetter, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Spring Lake Park (Minn.) School District #16

Growing to Greatness makes clear the case for service-learning by demonstrating how quality service-learning experiences can broaden and deepen schooling's impact. It does so by synthesizing research and by providing descriptions of initiatives that work. It highlights important and often undervalued gaps in many schools' priorities and practices and shows how service-learning can help educators respond.

Joseph Kahne, Ph.D.
Abbie Valley Professor of Education, Dean, School of Education, Mills College

Growing to Greatness annual reports have become essential desk (and backpack!) companions for those writing about, organizing, and participating in service-learning programs throughout the world. Each report provides snapshots of the current state of research alongside concrete examples of service-learning programs in action. This interplay in bridging the research and practice makes G2G's publications enormously useful.

Joel Westheimer, Ph.D.
University Research Chair in Democracy and Education, University of Ottawa (Ontario)

Service-learning through volunteering is one of the most effective ways to enrich young people's lives by enhancing personal and social growth. Through civic engagement, young people can develop leadership skills, explore career opportunities, and appreciate how individual contributions can make our community a better place to live.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, MN-04

The series of these annual reports has provided a very useful documentary on the service-learning landscape as it has evolved by citing research, discussing topics of interest to practitioners, and raising important policy questions. We need this kind of information to support the role we believe young people should have in transforming their communities and their education.

Susan E. Stroud
Executive Director, Innovations in Civic Participation

Those of us in higher education need to pay attention to what is happening in K-12 service-learning. High school students are coming to expect service-learning experiences as part of their college education, and we need to be ready for them. *Growing to Greatness* helps the higher-ed community understand the trends and outcomes for younger students in civic engagement.

Gail Robinson
Manager of Service-Learning, American Association of Community Colleges

