EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY
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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

FEBRUARY 2009
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This study described and analyzed the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. The evidence suggests that students describe their service experience in much the same way regardless of the type and circumstances of the service performed. While the subjects that participated in service learning described the activity of providing service as positive, many of the components of service learning did not seem to be present, including formal reflection. While there was recognition of different social classes served by the sites or agencies and within the community, the subjects had not explored core social issues that may arise from class differences. Participants in both service learning courses and volunteer community service activities found the experience valuable in either selection or continuance of academic major, as well as general career development skills.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. While there is a large quantity of data that describes the impact of incorporating service learning into the academic curriculum, there is little that describes the impact on students that volunteer without receiving credit or that analyzes the two types of experiences.

Overview of Community Service and Service Learning

The practice of incorporating volunteer community service both in and outside of the classroom in colleges and universities has been increasing (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). Outside of the classroom, it is often described as volunteering or participating in extra-curricular involvement, while inside of the classroom it is described as service learning. Because there is a defined process of incorporating hands-on giving in a way that directly relates to the course material, the term volunteer community service does not accurately reflect the academic component. Service learning is the term used to describe the practice of utilizing hands-on community service for credit in an academic course. “Service-learning programs formally integrate service with academic study; operate from
a social justice rather than a charitable framework; and intentionally combine reflection, action, and analysis” (Varlotta, 1996, p. 26). Many college campuses encourage the use of service learning in specific disciplines, including teacher education, as a way of linking course content and hands-on activity. The purpose of service learning is to help students formulate a better understanding of the underlying issues that necessitate community agencies. These programs are in addition to other structured campus programs in which students sign up to perform volunteer community service without doing so for course credit. The type of actual service experience (including a component of critical reflection) is often the same for students completing service learning and the students completing volunteer community service. There is little research that details and examines the experiences of students that participate in volunteer community service versus students that participate in compulsory service learning for course credit.

Description of Ball State University’s Student Voluntary Services Program

The Office of Student Life at Ball State University places undergraduate student volunteers in both volunteer community service and service learning opportunities. One of the primary components of The Office of Student Life is the student organization Student Voluntary Services (SVS). SVS has been in existence for 40 years and places students with educational and non-profit agencies in the Muncie and surrounding areas. During the fall of 2005, SVS had a recorded membership of 581 members. This number included all students that signed up through the SVS website for placement with an agency, and included students that were performing volunteer community service as well as those that were participating in service learning. Each semester, SVS provides volunteer opportunities for both through coordinated programs, referral programs, and
one-day opportunities. Coordinated programs are established programs with local agencies that require a 12-week time commitment and a specific, consistent time to volunteer (e.g., every Tuesday from 3:00-5:00). Coordinated programs have the same group of students that commit to that particular experience for the entire semester. The university provides transportation to and from campus for coordinated programs, and each group has a designated student serving as a Program Coordinator (PC). Each PC is responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with the volunteers in his or her group, driving the car or van to the site, and verifying the hours served. All PC’s participate in a formal training program and also lead the reflection process following the volunteer activity. Individual students that participate in referral programs work with each agency to coordinate their own time commitment and transportation. Volunteer hours are confirmed with the agency because there is not a student PC coordinating the experience. SVS also sponsors one-day service opportunities including a fall leaf-raking project and an annual spring philanthropic project. For the purposes of this study, all students have participated in coordinated programs, which allows for verification of hours served, as well as a similarly structured program with a designated PC.

Each semester, Student Voluntary Services (SVS) sponsors a recruitment fair to place students in the volunteer community service and service learning programs. The placements are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. The agencies that participate in the fair do not designate spaces for students participating through volunteer community service or service learning. For the coordinated programs, there are placements for programs Monday through Thursday at a variety of times throughout the day. Staff members from The Office of Student Life conduct informational sessions prior to the
recruitment fair for the students that are participating in service learning for a class requirement. These informational sessions describe the placement process and benefits of service learning. Faculty members either invite staff members to give this presentation during a class session or send the students early to the recruitment fair to hear the information. Students in courses with particular service learning objectives are encouraged to sign up for programs early to ensure the proper placement. If a student cannot be placed in a particular type of program (either because the program is full or because the student has a class conflict with the program schedule), students are sometimes allowed to make individual arrangement with the faculty member and agency representative, which then becomes a referral program.

Several factors have contributed to the increase of service learning activities at Ball State University. During the last five years, the staff members in The Office of Student Life have built and sustained relationships with faculty members in a variety of disciplines in an effort to merge classroom learning with involvement in community service. This involvement was designed to foster engagement and connection to the campus, the community, and to the academic major. In 1993, six colleges and universities in the state of Indiana formed the Indiana Consortium for Voluntary Service. Membership in this organization grew, and it evolved into the Indiana Campus Compact (ICC). ICC became an organization with over thirty member campuses that “…supports the integration of community service into the cultures of its member campuses by facilitating collaborations, sponsoring programs, advocating policy, and promoting public awareness” (ICC website, n.d., About ICC, mission, ¶1). The resources provided by the ICC (including grants directly to faculty) helped to increase the inclusion of service
learning in academic courses. During this same time period, there was a push on a national level for the inclusion of service and other types of hands-on activities in academic courses, facilitated largely by the Campus Compact. Although faculty members are not required to utilize the services of Student Life and Student Voluntary Services (SVS), many did. During the 2005-2006 academic year, 22 faculty members used SVS to coordinate the service learning portion of their academic course. Academic disciplines that incorporated service learning included criminal justice, elementary education, English, family and consumer sciences, and social work.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), qualitative research methods provide an opportunity to understand the experiences of those studied, which can lead to an improvement of practice in that particular area. The case study method approach “seeks to uncover the interplay of significant factors that are characteristic of the phenomenon” (Merriam & Simpson, p.108). The case studies resulted in a thick description of each case by analyzing the raw data while employing axial coding techniques. Next, an analysis was completed which involved analyzing data both within each case and between each case (cross-case) (Merriam, 1998).

Faculty members that incorporate service learning into a course curriculum find that it is an effective tool in teaching critical thinking skills, concepts of civic engagement, and practical application of material (McCarthy & Tucker, 2002). As faculty
members increasingly incorporate service learning into the course curriculum, it is important to understand the impact that the experience has on students. Universities are also increasing the number of volunteer programs available to students as the demand has increased. Students that perform volunteer community service without it being a course requirement are also impacted by the experience.

College campuses continue to implement experiences that help students become engaged with and connected to the campus and local community as a way to both improve retention and foster civic engagement. Both faculty and students often view volunteer community service as extra or co-curricular involvement, while service learning is seen as a legitimate part of the classroom learning process. Many of the volunteer experiences (including those at Ball State University) are structured virtually the same minus the course credit. Both volunteer community service and service learning can involve a component of critical reflection, which encourages the student to view the volunteer experience in a broader context. Service learning is designed to directly implement the course information in a real-world context. In this study, the researcher examined and analyzed the experiences of students that participated in similar programs with two different purposes (volunteer community service and service learning) in order to more fully understand the impact on students from their perspectives.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study to describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program, four specific questions were examined:
1. How do students describe their volunteer community service or service learning experience?

2. How did students that participated in volunteer community service or service learning perceive their local community following the community service or service learning activity?

3. How did students that participated in service learning perceive the educational concepts introduced in the classroom?

4. How did the students describe the impact these experiences had on their future plans?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could be important for several reasons. Saltmarsh (2005) described the need for higher education to return to engaging students in activities that have a goal of increased civic awareness and participation. While this is positive, he notes that the participation in programs such as service learning have not materialized into an overall agenda with “clear goals or outcomes” (p. 52). By asking students about their volunteer community service or service learning experience, a rich description can be developed that helps better understand the student experience. This may lead to opportunities to better integrate academic and student affairs contributions to create civic curricula that leads students to a more sustained involvement with the larger community. The results of this study could help Student Affairs professionals that implement either type of activity to more fully understand outcomes of the volunteer community or service learning experience, as well as students’ likelihood to continue interacting with the community. For example, faculty members may better understand how students view
their service learning experience and whether or not service learning contributes to achieving the academic outcomes of the course. For both Student Affairs professionals and faculty, the information could aid in understanding any impact that a volunteer community service or service learning experience may have on their experience either at the university or within the community. This understanding could help determine how volunteer experiences and service learning experiences are reflected upon by the students.

As Student Affairs areas are being assessed on their contribution to the academic mission and academic departments are being asked to provide practical experiences to enhance theory-to-practice for students, the information will be extremely valuable in the continuation of and future planning of community service and service learning programs at Ball State University. As current funding for programs may decrease, the potential for securing internal and external financial support and grants will increase. Having solid information about community service and service learning programs will be critical in making this happen.

Conditions of the Study

Qualitative case studies were constructed through the use of semi-structured interviews with students that participated in either volunteer community service or service learning. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use a list of predetermined questions supplemented with unstructured questions that allowed the researcher to respond or ask different questions based on the subject’s response (Merriam, 1998). Because Student Voluntary Services (SVS) provides placements for a wide variety of agencies, the participants have volunteered or completed service learning in different settings or agencies with different groups of peers. There were different
Program Coordinators (PC’s) assigned to the various volunteer groups. All educational sites and agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlined the expectations of the volunteer experience for both the site and the students. The PC’s are uniformly trained to coordinate the volunteer experience. Both the MOU’s and the PC training help establish a consistent experience for all volunteers. Because the students participating in service learning performed the service for academic credit, there is a possibility that those students will not view the experience as volunteering. For this study, the term volunteer community service is used to describe community service, while the term service learning is used to describe the experience tied directly to an academic course. While the literature rarely makes this distinction between the two, the structure of SVS tracks participation differently for students when they sign up for programs. The researcher specifically distinguishes the two. While there is variance on how the literature defines these terms and how they are used by practitioners, for the purpose of this study the researcher defined each based on whether or not students volunteered on their own or were required to participate. There is also the possibility that students that were willing to participate in the study would have a higher level of motivation, which could have impacted their responses.

This study was limited to:

1. Students that have participated in a coordinated Student Voluntary Services (SVS) program with hours that have been verified by a Program Coordinator (PC) and entered into the SVS on-line database. By interviewing students that have participated in a coordinated program rather than a one-time or referral program, there is a system in place to ensure that the hours were completed
and verified by a PC. This also ensures that a PC conducted a reflection component after the program was completed.

2. Students that signed up to participate in volunteer community service or service learning through the Student Voluntary Services (SVS) organization for the first time. By interviewing first-time volunteers, the researcher was able to formulate case studies that examine service that was completed within the same time frame for all participants.

Definition of Terms

*Community Service*. Community service is defined as an action taken to meet the needs of others and improve the community as a whole (Campus Compact website, n.d., About us, glossary).

*Reflection*. Reflection is a way in which an individual can process and make meaning from an experience. In service learning, reflection often includes discussion, writing in a journal, or completing a course assignment in order to connect the experience with specific learning objectives (Morton, 1996).

*Service Learning*. The National Center for Service-Learning defines service learning as having three key characteristics: 1) Activity that is focused on meeting an identified need in the community that is directly related to those individuals or the overall community environment. 2) There have been specific academic objectives identified before the service is completed that combine the activity with the learning process. 3) Reflection opportunities for the experience and the connection to the identified objectives are incorporated into the activity (National Center for Service Learning as cited through Campus Compact website, n.d., About us, glossary).
Volunteer. Volunteering involves engaging in service that addresses immediate social needs. Volunteering may involve the same behavior as service learning, but typically does not examine broader issues of social or community need (Campus Compact website, n.d., About us, glossary).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of students that participated with volunteer community service and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. A grounded theory approach, using axial coding, was used to create case studies. The findings of the study will be important locally to both staff members and faculty members affiliated with The Office of Student Life at Ball State University, as well as more universally to staff and faculty in other locations.

The Office of Student Life and Student Voluntary Services (SVS) coordinate both volunteer community service and service learning placements with community agencies. Although the reasons students engage in the programs are different (community involvement versus course requirement), the logistical structure of the program is the same for all students. There is little data describing the experiences of students involved with volunteer community service programs versus service learning programs.

Chapter Two will review the related literature on volunteerism and service learning, including the history of organized volunteer programs on college campuses and the evolution of those programs. Chapter Two will also include relevant methodological literature.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The literature highlighted in this chapter includes information on both volunteer community service programs and service learning. The origins of campus volunteer community service programs are presented. Information and research regarding service learning includes definitions of service learning, incorporating service learning and the impact on the classroom experience, forming community partnerships, and evaluating service learning programs. Information and data on both volunteer community service and service learning includes similarities of volunteer community service and service learning programs, volunteer community service and service learning as civic engagement, the benefits of volunteer community service and service learning, and successful implementation of both.

Origins of Campus Volunteer Programs

In 1969, the National Student Volunteer Program (which subsequently became The National Center of Service-Learning) was established by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The Center joined with Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the Peace Corps to form a national center for student service, known as ACTION (Jacoby, 1996). While the National Center of Service-Learning no longer exists, there are other centers and agencies that work to promote service on college campuses. According to
Kendall (1990), there were several reasons that service learning initiatives initially did not last, including: a lack of integration into the mission of the college/university; the relationships in these programs were not reciprocal and did not focus on larger social issues; and a lack of recognition of how to make the experience effective as either service or as learning (as cited in Jacoby, 1996). In 1984, Wayne Meisel traveled to over 70 college campuses to distribute literature on the importance of college students becoming actively involved in the community. Meisel subsequently received a grant from the Hazen Foundation, which allowed him to create the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (C.O.O.L). The aim of C.O.O.L was “to provide an organized, year-round effort to promote and support students to be involved in community service” (Idealist Without Borders website, n.d. History, ¶2). During the next ten years, C.O.O.L. gained prominence, hosting conferences and encouraging students to participate in formalized service experiences such as the popular Into the Streets program. Into the Streets was a program designed to help students go beyond the service experience and examine the root causes of many societal problems. Service was seen as a process rather than simply an action, and there were Five Critical Elements identified as crucial components of the volunteer experience: community voice, orientation and training, meaningful action, reflection, and evaluation. In 2004, C.O.O.L merged with the organization Idealist on Campus. The mission of Idealist on Campus was more broad and included elements of civic engagement and social responsibility (Idealist Without Borders website, n.d., Our mission, ¶1).

In 1985, the Campus Compact was founded with the purpose of fostering civic engagement and community involvement on campus. The mission statement of the
Campus Compact is as follows: “Campus Compact advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact website, n.d., About us, Mission statement, ¶2). State Campus Compact offices (including the Indiana Campus Compact) were formed to provide resources and service to faculty, staff members, and students to encourage service learning and civic engagement. Currently, there are over 950 campuses that are members of the Campus Compact (Campus Compact website, n.d., Membership, ¶1).

The forming of organizations such as C.O.O.L. and Campus Compact have provided some of the structure and tools necessary to make more recent initiatives much more successful. These organizations complemented the missions of colleges and universities, who have stated and expected a connection between students, faculty, and the broader community since their inception (Varlotta, 1996).

**Definitions of Service Learning**

As campus volunteer programs grew, so did service learning programs aimed to tie course content with hands-on service activities. According to Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) first defined service learning in a publication in 1969. The members of SREB were attempting to link learning opportunities with community service and development, as well as issues of social justice.

Service learning goes beyond community service or volunteerism; it is a meaningful experience that merges classroom knowledge with the identification and
solving of community issues. From the Corporation for National and Community Service, service learning combines the classroom learning experience with serving others in a way that improves both (Corporation for National and Community Service website, n.d., About learn and serve, What is service-learning, ¶1). Service learning is typically completed for course credit, and is an organized way of meeting a need within a community and provides students with a structured method to critically reflect on the experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Rhoads (1998), defines four components of service learning tied to an academic course: (1) service learning is a teaching methodology formed from a specific pedagogical model; (2) service learning has intentional goals and objectives that are tied to the academic course; (3) service learning integrates the out-of-class and in-class learning; and (4) service learning is directly relevant to that particular course. Learn and Serve America is a part of Serve America, created by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990. Learn and Serve America found that service learning programs improved students’ grades and attendance in school, as well as helped develop a sense of personal and social responsibility (Corporation for National and Community Service website, About learn and serve, What is service-learning, ¶3). In various writings about the term, there are different opinions on whether the term is hyphenated or not: service-learning versus service learning. Miligore (1995) believes the hyphen is critical in truly defining service learning because it demonstrates that the two terms are equal and symbiotic of each other (as cited in Jacoby, 1996). Other references to the term do not use the hyphenation, although there is no explanation as to why. For the purposes of this study, the researcher is not hyphenating the term because there is no standard that demonstrates a significant difference in
meaning and it is not hyphenated within Student Voluntary Services (SVS). The decision not to hyphenate the term was not philosophically examined by SVS, but rather became the default way to describe working with faculty members to support service activities incorporated in their course curriculum. The volunteer community service programs existed for many years before formalized service learning, and the use of a hyphen was not examined. Whether or not the two terms are hyphenated or if one of the terms is given more importance than the other can demonstrate differences in philosophy, approach, and implementation of service learning (Jacoby, 1996).

The purpose of service learning can be curricular (tied to a specific academic course or major), co-curricular (designed to develop leadership skills or personal development) or both (Jacoby, 1996). McCarthy and Tucker (2002) outline three components that define service learning: a specific learning experience tied to an academic course rather than an unrelated community project; service coordinated with a nonprofit agency that serves the community; and structured time to reflect on the experience in order to connect it with the course objectives. Service learning differentiates from other types of experiential learning. Internships, clinical rotations, or student teaching can be powerful learning experiences, but have a focus on professional skills and competence rather than an emphasis on civic engagement and responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). This distinction demonstrates the power of service learning to provide students with the opportunity to impact the surrounding community and become aware of their responsibility to be active and engaged citizens throughout their lifetimes. In order to have a successful service learning program, there must be thoughtful planning and implementation.
Similarities and Distinctions Between Volunteerism and Service Learning

There is little written comparing service learning with volunteer community service. One study that was conducted by Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found that there are positive outcomes from both ‘generic’ volunteer community service and service learning. The researchers looked at specific outcomes in the following categories: values and beliefs, academic outcomes, leadership outcomes, and career outcomes and plans for future service. In terms of values and beliefs, service learning had more of an impact in promoting racial understanding and commitment to activism, while volunteer community service had just as strong of an impact in whether or not students felt an individual could make a difference in society. Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found that academically, service learning resulted in growth in critical thinking skills, an improvement of writing skills, and a higher grade point average over community service. However, there was no significant difference in leadership outcomes of students participating in service learning over students participating in volunteer community service. Both service learning and volunteer community service positively influenced students in choosing a service-based career, although the influence was more pronounced in students participating in service learning. One challenge in this type of research is the lack of standardization of both service learning and volunteer community service, which makes direct comparison difficult.

While many well-developed volunteer community service programs may incorporate some of the same characteristics of service learning (including assessing community need and incorporating critical reflection activities), there is not always the
same standardization that comes with service learning. Faculty that design programs
grounded toward volunteer community service rather than content-driven service learning
may not facilitate as powerful of a learning and engagement process as those that focus
on connecting the service with course material. This is because that critical component of
reflection is often lost, which is the tie between the act and the content. Others would take
the idea even further, and conclude that there is no learning through community service.
According to Shumer, “I’m not against the word service, but I think service and
volunteerism take the emphasis away from learning.” Shumer goes on to state “The
focus needs to be on the learning, not on the service” (as cited in Stanton, Giles, & Cruz,
1999, p. 208). To truly understand the difference of a service learning program, it is
important to understand that service learning is directly tied to the curriculum, is not a
charitable ‘quick fix’ as opposed to a long-term commitment, and that reflection is
critical in order to facilitate social change (Varlotta, 1996). However, volunteer
community service can have many of the same benefits associated with service learning,
including a sense of accomplishment and commitment to action by the individual
volunteers, as well as establishing positive connections to the local community members
and agencies. An additional challenge in defining each comes with the different lengths
and formats of both volunteer community service and service learning. An activity can be
performed for a day, a week (particularly with experiences such as the alternative spring
breaks programs), or over the course of a semester. According to Jacoby (1996), the
focus (at least with service learning) is more on the incorporation of reflection activities
and the planning activities between both the volunteers and those being served.
There are conflicting opinions regarding volunteer community service versus service learning. According to Rhoads (1998), the main distinction between the two is that service learning has a direct connection to the academic mission of the institution. In addition to the service activity, there are learning outcomes designed to enhance the course or major. Volunteer community service experiences can also have that same connection to student learning if there is a set of objectives and reflection activities, even if there is no direct tie to an academic course (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Rhoads (1998) used the term “academic service learning” to distinguish the two experiences. In terms of the actual experience, there is often no difference between the students that are volunteering or participating in academic service learning. Giddings (2003) defines service learning as a combination of volunteer community service and experiential education. Volunteer community service is designed to provide for a need within the community, while experiential education is designed to enhance student learning.

Although the definitions of volunteer community service and service learning may vary, Brisbin and Hunter (2003) found that representatives of public education and nonprofit organizations found no significant differences in performance between students that were ‘coerced’ volunteers (through a service learning course requirement) and students that were ‘walk-in’ volunteers. Students that participated in service learning may have had initial challenges in getting excited about the experience, but usually became vested and effective volunteers. The representatives found that they did observe changes in career paths of both sets of students, as well as an increased commitment to stay in the geographical area and become involved in the community after participating in their
volunteer or service learning experience. Having some type of obligation has more of a positive effect on participation and experience of volunteering than other altruistic types of measures (Berger & Milem, 2002).

*Service Learning as a Part of the Academic Curriculum*

Although the focus of service learning can be different than other types of experiential programs such as practicum experiences or internships, it can still be an integral part of an academic curriculum. In order for successful inclusion in an academic course, there must be a decision by the faculty members as to the primary reason for service learning. According to Morton (1996), there are two types of service learning courses: service-centered and content-based. Service-centered courses consider a broader context of student learning by using the experience to create knowledge. Reflection is key in the service-centered approach and is used to help students make meaning of their experience by increasing levels of social awareness, critical thinking, and problem solving. Content-based service learning enhances previously designed course outcomes. The goal is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the material. Both types of service learning can be valuable teaching tools. Berle (2006) describes a service learning program at the University of Georgia in a horticulture class in which students constructed a stone wall and walkway at a local elementary school. This program differed from other experiential learning experiences because there was input from the client (elementary students), as well as the fulfillment of a community need along with the learning activity.

Faculty members have the opportunity to transform their classrooms into holistic learning laboratories with the inclusion of formalized service learning activities. In order
for this to be successful, however, there need to be specific learning objectives that are designed with service learning in mind, not simply as an add-on to an existing course (Enos & Troppe, 1996). Faculty must be intentional in designing and implementing service learning in order to achieve desired educational goals, as well as personal goals for the students (Berle, 2006). The benefits of incorporating service learning do not come without challenges. Faculty have to be willing to change their pedagogical approach, give up some control of course direction, and learn the skills to implement the logistical parts of service learning (Morton, 1996).

According to Henry and Breyfogle (2006), an additional challenge can be a differing or insufficient view of the component of reciprocity. Reciprocity is typically thought of as each party involved in the service developing goals or objectives that the service is designed to meet. Issues of power, boundaries, outcomes and the scope of the commitment are all components of a reciprocal relationship. By intentionally enriching the service learning experience by looking at long-term change, addressing perceptions of power in the service learning relationship, including all stakeholders as true partners, being honest about inherent boundaries and recognizing that all involved in the process can be truly transformed, all involved can be truly impacted by the experience. According to Varlotta (1996), Robert Greenleaf’s idea of servant leadership is often used as a basis to promote reciprocity in service learning, which can both provide an appropriate framework as well as pose additional challenges. While servant leadership is designed to promote a more global sense of leadership and giving of self in a larger context, the issues associated with reciprocity and power relationships (leaders ‘doing’ for others or an unequal distribution of power) can be problematic. If the challenges of incorporating
and truly understanding the potential impact of service learning can be overcome, the benefits can be powerful. Service learning offers a unique opportunity for students to thoroughly and practically understand subject matter, develop a working knowledge of community issues, and learn skills that transfer to new types of situations (Eyler, 2000).

From a faculty standpoint, there are multiple advantages in incorporating service learning, including enhancing performance, increasing an interest in the subject matter, teaching problem solving skills, and improving the experience of teaching (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). A survey of faculty members at the community college level found that faculty recognized the increased learning of core competency skills as a result of service learning activities. This factor was the primary motivator in including service learning in courses at that level (Garcia & Robinson, 2005, p. 4, ¶2). Service learning can be included in a variety of courses, from world literature to education to sociology. Strange (2000) found that in a childhood development course, learning outcomes were enhanced because of the service learning requirement. The Teacher Education Consortium in Service-Learning produced a publication (2003), which includes numerous examples of courses with a service learning component. In addition to a description of the integration of service learning into the classroom experience, examples of evaluation tools are given as well. This includes sample rubrics and outlines of final projects.

Faculty members typically are not seeking reward or recognition for incorporating service learning. For many, their reward is the knowledge and understanding that this type of experience creates opportunities for civic engagement and involvement. Although faculty members may not seek rewards for their work, institutions that are committed to full support and integration of service learning will consider it favorably when it comes
time for faculty review. Increased research on the outcomes of service learning can provide faculty members with valuable information, as well as add to the credibility of service learning integration.

The Impact of Incorporating Service Learning on Students in the Classroom

Students learn to directly apply the skills that they learn in the classroom to critically solve problems in the community. As opposed to a traditional classroom, students participating in service learning can truly learn and deeply understand their content by “merging reading and reflection with seeing, doing, and participating” (Varlotta, 1996, p.27). Service learning also provides a real-life context to incorporate and test the learning in the classroom (McCarthy & Tucker, 2002). According to Gelete and Gilliam (2003), service learning helps students “learn and develop through active participation in a carefully planned service that is specifically developed to meet and address real community needs” (p. 11). Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found that cognitive skills are enhanced when service is tied to the academic component. Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Illustre (2002) measured the impact of service learning on the educational experience using the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ), and course satisfaction measures. They found that students who participated in service learning had a significant increase on all but one of the components of the CASQ, including civic action, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, political awareness, leadership skills, and social justice attitudes. The only category that did not see a significant increase was diversity attitudes. The results also showed that students in service learning courses had a higher level of course satisfaction than comparable students that did not participate in service learning courses.
Participating in service can also have a positive influence on the amount of interaction a student has with a faculty member. According to a study conducted by Astin and Sax (1998), students who participated in service activities were nearly 50% more likely to spend at least an hour per week interacting with faculty compared to their peers that did not participate in service activities. Their study also showed that students who participated in service activities had a higher grade point average compared to non-participants, which may be partly explained by the increased amount of time spent with faculty members. Students that participated in a service learning course in horticulture at the University of Georgia rated the course highly in the evaluation process, but it was not determined if this was a result of a desire to serve others or a satisfaction in a hands-on learning activity (Berle, 2006).

According to a study by Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, and Anaya (2003), nursing students demonstrated an increased level of critical thinking skills as a result of participating in a service learning course. Critical thinking in this context was defined as development of self as a professional, as well as self as a community member. Development of self included increased caring for others and improved communication skills, while development of a community perspective included an awareness of diversity and a need to promote overall health. Another popular example of service learning is in undergraduate teacher education programs. Students are given the opportunity to help identify problems or challenges within the school district, determine strategies to address those problems, and then implement those strategies in the classroom. The reflection component, critical to a successful service learning program, allows students to examine their experience and incorporate that knowledge into their practical skill set for full-time
teaching. This addition of participation in the planning process and the critical reflection of the experience sets service learning apart from simply a student teaching experience.

Strange (2000) found that students enrolled in a section of a child development course that incorporated service learning demonstrated a higher level of content understanding than students that had not participated in service learning. The courses were otherwise identical, and students in the service learning course had significantly higher scores on the essay portion of final exams that demonstrated a deeper level of comprehension and understanding. Strange also found that the midterm scores of both courses were almost the same, leading to a conclusion that the service learning experience has a more long-term than immediate impact, particularly with the use of reflection journals. Having the content relative to a career choice or major can also impact the level of commitment from the student, and also from the university. For colleges or universities located in urban settings or communities that have a significant lower-income population, service learning within the public school system can also help students understand issues of social justice and the effects of poverty on the community (Moely et al., 2002).

When service learning is implemented as a part of a course, there is also a higher level of understanding about problems that impact the nation. This could be facilitated by a discussion or focus on social problems related to the service activity (Astin & Sax, 1998). Brisbin and Hunter (2003) found that public educators and nonprofit organizational personnel had more direct contact with the university than representatives from other types of public officials. Those other public officials tended to offer experiences focused on civic engagement rather than service learning.
Volunteerism and Service Learning as Civic Engagement

Articulating civic involvement and engagement as a priority is becoming more widespread in both college and universities and other higher education associations. The use of service learning is often used as a tool to promote the idea of civic engagement, although the term civic engagement is sometimes vague and a difficult concept to define (Saltmarsh, 2005). Using the definition of civic engagement as integrating academic and community knowledge with skills such as problem solving and critical thinking and incorporating values such as social justice, the two terms seem to easily integrate. Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found that volunteering in college helped students become more socially responsible, more committed to their communities, and more committed to education once they graduated.

The specific structure of service learning programs is designed to teach students about larger social issues surrounding the specific service activity, including questions about the history, culture, and economic influences on the current situation (Jacoby, 1996). Service learning is a specific tool that universities can use to educate and encourage students to become more involved as citizens (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Service learning can also focus entirely on civic engagement and involvement. Service learning can be a tool used to teach and build the idea of ‘social capital,’ a term used to describe the achievement of goals aimed at enriching society, as well as individuals. Specifically, service learning and civic engagement can and should encourage involvement in society through participation, voting, and understanding the role of a democratic process within a community (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003). When incorporated in the classroom, faculty members are using the intellectual experience to address broad
community needs in addition to enhancing student learning (Enos & Troppe, 1996).
Freyss (2003) developed a program in which college students signed up for a course that
specifically assigned students to work with an organized interest group, a government
agency or political office. The student evaluations of the program were overwhelmingly
positive, and many continued their service based on their newfound political interest.

Service learning experiences often enhance the educational experience of students
by exposing them to different types of people within the community that would not occur
otherwise, thus increasing understanding of diversity and related issues (Astin & Sax,
1998, Selak et al., 2003 and Moely et al., 2002). Rhoads (1998) found that participating
in volunteer experiences forced students to confront social ills concerning race and class,
as well as stereotypes held and enforced by the media. In order for this to occur, Rhoads
found that the experience has to include three components in order to have a strong
impact on students: mutuality, reflection, and personalization. Mutuality recognizes that
both the person completing the service and the person the service is done for benefits
from the experience. This can sometimes result in feelings of guilt on the part of the
person performing the service, but it is critical to recognize and give value to those
feelings. Engaging both parties in developing and implementing the service project can
help balance the experience. Reflection helps students process and make meaning of the
service. When included in a volunteer community service experience, this component
does make it similar to service learning. The third component, personalization, involves
making the experience meaningful by engaging the sense of self on a personal level.

Ernest Boyer wrote an article entitled “Creating the New American College,” in
which he challenged higher education to connect to the broader community in a way that
“would be committed to improving, in a very intentional way, the human condition.”

(1994, ¶ 22) The public perceives the university as having the financial and human resources necessary to address community concerns. Brisbin and Hunter (2003) found that community agency representatives expect universities in their community to assist in combating a “crisis of public engagement” by encouraging and expecting students, faculty, and staff to assist in the local community (p. 471).

Effective service learning activities result in students that can become valuable citizen leaders who can address community needs and form strong partnerships. Service learning is a unique forum that brings students, faculty, administrators, and community members together for one goal (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). As an educational tool, service learning also promotes democratic thought by engaging volunteers to contribute to the common good (Giddings, 2003). Students participating in service learning often more fully understand issues of social justice, including awareness of social structures that impact inequities and influence levels of socioeconomic status (Moely et al., 2002).

Benefits of Incorporating Volunteerism and Service Learning in the Student Experience

Astin and Sax (1998) found that the effects of student participation in volunteer community service activities were very positive. Students that participated in volunteer community service activities indicated that their involvement had a positive impact by providing opportunities for leadership, making course content more relevant, and preparing them for future careers. Although the experience had positive results for the students themselves, Astin and Sax found that over 90% of the students they studied listed ‘to help other people’ as their primary motivation for participating in volunteer community service activities. “Participation in volunteer service during the undergraduate
years enhanced the student’s academic development, civic responsibility, and life skills” (Astin & Sax, 1998, p. 255). In a later study looking at longitudinal effects, Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found that participating in volunteer community service in college helped students develop a greater sense of empowerment, and also had a positive impact on attending graduate school, earning a higher degree, contributing money to the school, socializing with individuals from different backgrounds, and participating in volunteer community service after college. The researchers found that the amount of volunteer community service completed in college had a clear impact on the amount of continued service after college. Fenzel, Peyrot, Speck, and Gugerty (2003) found that alumni who had participated in either service learning or volunteer community service were more likely to continue to participate in community service, to hold a job in a service-related field, and to be more likely to be involved in a community organization. Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found that service learning had a positive impact on students choosing a career that is service-based. Astin et al. (1999) found that service participation had a positive affect on both the perception of how prepared the student felt upon graduation, as well as the likelihood in seeking an advanced degree. However, Berger and Millem (2002) did not find that higher levels of participation in volunteer community service necessarily led to an increase in positive benefits, including an increase in self-concept. Their conclusion was that in order to have a significant positive impact, the amount of service completed needs to be regularly integrated and more than cursory.

McCarthy and Tucker (2002) found that a combination of class lecture discussing the root causes that result in need for service combined with performing service led to an increased level of intention to continue performing service. The lecture alone did not lead
to an increased level, but did strengthen the overall service learning experience. Students that participate consistently in volunteer community service or service learning see the benefits beyond graduation as they begin work in the ‘real world.’ This can be enhanced if part of the service learning process includes students getting to know the members and culture of the larger community. This should include a thorough orientation to the service itself, and also an introduction to the people and neighborhood to facilitate a broader understanding of the context of the service (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

**Successful Implementation of Volunteer and Service Learning Programs**

In order to have a successful partnership between the university and community, service learning has to include an element of reciprocity in developing the experience between those being served and those serving. Part of this process must include placing volunteers in appropriate and needed placements, rather than simply a convenient placement to satisfy a course requirement (Jacoby, 1996). Preparation for the act of service includes identifying a community need, examining the content of the academic course to make connections between content and service, and making logistical arrangements for service. The action component of service learning involves making a final decision on the type of service to perform, establishing the partnership with the community or agency, actually providing the agreed upon service, and reflecting on that experience. Further reflection and evaluation involves examining the final outcomes of the service for both the individuals and the community members and considering the overall impact of the project (Teacher Education Consortium in Service-Learning, 2003).

Full commitment and implementation of service learning or community service programs is not easy. Institutions that have a dedicated staff member to coordinate
service learning and educate faculty members on the benefits and implementation procedures of service learning are more likely to develop a program that can be sustainable. This staff member can be housed in either an academic department or in student affairs. The location of a service learning program can have a major impact on implementation, as well as the philosophical attitude and institution has on the program. Programs that are housed within academic affairs can be more coordinated, place more of the emphasis on the learning component, and can also send a strong message about the institution’s true commitment to service learning. Programs housed in student affairs are generally more focused on students’ needs, interact more with community agencies, place more emphasis on the service component, and receive less resources and priority from the institution (Jacoby, 1996).

Astin and Sax (1998) conducted a study of over 3,000 students that participated in service activities at forty-two higher education institutions. They found that 70% of those students that participated in volunteer community service activities did so through either student affairs or some type of student activity, as opposed to the 30% that participated in academic service learning. As more faculty members incorporate service learning into their courses, this may create tension between academic and student affairs. Student affairs typically does not have the financial resources to implement service learning without additional institutional assistance and the outcomes desired by the two areas can be in direct conflict (Morton, 1996). Whether or not service learning is housed in academic or student affairs, the goals of the program must be addressed and agreed upon by all stakeholders in order to create a positive learning experience.
In order to be successful, faculty need to have someone knowledgeable to provide support, resources, and training opportunities. “When a college commits to a designated office and staff, faculty are more likely to view the coordinator as the primary resource for service learning training and assistance” (Garcia & Robinson, 2005, p. 3). If faculty members do not fully understand the components of service learning, success will be limited. This also includes being able to work with representatives from the local community. There must be an understanding of who the major stakeholders on both the university and community side are, and developing a way that all stakeholders can play a role in the process. Both sides must feel that they have ownership in the process and that their point of view is both listened to and respected (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Brisbin and Hunter (2003) found that representatives from agencies involved in volunteer, service learning and civic engagement programs with students rarely saw faculty as taking any type of coordinating role. There was little communication from faculty, and the perception that faculty were not engaged after the placement of students in an experiential experience. They found a strong recommendation from community representatives to formalize the process and have a full-time coordinator to ensure strong, consistent programs.

Agencies may also have program requirements, such as criminal background checks, that must be addressed before the actual service may be completed. Faculty members without logistical or program planning skills should seek assistance from the service learning staff. Grants or subsidies may be available to offset any costs associated with implementing a service learning programs. Students can also be given ownership in the process. Enos and Troppe (1996) describe a ‘fourth-credit’ option that several
institutions have adopted to add a component of service learning. Faculty members give students an opportunity to add an extra credit to a three-credit course by seeking out an opportunity to perform service learning related to the academic material. There can be disadvantages to this model if students are not encouraged to connect their experience with the academic content.

An even greater challenge can come in educating and engaging students in the process. This can be particularly true in community colleges or urban universities without a residential component, or large universities that have the task of educating numerous students. Bringle & Hatcher (1990) noted that “nonresidential urban universities are learning environments that are disproportionately classroom oriented, with fewer campus activities occurring outside the classroom” (p. 229). One way to make service learning more attractive to commuter students is to promote the academic credit component. Freyss (2003) developed a service learning program well suited for urban areas which focused solely on civic responsibility and engagement by engaging students in an organized interest group, a government agency or political office. Because there were multiple options for students to participate and easy proximity to the sites, the students found it easier to participate in the activity. Any costs associated with service learning (such as transportation) must be considered before incorporating a service learning program.

It is also important to recognize the importance of previous experience with volunteerism that students have before entering college. Although the amount of service learning being incorporated into K-12 education is increasing, it is still not at a level at which students will have a uniform understanding of that type of learning experience
Berger and Milem (2002) found that students that had previously been involved in volunteerism were more likely to continue in college than those that had not participated. Astin et al. (1999) had previously found that students that participate in volunteering in high school are much more likely to continue volunteering, even beyond college graduation. An additional challenge of effectively incorporating and measuring the success of service learning is making sure that clear learning objectives are established, as well and an effective tool to measure if those objectives are being met (Eyler, 2000).

Community Partnerships as a Part of Service Learning

Developing genuine, thoughtful, and effective partnerships with community members is critical to the success of any service learning or volunteer community service program for both the student participants and the community members. Before a university seeks to have a partnership with community agencies, there must be a clear idea of the nature of that relationship. The university cannot use the surrounding community simply as a laboratory for students to gain ‘real-life’ experience. There must be a commitment to be a positive catalyst for change and ownership of the responsibility a university has in also being a part of that community (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Success will be limited if a relationship is not completely developed, but “the chances of success (of service learning) are greatly improved if the programs are well-designed and include strategies for real partnerships with communities . . .” (Cone, 2003, p.12).

Community members and agencies are increasingly expecting colleges and universities to assist in addressing problems in society and fostering an attitude of engagement in one’s community (Rhoads, 1998). In many communities, a gap exists
between the community partners and the university community. Developing common goals, informing partners of opportunities to interact with students, and communicating on issues of training and logistics in coordinating student participation can address this (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003). To build a foundation for this type of relationship, it is important for those coordinating service learning programs from the university side to be knowledgeable about the community, both demographically and culturally. Cultivating relationships with current community leaders and long-time residents can assist in learning about important cultural and social networks, as well as problems within the community that may not be as visible. It is important to understand the population from a demographic standpoint, both in terms of numbers and in important factors such as racial make-up and socioeconomic status of the residents (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

**Evaluation of Service Learning Programs**

In terms of using service learning as a teaching tool, there are few, if any, standardized measures to ensure that academic goals are being reached. While a few researchers have studied specific courses and found positive results, there is still a lack of widespread evaluation to truly measure if service learning positively impacts students learning course material (Eyler, 2000). The primary indicator often used is increase grade point averages, which may or may not have an influence on overall learning. Faculty members implementing service learning in their courses are often not equipped to do effective assessment of the true impact of the program beyond hours recorded and information presented in reflection activity or journal (Holland, 2001).

An evaluation tool was developed based on the work of Kecskes, Muylaaert, Furco, Gelmon, and Holland, to measure the sustainability of service learning programs
within an institution, division, or single course (Community Campus Partnerships for Health, n.d., Self-assessment tool for service-learning sustainability, ¶2). There are five dimensions of service learning that are evaluated based on three stages: critical mass building, in which the campus is starting to understand what service learning is and slowly incorporate it; quality building, in which the focus is ensuring that the experiences are meaningful and reaching some sort of outcome; and sustained institutionalization, in which the process is fully ingrained into the culture. The five dimensions of service learning include: the definition and application of service learning, including having a strategic plan for alignment with the mission of the institution; faculty support and involvement, including faculty awareness, support, and leadership in incorporating service learning; student support for and involvement in service learning, similar to faculty awareness and support; community support for and involvement in the process, including understanding and taking an active role in having a voice and displaying leadership in the process; and institutional leadership and support, including providing policy, staff, administrative, and financial support for service learning initiatives. The process of creating and implementing a service learning program must be coupled with the resources and action plan to sustain the effort (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

Holland (2001) proposed a comprehensive model using both qualitative and quantitative methods for assessing service learning on both the academic and the community partner side. To evaluate the impact on the academic experience, it is important to consider the following: the specific goals of service learning; the components of the service learning experience that will be measured; and how service learning will be measured. To evaluate the impact on the community partners, it is
important to consider other factors, including: whether or not the service learning fulfills the mission of the organization; any economical impact to the organization; whether or not the relationship with the university has been fair and reciprocal; whether or not the program can be sustained; and the overall satisfaction of the service learning program. Both the university and community partners must play a role in effective assessment.

Service learning can provide an experiential learning opportunity that enhances the overall understanding and application of course material. Students that participate in service learning can discover their role as engaged citizens and responsible leaders in the larger community. The component of critical reflection allows students to internalize the experience and facilitates growth and development. By insisting on the implementation of service learning into the curriculum, higher education institutions solidify the commitment to experiential education and the importance of creating and supporting strong community partnerships. In order to see comprehensive change, however, the commitment to include service learning must also contain mechanisms to research and evaluate the experience to ensure that service learning goes beyond simply giving a few hours of time without regard to the academic goals (Eyler, 2000).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented information from literature on volunteerism and service learning. Information was included regarding definitions and comparison of voluntary community service and service learning. The majority of the information found was focused on service learning and included curriculum incorporation, civic engagement outcomes, benefits of service learning, the community partner piece of service learning, and the implementation and evaluation of service learning programs. There was little
research found that compared the experiences of students that participated in volunteer community service versus service learning, and no information regarding an established program where students were participating in both types of activities organized by the same office or area.

Chapter Three details the methodology for this research study. Information will be presented on the design of the research study, including the selection of participants, the collection of data, the analysis of data, and the timeline of the data collection.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students (hereafter referred to as subjects) that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. Student Voluntary Services (SVS) at Ball State University utilizes an online enrollment program and database that tracks student participation in either type of program. The eleven subjects signed up for either service learning or volunteer community service through an SVS coordinated volunteer program.

The researcher used a qualitative case study method of research. The use of qualitative research methods allows for significant depth and detail to be studied about the subject (Patton, 1990). The goal of case study research is “holistic description and interpretation” (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 108). Because a case study focuses on a single phenomenon, the purpose was to determine how specific characteristics within that phenomenon interact together to make meaning (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). This particular type of case study involved collecting and analyzing data from multiple cases (Merriam, 1998). The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with each subject to develop a case study for subjects that participated in volunteer community service and a case study for subjects that participated in service learning through an academic course.
This allowed the researcher to study both the sample within each case and the cases jointly (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative study allows researchers the opportunity to understand a topic based on the meaning created by the individual subjects (Merriam, 1998). A rich or thick description of the topic is produced. Geertz (2001) developed the phrase thick description and describes the role of the researcher in collecting data and recognizing that the information is coming from the subject’s point of view rather than their own. “It comes from the ability to construe their modes of expression, what I would call their symbol systems, which such an acceptance allows one to work toward developing” (p. 270). In case study design, thick description includes information important to that case, including particular issues and interpretations (Stake, 2000). The level of detail provided by a thick description is particularly valuable in qualitative research collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Direct quotations that result from using open-ended questioning techniques are often included, as they provide detailed information from the viewpoint and reality of the subjects themselves (Patton, 1990).

There are five types of qualitative research typically utilized: basic, ethnographic, phenomenological, grounded theory, or case study (Merriam, 1998). Case study is a type of qualitative research design that focuses on one particular phenomenon, which allows the researcher to understand an issue in depth (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). The purpose of case study design is to “gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest” (Patton, 1990, p. 384). Case study research gives the researcher the opportunity to describe and analyze a specific individual, a group, or a process, known as a bounded system (Merriam, 1998). There are many advantages of
using case study in qualitative research. Case study produces a large amount of detailed information about the phenomenon, provides supporting information that can be used to investigate or conduct future research, and allows the researcher to more fully understand the educational process (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). By doing multiple case studies, the researcher may be able to use the information as a precursor to a quantitative study to measure differences in the experiences of volunteer community service and service learning.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is employed in The Office of Student Life as the director. Prior to her current position, she had served as an Assistant, Associate, or Director in either Student Organizations and Activities or Leadership and Service Learning (which merged in the summer of 2006 to form Student Life and have had direct or indirect responsibilities for Student Voluntary Services and service learning) for the previous ten years. As a staff member in The Office of Student Life, she has experienced firsthand the growth of volunteer community service and service learning programs, as well as the number of student participation with these programs. As the researcher became the permanent director when The Offices of Leadership and Service Learning and Student Organizations and Activities merged to become The Office of Student Life in July of 2006, she recognized the importance of understanding the student experience in both volunteer community service and service learning programs. As the Director of Student Life, she provides oversight for the programs and the staff that run the programs, as well as securing additional resources for the area. Subjects were not selected to participate in
the study if the researcher had previously worked, or interacted with them to guard against potential conflicts of interest and/or conflicts of commitment.

The researcher had extensive prior knowledge of the Student Life area based on the professional positions held. The insider-outsider dilemma is often an issue in qualitative research. Hellawell (2006) defines the insider-outsider dilemma that can occur in research, particularly with graduate students. Insider researchers often have familiarity with the setting and individuals being researched, where an outsider researcher does not. Roberts and Sanders (2005) contend that this dilemma is inevitable before, during and after conducting research. They define the term ‘pragmatic realism’ as the link between the research itself, the context of the research, and the dilemma present before, during, and after the research. They state that individuals have this type of dilemma in everyday relationships, and the ability to recognize the impact on a research project is key in conducting quality research. Although their research focused on ethnography, the concepts can be applied to other types of qualitative research. Both insider and outsider researchers vary in their degree of familiarity (or lack thereof) of a given setting. Hellawell contends that both can be an advantage, as having empathy and/or distance from subjects should be considered in quality research. In terms of this project, the researcher has a unique advantage of an extensive knowledge of the organizational structure in place to implement the community service and service learning programs, but does not directly interact with participants or agencies involved in the programs.
Research Design

Case study is designed to “take the reader into the case situation, a person’s life, a group’s life, or a program’s life” (Patton, 1990, p. 387). There are multiple ways of collecting data in constructing a case study, including conducting interviews with subjects (Merriam, 1998). Case studies can be described in three ways: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Particularistic means that the case study design focuses on a specific situation, program, event or phenomenon. Descriptive means that the end result of a case study is a thorough or ‘thick’ description of what is being investigated. Heuristic means that the case study allows the reader to have a more complete understanding of the topic or phenomenon that has been studied (Merriam, 1998). The case study method allows researchers to explore a real-life topic in depth in order to create a better understanding. “The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998 p. 41). Holland (2001) proposed a comprehensive model using both qualitative and quantitative methods for assessing service learning on both the academic and the community partner side. However, the purpose of this study compared two different types of experiences: volunteer community service and service learning. Holland’s model was designed for a different purpose than this study. Because this was a descriptive case study rather than an evaluation study, the researcher did not find Holland’s model to be an appropriate choice. The researcher chose to develop multiple case studies that included subjects that volunteered to do community service as well as students participating in service learning. The outcomes of this study were more directly relevant to the mission and operations of Student Voluntary Services (SVS). For future
studies, Holland’s model could be used to incorporate the community agencies utilized
by SVS, as well as focusing on faculty members that incorporate service learning in their
academic courses.

Eleven subjects participated in the research study. Each of the eleven subjects was
interviewed once. The researcher developed case studies with the data collected during
the eleven semi-structured interviews (seven for service learning and four for community
service). This allowed the researcher to balance between a formal and informal interview
with subjects. The researcher had a list of questions to ask, but utilized the flexibility of
asking additional or different questions based on the responses of the subjects (Merriam,
1998). The case study method was selected because the concentration was on one
particular phenomenon with the goal of developing a description of each of the two types
of volunteer experiences. There was little previous research that examined subjects that
participated in volunteer community service versus service learning experiences.
Utilizing a qualitative research method allowed for an in-depth understanding of the
phenomenon that could both improve practice and provide information to be examined
for future research (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The use of qualitative case study also
allowed the subjects to provide details about their volunteer experiences. This
information gathered provides a thorough understanding of students’ perceptions of both
volunteer community service and service learning experiences.

Selection of Subjects

For this study, the researcher used purposeful sampling. Purposeful (non-random)
sampling is common in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to select the
most appropriate sample to conduct the study on that particular phenomenon. Because the
results are not intended to be generalizable, it was not necessary to conduct probability sampling (Merriam, 1998). The subjects for this research study were students that participated for the first time in either volunteer community service or service learning through a coordinated Student Voluntary Services (SVS) program during the spring or fall 2006 semesters. Initially, the researcher planned to interview subjects that had participated in SVS during the spring 2006 semester. The number of willing subjects was too small to constitute a sufficient sample, so the researcher extended the pool of subjects to fall 2006 volunteers.

Student Voluntary Services (SVS) is housed in the Office of Student Life. Within Student Life, there are full-time professional and support staff, as well as graduate assistants, which develop the placement opportunities with the local agencies and assist in running the SVS recruitment fair. By using purposeful sampling to select subjects, information about the subjects was known before this study began. This allowed for the subjects to be knowledgeable about the topic being reported (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997).

The contact information of students that had participated in either volunteer community service or service learning activities was provided to the researcher from the coordinator of the Student Voluntary Services (SVS) program. Initially, the researcher planned to interview subjects that had participated in SVS during the spring 2006 semester. The number of willing subjects was too small to constitute a sufficient sample, so the researcher extended the pool of subjects to fall 2006 volunteers. The students were contacted via e-mail to gauge interest in participating in this project. The initial e-mail was sent to 837 students registered with SVS. Eight of those messages were returned
because the recipients’ mailboxes were full. The second e-mail was sent to 424 students registered with SVS the following semester. Twenty-three of those messages were returned because the recipients’ mailboxes were full. The researcher specified that potential subjects were needed that had participated in either volunteer community service or service learning for the first time. A total of twelve students contacted the researcher indicating interest in participating. In working with college students, the researcher understood that the low number of respondents could be attributed to a number of different factors including undergraduate students’ lack of familiarity with being a research participant, to the already full schedules of many students within the sample, to the time in the semester the invitation was sent or the recruiting method used by the researcher. Eleven of the subjects continued correspondence to establish a meeting time and location. The coordinator of SVS verified that those subjects had participated in a coordinated program. Three of those interviews took place during the fall of 2006 and the remaining eight took place during the spring 2007.

This study was conducted by interviewing a total of eleven subjects that signed up for a coordinated program placement through the SVS recruitment fair during either the spring or fall 2006 semesters. Seven of the subjects had participated in service learning for an academic course and four had participated in community service. Qualitative research is not designed to be generalizable, and therefore the sample can be relatively small (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). This was particularly true for this study given the number of subjects available that participated in a coordinated volunteer community service or service learning program for the first time during the spring or fall 2006 semester. First time volunteers were selected to ensure that the experiences and exposure
to the outside community were similar. Given the response to the request for subjects, more participants in service learning were interviewed than community service. All subjects had participated in full-semester, coordinated programs through SVS. Limiting to coordinated programs rather than one-time or referral programs helped ensure verification of the hours, as well as the inclusion of a reflection component by a Program Coordinator (PC). Coordinated programs were also chosen to ensure a meaningful experience. Referral or one-time events could have been very limited in the actual service hours.

According to Merriam (1998), there is no set number of subjects that signify an ideal sample size. The goal is to select enough subjects to cover the topic and to stop collecting information from subjects when no new information is learned. The researcher identified a total of eleven subjects that responded to the research inquiry and met the requirements of participating in a coordinated program and being a first-time volunteer. Gender, age, or class standing were not considered when selecting participants for interviews. All potential subjects were contacted via e-mail a second time to establish a time and location for an interview. The number of subjects was believed to be an appropriate number to establish in order to arrive at a data saturation point for each intended case study. Padak & Padak (1994) define saturation when the researcher is not learning anything new about the research questions. Additionally, if a researcher has a complete look at the data being collected, saturation has been reached (Charmaz, 2000). The researcher developed a description of each subject before constructing the individual and comparative case studies. Based on this definition, the researcher felt that saturation had been reached with the eleven interviews. This was important in determining if
enough information had been gathered to construct detailed case studies. Subjects that participated in the study received a $5 Starbucks gift card. Based on the researcher’s experience in working with students, providing an incentive ensures better participation. The e-mail message informing potential subjects of the study and inviting them to participate stated that the researcher would provide this gift card. The gift card was given to each subject prior to the start of the interview. The researcher purchased the incentive.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with subjects in an effort to understand each group’s experiences with both community service and service learning. According to Patton (1990), interviewing is used to gather information that could not be simply observed, and to explore the perception of the subject. It is the job of the person conducting the interview, not the person being interviewed, to ensure that quality information is being gathered. “The task for the interviewer is to make it possible for the person being interviewed to bring the interviewer into his or her world” (Patton, 1998, p. 279). The researcher conducted one interview with each of the eleven subjects. Subjects willing to participate were interviewed either during the fall following the spring 2006 placement or spring following the fall 2006 placement of volunteer community service or service learning. During the interview, the researcher developed rapport and secured basic information about the subjects’ previous experiences with volunteering, as well as asking several questions specifically about the volunteer community service or service learning experience. The interviews varied between twenty and thirty minutes. The researcher had hoped that the interviews would have lasted longer and the subjects shared more information, but the subjects consistently revealed their information directly and felt they
had adequately described their experiences in a much shorter amount of time. This may be due to the way the interview questions were organized.

A series of open-ended questions were asked in order to minimize the likelihood that subjects will give a predetermined response (Patton, 1990). The researcher used the questions listed below for the interview:

1. Think about a particular experience that you had volunteering/completing service learning this semester. Describe that experience.
2. What (if anything) surprised you during your volunteer/service learning experience?
3. If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same of different site? Why or why not?
4. Did volunteering/service learning help you in your academic coursework? Why or why not?
5. Did volunteering/service learning have an impact on your choice of or continuance in your academic major? Why or why not?
6. Describe the local community. What types of people live in the local community? What are their daily life experiences?
7. What did you learn about the residents of the local community?
8. Describe why you think that professors would incorporate service learning in their course requirements.
9. Should service learning or volunteerism be required for all students?

The interviews were semi-structured in nature. The researcher developed a series of questions for the interview, but also asked additional questions based on the responses of
the subjects. According to Patton (1990), probes and follow-up questions are an important part of the interview process and can improve the richness of the response, as well as let the subject know the level of detail desired in a response. The questions were asked in the same order to each subject.

Analysis of Data

A content analysis was done on the information gathered through each interview. A third party transcribed the interviews and was paid by the researcher. The person that completed the transcriptions was Ruby Laux and she was paid $50 per transcription by the researcher. The researcher verified the content by listening to the tapes while reviewing the transcriptions line by line. The researcher then coded the information for categories and themes. The purpose of classifying and coding data is to find patterns and themes within that setting (Patton, 1990). According to Merriam (1998), “Coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (p. 164). The coding process involved two levels: one level to note basic information about the subjects for quick retrieval and a second level to begin an initial analysis of the data (Merriam, 1998). The researcher did the coding by hand rather than utilize a computer program or other method.

In addition, axial coding techniques were used to organize the data. “Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and properties) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking” (Borgatti, n.d., Axial coding, ¶1). Radcliff (n.d., Analysis of field notes and other data sources), describes a five-step process to analyze field notes, including: determining the unit to analyze, such as a word
or sentence; coding those units; developing (and continually revising) categories and
subcategories from these codes; providing examples of the categories; and specifying
links between the various categories. The researcher also provided a copy of the
transcript from each interview to the subjects to ensure accuracy and ensure complete
information (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). The transcripts were e-mailed to the
subjects.

One of the powerful components of qualitative research is the ability to use direct
quotes from subjects. The ability to use direct quotes allows for the understanding of the
people or programs studied (Patton, 1990). To ensure the quotes are correct and to
increase validity of the information collected, qualitative researchers often confirm the
information collected with subjects. This process is referred to as member checking
(Janesick, 2000). Member checking allows the researcher to have the subject review the
information directly and clarify or correct problems or misinformation. Following the
preparation of the transcripts, the subjects in this study had an opportunity to clarify or
correct information contained in the transcript. All eleven subjects were sent a copy of
the transcript via e-mail to verify the information. E-mail was the only mode of contact
the researcher had for each subject. One of the subjects had an e-mail address that was no
longer valid when sent a copy of the transcript. Five subjects responded to the e-mail
message. Four of those five indicated that the transcript was correct. The fifth subject
clarified that an incorrect course number had been included in the transcript. The
researcher made this correction. The remaining five subjects did not respond.

Once the content was verified, the researcher began constructing categories for
each case using a constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998). Within each case (one
for volunteer community service subjects and one for service learning subjects),
information was sorted into common groupings to begin forming categories. With a
multiple case study, an additional stage of analysis is completed (Merriam, 1998). The
first analysis was the within-case analysis, where the researcher determined all of the
relevant data and important themes within each case. This was followed by a cross-case
analysis to develop general themes that will fit both of the individual cases. According to
McMillan and Schumacher (1997), there are three strategies that can be used to develop a
classification system: (1) the researcher will develop topics from smaller units and group
topics together to form categories; (2) the researcher will use predetermined categories,
which can include developing smaller subcategories; or (3) the researcher will use a
combination of new and predetermined categories based on the data. The researcher
needs to look for recurring patterns that can be sorted. Lincoln & Guba (2000) suggest
looking at both internal (data belongs together) and external (data differences are clear)
homogeneity. Once the information has been coded and placed into categories,
connections about the experiences will be made and the case studies developed. The
experience of the subjects will begin to emerge. “Creative synthesis is the bringing
together of the pieces that have emerged into a total experience, showing patterns and
relationships” (Patton, 1990, p.410). The following is a description of the steps the
researcher took to analyze the data.

1. As described previously, each interview was transcribed and checked for
   accuracy with the subjects.

2. Each question was reviewed to search for common behaviors, attitudes, or
   conclusions drawn by the subjects. Preliminary categories emerged for each
case, and the sections of the transcripts were cut and placed together with other pieces of information in that category. Each piece of information was labeled by category and also by the number of the subject. The information was reviewed again and the categories confirmed.

3. Once the categories were confirmed, the information was reviewed within each category to determine any subcategory. The researcher determined that if additional themes became apparent, a subcategory was created.

4. Following the creation of a case study for service learning subjects and volunteer subjects, the information was examined again to develop an analysis of the two cases. The overall categories remained the same, but each subcategory was only included if it had been in each individual case study.

5. The findings were reported and recommendations made in the following two chapters based on the information discovered during the interview process, coding, and analysis.

Evaluation of Findings in Qualitative Research

Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest four criteria to evaluate qualitative data collected: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility assesses the validity of the data collected from the participants’ point of view. The researcher assessed credibility by conducting member checks with the subjects of this study by providing the opportunity to view and give feedback on the interview transcripts. Transferability is the degree that the findings of the research can be transferable to other settings. Although the results of this study are not designed to be generalizable, they do provide a solid foundation for future research. Dependability is
similar to reliability in discovering the same information under similar circumstances. Although the number of participants in the study was small, saturation was reached and the researcher is confident that similar findings would have been found with additional subjects. Confirmability relates to objectivity and is the ability of the researcher to be aware of bias. The researcher is confident in the balance of the insider-outsider dilemma that can be found when having familiarity with the subjects or details of a program.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in volunteer community service and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to develop two case studies. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The data collected was used to construct two case studies: one for subjects that had completed service learning and one for subjects that had completed community service. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. A total of eleven subjects were interviewed: seven who participated in service learning for an academic course and four who participated in volunteer community service. All eleven subjects signed up for their service through Student Voluntary Services (SVS) and completed their service learning or volunteer community service over the course of a semester. Each subject was assigned a pseudonym during the transcription and coding of information. This pseudonym will be indicated if a quote is used from that particular subject.

A case study method was used. A description of each subject is included, followed by a case study of each set of subjects. Each set of subjects was analyzed separately and a case study was presented for each. Following each case study, an analysis of the two studies was included. A standard set of interview questions (see Chapter 3) was used with each participant, with additional questions asked depending on the responses given. This type of semi-structured interview is common in qualitative
research. A case study of each subject pool was presented individually, followed by an overall analysis of the two cases.

Case Study #1

A total of seven subjects were interviewed who had participated in service learning for academic course credit. The subjects described their experiences based on the interview questions, as well as things that stood out that they felt were significant. Each subject is described with their basic information, including their pseudonym, their major (if given), where they performed their service, and their thoughts on the experience. Following the introduction to the subjects, the case study is presented, including the primary categories that emerged and any subcategories discovered through the interview process.

The Subjects

Subject #1 - Sarah

Sarah was an elementary education major and completed service learning for an elementary education class. Sarah performed her service at an after-school tutoring program. It was her first experience doing any type of service. Sarah had an interesting perspective on her experience. She enjoyed the interaction with the kids and emphatically declared that she would volunteer again. However, she experienced a high level of frustration (she used this term four different times) with this particular site, which did impact her overall experience. She discussed the lack of organization provided by the staff members of this particular program. Sarah stated, “We would get there and we were placed with a certain child and then we got there and they didn’t have us placed with that child.”
Although Sarah was frustrated by the disorganization and problems at the service site, she found value in her experience personally and in professional preparation. “Overall, I think it was a good experience.” The researcher observed how Sarah thoughtfully reflected on the experience and how it impacted her decision to remain an elementary education major, and how her view of the surrounding community and broader social issues was impacted.

Subject #2 - Megan

Megan was a social work major that completed service learning at a senior center for a course within her major. As Megan described the site in general as well as the specific residents, she described a very positive experience and enjoyed her time in service. Megan stated, “Well, I mean it was definitely fantastic.” She described how she often spoke of this experience to her friends. “My friends are like ‘okay, we have heard enough – shut up’.” Her body language was very relaxed and the inflection of her voice demonstrated that she truly enjoyed her experience. She supported that impression when she shared that she went well beyond the required amount of time volunteering at the center simply because she was having such a positive experience.

Subject #3 - Steve

Steve completed a service learning requirement for a course in family and consumer sciences. Steve was unique in that he grew up in this community, and had a positive impression with those he interacted. Steve described serving at an after-school recreation site for kids. Steve cited that he changed his academic major to elementary education, in part because of his experience working with kids.
Prior to his most recent service experience, Steve completed service learning for another course. This experience was at an animal rescue center. Steve reflected that working in an animal shelter exposed him to individuals with a variety of life experiences and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Steve began the interview by describing a negative interaction he had with a child at the after-school service site. The child was chasing another child who ran into Steve, causing the child to fall and hit his head. This incident upset Steve, the child, and the child’s mother. The child quickly got over the incident, but Steve was still bothered by what had happened. “It was like I had really just hurt him, and I felt horrible because then I was like could I have prevented that?” In spite of that negative incident, Steve described the great experience he had at that service site. He described how he was having a positive impact with the group of kids he worked with and was forming strong bonds with them. “They (the kids) remembered me when I came back. They expected me to be there.” Although Steve did not become particularly animated when he spoke, the researcher heard enthusiasm in his voice when he talked about volunteering. This was evident when Steve stated he continued to serve beyond what was expected for course credit. Steve had formed a strong network with the other student volunteers involved with Student Voluntary Services (SVS).

Subject #4 - Mary

Mary completed service learning for a class in family and consumer sciences. Mary completed her service at an assisted living facility for primarily elderly residents. Mary described having a positive experience as she was complimentary of the staff that ran the center and their care and commitment to the residents. She mentioned a particular
resident that had recently lost her husband, and was touched by the comfort this woman found in the staff and volunteers at the site. When asked if she would volunteer at the same site, Mary responded that she would not. Interestingly, she did state that she recommended the site to other friends and classmates, but she did not feel completely comfortable in the setting in terms of knowing what to always do with older adults. “Sometimes I felt awkward because I wasn’t for sure what to do in certain situations.”

Making the individual connections with the residents was her favorite part of the experience. Mary did complete her service hours, but did not go much beyond minimum required. Although Mary kept reiterating how enjoyable her experience was, one of her regrets about her experience was that she did not volunteer as often as she could have.

I also think I would try to make more time for it. A lot of times I would, because I used to go on Friday afternoons and a lot of time I just wanted my Friday afternoons to myself. A lot of times I would go home instead and I wouldn’t be here for a weekend when I could have volunteered.

Subject #5 - John

John completed his service learning experience serving as a reading mentor at a local elementary school. At the time of the interview, John was an elementary education major from elementary education. He was thinking of changing his major, but not because of this experience. If anything, John felt that would have strengthened his commitment to elementary education. “If anything, it (service learning) would have encouraged me to continue in education.” John was the only subject interviewed that disclosed that he was married and that managing his family life in addition to the service learning assignment was a challenge. Of all of the subjects interviewed, John provided
the most direct answers to the questions. He was eager to share his experience, but gave
the impression that because of his external commitments to family and work, anything
that he did extra (including service learning and this interview) was very well managed in
terms of time.

Subject #6 - Cara

Cara was a German education major and completed her service learning tutoring
kids at an after-school program held in a local church. Both the church population and the
participants in the tutoring program were predominantly African-American. Cara is
Caucasian, and did not have much exposure to different cultures. She talked about how
this was a challenge when completing her service at this site because she did not know
how she would be received. In spite of the challenges, Cara responded that she probably
would work with this site again given the opportunity.

At the time of the interview, Cara was not completing service learning, but was
volunteering on her own at a store which provided teachers with classroom materials free
of charge. Cara did not discuss whether or not there had been a possibility of returning to
the other site and if she purposefully chose a different site. She mentioned her boyfriend
several times throughout the interview and that he had impacted her decision to become
involved in further volunteering. He was a member of Student Voluntary Services (SVS)
and had a real passion for volunteering. Cara described various types of service he had
completed, including some that he had persuaded her to participate in as well. It was clear
that she did not share the same enthusiasm for volunteering, but she discussed her
appreciation for his commitment to helping others.
Subject #7 - Angela

Angela was a fashion major within the department of family and consumer sciences and had completed a service learning course requirement at a homeless shelter. Angela described herself twice as being very shy, and this impacted her experience working at the shelter. She described being “in her shell” and found that it took her awhile to feel truly comfortable relating to the men at the shelter. Angela related her level of comfort only to her self-described shyness and to the type of environment at the homeless shelter. Angela described becoming more comfortable at the shelter over time, and was surprised that she had common interest as some of the men being served there. Angela stated her experience was positive and that she may go back to that site if given the opportunity, but would probably choose to volunteer at a site working with animals if possible. Angela talked about her interest in volunteering at an animal shelter because she had pets at home and missed interacting with them.

The Case Study

Once the researcher completed the coding of the data in the transcripts, five primary categories emerged from the data analysis: (1) description of the overall experience; (2) description of the recipients of the service; (3) description of the service site; (4) description of the local community; and (5) description of the relationship of service learning to the academic experience. Within each category, there were subcategories that emerged during the analysis. The researcher could not find any information that provided a set guideline for determining subcategories; therefore she determined that if a theme emerged as being recurring and important, a subcategory was created.
Description of the Overall Experience

The subjects provided a general description of their service learning experience, as well as specific examples of how their experience was meaningful or had personally impacted them. There were four subcategories that emerged when describing the overall experience: (1) details of the service learning experience, which included interactions with specific individuals at the site; (2) actual experience versus expected service learning experience, which included the preparation from the faculty member or their own perception of service compared to their actual experience; (3) impact of service learning on daily life, which included examples of how the service was incorporated into the subjects’ lives; and (4) compulsory service learning, which provided the subjects with the opportunity to reflect upon whether or not service learning or volunteering should be required for all college students.

The following four questions posed to the subjects provided them with the opportunity to describe their service learning experience. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning experience?

3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

9) Should service learning or volunteerism be required for all students?

Details of the Service Learning Experience

The subjects were eager to describe the service learning activity in detail, particularly if they had interacted with an individual or individuals on a personal level.
The majority of the interactions were positive, particularly if a one-on-one connection had been made.

Experiences working with kids and older adults were specifically described, which seem to be the two populations that generated strong feelings. Angela and Mary described their experience in working with adults, including working with homeless individuals struggling with addiction and working with residents of an assisted living facility. Each experience personally impacted that subject involved. “I was really shy and in my shell for a big majority of that time, then towards the end I was getting to know some of the guys. I started coming out of my shell a little bit” (Angela). Mary realized that an elderly woman she had been working with had been recently widowed and that she directly had made an impact. “. . . We all felt like we were a part of her life, and we just were able to comfort her and that kind of thing. That really helped a lot for her, I could tell.”

Overall, the descriptions of the service learning experience were positive. Two of the subjects were openly surprised that they enjoyed their experience as much as they did, particularly because they had been initially overwhelmed by the amount of hours they needed to complete during the semester. Megan completed more hours than necessary because she was so pleased with her experience. “I did many, many hours beyond what was required. I got all the required ten hours, and at one point I was going twice a week for four hours each time.”

Although the overall experiences were positive, there were examples given of interactions or situations that were frustrating or negative. Sarah was frustrated because the time allotted for an activity and the expectation of what to accomplish were not
congruent. As previously mentioned, Steve was involved in an incident where a child was involved in a slight accident. Although it was not his fault, the child and parent were not happy and this tainted his experience. In spite of that negative experience, Steve was one of two subjects that intended to or did return to the same site to continue volunteering.

**Actual Experience Versus Expected Service Learning Experience**

Although students perform service learning through an academic class, students sign up for a placement through Student Voluntary Services (SVS). SVS provides a description of the site and usually what the volunteers will be asked to do. The subjects often had an idea of what to expect when they went to the site to complete their service learning. This came from the faculty member who had assigned the service learning, information from SVS during the sign-up process, or based on assumptions of the subject. These assumptions may have come from previous experiences volunteering or other forms of civic engagement, from friends or family, or simply an idea of service that the subject created internally. This expectation did not always match the actual experience. When asked what surprised the subjects about their experience, one of the major themes was the difference the expectation set for the service learning and what actually occurred. The subjects did not want to place blame on a particular individual, such as the professor that made the assignment, the staff member at the site, or the student serving as the Program Coordinator (PC) through SVS. The faculty members may have taken for granted that the service learning activity would naturally supplement the course content. The staff on site and the PC may not have understood how service learning students may have different needs than other volunteers.
Sarah, who was involved in a tutoring project, had a particular image of the service that was very different from the actual experience.

I was going to have this sweet little kid that was going to listen to everything I said and I got there and I found out that I have to lead like I’m their friend but I have to be firm and I wasn’t expecting that.

Two subjects wished that they had put more effort into the experience. Angela was shy and felt that getting over the shyness more quickly would have helped her have a more satisfying experience. Mary was initially apprehensive, and regretted that it held her back from being more involved and engaged with the patients at the site and from putting in additional hours necessary to make that connection. Both of these examples related to the personal characteristics or decisions of these subjects, and not necessarily anything related to the service learning course or site. It did, however, impact their experience.

Impact of Service Learning Experience on Daily Life

While few subjects had reflected upon broader social issues or even their relationship with the local community, the subjects understood and articulated how service learning impacted them in terms of their day-to-day activities and interactions with others. “It (service learning) certainly has impacted my life” (Mary). Specific personal benefits included an improvement in social skills and an increased empathy for the elderly. Mary specifically noted a personal feeling of enrichment by participating in the service learning experience. “I came out of it feeling like I had accomplished something . . . I felt like I contributed something, and I made these peoples’ lives a little better.” Steve and Megan were inspired to pursue additional service-related activities as a result of their experiences. Steve volunteered in an additional program sponsored by
Student Voluntary Services (SVS), while Megan was planning to begin a book trade within her academic department to assist students in keeping costs low. Megan stated, “It (the service learning experience) has kind of inspired me to do my own thing.” An increased understanding and appreciation of the local community as a benefit of their experience was a common idea expressed, as well as the importance of other students participating in some sort of service activity.

The subjects found that the amount of time spent doing service learning does not have to be exorbitant to have an impact. They recognized that hearing about or watching the experiences of those completing service can influence participation by others. Megan described the experience to friends to persuade them that you can get your other work accomplished while volunteering and that it did not need to be a huge time commitment. She also recognized the importance of having empathy for the elderly and felt that “. . . even four hours of volunteering can change that (the perception of the elderly).” Megan referenced watching her parents participating in protests, which she credits as planting the seed for her involvement in the community. Cara was inspired by observing her boyfriend’s commitment to volunteering, particularly to a service site. His dedication to those at the site and passion for the experience inspired her to volunteer as well.

He just came here in the fall, and then became a PC this semester. Then I am like, ‘How are you finding the time to do this, why do you want to do this?’ It made no sense to me because I didn’t see that from him. But he just loves it so much because he is just with the kids and playing, which he loves to do. So it gets him out and active. Then so I’m like okay maybe I should get out and do something, so then I volunteered to go to the Back to School store.
Another important outcome of service learning was the development of personal connections with others participating in the service learning or volunteer experience. Steve found that meeting other volunteers was a way to expand his circle of friends, as well as an opportunity to become involved as an officer in Student Voluntary Services (SVS).

All of the other service learning students were doing this program with me. We all got along right off the bat, and I actually now have more classes with these people and I hang out with these people. So I formed these bonds that I wasn’t expecting. I was just expecting to fulfill a requirement for a class, and now I’m actually in SVS and I have these new friends.

**Compulsory Service Learning**

The subjects were asked if service learning or volunteer community service should be required of all students. Although there are majors that require service learning in selected courses, it is not a requirement for all students. The subjects were divided regarding requiring compulsory service learning or volunteerism for all college students. Steve, Mary, John, Cara and Angela responded that they thought that all students should be required to complete some type of service activity. Some had stronger feelings about this than others. They were split in the rationale of requiring students to complete service learning between the benefit of complementing the academic course and the benefit of helping the community. Steve noted a professional advantage in requiring service. “They (volunteers) get an idea of the people they will be working with, the real world people instead of the people in the bubble that we live in.” Angela noted a personal benefit. “It (service) broadens your horizon and opens your eyes to see what life is like outside
(university) to see what 50% of Americans go through and what 90% of the world goes through.” The practical applications in compulsory service included having a positive item to add on a resume and a way to observe a variety of experiences to apply to a professional position.

**Summary**

Description of the overall experience of service learning subjects included both general and specific examples. Subjects had the opportunity to discuss a particular experience, something that was surprising, inclination to volunteer again and/or return to the same site, and whether or not students should be compelled to volunteer or complete service learning. Four subcategories emerged from the responses: details of the service learning experience, the actual versus the expected service learning experience, the impact of the service learning experience on daily life, and compulsory service learning.

**Description of the Recipients of the Service**

In addition to describing the overall service learning experience, the subjects described in detail the recipients of the service. The researcher used the term recipients of service to assist in the analysis. The subjects did not use that term when describing the individuals they interacted with at the sites. They typically described the person or collective group (e.g. elderly, kids). For many of them, this was the most important part of the service learning experience. There were two subcategories that emerged when describing the recipients of the service: (1) description of service learning recipients’ life experiences, which included physical, environmental, or socioeconomic characteristics that were important; and (2) reactions to participants during the service learning activity,
which included specific interactions that shaped both the overall relationship between subject and recipient and the subject’s view of the experience.

The following two questions posed to the subjects also provided them with the opportunity to describe the individuals that were the recipients during the service learning experience. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning experience?

Description of Service Learning Recipients’ Life Experiences

Several subjects described important physical or environmental factors that played a role in how they interacted with or viewed the recipients. These factors may or may not have been controlled by the recipient. Megan worked with a nursing home patient suffering with Alzheimer’s disease. She enjoyed the time they spent together and joked about the woman repeating her name to her every time they met. Megan was struck by the fact that the patient did not recognize her own reflection when she showed the participant an old picture. Angela was impacted by a man that had become homeless after losing his job, home and family because of drug addiction. She had learned a lot about the experiences of those that had lost everything. “Some of them told me a little bit about why they were there instead of living in their little house with their wife. Just the variety of different backgrounds and also the life experiences they all had.”

Socioeconomic status was mentioned when describing recipients of the service learning. Sarah and Cara had interactions with those they perceived as lower socioeconomic status. Sarah felt that this made a service learning experience involving
tutoring more difficult. “They (kids being tutored) were struggling with school and it was kind of just a place for them to go while their parents were at work.” Cara was impacted by being exposed to others from a different socioeconomic status. “Those students have different experiences and different stories.” Cara also had a service learning experience in a store that provided supplies to teachers, whom she referred to as middle class. She felt that although the teachers may have some means, they could not afford all of the supplies necessary for class projects. While this may not have impacted their effectiveness in the classroom, it did make their jobs more difficult because they had to use their personal resources.

Reactions to Participants During Service Learning Activity

The reaction that a recipient had to someone participating in service learning did have a major impact on the subjects’ perception of the experience. Although not specifically asked, the subjects frequently described the different reactions recipients had to them during the service learning activity. How the recipients saw them (either based on the actual interaction or on perception) was important to the subjects. For one subject, the positive influence that she had on the recipients was evident. She recognized that many of the kids in the tutoring program she participated in were simply in need of attention and positive role models.

One little boy kept saying that he loved me, and he got in trouble for saying that. I kind of felt bad because all he wanted was someone to care about him and he didn’t understand why that wasn’t appropriate (Sarah).

Sarah also noted that the kids in the tutoring program emulated the language and mannerisms of the college students and made statements about wanting to go to college.
She saw this as a positive sign that they were perceived as role models and that they kids may be more encourage to attend college as a result.

Steve described a negative reaction from a recipient. This was the aforementioned incident with the accident that the child and his parent blamed on the service learning participant. The child quickly forgot about the incident, but Steve remained upset. He questioned his effectiveness and his ability to maintain trust from the kids and their parents.

Consistency in volunteers and motivation level of the recipients were mentioned multiple times as key factors in how the subjects were received at the sites. Steve described how consistency impacted the recipients. When volunteers returned to the same site (as he did) the recipients could make a stronger connection and trust the volunteers more. His experience during service learning involved consistent interaction with the same set of recipients. He had continued volunteering, and his current site placement did not provide consistent interaction and he felt this negatively impacted his ability to effectively interact and make connections with his group. The topic of motivation was mentioned multiple times as well. If the recipients were not motivated to participate in the program (particularly in the tutoring programs) the subjects tended to me more frustrated. Cara described being incredibly frustrated with the kids she was working with because they did not seem to have much of an interest in utilizing her help. She had compared that to her own school experience, where she had been very committed to doing well in school. In contrast, when the recipients were appreciative of the service, the subjects felt that their time was well spent and the service worthwhile. Megan and Mary,
who both completed service learning working with the elderly, mentioned feeling appreciated and how important that was to them.

Summary

This category of the case study focused on the individuals that were the recipients of the service learning. The subjects described the recipients as they described their overall experience or what surprised them about completing service learning. The subcategories that developed within this section included a description of the life experiences of the service learning recipients and reactions of the recipients to the subjects during the service learning experience.

Description of the Service Site

While the recipients of the service learning were discussed more frequently, the specific details of the service sites played an important role in how the subjects reacted to and ultimately described their service learning experience. Some subjects had the flexibility in choosing their own site. Others did not, either because of the course requirements or availability in their own schedule or with openings in a specific program. There were three subcategories that emerged when describing the service site: (1) description of the service site and paid staff, which included challenges faced by the subjects as well as a description of the staff at the site; (2) concerns with the organization of the site/Student Voluntary Services (SVS), which included logistical problems that were important enough to have impacted the service learning experience; and (3) willingness to repeat service at the same site, which included whether or not the subjects would continue volunteering and if so if they would remain at the same site.
The following three questions posed to the subjects also provided them with the opportunity to describe their service site. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning experience?

3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

Description of the Service Site and Paid Staff

Student Voluntary Services (SVS) coordinated the logistics of the service programs with the individual service sites. All sites have paid staff members that organize the activities at the site and have at least some level of interaction with the recipients. Some sites are better run than others, and some staff members are more receptive to volunteers that are students from the university. The evidence collected indicated that the interaction with the recipients of service and/or staff on site had an impact on the experience of the subjects while completing their service learning. This could include personal characteristics (including motivation to be at the site or additional problems or challenges that came with that population) or programmatic characteristics (how organized the staff was or the interaction between staff and volunteers).

Cara (who is Caucasian) described the initial cultural boundaries she faced in working with a population of African American students at her site. “Sometimes we were working with those students, there were cultural boundaries like I didn’t understand what she was really trying to express, and she didn’t understand what I was saying either so I had to get over that.” Mary did not mention any cultural issues, but she did initially have
difficulty making connections because she was working with a variety of age groups with different ailments. She worked in an assisted living facility and had a positive experience because she was able to work closely with the patients and understood what they went through. “I really got to experience what it was like for the people living there.” Megan and Mary specifically mentioned the excellent job that the professional staff did at their sites. Both recognized a genuine caring for each other, the recipients, and the volunteers. “I think that they don’t just treat them as clients, they treat them as friends…They seem to really care about what the clients are feeling” (Megan). In addition to the care for each other, Mary noted that the staff cared about her experience as a volunteer and she encouraged others to volunteer at the same site. “I did recommend other people for this semester, for them to go there because the staff was excellent in regard with what I needed to do. They didn’t just leave me somewhere.”

Concerns with the Organization of the Site/Student Voluntary Services

The service site staff had expectations for specific activities that were to be completed by the volunteers, which may have differed from the volunteer’s expectation. Staff members may have had different priorities for running their organization, and interactions with the student volunteers may not have been as high on the list. The subjects may also have come into the experience with unreasonable expectations regarding the amount of attention and direction they would received. For several of the subjects, the level of organization had an impact on their overall experience of service learning. For Sarah, it was challenging to work with her tutoring site. She had received training from Student Voluntary Services (SVS) on the type of activities that would take place and how to interact with the kids on site. The site supervisor wanted the service
learning participants to do something different. In addition, the recipients at the site did not necessarily want to participate in the outlined activities. This discrepancy had an impact on the relationship between the service learning participants and the kids they were tutoring. Sarah stated,

I think kind of, the group I went with over there, we kind of got frustrated a lot. We felt like we were being reprimanded in front of the kids. Then it took away our authority. They were just I kind of like oh well, if they are going to get in trouble by the teacher, too, then why should I have to listen to them.

Sarah felt the problem was in the communication between SVS and the site regarding mutual expectations. She further shared there were complaints about the sign-up process to actually complete the service and this was particularly true if subjects were not one of the first to sign up for particular programs due to high demand. Sarah discussed scheduling concerns in trying to coordinate classes and physically getting to the site also caused some level of frustration.

Willingness to Repeat Service at the Same Site

All seven of the subjects were asked if they would volunteer again, and if so if they would volunteer at the same site. Nearly every one stated that they would like to volunteer again. “Yes, absolutely” (Megan). “Yeah, I would love to volunteer again” (Angela). Cara was currently volunteering on her own at a different site after completing her service learning requirement. “This semester I am at a different volunteer place that I just decided to do on my own; it wasn’t required for anything.”

In terms of returning to the same site, the responses were mixed, both in whether or not to return and the reasons for that decision. Sarah was concerned about the
treatment of the volunteers by the staff. “They weren’t very friendly to us.” As mentioned, Steve continued to volunteer at the same site and had become a Program Coordinator (PC) for Student Voluntary Services (SVS). Although he enjoyed being a PC, he felt that his experience was not as much fun because of the added responsibility and the inability to stay with the same kids throughout the program. Timing and scheduling of a program also determined whether or not a subject returned, as was the case with Megan.

Three specific factors were cited as important in evaluating whether or not to return or begin volunteering at a site. The first was knowing what to expect during the experience. “Yeah, somebody there who is able to explain things and kind of tell you what is expected, that is key” (John). The second was the logistics of the service, such as whether or not there is transportation available to the site. “I have a huge range of interests, but I was limited to the coordinated programs because I don’t have a car” (Angela). The third was that the experience is enjoyable. “There was no playtime, no anything, all work (at the site). I would want to do more, something fun” (Sarah). Although there were exceptions, the subjects were not overly interested in returning to the same site.

Summary

This category of the case study focused on the sites where the service learning took place. Once again, this description came as a result of discussion about the overall experience, as well as the question of whether or not the subjects would continue to volunteer, and if so, whether or not at the same site. The subcategories of this section include a description of the service site and the paid staff, concerns raised with either the
service site or Student Voluntary Services (SVS), and the interest of the subjects to continue volunteering at the same service site.

Description of the Local Community

The description of the local community was based on the specific experience at their particular service site. Some subjects saw a reflection of themselves or their family, which was middle-class and “typical” in their terms, while others saw families worried about their financial condition and service sites located in poorer parts of town. Although the subjects described families with financial concerns with great empathy, there was not a recognition of broader social concerns or even community concerns beyond the closing of several local industries. The subjects often compared the service community to the city or town where they had come from, which was sometimes difficult to compare. There were two subcategories that emerged when describing the local community: (1) socioeconomic levels and the impact on the community, which included how the subjects described their perception of socioeconomic levels and the role that played (if any) at the service site; and (2) the perceptions of the community and the residents, which was how the subjects described the local community and those that live there.

The following two questions posed to the subjects provided them with the opportunity to describe their view of the local community and its residents. The questions were:

6) Describe the local community. What types of people live in the local community? What are their daily life experiences?

7) What did you learn about the residents of the local community?
Socioeconomic Levels and the Impact on the Community

There were two distinct points of view in the descriptions of both the local community and the local residents. One defined the local community as a typical, middle-class community. The primary activities of the community members consisted of spending time with family and working. “They (the families in town) are middle class, both parents work, but they are really family oriented” (Steve). John used similar language to describe the community. “I think the people are just regular, everyday middle class working people for the most part” (Mary).

Other subjects defined the local community as being lower–class with a high level of poverty. This point of view was supported by the economic struggles faced by many of the families in the community who were living paycheck-to-paycheck and constantly worried about having enough money. “You know the constant worries, if they are working at Wal-Mart, whether they will have enough money to pay that month’s rent and to buy groceries, and if they have kids that’s even more so” (Angela). Mary noted the physical difference when driving to her service learning site. “I would have to drive through parts of downtown, parts of the city that are not as well kept. It seemed like after you get off the campus, it’s just kind of, you know, sketchy in some places.” Although Mary had described the people in the town as middle-class, she described an environmental difference in where the service site was located. In addition to her service learning assignment, Cara described how she understood more about the poverty level in the community through a poverty simulation activity. Although this was not a direct part of her service learning experience, she described it in detail and made a connection between it and her experience at the site. In a poverty simulation activity, societal roles
are assigned to individuals to mirror those of the larger community. A facilitated discussion follows and is designed to demonstrate that individuals are often unaware of widespread poverty, even in their own community. Cara stated,

> It was so much like a game to start with, but then afterwards you would have all the actual people discuss how their life situations have happened, and what their life was like in this community. Also the struggles they had gone through and I did not realize how in poverty they really were then.

The subjects made a connection between families having to work hard to keep up financially and the impact on the kids at many of the service sites. “There’s such an income problem they (parents) have to work a lot more hours, so I think kids are left alone a lot and getting into trouble and there’s no real direction given to them” (Sarah). She goes on to say, “They (the kids at the site) seemed to know a lot of things that a young child shouldn’t know about” (Sarah).

**Perceptions of the Community and the Residents**

The perceptions of the community and the residents varied, and were based upon preconceived notions as well as actual experiences. Three subjects compared the local community to the larger cities they had lived. Although they felt the local community was small and did not have as much to offer, at least one subject felt it was not as bad as he had imagined. “It’s not Mayberry” (John). Cara shared how she and her mother had a preconceived notion of the town from a reality show that had recently been filmed in the town. “She (the mother) was a little leery then . . .” The lack of diversity within the town was noted, even though Cara felt that the campus population was more reflective of the broader population. “(The campus) . . . is very diverse and a lot of different
backgrounds.” The disparity between rich and poor also was apparent at some of the service sites. Steve noted this at an animal rescue site. He felt that enriched his experience.

Another difference noted was the attitudes of community members in dealing with college students. Steve felt the relationship was very positive. “They are very nice out there. They offer babysitting; they ask if we want to babysit their kids, so they trust us more than I would expect them. I think it’s pretty cool that they do that.” Mary had the opposite opinion.

I have learned that not all of the people in (the local community) enjoy Ball State students. They seem, you know, if I go on a trip to Wal-Mart, they kind of seem disgruntled because there are so many students.

Summary

This category focused on the description of the local community and residents that live there. Two questions were asked of the subjects regarding their description of the type of people that lived in the local community and their daily life experiences, as well as what the subjects learned about the local community. The two subcategories included a general description of the local community and the subjects’ perception of the community and its residents.

Relation of Service Learning to the Academic Experience

The primary difference in the sets of subjects was the requirement of service learning for course credit. The subjects were able to describe their experience related to their coursework, their academic major, and their career preparation. There were five subcategories that emerged when describing the relationship between service learning
and the academic experience: (1) reaction to the service learning requirement, which
described how subjects managed their academic and personal life to complete the service
learning; (2) impact of service learning on academic experience, which described how the
subjects utilized their service learning experience in the course where it was assigned; (3)
impact of service learning on career preparation, which described how the subjects
utilized their service learning experience in broader professional preparation terms; (4)
impact of service learning on academic major, which described if subjects continued in or
changed their major and the role service learning played in that decision; and (5)
perceived reasons faculty include service learning, which described how the subjects felt
that faculty members utilized and incorporated the service learning requirement into the
course.

The following three questions posed to the subjects provided them with the
opportunity to describe the impact service learning had on their coursework and academic
major, as well as why they thought their professor included service learning in the
curriculum. The questions were:

4) Did service learning help you in your academic coursework? Why or why not?
5) Did service learning have an impact on your choice of or continuance in your
academic major? Why or why not?
8) Describe why you think that professors would incorporate service learning in their
course requirements.

Reaction to the Service Learning Requirement

The subjects received their service learning requirement for their course within
the first couple of weeks in the semester, and then had to arrange their site placement
through Student Voluntary Services (SVS). Some subjects had a specific site requirement, such as a tutoring program, while others simply needed to complete a specified number of service hours. Many of the subjects were apprehensive when learning of their requirement. A common theme among the subjects was feeling overwhelmed and worried about the number of hours for their service learning requirement. Specific concerns related to other classes, jobs, and family commitments were all mentioned as reasons the assigned number of hours seemed impossible. For example, Cara sacrificed work to complete the requirement. The sign-up for a coordinated program occurred several weeks into the semester, so she struggled to complete her assigned hours. “I ended up going twice a week, quitting the job so that I could get it finished. It ended up being really difficult actually, but I still enjoyed it to some extent.” Steve did not initially see the value and questioned the premise. He stated, “I thought of it as mandatory volunteer, and I didn’t see what I would get out of it.” John is married, and was very concerned about juggling family, school, and the service learning assignment. His ability to work with the site to arrange a flexible schedule made the number of hours feasible.

I have a family life, and I was going to school full time. With everything going on, 50 hours was just not manageable. We are busy with other things. It really wasn’t near as bad once you broke it down.

Although the initial apprehension in the classroom was strong, all subjects found it to be ultimately manageable and their experience enjoyable.
Impact of Service Learning on Academic Experience

Subjects discussed ways that service learning impacted both their academic coursework and development of skills for their career. For some, the service learning placement had nothing to do with their academic coursework. This was particularly true if the professor assigned a minimum number of hours to be completed rather than a specific site requirement. The subjects who majored in education spoke of the value of the hands-on experience, even if they did not have the best experience at their site. “I think it (service learning) gave a better understanding of what kids want out of school when I’m doing my lesson plans and stuff” (Sarah). John explained that tutoring “gave me more of an idea of what a teacher really did” and that tutoring “was a real good way for me to get in and spend time working with children.”

If a formal reflection of the service learning process was completed, it also allowed the subjects to fully understand the material and help make meaning in a practical way. Those that discussed the reflection activities specifically noted the importance of them. Mary stated, “I also felt I could take my experiences and reflect them in a paper. That helped a lot.” Cara had been required to keep a journal for her class and described that exercise as valuable as she prepared to be a teacher. As previously mentioned, Mary also appreciated that the professor encouraged them to use the reflection activity as an accurate assessment of their experience and not worry about representing their thoughts in a way simply to please her. Sarah appreciated the reflection component more fully after the course was completed.

I think that at the time it was just an assignment to complete, but going back for it in my portfolio, going back and reading them, I am really glad that we had to do
them because I can see like some of the struggles that I had and I can look back and see how I’m progressing.

Because not every single subject discussed reflection activities, it could mean that the professors that assigned the service learning requirement did not understand the importance of structured reflection activities or did not convey the importance to the students in the class.

Impact of Service Learning on Career Preparation

In addition to assisting subjects in understanding coursework, service learning provided an opportunity to gain skills for career preparation. An important outcome of service learning was the understanding of the ‘bigger picture’ in preparation for their chosen field. John and Sarah (both preparing to be teachers) learned more about the role of a teacher beyond teaching content. Each described they would need to be prepared to deal with specific issues with students. John was mentoring a younger student whose father passed away, and he realized that “as a teacher you do much more than just teach facts – sometimes it is comforting and things like that.” Sarah used the service learning experience to shape how she would approach classroom situations involving discipline.

If a child isn’t going to have discipline at home or learn values and morals and what is right and wrong, then I think it is my responsibility then as a teacher to take over that role and explain it to them.

Sarah also developed a broader understanding of how students best learned. “They like to interact with each other and they like to do hands on. They don’t want to sit and read a piece of paper and sit and do paperwork. They like to be up and doing things.”
In addition to skills directly related to the field, there were also general skills gained that could be applied in a variety of situations. The subjects majoring in family and consumer sciences seemed to understand the impact of being at some of these sites on learning about the diverse work environment. Two of the skills mentioned that were valuable were empathy and interpersonal skills. According to Angela, working with people through service learning enhanced her skills in “being compassionate and sympathetic.” She recognized that the ability to remain non-judgmental and appreciate each person’s unique situation would help her be successful. “What I learned . . . you have to be able to step out of your comfort zone and work with other people.” The general interpersonal skills were also seen as important.

Networking is a huge part of the fashion industry. If you talk to people, a lot of them will say it’s not what you know, it’s who you know in fashion, so being shy is going to be a real obstacle. I’m just going to have to get over it.

Steve also agreed and appreciated the inclusion of service learning for that purpose. He spent time working in an animal shelter and recognized that the clients coming for animals were “from all walks of life” and appreciated the different interactions.

**Impact of Service Learning on Academic Major**

The subjects provided specific feedback on the impact of service learning on their academic major. Steve had changed majors, partly because of the service learning experience. He had been required to complete service learning as a part of both majors, so he reflected on that experience. He found value with both departments requiring service learning for many of the same reasons. As a family and consumer science major,
service learning provided him with an opportunity to learn more about the community. “You get a different view, a different aspect on the people around you.” This deeper level of understanding is important when working with people. His initial experience with service learning and past background both played a role in him switching his major to elementary education. He felt that was his true fit as a career. Elementary education majors did not have to complete all hours in a school setting. To ensure he completed all of his required hours within his available schedule, Steve completed additional hours at a local animal shelter. Although not directly related, he felt that his work in a local animal shelter enhanced many of those people skills critical to success.

Mary had a similar experience as Steve. Mary stated, “We have to be able to understand different kinds of people like children, families and adults” and the service learning experience helped solidify that within her major. Megan did not change her major, but her experience in working with elderly residents of an assisted living center encouraged her to consider a career in geriatrics in the future. Two subjects that were education majors saw the value of the practical experience in truly preparing students for what it is like in the classroom. Sarah was frustrated with her experience at a tutoring site and was considering changing her major. John did change his major, but not as a result of the service learning experience.

Perceived Reasons Faculty Include Service Learning

Specific reasons were given as to why the subjects felt professors would include service learning in a course. Three primary reasons given were: (1) providing a practical experience; (2) recognizing a broad social need; and (3) strengthening the development of interpersonal skills. The subjects majoring in education tended to discuss the practical
application of the service learning experience, although there was also the recognition of social understanding and personal enrichment as additional reasons to incorporate service learning. “Being in education, it gets you into a different community you may have not ever been involved in, and doing things with those students” (Cara). Cara also discussed a need to give back to the community. “They (the community) need tutors and college students are the best for that because they do know more . . .” Angela noted a time in class that was spent discussing issues related to poverty. The service learning experience helped connect the discussion with issues concerning real people. “It’s not just a bunch of numbers, it would easily have been you, or it might have been you.”

The general skills learned by interacting with others were seen by two subjects as important for a variety of majors. Megan noted that service learning “helps you learn a little bit better how to work with other people” and that involvement in the community “is a big part of the family consumer sciences, no matter what you are doing; fashion, dietetics, or anything” (Mary).

Summary

The final category focused on the role of service learning and the academic experience. Subjects were asked whether or not service learning assisted them in either their coursework or their choice of academic major, as well as their perception of why faculty members would be inclined to include service learning in a course. The subcategories of this section included reaction to the service learning requirement, the impact of service learning on career preparation, the impact of service learning on academic major, and the reasons the subjects thought faculty would include service learning.
Case Study #2

A total of four subjects were interviewed who had participated in volunteer community service. The subjects described their experiences based on the interview questions, as well as things that stood out that they felt were significant. Each subject is described with their basic information, including their pseudonym, where they performed their service, and their thoughts on the experience. Following the introduction to the subjects, the case study is presented, including overall themes, primary categories, and any subcategories.

Subject #1 - Teresa

Teresa participated in volunteer community service in a tutoring program. Teresa was planning on transferring to another school out-of-state, and stated she would continue volunteering. She also shared she would go back to the same site to volunteer if she was staying enrolled at this campus. “Yes, I would volunteer again and I would go to the same site.”

Teresa had a positive experience volunteering, but she did mention that she had a couple of reservations with the site. She struggled with feeling that she was making an impact because some kids did not seem to want to be there. That was countered with students that did want to be there, and particularly those that she helped understand the particular assignment or lesson. “I wondered but then sometimes I would be working with the kids and we would be working on math and he would be like ‘Oh I get it now’ – that is what I liked about it.”

Although she had an overall positive experience at the site, that would not be her primary factor for returning. Teresa stated that having consistency for the kids by
returning to that site would be the motivating factor to return. She felt that the constant presence of the same person volunteering would have a positive impact on the students. “I think that there is a good effect with seeing the same kids from one year to the next – like being a constant presence.” Participating in volunteer community service impacted Teresa’s choice of major. She was majoring in English education and had switched to English literature with the intention of teaching college students. Her experience changed her mind about the population she wanted to teach. She loved English as a content area, and felt that teaching college students was the way to focus just on that subject. Teresa felt that students in a variety of majors, not just education, could benefit from volunteer community service or service learning. Being out in the community and spending even a small amount of time doing something related to the academic major could provide an opportunity for students to have first-hand knowledge of what they would be doing professionally.

Subject #2 - Scott

Scott performed volunteer community service at a recreation facility that provided local kids the opportunity to participate in various sports and games. Scott was surprised at how quickly the kids responded to him and demonstrated their respect. The researcher observed that Scott seemed to have a very playful attitude, which may have come through in working with this specific population. Scott stated that he loved the experience so much that he became a Program Coordinator (PC) through Student Voluntary Services (SVS) for that particular site. In addition to volunteering and serving as a PC, Scott was completing service learning for another course. As he described the two sites, he noted that the only significant difference was the level of structure at each program. The
recreation program was much more unstructured, while the other site was a tutoring program run at a local church. In helping kids with specific subjects in completing their homework, the site needed to have more planning and structure. Scott did not prefer one over the other as he noted the difference. He felt that both contributed to his academic major of secondary education by providing practical experience to “know how to face problems if they ever come up.”

Subject #3 - Kim

Kim volunteered as a site assisting students with their language skills. Kim’s career goals were to work in a public school system and she felt the interaction with “inner city kids” would be very beneficial. Kim used that term initially to describe the kids at the site, who likely were African American, rather than describing them by race. She later specified that working with African American kids on their grammar and presentation was important in helping them be successful. It was evident that she had thoughtfully reflected on how she could use the skills she was gaining in her major currently as a volunteer and in the future as a professional. Kim felt that all college students should volunteer to help make the connection between academic preparation and actual practice.

Kim loved her site and referred to it in very positive terms. Kim became involved with Student Voluntary Services (SVS) because a friend had volunteered and shared the positive experience with her. She noted that she needed to volunteer within the structure that SVS provided because she would not be organized enough to contact the agency and organize the service schedule. Kim also mentioned other volunteer activities that she participated in through Christian organizations. Kim was the only subject to disclose or
discuss the role of volunteering within the context of religion, but she only mentioned this connection briefly.

I’m Christian, so I have worked with Christian organizations in the Muncie community and non-Christian organizations. Both Christian and non-Christian have this strong desire to make a difference somehow.

Subject #4 - Lisa

Lisa described volunteering in a tutoring program and participating in a one-day leaf raking program for those unable to rake their own leaves. She also volunteered at a nursing home. Lisa disclosed that she was home-schooled and that the practice of volunteering and giving back was always stressed in her home. “I was home schooled and my mom would always take us to do stuff in the local communities.” Coming from a home-schooled background did not seem to have a major impact on her view of service or her academic experience in general, but she felt that she was raised to be more open minded and accepting of others because of her background. Lisa was very outgoing and talked very quickly. Her excessive use of the work “like” made it a little difficult to follow her in conversation. She also jumped back and forth between the service sites she worked with, which also made it somewhat difficult to understand the connections she made.

Lisa had a positive experience interacting with each set of individuals at each of the three sites. She began with describing how frustrated she was with raking leaves in a huge yard until she met the woman that lived in the home and who showed a genuine appreciation for the help. She spoke specifically about enjoying the interaction with the kids at the tutoring site, where two kids “stole my heart” and with the residents at the
nursing home, where she “made such amazing connections.” She was much more
complimentary of the organization of the tutoring site, and this was a deciding factor in
returning to that site and not to the nursing home. She was not currently at the tutoring
site, but was arranging her schedule to return there the following semester. Lisa also felt a
special empathy for the students at the tutoring site because she herself had needed a tutor
in college. Lisa was the only subject to relate the service she provided with a service she
had needed herself.

**The Case Study**

Once the researcher had completed the coding of the data in the transcripts, five
primary categories emerged from the data analysis: (1) description of the overall
experience, (2) description of the recipients of the service, (3) description of the service
site, (4) description of the local community, and (5) relation of volunteering to the
academic experience. Within each category, there were subcategories that emerged
during the analysis. The researcher could not find any information that provided a set
 guideline for determining subcategories; therefore she determined that if a them emerged
as being recurring and important, a subcategory was created.

**Description of the Overall Experience**

The subjects provided a general description of their volunteer community service
experience, as well as specific examples of how their experience was meaningful or had
personally impacted them. They provided specific examples of working with individual
recipients, as well as working with other volunteers. They often mentioned the role the
Student Voluntary Services (SVS) played in providing the organization and structure for
their experience, as well as their SVS peers. The subjects also indicated their love and
value of service itself, regardless of the specific site. There were five subcategories that emerged when describing the overall experience: (1) developing an interest to volunteer, which included how they became involved in volunteering and who may have influenced that decision; (2) details of the volunteer experience, which included interactions with individuals at the site and with the other volunteers; (3) actual versus expected volunteer experience, which included a change in how they felt about the recipients or the local community; (4) compulsory volunteerism, which provided the subjects with an opportunity to reflect upon whether or not service learning or volunteerism should be required for all college students; and (5) volunteerism versus service learning, which included descriptions of subjects that had performed both volunteer community service and service learning, as well as differences they observed between students doing each type at the same site.

The following four questions posed to the subjects provided them with the opportunity to describe their volunteer experience. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had volunteering this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your volunteer experience?

3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

4) Should service learning or volunteerism be required for all students?

Developing an Interest to Volunteer

The subjects that were involved in volunteer community service described life experiences or other specific reasons for wanting to become involved with a volunteer
community service program. Scott and Lisa described how they became involved with a volunteer community service program. Lisa specifically indicated prior experience with volunteering. She had been home-schooled, and her mother had made volunteering a regular practice in their household. This experience was highlighted on her transcript, and she was contacted about scholarships that involved volunteering. Her interview experience for the scholarship introduced her to Student Voluntary Services (SVS), which complimented the concept of service that was already present. “I could not picture my life not doing service. I don’t know what I would do, but I would so something.”

Scott was recruited by a neighbor (who served as a Program Coordinator) and by an e-mail sent to students to attend the SVS recruitment fair. “I went to that (volunteer recruitment fair) and checked that out and signed up for a program.” Scott also discussed his strong support for any type of civic engagement, including philanthropic work, voting, and military service and stated: “I’m huge on civic duty.” The influence of friends, family members, or other life experiences can impact a student’s current view of volunteer community service.

Teresa and Lisa continued to volunteer after completing a service learning requirement. “I feel like there is something worthwhile about it (volunteering) and I would continue to volunteer” (Teresa).

Details of the Volunteer Experience

Each of the subjects provided details about their volunteer community service experience. All four subjects described having a positive experience volunteering. “It’s like perfect. I know that is cliché, but it is awesome!” (Kim). Scott echoed: “It’s fun!
Volunteering is fun!” Kim described her particular interest in volunteering with kids. “I don’t know, I just really love working with kids as opposed to working anywhere else.”

The presence and organization of the campus service center, Student Voluntary Services (SVS), was given as a main reason the subjects’ experiences were so successful. This included both the structure of the program and the interactions with the other students volunteering or completing a service learning assignment. SVS was responsible for contacting the agencies and even providing transportation from campus to some programs. “If I would have to organize stuff myself, I would have had a negative view about everything because I would have gotten stressed out with the organization” (Kim).

The Program Coordinators (PC’s) were also college students that volunteered to work directly with each agency, contact the group of volunteers about their assignment, and assist with reflection activities. The PC’s were mentioned as being helpful and supportive. Scott stated, “I actually just really enjoyed my program and the Program Coordinator.” Both Scott and Lisa became PC’s, and the support of peers was very meaningful. “Everyone is just super supportive, and it is like a family in there” (Lisa).

Although she loved her experience, Kim did find that balancing her volunteer commitment with other aspects of her life to be difficult.

I was like that is going to be so easy because I love volunteering and stuff, so my life is going to be completely volunteering and I was like yeah. But with work, classes, group projects, and everything it was so much harder to find things that fit into my schedule (Kim).
Actual Versus Expected Volunteer Experience

When students sign up for a placement through Student Voluntary Services (SVS), there is description of the site and usually what the volunteers will be asked to do. Because they often know current students in SVS or have volunteered before, the concepts of volunteer community service are not new. However, there can sometimes be a disconnect between the expectations volunteers have and what actually happens when volunteers get to the site to perform the service. Kim had a friend that had volunteered at the same site where she had been placed, so she knew more about what to expect. The friend had a positive experience, so she went into the experience with a positive attitude. In Kim’s case, her actual experience matched her expected experience. “It is a great site” (Kim).

Lisa and Scott discussed how volunteering changed them or their perception of a population. Lisa was initially apprehensive about volunteering in a nursing home because she was not sure about her comfort level with that population. Her experience turned out to be very positive. “I just made such amazing connections with some of the residents and I think that was kind of surprising that I would feel attached to them.” Lisa also volunteered to tutor kids, and recognized the gratitude that she herself had felt during tutoring experiences. Lisa stated,

I struggled through school and my freshman year of college I really needed a tutor. I just totally appreciated that. So I just like the feeling knowing that maybe I could do the same for them. Like I have had so many of the kids say ‘thank you.’ You can tell when you make and impression in a child’s life even if they don’t say anything. So that’s just a good feeling.
The actual experience of volunteering also changed the perception the subjects had of wider social problems. In his experience, Scott learned more about problems within the community. “It definitely opened my eyes to what’s going on around.”

**Compulsory Volunteerism**

The subjects were asked if service learning or volunteer community service should be required of all students. The subjects in this group responded that students should be required to volunteer. The feeling was strong that not only should students be compelled to volunteer, they should want to volunteer. Kim felt that students that were initially resistant to volunteering would change their mind after the actual experience because it was so rewarding. She stated,

> Once they actually get out into the site and saw that there are problems and that they could make a different whether big or small, that would definitely correlate their volunteer experiences and their jobs and what they can do in the community together.

Scott was also an advocate for all types of civic engagement, including volunteering, voting, or serving in the military. “I think every college student should do something that involves his or her society.” While Lisa felt that all students should want to volunteer, she also noted problems when students were required to volunteer. “I don’t think they should have to, I think they should want to (volunteer).” She noted the difference in motivation levels between students at her site performing volunteer community service and those performing service learning.
Volunteerism versus Service Learning

Two of the subjects had previous experience with service learning. They noted a difference in their own motivation level, as well as the other students at their site. Teresa and Lisa volunteered after having participated in service learning. Teresa stayed at the same tutoring site. The similarity in the experience was that she went to the site with the same intent of helping students learn. The difference was sometimes her own motivation. Teresa stated, “I knew that I could not show up and it wouldn’t affect my grade, but I would still try and show up.”

Lisa did not find a change in her motivation level, but did note a difference in the structure of each site. Her service learning site had been somewhat disorganized, and that organizational structure had influenced her attitude about each site. Lisa also noted differences in attitudes or behaviors between students that were volunteering and students completing service learning requirements. She observed that the service learning students were there simply to complete their hours and would often complain. During her specific experience, there was a transition between the professional staff on site, which resulted in poor planning on the amount of work to be completed. The difference in volunteers and service learning participants was evident.

We would have people complain and stuff like that, and we would have people there because they wanted to be there, and their attitude was just like well, let’s find something to do, instead of just like we can leave.

Summary

The description of the overall volunteer experience included motivational factors to volunteer, a description of the volunteer experience, and comparisons to service
learning. The questions posed to the subjects centered on describing the volunteer experience, whether or not the subject would volunteer again at the same site, and whether or not service should be compulsory. The subcategories that emerged included how the subjects developed an interest in volunteering, details of the volunteer experience, the actual experience versus the perceived experience, whether or not volunteering should be compulsory, and observations of difference between volunteers and service learning participants.

Description of the Recipients of the Service

In addition to describing the overall volunteer community service experience, the subjects described the recipients of the service in detail. The researcher used the term recipients of service to assist in the analysis. The subjects did not use that term when describing the individuals they interacted with at the sites. They described collective groups (e.g. elderly, children) and specific individuals. This was one of the most important parts of the volunteer community service experience. There were two subcategories that emerged when describing the recipients of the service: (1) description of the recipients’ life experiences, which focused on either a specific encounter or with a circumstance that impacted the recipient; and (2) reaction to participants during the volunteer community service activity, which also included specific interactions that shaped both the relationship between subject and recipient and the subject’s view of the experience.

The following two questions posed to the subjects also provided them with the opportunity to describe the individuals that were the recipients during the volunteer experience. The questions were:
1) Think about a particular experience that you had volunteering this semester.

   Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your volunteer experience?

Description of Recipients’ Life Experiences

The subjects described the experiences of the recipients at their volunteer site in detail. Lisa worked with residents in a nursing home and found their stories to be engaging and enjoyable. “We would talk and they have such amazing stories, and some of them grew up here. They still remember different things. It was such a wonderful experience.”

Teresa worked with kids in an after school program and was surprised to find that many actually enjoyed being there, saying, “It did surprise me that some of them did look forward to it.” She was particularly surprised because several of the kids had an attention deficient disorder, but yet were able to focus on their homework while at the site. Socioeconomic status was also mentioned when describing the recipients at one of their volunteer sites. Teresa realized that the kids she was working with came from a lower socioeconomic background. She felt that the program was very good and the kids in the program seemed representative of all types of families until she heard some of their personal stories. “I didn’t know really they might live in a trailer or their parents might be trying to get a job at Wal-Mart or their family situation.” Socioeconomic status was also seen as a factor in the amount of support a child may get at home. Scott noted a connection between the involvement of parents and the success level of the child and stated,
The kids I worked with, their parents don’t have time to sit down and work with them, and so they are a little lack-a-dacical when it comes to work. But then the kids whose parents do work with them, they go in there, they sit down, they do their work, they know what they are doing, and it is a little bit easier for them.

Lisa and Kim used the words ‘inner city’ to describe the kids at their volunteer site. Both used the term in a way that stated or implied that this had a negative impact on the kids’ experiences. “Some of them, I think they have kind of . . . it toughens them. They will be first graders and the things they say are so much older. It is kind of like they have to grow up faster” (Lisa).

Reactions to Participants During Volunteer Community Service Activity

All four subjects described the different reactions recipients had to them during the volunteer community service activity. Each had volunteered at a site with kids and had positive interactions, with some being more meaningful than others. Scott described how the kids nicknamed him ‘pork chop’ following a game they were playing. He found this very endearing. He also was surprised how quickly the kids interacted with him and accepted him into their group. He stated, “I was actually expecting a little hesitation with the kids like ‘who are these people?’ but they had so much fun with us and that is what surprised me was the amount of respect I got from them.”

Teresa was not initially sure about the impact she was having as a volunteer. Once a student acknowledged that he understood his math assignment because of her help, she found her experience more gratifying. Another interaction described by Kim was more serious. A student she was working with had a difficult home life, living with a great grandparent because the parents did not want him. He had a terrible attitude and they
were getting nothing accomplished. She demonstrated that she cared about him and his progress, which made a huge difference.

He had this horrible attitude with me, and after talking with him after about half an hour of talking with him and fighting with him, I finally had to just tell him I’m here to help him and I care about him. After realizing that someone did really care about him, he like did a 180 and was wanting to learn and wanting to read and everything. That stood out to me. That is exactly what I want to do in my future.

Lisa also had a positive interaction with an elderly woman. She had participated in a one-day project to rake leaves for those that could not rake them. The woman at one particular home had an unusually large yard, and the volunteers were somewhat frustrated with all of the work. The woman was so appreciative that she provided a picnic for the volunteers, and this made a big impression on her and the impact she made.

Summary

This category of the case study focused on the individuals that were the recipients of the volunteer service. The subjects described the recipients as they described their overall experience or what surprised them about volunteering. The subcategories that developed within this section included a description of the life experiences of the recipients of volunteering and reactions of the recipients to the subjects during the volunteer experience.

Description of the Service Site

While the recipients of the volunteer community service were discussed more frequently, the specific details of the service sites played an important role in how the
subjects reacted to and described their volunteer community service experience. Because these subjects had all selected their particular site, their descriptions were very positive. There were two subcategories that emerged when describing the service site: (1) description of the service site, which included specific details about what they enjoyed, what they would change, and any specific challenges; and (2) willingness to repeat at the same site, which included whether or not the subjects would continue volunteering and if so if they would remain at the same site.

The following three questions posed to the subjects also provided them with the opportunity to describe their service site. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had volunteering this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your volunteer experience?

3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

Description of the Service Site

As described previously, Student Voluntary Services (SVS) coordinates the logistics of the service programs with the individual service sites. All sites have paid staff members that organize the activities at the site and have at least some level of interaction with the recipients. The subjects provided specific details about their volunteer site, including aspects they would change.

Scott and Lisa stated that they would have given more time if possible to their site. “I wouldn’t want to change anything. I’d want to be involved more and take on more programs” (Scott). Lisa felt that spending more time would have had a direct impact on
the kids she worked with, similar to comments made earlier by Teresa. The consistency of having the same person volunteering on a regular basis helps develop a positive relationship. “They (the kids) want certain people and if they are not used to seeing you, then they are not going to want to work with you” (Lisa). Lisa also worked with residents in a nursing home, and felt that the lack of interaction with the patients given the time she was on site had a negative impact. In addition to the time spent with the recipients, the structure also had an impact on the experience. The nursing home was unstructured and unorganized, although they were transitioning to a new administrator that was supplying more structure. She was surprised that the tutoring program was more structured and stated,

That was really shocking, just because the tutoring program was way more organized than the hospital, and you would think at a place where they need help and stuff it would be more organized. It was kind of shocking.

Kim also mentioned volunteering with an organization outside of Student Voluntary Service (SVS) through a religious organization. Similar to SVS, she described those involved with the project in positive terms.

Willingness to Repeat Service at the Same Site

All four subjects indicated they would like to volunteer again and at the same site. Three of the four indicated that they did volunteer the next semester, and two of them become Program Coordinators (PC’s). Scott became a PC for the same site that he was a volunteer. He found the experience to be very similar except for the added responsibility of helping coordinate the experience for others. “The only thing different is making sure
that I log all of my volunteers’ hours and make sure they know what is going on and contacting the site so they know I am coming.”

Lisa and Kim were unable to arrange their schedules to return to the same site, but were planning to return the following semester. “I am working my schedule with the other one (site) because I love the structure and I love the head coordinator. I feel like I work under that environment better” (Lisa). She had made a powerful connection at this particular site and was eager to return. “I get so excited to go back and I would probably go every day if I could” (Lisa). Kim was going to arrange her schedule so she could specifically go back to that site. Teresa was planning to transfer to a different school the following semester, but was planning to continue volunteering. She would have returned to the same site if she were not moving.

**Summary**

This category described the actual site where the subjects volunteered. The subjects had been asked to provide a description of the volunteer experience, as well as whether or not they would volunteer again and if so, at the same site. The two subcategories included a description of the service site and their willingness to repeat their service at that site.

**Description of the Local Community**

The description of the local community was based on the specific experience at their particular service site. These subjects did not provide much information on how they viewed the local community. The information they did provide was primarily a superficial description. This may have been attributed to the fact that their volunteer community service was not put in a context of a broader social issue or tied to an
academic course. The subjects seemed to focus on the satisfaction they received simply from serving, and did not delve deeply into problems. There were no subcategories that emerged.

The following two questions posed to the subjects provided them with the opportunity to describe their view of the local community and its residents. The questions were:

6) Describe the local community. What types of people live in the local community? What are their daily life experiences?

7) What did you learn about the residents of the local community?

Two of the subjects described people from the local community as being of a lower socioeconomic status. Within this context, Scott expressed some concern about the physical location of the center where he volunteered and the potential risk to the kids in the program. “Nothing bad has ever happened, but just the look of it – it’s kind of ‘wow, are these kids safe here?’” Teresa noticed that the number of factories that had been closed in the community has had a negative impact on working families. She noted that several kids at her volunteer site made note when a local Wal-Mart was opening, as many of their parents were seeking employment there. Teresa also mentioned racial diversity within the local community, which was something she had not experienced in her own hometown. Scott and Teresa described residents of the local community as “nice and down to earth” (Scott) and “pretty friendly” (Teresa). The residents in this community are viewed as “not too different from any other town” (Teresa).

Kim described the desire of community members to make a positive different in the lives of others. “Everybody that I have come in contact with, they just have this
strong desire to make a difference” (Kim). While Kim did not specifically describe the socioeconomic levels of the community or the recipients of the service, she did use the phrases “inner city” and “they all speak ghetto” which imply lower socioeconomic status.

**Summary**

This category described the perceptions the subjects had of the local community and its residents. The subjects had been asked questions to describe their perceptions of each. No subcategories formed under this category. The subjects provided information relevant to an overall description of the community as a whole and the individual members.

**Relation of Volunteering to the Academic Experience**

The primary difference in the set of subjects was the requirement of service learning for course credit. Even though these subjects were not performing service learning, they did describe ways that their volunteer community service experience impacted their coursework, major, and career preparation. There were two subcategories that emerged when describing the relationship between volunteer community service and the academic experience: (1) impact of volunteering on academic coursework and career preparation, which described how subjects found practical application of classroom concepts with participating in volunteer community service; and (2) impact of volunteering on academic major, which described how performing volunteer community service impacted choice of major.

The following three questions posed to the subjects provided them with the opportunity to describe the impact volunteering had on their coursework and academic
major, as well as why they thought a professor might included service learning in the curriculum. The questions were:

4) Did volunteering help you in your academic coursework? Why or why not?
5) Did volunteering have an impact on your choice of or continuance in your academic major? Why or why not?
8) Describe why you think that professors would incorporate service learning in their course requirements.

**Impact of Volunteering on Academic Coursework and Career Preparation**

Even though these subjects were not receiving course credit for their volunteer work, all four subjects reported a connection between their experience volunteering and their academic coursework. Teresa and Scott, both majoring in education, found the experiences to be particularly helpful. Teresa volunteered with young kids, and although she enjoyed her volunteer experience, the experience affirmed she did not want to teach at this level. She realized that she wanted to focus on the content area (English) and not the classroom management necessary to work with high school students. She felt that teaching at a college level would be more in line with her interest. Teresa also described feeling that the experience of helping others was valuable to students in any major and could plant a seed to continue providing service. “Once you do it (help others) then you could see how much you might like it, and so you might do it later on.” Scott found the experience to be relevant simply by working with kids.

I’m majoring in secondary education and so just being able to work with kids is kind of helping me figure out how to go through the process of being a teacher. I know how to face problems if they ever come up.
Kim, who was majoring in speech language pathology, noted two reasons how volunteering assisted her in her coursework. Several of the kids she worked with at her volunteer site had speech disorders, so she was able to work directly to help them as well as gain experience. “When I was learning about different communication disorders, I was actually able to put them with the student that I knew had that disorder, and that helped me really grasp the understanding of what that communication disorder is like.” The experience working with what Kim described as ‘inner city kids’ also affirmed the type of site she wanted to work in professionally. Lisa discovered an academic support system through volunteering. Fellow volunteers established a culture of helping each other be successful academically. “It is not necessarily doing the volunteering but the environment around it” (Lisa).

Impact of Volunteering on Academic Major

All four subjects discussed the role that volunteering played in the continuance or changing of academic major, and their responses varied from one extreme to the other. Lisa noted that the volunteer experience had no connection with her academic major, and she viewed the two experiences as separate. Scott may have slightly affirmed his decision to major in education, but he had made that decision before his work at his volunteer site. His volunteer experiences had continued from high school. Scott stated: “Just the volunteering aspect of it and donating my time for good causes, I have always done that.” Kim felt that the decision to major in speech language pathology working with ‘inner city kids’ was strongly affirmed through her volunteer experience. She felt strongly that helping students speak correctly would have a big impact on their future success.
In just my experiences with working with these kids and showing them that if you speak properly, then you are able to get your ideas across better and you eliminate that stereotype. I see myself wanting to continue in my job, and my desire to work as a speech language pathologist because of volunteering.

Teresa completely changed her major based on her volunteer experience. She was majoring in English education and changed to English literature. She determined that she did not want to teach at a high school level, because “. . . pretty much half of the work of teaching high school is just keeping the kids in line, keeping them disciplined, and keeping them focused.” Teresa determined she was more interested in the content than classroom management, and decided she wanted to pursue a graduate degree so she could teach college students. “It changed my mind about what and who I wanted to teach.” Teresa also felt this was a good reason for professors to include service learning into their coursework. By experiencing first-hand what you would be doing as a professional, it could help a student determine if that major was truly a good fit.

Summary

The final category described the relationship between volunteering and the academic experience. The subjects were asked if volunteering assisted them with either their coursework or choice of major and why they thought faculty members would include service learning in a course. The subcategories that developed included the impact of volunteering on academic coursework and career preparation and the impact of volunteering on the choice of or continuation of an academic major.
Analysis of Case Studies #1 and #2

An analysis of both case studies was completed to identify common categories and subcategories, which allowed the researcher to describe the major findings. Each case study was developed based on semi-structured interviews with subjects that had participated either in service learning or volunteer community service. The five categories that emerged through the data analysis process were: (1) description of the overall experience; (2) description of the recipients of the service; (3) description of the service site; (4) description of the local community; and (5) relation of service learning/volunteering to the academic experience. At this stage of the analysis subcategories were re-evaluated to determine if there was anything distinguishable between those who participated in voluntary community service and those who were involved in a service learning experience.

Description of the Overall Experience

The subjects provided a general description of their service learning or volunteer community service experience, as well as specific examples of how their experience was meaningful or had personally impacted them. They provided specific examples of working with individual recipients. The three subcategories that emerged in this case were: (1) details of the service learning or volunteer community service experience, which included interactions with individuals at the site or their overall feelings about their experience; (2) actual versus expected volunteer experience, which included details about their experience that may have been different from their expectations; and (3) compulsory service learning or volunteer community service, which provided the
subjects with an opportunity to reflect upon whether or not service learning or volunteerism should be required for all college students.

All eleven subjects were asked the same four questions in relation to describing the overall service learning or volunteer experience. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning/volunteering this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning/volunteer experience?

3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

9) Should service learning or volunteerism be required for all students?

Details of the Experience

Overall, each subject reported that they had a positive experience performing their service learning or their volunteer community service. This attitude was highly contextualized and was tied directly to the specific service performed rather than a more generalized concept of giving back. The subjects that completed service learning provided more detail about the type of service they were performing (e.g. working at a nursing home or tutoring kids), but both gave specific examples. Sarah described working with kids that attended an after-school tutoring program. She was struck by the level of attention that they sought from her, and assumed they were not getting this attention at home. “They (the kids) were very needy and the first day I was there everyone just kind of clung to me.” Sarah felt good about the impact she had one recipient in particular that
was seeking affection from her. “It was a good experience because I got to be a positive influence for him.”

Megan described her experience at an adult care center as “fantastic” and particularly enjoyed working with a woman with Alzheimer’s disease, even if she did not remember Megan. “She (the woman) was just awesome.” Mary also worked at this type of center, and enjoyed her service learning experience in spite of the fact she was not very comfortable with older adults. “I also was surprised that I enjoyed it as much as I did.” Both Steve and Scott described how quickly they connected with kids at an after-school recreation site. Scott illustrated that by describing the mutual affection that he and the children had developed for each other by giving each other silly nicknames while they were playing football.

Both sets of subjects described their feelings toward the service (e.g. having a positive or rewarding experience). Lisa worked with kids at an after-school tutoring program, and felt appreciated even when it was not openly expressed. “You can tell when you make an impression in a child’s life even if they don’t say anything.” John talked the least about the actual service he performed, but did state that his experience was very positive.

I would like to reiterate that it was a very positive experience. The teachers that I worked with were they really good with us and they encouraged us. They really did a really good job at explaining what they wanted from us and really supported us with the children. It was just a great experience.

Scott enjoyed his experience so much that he became a Program Coordinator (PC) for his site so that he could return there. Becoming a PC added the extra responsibility of
coordinating the other volunteers, logging their hours and maintaining contact with the staff on site, but Scott was very matter-of-fact about the added time commitment and commented that it had not changed the actual volunteer experience.

The only thing different making sure that I log all of my volunteers’ hours and make sure they know what is going and contacting the site so they know that I am coming. Other than that it’s the same.

The majority described their experience in favorable terms, although there were specific details given from subjects that described their experience as negative. Cara described her experience at a tutoring site for high school kids. The program itself was in its second year, and was still being organized to be able to run effectively. The students that were in the program were in high school and not the most motivated, and this was a shock for Cara. She described her own high school experience as always wanting to complete her homework and these kids struggled to even find a good reason for being there.

I didn’t ever want to postpone anything, and they were sitting going ‘Why do I need this. This is stupid. I don’t want to be here’ and it is hard to try to get them motivated to want to be there then. So it was very different for me not having worked with students that are like that before.

Being overwhelmed at the time commitment at the beginning of the service initially impacted how the service was viewed, although any concern initially held dissipated once the subjects began the service and management the time commitment. John, who was married, shared the biggest concern with the initial time commitment, but found the number of hours manageable, particularly with the help of the faculty member and agency staff. “The teachers worked with me well . . . It wasn’t bad at all. I was frustrated
at first, but I soon found out it wasn’t really too much.” Once this concern had been addresses, the description of the experience was ultimately positive.

**Actual Experience Versus Expected Experience**

One concern voiced by the service learning subjects different from the volunteer community service participants was about the time commitment. All subjects were able to complete their hours successfully, but several subjects described challenges in meeting the requirement. For example, John talked about having a family in addition to his school responsibilities. Cara needed to take public transportation to travel to her site. Other concerns expressed about the service experience were described as not being comfortable with those at the site, such as Mary working with older adults or Angela working with homeless adults. The lack of organization or structure on behalf of the paid staff at the site was discussed by Sarah and Cara at the after-school tutoring sites.

However, some expressed regret for not spending more time at their site. Mary had reflected on her experience and wished she had spent more time there, particularly when she had chosen to go home simply to relax and have free time. “I used to go home instead and I wouldn’t be here for a weekend when I could have volunteered.” Lisa recognized the positive impact more time could have on her recipients.

They (the kids) want certain people and if they are not used to seeing you, then they are not going to want to work with you. Also with the residents last semester, I wish that I could have spent more time with them because we would always have to go late at night. They would be going to bed and so we would not get a lot of one-on-one time.
Sarah found inconsistencies between what was expected through her course assignment and the service experience. The faculty member had not provided much guidance in setting up the service hours. “We didn’t get really much direction. It was just like you need so many hours, go find them.” In interviewing Sarah, her idea of what the experience would be working with kids and what actually transpired were different. Sarah thought she would be working with kids she could nurture, but discovered that many of these children had specific behavioral challenges and that she would have to be the firm hand.

My expectations, I guess, were kind of low, like I thought it was going to be easy and I was good to go. I was going to have this sweet little kid that was going to listen to everything I said and I got there and I found out that I have to lead like I’m their friend, but I have to be firm and I wasn’t expecting that. So I got a little frustrated, but overall I think it was a good experience.

Differences in the expected experience versus actual experience were not all negative. Both Megan and Mary were surprised in the paid staff and how close they were to the residents in the adult service sites. Megan found value in her experience, even if it did not directly tie into her coursework. Although this was the first time Megan had participated in a formal service experience, she described how her parents had been involved in protests and other civic engagement activities, which clearly influenced how she perceived her role in the larger community. Of all of the subjects, Megan was the only one that described a connection between the service experience and taking the initiative (or at least thinking about taking the initiative) to develop and provide another
type of service activity to meet a community need. Megan was the only subject to
describe this action.

It (service learning) did inspire me to think about what I could create as far as a
service learning (project) for other people, like in my social work department. It is
very small and I’ve been toying with the idea of getting a book trade going on, so
that we don’t have to buy our books new.

Megan also recognized that she came into the service learning experience with a family
background that supported being an involved and engaged citizen, and seemed to
understand this her background was unique. She stated, “So it’s kind of in my blood to be
an activist type and I volunteer for student rights and democratic campaign for state
senate, for class election.”

**Compulsory Service Learning/Volunteerism**

Most subjects had an opinion about compulsory service learning or volunteerism
for all students, and it was that students should be required to participate in either service
learning or volunteering. Regardless if a student was required to complete service
learning or volunteer community service, serving the community was a primary reason
for participating in either service learning or volunteer service. Some did see the global
value of service for the good of society or as a larger part of civic engagement. Steve
mentioned a variety of ways that he felt were important for citizens to be involved,
including volunteering, military service, and voting. Upon reflecting during the interview,
Steve felt that requiring students to complete some type of volunteering was a good idea.
He focused on the exposure to different types of people in the community rather than the act of volunteering or giving back.

When asked if students should be required to complete some type of service activity, Mary noted that it would help “community relations” and create more of a positive impression of students with community members. She specifically noted improved interactions or impressions of local residents could be a positive outcome of service activities. Overall, Mary felt a sense of accomplishment following her service learning experience. “I felt like I contributed something, and I made these people’s lives a little better.” Likewise, Angela felt that it was important for students to gain a realistic world view of those living in poverty. “It broadens your horizon and opens your eyes to see what life is like outside the University.”

Lisa felt that students should not have to be compelled to volunteer because they should want to volunteer. She was the only subject to note a difference in the behaviors of service learning students and students completing volunteer community service. She had a much more favorable impression of those performing volunteer community service, and found those completing service learning requirements complained and were only looking to complete their mandatory hours. She stated, “We would have people complain and stuff, and then we would have people there because they wanted to be there.”

Providing students with the opportunity to put theory into practice for a particular academic major was also a reason given to require service. For education majors, the direct experience was seen as a benefit. For other majors, particularly those in family and consumer sciences, the overall experience of interacting with others in the community
was seen as a way to prepare one’s self professionally to interact with a variety of people. Sarah could see the benefit of both.

For my major, it’s obvious that during service learning, it give you experience with kids and it’s just beneficial to a person as a whole. I think that some professors that aren’t with education, they just want people to become or feel a part of the community and meet new people and work with people in Muncie and just enrich themselves.

Most of the subjects cited using their experience to make a decision regarding a future profession, or at least recognized that the hands-on activity would be a great way to begin that reflection.

*Description of the Recipients of the Service*

In addition to describing either the overall service learning or volunteer community service experience, the subjects described the recipients of the service in detail. This was one of the most important parts of both experiences. The researcher is using the term recipients of service to assist in the analysis. The subjects did not use that term when describing the individuals they interacted with at the sites. They described collective groups (e.g. elderly, children) and specific individuals. The same two subcategories emerged when describing the recipients of the service: (1) description of the recipients’ life experiences, which focused on either a specific encounter or with a circumstance that impacted the recipient; and (2) reaction to participants during the service learning or volunteer community service activity, which also included specific interactions that shaped both the relationship between subject and recipient and the subject’s view of the experience.
All eleven subjects were asked the same two questions that provided them with the opportunity to describe the individuals being served through the service learning or volunteer activities. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning/volunteering this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning/volunteer experience?

Description of Recipients’ Life Experiences

The specific life experiences of the recipients of the service were an important part of the service experience. The subjects described the interactions with specific individuals as having a direct impact on how they viewed their service activities. Both service learning subjects and volunteer community service subjects cited socioeconomic status as a characteristic frequently described by the subjects, with the majority of those being served in the lower income bracket. Most subjects talked about the impact this had on the local community. Subjects in both service learning and volunteering described how social class affected the recipients of service, particularly kids involved with these programs. In some cases, this was highlighted in particular behavior, but it also was noted simply as a description of family background. For example, Kim loved her site and was particularly impacted by one boy that was having serious problems. He was being raised by a great grandmother, and Kim knew that his resentment of not being wanted by his parents caused him to be distrustful and have a negative attitude. By showing him that she did care about his success, he completely changed his attitude and wanted help in learning.
In another instance, Lisa recognized that she lived in the “bubble” of the university and that she learned a lot about the external community through volunteering at these sites. Lisa used the term “inner city kids” to describe students at the tutoring site. She noted that those students seemed to have been exposed to things quicker than most, and this had “toughened them.” Lisa was very complimentary about her interactions with the children and the elderly residents of the nursing home, stressing that she had learned from each.

Reactions to Participants During Service Learning/Volunteer Activity

Both the volunteer community service subjects and the service learning subjects described positive reactions from those they were working with, although this was more prevalent with the volunteer community service subjects. Sarah noted that having college students work with kids in the community provided them with an opportunity to serve as role models and encourage kids to complete their education. “They (they kids at the service site) will copy our mannerisms and everything and they say that ‘Oh, we’re from Ball State’ and ‘I want to go to Ball State’.” Steve also described being seen as a role model. He had enjoyed his service learning site so much that he became involved with Student Voluntary Services (SVS) so that he could continue to serve. However, Steve did not enjoy the site placement through SVS as much as his service learning site because he was not interacting with the same set of children each week due to the structure of the program. He enjoyed the site with the same children because they remembered him and looked forward to him being there and he recognized the importance of consistency.
I don’t want to say that I don’t like the program because each room is fun, but I’m not creating the bonds with the kids anymore that I was able to create last semester.

Teresa and Lisa both had favorable reactions at tutoring sites. Teresa was surprised that “some of them (the kids at the site) did look forward to it (the tutoring program)” and both received affirmation from the kids they were helping. Lisa found value in a simple statement. “I have had so many of the kids say ‘thank you’!” However, not every interaction was positive. Cara struggled with the kids at her tutoring site, particularly because they often did not appear to be motivated to learn and understand the material. “It is hard to try to get them motivated to want to be there.” Despite that challenge, Cara did feel that she made a difference and would consider going back to the site.

Description of the Service Site

The two subcategories that emerged in this case were (1) description of the service site, which included specific details about what they enjoyed, what they would change, and any specific challenges; and (2) willingness to repeat at the same site, which included whether or not the subjects would continue volunteering and if so if they would remain at the same site.

All eleven subjects were asked the same three questions in relation to describing the site the service learning or volunteering occurred. The questions were:

1) Think about a particular experience that you had completing service learning/volunteering this semester. Describe that experience.

2) What (if anything) surprised you during your service learning/volunteer experience?
3) If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

**Description of the Service Site**

Overall, the descriptions of the service sites were positive among both service learning subjects and volunteer community service subjects. Megan described how she became attached to the clients, referring to them as “my residents” and stated, “I got a little emotionally involved there.” Mary noted that the paid staff at her site were concerned about her experience and made sure she accomplished what she needed to for her class. John noted that in addition to the support he received from the teachers at his site, he also appreciated the Program Coordinator (PC) from Student Voluntary Services (SVS). “She (the PC) did a great job. Somebody there who is able to explain things and kind of tell you what is expected, that is key.” Scott felt welcomed at his site, which contributed to him feeling comfortable working with the kids there.

In describing their sites, some challenges were given by the service learning subjects, either with the client population or the amount of time spent on site with a consistent set of recipients. Sarah described a transition within the paid staff, and this negatively impacted her experience because there were inconsistent message sent as to how to interact with the kids at the site. “They were kind of in training mode with her (the new person), but they weren’t very friendly to us. I know a lot of people felt that way.” Sarah was also concerned that this particular site was not at a school, and she felt that the way it was being run was contrary to what she was being taught in her courses. “I know that there are Indiana State Standards and I didn’t know if they had to abide by those.” Lisa did volunteer community service at two sites, and found a similar situation
with a staff transition. Before the transition, she found the site to be “very unorganized and unstructured, and I was very surprised by that.” Cara was placed in a religious-based program, and was surprised at how the staff sometimes treated the kids there. “It was religious-based, then they would get yelled at.”

**Willingness to Repeat at the Same Site**

The majority of both sets of subjects responded that they would like to continue volunteering. Those that wanted to return but did not expressed having a conflict with their schedule that prevented them from doing so. Problems with the site, such as a lack of organization and/or direction, was more of a deciding factor for service learning subjects in choosing whether or not to return to the site. Sarah stated that the problems she encountered with the staff would prevent her from going back to the same site. Mary and Angela were not as comfortable with the populations at their site and would probably not go back. Following their initial experience, the service learning subjects included information they felt they would want to know ahead of time before deciding to commit to volunteering at a service site, including what their role would be and how the service would be structured.

In terms of actually continuing to volunteer the following semester, the students who participated in volunteer community service were much more likely to have continued, either at the original site or at a new site. Teresa and Lisa realized the larger benefit for the recipients of the service (in this case, the kids at a tutoring site) in having a consistent set of volunteers each semester. Although she had an overall positive experience at the site, Teresa stated that having consistency for the kids would be the motivating factor to return to that site. “I think that there is a good effect with seeing the
same kids from one year to the next; like being a constant presence.” Similar to Teresa, Lisa felt that having continuity with the same volunteer can be as important to a child as the volunteer’s particular skill. Going to a program once a week, Lisa felt that she did not provide that consistency and recognized how important it could be, particularly for young boys.

I wish that I could spend more time with the kids like not just once a week. I think that they don’t really remember you, or they are not as willing to be cooperative, some of them especially the boys.

The involvement through Student Voluntary Services (SVS) followed the same pattern, with it being much more likely that a student in volunteer community service to become actively involved as a Program Coordinator (PC). Steve was the only service learning subject continuing in SVS as a PC. Kim and Scott were both PC’s, and Lisa continued volunteering through SVS at her same site.

Description of the Local Community

The description of the local community was based on the specific experience at their particular service site. The responses from the service learning subjects were divided into two subcategories: socioeconomic levels and the impact on the community and their perception of the community and the residents. The responses from the volunteer subjects only focused on socioeconomic status and therefore did not result in the development of any subcategories.

All eleven subjects were asked the same two questions to describe their view of the local community and its residents. The questions were:
6) Describe the local community. What types of people live in the local community? What are their daily life experiences?

7) What did you learn about the residents of the local community?

The subjects described the local community as being either middle-class or lower-class or residents as living in poverty. The majority viewed the local community as being mainly lower class, particularly once you were outside the confines of the university. The description of the social class included details about the depressed physical surroundings of the neighborhoods, particularly those around the service site. Subjects in both pools mentioned the impact of the parents’ struggles was present either in conversation or in behavior of kids they worked with at their site. Sarah described that the children served by this site were primarily from families with a lower socioeconomic status. Sarah used this information to frame some of her descriptions of both the children and their parents. Sarah also observed that many of the children acted out in this setting, which she attributed to a lack of involvement from the parents, possibly because of the need to work more hours to earn extra income. Scott noted that the neighborhood surrounding the center was in a poor neighborhood. Although he surmised that most people that used the center were in a lower socioeconomic level, he felt that everyone was “happy” and “down to earth.” He also realized the importance of parental involvement in the lives of the children he worked with, particularly at the church. He could tell that students that had parental involvement with their school work had an easier time focusing and learning the material.

Angela was the only subject that stated that she had specifically discussed the service learning experience within the context of the class that required it. The class
discussion centered on the number of residents in the local community that were living in poverty and how close they could be to losing everything. Angela described having that discussion and being placed at the shelter “made it a lot more real.” She also noted that witnessing the experiences of actual people increased her compassion because she realized “it might have been you.” Her observation of the local community matched the discussion in class in that it was very “run down” with a high percent of individuals living in poverty. Angela also described knowing families at home that constantly worried about paying for basic needs such as food, rent, and groceries.

You know the constant worries, if they are working at Wal-Mart, whether they will have enough money to pay that month’s rent and to buy groceries, and if they have kids that’s even more so. I have a lot of friends at home that are from low-income families. I see their parents getting up every day at the crack of dawn, working all day, then coming home to the kids. Especially the younger ones that really understand how much work it takes. The struggles and how hard it can be.

Megan did not frame the community in terms of socioeconomic status alone, but in a broader context of observing how people behaved. Megan shared that she was from a larger city, so she did view the local community as small. Other than the lack of diversity she witnessed, she felt as if the local community was very typical. “It’s pretty normal, whatever normal is.” Steve was similar in his observation. Steve recognized that many people had some personal challenges (particularly related to the job market and local economy), but felt that the community was full of warm, caring individuals that were willing to place a lot of trust with the student volunteers.
They (community members) are very nice out there. The offer babysitting; they ask if we want to babysit their kids, so they trust us more than I would expect them. I think it is pretty cool that they do that.

In contrast to the poverty she observed traveling to her tutoring site, Cara described the teachers at the teacher supply store as being primarily middle-class. Teresa’s view of the children at the tutoring program and the members of the local community was that they were pretty typical of any other town. There was a variety of people, and many had economic challenges because of the closing of many industries in the area. Some individuals struggled; others did not. There was not a broader connection between class and any of the issues discussed in the interviews, including the need for service agencies or why those agencies would be located in areas that were visually depressed.

There were mixed responses of the reactions of local residents to students. Typically, those residents at the sites welcomed the interactions of the subjects and college students in general. Mary felt that most students did not interact with local community members outside of the confines of campus. An interesting connection that Mary made was in her description of how the local community members felt about students. She noted that “not all of the people in Muncie enjoy Ball State students.” This observation came from outside of her service site and more in the community itself, such as interactions on the phone when contacting local service agencies or witnessing negative non-verbal communication at the local Wal-Mart. Similar to Mary, John felt the animosity between the residents of the local community and the members of the university community. The experience of volunteering in any capacity can help ease that tension.
Especially it seems like the Ball State versus the (local community). There seems to be this almost animosity, and I think it’s great for the students to get out in the community and feel like they are part of it, and volunteering is a great way to do that.

Relation of Service Learning/Volunteering to the Academic Experience

The primary difference in the sets of subjects was the requirement of service learning for course credit. Both sets of subjects were able to describe their experience related to their coursework, their academic major, and their career preparation. The subcategories that emerged were the same except reaction to the service learning requirement (service learning subjects) and perceived reasons faculty included service learning (service learning subjects). The two subcategories that emerged in this case were: (1) impact of service learning/volunteer community service on academic coursework/experience and career preparation and (2) impact on academic major.

All eleven subjects were asked the following three questions to provide them with the opportunity to discuss the impact service learning or volunteering had on their coursework and academic major, as well as why they thought a professor might included service learning in the curriculum. The questions were:

4) Did service learning/volunteering help you in your academic coursework? Why or why not?

5) Did service learning/volunteering have an impact on your choice of or continuance in your academic major? Why or why not?

8) Describe why you think that professors would incorporate service learning in their course requirements.
Impact of Service Learning/Volunteering on Academic Coursework/Experience and Career Preparation

Most subjects did relate their experience to what was going on in the classroom. Again, there was a distinction between the different majors, in comparing a general service learning requirement as opposed to working at a site directly related to the content area. The education majors tutoring kids (or related experience) felt that experience had a direct connection in both subject pools. All subjects majoring in education found that their experiences helped them understand content material, but also general concepts of what the teaching experience is really like. Sarah understood that requiring students in her major to complete service learning made sense. Sarah also commented that professors in other majors that included service learning recognized the importance of having students connect with the community and further “enrich themselves.” Although Sarah did not feel that her professor adequately prepared her for her experience, she easily made connections with the content in the classroom. The reflection activities that followed the service learning experience demonstrated her progress throughout the semester and she found them very valuable. Although Steve changed his major after his service learning experience, he felt that there were general skills in service learning that could be tied to a variety of majors. His opinion was that completing service learning allowed students the opportunity to interact with the external community, which was a skill necessary for any major. Steve made a specific reference about business majors.

You know most of them aren’t just going to be working in cubicles. They are going to be they are going to school to be some upper level management position or something. They are working with people all the time and it’s not always going
to be the people that have the big bucks. I think it would be a good idea for them to get to know how what they do and their education and what they are wanting to do effects the little people. So yes I think it would be a good idea to have service learning into the curriculum.

Similar to Steve, Mary felt that students majoring in family and consumer sciences gained valuable skills by interacting with different types of people in the community. “I am a FCS (family and consumer sciences) major and like we have to be able to understand different kinds of people like children, families, and adults.” Mary was able to utilize the reflection activities in her service learning course to make meaning of her experience. She described her professor as someone that wanted them to be honest in their reflection rather than being concern about the reaction to the content. Although Mary did not provide specific examples of what she included in her written reflection, she mentioned this freedom to be honest about the experience a couple of times. “I really tried not to restrict what I thought, if I felt uncomfortable about something I wanted to reflect that in my paper.” In terms of relating the service learning assignment to her broader academic experience, Megan did not have a direct correlation. Her professor had given the class a broad assignment of doing service, and this was not directly related to her major in social work. She did, however, see the value in gaining social skills that come with volunteering at this type of agency. “. . . it (service learning) helps you learn a little bit better how to work with other people.” Her experience also caused Megan to consider geriatrics as a potential career path.

Impact on Academic Major
Almost all of the subjects discussed how their experience played in their choice of or continuance of academic major. One subject in each pool changed their academic major, and this decision was made in part because of their service learning or volunteer experience. This was seen as a positive thing. The subjects were happy to have made the decision at this point rather than wait until they were actually working in that field. Steve changed his major to elementary education, due in large part to his service learning experience working with kids. Although he had changed his major, he felt that requiring service learning was valuable for students enrolled in courses related to family and consumer sciences (his original major) as well as elementary education. Teresa changed her major within the field of education. She made the decision when she realized that she did not want to teach high school students because of the non-content related things such as classroom management and discipline that went along with that job. “I realized that I don’t want to do that – it doesn’t appeal to me. I just like teaching.” Teresa had witnessed some students in an after-school program that struggled with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and other problems that demonstrated that she was not cut out for that type of teaching. If that knowledge caused a student to change their mind about their career choice, volunteering could open doors to other career possibilities.

I think that it’s a good opportunity for people to have even if you just do it for one class. I think that it would be good for any major not just teaching. To experience not only day to day maybe just a little bit just a slice maybe just a couple hours of what you will be doing. Also to maybe if you don’t know what it’s like to help people then maybe you would never be interested in that, but once you do it then you could see how much you might like it, and so you might do it later on.
Participating in either service learning or volunteer community service did help some of the subjects affirm their choice of major. Sarah continued in her academic major of elementary education. At the time of the interview, she was beginning another assignment in an elementary classroom setting. John also felt that the experience of being in the classroom was very important for education majors to solidify whether that choice of major was right for them.

Their experiences either in service learning or volunteer community service contributed to their decisions to stay in their chosen major, but in varying degrees. The subjects that had a meaningful interaction with recipients of the service were more likely to comment on the impact the service experience had on their decision.

Summary

The analysis of the two case studies described the responses in each category and subcategory of the case studies for both service learning subjects and volunteer subjects. Chapter Five summarizes the research study, discusses the findings, draws final conclusions, and provides final recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusions, Recommendations

This chapter includes a summary of the research study, a discussion of the major findings, conclusions of the case studies, recommendations, and final comments.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. A description of each subject was included, followed by a case study of each set of subjects, and an overall analysis of the cases.

A case study method was used and the subjects were selected using a purposeful sampling technique. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the eleven subjects. A list of questions was developed (see Appendix B) and asked of each subject. A single interview was conducted with each subject between November 2006 and April 2007.

Each interview was transcribed. The transcriptions of each interview were analyzed and five categories emerged within each case and between the two cases. Subcategories were developed if at least three of the seven service learning subjects or two of the four volunteer subjects discussed a particular area. Chapter Four provided the
findings of the study organized into two individual cases and an overall analysis of the data.

Major Findings

This section examined the results of this study and outlined the themes found in the five categories that emerged within and between each case study. Following the discussion of each section are the major findings of each.

Students’ Description of Their Volunteer Community Service or Service Learning Experience

Case Study #1

The subjects described in detail their specific service learning assignment. The subjects that worked with older adults seemed particularly impacted by their experience, and personally reflected on the experience. The majority of the subjects viewed their service learning experience as positive. Only two of the subjects interviewed indicated they were planning on returning to that same site to volunteer. The majority of the subjects had an actual experience that was different than their expected experience. This was based on a perception of what service would be like, as well as an acknowledgement that the effort may not have been put forth to have a more impactful experience. Almost all of the subjects recognized how performing the service learning had impacted them in terms of daily activities and interactions, including increased empathy and social skills. A majority of the subjects felt that some sort of volunteering or community service should be compulsory for all students. Reasons given included benefits to the local and global community and practical experience toward a given major.
Case Study #2

Two of the four subjects described how they became interested in volunteering as they described the experience. All four viewed their volunteer experience as positive. The subjects also described in detail the positive role Student Voluntary Services (SVS) played in setting up and managing the service experience. The subjects did not have a real difference between actual and expected experience volunteering. Almost all of the subjects had an opinion regarding compulsory service, and strongly agreed that all students should have to do some sort of volunteering. There was a difference in perceived motivation with the volunteer subjects. One noted that she may not have been as motivated at her site because her grade was not impacted. Another subject noted negative attitudes and decreased motivation in students completing service learning versus those that performed volunteer community service.

Major Findings of Case Studies #1 and #2

1. There were no major differences in the experiences described by subjects that performed service learning and subjects that performed volunteer community service. Because the experiences are structured similarly through Student Voluntary Services (SVS), this may not be surprising. Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found positive outcomes from both volunteer community service and service learning. Even subjects that had a negative encounter with a staff member or recipient of the service described the experience as positive overall. Service learning subjects did focus more on the description of their site, while the volunteer community service subjects described their own level of motivation that led them to volunteer in the first place.
2. The majority of subjects felt that a service experience should be required for all students. This should not be a surprising result from the volunteer community service subjects given they purposefully chose to participate. Subjects participating in service learning concurred, regardless of their particular experience with their academic course. The distinction was primarily in the perceived end result of completing service. The service learning subjects were more likely to see the value of connecting theory to practice and the volunteer community service subjects were more likely to see the value of giving back to the individuals in the community. Although there was little research found that discussed compulsory service programs, service learning expands the focus of experiential learning and internships to include civic engagement and responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

Description of the Recipients of the Service

Case Study #1

Several service learning subjects provided detail about either the specific life circumstances or the community experience of the recipients of the service. Only two subjects classified the recipients of their service learning as belonging to a low socioeconomic status. The subjects were split on the evidence of a positive impact they had made while performing service learning. Two of the subjects also noted the amount of interaction and level of instruction given prior to the service had an impact on their experience and level of interaction with recipients. Those that were well informed (typically by staff on site) had more interaction and felt the experience was more organized.
Case Study #2

Three of the four volunteer subjects provided detail about specific life circumstances and the socioeconomic status of the recipients and/or their families. All three described their recipients as being in a lower socioeconomic status, which two using the term ‘inner city.’ All four subjects described having positive interactions with the recipients of their volunteer service. These interactions included content level through tutoring and on a personal level through comforting someone after the loss of a family member.

Major Findings of Case Studies #1 and #2

1. The types of descriptions given by the two sets of subjects about the recipients of the service learning or volunteering were not dramatically different. This may be a result of all subjects participating in programs through Student Voluntary Service (SVS) and performed service in the same community. The subjects that performed volunteer community service gave more detail about the recipients of service. Because they had chosen to be there, they may have been more likely to take a deeper interest in the recipients’ well-being. However, the service learning subjects tended to focus only on the staff at the site. The disconnect between the two may be tied to the reason the subjects were completing the service. The service learning students viewed this experience through the lens of a class assignment, and therefore were focused on the site itself and completion of required hours. Neither set of subjects discussed broader issues of reciprocity, which included issues of power, boundaries and long-term change (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). This may be the result of a lack of preparation before beginning
the service experience by either faculty members or Program Coordinators (PC’s). Service learning should help develop a sense of personal and social responsibility (Corporation for National and Community Service website, About learn and serve, What is service-learning, ¶3).

2. Both sets of subjects described the level of personal impact they felt as a result of the experience. One difference among participants in the study was that all of the volunteer subjects described positive interactions and seemed to feel that they had more of a direct impact through their service. This could be attributed to the original motivation for completing service and self-reflection that resulted. The service learning subjects also had the ability to pick their site to volunteer based on their preference or availability. The service learning subjects either had a specific type of site (particularly for education majors) or a set number of hours to complete, which would likely mean signing up for the program that met that need and fit into their schedule. Faculty members typically structure service learning courses as either service-based (completion of hours to discuss broader social issues) or content-based (directly tied to course objectives) (Morton, 1996). Both can be valuable, but should be implemented thoughtfully and not simply an add-on to a course (Varlotta, 1996). More of the service learning subjects indicated that if they were to volunteer again they would have chosen a different site either based on their experience at their service learning site or their personal interest.
Description of the Service Site

Case Study #1

Two subjects described challenges at their site due to specific problems: one by cultural barriers and the other by a lack of consistent interaction. Subjects in this group also discussed problems with inconsistencies between the site and Student Voluntary Services (SVS) and having difficulty signing up for their required program. There were specific details given about the paid staff at the site in a very positive way, both in job performance and level of caring for service recipients. Five of the seven subjects indicated that they would like to volunteer again, with three of those either returning to or planning to return to the same site to volunteer. Based on their service learning experience, the subjects provided specific things they would look for in a site before committing to volunteer there again, such as congruence in what they had been told to expect at the site and the actual service to be performed. Following the service learning experience, one subject became a Program Coordinator (PC) through Student Voluntary Services (SVS).

Case Study #2

Only one of the subjects described a specific challenge at the volunteer service site, and that was due to lack of organization by the site staff that resulted in inconsistent interaction with the recipients. All four subjects indicated that they would like to volunteer again at the same site, and three either had returned or planned to return to the same site. Two subjects became Program Coordinators (PC’s) through Student Voluntary Services (SVS).
Major Findings of Case Studies #1 and #2

1. The majority (five of the seven service learning subjects and four of the four volunteer subjects) indicated an interest in continuing to volunteer. Berger and Milem (2002) found that students that had volunteered in high school were more likely to continue volunteering in college, and Fenzel, Peyrot, Speck, and Gugerty (2003) found that alumni who had participated in service learning or volunteer community service were more likely to continue volunteering after college. Therefore, it is not surprising that the participants in this study intended to continue participation in volunteer community service. As previously mentioned, the service learning subjects were less likely to specifically discuss Student Voluntary Services (SVS) as a program. Although they would have been aware of the role of SVS in coordinating their service learning program, these subjects may not have see SVS as a vehicle to continue volunteering. None of these subjects mentioned one-time programs offered by SVS, so the perception may have also been that the only way to volunteer was through the coordinated or referral programs.

2. More of the volunteer community service subjects wanted to return to their same site than service learning subjects. This was not surprising since these subjects would have had more flexibility in choosing the site to volunteer. The service learning subjects provided specific examples regarding the service site, including problems that occurred on their site and positive observations of the paid staff members. These subjects did not indicate that they were specifically looking for problems or good things at the site, but they may have been looking to the staff for more direction.
on what they were supposed to be doing at the site. This would have highlighted both problems and positive interactions.

**Description of the Perceptions of the Local Community Following the Experience**

**Case Study #1**

The service learning subjects were divided on their view of the local community. Some saw the community as typical and middle class, while others described the community as lower class. The subjects that described the community as lower class had presented specific examples to illustrate their point of view. The subjects also described the local community in relation to their hometown community; therefore the comparison may not have been the same among the subjects.

**Case Study #2**

Two of the four volunteer subjects described residents of the local community as being in a low socioeconomic status. One subject did note that she recognized that the closing of local factories impacted the families of the recipients she worked with at her site. While there was recognition of job loss, the subjects did not delve deeply into other root causes of poverty or social issues. These subjects only considered the community based on their experience and did not compare to their own hometown or other communities.

**Major Findings of Case Studies #1 and #2**

1. Both subject groups were spilt in their experience and/or their view of the local community. Some viewed the community as middle-class and similar to their own, while others viewed the community as struggling economically and primarily comprised of lower-class individuals. Neither explored the broader
social issues that would have constituted the need for some of these agencies. A lack of standardized and consistent reflection activities may account for the lack of exploration. Astin and Sax (1998) found that a higher level of understanding about problems that impact the nation can be facilitated by a discussion or focus on social problems related to the service activity. This type of discussion was not mentioned by either subject set.

2. Neither set of subjects discussed the impact they had on the community through their service in this context.

Perception of Service Learning/Volunteering to the Classroom Experience and Future Plans

Case Study #1

Most of the service learning subjects were overwhelmed when they learned of the service learning requirement for each class. The concerns did not seem to be specifically with the service, but rather the hours required along with other academic and personal obligations. Once they completed the service, these subjects felt positive about having completed their service. A majority of subjects affirmed that the service learning experience did help them with their academic coursework. This included both practical application, as well as a greater understanding of the professional field.

The value of any type of structured reflection activities incorporated by their professor in the classroom was highlighted by some as being an important part of this positive view, although this was not consistent across the board. Participating in service learning also assisted subjects in gaining non-academic skills such as interpersonal skills and empathy that the subjects recognized were important to learn. This was particularly
true of students majoring in family and consumer sciences. Five of the subjects noted an impact on or affirmation of their chosen academic major. At least one subject changed majors as a result of the experience because he connected with kids he had been tutoring. Other subjects felt their experience affirmed that they were in the right field for them.

Five subjects provided reasons why they felt professors would include service learning in the classroom. These reasons included (1) gaining practical experience; (2) recognition that students could provide a valuable skill such as tutoring; and (3) an understanding that professionals need to be engaged in their local community.

Case Study #2

All four subjects responded that there was a connection between their volunteer community service and concepts learned in the classroom. Three noted a connection between their coursework and the specific assignment at the volunteer site. The fourth subject noted the formation of an academic support system as a result of the personal connection with other volunteers. The volunteer subjects varied widely about their decision to stay in their major based on their experience. One subject found no relationship between the two, another had her decision slightly affirmed, a third had her decision strongly affirmed, and the fourth changed majors entirely because she realized her current field was not a good fit.

Major Findings of Case Studies #1 and #2

1. Both sets of subjects discussed the impact of their service experience on their academic coursework. This would be expected with service learning students but may be surprising for students that volunteered because the experience was not specifically designed to have anything to do with their coursework. Because the
students participating in volunteer community service were doing it in the setting
of a university, there is likely a natural connection between the activity and the
classroom, even if it was not intentional. Jacoby (1996) found that service
learning can be curricular, co-curricular, or both. Although the subjects majoring
in family and consumer sciences did not specifically mention classroom
discussions or comments from their professor regarding their service learning
sites, it was clear that they saw the connection with the larger community as
important for their major. Because the subjects did not disclose what class the
service learning was for, there was no way of knowing if the subjects had the
same or different professor.

2. Both groups of subjects cited practical experience as a reason that either affirmed
or caused them to change their chosen major. The subjects that changed their
major still found the experience positive. In fact, it was viewed that they were
better off realizing that they needed to change at this point rather than coming to
that conclusion after graduating and starting in the profession.

Findings in Relation to the Central Research Questions

This section outlines the major findings found in this qualitative study of students
participating in either service learning or volunteer community service. The research
questions examined in this study are listed, followed by the major findings of each.

1. How do students describe their volunteer community service or service
   learning experience? In terms of the service learning or volunteer community
   service, both sets of subjects described overall positive experiences and
   interactions with the recipients of the service activity. None of the subjects
broached the broader social issues regarding many of the programs or service agencies that hosted the service. According to definitions of service learning from the Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation for National and Community Service website, n.d., About learn and serve, What is service-learning, ¶1) and Bringle & Hatcher (1996), service learning should have an emphasis of civic engagement and responsibility to the local community. Either the subjects did not make that connection, or the components of service learning were not understood or incorporated by the faculty members that included service learning in their course. For example, Angela, who went to the homeless shelter, recognized that many of the men there had come from ‘normal’ backgrounds, but she did not discuss individual or societal factors that would cause someone to be in the position of needing that type of service. Many of the subjects that provided tutoring mentioned the role parents play in the success of their kids in school, but none expanded on the core reasons that lack of participation may be a problem (other than one subject that mentioned a parent may have to work more hours to make it financially). There was also no recognition that most of these programs were held in schools or venues that were in poorer parts of town, although there was the recognition of the poor physical surroundings. The vast majority of subjects felt that all students should have to perform either service learning or volunteer community service, but not really beyond it being a good thing to do.

2. **How did students that participated in volunteer community service or service learning perceive their local community following the community service or service learning activity?** There were varying perceptions of individuals from
the local community from the subjects. While there was recognition by some subjects of the disparity in socioeconomic levels, or that many individuals they interacted with were primarily lower socioeconomic status, the subjects did not indicate a common perception of community members. Because the subjects were placed at sites that were already established by Student Voluntary Services (SVS), they did not work with the community members or agency representatives to develop any goals or objectives of the service project. Because of this, issues of reciprocity were not addressed. The issues of power, boundaries, and commitment are all associated with reciprocity and can be key in truly understanding the surrounding community and seeking long-term change (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). Jacoby (1996) found that placing students in a service site based on convenience rather than placements that are truly needed and appropriate to the course do not meet the goal of teaching reciprocity.

3. **How did students that participated in service learning perceive the educational concepts introduced in the classroom?** Most of the subjects in service learning were initially concerned about the extra work and time commitment associated with this assignment. None of them mentioned that they saw the value of service learning before they completed their hours; only after they completed their hours. Subjects that participated in service learning indicated that their experience positively impacted their academic coursework and may have influenced their decision regarding academic major. Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, and Anaya (2003) found that nursing students increased critical thinking skills as a result of service learning, while Strange (2000) found that
students in a child development service learning course demonstrated a higher level of content understanding. However, that increased skill level or content understanding may not have been felt immediately or to the same degree with these subjects. In describing how service learning helped students in the classroom, there were not specific examples given related to content. For example, none of the subjects provided any information such as “Tutoring kids at this site helped me understand a specific teaching methodology” or “I learned how to manage conflict because I had a particular interaction with two children fighting at my site.” Their comments were very general, such as learning “people skills” or being in a setting that would “better prepare” them for their future careers. Enos & Troppe (1996) found that successful service learning was a separate component of a course rather than simply an ‘add-on’ to an existing course. The faculty members that the service learning subjects had during this experience may not have designed the course with intentional educational goals, which is key in creating a useful and meaningful service learning experience (Berle, 2006).

4. **How did the students describe the impact these experiences had on their future plans?** Subjects indicated a desire to continue volunteer community service, either at the same or a different site. The subjects in volunteer community service were much more likely to have actually continued doing service. The service learning subjects were less likely to continue volunteer community service and did not discuss any additional courses in their major that would require service learning in the future. The researcher did not find any literature that
discussed patterns of sustained volunteering among college students. Astin et al. (1999) found that students that volunteered in high school were much more likely to continue volunteering in college and beyond. The information provided by these subjects would support the assumption that students that performed volunteer community service in college would be more likely to continue volunteering than those who did not.

Conclusions

Four conclusions were drawn from this study and are outlined below.

1. The evidence in this study suggests that students describe their service experience in much the same way regardless of the type and circumstances of the service performed. The difference in the terms volunteer community service and service learning were not evident among the two sets of subjects in regards to their actual experiences at the sites. Although the motivation to sign-up and initial reaction to a service experience may be different, the evidence in this study suggested that both sets of subjects found service activities to be a positive and rewarding experience. The personal connections with the recipients and feeling of making a positive difference were consistent among all participants. Vogelgsang and Astin (2000) found that students developed values and beliefs, improved academic critical thinking and writing skills, and considered service-based careers through both ‘generic’ community service and service learning. Brisbane and Hunter (2003) found that representatives of public education and nonprofit organizations found no difference in performance between students performing service learning and students that volunteered. While the researcher did not interview any staff at
the service sites or anyone from Student Voluntary Services (SVS), no subject stated that the either staff or SVS representatives noticed or mentioned a difference in the quality of volunteering that came from either set of subjects.

2. Based upon the evidence collected through this study, students did not consistently and thoroughly complete reflection activities following their service learning experience. Rhoads (1998), define four components of service learning tied to an academic course: (1) service learning is a teaching methodology formed from a specific pedagogical model; (2) service learning has intentional goals and objectives that are tied to the academic course; (3) service learning integrates the out-of-class and in-class learning; and (4) service learning is directly relevant to that particular course. If faculty members do not fully explain the components of service learning, success will be limited (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Morton (1996) found that service learning could be service-based or content-based. While the subjects that participated in service learning described the activity of providing service as positive, many of the components of service learning did not seem to be present. The subjects could not articulate the purpose of service learning within each course, or whether the emphasis was on the service, the content, or both.

Bringle and Hatcher (1996) found that advantages for faculty to incorporate service learning in a course include enhancing performance, increasing an interest in the subject matter, teaching problem solving skills, and improving the experience of teaching. Service learning can provide a real-life context to incorporate and test what is being taught in the classroom, can address
real community needs, can enhance cognitive skills, and can increase civic
attitude and engagement (McCarthy & Tucker, 2002, Gelete & Gilliam, 2003,
Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000, Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Illustre,
2002). McCarthy and Tucker (2002) specifically include structured time to reflect
on the service learning experience as a part of the definition of service learning.
This component of reflection is a key difference in service learning and other
types of practical experience such as internships or clinical rotations (Bringle &
Hatcher, 1996). Although there was no literature found regarding the use of
structured reflection activities in volunteer community service activities, the
formalized structure of Student Voluntary Services (SVS) would lend itself to
providing some type of reflection by the Program Coordinators (PC’s).
3. While there was recognition of different social classes served by the sites or
agencies and within the community, the subjects had not explored core social
issues that may arise from class differences. Reciprocity is the idea that all parties
involved in the service project are involved in developing the goals or objectives
the project is designed to meet (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). There was no mention
of any subject participating in this type of activity or discussion. Because of this,
there was no mention in the interviews about power relationships, boundaries,
outcomes of the service, or the scope of the commitment to service, which are all
involved in reciprocal relationships. Many of the subjects recognized that they did
have a limited view of the local community, but no subject expressed how that
could be changed or a real desire to learn more. Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999)
found that volunteering in college ultimately helped students become more
socially responsible, have a higher level of commitment to community and value education more after graduation. Astin and Sax (1998) also found that a facilitated discussion about social problems related to a service activity leads to a higher level of understanding about societal problems. Formal reflection activities are designed to both prepare students before going to their site, as well as process their experience in the specific context of a course or a more global context of a social issue. As stated in the previous conclusion, this did not seem to have occurred consistently in the service learning courses.

4. Participants in both service learning courses and volunteer community service activities found the experience valuable in either selection or continuance of academic major, as well as general career development skills. This occurred in spite of the fact that faculty did not seem to fully implement service learning practices (including the element of formal reflection) and Student Voluntary Services (SVS) did not conduct reflection activities. Almost all of the subjects found some connection between their service experience and their coursework or in skills necessary to have a successful career. Astin and Sax (1998) found that the students that participated in service activities indicated that their involvement made course content more relevant and also helped in career preparation. The service learning students (particularly those in family and consumer science) repeatedly mentioned learning general “people skills” involved in interacting with a variety of people that would help them be successful in their profession. Voggelgesang and Astin (2000) found that service learning had a positive impact on students choosing a career that is service-based. Although the subjects
performing volunteer community service did not specifically mention service-based careers, their discussion included the importance of giving back to the community and that their experience had helped determine their major, particularly for those choosing education.

Recommendations

The researcher outlined five recommendations for future research and practice.

1. Further studies of students participating in service learning should be conducted. These studies should include information on the specific service sites and whether or not those are directly tied to the academic coursework and major. The researcher did not get a full picture of how participating in service learning truly impacts the understanding of content knowledge in the classroom or specific skills related to overall academic major or career preparation. Astin and Sax (1998) found that students who participated in service activities were nearly 50% more likely to spend at least an hour per week interacting with faculty compared to their peers that did not participate in service activities. These students also had a higher grade point average. A direct comparison of academic performance both within and across academic majors could further demonstrate the impact of service learning on content understanding.

2. Further studies of students participating in volunteer community service should be conducted. These studies should examine whether or not students choose a service sites based on their current academic coursework and major. The reasons students initially choose to volunteer should be further examined. Exploring previous volunteer experience or exposure to volunteering or other civic
engagement activities prior to college could aid in the recruitment of volunteers and the type of organizational structure they may expect to continue in their service. Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found many positive effects of volunteering, including a greater sense of empowerment, likelihood of attending graduate school, giving money back to the university, socializing with people from a variety of backgrounds, and continuing volunteer activities beyond college. Measuring these outcomes in student volunteer programs would be beneficial to structuring experiences to encourage these outcomes.

3. To add to the literature, other research should be conducted directly comparing the experiences of students that perform service learning and students that perform volunteer community service. Currently, there is little research available that examines this issue. The research of Vogelgesang and Astin (2000) found that there were positive outcomes from both service learning and volunteer community service. A problem with that study was that there was no standardization, so it was difficult to truly compare the outcomes. Because the structure at Ball State University is standard, it would be easier to conduct a research study to directly compare the two. It would be important for professors that assign service, for university staff coordinating service activities, and staff at the service sites to know if the subjects performed differently given their different reason for being there. It would also be important to compare the responses during reflection activities as to how the service was viewed by each, including feedback on the structure of the service site, the expected versus actual service experience, and the application to broader social issues and issues raised in a classroom.
setting. Analysis of this data raised questions of whether there would have been more distinct differences if the subject pool would have been larger and more direct questions about the service sites asked.

4. Student Voluntary Services (SVS) is the appropriate place to house both volunteer community service and service learning. The organization is over forty years old and clearly has an effective system in place to work with students, as well as established relationships with community service sites. Astin and Sax (1998) found that 70% of students surveyed participated in service activities through student affairs rather than academic affairs. According to Garcia and Robinson (2005), faculty are more likely to view student affairs staff as the primary resource when there is an office dedicated to coordinating all service activities. The feeling of the subject that commented that she probably would not have been able to be organized enough to do service on her own may reflect the attitude of other students. Given that the subjects found value in the service activities in relation to their class work and choice of major, there is no compelling reason for SVS to recommend a separate pedagogical approach be used to distinguish service learning from volunteer community service, nor to begin using a hyphenated term, such as service-learning to further communicate the distinction. For all intents and purposes, the students reported the same kinds of experiences resulted from both forms of engagement. The structure of each program is the same and the experiences of the subjects demonstrated that adding a hyphen to emphasize either ‘service’ or ‘learning’ would not impact the overall experience of the participants.
5. Formal written reflection activities should be included in all service activities.

There is frequently discussion following service, and this is often structured. The lack of consistent reflection also demonstrates that professors may or may not truly understand how to incorporate service learning into the classroom, and there is no evidence that moving service learning out of SVS would enhance the implementation of service learning programs. Because faculty members rely on SVS to coordinate the logistics of the service programs, they may not ensure that they are truly following a model of service learning tied to the course curriculum. The true difference of a service learning program involved directly tying service to the curriculum, demonstrating that it is not a charitable ‘quick fix’ and that social change should be a broader outcome (Varlotta, 1996). According to Rhoads (1998), formal reflection is critical in understanding social ills concerning race and class. To have the most impact on both a personal level and to draw a connection to the academic experience, a set of specific, thoughtful questions should be presented by each Program Coordinator (PC) for students to respond. The PC should consult with professors that consistently utilize Student Voluntary Services (SVS) for their service learning assignments. This would ensure that the reflection activities did not contradict and hopefully would complement the types of activities being performed in service learning courses. Under appropriate supervision, the PC’s could conduct a pre- and post-test each semester to gauge how students view each site and the local community may have changed because of their service experience. This would also allow SVS to make improvements to
their programs and provide feedback to the service sites to address concerns and make the site experience more meaningful for participants.

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively describe and analyze the experiences of college students that participated in a volunteer community service program and those that participated in a service learning program using a case study method. A case study was developed for each set of subjects, and an overall analysis of the cases was conducted.

The case studies provided a description of the experiences of both students that participated in service learning and students that participated in volunteer community service. Analyzing the data allowed the researcher to understand each experience individually, as well as understand the similarities and differences between the two experiences sets of students. It is my hope that there will be continued research on all aspects of volunteer community service and service learning programs on college and university campuses and that institutions of higher education will encourage students to participate in some type of service activity.
References


Service Learning: Partnerships in Practice at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.


Appendices
Appendix A

E-mail Text to Subjects
E-mail Sent To Verify Transcripts

Several months ago, I met with several students to discuss either participating in a volunteer or service learning experience. I am finishing up my dissertation based on that research, and am double-checking my information. I have attached the transcript of our interview. If you could, please verify the information included and let me know if I need to make any corrections.

Thank you so much for your help.

Lynda Wiley
Doctoral Student
Adult, Higher, and Community Education
E-mail to Subjects

My name is Lynda Wiley and I am a doctoral student conducting a research study on students that participate in either volunteer community service or service learning. I am contacting all students that enrolled in a coordinated program through SVS during the spring 2006 semester. I am seeking to interview volunteers that participated in a coordinated program for the first time through SVS in the spring 2006 semester in either volunteer community service or service learning for course credit.

I am contacting you to see if you would be willing to participate in my research study. Participation would involve an hour-long interview, in which I would ask you several questions about your experience in either volunteering or participating in service learning during the spring 2006 semester. The interview would take place either in the Atrium or library on campus. I would be audio taping the interview, but you will not be asked to reveal any personal information. I will transcribe the interview, and you will be given a copy to review and clarify any information. Your identity will remain confidential. If I do refer to you in my research results, you will be identified by a pseudonym.

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will receive a $5 gift card to Starbucks. There is no obligation for you to participate, and no penalty if you choose not to participate.

If you are interested in participating, you can reply to this e-mail or call me at 285-2621. Please indicate if you participated in volunteer community service or service learning. You do not need to indicate the course requirement that you were fulfilling. Thank you and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lynda Wiley
Appendix B

Interview Questions
1. Think about a particular experience that you had volunteering/completing service learning this semester. Describe that experience.

2. What (if anything) surprised you during your volunteer/service learning experience?

3. If you had the opportunity to volunteer again, would you? If yes, would you volunteer in the same or different site? Why or why not?

4. Did volunteering/service learning help you in your academic coursework? Why or why not?

5. Did volunteering/service learning have an impact on your choice of or continuance in your academic major? Why or why not?

6. Describe the local community. What types of people live in the local community? What are their daily life experiences?

7. What did you learn about the residents of the local community?

8. Describe why you think that professors would incorporate service learning in their course requirements?

9. Should service learning or volunteerism be required for all students?

10. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your experiences with volunteering or service learning?
Appendix C

Subject Consent Form
Exploring the Experiences of College Students Participating in Volunteer Community Service and Service Learning Activities

The purpose of this research project is to compare the experience of students that participate in either volunteer community service or service learning activities for the first time. For this project, you will be asked to participate in an interview in which you will answer questions regarding your experience in either a volunteer community service or service learning placement. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete.

All data will be maintained as confidential and no identifying information such as your name will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s office.

For purposes of accuracy, with your permission, the interviews will be audio taped.

The foreseeable risks or ill effects from participating in this study are minimal.

One benefit you may gain from your participation in this study may be a better understanding of how your experience in either volunteer community service or service learning impacted view of the local community, as well as your educational experience here at Ball State.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at anytime for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing the Informed Consent form and beginning the study, and at any time during the study.

For one’s rights as a research subject, the following person may be contacted: Coordinator of Research Compliance, Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070.

**********
I, __________________, agree to participate in this research project entitled, “Exploring the Experiences of College Students Participating in Volunteer Community Service and Service Learning Activities.” I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

________________________________   _________________
Participant’s Signature     Date

Principal Investigator:     Faculty Supervisor:
Lynda L. Wiley, Doctoral Student     Dr. Thalia M. Mulvihill
Adult, Higher and Community Education     Educational Studies
& Director of Student Life
Ball State University     Ball State University
Muncie, IN  47306     Muncie, IN  47306
Telephone: (765) 285-3476     Telephone: (765) 285-5463
Email: lmalugen@bsu.edu     Email: tmulvihi@bsu.edu
Appendix D

Institutional Review Board Original Approval and Modifications
The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on June 11, 2008 and has determined the modifications you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact Amy Boos at (765) 285-5034 or akboos@bsu.edu if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (http://www.bsu.edu/irb) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY • INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Modification Request Form

IRB Protocol Number: 07-094

Date: 06/04/2008

Current Principal Investigator: Lynda Wiley

Current Protocol Title: Exploring the Experiences of College Students Participating in Volunteer Community Service and Service Learning Activities

A modification is ANY change to a previously approved protocol. Modifications must be approved by the IRB before they may be implemented.

1. Please check the appropriate box(es) for the modifications you are requesting. Upload a revised version of all documents affected by these modifications, with changes highlighted. Remember that PI/Faculty Sponsor/title changes will likely affect Informed Consent documents and introductory letters.

   Change of Principal Investigator – A revised Informed Consent document may be needed with the new PI's contact information. Provide the new PI's contact information:
   
   PI name: 
   Telephone: 
   Department: 
   E-mail: 

   Change of Faculty Sponsor – A revised Informed Consent document may be needed with the new FS's contact information. Provide the new FS's contact information:
   
   FS name: 
   Telephone: 
   Department: 
   E-mail: 

   Change in protocol title – Provide the new title:

   Addition of new Key Personnel – All Key Personnel must have a completion certificate for the online NIH tutorial for the protection of research participants on file with the IRB or included with this form.

   List personnel to be added and their role in the research:
   Thalia Mulvihill, PhD - Chair of Committee and Professor in Higher Education and Social Foundations of Education. As chair of the committee, Dr. Mulvihill will review the proposal and all data collected. She will provide feedback and assist in answering research questions.

   Removal of Key Personnel – List personnel no longer associated with the project:

   Addition/substitution of research location – A letter of permission may be needed from new sites where research is to be performed. List sites to be added:

   Revision to Informed Consent document – Indicate whether the revisions are minor or significant:

   Minor revisions include changes that do not alter meaning or procedures (spelling changes, defining a term in lay language, changes to reflect what is already approved, new personnel).

   Significant revisions include changes that alter procedures or meanings of terms, changes that accompany a modification to procedures in the protocol, or addition/waiver of any elements of informed consent.
Addition/revision of recruitment materials or methods – Describe the format and procedure:
The process of recruiting subjects has not changed, but the researcher originally stated that she would recruit students that had participated in community service/service learning during the spring 2006 semester. Based on responses, she extended that pool to the fall 2006 semester.

Change of population or number of subjects– Note: addition of some populations may require a change in review status. Provide the following information about the population to be added:
Number of subjects: Gender: Male & Female Age ranges: At least 18
Check all categories that apply to the populations to be added:
Cognitively impaired
Minors (individuals under age 18 years)
Normal healthy volunteers
Patients/clients
Other, explain:
Pregnant women
Prisoners
Students
Student athletes
Indicate approved populations to be removed from the protocol:
Indicate new total number of subjects for this study:

2. FOR ALL OTHER MODIFICATIONS – describe the requested modifications in sufficient detail for understanding by the IRB. Upload a revised copy of all documents affected by the modification. If additional space is needed, please upload a separate document.
The researcher is requesting that the protocol remain open until a successful dissertation defense. The original Anticipated Project Dates were 10/15/06 through 02/01/07.
The researcher noted in the narrative that she paid an individual to transcribe all interviews. The researcher then reviewed, coded, and analyzed the data collected.
The researcher clarified that audio tapes and transcripts would be kept in a locked cabinet until the conclusion of the study. At that time, they would be destroyed.

* note - the e-mail of the PI has changed from the original proposal. The current e-mail is lwiley@bsu.edu. The original e-mail was lmalugen@bsu.edu.

3. Provide a justification for all requested modifications from sections 1 and 2. If additional space is needed, please upload a separate document.
The modifications in the Key Personnel, clarification of subject age, and clarifications regarding storage of data was requested in the original IRB approval. The researcher is requesting the modification on the subject pool (dates of service) based on response of subjects willing to participate in the study.

The new package created for submission of this modification request must be electronically signed by the Principal Investigator (and by the Faculty Sponsor, when applicable). Your electronic signature indicates your acknowledgement that requested modifications may not be implemented in the study until the modifications have been approved by the IRB.
TO: Lynda Wiley  
   Educational Studies

FROM: Institutional Review Board  
   Leonard Kaminsky, Chair  
   Melanie L. Morris, Coordinator of Research Compliance

DATE: October 18, 2006


TITLE: Exploring the Experiences of College Students Participating in Volunteer Community Service and Service Learning Activities

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on October 18, 2006 and has determined the procedures you have proposed qualify as “exempt.” Projects determined to be exempt on or after March 3, 2005 are no longer required to be actively monitored by the IRB. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with Academic Research and Sponsored Programs as a matter of record.

Editorial notes: Please submit a copy of all revised documents for your file. This will not delay the beginning of your study.

1. Your study was determined to be exempt under the second exemption category, as you propose to conduct surveys/interviews/observations with adults either in an anonymous fashion or on a topic that will not reveal sensitive information about the participants that could place the participants at risk.

2. As your study has been determined to be exempt, you may revise the Informed Consent document into an introductory letter to your participants to inform them of the nature of the study. An introductory letter should contain all relevant information from an informed consent document but without the signature block for the participant. Therefore, you are not required to retain signed informed consent documents from each participant unless you choose to do so.

3. Please list your faculty advisor for this study as Key Personnel on page 2 of the application form and include a description of his/her responsibilities with regard to this study.

4. Please provide an age range for subjects on page 2 of the application form. Please be reminded that, since this study has been determined to be exempt, subjects must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study. Potential subjects under the age of 18 would require parental permission and child assent in order to participate.

5. Please disclose to participants in the informed consent document the nature of any risks that may exist for this study or that there are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

6. In the informed consent document, please inform your participants what will happen with the audio
recordings in terms of transcription, secure storage, and ultimate disposition or retention.

7. Please ensure that you have permission from Student Voluntary Services to conduct your study using their data. You will not need to submit proof of this permission to the IRB, but please retain a copy for your files.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project. Please contact Melanie L. Morris in Academic Research and Sponsored Programs (mmorris@bsu.edu; 765-285-5070) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing to the IRB at Academic Research and Sponsored Programs (2100 W. Riverside Avenue). Please reference the above identification number (IRB #) in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

pc: Thalia Mulvihill, Educational Studies
Exempt Review: Protocol Information (continued)

Human Subjects Research Application

If any part of the research is to be conducted at another institution with a collaborator, provide the following information for that person:

Name: ____________________________
Title: ____________________________
email: ____________________________
Address: _________________________
Telephone: ________________________

If any part of the research is to be conducted at an institution, or in conjunction with another organization, other than Ball State University, provide the name and contact information for a person who can give permission to conduct the research (Generally, this will be the person who will write the letter of permission to conduct the research):

Name: ____________________________
Title: ____________________________
email: ____________________________
Address: _________________________
Telephone: ________________________
Exempt Review
Human Subjects Research Application

Protocol Title: Exploring the Experiences of College Students Participating in Volunteer Community Service and Service Learning Activities

Anticipated project dates: begin October 15, 2006 end February 1, 2006

Principal Investigator: Lynda Wiley
Rank: Graduate

Department: Adult, Higher and Community Education
Email: lmalugen@bsu.edu

PI’s address to which all correspondence will be sent: Student Center 133
Telephone: 

If this project is funded or if the investigator is seeking funding, list the agency(s) and/or source(s):

n/a

To comply with the federally mandated educational requirement, you (and all of the key personnel for this project — including faculty advisor/sponsor) must have completed the on-line tutorial on the protection of human subjects. A printout of the computer-generated certificate indicating your successful completion of this tutorial must be either attached to this application or be on record in the Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs. Have you and all key personnel completed this online tutorial? ☐ Yes ☑ No

IRB Assurance Statement
I have read and understand Ball State University’s Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research as stated in the Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook and I agree:

a) to accept responsibility for the scientific and ethical conduct of this research study;
b) to obtain IRB approval prior to revising or altering the research protocol or the approved Informed Consent text;
c) to immediately report to the IRB any serious adverse reactions and/or unanticipated effects on subjects which occur as the result of this study.

Signature of Principal Investigator ________________________ Date ________________________

Faculty Advisor/Sponsor Assurance Statement
As the Faculty Advisor/Sponsor, I certify that I have reviewed this protocol and affirm the merit of this research project and the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project. (A signature is required for all student research projects, and for all persons not affiliated with Ball State University.)

Signature ________________________ Department ________________________ Date ________________________

Thalia Mulvihill, PhD
Print/Type of Faculty Mentor name ________________________

For IRB use:

Send original (including the application, protocol plus any additional materials) to:
IRB, Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs, Ball State University, 2100 W. Riverside Ave., Muncie, IN 47306.
Exempt Review: Protocol Information

Human Subjects Research Application

List all persons, other than the PI, who will have a role in the research project (include additional sheet of paper if necessary):

Name: ___________________ Rank: Other Department: ___________________
Responsibilities: _______________________________________________________

Name: ___________________ Rank: Other Department: ___________________
Responsibilities: _______________________________________________________

Name: ___________________ Rank: Other Department: ___________________
Responsibilities: _______________________________________________________

Name: ___________________ Rank: Other Department: ___________________
Responsibilities: _______________________________________________________

Description of subject population:

Number of Subjects: 10-12 Gender of Subjects: Female & Male Age Ranges: Undergraduates

Check all categories that apply to the subjects:

☐ Cognitively Impaired ☐ Minors (individual under age 18 years)
☐ Normal Healthy Volunteers ☐ Pregnant Women
☐ Patients/ Clients ☐ Prisoners
☐ Other, explain: _______________________________________________________

☐ Students ☐ Student Athletes

Will any information pertaining to the research be withheld from the subjects (i.e., as in a deception study)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, for what purpose? ______________________________________________

List the location(s) where the research will be conducted:

On-campus in the Atrium or Library

If an advertisement(s) will be used to recruit subjects, indicate the format(s) to be used:

☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ Radio
☐ Electronic Media, describe: Television (e.g., public access channel)
☐ Other, describe: E-mail to Student Voluntary Services volunteers from spring 2006

Attach copies of all advertisements to the protocol
Exempt Review: Check List
Human Subjects Research Application

Indicate the most appropriate category(s) that apply(s) to the proposed project:

IMPORTANT NOTE The Exempt Review categories do not apply to: (a) research involving prisoners, fetuses, pregnant women, or human in vitro fertilization; (b) research involving survey or interview procedures or observation of public behavior of minors, except for research involving observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in activities being observed; (c) research involving the deception of the subject. While the investigator may request that a research protocol receive an Exempt Review, the IRB may determine that such a review is not appropriate if there exists any potential risk to the subject. In such a case, the protocol will receive the type of review (Expedited or Full Review) deemed appropriate by the IRB.

☐ Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

☐ Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability or reputation.

☐ Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2 of this section, if (a) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (b) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

☐ Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

☐ Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Federal Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

☐ Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.