PRACTICES IN SERVICE-LEARNING THAT SUPPORT HIGHER LEVELS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AFTER GRADUATION

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ABSTRACT

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Civically-engaged alumni should be an important outcome of higher education. Service-learning is one method for helping students commit to a life of civic engagement after graduation. In order to create these civically-engaged alumni, practitioners need to understand best practices in service-learning. In this holistic multi-case case study, four participants were interviewed who had participated in three different types of service-learning programs at the University of Michigan.

Existing literature addresses outcomes of service-learning including academic learning, career choice, and civic engagement outcomes. It also emphasizes the importance of reflection, community service, interactions with faculty and staff, community building, structures of academic service-learning programs, and interactions with people different from the student.

From the interviews, six themes emerged that the participants thought were effective in leading to their civic engagement after graduation. These six themes are reflection and critical thinking, community service, community building, interactions with people from whom the student differs, leadership responsibilities, and a desire for continued involvement and reflection.

These findings have implications for practice. Practitioners should utilize discussion, going beyond the shock factor, and conversations on congruence in reflection; they should create diverse communities and help those communities form relational bonds; they should create opportunities for students to interact with people from whom
they differ; and they should incorporate student leaders in their programs and teach those students leadership skills.

More research needs to be conducted on the intersections of the themes uncovered in this study. In addition, there needs to be more research on the impact of students who take on leadership roles in their service-learning experience and on the outcome of continued involvement and reflection for students both throughout their undergraduate experience as well as after graduation. However, this study provides a firm starting place for this future research.
To all my mentors, both in and out of the service-learning world, who have made me who I am today and to all those who see the larger picture of the work that is done through service-learning.
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It does not seem appropriate to acknowledge all of those who have helped me bring this dream to completion without saying what this work truly represents to me. As a sixth grader reading at a second grade reading level the idea of doing research in a graduate program was the farthest thing from my mind. However, through this journey I have realized dreams I never knew I had and uncovered a desire to continue with my research and my education with excitement and passion.

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CHAPTER ONE: SERVICE-LEARNING

There is one goal that higher education should aim to achieve above all others. The audacity with which I came to this conviction came through Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont and Stephens’ (2003) book entitled *Educating citizens: Preparing American’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. In this book, the authors describe the “mounting political apathy [that] bodes ill for the future of U.S. democracy unless ... generations of young people come to see both the value of and necessity for civic engagement and political participation” (p. 8). Ours is a country divided with citizens who no longer think of themselves as dependent on the greater cohesiveness of society. Higher education should combat this belief of an individualistic society. The goal I see above all others is that of instilling students with the aim of being intentionally civically engaged for the public good.

Creating civically-engaged alumni is one goal of higher education in general as well as student affairs specifically. “Nearly all colleges and universities include citizenship education in their mission statements and offer some type of program to achieve this goal” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 2). One piece of citizenship education is to teach students to be civically engaged. Colleges and universities use many different methods to create civically-engaged students and alumni. They do this through leadership programs, through academic courses, and through service-learning programs.

Several ways that colleges and universities work towards creating civic engagement involve student affairs staff. Three student affairs foundational documents, *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA: College Student Educators International [ACPA], 1996), *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (ACPA & NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [NASPA], 1997), and *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA &
ACPA, 2004), directly address the hallmark, value, or expectation of creating people who are civicly-engaged (ACPA, 1996, para 5; ACPA & NASPA, 1997, para 8; NASPA & ACPA, 2004, p. 3).

One tool for encouraging students to become civicly-engaged is service-learning. Service-learning has many different definitions, applications, and uses depending on the institution and scholars discussing it. It can range in academic settings from a rigorously incorporated pedagogy that complements and increases students learning to an extra credit opportunity for students who chose to participate. In co-curricular settings it can range from a several-week-long educationally-intensive immersion project to one-time service activities with minimal reflection or education tacked on as an afterthought. I define service-learning programs as those that include (a) a mutually beneficial community service component, (b) education and training on the social issue on which students are volunteering, and (c) reflection that encourages students to think about their personal and social responsibilities. This definition is my own but stems from the contributions and guidance of Jeff Howard, Jane Rosser, and Coleen Slosberg.

The history of service-learning, like the definition, varies depending on the source. The concept of service-learning has been around for at least the last century when John Dewey and William James developed the “intellectual foundations to service-based learning” (The Corporation for National and Community Service and Learn and Serve America). Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999) wrote that until the 1980s “service-learning advocates were a small, marginal group within higher education” (p. 5); however, its use has increased over the past two and a half decades.
Clearly, not all kinds of service-learning are equally effective at creating civically engaged alumni, but since service-learning has become a buzzword in experiential education, it has been attached to a wide array of activities. With so many activities being labeled service-learning, it is important that researchers discover which service-learning programs are effective and what characteristics of these specific programs lead to the desired outcomes. Kuh (2008) labeled service-learning as one of the high-impact practices in higher education, but included little description of what about these service-learning experiences makes them high impact.

Statement of the Problem

It is important to find what, over the long term, increases students’ level of civic engagement. It is important to look at programs that appear to positively influence students’ civic engagement levels and to see which parts of those programs are most effective. In this study, I engaged with students whose service-learning and civic engagement program participation had positively influenced their level of civic engagement.

My goal is to contribute to the larger conversation of what makes high-quality service-learning programs. To do this, I interviewed alumni of service-learning programs who self-identified as being more civically-engaged as a result of that program to answer one main question: What about their service-learning experience did they believe led to their increased levels of civic engagement after graduation?

Few researchers have looked at the long-term effects of service-learning. Astin et al. (2006) have done such a study and found that “service-learning does not remain a significant predictor of most civic engagement outcomes once other college experiences –
most often generic volunteer work – are accounted for” (p. 73) in the years after graduation. The authors recommended, however, that further researchers focus on high-quality service-learning programs, thus eliminating the issue of self-selected participants from programs whose quality widely varies. I intend to address this recommendation and take the first steps in documenting practices of high-impact service-learning programs through this study.

**Gains Made by Looking at Effective Practices in Service-Learning Programs**

While this is only one study, it will inform practitioners of the different elements of service-learning programs that potentially make those programs effective in achieving long-term increases in students’ levels of civic engagement. Finding out what alumni identify, years later, as the most effective pieces of their service-learning experience will contribute to understanding how service-learning programs can best meet the goals of institutions. From this information, service-learning practitioners can take a closer look at those pieces of their programs and either adjust what already exists or revise their programs to include more of these high-impact practices. Future researchers will also be able to draw on the practices these alumni determine are most effective to identify high-quality service-learning for further study as Astin et al. (2006) suggested.

This study examined student perceptions of the different ways in which service-learning can increase civic engagement, illustrating best practices for effective high-impact service-learning. The findings of this study can inform advocates, teachers, and administrators how best to make service-learning more effective, depending on what outcome they would most like their students to acquire.
In order to implement many of the best practices this study identifies, it is likely that institutions will need to provide their programs with more support. It is my hope that with more research to justify desired programmatic changes, institutions will be more likely to support, reward, and fund programs that are making changes to incorporate high-impact practices. My research is just one more tool for practitioners to use to support their program structure.

Furthermore, I hope this research will assist faculty and administrators as they make more informed decisions on where research on service-learning should continue in the future. Those of us who engage in the practice of service-learning, both as teachers and as students, see how it increases students’ levels of civic engagement. However, little research has been conducted to see which service-learning practices lead students to maintain these increased levels in the long term. It is my hope that in the future I will be able to continue this research by using the factors uncovered in this study to do more research on how effective these practices truly are.

Definitions

While many of the terms in this paper are used in everyday conversations it is important to be clear about the ways I use specific terms in this study. I will define the terms: careers for the public good, positive career impact, volunteerism, and civic engagement. I will also be defining the gender-neutral pronouns I will be using in this paper.

I define careers for the public good as any position in which the employee makes the argument that the job they are doing is for the benefit of the broader community. These might range from easy-to-identify jobs such as teachers and social workers to the less
obvious jobs such as lawyers working for public interest groups rather than simply for
corporate clients. Thus, some of these labels will be subjective. I left it up to the
participant to make the decision whether hir job was for the public good.

**Positive career impact** is defined as one of two things: either an affirmation that a
career choice is the right one or a shift in one’s career goals to a career for the public good
as a result of the service-learning experience. This definition is greatly informed by Astin,
Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000).

**Volunteerism** is any community service work done without full compensation. This
includes a person serving a meal at a soup kitchen for no reimbursement as well as an
AmeriCorps member who gets a small stipend for hir of service.

The term **civic engagement** seldom has an agreed-upon definition, something Jacoby
(2009) addressed in her book *Civic Engagement in Higher Education*. In this thesis, it
includes careers for the public good and volunteerism, as defined above, as well as
involvement in politics, from voting to community organizing to running for public office to
activism. For a more complete definition of the term I defer to Jacoby (2009) and her
definition, a variation of the definition prescribed by the Coalition for Civic Engagement
and Leadership (2005):

Civic engagement involves one or more of the following:

- Learning from others, self, and environment to develop informed
  perspectives on social issues
- Valuing diversity and building bridges across difference
- Behaving, and working through controversy, with civility
- Taking an active role in the political process
• Participating actively in public life, public problem solving, and community service
• Assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations
• Developing empathy, ethics, values, and sense of social responsibility
• Promoting social justice locally and globally (p. 9)

Finally, I would like to define hir and ze. These are gender-neutral pronouns, hir taking the place of his and her and ze taking the place of he or she. In academia, researchers only mark participants in categories relevant to the topic being studied. Just as I would not mark race in participants as I talk about their experiences I will be using these pronouns to not bring undue attention to the gender of the participants.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many definitions of service-learning. Kendall wrote in 1990 that she had reviewed 147 definitions (p. 18) and new definitions have been written over the last 20 years. These definitions vary from pinpointing every component of a service-learning program to just hinting at the necessities.

Some of the foundational elements laid out in definitions of service-learning include: relevant and meaningful community service (Howard, 2001); academic learning (Howard, 2001; Jovanovic, 2003), reflection (NASPA & ACPA, 2004, p. 17), reciprocal benefit (Seifer, 2007), placing service in the broader context of education (Seifer, 2007), a focus on civic learning (Seifer, 2007; Howard, 2001; Jovanovic, 2003), addressing a community-identified concern (Seifer, 2007, p. 9; Jovanovic, 2003), and involving the “community in the...design and implementation” (Seifer, 2007, p. 9). Community service is the only constant variable in service-learning definitions (Mabry, 1998, p. 32).

One major hurdle to doing research in the field of service-learning is this wide array of definitions. Eyler and Giles (1999) found in their study on the outcomes of service-learning that programs differed from “an afternoon of community service” to programs “where students spend a year or two in a connected series of courses linked to service projects in the community” (p. 3). Astin et al. (2006) wrote that “the biggest practical limitation...[was] that our service-learning measure treats a wide range of experiences as equal” (p. 127).

Despite, and maybe because of, the wide array of definitions of service-learning there is much that is specific to the pedagogy. Many scholars believe that the distinctive factor in service-learning is the element of civic engagement (The Corporation for National
and Community Service and Learn and Serve America; Bringle & Hatcher, 2009, p. 38) and helping students develop “an understanding of the root causes of social problems and where to begin to find solutions” (Jacoby, 2003 cited in Jacoby, 2009, p. 13). Kendall (1991) wrote that “service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both” (p. 95).

**Outcomes of Service-Learning**

Service-learning leads to several outcomes. The most prominent outcomes are in academic learning, career choice, and civic engagement. This section explores the literature in each of those areas.

**Academic Learning**

Service-learning has a positive influence in academic learning outcomes. There has been research on both levels of engagement and grades earned. Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000) found “an increased level of engagement in the [service-learning] course” (p. 82). They also discovered “evidence underscoring the potential value of placing service learning in [their] major field, since the impact of service learning appears to be enhanced when the subject matter of the course is of interest to the student” (pp. 86-87). Brownell and Swaner (2009) wrote that making the direct link between community service and classroom learning “enables students to apply classroom learning in out-of-class settings and vice versa” (p. 29).

In the most recent volume of *How College Affects Students*, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded that students have better application of course concepts outside of class when there is a service component incorporated into the class. The authors continued to
write that courses that use service-learning have better learning outcomes than those that simply use a service component (pp. 129-130).

**Career Choice**

Career choice is another major outcome of service-learning programs. Many studies have shown that service-learning programs have a positive career impact (Astin et al., 2000, p. 87; Weisskirch, 2003, p. 141; Brownell and Swaner, 2009, p. 27). Astin et al. (2000) even went so far as to write “if the pursuit of a service career is to be valued, then we can argue that service learning be placed in the core curriculum, due to its dramatic effect on career choice” (p. 86) either through a change in career choice to a career for the public good or through a confirmation of one’s previously chosen career choice.

**Civic Engagement Outcomes**

As mentioned in Chapter One, there are many different elements to civic engagement. Here I again use Jacoby's (2009) definition:

Civic engagement involves one or more of the following:

- Learning from others, self, and environment to develop informed perspectives on social issues
- Valuing diversity and building bridges across difference
- Behaving, and working through controversy, with civility
- Taking an active role in the political process
- Participating actively in public life, public problem solving, and community service
- Assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations
- Developing empathy, ethics, values, and sense of social responsibility
• Promoting social justice locally and globally (Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership, 2005). (p. 9)

I will address several of these bullet points separately as many appear, in the literature as specific outcomes of service-learning.

Informed perspectives on social issues. “Service-learning done well...serve[s] as a powerful introduction to developing an understanding of the root causes of social problems and where to begin to find solutions” (Jacoby, 2003 as cited in Jacoby, 2009, p. 13). Eyler and Giles’ (1999) assessment that “service-learning programs that place students into contexts where their prejudices, previous experiences, and assumptions about the world are challenged may create the circumstances necessary for growth” (p. 17) applies to both developing informed perspectives on social issues and Jacoby’s (2009) next civic engagement outcome of “valuing diversity and building bridges across difference” (p. 9).

Valuing diversity and building bridges across difference. Several authors have concluded that service-learning can increase students’ ability to value diversity and interact with people different from them (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 29; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 202). Developing students’ identities can help them get along with others from whom they differ, the first step in valuing diversity. In a small study focused on first-year students involved in service-learning, Weisskirch (2003) found that “developmental themes of identity exploration...emerged from the first year student journals” (p. 141).

Students in this study reflected on a variety of different identities including social class and English as a second language status.
Taking an active role in the political process. Astin et al. (2006) found, after taking into account the effect of generic volunteer work, that “service-learning has a [possible] unique (positive) impact...on political engagement” (p. 122). However, more research is needed in this area because this finding was not conclusive.

Intentions to participate actively in public life, public problem solving, and community service. Monard-Weissmen (2003) found that students said they “could not turn away after coming across poverty, abandonment, illness, and ignorance” (p. 167) and that “through conversations and reflections, students expressed their service commitment” would endure (p. 168).

Assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations. Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh (2002) concluded that one of the outcomes affected by service-learning was “increased leadership skills” (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 202). Astin et al. (2006) found similar results four years later. They wrote that “once the effect of generic volunteer work is taken into account, service-learning has a unique (positive) impact only on post-college civic leadership” (p. 122).

Promoting social justice locally and globally. Brownell and Swaner (2009) found that “service-learning participants demonstrate gains in moral reasoning ... [and] in the development of a social justice orientation (p. 27).

Summary.

Most of the studies to date are small case studies and program reviews. While the evidence they provide is weak, it shows promise of outcomes related to civic engagement. One exception to these findings is Astin et al. (2006). In their research, these authors found that although “service-learning has a lasting impact for most of the civic engagement
behaviors even after accounting for entering student characteristics and institutional differences ... [it] does not remain a significant predictor of most civic engagement outcomes once other college experiences – most often generic volunteer work – are accounted for” (p. 73). This claim might seem to diminish the need for further study on service-learning. However, in addition to the promising evidence from other studies the work of Astin et al. encourages me to continue to do research on what service-learning programs can accomplish if they use high-impact practices. If service-learning seems to have similar outcomes to volunteer work, what can administrators of service-learning programs do to make the programs more intentional and consistent?

**Service-Learning Practices**

In the field of service-learning there is a great deal of variety in the amount and type of reflection done; the time dedicated to, quality and content of, and the contact and supervision provided in the community service; as well as a variety of other factors. High-impact practices are those that most effectively create civically-engaged individuals. The following is a review of the literature that looks at practices used in service-learning programs.

**Reflection**

Reflection is, as Eyler and Giles (1999) wrote, “sometimes described as the hyphen in service-learning; it is the link that ties student experiences in the community to academic learning” (p. 171). Many others have agreed with this assertion of the importance of reflection (e.g., Astin et al., 2000, p. 85; Kendall, 1991, p. 96; Weisskirch, 2003, p. 141). Although “reflection adds power to even the interpersonal dimension of service” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, pp. 33-34), “merely adding a reflection component...might not
be enough" (Astin, 2000, p. 85). Instead, there are many factors needed to make service-learning effective. Three of the most written about are time dedicated to reflection, content of reflection, and types of reflection.

**Time.** There is much variation in the amount of time service-learning programs dedicate to reflection. It can range from an end-of-semester reflection paper to weekly discussions and journals encouraging students to think critically about what is going on around them. Without time built into the program explicitly for reflection, students may leave the program without having thought about important concepts and connections. If reflection is not intentionally built into the program as an ongoing process students may stop reflecting once their program is over. This seems to happen most often when the community service was an-add on project due at the end of the semester rather than being integrated throughout the course (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 171-172). The civic engagement outcomes of having a "better understanding of societal issues, ... growing sense of responsibility, and ... commitment to social action" seem evident when reflection is integrated throughout the program in both in-class discussions and written papers (Monard-Weissman, 2003, p. 164).

**Content.** Content is also important in regards to reflection. Reflection that includes relevant content is the connecting piece between course material and community service. Monard-Weissmen (2003) claimed that it is through reflection that "students can reach a higher understanding of societal problems" by looking for answers to the "why" and "so what" questions behind societal issues (pp. 166-167). While students would likely have outcomes ranging across the board if simply asked to reflect on their experience it is
guiding questions that help students make the connection from community service to civic engagement.

**Reflection types.** There are many types of reflection, each of which is effective for different reasons, in different ways, and for different people. The two most commonly used types of reflection are written and verbal. While journaling is the most written-about type of reflection, there is also a call for students to reflect in multiple ways (Mabry, 1998, p. 33; Monard-Weissman, 2003).

There are many positive factors about reflection through journals. Most journals are written from a prompt given by the instructor beyond simply asking them to write. Responses to these prompts can cause students to believe “that people in the community were ‘like me’” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 33), be introspective and reflective, “document changes during the experience” (Weisskirch, 2003, p. 144), and “build citizenship” (Goldsmith, 1996 as cited in Weisskirch, 2003, p. 141). Some themes that recur in reflection journals include: “learning about community, recognition of improvement of personal skills, self-discovery, exploration, and career development” (Weisskirch, 2003, p. 143). While these are valuable outcomes, they are not the only outcomes that can happen through reflection.

Discussion is another important type of reflection. This can be either formal reflection (in a class or programmatic setting) or informal reflection (with friends and family) (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Reflection requires students to process what is happening at their community service site and what they are reading in course materials. However, reflection does more than that; it also can also help students uncover their hopes and expectations for the coming semester depending on the prompts students are given. This
kind of reflection includes uncovering “their interests, biases, and obstacles to doing service intended to combat the cynicism that ... [can keep] students’ voices silent” (Jovanovic, 2003, p. 83). One problem with in-class discussions is that it can get stuck with students sharing their feelings and experiences without ever moving on to more critical thinking (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 177). Alternatively, informal discussions face that same challenge with the additional challenge that students may never take the initiative to have those discussions.

Community Service

Community service is, quite obviously, one of the main components of service-learning pedagogy. However, simply adding a service project to a learning experience does not make it effective service-learning. Much research has been done about the amount of time required, the quality of the placement, the type of contact needed, and the supervision provided to make effective service-learning programs.

Time. Programs that include everything from one-time service projects to intensive 20-hour-per-week internships have been called service-learning programs. However, “evidence suggests a positive relationship between the amount of time students spend engaged in community service and their civic values” (Mabry, 1998, p. 33). Some believe that the amount of time spent involved in service should be enough to allow relationships to form between the students and the community partner (Brownell & Swaner, 2009, pp 29-30) though the authors do not specify a particular number of hours.

Quality. Eyler and Giles (1999) defined placement quality as “the extent that students in their community placements are challenged, are active rather than observers, do a variety of tasks, feel that they are making a positive contribution, have important
levels of responsibility, and receive input and appreciation from supervisors in the field” (pp. 32-33). Each of these factors can be important in helping students gain the experiences necessary to make reflection effective. Eyler and Giles found that quality was a significant predictor of reducing stereotyping (p. 33).

**Contact.** In light of the learning outcomes desired, different types of service—such as tutoring students, working with the elderly, or working with prisoners—might be better suited to achieve those outcomes. With the goal of creating civically engaged citizens in mind, direct contact with clients is found to be more effective (Brownell & Swaner, 2009, p. 30; Mabry, 1998, p. 33).

**Supervision.** The amount and type of supervision that participants receive at their service site can affect the outcomes of their service-learning experience. Brownell and Swaner (2009) wrote that “regular feedback to students” should be included in supervision at the community service site (p. 30) though “regular” is not defined. Kendall (1991) goes further, writing that service-learning should include “training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and goals” (p. 96).

**Other Factors**

Other factors showed up less frequently in the literature. These factors were: interactions with faculty and staff, community building, structure of academic service-learning, and interactions with people different from the student.

**Interactions with faculty and staff.** Often, service-learning programs have a smaller student to faculty and staff ratio than do traditional courses, creating more opportunity for one-on-one interactions between students and faculty or staff members. Students benefit from close relationships with faculty members (Kuh, 2008; Chickering &
Reisser, 1993). Reflecting on service experience with professors has “lasting impact[s] across a variety of engagement measures” (Astin, 2006, p. 123).

Community building. Community building often happens in service-learning programs on three different levels: structured program time with students’ peers, outside structured time with students’ peers, and between students and the community members. When students in a service-learning program come together they are often asked to express their expectations, hopes, fears, and concerns. This is just the beginning of forming community within the program setting. Being a part of a larger group enables students to “see the value of community and making a contribution to a larger group” which are important values for students to hold in order to become effective and engaged citizens (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 192). Jovanovic (2003) found that “some of the best learning takes place outside the classroom” and that informal socializing is often a need of the students (p. 83).

Building community with service partners is also a factor in the quality of a service-learning program. Jovanovic (2003) wrote that there were a variety of ways to introduce students to a community partner but insinuated that the more ways a community partner and their social concerns can be made real—through techniques like communicating shocking statistics and talking about personal appeals—the better it is for the students involved (pp. 83-84).

Structure of academic service-learning. Course structure in academic service-learning is another practice that can be a distinctive feature of service-learning pedagogy. Course design and structure are often “subject to revision” in collaboration with students in
the course and assignments often encourage students to take their own initiative (Jovanovic, 2003, p. 84).

**Interaction with people different from the student.** Volunteer work and service-learning programs often connect students with people or communities that are different from them in regards to a variety of social identities including, but not limited to, race, religion, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and level of ability (Pascarella & Terenzini; 2005, p. 315). These interactions often break down stereotypes and cause students to question previously held beliefs (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 315, Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 28 & p. 31).

**Conclusion**

This review exposes the wide range of practices that take place in service-learning programs and the presence of some variation even within specific practices. It is clear that the service component can have a wide range of results depending on time, quality, contact, and supervision factors. Reflection also varies in its results depending on the time involved in and the type and quality of reflection. There is a range of other factors that influence service-learning programs including the educational component, community building, program structure, and interaction with people different from the student.

While some of these practices have been shown to be more effective than others there is still much room for research in this area. Most of the studies done to date have been small-scale studies regarding outcomes of existing programs. This leaves room for additional larger-scale studies to be completed to provide a more comprehensive perspective. In addition, and arguably more importantly, it leaves much room for exploring
best practices. Identifying the specifics of best practices may lead to more consistent and intentional outcomes.

ACPA and NASPA (1997) found that students learn “best in communities that value diversity, promote social responsibility, encourage discussion and debate, recognize accomplishments, and foster a sense of belonging among their members” (para 19). These are characteristics often found in service-learning programs and with community partners. As further research is conducted about this pedagogy, best practices will continue to be identified and the potential for positive impact on students will increase. Kuh (2008) reports that service-learning is a high-impact practice in higher education and as further information is gathered its potential continues to grow.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

My aim in conducting this research was to contribute to the larger conversation of what makes high-quality service-learning programs. To do this, I interviewed alumni of service-learning programs who self-identified as having become more civically engaged as a result of that program to answer one main question: What about their service-learning experience did they believe led to their increased levels of civic engagement after graduation? My main research question was: For alumni of service-learning experiences who believe they have become more civically engaged as a result of that program, what about their experience did they identify as having lead to their increased levels of civic engagement after graduation?

The first reason for choosing a qualitative study, to get more individualized and in depth responses from my interviewees, aligns with Creswell’s (2007) assertion that qualitative research is conducted when “we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (p. 40). While my questions were shaped by the current research on high-impact practices, it was important for me to leave room for participants to share practices I had not anticipated that led to their increased level of civic engagement. I not only wanted to be able to find what high-impact practices were used in their programs but also why those practices were effective. A quantitative study would not have allowed me to do either of these things.

Using a qualitative methodology enabled me to place my participants’ interviews into a larger context of both the participants’ experiences and the service-learning field as a whole. There are many different types of service-learning. Each of my sample programs
represented a different type and thus had some practices unique to that type of service-learning.

**Values and Assumptions**

I became interested in doing research on service-learning because of my own involvement in many different types of service-learning programs as an undergraduate. This previous experience and the ideas and preconceived notions I have because of it had the potential to influence my findings. Because of this potential, I laid out my values and assumptions before conducting my research. This helped me, as a researcher, be more aware of them.

I was involved in a living-learning program that incorporated community service, academic learning, and diversity education; an AmeriCorps program; a series of three service-learning courses; a community-based research class; and several alternative spring break trips. I also took on leadership roles as a leadership team member in a service-learning program and as a facilitator in a service-learning course. Through these experiences, I formed many assumptions on what makes a high-impact service-learning program.

I was involved as an undergraduate college student with the three programs I am looking at in this study. I was a participant in the Michigan Community Scholar’s Program (MCSP) my first year of college. During that year, I went on an Alternative Spring Break trip with other MCSP students through SERVE. In addition, I took a Project Community class that was taught primarily for MCSP students. My second year in college I took on several leadership roles; I was a peer mentor in MCSP and a site leader for an Alternative Spring Break trip in SERVE. My junior year I moved out of MCSP’s residential space but
became a peer facilitator for a Project Community class taught primarily for MCSP students. That year I also took on a role as a leadership team member in SERVE running their Volunteers Involved Every Week program (VIEW) while also site leading another Alternative Spring Break trip. My senior year I remained on the leadership team for VIEW. One year after graduation, I returned to the University of Michigan to work for Project Community as the Administrative Coordinator. It is because of this inside knowledge of the programs and the effect the programs have had on my own life that I chose them for this study. It is also through these experiences as a student and a staff member that I have come to know many of the past and present directors of these programs. These relationships with the gatekeepers of these programs helped me to gain access to their alumni.

Over the past three years I have reflected on my own as well as my students’ experiences in order to identify four pieces of service-learning that I see as critical. Going into this research, I valued programs that integrate four elements: mutually beneficial community service, issue education, social identity development, and reflection on one’s personal and social responsibility. Mutually beneficial community service provides for a community identified need while also helping the students providing the service develop an informed perspective on the social issues involved and gain practical skills. Issue education relates to the type, quality, and amount of education and reflection done around the community service preformed. Issue education continues the theme of learning about social issues but also promoting social justice. Social identity development helps students learn to value diversity and work through controversy with people from whom they differ. Reflection on one’s personal and social responsibility happens through the reflection
portion of service-learning and leads to obvious outcomes in civic engagement. In part, I
value these elements because as I reflect back on my experiences these seem to me to have
been the most influential practices that led to my own increased levels of civic engagement.

Two practices that were incorporated into many of my service-learning programs
were social identity development training and social justice education. I believe that these
tools can greatly increase the effectiveness of service-learning as a pedagogy to increase
when they wrote:

In general terms, we believe that a morally and civically responsible individual
recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore
considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is
willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed
moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate. A fully developed
individual must have the ability to think clearly and in an appropriately complex
and sophisticated way about moral and civic issues; he or she must possess the
moral commitment and sense of personal responsibility to act, which may include
having moral emotions such as empathy and concern for others; moral and civic
values, interests, and habits; and knowledge and experience in the relevant domains
of life. (pp. 17-18)

My value of social justice and social justice education influenced the definition of
civic engagement I chose to use. Because of this value, I chose to incorporate Jacoby’s
(2009) definition which includes “valuing diversity,” “developing empathy, ethics, values,
and sense of social responsibility,” and “promoting social justice locally and globally” (p. 9).
Conceptual Frameworks

I approached this study with a social constructivist worldview. As Creswell (2007) wrote, I “seek understanding of the world in which [I] live and work” (p. 20). I do not believe that a single truth exists but rather that we each construct our own truths. To do this research, I looked to my participants to share their perspectives with me. In addition, I do not believe that I was or could ever be a researcher free of bias. So, in order to combine these two beliefs, I analyzed the participants’ perspectives with my own experiences in mind in order to discover practices that are effective in the field of service-learning.

I also approached this research with a pragmatic and advocacy worldview. As a student affairs practitioner, I was looking for outcomes that support student growth and transformation in the area of civic engagement. Because of my interest in that area, I was also interested in conducting research that would confirm the best practices already at work in this area and support implementing them in institutions of higher education.

This study allowed me to look at service-learning to see what elements, if incorporated, inspired its participants to have higher levels of civic engagement. Now that I have uncovered some high-impact practices within service-learning I will be able to advocate to have them further implemented in service-learning programs at my institution of higher education. I will also advocate to further research on newly revealed high-impact practices.

I look through the world with an advocacy lens because of my own realization that real social change is needed to make the world a more just place. I believe that if we want to see real social change happen in our country it must start with helping our youth become more civically engaged. Because of this, I think I can make the biggest difference in
making real social change by increasing the effectiveness of service-learning programs around the country. This has been my starting place.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

I used four theoretical frameworks to view this research and I see them as theories that together create an ever-refined picture of students in a service-learning program. The first is Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory on education and identity. The second is Perry's (1968) epistemological model of development. The third is Marcia, whose theory revolves around decision-making. The fourth framework is less theory and more pedagogical methods taken from Freire (2003/1970). I incorporated Freire’s idea of a liberationist pedagogy and experiential learning or problem-posing education.

**Chickering and Reisser**

Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory depicts seven different vectors through which students develop. I agree with Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh (2002) that “several of the vectors ... relate to becoming a contributing citizen of a society” (p. 190). The two vectors that can be most clearly developed to create civically-engaged individuals through the use of service-learning are vector six, *developing purpose*, and vector seven, *developing integrity*. Developing purpose is made up of several different components: “vocational plans and aspirations,” “personal interests” such as “avocational and recreational interests,” “interpersonal and family commitments,” and “intentionality.” Developing integrity is made up of “humanizing values,” “personalizing values,” and “developing congruence” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, pp. 236-237).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) wrote that faculty-student relationships can have an impact on both developing purpose and integrity (p. 269). Having a personal relationship
with professors can enable students to “see more clearly the rewards and frustrations of varied vocations and avocations” (pp. 269-270) and in seeing faculty and staff members as “real human beings” (p. 269) students can get a better sense of what values they wish to have. I suspected that at least some of my participants would talk about their relationships with faculty or staff and how it encouraged them to be more civically engaged.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) also listed curriculum as a means to help students develop purpose and integrity. They wrote that content should “create encounters with diverse perspectives that challenge preexisting information, assumptions, and values [and that they should] provide examples of, opportunities for, and activities that help students integrate diverse perspectives, assumptions, and value orientations” (p. 270). Students who wrestle with their value orientation and assumptions come to hold values that are more concrete have an increased sense of integrity and sense of direction. I believe that service-learning programs, both academic and co-curricular, done well, do both of these things. I hypothesized that I would hear in my interviews that the education of social issues and the personal reflection components of service-learning programs helped my participants develop along these two vectors.

**Perry**

Perry's (1968) epistemological theory was another lens through which I viewed my research. Perry's nine positions can be broken up into three “modes of meaning making” (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 131): duality, multiplicity, and relativism. Duality is the mode in which people see the world in terms of right—wrong dichotomies (p. 131). Multiplicity occurs when people honor “diverse views when the right answers are not yet known” (p. 131). Relativism is the mode in which people realize that opinions must be
supported with evidence to determine their value (p. 132). Within relativism there is a move to *commitment in relativism* that initiates “ethical development” (p. 133).

I believed that the people I interviewed would talk about their development along these models. Often service in service-learning programs exposes students to a multiplicity of opinions and I suspected this would dissuade students from believing that there is only one right answer. I also hypothesized that the education component that service-learning programs provide alongside this service would support the realization that a multiplicity of ideas exist while also supporting the notion of evidence-based opinions. I predicted that through the act of reflection at least a few of the alumni I interviewed would have developed the realization that in different contexts different answers may be appropriate for different people.

**Marcia**

“Marcia (1980) included political [and occupational] decision making as a primary focus of identity formation” (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 189). His theory is relevant because these are two of the qualifying characteristics for this study. Marcia’s theory on identity development includes four statuses. In each of these statuses an individual has some mix between levels of crisis and commitment.

Foreclosure (no crisis/commitment) is one status, in which “individuals accept parental values without questioning them” (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 53). In another status, moratorium (crisis/no commitment), “individuals actively question parental values in order to form their identity; however, their crisis comes without commitment” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 53). In diffusion (no crisis/no commitment), a third status, people “either refuse to or are unable to firmly commit” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 53).
In the last status, identity achievement (crisis/commitment) “status comes after an extensive period of crisis in which individuals sort through alternatives and make crucial choices that lead to strong commitments in setting goals and establishing firm foundations” (Orlofsky et al., 1973, cited in Evans et al., 2010, p. 53). Marcia “viewed identity achievement, a state arrived at when a crisis has been worked through and commitment has been made, as the healthiest psychological status a person can obtain” (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 189).

I suspected that at least some of the alumni I interviewed would have been forced into crisis through their service-learning experience. I believed that most would have been supported, either within the service-learning experience or elsewhere, to come to a level of commitment on their political and/or occupational levels that made them eligible for this study.

**Freire**

Freire (2003/1970) has informed my thoughts since I first read his work as an undergraduate student. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire, wrote about two contradictory pedagogies: banking and problem-posing. The problem-posing pedagogy he encouraged incorporated a liberationist and experiential education. I believe that many service-learning programs incorporate these two elements. Instead of being “an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire, 2003, p. 72), education through service-learning puts students out into the community where they have their own experiences from which to draw their own conclusions. Many service-learning experiences have facilitators who are willing to present “the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her [sic] earlier
considerations as the students express their own” (Freire, 2003, p. 81) encouraging them to collaborate with one another in the learning process.

It was my job to be aware of these elements as my participants were reflecting about their experiences with service-learning. I listened for examples of their teachers, site leaders, and facilitators collaborating with the participants (Freire, 2003, p. 75) in order to create a freer more liberated experience. I also tried to be receptive to any experiences that the alumni talk about where they learned from their own doing rather than being lectured or told what to believe. I expected that these experiences would be abundant throughout my interviews because these challenging experiences can help students understand the importance of being civically-engaged individuals and understanding is the first step to action.

The theoretical frameworks of Chickering and Reisser, Perry, Marcia, and Freire helped shape my interview questions as well as the way I viewed the data collected from my study. It is with these lenses that I was able to see more precisely the high-impact practices within each service-learning program. While it is possible that these lenses may have shaped how I understand some of the information I heard I believe these theoretical frameworks helped me identify some of the best practices for creating civically-engaged individuals.

**Methodology**

I used a case study approach for this research project. In deciding on this approach, I drew upon Creswell's (2007) definition of a case study as “research (that) involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (p. 73). My study fits into this definition because I looked into the issue of service-learning and
used several specific service-learning/civic engagement programs at a single university as my bounded system.

Yin (1989) wrote that there are three conditions upon which researchers should chose their research strategy. The three conditions are: “1) the type of research question, 2) the control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and 3) the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena” (p. 13). My research question asked how a service-learning experience influenced a person’s level of civic engagement. Yin wrote that how and why questions should use one of three research strategies: experiment, history, and case study (p. 17). So, my research question falls under a case study in the first of Yin’s three conditions. He went on to write that “the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (p. 19). As I studied the contemporary pedagogy of service-learning but had no control over my participants’ actions, my research fits all three of Yin’s conditions for a case study.

Yin (1989) went on to write about multi-case and single-case studies conducted in either a holistic or embedded design (pp. 49-50, 53). My study was a multi-case case study with each person interviewed representing his own case. It was designed as holistic case study because although participants could have been involved in more than one service-learning experience I looked at what about those experiences as a whole lead to their current level of civic engagement.

**Methods**

The following section is the methods I used for this study. It includes the setting and context, participant selection, recruitment, participant demographics, data collection, and data analysis.
Setting/Context

I conducted my research at the University of Michigan, a large Midwestern research university. The student population is extremely geographically and ethnically diverse representing all 50 states and 114 countries (University of Michigan, 2010). It houses over 1,200 registered student organizations, which include a large number of ethnic and cultural organizations and it offers over 200 degree programs (University of Michigan, 2010). The university is near Detroit and its suburbs, which include a racially diverse population, giving students the opportunity to interact with people who are different from them. The university is large enough to support a variety of different service-learning programs and has a center out of which several of these programs are run. I looked at three of these programs: an academic service-learning course, a co-curricular service-learning program, and a living-learning program.

Academic service-learning. The academic service-learning course, Project Community, is a collaboration between the Department of Sociology and the Division of Student Affairs. Their website did not provide a mission statement or learning outcomes. It has been in existence for several decades and runs with two levels of students. The first level is the students who take the service-learning class and the second is the peer facilitators who facilitate the class. These facilitators usually have been through the course at least once and have interviewed for the position. They go through several days of training throughout the semester as well as a weekly meeting with other facilitators and a graduate student instructor to talk about issues such as facilitation, social justice training, and problem solving.
For both students and facilitators this academic program uses several of the practices identified in the literature review I conducted. It encourages reflection through weekly written journals and through class discussion. Both students and facilitators volunteer at community partnership sites once a week for approximately 2-4 hours. All students in each section of the course volunteer at sites that work on the same issue (e.g. education, health care, criminal justice) if not at the same site. All students involved are assigned readings to further explore both the larger social issue well as readings designed to challenge them to think about their own social identities in addition to the identities of the people with whom they serve. There is a great deal of emphasis put on the student facilitators to conduct icebreakers in class, to encourage community building, and many students in this program get to volunteer with clients who differ from the student.

Co-curricular service-learning. This co-curricular service-learning program, SERVE, has a history of two decades. It is a student-led program, with two full time co-directors who serve as advisors to the student leadership teams. Its mission is “to foster, through community and social action, a student movement at the University of Michigan that thoughtfully addresses the challenges we face as a society” (University of Michigan, n.d.). Its guiding principles are social change, student leadership, empowerment, working together, and heightened awareness (University of Michigan, n. d.).

There are six subprograms within SERVE; five of these subprograms are volunteer programs, and the sixth is an educational program. This co-curricular program has three levels of participation: the students who volunteer; the student site leaders who help manage the volunteers and lead reflection; and the students who serve on its leadership
teams and put on education and training sessions for the site leaders, coordinate with community partners, execute finance and fundraising plans, and advertise for the group.

This program uses a variety of reflection activities that occur throughout the year depending on the program and their leaders at the time. The volunteer programs require different amounts of time, from once a week for a few hours to once a year for a few weeks. Each program also differs in the sites where their participants volunteer; however, each program has an opportunity for students to volunteer with someone who might differ from the student. The education component varies as well. Many of these subgroups strongly encourage or mandate that their site leaders or participants attend education and training sessions throughout the year. The leadership team receives an hour and a half education and training session once a week. The educational program helps with these sessions as well as plans and puts on educational sessions for the campus as a whole.

**Living-learning program.** The last program is a living-learning program, the Michigan Community Scholar’s Program (MCSP), which has been in existence for ten years. Its four main goals are “deep learning,” “engaged community,” “meaningful civic engagement/community service learning,” and “diverse democracy, intercultural understanding and dialogue” (Michigan Community Scholars). As with the other two programs there are multiple levels to this program. There are first-year students who enter into the program, then second-, third-, and fourth-year students serve as peer mentors, peer advisors, and resident advisors. Each of these levels requires additional responsibilities.

Like the other two programs, this program incorporates many of the practices discussed in the literature review. There is some structured reflection that happens in this
program and students can choose to do additional reflection. There is a requirement to do some community service; however, it does not have to be with the same community partner each time and the amount varies depending on what the student decides to do. The program has many small classes that students can take in their residence hall, several of which are service-learning courses. The community places a great deal of emphasis on community building. The main job duty of a peer mentor is to make the first-year students they mentor feel at home in the community and get to know one another. The small class size is also designed to encourage community building among the students. The community is intentionally built around diversity ensuring that all students are able to meet and interact with other students who are not like them in one way or another.

**Participant Selection**

I interviewed four individuals for this study. While “sampling to the point of redundancy is an ideal, [it is] one that works best for basic research, unlimited timelines, and unconstrained resources” (Patton, 2002, p. 246). Because I had only those resources which I could provide myself and the limited time of one academic year I decided on this sample size in consultation with my advisor as one that would make this research feasible. I aimed to get maximum variation within this sample size, which would be one to two individuals from each program. Because of the tremendous overlap that exists between these programs I interviewed one participant from each of the three programs and a fourth participant who was a part of all three.

I looked for individuals who represent a range of one to 10 years removed from their undergraduate experience. I looked for this range because I believed that giving participants at least a year out of school would allow them to be at a point where they had
the opportunity to engage in activities that made up the definition of civic engagement. I set the cap on 10 years after graduation because my participants had to be able to recall programs they were involved in as an undergraduate student.

**Recruitment**

I recruited participants by requesting access to a listserv of past participants from past and current directors of the three programs. I had personal connections with all of the directors and they had previously indicated that they were willing to give me the information I required. I sent them an e-mail (see appendix A for e-mail) with my request. From each program, I received either access to a listserv or a list of e-mail addresses from which to recruit participants. These lists were incomplete however and overrepresented student leaders.

I then sent the requests to each listserv or group of e-mail addresses (see Appendix B for e-mail) inviting participation from individuals who saw themselves as being more civically engaged as a result of their service-learning program. In this e-mail potential participants saw the nature of the study. I did this for two reasons. First, it ensured that the respondents self-identified as qualifying for this study. Second, it gave participants time to reflect on what program elements caused their increased levels of civic engagement.

**Participant Demographics**

All four of my participants were women. Two of the participants were first generation Americans; one had Chinese parents and the other had parents from India. The other two participants appeared to be White but their ethnic background did not come up during the interview.
All four of the participants had graduated from the University of Michigan with at least a Bachelor’s degree. They had all received their undergraduate degrees between 2006 and 2008. Two participants had gone back to the University of Michigan for advanced degrees. One of those had finished his Master’s degree a year before the interview and the other was in medical school at the time of the interview. Participants completed their experience in the programs that are the focus of this study between one and five years ago.

**Data Collection**

The following is a review of my data collection methods. It includes structure, content, ethical considerations, and emergent design.

**Structure(s).** I did all of the initial interviews in person and I used an online video chat service for the one follow-up interview. Interviews took between 45 and 90 minutes. All interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. During the interviews, I took field notes, which I added to immediately following all but one interview to ensure that the interview was still fresh in my mind. These field notes included indications of the participants’ demeanor as well as initial themes. I audio recorded all interviews (see Appendix C for a copy of the informed consent form) and transcribed them. I conducted a follow up interview with the one interviewee who was a part of all three service-learning programs since it was not possible for me to get through the initial interview protocol during our first interview session. I sent the transcripts to each participant for them to review and make any additional clarifications. Two participants wrote back saying they were comfortable with the initial transcription, one participant did not have time to review his transcript, and the fourth participant went over the first half of his transcript with me in
the follow up interview, making clarifications as needed but did not give feedback on the second interview. Interviews took place over a span of three months.

Content. Please see Appendix D for the interview protocol. I began each interview asking about the structure of the service-learning program in which the participant was involved. While I have personal experience with and knowledge of the history of each program, each participant’s perception of the program clarified how that program was run when the participant was there and what that particular participant saw as the major components of the program.

Then, I asked which part of the civic engagement definition they felt was increased by their service-learning experience. It was important that participants were able to articulate how they believed they were more civically engaged. My intention with this and the following question, regarding which element of the service-learning experience participants believed led to that change, was to see if participants could tie program elements directly to outcomes. While none of the participants could tie specific program elements to outcomes, participants were able to express what they thought the most important program elements were.

I then followed up on the program elements that participants described while answering the first question to see if any of these program elements might have been beneficial in ways that the participant had not linked to his level of civic engagement. I asked participants to expand on what made those elements effective.

Ethical considerations. The potential harm to individuals was minimal as I suspected most of their memories would be positive as they self-selected to be in the study.
Since all my participants were alumni of the programs we discussed, my relationship with
the directors of the programs should not have been a conflict of interest.

**Emergent design.** I continually refined how I asked questions in order to better try
to answer my research question. In doing that I made slight changes to the follow-up
questions I asked in light of the information provided by the preceding interviews. I did
not do follow-up interviews with any of the participants once I had asked all the questions
on the interview schedule.

**Data Analysis**

For data analysis, I “rely[ed] on theoretical propositions” (Yin, 2003, p. 111). I used
each of the main programmatic components covered in my literature review as a
proposition of a best practice in service-learning. For each proposition, I used a three letter
code (a complete set of codes please see Appendix E). As coding progressed I pulled out
sub-themes from each of these program elements. From here, I condensed some codes and
eliminated others which is noted in Appendix E through asterisks and strike through lines.

After each interview had been transcribed, the transcription was sent to the
participant for their review and to allow them to make any clarifications. Three replied to
the e-mail either saying the transcript was accurate or making a few small corrections. One
participant responded saying ze did not have time to review the transcript. I read the
transcription and wrote down codes next to the text as program elements came up. I
continued to read each interview until I believed I had found all of the elements mentioned
by the participant. I found elements that I had not discovered in my literature review; for
these elements I created new codes and kept an on-going list throughout my data analysis.
At that point, I had a colleague read through the transcripts and discuss what additional
and conflicting codes he saw from the codes which I used. I then adjusted my coding accordingly.

I then used the “Cross-Case Synthesis” model described by Yin (2003, pp. 133-137). I created a table that contained a separate sheet for each major programmatic component laid out in my literature review as well as the sub-components of each element. As I identified additional program elements, I added new codes to the code list. After coding all of the transcripts I filled out the table, placing each coded quotation in the appropriate sheet of the file.

After all of the transcriptions were broken into codes, I looked back at the transcripts to see what connections participants had made between their current civic engagement and their service-learning experience. I then explored those program elements in the chart I had created. Through this, I was able to find trends in program elements that were reported to have led to increased levels of civic engagement.

I then was able to make some overarching statements regarding which program elements seemed to be effective as well as what about the program element made it effective. I then asked the participants to look over the themes that I thought played a role in their experience. All four participants did this and small changes were made resulting from their feedback.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is crucial in research. Below I address four issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba as cited in Shenton, 2004, p. 64).
Credibility

I have tried to insure credibility of this study in a variety of ways. Researcher bias on my behalf could lead to questions about the credibility of this study. However, I have done my best to discuss my “past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). I have also been cognizant that my biases might come out in the interview process itself and I was careful to vet my questions through a number of sources to insure that they were not leading.

I have an established “familiarity with the culture of participating organization before the first data collection dialogue [took] place” (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). I had experience with all of the programs and had relationships with all of the program directors before starting this research. In addition, I reviewed each of their websites while doing preliminary work for this study.

I have verified my analysis in two main ways. The first was through a peer review process (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). I had a colleague, who was not familiar with any of the programs, read over all of my interview transcripts and give me feedback on what additional codes he saw and what, if any, feedback he had on the codes I had used in the interviews.

The second way I verified my analysis was by conducting member checks. I asked each interviewee to look over the main themes that I had pulled from their interview and I corrected any misconceptions that were reported back. All four participants participated in member checking and changes were made as appropriate.
Transferability

It was my goal that this study had have some level of “analytical generalizations” (Yin, 1989, p. 38). My conclusions supported some of the research laid out in my literature review while critiquing other programmatic elements. Through using “rich, thick description” that allow “readers to make decisions regarding transferability” (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, all cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 209) I have supported the conclusions I have drawn.

Dependability

No study can be completely repeated because the perspectives of each researcher are different and even if the same participants are used their perspectives on past events and future actions have continued to change. However, I wrote down all the steps I took in “research design and implementation,” “the operational detail of data gathering, and the reflective appraisal of the project” (Shenton, 2004, pp. 71-72). I also recorded the decisions I made so that a close approximation could be made.

Confirmability

I have kept an audit trail of decisions I made regarding my data analysis. This includes the codes I have used in the various phases of the research, the tables I used to group my codes, the transcripts which have the codes written on them each time I read them as well as from my colleague who also coded the data.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In the collection of data for this study I conducted five interviews of four participants. The interview schedule used for these interviews can be seen in Appendix D. I analyzed the transcribed interviews in order to find themes. This chapter gives a brief overview of each participant and then identifies the six themes that ran throughout the interviews.

Participants

The following are brief profiles of each participant using a pseudonym in place of her real name. Profiles include which service-learning program(s) they were involved in, the capacity in which they were involved, the service experiences they had, and how they were civically engaged at the time of the interview. As part of the interview, I gave each participant a copy of Jacoby’s (2009) definition of civic engagement that I used for this study (please see Appendix G for a copy of the definition). Participants were then asked to talk about how they were currently civically engaged.

Amanda

Amanda graduated in December of 2007. She was a part the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP) for all three and a half years of her college education. She was a student in MCSP her first year, a Peer Advisor her second year, and an Office Assistant there her third year and final semester.

Amanda was involved primarily in three ongoing service activities. She volunteered at a food pantry monthly with a group of students; she volunteered weekly for a semester at a hospital; and she volunteered for two years as a part of an acting troupe doing drug education for youth in the local schools.
Amanda was just finishing law school, which ze had started directly after graduation from college, when I interviewed hir and was working in a career for the public good at a legal aid clinic. Ze saw hir work at this clinic as civic engagement as ze was giving assistance to low-income people. Ze described work ze had done on a class action lawsuit filed by African Americans who had been inappropriately treated by police as meeting the “valuing diversity” component of Jacoby’s (2009) definition of civic engagement (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9). Amanda felt that hir work on the board of the American Constitutional Society was “taking an active role in the political process” and “assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations” (p. 9). Finally, ze identified the pro bono work that ze providing legal aid to those who could not afford it as “community service” and fulfilling hir “social responsibility” (p. 9).

Kayla

Kayla graduated in 2006. Ze was a student in a Project Community class for one semester hir senior year of college. In this class, ze volunteered 40 hours at a local hospital visiting with patients and helping the staff.

Kayla was working at a large health-oriented nonprofit organization when I interviewed hir, a career for the public good. Kayla talked about “valuing diversity and building bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9) through hir job in multicultural media working with Spanish language television and African American radio stations in hir previous position. Hir auxiliary board memberships represented hir “leadership and membership roles in organizations” (p. 9). Kayla described working on the 2008 Obama campaign as “taking an active role in the political process” (p. 9). Finally, ze said that hir
work with the nonprofit organization raising awareness about health related issues at which ze was employed was “promoting social justice locally” (p. 9).

Zabrina

Zabrina graduated in 2007 from a five-year Bachelor in Science/Master in Public Health program. Ze was a student in SERVE. Hir sophomore year ze took an Alternative Spring Break trip as a participant in the program and junior and senior years ze was on the leadership team for the ISSUES program that runs out of SERVE. The ISSUES team was responsible for putting on education and awareness events for the campus as a whole and for the leadership teams and participants of other SERVE programs.

Zabrina was back at the University of Michigan in medical school at the time of the interview, getting a degree that would help hir obtain a career for the public good. Ze talked about “valuing diversity and building bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9) through continued conversations about issues regarding race, especially those that came up in hir medical school curriculum. Ze talked about how ze decided which organizations to take “leadership and membership roles” (p. 9) in, through considering hir “ethics... [and] social responsibility” (p. 9). Finally, Zabrina talked about “promoting social justice locally and globally” through the global health work ze did in China the two years before returning to school.

Joy

Joy graduated with an undergraduate degree in 2008 and with hir Master’s in Social Work at the University of Michigan in 2010. Joy was involved in all three service-learning programs. In addition, ze took a Project Community class that volunteered at a local elementary school that was tied to MCSP. Hir sophomore year ze became a Peer Advisor
for MCSP and was a participant on an Alternative Spring Break trip jointly run through MCSP and SERVE. Ze also took a second Project Community class hir sophomore year that worked with a local nonprofit organization focused on organizing for social justice. Hir junior year, Joy became a resident advisor (RA) in the MCSP learning community and led an Alternative Spring Break trip. In hir senior year of college, Joy was an RA again and joined the leadership team for Alternative Weekends, another subgroup of SERVE. In Alternative Weekends, Joy built partnerships with community partners so that volunteers could serve with them one weekend a month. During hir Master’s Degree program, Joy worked as the community partnership liaison several hours a week, connecting MCSP to community partners.

At the time of the interview, roughly one year after receiving hir MSW, Joy was working as a community organizer for a nonprofit organization focused on organizing workers to stand up for worker rights, a career for the public good. Ze described hir work as demonstrating “valuing diversity and building bridges across difference” and “public problem solving” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9). Ze also described how an earlier role ze played with this organization helped hir work “through controversy with civility” (p. 9). At the time of the interview, Joy was living in an intentional community where ze lives with several other individuals who meet together to discuss social issues surrounding faith and spirituality as well as their experience living and working in Detroit. Ze talked about this experience at length. Ze felt it had helped hir live out being a socially engaged citizen through “developing empathy, ethics, values, and sense of social responsibility” and “community service” (p. 9). Ze had also recently helped put on the US Social Forum and described this as “assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations” and “promoting social
justice locally and globally” (p. 9). Finally, Joy talked about “taking an active role in the
political process” (p. 9) through being an informed citizen and voter.

**Themes**

Six themes came up in the interviews. These themes were reflection and critical
thinking, community service, community building, interactions with people different from
themselves, leadership responsibilities, and desire for ongoing involvement and reflection.
Below I explore each of the themes in detail, revealing findings about program elements
that surrounded these themes as well as how their outcomes related back to Jacoby’s

**Reflection and Critical Thinking**

Reflection and critical thinking were two themes the participants described as being
important to their levels of civic engagement after graduation. While reflection and critical
thinking are two different things (critical thinking may not always be reflection and
reflection may not always be critical) they seemed unquestionably tied to one another in
the context of the interviews. Participants described the program elements that prompted
reflection as well as the outcomes they believed came from the reflection that followed.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Program Element</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcome</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Reflection Prompts • Written Reflection Prompts • Activities • Discussion, Debriefing, and Debate</td>
<td>• Increased Self-Awareness • Frameworks From Which to Discuss Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content • Self-Awareness • Social Issues • Social Justice • Congruence</td>
<td>• Increased Awareness About Social Issues • Continued Critical Thought and Reflection</td>
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</table>
**Program elements.** Participants identified several different types of activities that were successful in prompting critical reflection. In addition, they described the content of some of these reflections. There were not enough data from participants to draw any conclusions regarding how much time was necessary for reflection, consistent with the literature review.

**Types.** Participants identified reading, writing, games, movies, debriefing and discussion, and debate as types of prompts effective in the reflection they participated in during their service-learning experience. The use of readings as prompts for reflection was only mentioned twice in passing in the interviews. The other prompts were more prominent.

Written reflection included public writing, private writing, and writing that only one other person, usually a professor, would see. It included free writing as well as responses to specific prompts and happened in a wide variety of ways. Joy talked about writing reflections as part of a class tied to MCSP as well as writing ze did for an Alternative Spring Break trip ze took as a participant in SERVE.

Zabrina and Joy both talked about using activities to prompt reflection as a part of their SERVE experience. These activities included games, movies, and the community service events themselves. Zabrina talked about how SERVE used activities to start debate, another key type of reflection prompt. Ze was also part of a team of students, the ISSUES team, who helped lead activities that prompted reflection for a group of leaders in SERVE. Ze discussed this experience by saying:

ISSUES put on like SimCity where ... we marked out a fake city in the room and different people had different roles and different privileges and so the idea was to
bring out discussions on social justice and then like urban planning and then just society in general. And so it was like active participation which I think is pretty typical of SERVE events. It’s a way to get people to participate and to put themselves in people’s shoes to really experience something and then to reflect on that. Listen to new feelings and new ideas and then debrief afterwards. Really have that be more impactful.

Through activities like this Zabrina and others in SERVE were able to reflect on their service-learning and training experiences. This created a foundation for students to think more critically about the larger picture behind social issues.

Zabrina differentiated debate from debriefing or discussing, all three of which played a role in the participants’ reflection activities. Ze said that “it’s debating someone that really gets to the core of what you think and challenges your own thoughts and I think those are the most valuable.” Discussion, debriefing, and debate played a role in helping students process activities that were done to prompt reflection as well as to process the community service itself. In conclusion, the participants described active reflection as the types of reflection that lead to critical thinking in their reflections.

Content. The four participants talked about a variety of different content areas being covered through reflection. These topic areas included self-awareness, social issues and social justice, and congruence. Participants varied in how often and to what extent they discussed these topics.

All four participants talked about gaining a level of self-awareness, either about their identity or about their sense of their future self. Three participants talked about their
social identities—including race, gender, and immigration status. Joy recounted a course ze took as an MCSP member by saying:

It was a class centered around exploring issues of identity and the dynamics between your different identities and issues of privilege and oppression. And so it's kind of like a self discovery class but you're also ... working with others as they go through their own self discovery process. And then, figuring out how to interact with each other, in addition to learning about the bigger picture. So that was like a great class.

Joy and Kayla discussed a raised sense of self-awareness through reflecting on their future self. Their service-learning experiences helped them to realize what they wanted to do with their lives and how they could continue work on social issues. Joy said, "I guess it was through SERVE really, I figured out what my passion was. In terms of, maybe I didn't know the words for it then but, racial and economic justice and immigrant rights."

Three participants talked about discussing social issues and social justice including immigration, racism, and public health. Other content areas Kayla and Joy mentioned as linking social issues to social justice were activism and social movements. Joy reported that it was memorable when hir advisors "shared some of their own organizing experience .... about people basically doing the work in the real world."

Another social issue that was talked about repeatedly was that of social justice education and an exploration of systems of privilege and oppression. Two participants explicitly and one implicitly dove into their understanding of these systems. Zabrina talked about SERVE being able to help hir integrate this understanding into hir everyday life when ze said "I think SERVE is really great for ... not just [educating] about the issues that are out
there but [helping you] reflect on yourself and who you are and what those issues mean to you and how you'll approach your life." Joy described hir experience when ze said:

Frustration turned into an appreciation for diversity and realizing how essential it is for people to learn better, or create better learning environments basically because I remember...the students in my class were so diverse that we were able to get valuable experiences from that class.

The final content area that was discussed during reflection was around the area of congruence. Zabrina spent the most time talking about this topic and went into great detail during hir interview:

I remember it was a board where Tracy and Will talked about how to stay ... congruent to your values. Because I feel like something that can happen with a lot of people who are in SERVE, is that you're in college and you have all of these great ideals but then you need to find a job, you need to go do what you need to do in life and so sometimes it's really hard to remember those values or live them. Well you remember them, you still believe in the same things they're still your values, but it's hard to find a way to actualize that. I mean, you're not going to do anything bad but it's hard to find a way to actively try to make change the way that we were all trying to do when we were in college and SERVE. So I thought that was a really really great board.

Ze continued to refer back to this issue of congruence later in hir interview saying that ze goes back often to this discussion to figure out what congruence means to hir and how ze can live as congruently as possible without burning out.
Outcomes. Participants indicated several outcomes of reflection and critical thinking as influencing their current civic engagement. They are increased self-awareness, framework creation, increased awareness about social issues, and continued critical thought and reflection.

Increased self-awareness is explicable through the many conversations the participants had on self-awareness during reflections. One specific realization that two participants had was that most of their friends at the time of the interview came from non-dominant backgrounds. This connects to civic engagement by increasing the likelihood that they would value diversity and build “bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9), part of the definition of civic engagement that was used in this study. Zabrina illustrated this in her comments:

It’s something that I just realized this year, that most of my friends are not mainstream. There’s something about them—whether it’s social economically, or immigrant, or racially—they’re just not the mainstream America. I don’t know, I don’t know if that’s a result of what I think my identity is or that’s definitely an interesting realization. And again groups all segregate so a lot of different people tend to stick together. So I guess I became aware of that... interesting...

Another outcome that three of the participants explicitly said was tied to reflection was that the discussions helped them create frameworks from which they would continue to operate in the future. These frameworks included an understanding of what service consists of, an understanding of social issues, and a vocabulary to talk about service and social issues. Kayla addressed this when she said:
Realizing that there was this whole new world of the nonprofit community or the service community that I didn’t know existed before and knowing that there was an entire subculture that I hadn’t been exposed to before that wasn’t just volunteer opportunities but people that were dedicated to service all the time. These frameworks helped these alumni to “participate actively in public life...and community service” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9), one aspect of civic engagement.

A third outcome from reflection seems to be increased awareness about social issues. This was likely a consequence of their conversations on social issues. "The readings were about racial barriers in education or race, class, and gender," Joy explained. This helps the alumni “develop informed perspectives on social issues” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9).

The last outcome from reflection was continued critical thought and reflection. Zabrina specifically talked about continued reflection; however, all four participants were reflecting on their experiences in the service-learning programs throughout their interviews. In her quotation below, Zabrina continued to think about how to live congruently as a professional serving underserved populations without risking burnout, a topic initiated through a training discussion in SERVE:

I remember them saying for example: if I’m working with an underserved population then where do I live? Do I live ... literally in that community or do I live in a comfortable place? .... Should I try to live like the way they live verses is it okay for me to have certain luxuries knowing, understanding that I just need that? That’s what I grew up with.

Reflection and critical thought in all its different types and forms is important for students who participate in service-learning programs. Students will continue to benefit
from participating in reflection for a long time to come as they have a better understanding of themselves and the world around them, and of a skill they will continue to be able to use.

**Community Service**

Community service was an important element to the participants’ service-learning experiences. While potentially obvious, the importance of community service is a reminder of why many use service-learning to engage college students. There was not enough information to make a conclusion on the amount of time students needed to participate in service in order for it to increase their level of civic engagement after graduation. I found it surprising that there were few personal stories about volunteering. The vast majority of the detailed personal stories came from the one participant who did not take on a leadership role in the service-learning program of which ze was a part.

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<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Program Element</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcome</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>Taught About Service</td>
<td>• Realization of Enjoyment of Community Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical Skills</td>
<td>• Ability to Utilize Skills Later in Life</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Realization that Community Service Includes a Wide Range of Activities</td>
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**Program elements.** Learning about service was extremely important for one participant. It was in hir service-learning experience that ze found out that nonprofit organizations existed and that ze could work for one to make a living. It was the conversations ze had about service that helped hir realize people do service for different reasons and ze learned to respect others’ beliefs.

Community service helped another participant learn office skills. Ze had never experienced working in an office setting so hir service helped hir know what to expect in
future jobs. Another participant got her first taste as an organizer while volunteering with a Project Community class. This type of societal acculturation can be important for students in their transition into the work force. They can also help teach students the skills they will need to continue work in the nonprofit sector.

**Outcomes.** One main outcome from being involved in community service is that it helped students realize they enjoyed it. This could lead to continued service in life after graduation, as it has with Amanda, which is one point in the definition of civic engagement used in this study (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9).

The skills that the participants gained through the community service work they did as a part of a service-learning program helped them continue to live a civically engaged life. These skills helped them in “working through controversy, with civility; taking an active role in the political process; ... [and] assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9). Kayla talked about how her experience in Project Community had directly enabled her to better work with members of auxiliary boards on which she served.

Participating in community service and conversations about service helped individuals realize that service can be a variety of things. This is also important in helping people realize the many different ways they can stay involved at a variety of levels in civic life including through career choices, direct service, or indirect service.

**Community Building**

Community building is an important part of service-learning and the participants I interviewed talked about it being important to them in their lives now as civically-engaged alumni of these programs. Two of the participants spoke of direct outcomes from
community building that have led to them being civically engaged now. All four participants described community and community building from the service-learning programs in which they were involved.

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>Community Oriented</td>
<td>• Confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged Tough Conversations</td>
<td>• Broader Appreciation of Diverse Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Facilitated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-Selected Group</td>
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**Program elements.** There was a variety of program elements that were tied to community building. The service-learning programs were often community oriented from the very onset of the program, they helped students get to know one another well, and there were elements in both the human and organizational environments that helped students build community. Two participants talked about their service-learning experiences being community-centered from the beginning. This could happen by helping the group to get to know each other well on an Alternative Spring Break trip or by offering many different events which community members could attend. Below Zabrina talked about her Alternative Spring Break trip and getting to know the other participants:

We were just doing introductions but then it turned out to be a five-hour conversation because everyone got really deep into the big conflict points in my life and so that was pretty cool, I guess, to get to know each other so well.

Other community building activities included having tough conversations about social issues which also helped students to know what they believed. Zabrina talked
eloquently about learning to trust one another in order to be able to challenge and inquire about others’ ideas and beliefs when ze said:

As far as ISSUES, community building is really important because a lot of the things we’re talking about are pretty inflammatory issues and we might not all see on the same page when it comes to it so it’s really important for us all to be friends, essentially to be able to push back a little bit or step back.

Two participants talked about their programs creating small environments in which to explore difficult topics, unusual at a large research institution. This small environment encouraged sharing with one another, as Kayla portrayed when ze said:

I think just, in the process of small, you get to know people. When you’re talking about something as personal as volunteering and how you felt and what you did, your personal experience is not just what you thought of in a book or what you thought about in a reading, you get to know the people a lot better and you get to understand your peers a lot better and you get to learn from them.

Kayla also expressed the freedom of being able to speak hir true thoughts when a discussion was being led by a peer rather than a faculty member or other authority figure. Another participant talked a great deal about the impact of having a self-selected group of people. Having a smaller environment, a peer facilitator, and a self-selected group of people all help create more and more honest interactions which lead to building stronger community relationships.

The organizational environment is also important in helping to set the stage for community building. One participant wrote about the importance of having peer mentors who could create a supportive environment. Another talked about having a horizontal
leadership model. Two participants talked about the impact of having peer facilitators leading their service-learning experiences. Again, these factors helped the group have more and more honest interactions, which led to stronger community bonds. Kayla showed this, saying “I think we felt a little more, the environment was a little more causal, I feel like people felt a little more free to speak, to speak freely because you were with your peers.”

**Outcomes.** There were poignant examples of outcomes given by two of the participants. The first one was confidence. Finding friends and fellow students who built community with Amanda helped hir build confidence in a way that has allowed hir to continue giving back to hir community even after graduation. Amanda said “I wasn’t necessarily successful socially in high school and now I have so many friends and so many connections...when you’re happy with yourself ... you can be more willing to give back to other communities ... that you feel connected to.”

The second outcome is a broader appreciation for diversity within communities. Two participants spent time talking about how their friendship circles currently represent a larger spectrum of social identities than is represented by the “average” American. Joy summed this up well when ze said ze did not "want to be around people who are exactly like me because I can't even identify with those people sometimes. I just want to be around a lot of different people.” Two participants talked about learning to work with people who did not hold the same ideological views they did. This skill helps people engage in several of the civic engagement activities such as “learning from others, self, and environment to develop informed perspectives on social issues, valuing diversity and building bridges
across difference, [and] behaving and working through controversy, with civility” (Jacoby, p. 2009, p. 9).

**Interactions with People from Whom the Student Differs**

Interacting with people different from themselves influenced participants’ level of civic engagement after graduation. The outcome that working with people different from the students produced was “valuing diversity and building bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9). Two main program elements that helped this happen: having the opportunity to interact with people who are different and having a diverse learning environment.

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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with People Different from the Student</td>
<td>Opportunities for Interactions</td>
<td>• Awareness that Other Types of People Exist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diverse Peer Group</td>
<td>• Desire for Continued Engagement with People from whom the Student Differs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging Learning Environment</td>
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**Program elements.** The first, and very basic, program element that was described was that there was a very clear opportunity for these interactions. Whether it was discussing the interactions with people in the program who had different ideologies or identities or through volunteering with a group that was different, these opportunities not only existed but also were integral to all of the programs. Kayla commented that "in [my] class ... there were all kinds of people with lots of different perspectives which I hadn’t heard before."
Several participants commented on the importance of the type of learning environment in which they found themselves. Joy commented on her learned appreciation for having a diverse group of peers in her learning environment:

I was frustrated with the lack in diversity in education, in my relationship with others, I think, but not that I was unhappy with my friend circles but the wider community of people I was learning with. That frustration turned into an appreciation for diversity and realizing how essential it is for people to learn better, or create better learning environments.

Added to this idea of having a diverse learning environment is Kayla’s comment about her own changed behavior which allowed her to work better with people who are different from her throughout the Project Community course she was taking:

Behaving and working through controversy with civility... definitely with the Project Community, I guess I was a snob in that when there were those kids who had never volunteered before I was like “how could you have never volunteered before?” and so learning how to talk I guess in the sense that encouraging them and not, I mean really behaving civilly and not laughing and scoffing because their experiences were different than mine and just because I hadn’t been exposed to somebody like that you know doesn’t mean you behave that way.

This quote shows reflection on Kayla’s behalf and illustrates a learning environment that allowed her to come into the course with one attitude, grow, and leave the course with a different attitude. This type of open, encouraging learning environment seems very important to allow students to grow from their experiences.
Outcomes. The main outcome from working with people different from the student was an awareness that other types of people existed and knowledge of how to work with them. Without a simple awareness that other people exist no one would “[value] diversity and [build] bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9), part of the definition of civic engagement. Two participants talked about gaining this understanding that people who are different from them exist, one in regards to social identities and the other in regards to different ideologies. One of these participants spoke about learning a new vocabulary that would help hir better interact with other people. This is a fundamental skill to have to engage with others.

A third participant described a stronger desire to engage with people who are unlike hir. Joy said “I don’t want to be around people who are exactly like me because I can’t even identify with those people sometimes. I just want to be around a lot of different people.” Again, this desire helped hir “[value] diversity and [build] bridges across difference” (Jacoby, 2009, p. 9).

Leadership Responsibilities

Leadership was a key part of helping the participants stay civically engaged after graduation. Three out of the four participants had taken on leadership roles within their service-learning programs and all three of these individuals talked at length about this experience. Program elements of leadership experiences included opportunities for leadership, skill building, and role models. Outcomes included increased dedication, increased responsibility, and the continued use of learned skills.
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
<td>Opportunities for Leadership</td>
<td>Increased Responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Role Models</td>
<td>Gained Leadership Skills</td>
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<td>Taught Leadership Skills</td>
<td>Increased Dedication</td>
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**Program elements.** All three programs that I looked at included opportunities for leadership. While this might seem natural there was nothing in the literature review I conducted that addressed leadership roles within service-learning programs and it was not a criterion I used to select programs. In both MCSP and SERVE there were multiple levels of leadership students could take on. Joy talked about hir greater sense of understanding of these programs when ze said, “I understood what it was like to be a participant, and what it was like to be a site leader, and also in a leadership role whether through SERVE or through MCSP in my various capacities.” Ze also talked about how ze wanted to create the experience others had created for hir for incoming students.

Along with having leadership roles that students could fill, it might seem equally as obvious that the programs also had role models for participants. Kayla, the one participant who had not taken on a leadership role, talked admiringly of the student leader who facilitated hir in Project Community class, including saying “she was great.” Kayla also expressed interest in taking on a leadership role if ze had only found out about the program sooner and it had fit into hir busy schedule.

As student leaders, the participants learned skills that they could then take with them as they continue in their programs and venture out into the world after college. As
with reflection, students who had to facilitate meetings and build partnerships took those skills with them and it helped those participants remain civically engaged.

**Outcomes.** Students who took on leadership roles took on additional responsibilities. They were no longer simply participants but were essential to making these programs run. None of the alumni that I talked to expressed being hindered by this additional responsibility; rather they thrived in making their programs better for the next set of students. Joy, while talking about facilitating a class for MCSP said “It was great! I could do, you know, everything that I thought was lacking or just, I wasn’t that happy with my UC102 discussion section so I could do all of those things."

The participants learned new skills as student leaders, and they took these skills with them when they graduated. Joy talked about being able to transfer the skills ze was using in one program to hir responsibilities in another program. Ze said “I’m sure it was some of the stuff I learned there [in SERVE] just in terms of building relationships with different community partners is something that I brought back to MCSP too.” In addition, Joy made direct connections between having to learn how to facilitate conversations for hir role as a student leader and being able to use that skill to be more civically engaged today, in both hir personal and professional lives.

The students who took on leadership roles in their service-learning programs expressed increased dedication both from themselves and other student leaders. Amanda said "by sophomore year the PAs [Peer Advisors] and PMs [Peer Mentors] are really the people who are dedicated to the program and who want to be in it." This made these communities of student leaders bond even more closely than they might have otherwise. Three participants talked about learning from these peers.
A Desire for Continued Involvement and Reflection

One theme that I saw throughout all four participants’ stories is the desire for a continued presence of the program in the participant’s life. This included both after the student had completed participating in the program at a participant level and was still an undergraduate student, and as alumni who had graduated from the university.

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<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Desire for Continued Involvement</td>
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<td>Desire for Post-Graduation Follow Up</td>
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Program elements. The first program element that students wanted was being able to participate in the program again or with increased responsibility. Amanda described how hard it was for her to stay involved:

Basically the only opportunity to stay in MCSP actively in your third and fourth years was to be an RA or a PA or something like that .... And so my only option really to stay active in the program was to have this office position and of course there’s only one or a couple of them.

Ze then went on to say that ze wished others had the opportunity to stay involved so that they might have the opportunity ze had to feel the program’s full impact. Kayla voiced a desire to have been able to be further involved in her service-learning experience; because ze did not become involved until her senior year ze was not able to become a student leader. In contrast, Joy vocalized gratitude at having been a participant, a site leader, and a leadership team member.
Another potential program element is follow-up with students after they have graduated. Three of the participants voiced gratitude for being able to talk about and reflect on their experiences through the interviews I conducted. Zabrina said, "I think it’s really great to have the opportunity to think back about this. So thanks for doing this. I think thinking back and reflecting on what you do and why you do it is really important." Ze also thought "it would be valuable for the alumni to think a little bit about what, why they did it and what it’s done for them.” Other interviewees echoed hir comments.

**Outcomes.** While there is no way to know what the outcome of continued involvement would be, it seems as though it would help students continue to make connections between their service and knowledge of social issues into their everyday life as alumni. I hope to look into this issue more as it is one I did not find addressed in the literature review.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss the implications of this study. This section starts out with a review of the study’s delimitations and limitations. It continues on to a discussion of the findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks, then in relation to current literature, and then moves on to implications for practice. I conclude by making recommendations for future research.

Delimitations

One delimitation of the study is that all of the participants I interviewed were alumni of one institution and of service-learning programs from that institution. Experiences may have differed if I had used additional programs and different universities.

A second delimitation of the study was that the participants were all self-selected in several ways. They all self-selected into the service-learning experience, three out of the four participants self-selected into leadership roles in those programs, and finally, all four self-selected into the study. While, this is how the study was designed it is important to remember that these findings cannot be generalized to all students participating in service-learning experiences.

Limitations

There were a few limitations to this study, the majority of which were caused by a lack of time and resources. The first limitation is the sample size. Four participants did not allow for data saturation, the ideal for qualitative studies. To saturate the data is “to continue looking (and interviewing) until the new information obtained does not further provide insight into the category” (Creswell, 2007, p. 160); interviewing additional participants may have provided additional answers to the this research question guiding
this study. This study may be seen as a pilot study for future research; a next step would be to conduct a larger-scale version of this study.

A second limitation is that all of the participants for this study were women. This is not surprising since women make up the majority of students involved in service programs. However, the experiences of men in service-learning programs may be different from those of women. With more participants would come the opportunity to see if there were gendered patterns in participants’ experiences.

A third limitation of this study was a lack of time for a round of in depth follow-up interviews after the initial data had been collected and a first round of analysis had been completed. There were areas in each interview that could have benefitted from clarification or further detail.

A fourth potential limitation is that I knew two of the participants in the study. I am assuming that these two participants thought I had a basic understanding of the program and might have left some basic programs components out of their descriptions. One example of this is that these two participants talked the least amount about the actual community service that they conducted and whether it had a direct impact on their level of civic engagement after graduation.

A final potential limitation is that I had a personal relationship with many of the program directors about whom my participants spoke. I hope that participants did not alter their responses because of this; however, it is always possible.

**Findings from My Theoretical Frameworks**

I used four theoretical frameworks to view this research: Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory on education and identity, Perry’s (1968) model of epistemological
development, Marcia’s (1980) theory on ego-identity status, and Freire’s (2003/1970) idea of liberationist pedagogy and experiential learning or problem-posing education. From Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory I suspected that at least some of my participants would talk about their relationships with faculty or staff and how it encouraged them to be more civically engaged. While one participant did mention the staff members ze worked with, faculty and staff interaction was not a primary theme in any of the interviews I conducted. I also hypothesized that I would hear that the education about social issues and the personal reflection components of service-learning programs helped my participants develop along the vectors of developing purpose and integrity; reflection was one of the major themes in my findings.

Perry’s (1968) epistemological theory including three main categories: duality, multiplicity, and relativism. Often service in service-learning programs exposes students to a multiplicity of opinions, which I predicted would move them through Perry’s model. One participant did show some movement through this model in expressing how ze learned how to interact with others who held different beliefs than ze did.

I suspected that at least some of the alumni I interviewed would have been forced into Marcia’s crisis through their service-learning experience. I believed that most would have been supported, within the service-learning experience or elsewhere, to come to a level of commitment regarding their level of civic engagement that made them eligible for this study. Despite these expectations, my participants did not talk in depth about entering into any sort of crisis through their service-learning experience.

I kept an eye out for examples of my participants teachers, site leaders, and facilitators collaborating with the participants (Freire, 2003, p. 75) in order to create a
freer more liberated experience. I also tried to be receptive to any descriptions of learning from their own actions rather than being lectured or told what to believe. I expected that these experiences would be abundant throughout my interviews because these challenging experiences can help students understand the importance of being civically-engaged individuals and understanding is the first step to action. This type of active learning was strongly represented through the themes of reflection and critical thought, community service, and leadership responsibilities.

**Findings in Relation to Current Literature**

I found six themes that alumni of service-learning experiences who believed they had become more civically engaged as a result of that program see as leading to their increased levels of civic engagement after graduation. The findings added to and corroborated the current body of literature that exists with the first four themes: reflection, community service, community building, and interactions with people who are different from the student. The last two themes introduced new ideas that need to be further explored: leadership responsibilities and desire for continued involvement and reflection.

**Findings that Correspond to Current Literature**

While there was not enough information collected to draw conclusions about the amount of time the participants spent on reflection, there was information on both the type and content of the reflections in which they participated. The two types of reflection prompts that were most prominent in the literature, written and discussion-based, were also found to be two important types of reflection prompts in my study. In addition, my participants also talked about the use of readings, games, and movies as other useful prompts for reflection. There is support for the two main points I found in the literature
review regarding content: reflection should connect educational content to service experiences (Astin, 2000, p. 85) and reflection can help students reach a higher understanding of societal problems (Monard-Weissmen, 2003, p. 167). In addition, I found a link to reflection between identity, sense of future self, social justice issues, and congruence. Reflection was the vehicle used to explore these issues.

The current literature breaks up community service based on several different characteristics including time, quality, contact, and supervision. The vast majority of the detailed personal stories about community service experiences came from the one participant who did not hold any leadership responsibilities in her service-learning program. This makes me wonder if the actual service experience is more important to this type of student. Unfortunately, there was not enough information gathered about characteristics of participants’ community service to make any direct connection to the current literature in this area except to say that the community service aspect of service-learning is important. It was important because participants had found new ways to talk about civic engagement and to be civically engaged through their community service work.

While the current literature talked about community building on three different levels (structured program time with students’ peers, non-structured time with students’ peers, and between students and community members) my research only demonstrated the importance of peer-to-peer relationships, mostly within structured program time. This is not to say that the other two types of community building were not important, just that they were not what my participants chose to speak about. Being a part of a larger group enables students to “see the value of community and making a contribution to a larger group,” which are important values for students to adopt if they are to become effective
and engaged citizens (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002, p. 192). The interviews also added to this knowledge, providing ideas about how programs should be community-centered from the beginning, and about ways in which a program might do this including creating small group size, having a self-selected population, and having peers lead the group.

The information I gathered on students interacting with people from whom they differ also is represented in the literature review. The participant who talked about this issue the most talked about differences between hir classmates and herself. Ze talked about breaking down stereotypes and even learning how ze might approach situations today when ze is interacting with people who are different from hir.

**Additions to Current Literature**

In addition to addressing issues already found in the literature, I found two ideas not represented in my literature review: a positive relationship between service-learning experiences and leadership development leading to civically engaged participants, and the desire for continued involvement and reflection. While the finding that leadership development in service-learning programs might be useful in encouraging students to be more civically engaged after graduation is not surprising, it is new and needs to be studied in greater depth in future research. Leadership experiences helped teach participants skills they would later use to be civically engaged. Information on leadership experiences and civic engagement might exist in literature about leadership certificate programs; however, this was not literature reviewed for this study.

The desire from students to have continued opportunities to be involved in service programs during the remainder of their time in school as well as to have additional opportunities for reflection and involvement after graduation was also a theme I had not
found in the literature. This theme came up repeatedly throughout all four of the
interviews. The participant who had not had a leadership experience expressed a desire
for it and participants who had this continued involvement expressed gratitude for the
experience. Three of the participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on
their experience through their interview with me and directly expressed a desire for others
to have similar experiences or for themselves to have more of these experiences. It may be
a key piece of how we should run service-learning programs in the future and it will be an
important piece of research to continue exploring.

Implications for Practitioners

There are many implications for student affairs and service-learning practitioners
from the findings laid out in Chapter Four. These range from confirming many things
practitioners already implement on a regular basis to implementing new ideas not
addressed in much, if any, of the current literature.

Reflection and Critical Thinking

Reflection and critical thinking are important pieces of the service-learning
experience. As most practitioners already know, reflection and critical thinking are what
make service-learning different from community service. The findings related to reflection
and critical thinking lead me to three main implications: discussion, “going beyond the
shock factor,” and having conversations on congruence.

Discussion, debriefs, and debate. Conversation seemed to be a key piece of
critical reflection for all four participants. Whether there was a simple question prompt
that started the discussion or a long in-depth game, participants kept coming back to
discussions and debriefs. Talking with others itself has several benefits in service-learning.
Among participants, dialogue creates a venue where students may challenge and push one another to think more critically about their espoused beliefs. As practitioners we must provide the prompts and allow the time needed to discuss, debrief, and debate the issues students are interacting with through their service and education. There are many resources to help practitioners with creating prompts including books like Learning through serving: A student guidebook for service-learning across the disciplines written by Cress, Collier, Reitenauer, and Associates (2005).

“**Going beyond the shock factor.**” Zabrina said it best when ze said “really going beyond the shock factor and learning the nuance behind the situation...go beyond to understand the deeper issues behind it and to apply them to different situations.” The second half of this statement is what I believe to be the basis of critical thinking. Pushing students beyond this point of the shock factor helped them to lead more civically engaged lives by thinking about the service they are giving others, understanding what they think about different social issues, and knowing how they stand up for social justice. As practitioners, we must continue to push our students beyond the shock factor by not letting them stop reflecting without challenging their beliefs and helping them to think through the perspectives of others. Practitioners can do this through the community service we have our students engage in, through guest speakers, and through activities. The most important piece is not to let students stop thinking once they have formed initial thoughts.

**Conversations on congruence.** Finally, the conversation about congruence that Zabrina had in SERVE was a lasting cause of critical thinking around how to live congruently with hir values. In hir public health work Zabrina was conscious to balance what ze believed in with what would make the work sustainable for hir. I would encourage
all practitioners to add a congruence piece to all service-learning programs. It is not enough to help our students have these sometimes life-influencing moments through service; we must help them to think about how these experiences will continue to influence them after they are done with our programs and after graduation. How can they continue to work towards a socially just world when they have their own bills to pay and when their direct supervisor is asking them to do something that is not in line with their own values? Practitioners must teach students to think critically about these situations and what they want to do so that when faced with an issue that challenges their congruence they are not being confronted with this challenge for the first time.

Community Service

Community service is another critical piece of service-learning. While the implications are not as profound as with some of the other themes they are important nonetheless. The one implication I make from this study is to discuss different types of community service with participants. Community service can be made up of a variety of different things, from a one-time, two-hour service project to a career for the public good. These discussions can help participants see ways they can be civically engaged after graduation other than just volunteering, such has having a career that gives back to the community or taking a leadership role in an organization or group. Another implication for practitioners might address this issue more directly. Practitioners should have intentional conversations with students about their career plans and encourage them to reflect on how their community service experience might play a role in what they decide to do.
Community Building

Community building is an important part of the service-learning experience. Helping students learn to trust and challenge one another is an important part of community building. Peers learn and grow from one another in ways they could not if only interacting with professional staff. There are two main implications this research has for practitioners on the issue of community building: create diverse communities and help groups form relational bonds.

Community bonds help students learn from one another and grow. There are many ways to help our students form community; suggestions from this study were to have small group size and create spaces for peers to lead one another. Having a small environment enables students to get to know each other and feel a sense of responsibility to actively engage with one another as Kayla showed when ze said that the group was so small everyone had to participate.

Three participants talked about the benefits of having peers facilitate student groups. As discussed further in the leadership section these leadership roles are not only positive for the students who fill them but also to other group members. Peer facilitation led to increased and more honest interactions, and these both led to stronger communities. While practitioners should not remove themselves completely from service-learning programs they should not hesitate to put peers in leadership roles and allow students to take the lead in building community within their own groups.

Interactions with People Different from Themselves

Interacting with people who were different from the students themselves was an important part of the service-learning experience. There are two basic recommendations I
would make for practitioners. The first is to create opportunities for students to interact with people who are different from them and the second is to create opportunities for students to reflect on those interactions.

**Create opportunities for interactions with people different from the student.** Students cannot interact with those who are different from them if they are not given the opportunity to be in environments with those individuals. Different individuals may find these environments in different ways; the difference could be in the people the students interact with at their community service site or it could be the peers in the program with them. Whichever it is, practitioners need to be aware of the student population with which they are working in order to intentionally find spaces for these students to interact with those different than they are. This may be as complex as asking for students’ identities before a class begins and creating an intentionally mixed class as is done in some intergroup dialogue classes or as simple as asking students to be aware of their many identities and to be aware of how they interact with those who have different identities.

**Reflect on interactions.** It was not simply enough to interact with people who are different; students needed time to reflect on those interactions and learn how to interact in a positive way. Kayla discussed at length struggling with communication and working with people who are different than ze was and how at some point in her development ze learned to work better with these people. In addition, it was clear that ze was using their reflective skills in discussing how to work more effectively with these people in the future as can be seen in her quote below:

> Project Community helped me realize that just because I hadn’t been exposed to somebody like that ... doesn’t mean you behave that way. And certainly with
auxiliary board membership there are people from all different backgrounds. Many of them are just there because their companies are making them be there so... having that not be the first time I have to interact with those kinds of people I’m better able to manage them or to work with them.

Practitioners could facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. One example would be to have students look at a situation where they succeeded and one where they failed and ask them to think, write, or talk about what the differences were and what lead to their success in that situation.

**Leadership Responsibilities**

Three out of four participants I interviewed had extensive leadership responsibilities in their service-learning program. These experiences may help students be more civically engaged than they might have otherwise been after graduation because it shows them a variety of ways they can help their communities and teaches them the skills they need to be leaders. There are two main recommendations I would make to practitioners regarding the theme of leadership responsibilities: find ways to incorporate student leaders and teach them the skills they need to be successful.

**Incorporate student leaders.** There are many different ways to structure service-learning programs, but from peer mentors to peer facilitators to team leaders, there are endless ways to get students involved in some sort of leadership role. Students put in appropriate leadership roles are not only accountable to those above them in a hierarchy but also to their co-student leaders and to their participants. This can raise the stakes for them to be effective student leaders and for them to make the program succeed.
Teach leadership skills. It is important when putting student leaders into these roles to teach them appropriate skills, including skills they will use as effective leaders and adults in the world beyond graduation. Teaching students skills like problem solving, facilitation, and good communication will help them succeed as student leaders and will give them the skills needed to problem solve and communicate well in their life after graduation.

A Desire for Continued Involvement and Reflection

In the interviews I conducted, there was a repeating theme of a desire for continued involvement in the service-learning program and ongoing reflection on their experiences. Service-learning programs need to hear this call and provide leadership roles for students after they have participated in the program and then find ways for participants to continue reflecting on their service-learning experience into the future. It is clear from the repetition that this first implication of providing leadership roles is a critical step for service-learning programs that want to have long-term effects on the level of civic engagement of their participants.

There are many ways to provide ongoing opportunities for continued reflection. Service-learning programs must be connected with other opportunities for students to be civically engaged. Whether it be through other service opportunities, getting involved in student government, or other advocacy groups, these activities allow for ongoing opportunities to be involved in service and to continue reflecting on service-learning experiences. All too often, especially at large institutions, programs silo themselves and are unable to direct students to possible next steps for involvement. Practitioners must be
knowledgeable, must share that knowledge with their students, and must help students make connections between their involvements in many different programs.

Once students graduate, it is important not to lose contact with them but to stay in touch and continue providing alumni with prompts to reflect on their experiences. There are fundraising opportunities through the development offices where, if done well, alumni will be asked to reflect on what they enjoyed in their service-learning experience and what they might want to provide for others through the financial donation for which they are being solicited. There could be reunion opportunities to celebrate the program or to bring individuals back together as a community during which reflection prompts could be given to attendees. Another opportunity is for alumni groups in cities across the nation to engage in service together, possibly using students who were in service-learning programs in their undergraduate education to lead other alumni in reflection, education, and community service. The only limit is the practitioners’ imagination.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

There is a lot more research that needs to be completed on service-learning programs. My recommendations for this future research fall into three categories: inconsistencies with current literature, intersections of program areas, and things missing altogether from current service-learning literature.

Some of the findings corresponded with previous research done on service-learning but there is still more research to do. “What types of reflection are most effective?” “What types of active learning help students take the most from the learning experience?” While there have been a number of small-scale studies done on these areas we need more large-scale research to help us focus in on what is important.
There are some areas of intersection on which further research could be done. This would include asking questions such as “How does having or not having a sense of community foster reflection?” “What is the effectiveness of student leaders in service-learning programs on participants?” “Should student leaders participate in the community service portion of the service-learning program?” None of the program elements stand alone and it is important to explore and understand their intersections.

Finally, several questions arise from findings that were missing from the literature. “How is the experience of student leaders different from the experiences of participants?” “How does follow-up from service-learning influence students?” “How does it affect participants after graduation?” “Does it matter how long after graduation or how often this reflection is done?” These new areas must be further investigated.

**Conclusion**

This study looked at alumni of service-learning experiences who believed that they had become more civically-engaged as a result of that program and asked them what about their experience they identified as having led to their increased levels of civic engagement after graduation. The six themes discovered were reflection and critical thinking, community service, community building, interactions with people unlike the students, leadership responsibilities, and a desire for continued involvement and reflection. There is still a lot about service-learning programs we need to learn, and this research has opened up two new areas for research: leadership responsibilities and continued involvement and reflection.
REFERENCE LIST


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APPENDIX A: E-MAIL TO PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Hi Directors’ Names,

Thank you both once again for agreeing to have Program represented in my study. I’m writing because I just passed my thesis proposal defense and I need some information from you before I move on to get IRB approval.

First, the BGSU Human Subjects Review Board needs a written statement from you that you’ll agree to give me access to your alumni (an e-mail reply should suffice but please include your program title so they know what your role is within the Program). In the final reworking of my methodology, I’ve decided to first attempt a large scale call for participants through alumni e-mail list serves if you have one that I can use. As a backup method, in the case that you either don’t have a wide reaching list serve that I can use or that I don’t get any participants to respond to that call, I will e-mail individuals who you believe would fit in my sample population (this is the method I’ve talked with you previously about).

The second thing I’d like to discuss is whether or not you’d consent to me using the Program name in my study. I see a benefit to those who later read the findings in being able to learn more about what you do and how you do it in order to better their own programs. I need to know the answer to this before I analyze any results (for ethical reasons).

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding either of these two issues either through e-mail (dslosber@gmail.com) or phone (734.645.0043) and I look forward to hearing from you both!

Deborah
APPENDIX B: E-MAILS TO PARTICIPANTS

Subject: Request for Participation from [Program Name] Alumni

Dear [Program Name] Alumnus,

My name is Deborah Slosberg and I am also an alumnus of [Program Name]. I am conducting a study to ascertain what service-learning practices are most effective in creating civically-engaged citizens and was hoping you might fit my criteria and be willing to participate in the study. This research will inform the structure of other service-learning programs so that more college students can be able to have such experiences. Below are the criteria for participation and information on what to do to become a participant.

Criteria:

To be eligible for this study, you must be an alumnus of [list three programs] and believe that you are more civically engaged than you would have been otherwise because of your involvement in the service-learning program. To define civic engagement I am using Barbara Jacoby’s definition. She defines civic engagement as involvement in “one or more of the following:

- Learning from others, self, and environment to develop informed perspectives on social issues
- Valuing diversity and building bridges across difference
- Behaving, and working through controversy, with civility
- Taking an active role in the political process
- Participating actively in public life, public problem solving, and community service
- Assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations
· Developing empathy, ethics, values, and sense of social responsibility
· Promoting social justice locally and globally.”

**Participation:**

Participation would include a 60-minute, in-person interview, at a location and time convenient for you, to talking about your involvement in [Program Name], your civic involvement since participating in [PROGRAM NAME], and what program characteristics you think were most helpful in forming those civic behaviors. In addition, I will follow up with you regarding any outstanding questions I have after the interview and I will request that you review a transcription of the interview as well as the overarching themes I pull from the conversation. In total I estimate that participation would be approximately four hours over a six month period of time.

If you have any questions or are interested in participating and feel that you meet the criteria, please contact me by [DATE]. Please include your current location if you are interested in participating. You can contact me at dslosber@umich.edu or 734.645.0043.

Thank you,

Deborah

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Deborah Slosberg  
Assistant Director  
Curriculum Programs and Faculty Development  
Office of Service-Learning  
Bowling Green State University  
315 University Hall  
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0250  
E-mail: dslosbe@bgsu.edu  
Phone: 419-372-9865  
Fax: 419-372-5467  
[www.bgsu.edu/offices/service-learning](http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/service-learning)
Follow up E-mail

Subject: Scheduling [Program Name] Interview

Dear [Name],

Thank you so much for taking interest in participating in my study! I am looking forward to hearing more about your experience with [Program Name] and how it has increased your level of civic engagement.

At this point in the process, I’d like to work with you to schedule your in-person interview. I am currently located in Bowling Green, Ohio (about an hour’s drive south of Ann Arbor) and have reserved Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for driving to and from interview sites. I can also be available Monday and Wednesday evenings for interviews within an hour’s drive. Please let me know what dates might work well for you in the next week or two. As I don’t know the area, I am hopeful that you’d be able to reserve a public quiet area in which we can talk.

I look forward to talking with you about your involvement in [Program Name], your civic involvement since participating in [PROGRAM NAME], and what program characteristics you think were most helpful in forming those civic behaviors. And thank you again for your participation in this endeavor.

Deborah

--
Deborah Slosberg
Assistant Director
Curriculum Programs and Faculty Development
Office of Service-Learning
Bowling Green State University
315 University Hall
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0250
E-mail: dslosbe@bgsu.edu
Phone: 419-372-9865
October 29, 2010

TO: Deborah Slosberg  
College Student Personnel

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.  
HSRB Administrator

RE: Human Subjects Review Board Project No.: H11T070GE7

TITLE: Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

The BGSU Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) has completed its review of your project involving research with human subjects.

Your project has been approved as submitted. This approval is effective October 25, 2010 and expires on October 24, 2011. You may begin subject recruitment and data collection.

The approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and copies of the dated document(s) must be used in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are authorized to use human subjects for 12 months, but only in the manner described in your proposal. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), those changes must be approved by the HSRB prior to their implementation. If any anticipated adverse reactions develop during the course of your project, you must temporarily suspend your research and notify the Chair of the HSRB.

Please notify the Board in writing (or e-mail: hsr@bgsu.edu) when you have completed your project. If you have any questions, please contact the Chair of the HSRB or me at 372-7716. Good luck with your research project.

COMMENTS:  
Stamped consent document is coming to you via campus mail.

C: Dr. Ellen Broido

RESEARCH CATEGORY: EXPEDITED #7
Informed Consent Form for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Research
Bowling Green State University

Title of Project: Service-Learning Practices that Increase Civic Engagement Levels Post Graduation

Person in charge: Deborah Slosberg
315 University Hall
Bowling Green, OH 43403
734.645.0043
dslosber@umich.edu

Research Supervisor: Ellen Broido, D. Ed.
Associate Professor, Higher Education and Student Affairs
330 Education Building
Bowling Green, OH 43403
(419) 372-9391
ebroido@bgsu.edu

1. This section provides an explanation of the study in which you will be participating:

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how service-learning programs can affect civic engagement. By conducting this research, I want to gain a better understanding of which program elements affect civic engagement as well as what types of civic engagement service-learning alumni are involved in. I hope that this research will provide preliminary results that can guide development of service-learning programs. As a participant you will help make this benefit to higher education possible. While the benefits for you as an individual may be small, hopefully, you will enjoy your experience retelling the narration of your involvement in service-learning programs.

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview with me that will last about an hour. This session will be digitally recorded. I will send you a copy of the transcript of the interview, and will ask you to review the transcript. Then I will ask you to either talk with or email me about any further thoughts you have upon reading your transcript. Finally, I will ask you to read the conclusions of the study, and to talk with or email me about your reactions to those conclusions. If we talk, these subsequent discussions will be recorded as well. Your involvement in the study (from the time of the interview to your reviewing the study’s conclusions) will span about six months.

Your participation in this research will take less than four hours, including the initial interview, that will take about an hour, the two follow-up discussions or
emails, which should each take about one-half hour, and between one and two hours to read and comment on the transcript and study findings.

The transcripts of your interviews, as well as those of 3-5 others, will be used to developed a better understanding of how service-learning programs affect civic engagement.

2. This section provides an explanation of your rights as a research participant:

I have explained to you the purpose of this research and your role in it, and I will answer any questions you have about the research procedures. If you have further questions after the interview, you can contact me at 734.645.0043, or at dslosber@umich.edu. You may also contact my research supervisor Ellen Broido at 419.372.9391 ebroido@bgsu.edu or the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, 419.372.7716 hrsrb@bgsu.edu, if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study, or if you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant.

I will make every effort to ensure that your participation in this research is confidential, although I cannot absolutely guarantee that. Before we start the study, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym. I will have one sheet of paper that matches your real name and contact information (phone number and/or email address) with your pseudonym, but no other information will be on that paper, and it will remain securely in my possession. That paper will be stored in a place separate from all other materials for the study. Your pseudonym is the only identifier that will be on the interview tapes, any notes I make during our discussion, and on the interview transcripts. When I compile the results of the study, I will change the name of any personally identifying information (including the names of people you mention); however, it may still be possible to identify an individual based on quotations. I am the only person who will be able to match the pseudonym to your real name. All tapes will remain securely in either my possession, or that of the study transcriptionist. All tapes will be erased at the completion of this study.

Because I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of email, I will email you only if you give me permission to do so; you will indicate your permission by giving me your email address at the same time you chose a pseudonym for the study. If I email you about the study, I will remind you that email is not confidential.

Your participation in this study will not impact your relation to either Bowling Green State University or the University of Michigan.
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions without penalty.

This study involves very little to no risk to you as the participant. There may be a very small risk to your mental health as a result of sharing these experiences. If you are concerned about any questions you may choose to not answer them; refusing to answer any questions will not result in negative consequences.
3. This section is to indicate that you give your informed consent to participate in the research:

**Participant:**

I agree to participate in a research study involving service-learning's affects on civic engagement.

The information on this form has been explained to me, and I have received answers to any questions I may have had about the research procedure. I agree to the conditions of this study as described.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have no physical or mental illnesses or difficulties that would increase the risk to me of participation in this study.

It has been explained to me that I will receive no compensation for participating. However, I may request a copy of the study's results.

I voluntarily consent to participate in this research investigation. I may refuse to participate in this study or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without penalty.

I am 18 years of age or older.

I have been informed that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

________________________________________  ____________
Signature                                      Date

**Researcher:**

I certify that the informed consent procedure has been followed, and that I have answered any questions from the participant above as fully as possible.

________________________________________  ____________
Signature                                      Date
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about **PROGRAM**. Describe your experience with **PROGRAM**. What were the main program elements?

2. Tell me about how you’re civically engaged now. **Follow Up Questions**
   a. Are there other ways you’ve changed?
   b. How do you think of yourself now?
   c. How do you want to live your life?
   d. Problem solving style (questions to get at any influence relating to Freire or Perry)
   e. Identity development
   f. Civic Engagement

3. What about these programs influenced what you’re doing now? (Start by listing changes one by one to see if they can individualize them.)

4. Follow up questions about each element named by the participant.
   If not talked about ask specifically about: (list all practices found in literature review)
   a. Reflection
   b. Faculty Engagement
   c. Service work
   d. Etc.

5. What else might the program(s) have done, that they didn’t, to enhance your future civic engagement?

6. Why do you think you’re still civically engaged?
APPENDIX E: EXPANDED LIST OF CODES

Reflection:

Reflection Catch All: REF
Reflection Time: RE-T
Reflection Content: RE-C
Reflection Type: RE-Y
Reflection Ongoing: RE-O

Community Service:

Community Service Catch All: CS
Community Service Time: CST
Community Service Quality: CSQ
Community Service Contact with Clients: CSC
Community Service Supervision: CSS
Community Service Contact with Administrators: CSA

Previous interest/experience in Community Service: CS-P
*Community Service Description: CS-D
*Community Service Type/Issue: CS-Y

Community:

Community Make Up: CMU
*Community Building In-Group: CB-IG
*Community Building Community Service Site: CB-CS
*Community Building-outside of program events: CB-OG

Key

—— Deleted Codes
* Combined Codes
*Community In Group (community within the group and the program experience itself): C-IG

*Community Out Group (community within the group but outside of the program experience: C-OG

Interactions with Faculty & Staff: F/S

Issue Education: ED

   Education Style: EDS

   Education Content: EDC

Interaction with “the other”: OTH

Rewards: RWD

Continuing Opportunities: CO

Leadership of Program: LDP

Program Structure

   Service-Learning Structure: SLS

Leadership Position held by Interviewee: LEAD

Big Picture (Civic Engagement): BP

Values: VAL

Program Set Up (for incoming students): PSU

Framework to Start Civic Engagement Work: FW

Personal Development: PD

Life after Program: LA