BECOMING “SERVANTS”:
EXPERIENCING DIFFERENCE WHILE FORMING COMMUNITY, SERVANT &
CIVIC IDENTITIES IN A SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSROOM

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By

Gabriel P. Swarts

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A dissertation written by

Gabriel P. Swarts

B.A., Baldwin-Wallace College, 2003
M.A., Kent State University, 2006
Ph.D., Kent State University, 2017

Approved by

_________________________________, Director, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Alicia R. Crowe

_________________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Kenneth Cushner

_________________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Tricia Niesz

_________________________________, Member, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Elizabeth A. Kenyon

Accepted by

_________________________________, Director, School of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Studies
Alexa L. Sandmann

_________________________________, Dean, College of Education, Health, and Human Services
James C. Hannon
BECOMING “SERVANTS”: EXPERIENCING DIFFERENCE WHILE FORMING COMMUNITY, SERVANT & CIVIC IDENTITIES IN A SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSROOM (425 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Alicia R. Crowe, Ph.D.

This qualitative study addressed the formation of student identity (servant and civic) as well as how students formed community through experiencing difference in a service-learning classroom. An interpretive qualitative study of five high school students was conducted in a service-learning program at Willow Falls High School, a public high school in Ohio. Interviews, journals, observations, student photographs, and contextual artifacts were collected and analyzed with a critically oriented, interpretivist researcher lens.

The findings included: 1) Participants’ experiences in a service-learning program contributed to shifts in how they viewed themselves and their classmates as well as their relationship as servants to those they served. 2) Aiming for “buy-in,” teachers challenged participants through program specific-aims to think about their position and context and were encouraged to push out of their comfort zones in order to do so. 3) Participants were purposefully challenged to accept exposure to difference in a variety of capacities and internalized these challenges. 4) Participants found a variety of outlets for community-making in their service-learning experiences; in group/out group distinctions, class sections, site experiences, and bonding activities. 5) Citizenship and democracy were linked with service work in an uneven fashion, with some participants making direct
connections while others made partial or nascent links. 6) Personal growth and community change for participants were incomplete. Teachers and students recognized that there were barriers to fully achieving program goals.

The findings of the study offer implications for future research in service-learning as well as for teachers, administrators, and stakeholders interested in implementing service-learning programs in their schools. Through service-learning and experiences with difference, students formed servant and civic identities and wrestled with community formation and democratic thinking.
DEDICATION

To my parents, Jeffrey and Patricia Swarts,

and brothers Benjamin and Brian Swarts,

you always tolerated my eccentricities and supported me fully in my life and work.

Too often I get lost in my own world and you are always there when I come back.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Defining the Problem

More human beings encounter difference, through travel, migration, mediated electronic communication, and social media, in their daily lives today than at any other time in human history (Appadurai, 1996). Experiencing and working with people from different cultural groups, languages, religious affiliations, ethnicities, practices, education levels, socioeconomic statuses, and geographical location encompasses all aspects of our lives and our identities and our daily ways of knowing and being. Difference is all around us in our lives, in our classrooms and with our students, and we must better understand how our students experience difference, and how it can shape their identities in regards to civic, community, and intercultural competence. This changing world necessitates a deeper look into our schools and the classes, programs, and curriculum they create, and the role schools play in teaching and learning about difference. Due to increasing global interdependence and the need to work together to solve worldwide issues, teaching and learning about difference is more important than ever before. It is imperative that we prepare our students to be flexible, open, and engaged so that they may use this awareness, and their skills to solve the shared problems and issues of humanity.

The world is changing at an increasingly rapid pace. The arenas for change, whether being human migrations, travel, the speed of information, or social/media penetration into new and far-away places directly exposes us to social, political, and
cultural practices that are unlike our own. There is, now more than ever, an inherent need to acknowledge and accept this difference, and to communicate and negotiate across these differences, in order to address global issues such as climate change, water shortages, and transnational warfare. The world and its problems have created much greater demand for human interaction, understanding, and working together. Human cooperation and working with difference must be the order of education as we move forward to deal with these issues. This imperative that humans must be better at learning to work together, to have respectful cooperation, is seen as the very key to species success and survival (Hammerstein, 2003).

Educators teaching for this purpose could encounter resistance from students, parents, or administrators, as embracing these human differences (cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, etc.) and interacting peacefully in the name of cooperation and communication is often viewed as an “unnatural” human endeavor when compared with “natural” division, prejudice, conflict and separation (Bennett, 1993). To combat this “natural” state of human distrust of the “other,” public education, at its best, can prepare students to experience meaningful difference in order to solve incredible problems, as well as to live within and to sustain a democratic society. Schools must act as “corrective” facilities in regards to difference, reducing prejudice, increasing awareness and perspective consciousness, and beginning to plant the seeds of long term student engagement with new ways of thinking, being, and cooperation (Hanvey, 1976/1982).

In this study, difference is a product of transaction. As we learn we produce difference, in our classrooms and society (Green, 1998). This meaning allows us to link
the processes of working with difference (i.e. age, location, ability, background, cultural, sexual orientation, gender, economic, religion, language, etc.) with the formation community and identity, or “becoming” (see also, Nancy, 2000). The politics of difference, and how difference impacts the concept of a face-to-face community formation is important in this paper; community is constructed of a same-ness, a commonality, and the advent of difference creates a spatial and temporal field in which the community must decide whether to allow difference, or reject it’s inclusion (and vice versa, as difference can also reject/accept the community) (Young, 1986, 1989). If so, the way students work with difference can impact how we think about our teaching and learning, allowing for spaces that encourage communication among students, their peers, their teachers, those they serve, and their community at large.

In this sense, difference is indeed everywhere, cannot be avoided, and the idea that it should be welcomed into the community, is the bedrock of a diverse democratic society. Therefore, learning to communicate across this difference in the name of collective aims talking and problem solving for the betterment of society, is of utmost importance and need.

Difference and diversity are highly valued in everything from educational experiences, art and creativity, and biological co-habitation. Experience with diversity and difference is seen as fundamentally important to decision-making, innovation, invention, problem solving, and intelligence (Phillips, 2014; Steele & Derven, 2015; Zhao, 2012). Experiencing difference is also the fabric of democracy as a “way of
personal life,” an orientation that promotes a democratic moral/ethical standard (Dewey, 1939/1989). Simply put, difference strengthens both our society and its work.

Dewey’s vision sets the pathway towards a more democratic society. At once active and organic, Dewey’s vision of a publicly led democracy is rooted in associated living and is a way of life to be embodied in everyday practice (Bernstein, 2000). Dewey’s concept of associated living thrives on the recognition that a democratic society is inherently diverse and as democratic citizens our ability to cooperate among difference is directly tied to the health of the community:

The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. *These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond; they consequently put a premium on variation in his action.* (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 87) (italics added for emphasis)

As our society further changes, experience with difference continues, and as more “barriers of class, race, and national territory” are introduced through the rapid multilayered process of globalization and communication, more and more our students and educators will be asked to respond to difference with a “variation of action.”

Working across and with human difference in order to be reflexive and cooperative in the
face of growing inequality, terrorism, climate change, changing political structures and human interaction is knowledge of value.

As a social studies educator the main goal of teaching and learning with my students, whether it is in government classes, world history, economics, sociology, or psychology, is to expose them to different ways of thinking and being, to encourage “variation of action.” In an age of “globally homogenous education” involving standardization, prescriptive curricula, and tight national control (i.e. The United States’ No Child Left Behind and the Common Core), there is a dire need for teachers to further emphasize meaningful exposure to difference in order to nurture new ideas, invention, and problem solving (Zhao, 2009; 2012). To that end, schools must incorporate experiential learning that specifically includes working with difference in their communities, inside and outside the classroom.

So how do we create learning spaces where students can experience difference, and how do these experiences influence our students’ perspectives, if at all? These learning spaces, centered on active experiential learning in the community, may be the missing space where community, citizenship, and identity can intertwine (Dewey, 1938; Madsen & Turnbull, 2005). In the vein of Dewey’s work, experiential learning has long been touted as a framework for engaging with difference in the name of active participation, community, and citizenship. Examples of experiential learning such as action research, participatory research, community service, service-learning, and study abroad are important ways forward in teaching and learning through difference.
Purpose of the Study

To those ends, this study was designed to examine the experiences of high school service-learning students at work in the classroom, with each other, and at their varied service sites. In order to more specifically define the purpose of this study I am using Malewski’s (2010) concept of “through lines,” which neither fully absent or present in the text but are “spaces to work,” as a structure (p. 25). Each “through line” in this manuscript allows for a major concept to be forged. From purpose to execution, analysis to findings and discussion, each line ties my initial ideas about the purpose and approach in this study to the data and discussion of the findings. These through lines allowed for the generation of research questions, study design, and approach.

For the first through line, I am especially interested in how students experience difference as they progress through the yearlong program and how it influences their ideas of self and citizenship. For the second line, I am interested in how students form conceptions of their program and local community, including privilege, in a high school service-learning program. And for the third and final through line, I am interested in student identity formation as “servants” as well as how this affects their conceptions of community (their classroom, school, city, and beyond).

The purpose of this study is to explore how students experience difference in their service-learning work and in what ways these experiences can address the problems outlined in this study.

How do we see difference in our teaching and learning today? How does it affect our world, our democratic society in the United States? How is difference changing our
classrooms? People can interpret this profound change towards difference in our world, in which we experience vast human diversity in our local/daily lives, in many different ways. Depending on whom you ask, this era of difference can be viewed as a journey towards a united human community, as an invasion of a suspect other, a nefarious threat, or difference can even be seen as an inconvenience, something to disregard or ignore. However, as educators we are engaged in the “paramount moral duty” of society, a society changing faster and in more ways than ever before, and we must embrace human difference in order to engage in classroom instruction, curriculum practices, and courses designed to harness creativity and student experiences and learning (Dewey, 1897).

The idea that service-learning may be a way to begin working towards Dewey’s ideals is not new. Incorporating active experiential learning and community-building through engagement outside of a “traditional” school setting fits well within the ideals of transaction and democracy Dewey advocated for during his life and work (Madsen & Turnbull, 2005). Through experiential learning, like a service-learning program, programs with a high link between the classroom and service activities could provide growth in personal and intellectual capacities allowing for smarter, more communicative members of society (Rama, Ravenscroft, Wolcott, & Zlotkowski, 2000). In the social studies field, service-learning has been seen as a major component in culturing a citizenship that allows for difference within community. This most recent NCSS position statement on civic education extols the virtues of service-learning in a social studies context with regards to problem solving, community connections, and the larger American society:
Service-Learning: Schools should provide students with relevant and motivational opportunities to connect formal classroom instruction with the principles and processes of democratic life through practical community problem solving. With guided practice in collaborative problem solving through public policy approaches, students learn to make long-term differences that will be sustained over time. They learn firsthand about the advantages of working as a group, the influence of public policy on human lives, and the intricacies of local government and community politics. They also develop firsthand knowledge of such abstract concepts as justice, diversity, opportunity, equality, and the common good, while developing empathy and compassion for others. Most importantly, students learn that American society is "unfinished" and that they can play a key role in narrowing the disparity between our democratic ideals and the reality of daily life by registering to vote, voting in elections and influencing public policy. (NCSS, 2013)

NCSS’ statement reflects the work of almost twenty years of service-learning scholarship. The NCSS statement offers service-learning as a means to continue to work on our “unfinished” society enabling interactions with difference that can begin to foster perspective shifts, identities, and consciousness needed for collaborative problem solving. The purpose of this study is to understand how high school students experience a service-learning program and how they form their servant identities as well as conceptions of community and civic identity while engaged in experiences with meaningful difference through service-learning.
Research Questions

This study was designed to explore understandings in high school students as they experience a service-learning program. More specifically:

1. How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?

2. What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding service, citizenship, and community within a service-learning program?

3. How do students construct meaning (if at all) while experiencing difference with people of diverse ages, education levels, cultural, socioeconomic, and backgrounds through service-learning coursework?
   a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?
   b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

Research Design

For this study I focused on five participants; Bernice, Justin, Samantha, Sarah, and Vincent¹ and their experiences in a public high school service-learning classroom. I used an interpretive qualitative design with a variety of data, through a *bricolage* design framework. Using grounded-theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014) I analyzed and coded

¹ The students each chose their own pseudonym to ensure privacy for the purposes of this study.
study artifacts as well as research and analysis memos. This process identified key findings and through the nine-months of research and service work. This study allowed for an immersive approach through observations, interviews, journals, student photos, and service work; as I studied and worked with students in class, at their sites, and on service trips.

**Conclusion**

This dissertation focused on student experiences and identity in a service-learning program. In Chapter II, literature tied to the three main through lines, and offshoots, of this study; servant identity, working with difference and community, and privilege, is also examined. In Chapter III I discuss the details of the study design, research and analysis approaches, and theoretical framework regarding the methods of the study. In Chapters IV and V, I report the findings, with Chapter IV focused on participant experiences in class and during site work, and Chapter V focused on reporting the findings of analysis of the five participant data sets. Finally, in Chapter VI discusses the findings, the implications for students, teachers, and service-learning program stakeholders, limitations, and potential or future spaces for research and exploration of the key through lines and research foci in this study.

**Definition of Terms**

To best understand the reporting of this study some terms are defined below to help the readers contextualize the meanings and terms used throughout. These
definitions and citations are intended to provide an understanding of the author’s interpretations of the key terms and concepts, informed by the literature of the field.

*Civic identity*- Student engagement with their political selves and political environment, or “locating self in community.” (Knefelkamp, 2008)

*Community*- A variety of definitions have been posited in this proposal but Nancy’s (1991) vision of community as an entity that exists “as it happens to us” is one that I find helpful. Nancy’s “community” is simultaneously encompassing and emergent, dynamic and constructed, in process. Community is also a homogenizing force, one that has shared values and norms, and one that communication and teaching and learning must combine to define. The idea of community, as it regards to difference, is not without critique and it is important to recognize that community and difference could interact in tense, and possibly volatile, ways. (Young, 1986, 1989)

*Difference*: Difference is produced as teaching and learning happen (Green, 1998). The way societies transmit cultural practices or norms, the way values are defined, through learning, allows for recognition of difference as one encounters and learns about the world. For this paper and in the service-learning program, difference is defined as both inside and outside of the service-learning community and classroom, and includes multiple intersections of age, location, ability, background, cultural, sexual orientation, gender, economic, religion, language, etc.

*Intercultural Education*: Intercultural education has two major goals; first to expand notions and experiences relating to diversity of thought and practice, multiple cultures
and practices, a better understanding of how culture is formed, etc.; and to also advance and facilitate growth in teachers and students so that they can become more aware, tolerant, accepting, and empathetic, ultimately becoming “better skilled at living and working with others” (Cushner, 2013, p. 4). Intercultural learning is based in culture production theory (i.e. Hofstede, various, Geertz, 1973/2000) and is often found in studies focused on action research, study abroad, travel/sojourns, international business, the military, and sometimes in service-learning scholarship.

*The IDI:* The use of the Intercultural Development Index (IDI) as an instrument to provide snapshot data regarding student intercultural skills and experiences allowed for an exploration of how students may, or may not, be open or willing to work with difference as they progress through the service-learning program. (Bennett, 1993; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Bennett, 2011)

*Servant Identity:* Greenleaf (1977/1991) first promoted the idea of servant leadership as an identity formation in which a leader must view themselves first as a natural servant of others. This definition was similar to meaning and statements of the program’s aims at Willow Falls, students were expected to be selfless and present, focused on “others” and their service work.

*Service-learning:* “service-learning [is] a course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112)
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

To situate this study I focused my research on three distinct “through lines” of theoretical scholarship: identity formation (servant and civic), democratic living, and community (Malewski, 2010). In addition to these main areas of theory work, I also gathered empirical studies on service-learning and service-learning in high school settings, as well as key works defining and theorizing the major terms used in this study such as privilege, difference, and intercultural learning. To that end, multiple theoretical frameworks have informed this study and provide a beginning or “launch point” for the study design and research. These frameworks all have a common overlap; to further democratic ideals by educating students through exposure to meaningful difference in a reflective way.

First and foremost, understanding how service-learning is defined is an important part of the literature review in this chapter and allows for a baseline definition from which we can envision the design and aims of the Willow Falls program, as well as the areas selected for review here. Clarification is important because often teachers and stakeholders have different aims and goals that may complicate definitions and practices, making the term difficult to define (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Service-learning is distinguished from other fields such as community service, service internships, community outreach, etc. by the inclusion of equal parts academic and service work, exemplifying that fact “service” based programs and concepts are disjointed in meaning.
and often overlap in aims (Furco, 2002). Despite these debates within the field, the most widely accepted and oft cited definition of service-learning comes from Bringle & Hatcher (1995) and allows for an explicit link between service and learning in their conceptualization of the term:

…Service-learning (is) a course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112)

Regarding this definition of service-learning, it is also important for in this study to ask why “service-learning” and not “service learning?” According to Sigmon (1996) the emphasis must be on both service and learning if it is hyphenated, while a non-hyphenated phrase allows for separate service and learning goals. The experiential component, the “escape” out of a traditional classroom offered by a “service-learning” course is also the driving factor of conceptualizing the course context of this study, as well as a structure to begin our exploration of the term. According to Butin (2007) this experiential approach allows for deep reflection and connection in a way that other community service and traditional courses cannot:

By escaping the covers of the textbook and the walls of the classroom, the service-learning experience offers (if we open ourselves to it) an ambiguous and open-ended situation (be it tutoring local youth, doing community-based research, or working in a soup kitchen). Answers are no longer found at the end of the
chapter, or delivered by the expert lecturer, or assumed to be static and universal. Rather, the sheer complexity of social reality—when carefully and systematically examined and reflected upon—yields opportunities for the realization that justice (or the lack thereof) is contingent upon our engagement with the world. (Butin, 2007, p. 182)

In light of these definitions and stated values, and the way the course at Willow Falls is designed, the participants in this study took part in what I consider to be “service-learning.”

From the definition of service-learning we can better articulate the aims of the Willow Falls program as well as the theoretical and empirical work that influenced my study. The research questions guiding this dissertation focus on three major theoretical areas, identity formation as servants, community building, and democratic living. These research questions allow for exploration of theory and research in the field regarding service-learning in high schools, working with difference, intercultural education, and privilege.

This dissertation was designed to study these questions and to work through an “exemplary” service-learning program, as many of the students experienced different communities and people outside of their own worlds in a meaningful way for the first time. To that end, how do students form their “servant” identities in relation to their community and civic identities, and what assumptions and attitudes permeate their service work while learning in a majority White, privileged school? What racial, economic, and “Othering” beliefs and language persists in such a course? Does a course
like this support Dewey’s vision of a personal, moral democratic citizen-based society?

These initial questions can help us better understand existing attempts to engage with difference, work in the community, and create active democratic citizens as students work through their own prejudices and fears through their work. The literature highlighted in this chapter allows for a scholarly context that gives this study space for findings and discussion to add to the field.

**The Literature Review Process**

The literature review for this study began by searching for service-learning studies that focused on identity formation and democratic living in high school settings. I used a variety of search databases including Education Research Complete (ERIC), Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis Online, and the OhioLink Library Consortium database. As the study progressed, and was refined during the proposal phase in the summer of 2015, I began to incorporate search terms such as “community” and “intercultural” into the search criteria. My main focus on scholarship was directed at studies that incorporated student experiences and reflection about identity and democratic living. Scholarship in the field of social studies, sociology, civic education, intercultural education, and study abroad emerged as areas where links between identity and experiential learning formed participant conceptions of self, community, and action.

From these studies key contributors and authors emerged in the field of service-learning, identity, and community. These authors overlapped with democratic studies and scholarship in many places and allowed for a focus on linking democratic education
with service-learning and experiential learning (see Kahne & Sport, 2008; Cranford, 2011 as exemplars).

Further in the literature review process, two pillars of academic work formed the basis for my research focus and were important throughout the different sections of this chapter. First, John Dewey’s work was an important foundational starting point as his theories have influenced the fields of democratic education, transformative learning, experiential learning, community, and schools for over a century. Second, Erik Erikson’s publications on identity were of utmost importance in my focus on student identity formation in the service-learning Program. Erickson’s work on identity formation contributed to many of the scholars cited regarding servant and civic identity formation. The participant identity forming processes in this study was directly influenced by their personal experiences in class and at site, their social interactions, and the community of the service-learning program.

Building on the search criteria, electronic databases, print works, and journal articles, the areas of study emerged along with the interests expressed in the research questions for this study. Each question and focus, identity, community, and democratic living envelops fields of study and empirical works that inform the context and design of this dissertation. The table below outlines each research question and the corresponding field of literature that informed the conception and implementation of the research.

Table 1. Literature Aligned to Research Questions

Question 1: How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?
Identity formation, Service-learning studies

**Question 2:** What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding service, citizenship, and community within a service-learning program?

Identity formation, community formation, democratic living, service-learning studies

**Question 3:** How do students construct meaning experiencing difference with people of diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?

Working with difference, service-learning studies

a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?

Identity formation, privilege, service-learning

b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

Intercultural learning, community formation, working with difference

Structure of the Literature Review

This literature review is divided into two main components with a series of subsets addressing each area of the study and findings. The first section covers the theoretical framework surrounding the study with specific focus on identity formation, community, and working with difference. Each section contains work that informs the theoretical backbone of this study and allows for foundations that inform the personal meanings and experiences of the participants in this study. Underneath the larger theoretical frameworks are three additional areas of scholarship that contributed to specific components of the interests in this study and the research questions. The
literature is embedded in one of the larger frameworks and allows for an exploration of a more specific topic that had emerged during the research phase of this study (larger topics are included in parentheses). The more specific topics include; servant and civic identity formation (identity), privilege and democratic living (community), and intercultural education (difference).

The second section of this literature review addresses empirical studies in service-learning including topics such as citizenship, academic performance, community, interpersonal skills, career choice, and acceptance/tolerance. Each group of studies and their findings contribute to this study through method, design, topic, and form and were used to identify gaps in the literature in high school service-learning research. Finally, the conclusion of Chapter II explores these key gaps in the literature and provides space for the justification for this study.

Theoretical Framework

Three theoretical areas of emphasis have been selected for this study; identity formation, community, and working with difference. These areas of study emerged through initial observations and interviews as well as key experiences with the program. Service-learning teaching and learning in Willow Falls is focused on engaging these three areas with the aims of aiding students in self-discovery, community building, democracy, and pushing outside of student comfort zones (Service-Learning Syllabus, Program Artifacts, 2015). Major cross-themes of the course, such as servant identity and action, democratic agency, and working to experience difference, provide a course structure for what students in service-learning will hopefully “become.” Each literature-based
framework provides space for questions and discussion, as students wrestle with their identity formations and experiences regarding citizenship/civic identity, community building, and intercultural learning.

I view each of these frameworks as iterative, dynamic, and recursive; each informs the other and allows for an interaction of self, community, and difference. These three areas of scholarship help to identify a milieu of interactions and allow me to define the realms of transaction that allows for a thorough investigation into student service-learning experiences.

**Identity Formation.** A major research focus of this study was identity formation through service-learning experiences. One cannot discuss identity formation without Erik Erikson. A pioneer in research on identity development, Erikson’s work has greatly influenced how the world views the process of identity formation in humans, specifically in adolescents (Erickson, 1950/1994; 1959/1994; 1968/1994). Erikson focused on context and surroundings as factors in identity formation especially regarding adolescents. Recent studies have expanded this view, including the recognition that time-processes of identity formation and context/ego relationships are complex and hard to determine (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001). Erikson’s identity work culminates in a progression through stages of identity, during encounters with context and action, or what Erikson calls “crisis,” which allows for growth and personal recognition of a shifted “inner identity.” This collision with difference, or crisis, spurs growth and identity formation changes, allowing for a progressive journey. Erikson states:
The young person, in order to experience wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and expect of him. . . . Identity is a unique product, which now meets a crisis to be solved only in new identifications with age mates and with leader figures outside the family. (Erikson, 1968/1994, p. 87)

In this sense, adolescents progress through developmental stages of identity, interactions with contexts, including exposure to difference, allow for a transactional experience (in the Deweyean sense, see Ryan, 2011), recursively leading to a shift in perspective which influences ego/identity building. Penuel & Wertsch (1995) also explore sociocultural effects on identity formation specifically the formation of identity in “local activity settings” with a specific aim to reframe how we see identity emerging:

It is for this reason we suggest that identity be conceived as a form of action that is first and foremost rhetorical, concerned with persuading others (and oneself) about who one is and what one values to meet different purposes: express or create solidarity, opposition, difference, similarity, love, friendship, and so on (p. 91).

The values and purposes expressed in Penuel & Wertsch’s exploration of identity link closely with the aims of the Willow Falls program. The idea that purposes such as difference, love, friendship, and solidarity can emerge from action-based identity formation is highly supportive of the service-learning approach and its intended outcomes.
Philosophically, this can apply to Nancy’s (2001) conceptions of “singular-plural” a self that is influenced by other selves that form an epistemological link between individual and community. Regarding service-learning aims and goals, the commonly held belief in the program (by teachers and students) is that students will be able to grow and “find themselves” if they move completely out of their “comfort zones,” experiencing full buy in, and will emerge as servants with a shifted perspective about their roles in society, their local community, and the democratic process. The moral components of identity formation are also influenced, allowed by the program to perform corrective measure against self-interest and the insulated “bubble” of privilege, which opens new layers of identity that is often lacking in Western thought. According to Baumeister & Muraven (1996), often identity is formed around an unprecedented self-interest:

…the modern Western individual often perceives a moral imperative in the pursuit of self-interest and self-actualization that is largely unprecedented. According to this new view, one has a moral right, and even a duty, to do what is good for the self, such as learning to understand oneself and cultivating one’s talents and abilities. (p. 410)

This “adaptation” approach, between the individual and the sociocultural context described by Baumeister & Muraven (1996), articulates the expectations of the Willow Falls program. The program challenges the focus on Western identity formation directly. Program documents and conversations, class discussions, journal prompts, and
assignments point students towards a more inclusive view of moral direction, one that includes those they served, their classmates, their teachers, and families.

**Servant Identity.** Students in the Willow Falls High School service-learning course experience the coursework and service within the context of specific goals and objectives. Becoming a “servant” is a complicated process, one that has roots in community building, identity formation, and belonging to the “family” of service-learning. Greenleaf (1977/1991) first promoted the idea of servant leadership as an identity formation in which a leader must view themselves first as a natural servant of others. This idea, constructed through a literary critique, sets the identity as servant first, one that is willing to become uncomfortable and embrace the strenuous journey. Moely, Billig, & Holland (2009) built on Greenleaf’s work and explicitly stated that research in identity formation and service-learning was a clear path forward in the field, and must be the focus of future work. This statement opens the field for this study and other work that is involved and deeply personal, allowing for research into the complicated nature of service, learning, community, and self.

Claar, Jackson, & TenHaken (2016) extend Greenleaf’s work to explore the theoretical idea of a servant. Greenleaf’s work views personal attributes and dispositions as conducive to servant work, which could be construed as natural. Claar et al (2016) ask if servant qualities can be learned through experiences, and explicitly link these qualities to servant leadership. The authors believe that it is possible to learn these characteristics and in their exploration of servant qualities they state:
We see great hope in the idea of the servant leader who is formed by past experiences, the mentors he or she seeks and follows, and the daily practice of the habits of a true servant leader. Even if someone is not yet a genuine servant leader, anyone who possesses a sincere desire to have the heart of a servant leader – to lead as other servant leaders – has the potential to lead through service. (Claar et al, 2016, p. 51)

The idea that “potential” in servant leadership could be cultured is incredibly relevant to this study. The development of servant and civic identities by the participants in this study is uneven and mixed, however, each participant believed they becoming more aware, present, and engaged in their service and civic work.

Other works related to servant qualities touted adolescent “empowerment” as a way to inculcate new servant-related identities. Chinman & Linney (1998) discuss how empowerment can overlap with identity work and other fields to allow for a new perspective of adolescents as they combat other identity roles/formations that could be defined as negative (Erikson, 1968/1994). Empowerment is a vital component to positive forms of identity development:

How might the ideas of empowerment be applied to adolescents? Active participation, awareness of the surrounding world, and identification of strengths, key components of the empowerment process, are also developmentally important during adolescence. Many theories of adolescent development and problem behavior (e.g., identity development, rolelessness, bonding, and social control) appear to include these concepts and thus imply that an empowerment process is
essential to positive, socially appropriate development during adolescence.

(Chinman & Linney, 1998, p. 395)

The belief that this empowerment can be achieved through activity, awareness, identification, and social interaction fits well within the experiences of participants in this study and dovetails well with the WFHS service-learning program aims.

Servant identity formation is a needed area of research in the service-learning field and there is theoretical and practical work on how servant identities can be formed (Moely, Billig, & Holland, 2009). The focus of servant identity formation in the Willow Falls course is foundational to the work students do in the program; showing the “moments” of servant learning is important for the teachers as they mark the progress of students towards empowerment and servant thinking and behavior. These processes, dynamic in formation and reliant on the context of the course and teacher and peer modeling, provide space to explore servant identity formation.

**Civic Identity.** Student formation of civic identity is another major component of the “in process” research structure of this study and continues to build on Erikson’s work as well as the servant identity work illustrated previously. Democratic education is explicitly mentioned in the WFHS service-learning course syllabus and routinely used to frame class activities, topics of discussion, and as the “end point” of the course. John Dewey’s associated living (1916/1944), James Banks’ (2006, 2007) citizen actor, and Martha Nussbaum’s (1994) cosmopolitanism all converge in important ways within the day-to-day goals of the service-learning classroom and allow for a re-imagining of civic identity coupled with the aims of the program.
The values and attitudes, skills, and knowledge within a citizen in a Dewey-styled moral democracy allow the construction of what is termed by James Banks (2006, 2007) as a “citizen actor.” Banks’ citizen actor fits the mission of the service-learning class described in this study and allows for a theoretical model that can connect to the work done in the classroom and at service sites.

For our connections to the service-learning program, a citizen actor is accepting of difference, and working towards an emergent and expansive view of their multilayered community (local, national, global), combating societal ills with regard to human life and dignity (Banks, 2006). Banks’ citizen actor is steeped in intercultural experiences and pedagogy as well. A true “global soul” the citizen actor aims for transformative engagement as a member of the world community, knowing that they share the future with others (Bennett, 2008, p. 13).

Intercultural literature adds further layers to Banks’ model of citizen actor; these layers reach out into a greater “oneness” of humanity and are articulated in this study by the addition of Martha Nussbaum’s exploration of Immanuel Kant’s “cosmopolitanism” (Nussbaum, 1994, in Brown & Held, 2010; Banks, 2006, 2007, 2008). Nussbaum explores the philosophical link between human beings with a comparison of a cosmopolitan stance (a moral obligation to all human beings based solely on our shared humanity) to nationalism/patriotism. Nussbaum’s exploration of cosmopolitanism allows for a “citizenship” that is greater than traditional or technical definitions, and encourages a civic identity focused on people. Cosmopolitanism assumes a desire and necessity to communicate with diverse “others” in order to work together as larger humanity, which
Banks terms as an expansion of the concept of “public” (Banks, 2006, p. 209).

Nussbaum’s views of cosmopolitanism provide a framework for how we hope our students will think and question at the conclusion of their service learning experiences; valuing shared humanity, difference, and interconnectedness that can be inclusive of intercultural interactions, democratic practices, and community discourses.

Dewey’s contributions on civic identity are also firmly rooted in a belief in common humanity. Isolation or exclusivity wreak havoc and bring an “antisocial spirit,” shutting down interaction and association (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 85). Dewey’s life’s work focused on the commonality of humanity, collaboration, and cooperation, Dewey firmly rejected barriers to interaction. Instead, he focused on individual experience, growing “thicker” as socially obligated inquiry and education progressed (Dewey, 1938/1997). Despite his distrust of nation-state based civic structures, Dewey was always optimistic that education was the answer to working successfully with difference, in essence, the mortar of society; “the emphasis must be put upon whatever binds people together in cooperative human pursuits and results” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 98).

In imaging the outcome of education, Immanuel Kant’s vision of moving towards a wider and freer society, a cosmopolitanism, was an important construct that when partnered with education for societies benefit, would ever expand human minds, to be filled with truth (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 92).

**Community.** Defining and exploring the student conceptions and experiences of community, which includes the school, service sites, Willow Falls, and outside communities, is a major part of this study. If students are not experiencing difference in
schools and their community, how do their constructions of community change when they do encounter difference in their service-learning work?

Community is a primal, albeit “ambiguous,” component in education (Dewey 1916/1944). Education has been constructed to re-scribe, reinvent, and reform community, “school is … community life” (Dewey, 1897, p. 7). Dewey viewed community as democratic practice, as dynamic and based in “associated living” and requiring communication and deliberative action among diverse groups with diverse ideas and practice (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 99).

**Democracy and Community.** Dewey’s vision of democracy required active participation and personal moral commitment, and the schools and programs to encourage this participation (Goodman, 2013). Writing about what he called “creative democracy,” Dewey (1940) saw schools, curriculum, and societal action as contingent on the *creative local*, the neighborhood, the community; individual transactions involving creative people required to innovate and obligated to contribute to the society that they exist within (Ryan, 2011). Small-scale individual talents and “transactive” experiences among different people would enable the formation of a transnational community of communities, filled with important creative differences and experiences of which an obligation to “the Public” would ensure deliberation, judgment, and reflexivity. This intense belief in little community, termed by some today as “mass localism,” can only be democratically oriented and sustained through education, and is predicated upon a symbiotic and fluid relationship between the global and local (Zhao, 2009, 2012).
In regards to “the Public” Dewey rejected the nation-state centric “Great Society” language of the modern United States instead opting to focus on the Public as a “Great Community” (Dewey, 1927). Due to fears that education would be used for exploitation of social and economic classes, and framed within fervent patriotic devotion, Dewey was critical of a nation-state’s ability to properly run an education system that in which “the full social needs of the educative process not be restricted, constrained, and corrupted” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 97). Because of these concerns he favored the concept of the great “Public” engaged in active participation in public spaces in the name of self and community. Indeed, this consistent action of citizens in the “Great Public” could only be nurtured and sustained through education, human interaction and communion; in essence, actively thinking, communicating, and working as a community, being together in difference.

Thus service-learning experiences and student connection to self and community, reflecting ideals ranging from servant identity, community belonging, intercultural competencies, and civic identity, are the initial step into the formation of a moral, personal “Great Public.” This moral condition can shape “disorderly experiences into harmonious ones that allow every participant involved the opportunity to grow” (Wang, 2007, p. 114). Each associated individual within a community can then both contribute to, and benefit from, their personal reflective inquiries; the motivation for social benefit in a democracy and the cooperative nature of human beings can again, only be encouraged and nurtured in schools; curriculum must reflect these fundamental necessities of/by/for community in order to sustain democratic living (Dimitriadis &
Kambrelis, 2006). It is within Dewey’s democratic vision the context of service learning in schools can be established. Service-learning scholarship has gained institutional support from a variety of areas in recent decades as schools, teachers, parents, and communities, which understand the role difference and diversity, can play in education.

The Service-Learning Program and Community. In a school “learning community” Maxine Greene (1978) advocates thinking of community as both encompassed within and transcendent of the classroom. This active “conversation” of the community must expand to include silenced groups and to create spaces where students see private to public implications through “social imagination” (Greene, 1978; 1993; 2000). This conversation is ultimately linked to citizenship and action, as deliberation on expanding the community must include discussions of citizenship (Davies, 2006). Greene’s “community” refers to Deweyean interpretations where, through action, and as a “reach beyond” the individual work within space to construct “arenas where freedom can sit down.” (Greene, Ayers, & Miller, 1998, p. 12, p. 19). This space and the freedom, or civic action, it ensures can be understood as a process, a process that is emancipatory in aims and open to the new:

This is what we shall look for as we move: freedom developed by human beings who have acted to make space for themselves in the presence of others, human beings become ‘challengers’ ready for alternatives, alternatives that include caring and community. And we shall seek, as we go, implications for emancipatory education conducted by and for those willing to take responsibility for themselves and for each other. We want to discover how open spaces for persons in their
plurality, spaces where they can become different, where they can grow…

(Greene, 1988, p. 56)

This growth can be composed of transactions and relationships, the inner workings of the self and the public (Dewey, 1938/1997 cited in Greene, 1988, p. 120). This sense of “wide-awakeness” challenges the passive citizenship of technical social studies education, instead aiming for an agitated, stirred citizen, one that cannot accept the “basics” of individualistic notions of freedom and community. Greene’s contribution to social studies is this passion, this desire for emancipatory and plural educational experiences and directions, which provides a link to the aims of service-learning.

Production of Community. Also influencing this study are theoretical orientations that focus on community production of meaning and communication; service-learning students were actively re/producing community as they engaged in their course and service work. Students experienced this community formation in a variety of ways and the specific participants in this study saw their belonging to the various overlapping communities explored in this study as emerging and important.

As students and teachers engage in forming community, understanding the process of community formation allows for deeper research into ways that students wrestle with meaning while experiencing difference. Jurgen Habermas focused on social aspects of community, specifically the conception of community and interactions, speech related to the creation of the community (Habermas, 1971). Theories of social interaction (“communicative competence”) and the public sphere provide a space within which actors (students) can reflexively engage with new ideas, people, and interactions.
(Habermas, 1984). Using hermeneutics (i.e. interpretation), public actors mix private/public behaviors and beliefs, re/forming the self, or identity, through experiences, language, and communication (Mezirow, 1997). Nancy (1991) also theorized community as something that “happens to us” as a process-oriented interaction based in “resistance.” This process of community-making, between self (singular) and our community (plural) ultimately forms our in-process identity as a “being singular-plural” (Nancy, 2000). Student engagement in service-learning allowed a personal exploration into their interpretive experiences as they influenced their conceptions of self and society or community.

Though authors and interpretations of community may complement, confront, or disagree, with some claiming consensus and cultural production, others resistance, dissensus, and non-linear political processes, education creates space for addressing the nature of self co-creating and inhabiting community as something “that happens to us” (Nancy, 1991, p. 11). As teachers and learners we cannot predict how our community will continue to “happen to us,” as we cannot predict the future. But in a very broad sense the multilayered form of a community with difference, in all its entangled forms, has shifted, fundamentally re-scaling our interactions and habits with different ways of knowing and being. Now seemingly inextricable cultures, people, and ways of being that very different from our own make up an increasing percentage of our once localized existence and require skills and thinking to engage in interaction with difference and problem solving.
A Privileged Community. Deeply embedded in the service-learning program and the experiences of the participants in this study, are layers of privilege. Privilege is conceptualized as a dynamic relationship, one that allows for specific “unearned” advantages in society that form hierarchies that influence our institutions (Pease, 2010). Therefore service-learning programs are not immune to privilege, especially regarding serving hierarchies (helper/helped) and power, and how they influence interactions with difference. In privileged areas, service-learning students engage difference and benefit from it on their terms (Johnson, 2017).

In this study, privilege is inescapable, and service-learning can often become a “pedagogy of privilege” as wealthy school districts and privileged students engage in a carefully orchestrated “exchange;” the outside community needing service, and the privileged service-learning students meeting their requirements through the use of the less-privileged (Butin, 2007). The service-learning requirements and the need to gain access to the different, “other,” outside of the service-learning students’ personal worlds, create contexts where program participants engage in service for the capital they accrue within the program. Butin argues:

…so-called “border crossings” are more often than not “border inspections;” that students' epistemic privilege comes not from who they are but through their authorized institutional role (as “college students in a course”); and, finally, that the very act of writing (i.e., representation) positions students as the ones who control the tropes within which privilege, identity, and power are defined or obscured. (Butin, 2007, p. 180)
Student engagement and interaction with difference may indeed be superficial and deemed beneficial for course credit or performance. Site pictures, journal entries, and the glow of feeling “good” through service were present in many class observations and artifacts in this study and add credence to Butin’s (2007) concerns. The product of service in many of the study participants’ own words was the feelings of accomplishment and connection with a strange or different “other” through the process of an uneven exchange.

Discussed further in Chapter III, students openly referred to their lives in Willow Falls as protected in the “bubble” and viewed their service work as a way to challenge their inherent privilege growing up in the community. In this privilege there is a perceived lack of difference, and a constructed “unknown” outside of the community that adds purpose and tension to the service-learning program. Himley (2004) refers to the “unknown” in community service programs as the “stranger” and underscores the transaction that occurs between the privileged servants and the underprivileged served. Often service-learning programs in privileged schools are created to expose highly academic and focused students to the outside world. This thinking is fraught with complications and can be repressive instead of transformative, as Butin (2003) writes:

From such a perspective, service learning becomes yet another means for those in the culture of power to maintain inequitable power relations under the guise of benevolent volunteerism. It reinforces conservative assumptions that relatively isolated actions of caring individuals can overcome societal problems and that it is the servers who bring the solutions and that such solutions are assimilationist by
nature. Tutoring students or working in a soup kitchen maintains the position of privilege for those doing the serving, and presumes that the enactment of such service in and of itself substantiates the worth and legitimacy of the servers’ perspective. (Butin 2003, p. 1679)

Butin further claims that service-learning must work harder to disrupt the hierarchy in order be transformative and that too often service-learning programs may reinscribe privilege and reinforce stereotypes about difference.

In recognizing their privilege, the teachers and students take a first step towards addressing it. No matter how entrenched or valued the privileges are within the program, working through their privilege is a common refrain in the course. Pease (2010) believed that only through working within a privilege dichotomy, confronting privilege might only occur through the shared work of both oppressed groups and their oppressors (p. 169). This “pedagogy of the privileged,” or of the oppressor, values the experiences of the those doing service over those that receive it, and those doing service ultimately benefit in much greater ways, i.e. college application entries, school credit towards a diploma, and valuable experiences, that could translate into future study and employment possibilities (Pease, 2010, p. 171, Freire, 1970). Work has been done to study the privileged in relation to the oppressed in recent years and has allowed for a further discussion into how the processes and benefits of privilege can be used to challenge its very nature (Breault, 2003; Kimmel & Ferber, 2003). Curry-Stevens (2007) outlined six stages of privilege pedagogy that can help privileged groups address their station and power:
1. Developing awareness of the existence of oppression
2. Understanding the structural dynamics that hold oppression in place
3. Locating oneself as being oppressed
4. Locating oneself as being privileged
5. Understanding the benefits that accrue to one’s privilege
6. Understanding oneself as being implicated in other’s oppression and acknowledging the oppressors status. (Curry-Stevens, 2007)

To address privilege and oppression for the privileged it is important to foster dialogue across difference through communication, to organize work with difference in the name of identity and to encourage problem solving (Pease, 2010). Through the theoretical literature regarding identity, community, and difference a framework for the service-learning program and this study emerged. Student identity formation was inextricable from their visions of the local community, their sites, and their encounters with difference.

**Difference.** In addition to civic and servant identities and community formation, service-learning students were expected to be able to work together in difference. The ability to communicate and work to understand people of different ages, backgrounds, education levels, ethnicities, and cultures was an integral part of the course expectations. This need for communication can be addressed in the exploration of intercultural frameworks. These frameworks, focused on understanding and communicating with people of different backgrounds, experiences, and cultures, can link how students experience the course and interact with difference.
There is a strong background of theoretical work as individuals experience other people, backgrounds, practices, and cultures. Allport’s (1954, in Pettigrew 1998) contact theory, which specified important parameters for intercultural meetings such as equal status of participants, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities or the law, was one of the first major works to address intergroup relations. More recently, Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) outlined affective, behavioral, and cognitive experiences in intergroup activity, Milton Bennett’s (1993) worked on a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, and finally Paige (1993) studied the “intensity” of an intercultural situation and the effects that various levels or characteristics of the situation had on a person’s intercultural experiences. The intercultural theories and exposure to difference within this study revolve around thinking of interaction within Bennett’s developmental model (DMIS). This study aims to track student intercultural sensitivity over the course of a year-long experience in service-learning site and course work. In schools, Robert Hanvey’s perspective consciousness framework aims to arm teachers and students to blend many things, but especially to “perform a corrective function” against the prejudice, bigotry, and isolationism that is inherently natural in the modern human condition (Hanvey, 1982, p. 2).

In general, intercultural education or learning has two major goals; first to expand notions and experiences relating to diversity of thought and practice and develop a better understanding of how culture is formed or produced; and second, to also advance and facilitate growth in teachers and students so that they become more aware, tolerant, accepting, and empathetic, ultimately becoming “better skilled at living and working with
others” (Cushner, 2013, p. 4). Intercultural learning can be a new path when partnered with civic education, and service-learning provides space for the two to meet, to overlap, and to facilitate student and teacher experience with difference. Arguing specifically for European reconceptualization of “citizenship” within the European Union political structure, Bekemans (2008) explicitly links the local exercise of intercultural work, citizenship, and civil society, imbricated within local/global layers, as an important “new horizon” for Europe and beyond. Bekemans writes;

The redefinition of citizenship as a plural (pluralist) concept is an essential part of the intercultural discourse, in view of opening new horizons and ways for the practice of participatory democracy at local, national, European and international, from the city up to the European Union and to other international institutions. This is a road that provides opportunities to all to exercise the same citizenship rights in inclusive Europe. In this context new roles are offered to civil society organisations and movements and to local government institutions. (Bekemans, 2008, p. 1)

Bekemans’ view allows for various perspectives and forms of citizenship in a participatory, democratic context. This opening allows for programs like service-learning to perform their educational missions through the recognition of an endpoint, towards a pluralistic, deliberative, democratic society.

The theoretical framework for intercultural education emerges out of cultural production theories. With core assumptions being that culture is human-made or social, is “unknown” or objective/subjective, and consists of thoughts, ideas, interactions, and
adaptations; in our presently changing world, cultural has rapidly “pluralized” increasing as global and local interactions increase and recursively inform each other (Cushner, 1992, p. 69, 75). More broadly, intercultural difference is not just “in someone’s head;” but as an actor a person is both a “shaper” and “shaped-by” this difference, subjectively sending and receiving cultural information in a multitude of interactions, language cues, and practices all in a transaction of self and society (Geertz, 1973, p. 10). Intersections of age, race, ethnicity, class, physical ability, nationality, and religion inform our conceptions of culture and cultural difference, often creating lines of demarcation between groups, inhibiting or eliminating interaction through social classification and separation.

Geert Hofstede’s work on the “programming” of culture and difference has been greatly influential in establishing the basic components of cultural theory in intercultural education. Seen in this study as part of the “context” informing the self or identity in Erikson’s identity development theories, Hofstede’s (1986) “4-D” dimensions of culture create the framework for intercultural interactions in teaching and learning, and can provide spaces for teaching and learning within intercultural educational experiences. The “4-D” model consists of cultural differences in individual/collectivist practices (in/out group); Power Distance (hierarchies, power distribution); Uncertainty avoidance (nervous actions, codes of behavior, acceptance of ambiguity); and masculinity/femininity (societal value of traditional roles, relations of women to women interactions, men to men, women to men, etc.). Using this model, teachers and their students have a framework for exploring intercultural educational practices and lessons
that can work to close the differences and heighten awareness in the contested spaces of
difference. Linking Hofstede’s “programming” to this study is an important step; this
course was founded and continues to be utilized to “deprogram” students’ preconceived
views of difference while engaged in their service work.

Embracing the fluidity/hybrid nature of culture within intercultural education
time theory established in Geertz and Hofstede’s work and adding a linguistic twist, Bakic-
Miric (2008) and Rodriguez (2002) both conducted studies on cultural production and
recommend theorizing “culture” as “culturing.” The process focus of this study allows
for understanding concrete terms in verb form, as an emergent act of growth. The
service-learning student experiences and the findings in this study allow for a messy
interpretation of difference and culture, as well as how the community culture of the
course re/formed to produce ideals of “family,” “buy in,” and “servant identity” within
the service-learning program. These messy formations can be thought of as “in process”
and the idea of “culturing” may describe the dynamic processes of the service-learning
course and student interaction with difference in their service work.

Further, culturing incorporates tensions and processes into a moral lens that
allows for viewing culture as ambiguous, chaotic, and unstable, as it is practiced and
produced, seeing multiple angles and components in flux with a guidepost towards a
“moral direction”:

We simultaneously see the homogeneity and diversity, the stability and instability,
the order and the chaos, and so forth... Culturing gives us a moral direction rather
than a moral destination promoting intercultural communication practices that
stress diversity, sensitivity and other ways of being that make or intend for no harm to others and the world. In this way, culturing does make for a superior morality. (Bakic-Miric, 2008, p. 6)

And from Rodriguez, the idea that ambiguity and uncertainty can guide “culturing” allows for the “in-process” focus of this study to thrive (2002, p. 1);

Culturing is born out of our uniquely human need to bring meaning to bear upon the world’s ambiguity. It represents the various tensions and rhythms that come with our trying to find and hold onto meanings in a world that is inherently quantum in consciousness.

Adding discussions of morality and community via a “quantum understanding of culture,” which this author interprets as having an infinite number of freedoms of production, each influential on the others, allows for “in process” conceptions of culture. A “software” metaphor a la Hofstede would constantly and perpetually be programming itself in the language of “culturing,” each subject sharing the infinite difference as a moral, communal connection, a “singular-plural” (Nancy, 2000).

**Servant-learning Scholarship.** In schools today experiences with human difference are not happening in meaningful ways as students from different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds are separated at historic levels. Despite record levels of ethnic and cultural diversity among young people, schools are more segregated now than they were 40 years ago as integration among diverse cultural groups has been abandoned as a justified educational goal (Rothstein, 2013). In an era of major income inequality not seen since the Great Depression, school funding and educational access are
restricted along racial lines, especially in areas of “concentrated poverty\(^2\)” in which almost half of all African-American children (45%), 35% of Latino children, and 39% of Native American children live, this in comparison to only 12% of their White counterparts (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012). Closer to home and in the geographic area of this study, in Northeast, Ohio, the nearest major city of Cleveland is currently the most economically segregated urban area in the United States (Florida & Mellander, 2015).

Add failing charter schools and scandals (in Ohio and other parts of the U.S.), the de-professionalization of teaching, and shady privatization funding practices, all occurring dramatically more in areas of concentrated poverty, and there are two distinct educational paths in the United States; one for those without (overwhelmingly poor African-American, Latino, Native American, and immigrant families), and a very different path for those with (White, middle class and wealthy families) (Cook, 2015; Gross, 2015).

Despite diverse student groups and cultures in our schools today, rarely do these cultures meet and interact. Political, social, and geographic barriers restrict student interaction and experiences, and limit the corrective aims of our schools, leading to further segregation and “natural” applications of fear and distrust among different people. For Dewey, experiencing difference in schools was a precursor to a functioning democratic society and schools existed as spaces to create these desired interactions with difference. If schools are seen as corrective institutions in Hanvey’s work, Dewey saw

\(^2\) Communities in which at least 30% of residents have incomes below the federal poverty level
them as spaces for the caring development of educated citizens, aware and engaged in societal issues and democratic problem solving (Goodman, 2013).

In this vein, service-learning and other transformative pedagogies (action research, participatory action research, community service, intercultural education, culturally-relevant teaching, study abroad, etc.) have been incorporated into educational settings to provide new spaces and avenues for these experiences. Studies concerning key topics in this dissertation, namely democratic living/civic identity, intercultural learning, community, and service work, were selected to explore the field and illustrate strengths and gaps in the research. Studies in both college and high school provided a look into programs that develop goals and aims around the key themes of this research study.

**Service-learning and Democracy.** In light of these reports and findings, how can schools, teachers, and students experience difference and engage with community problems, all while taking part in required standards-based coursework, in the name of our democratic society? For some school districts and universities, service-learning is viewed as a way to explore self/identity through service experiences, teaching, and learning about difference, while addressing local community issues and activism in a larger national and global context (Davies, 2006, Yates & Youniss, 1998; 1999). These experiences with difference through service-learning provide spaces for democratic education and action, as students form civic and communal identities as well as work on views of democratic action and society as a whole (NCSS, 2013).
There has been a steady increase in studies on nation-wide action in community service programs and organizations (for example the Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS). Much of the focus has been on engaging students and community members politically and civically, by connecting volunteers with their local communities through community service projects. Though similar in aims and very popular, community service differs from service-learning in that there is no academic coursework or curriculum tied to service. Community service in schools and the community can range from tutoring other students, working in local public gardens, helping at a food bank, to raking leaves and shoveling snow for the elderly; however without attached coursework and academic aims, it is not service-learning. This division is important and points to a larger component of service-learning course, specifically, reflective practices and engagement with community problems in both immediate and academic settings.

The noted nature of service-learning has prompted educational organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), Campus Compact (CC), and National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), etc. to define and call for incorporation of service-learning concepts and scholarship into their mission statements for future disciplinary foci. NCSS has published multiple documents regarding service learning and citizenship, explicitly linking the two concepts. The original NCSS statement directly regarding service-learning (NCSS, 2000) was expanded upon in 2013. This most recent NCSS position statement on civic education extols the virtues of
service-learning in a social studies context with regards to problem solving, community connections, and the larger American society:

Service-Learning: Schools should provide students with relevant and motivational opportunities to connect formal classroom instruction with the principles and processes of democratic life through practical community problem solving. With guided practice in collaborative problem solving through public policy approaches, students learn to make long-term differences that will be sustained over time. They learn firsthand about the advantages of working as a group, the influence of public policy on human lives, and the intricacies of local government and community politics. They also develop firsthand knowledge of such abstract concepts as justice, diversity, opportunity, equality, and the common good, while developing empathy and compassion for others. Most importantly, students learn that American society is "unfinished" and that they can play a key role in narrowing the disparity between our democratic ideals and the reality of daily life by registering to vote, voting in elections and influencing public policy. (NCSS, 2013)

The NCSS statement on service-learning encourages service-learning in order to view our community as a larger, “unfinished” society, exploring the impact of government and public policy, voting, and political action can have through service work.

There is a large and well-defined body of research linking service-learning and citizenship. This research often addresses citizenship and belonging with a critical lens and allows for discussions of privilege and difference. In Cunningham & Leighninger’s
(2010) position paper an argument is made that situated action research can indeed bridge democratic gaps and encourages not only deliberation and democratization among participants, but it also democratizes the research process. In the same article, Cunningham and Leighninger (2010) also call for more quantitative work; with aims of better understand the process of student experiences during “embedded” times in the research. Further exploring democracy, community, and citizenship, Eyler and Giles (1999) massive overview of service-learning programming concludes that legitimate outcomes of service-learning and research work, include not only academic improvements and critical thinking, but also democratic citizenship aims.

A “civic identity” is the focus as students and social studies educators can think of service-learning as an initial step towards active engagement as citizenry in the democratic process. Specifically linking service-learning to civic identity increases in student citizenship efficacy has been widely covered with attention paid to political engagement, civic action, and voting (Battistoni, 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Billig & Furco, 2002; Davies, 2006; Cranford, 2011; Lin, 2015). Service-learning is seen as a viable way to engage students in their civic lives, and to form nuanced civic identities through their work. Also, Youniss, McLellan, & Yates’ (1997) fifteen year study on activities that engender civic identity allows for a look at programs and processes outside of, but also including, community service and service-learning, and shows that exposure to these activities makes students more likely join community organizations as adults compared to their counterparts who did not participant in these activities in school. Lastly in the closest study to this dissertation, although there are no student voices or
perspectives cited in the article, Gonsalves (2011) looks at community connections with Mexican immigrants to local school AP Spanish curriculum through service-learning, identifying a key school-community opening that could be utilized to reframe student perceptions of themselves and their community through service-learning.

On a larger scale, despite this increase in organizational focus on citizenship and other service-learning related benefits, the existence of service-learning programming in schools and universities has stagnated nationally. Service-learning courses have dropped off from 30% of schools in 1999 to only 24% in 2008 (CNCS, 2008, Furco & Root, 2010). School budget issues and a focus more on civic engagement through singular “generic” community service projects, not in academically oriented service-learning coursework, may be part of the cause of a drop in service learning related courses (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; CNCS, 2008). Despite this lack of formal, school-based service-learning programming, service-learning has been proven to improve academic performance, improve subject matter knowledge, foster civic engagement, enhance personal and social communication skills, and improve student engagement in school (Furco & Root, 2010). Scholarship has shown service-learning programs to be effective and important in a variety of educational measures.

**Service-learning, Difference, and Intercultural Education.** Intercultural learning theory has important implications in service-learning community building, if students are expected to be “present” and to work with others in difference. Difference means much more than ethnic, racial, or economic diversity, it is intertwined in our
institutions and actions. Intercultural education allows for a better understanding and study in the recognition and interaction with difference.

In intercultural work there are almost no studies focused on the process of socially constructed meanings of culture or community and the intercultural interactions within service-learning that may contribute to these meanings, especially considering the high school or secondary level. Intercultural outcome-based literature presents an overwhelming focus working with difference in study abroad at the high school and college levels, and whether students are gaining intercultural awareness and skills during their sojourns and interactions (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). These studies sometimes include service-learning abroad, though so far only at the college level (Parker & Dautoff, 2007; Wessell, 2007; Pusch & Merrill, 2008; Wang, 2011, Crabtree, 2013). Smith, Johnson, Powell, & Oliver (2012) and Pederson (2009) focused on service learning programs and the general effects on students’ perceptions of culture (of self, and general ethno-relativism), and Gross & Maloney (2012) reported increases in willingness of college age students to engage with diverse students through pre-service teachers’ intercultural experiences with a service-learning class situated within their students’ communities.

Again, there is rarely a study with a real focus on “how” the K-12 students construct meanings and their identities during their service and what elements of service learning contributed to students’ meaning making. Alternatively, straightforward product-based high school studies involving service-learning and intercultural experiences do exist. For example, Van Brummelen & Koole (2012) studied Christian
high school students and their levels of cultural awareness, pre- and post-service-learning experiences finding that although levels and success and student engagement in service differed, connecting students with social justice issues did occur in the programs. There are a few intercultural communication/service-learning studies within the ESL community with aims of connecting ESL students with others to address language needs (Tacelosky, 2013).

Each study referenced above, outcome-centered in design, concludes that service-learning does have a major impact. But again, how the impact occurs and how students think through it, is largely missing. Despite very few studies linking all the three fields proposed in this project (service identity, intercultural communication, community/democracy), there are some fine examples of interculturally framed, action research-based service-learning projects which do touch on student engagement.

**High School Service-learning Scholarship.** There are many studies looking at the measured outcomes of service-learning, as a away of justifying service-learning programs regarding cultural understanding and civic engagement. However, there are very few studies which look at how service-learning “happens” through act student perceptions of identity, service, community, and intercultural communication, especially at the high school level. Service-learning literature has, in a sense, focused much on “proving itself worthy,” through product-based studies aiming at linking social skills, academic performance, citizenship and/or civic engagement, critical thinking skills, etc. with service-learning coursework (Eyler & Giles, 1999).
The specific studies that look at service learning and high school students’ academic performances are important and helped inform this study design and focus; there are studies focused on high school students with either gifted abilities, disabilities (Dinan, 2005), or academic performance in mixed achievement groups (Carter et al, 2012; Lee et al, 2007; Miller 2013; Dymond, Renzaglia, & Slagor 2007; Dymond, Renzaglia, and Chun, 2010) or social justice and critical engagement (Mitchell, 2007), and finally civic mindedness/awareness (Billig, 2005; Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, Donahue, & Weimholt, 2007). Outcome based studies include both qualitative and quantitative approaches, usually through surveys (i.e. Smith et al who conducted a self-reported survey relating to cultural awareness, but among college students, not K-12) and some interviews, although authors (Eyler, 2002b; Cunningham & Leighninger, 2010) call for more quantitative work to balance the overwhelmingly qualitative field, which is often based on anecdotal, self-reported student and teacher data.

One critically oriented service-learning article included is a critical action research-based transformative approach with African-American high school students. Within a cultural and anthropological framework, the study addresses the power structures that have led to situations in students’ communities and neighborhoods and how students worked to address these issues (Schensul & Berg, 2004). Additionally, as in Eyler (2002a), Schensul & Berg (2004) encourage reflection about their intercultural experiences and claim that researching how students “do it” is an important next step in service-learning research.
In recent years literature has begun to emerge looking critically at the service-learning structure and implementation as it becomes more institutionalized, more standardized, and in many cases (such as in the National Council for Social Studies example) is touted as an integral method for linking school experience with local, regional, and global community spheres. These newer studies have begun to question power dynamics, research methodologies, and institutionalization of service-learning at the higher education level. This critical approach to service-learning has opened the door to a re-imagination of what service-learning could be like and allows for research to engage issues in service-learning programs through teacher and student experiences. This opening has allowed for this study to address issues of privilege and working with difference through service experiences as well as approaching the study design and implementation through a critical lens.

**Student Experiences in Service-learning.** The largest identified gap in the literature is a specific focus on narrow ranges of age and student experience. Much of the published service-learning research occurs at the university level (see Butin, 2005 for an exemplar) in semester-long, or shorter, time frames (Eyler, 2002b, p. 6). For example, Stewart (2012) looks at pre-service teachers and their work in service-learning and how it pertains to their sense of efficacy and leadership in a quasi-experimental pre/post study during their student teaching. This limitation regarding a focus on how students “do it” provides a space for this study to bring important research into the field, especially from a well-regarded program, with privileged students, in a nine-month long high school context.
Outside of the university focus, there are indeed K-12 studies on service-learning, designed and organized to explicitly research how service-learning enhances or supports student academic performances. In regards to social studies, these K-12 studies often utilize a pre/post measurement of academic success in regards to cultural competencies, conceptions of human rights, or how service-learning influences future civic engagement, community links, and agency (Wade, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2010; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Dinan, 2005; Smith, Johnson, Powell, Oliver, 2012; Gaudelli & Fernekes, 2004; Battistoni, 1997, 2000). By and large, these studies show incredible benefits to service-learning as they pertain to academic success, self-esteem, and social relationships. However, there are few studies that show the day-to-day process of how students realize these benefits, especially at a civic level.

The research showing positive linkages regarding service-learning and academic work in the aforementioned areas is important, but studies showing how students experience these changes in political efficacy, citizenship, and conceptions of community is largely lacking. The studies cited in this paper often incorporate self-reporting data methodologies, administered before and after any service-learning experiences, aiming for data reflecting measurable, or identifiable, short and long-run growth due to service-learning experiences. This “overreliance” on self-reported data could be corrected with studies involving teachers, peers, and community members, which could provide a broader view of how service-learning is working (Eyler, 2002b; Lin, 2015, p. 24).

Janet Eyler’s forward in Billig & Furco (2002, p. 7) directly addresses this issue regarding strong qualitative work and research design; “the field is in need of such
studies to give us a better idea about how students develop over time through service-learning experience and to give us greater insights into the experiences that students have in our programs” especially, she continues, observational studies to counteract work done by teacher researchers on their own classes (p. 7). Eminent service learning scholar Dan Butin also sees a lack of experiential studies, stating that “…although researchers have begun to articulate what positive outcomes may accrue from service learning, there is almost no solid research on how such outcomes occur” (Butin, 2003, p. 1687).

Conclusion

This summary of research that overlaps between service-learning, intercultural studies, and democracy/community studies is messy and complicated. There are important gaps in the literature, specifically, how community formation is influenced by service learning experiences, the lack of study on how students “work through” service learning conceptions of culture and community, and ultimately how service-learning influences how students form identity and connection. The messiness in linking these fields should not only be expected but also embraced as the processes of the student journeys may prove to be just as messy; the layered fields and the highlighted research gaps need further theorizing, study, and reading.

Using a variety of research and analytical lenses in this study can lead to unique interpretations and data that can provide new insights into the field and either support or contradict existing work. The aim of this design however is to bring an in-depth high school service-learning experience into the research field, and to engage thoroughly in
addressing the students’ journeys through their own servant identity, citizenship perspectives, and community formations in a service-learning context.

Sticking specifically to a technical approach to service learning, i.e. academic gains, one misses a wider lens, a broader perspective that engages culture, political positionalities, and critical experience. By attempting to bring together intercultural research, civic and social studies research, and identity/community formation, a new perspective on what service learning does could be possible. To close, Butin (2003) makes the case that this must occur as more research on theory and practice is conducted within the service learning structure in order to reframe service-learning goals as well as to affect student experiences:

This article suggests that such issues are a byproduct of a monochromatic perspective on what constitutes service-learning. Specifically, the normative framework of service-learning is constituted through what I have termed a technical/cultural lens. If instead the service-learning field is understood through multiple conceptual frames, technical, cultural, political, and poststructural, it becomes possible to uncover the specific assumptions and implications of each. In so doing, I suggest, service-learning practitioners and researchers can move forward in developing, extending, and reconstituting diverse means and goals for service-learning. More forcefully, I suggest that melding and merging contrasting lens offers the opportunity to come up with new ways of approaching service-learning theory and practice. (Butin, 2003, p. 1690) (italics added for emphasis)
This call for “reconstituting diverse means and goals for service-learning” opens space for studying how working with difference in a service-learning program can influence identity and community formation. Through this study this research fields and gaps were addressed and create a way forward for future work.

The following statements provide a rationale for this study: a) There is a lack of research on high school students in service learning programs, and the research that does exists is mostly focused on a pre/post research design with little if any qualitative data from the students perspective. b) There is also a dearth of work in service learning programs focused on what is experienced by the students, especially within programs that directly address students’ personal growth, morals/ethics, and being a member of a larger community, society. c) There are studies that research student community service/service learning and conceptions of citizenship, including efficacy, however the overwhelming focus is on college-aged students, with few studies working at the high school level. Finally, d) there is no literature I found which adds the element of citizenship with the added layer of relative privilege, and its influence on high school service learning studies or citizenship discussions. Literature in Chapter II informed these statements with detailed citations and analysis, as well as the outline of a conceptual framework within which the literature review was conducted.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explored the experiences of service-learning students as they formed conceptions of community and servant, civic identities, through working with difference. This methodology chapter is divided into three main sections; theory and methodological framework, study context, and data collection/analysis. Additional sub-sections on researcher positionality and trustworthiness were also included. The research questions in this study were formed through an iterative and recursive process and contributed to the design of the research methodology in this dissertation.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how adolescents experience service-learning coursework and how these experiences could have shaped their constructions of community, democratic civic identity, and intercultural experiences. It is within this initial framework that I constructed the following research questions:

1. How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?
2. What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding civic-mindedness and community within a service-learning program?
3. How do students construct meaning (if at all), as they experience difference with people of diverse ages, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?
a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?

b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

Much like students’ service experiences, the construction and implementation for this research project was complex and recursive. The layers of being an active teacher in the district, the role of researcher/servant, the personal engagement with my context and participants, and the conceptualization of the key research questions was in flux, context-specific, and ongoing. Formulating initial research questions, collecting data, and refining terms and keywords was a hermeneutic and generative process, one that involved revisiting questions, data sets (for example the three-series interviews), and cited literature to continually work towards a more appropriate study design and structure.

Each question was constructed with the aim of following these students through an entire school year in a service-learning program (in a typical nine-month American school year). This approach allowed for longer conversations and interactions over a period of time and in many settings. I was interested in learning about the influence a year of service learning would have on a high school senior as they prepared to leave their community for college, the work force, or other possibilities.

An interpretive qualitative design was selected for this study as the research questions, participants, and context fit the following criteria for a qualitative approach; this study sought to addresses questions that were subjective, involved human action and
meaning-making, which included participant assumptions, thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.

**Background and Research Lens**

This section explores my personal background and researcher lens as well as the theoretical frameworks that influenced the conception and implementation of this research design. Personal positionality and perspective must be acknowledged and embraced, recognizing that a researcher’s personality is intertwined within the work at. This recognition involves personal beliefs about research and the work done for this dissertation regarding foundational aspects of learning and living. My own personal beliefs and experiences regarding my work in education are as follows: 1) First of all, I believe all knowledge is social constructed and is experienced solely by the subject at hand, within a unique set of personal, experiential, political, and cultural contexts. 2) A critical lens has influenced my work immensely; I believe that power, access, and power dynamics shape our world and are created through social interaction and expectation. I also believe as a researcher and scholar with privilege it is impossible to separate my own values from my work, therefore I must use my position and privilege to conduct my research and scholarship to address social and political issues (Bourdieu, 2000). 3) An interpretivist approach has guided my research. Understanding my role as a “meaning-maker” as researcher, organizing, planning, and orchestrating the work in this study through my own personal interpretations and backgrounds. These personal beliefs are essential to the framework of this study and its processes.
My own personal and professional background is as follows; I am a white, mid-30s year aged male with no religious affiliation, and currently live in a similar economic situation and social to the relatively privileged students I am studying. This positionality could add biases regarding societal expectations (i.e. go to college, get a job, work hard become successful), ways of speaking, behaving, and interacting. Despite my current economic situation, my upbringing was very different, as I grew up middle class but in a very poor, rural farm town in central Ohio with experiences in communities of poverty very different than students at the research site. I am currently working on this dissertation to finish a PhD program in Curriculum & Instruction at a large Midwestern university and I have other degrees in Integrated Social Studies Education with a minor in Economics and an MA in History from a large Midwestern university. I have never been involved in service-learning programs as a student but I have engaged in community service regularly throughout my life. I do believe service is an invaluable part of becoming civically and socially engaged in community.

The aim of exploring my background and positionality is to frame this study as a researcher. This study was designed to engage students in the construction of critical concepts of the community and interactions with difference throughout their service learning experiences. To that end, multiple theoretical frameworks provide a beginning, or “launch point” for my researcher positionality and have influenced my perspective, decision-making, values, and conceptions of this study. These frameworks share overlapping theorizing in fields that have greatly influenced my approach to this study and include literature on the self, community, and experiential learning. The following
sections provide important literature that has shaped how I see the world and this research, allowing for context and connections to literature in Chapter II.

My personal assumptions regarding service-learning and the research context are important to establish positionality. I value experiential learning and service work in my own teaching and learning, and I believe that it has an important role in a democratic society as well as in personal growth, community formation, and student awareness. I also teach in Willow Falls and value the teachers, students, and administrators that I work with, finding the school to be very supportive and active in the community and student lives. Lastly, I understand the privilege that is present in Willow Falls and I know that the participants in this study and their peers are relatively privileged in their educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and social standing.

Theoretical Framework.

The theoretical framework for this study emerged from my teaching values, research positionality, and experiences as a teacher/researcher. It is important to recognize the intensely personal nature of qualitative work and to acknowledge that as a qualitative researcher my personal values and positionality informs my work and forms through my personal history, background, and experiences. Therefore this framework should be understood as emergent and personal, scholarly and subjective. I felt it necessary to include this framework so that key theories in my work were explicitly stated and tied to this study.

Social constructivism. I believe that all knowledge, all learning, is created through transaction among human beings. Knowledge cannot be “had” or “captured” but
is situated in each person’s social, cultural, historical, and communal backgrounds. This dissertation was focused on student experiences and meaning-making in a service learning program therefore the social constructivist theoretical framework is important to establish how students experience learning, in class, at their sites, etc., and how they make meaning of these learning experiences.

Social constructivism is when “individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple…” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). With special reference to seminal works by Dewey (1938/1997), Vygotsky (1962), and Piaget (1970) social constructivism in education has a well-regarded history. Ontologically, the belief that individual experiences allow for multiple constructed realities, fits with the epistemological view that knowledge is constructed by human beings. Therefore, in a research setting I believe that my participants construct their own realities of their experiences within the context of knowledge construction/creation (Hatch, 2002, p. 12). Fox (2001, p. 24; see also Ernst, 1996; Murphy, 1997) identifies six major components of constructivism that outline its theoretical structure as a learning process, which in this study apply to the learning processes in “service-learning:”

(1) Learning is an active process.

(2) Knowledge is constructed, rather than innate, or passively absorbed.

(3) Knowledge is invented not discovered.

(4a) All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic.

(4b) All knowledge is socially constructed.
(5) Learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world.

(6) Effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve.

These components allow us to see Fox’s interpretations of constructivism and provide this study with an ample structure for placing the research questions posited in this chapter. Learning as an active, constructed process means that it is important to acknowledge that student experiences will be subjective, personal, and emergent. Constructed and designed through my researcher lens, my study of the Willow Falls service-learning program was steeped in the social constructivist beliefs and assumptions; namely that learning is active, constructed, personal, social, and in process (Fox, 2001).

With my research questions and the student focus of this qualitative research design the words “meanings,” “understandings,” and “identities” are being used as the pivotal components and fit well within Fox’s characteristics. Meanings are not waiting to be discovered truths, but instead context and experience specific, and emergent as participants (and I as the researcher) work through the service-learning course, the data collection processes, and the data analysis. To that end learning theories and my research lens are inextricably linked through the study design and focus.

Working hand in glove with social constructivism and constructed knowledge, interpretivism is a fundamental component of this qualitative research design (Hatch, 2002, p. 179). The researcher must be acknowledged as the research instrument and as inextricable from the research context, the data, and the social interactions among participants. Schram (2006, p. 32) states that interpretive researchers “investigate
important categories of meaning, to understand how the particular context in which participants act influences their behavior and actions, or to uncover and/or generate questions or hypotheses for further research.” This interpretivist study, grounded in Gadamer’s hermeneutic approach, aimed to work through theory in more flexible, less rigid forms, embracing a “humane and holistic alternative to the objectifying data-mills of the positivistic sciences” as a means to explore a vastly infinite spectrum of diverse experiences and meaning-making as well as the way humans attempt to understand their own meaning-making (Levinson, 2002, p. 87; Levinson, 2011). According to Hatch (2002, p. 180) interpretivism within a research study is:

…about giving meaning to data. It’s about making sense of social situations by generating explanations for what’s going on within them. It’s about making inferences, developing insights, attaching significance, refining understandings, drawing conclusions, and extrapolating lessons. Interpretation situates the researcher as an active player in the research process.

Within this framework this qualitative study and my own social constructivist lens, interpretation is key to the design, data collection, and analysis regarding my research questions. Each question, designed again with key words like “understanding,” “meaning,” etc., is trained upon the lived experiences and meanings formed by participants in the service-learning course and site work.

**Democratic aims and “Associated Living.”** A major part of my work and research involves teaching and learning for a democratic society. My teaching and
scholarship is greatly attuned to my desire to contribute to the democratic process and to allow for student civic engagement and participatory values.

John Dewey’s work on democratic society and education has influenced this study and my research questions from the beginning. Understanding the need for experience in education through Dewey’s work, with the aims of better democratic society, has felt like home as I worked through initial research and coursework in my PhD program. Specifically, Dewey’s work on the ideals of a democratic community, and the actions that create it, influenced my research questions as I hoped to explore experiential learning with democratic and moral aims, in the name of working to be a better community member (or to use the terminology of the Willow Falls service-learning program, a community servant). The confluence of democratic ideals, community, experiential learning (transaction), and citizenship greatly influenced my research, my researcher lens, and the processes through which I conducted and designed this study.

For John Dewey, at its core, education is an artistic, democratic, and social process; “a society which makes provision for participation in its good for all members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 99). However, the society Dewey references here is termed by him as many societies, a plurality of groups and traditions each with their own markings, values, and desires (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 82). This recognized plurality, or in this study, difference, establishes a context for Dewey’s work in which the only way to mirror the
growth and expectations of community within a democracy is to focus on shifting social
processes and public mood (Null, 2011).

With the decades long re-segregation of schools, the political climate of the 2016
elections, and the political divisiveness in our communities, I cannot help but be
emboldened and comforted by Dewey’s work. I believe programs like service-learning,
or study abroad, action research project-based learning, and community experiences
resonate with Dewey’s aims and scholarship. This study reflects my own leanings
towards Dewey’s work on associated living and transaction in education.

**Critical Social Theory.** Finally, my work also employed a critical lens, one that
was attuned to power dynamics, privilege, hierarchy, and interactions/process that allow
for uneven relationships. My critical approach has informed this study as I looked at
community and identity formation in public educational institution, the expectations of
the program, as well as the relative privilege of the community in which this study takes
place. The layers of power and privilege influence each participant and context, as well
as my own researcher lens and identity. To that end, critical social theory functioned as a
tool that enabled the design of the research questions, methodology, data collection, and
analytical approach (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). The critical lens, especially related to
community, identity, and working with difference, offered a pathway towards
understanding the relationships and power dynamics in the service-learning program.
Kincheloe & McLaren (2002) state:

There is nothing simple about the social construction of interpretive lenses-
consciousness construction is contradictory and the result of the collision of a
variety of ideologically oppositional forces. Critical qualitative researchers understanding the relationship between identity formation and interpretive lenses are better equipped to understand the etymology of their own assertions—especially the way power operates to shape them (p. 100).

In this vein, I viewed the role of critical social theory as a way to view the dynamics and interactions in the service-learning program and as the students interacted with the demands of their work, their classmates and teachers, and difference at their service sites. Through constructed meanings and the interpretive approach of this study, the meaning making, the construction of identity and community, was more thoroughly understood and interpreted.

To that end, theoretical frameworks from critical and postcolonial fields enabled a deep investigation into the underlying assumptions and meanings within the service-learning course as students engaged with difference and experienced other groups of people and cultures in a unique and meaningful way, through their service, in some cases for the first time. Conceptions of community, identity, and working with difference, as tied directly to the research questions in this study, were investigated for unequal power dynamics and relations as students and teachers hoped to expand student conceptions and experience; Peter McLaren (1995) stated that:

As an evolving entity, community must be fluid and flexible, similar and conjoined with individual identity construction, community is “always already,” but more importantly, constantly examined and critiqued in the now; critical
theory, postmodernism, and postcolonialism each provide tools and ways of being the can enable examination with aims, sometimes conflicting, towards the future. Attuned to political, social, and cultural power dynamics, critical social theorists attempt to pull apart the grand promises of rational and objective thought, turning instead to socially constructed, historically situated knowledge, with a variety of emancipatory paths forward (p. 230).

Looking for both new and embedded problems in society, critical social theory looks to respond in the name of liberation and within the historical contexts of dominance or oppression (Bronner, 2011). Participatory democracy, social justice and equity, human dignity across all cultures and groups, community-oriented institutions, awareness of the environment, and focus on power dynamics within social and political institutions are just some of the common hallmarks of critical social work, regardless of the school (Levinson, Gross, Heimer Dadds, Hanks, Kumasi, Link, & Metro-Roland, 2011, p. 10). Service-learning was another realm that could provide space for critical perspectives and interpretations, and the Willow Falls program was built on challenging student privilege and assumption.

Finally, I felt it was important to carry this critical lens into the methodological process and qualitative research design of this study, as it related to researcher/participant power relations. Informed by Bourdieu (1999), Courdey (2015), and Brinkman & Kvale (2015), it was important to consider power dynamics among the teacher/researcher, the service-learning teachers, and the students within the data collection process as well as the production of knowledge outside of the school setting regarding service work and
expectations within the community. Working to investigate power dynamics and these influences, while at the same time still functioning as a researcher, was a constant concern throughout the nine-month process. Student voice and pictures, regular discussions with the teacher, and actively working in service myself were all attempts at reframing the teacher/research participant binary while working alongside the participants in achieving the stated goals of the service-learning program.

These three theoretical frameworks deeply inform my researcher lens and approach. Social constructivism, democratic living, and critical social theory provided an anchor from which I conceptualized the research questions, study design, and implementation. For the research study, these frameworks influenced the questions including an exploration of participant meaning-making and experiences, how participants formed civic and servant identities in their work, and finally, how participants engaged with difference and their own privilege.

**Research Design and Rationale.** For this study I chose an interpretivist qualitative design because it best fit my research focus on processes meaning-making, identity formation, during participant experiences in a service-learning program (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). In this section I describe my qualitative research approach, grounded in the theoretical frameworks described previously and the concept of *bricolage*. I explain and outline each component of this study to argue my case and to make clear how the methodological approaches selected for this study fit the research design, the research questions, and the research context itself.
**Interpretive Qualitative Study and Bricolage.** There were three important factors in choosing an interpretive qualitative study approach: 1) the duration and context of the data collection process allowed for a wide variety of experiences, interviews, and artifacts, 2) My interpretive research lens currently fits within a broad, emergent process regarding the research approach of a bricoleur, and 3) I wanted to focus on student meaning-making and identity formation in this study. The experiences students had in the service-learning program were meant to be transformative (according to program aims) and an interpretive approach allowed for an exploration of the processes of student transformation, if they occurred. These three factors, along with my research questions regarding community, citizenship, and intercultural skills, pointed my work towards a qualitative approach.

Through this study design and in my researcher lens is the important, but emergent, concept of *bricolage*. As I designed this study I decided that I wanted to avoid specific qualitative research design categories and work on the edges of a larger, interpretive qualitative framework. I did this having been inspired by the concept of a bricoleur, first broached by Levi-Strauss (1966) and discussed more recently in qualitative research by Denzin (1994), Kincheloe (2001, 2005), and Lincoln (2000). Denzin (1994) describes a bricoleur as:

A person who fashions meaning out of experience, using whatever aesthetic and instrumental tools that are available. The writer-as-a-bricoleur produces a bricolage, an aesthetic solution to a problematic situation. In this picture, there is no rupture between experience and its representations (p. 15).
Kincheloe (2005) takes this concept further and asks researchers to push beyond methodological *bricolage*, but to self-reflect on the multifaceted layers within our research designs, processes, and analysis, stating that:

The bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world. Indeed, it is grounded on an epistemology of complexity. One dimension of this complexity can be illustrated by the relationship between research and the domain of social theory. All observations of the world are shaped either consciously or unconsciously by social theory—such theory provides the framework that highlights or erases what might be observed (p. 324).

As an emergent part of my work, I believe I am still in the early stages of Kincheloe’s description (as is the use of *bricolage* in this study), fitting within Denzin’s quote more readily, but Kincheloe’s points regarding social theory and the need to expand beyond research methodology *bricolage* provides ample space for my future research designs and aims.

Within these *bricolage* pieces I focused on the research methodology and most importantly, the flexibility to borrow from the various qualitative research schools to construct my study design. I did not want to specifically engage in a case study, nor phenomenology for example, and I did not want to focus solely on a critical ethnography or grounded theory. Instead I wanted to borrow components from each, maintain flexibility within the research design, and to stay true to my research questions while honoring my participants perspectives and input. I felt the concept of *bricolage* within the research framework allowed me to do all of these things within this specific study, as
well as set the foundation for a future of interdisciplinary scholarship including social studies, curriculum studies, global education, action research, and service-learning. Through this structure I set my study design within the interpretive qualitative research framework.

**Theoretical Framework and Research Design.** With the four lenses interlocking to form a broader research lens, social constructivism, interpretivism and bricolage, democratic/associative living, and critical social theory have informed all aspects and stages of this work. The aims of this study design were to critically investigate the service-learning related research questions within a socially constructed educational context, interpreted through student and researcher data sets, with aims of improved democratically-oriented associative practices in the program, the school, the community, and beyond.

These frameworks informed my own positionality as I designed the study and research questions. My interest in student experiences, transformative aims in the program, and democracy, overlapped in my conceptualization of this study and I felt it important to include them not only in my positionality, but also in the study rationale. I approached the study through an interpretive researcher lens with special attention to how students made meaning in their service-learning work. This interpretive qualitative approach was focused on exploring three areas of interest and importance; 1) how students thought of themselves, or formed identity, in their service work, community, and greater democratic society, 2) how students experienced difference, and were confronted
with their own privilege and backgrounds in their work, and 3) how these formations and experiences changed (if at all) their views and thought processes.

To hone in on student meaning-making, social constructivism, my interpretive lens provided the approach to constructing and conducting the research in this dissertation. With a focus on how participants learned their service-learning approach, values, and program work it was important to establish an interpretivist lens to explore these complicated and subjective processes and meanings.

With democracy and its emphasis in this study, Dewey’s conception of associated living, provided a framework for thinking of how civic identity and citizenship were formed by participants in the program. The visions of a society of active citizens in an associated manner formed the context for the second research question, which focused on how citizens saw their own roles in a democratic society as their service-learning experiences influenced how they felt about their communities and personal belonging. The broader goal of the program was to challenge or push student conceptions of themselves and their role in the community, through their service work, this aim informed much of the focus on democracy and how participants felt their views on democratic living had been influenced by their work.

For critical social theory the privilege of Willow Falls students was an inescapable layer in this study. How the participants interacted with difference, often from a privileged position and with specific aims that benefited them in their service work, the inclusion of a critical lens was important to explore how privilege, and especially student meaning within a privileged space, occurred. Privilege was widely
recognized by teachers and students in the program and participants in this study
regularly referenced it, either through code words, such as the “bubble” or more directly
in class assignments, literature, and discussions.

Through a broader scope, interpretive processes and designs informed the critical
and democratic aims of the study, and vice versa, through a recursive process. My
researcher positionality, the aims of this study, as well as the service-learning program
goals all influenced how I chose to utilize the theoretical frameworks explored in this
chapter.

**Research Site and Context.** The program at the school is unique in the area and
the state. The service-learning program is well regarded by school parents, teachers,
administrators, and students, and has been in operation for nineteen years. The long-term
success and teaching approach to the service-learning program made it attractive to study
student experiences; the program was well organized, respected, and well run. In
addition to the local value placed on this program, the state in which the school district
resides has tapped the teachers for a variety of professional development opportunities for
other school districts interested in service-learning (Research Memo, February 23, 2016).

The State Superintendent visited the Willow Falls district early in 2016 with a
service-learning meeting scheduled as one of the specific stops targeted by administrators
(including a roundtable with students, and one of the participants in this study) (Bernice,
Interview 2, March 14, 2016). By all accounts, local and state administrators, families
and staff, students, and fellow teachers, this program is considered an exemplar, an
outstanding and important part of the school district. Finally, regarding site selection, I
also teach in the school district and know the school. I have maintained relationships with the teachers of the service-learning program and knew I would be trusted and able to work with teachers and students in a meaningful way.

Deeply embedded in the city of Willow Falls and the service-learning program and the experiences of the participants in this study, are layers of privilege. Willow Falls is the wealthiest city in the county and far above the national and state averages in median household income and education level. Willow Falls consistently ranks high on national “safe community” lists, is low in crime statistics, and earns high marks in education, and after school community programs. A vast majority of residents are white, well educated, and upper middle class. The average annual household income in the town of this public high school is around $118,000 and the poverty rate is 1.3%, far above/below the Ohio state averages of $48,000 and 16% (U.S. Census Data, 2013). Students in Willow Falls are expected to be highly successful, academically motivated, and to attend a four-year college. These numbers are noteworthy as traditional (i.e. non-“critical”) service-learning programming has been called a pedagogy of “privilege,” often only practiced by wealthy schools and districts which is a valid description in the context of this study (Mitchell, 2008). It also reflects recent research on community (and school) re-segregation based on economic and racial lines, falling in line with data suggesting the local greater metro area near this district is one of the most economically, and educationally, segregated in the country (Cook, 2015; Florida & Melander, 2015; Gross, 2015). This privilege influenced student perspectives of the “outside” world and the idea
that Willow Falls and the students existed in a “bubble” was a key construct in the school and community that is further explored in Chapter IV of this study.

As a teacher in the district and school in which the service-learning program is located, I have had direct, day-to-day working relationships with the service-learning teachers during my six years in the district as a high school social studies teacher, and I have had a few of the students in the program in a previous class. However, I have never taught the course nor been specifically invited to attend course events or planning meetings. As a teacher in the district I am well known in the building and community and I was given almost complete access to these participants, their sites, the program, and public documents. However, I did not give or have access to grades, or personal student information or files such as special education documents (for example, IEPs) or details regarding family history or student experiences in the school unless students revealed such information in interviews (i.e., family history of service work, or if a student spoke of ADHD issues in typical classrooms).

Regarding the teachers in the class, I have worked with both teachers in the past and they gave me almost unlimited access to course documents (public), student sites and trips, and time for interviews. As a trusted and respected teacher in the district and within the building, I received unique access from the district to the students and teachers in the program and was readily accepted into the program as a researcher/teacher. Students, teachers, and administrators trusted me as a professional and as a person, this enabled “deep” embedding inside the program for the duration of the nine month school year. Finally, due to the levels of trust between myself and the district administrators, teachers,
and students, as well as my reputation in the district I was granted district-wide permission to conduct research by and received permission from parents and students of 46/65 class members to participate in the research process. The students who did not participate in the study overwhelmingly said they had forgotten their paper work before the due date and that they would have participated if they had remembered. I had no negative interactions with students or to my knowledge, any questions/contact from parents or administrators throughout the duration of my work in the district.

I was also given a small closet and a desk next to the service-learning classroom to use as a research center and to conduct student interviews outside of the larger classroom and to make it more conducive to students’ busy schedules. I utilized this room to type field notes during my observations, to conduct student interviews, and to keep my files (i.e. consent forms, class artifacts) organized and present at the research site.

All of these concessions were attained through my reputation and work in the district and the line between “outside researcher” and “teacher” was constantly negotiated in my work throughout the course of the data collection phase. Students openly viewed me as a teacher-first, using the title of “Mr.,” chatting with me about their weekends or sporting accomplishments, and asking for help with assignments or direction clarification often during my classroom observations.

The process of gaining student trust involved working with teachers and students in the classroom and at their sites, as well as engaging in class activities such as large group discussions, one-on-one site sharing talks (see Chapter IV for a detailed
description), and engaging in service work with the students. Students expected me to participate in debates and class discussions, write letters of recommendation for college (four of the students I had previously had in social studies classes asked me for recommendations) and to be present during program social events, site work, and trips.

The teachers also had expectations of me as a “co-teacher” that included program responsibilities, class help, and conducting my own service work at sites, on service trips, and in the local community. In the first week of observations I was asked to provide a cell phone number to all students, administrators, and co-teachers involved in the service-learning program for emergency contact reasons (I was never contacted by any students) and I was also asked to attain a van driver certification through the school district and state for the final service learning trip (Appalchia Service Project, or ASP) in April of 2016 so that I could help ferry students to and from their service sites during the weeklong service trip. These expectations and the pull of teacher/researcher responsibilities were on my mind as I set up my research proposal. My aim was to be embedded with the group the best that I could be as well as to maintain my trustworthy status as a “trusted” adult and teacher in the community in order to better work with my participants through the year.

Participants. The service-learning students were high school seniors, ages 17-18 and attended a public high school in NE Ohio (pseudonym, Willow Falls High School, WFHS). The school demographics show that local incomes place the students into upper/upper middle class socioeconomic status, with a majority of students affiliating as Protestant Christian and conservative. General school demographics, discussed in the
previous section, show Willow Falls students to be overwhelmingly white, wealthy, educated, and privileged.

Through purposeful selection and a three-stage participant narrowing process I was able to choose study participants who would be able to provide rich data and details, telling of their experiences in the service-learning program. With a broad focus on choosing participants who could provide a variety of experiences in the service-learning program, special consideration was given to site assignments, sex, race, class, an intercultural survey, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and participant schedules. Despite lengthy consideration, no one signifier was weighted heavier or was used to determine who would be asked to participate in the study. A reflective, holistic approach was used to select a wider number of participants earlier in the data collection, with decisions to narrow the field coming at the end of the research and after lengthy discussions with dissertation committee members, including my dissertation advisor.

Participant selection began with the administration of the IDI, an intercultural cultural inventory that ties in directly with research question #3 and was used in this study to gauge influence of student experiences with difference. The results of 46 survey participants were analyzed and categorized to provide a snapshot of each participant’s intercultural development. Along with feedback from the main service-learning teacher, Ms. Ananda, we discussed schedules, program requirements, and her thoughts about students who may have interesting experiences depending on the specific sites of which participants were assigned. Initially, ten participants were selected based on characteristics from the criteria stated previously, as well as their class schedule (morning
or afternoon service-learning class times) and their site placements (I focused on students who would be placed outside of the local community in at least one out of their two main service sites).

As the study progressed, there was another set of discussions with Ms. Ananda and my dissertation committee members about two specific students who were struggling in the class and at their sites, and in her words, “were not getting it” (Research Memo 3, September 24, 2015). After careful deliberation with Ms. Ananda and committee members, these two students were asked, and agreed, to join the study. I believed this was a way to widen the experiences of the class and to share some of their challenges and issues.

Individual interviews, class observations, participation in class discussions, and individual journal entries were collected from these twelve students throughout the traditional nine-month school year, culminating in final interviews the week of their graduation in May. As data was collected on these twelve initial participants it was apparent to my committee members that in this qualitative study design, the amount/types of data collected would need to be slimmed down into a manageable number. In order to accomplish this aim the narrowing process occurred as data collection was finished and data were organized, twelve student dossiers, one for each participant, were constructed consisting of short summaries of all three audio interviews, journal entries, research memos and field notes. Each dossier (roughly 6-8 pages) was then studied for intriguing details and experiences and compared with both rounds of IDI survey results and course-related journal entries. In this last stage, identifiers such as sex, race, academic
performance, site experiences and location, and the richness of qualitative data and
descriptions factored into this the narrowing of the participant field. In the final stage,
five participants were selected for in-depth analysis in this dissertation. These five
students made up the participant group for this dissertation:

*Table 2. Participant Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Service Hours (class avg: 232)</th>
<th>Assigned Sites (first semester top; second semester, bottom)</th>
<th>IDI Continuum Scores (pre, top; post, bottom)</th>
<th>IDI Cultural Disengagement (pre, top; post, bottom)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>WF Charity Organization Urban Refugee School</td>
<td>110.6 (Cusp of Accept.) 109.4 (Cusp of Accept.)</td>
<td>3.20 3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Urban Elementary School Urban UDS</td>
<td>108.96 (Min.) 109.6 (Cusp of Accept.)</td>
<td>4.20 3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>WF Montessori School Hospice Care (Two sites)</td>
<td>88.9 (Min.) 91.5 (Min.)</td>
<td>3.60 3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>193.25</td>
<td>Animal Rescue Farm WF Elementary School</td>
<td>89.03 (Min.) 93.09 (Min.)</td>
<td>4.00 3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>WF Elementary School Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>60.68 (Denial) 73.23 (Polar.)</td>
<td>3.40 3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section provided a brief introduction to the participants in this study (a more
detailed background is provided in Chapter IV. There were five student participants who
were selected through the narrowing process described previously. Both service-learning
program teachers are also included in introductions here although they were not the main
focus of this study. Students were recruited through verbal and written interactions in
class during the common period with all 65 students. The class consisted of roughly 2/3
female, 1/3 male students and reflected the Willow Falls community demographics with
around 90% of students of White/Caucasian backgrounds.

Bernice is 17, an African-American female, and motivated academically, taking
some AP courses in her schedule. However, she saw herself more attuned to social
interactions and leadership experiences, enjoying her time in summer leadership camps
and school clubs. Bernice had moderate leadership and volunteer opportunities with
church and family (citing her grandmother’s influence) and enjoyed them immensely.
Bernice enjoyed school and learning, and considers herself a good student but she is also
dyslexic and struggles at times with reading and writing. She is a longtime Willow Falls
resident and has attended school in the district K-12. Bernice’s sites included a local
charitable foundation that funneled donations to local causes in Willow Falls and an
elementary school for refugee children in a nearby metro area.

Justin is a white male, 17, well spoken and popular. He is a lacrosse player and
well known for his athletic exploits. He is very organized and when we scheduled
interviews was always punctual to class and our interviews. He is pleasant and he
described himself as an average student who liked school but did not get the best grades.
Justin mentioned ADHD issues in class and how being able to get out of school was a
major part of his desire to apply to the service-learning program. He attended Willow
Falls schools for his entire education and views the schools as excellent. Justin was in
the AM section of the service-learning program and reported that his experiences in the
class and at his site were very positive. Justin’s sites were an elementary school in a large metro area neighboring Willow Falls and at an adult developmental disabilities center in a nearby college town.

Sarah is a quiet, intelligent, and measured 17 year old, white female. She was often mentioned by the service-learning teachers as one of the students they loved and was pointed out by the teachers as example of someone who “gets it.” Sarah described herself as not academic and more hands on and interested in the arts, and as someone who was not interested in academic competition or upper level/AP classes. Her family is very well known and had as strong presence in the city and her grandfather/mother run the international organization to combat hemophilia (a disease which runs in her family) and is a 2nd-12th grade attendee of Willow Falls schools. Sarah’s service sites included a Montessori school in Willow Falls with Kindergarten students, and two hospice care centers (she was one of few students with three sites), one in Willow Falls and one in a nearby town.

Samantha is a white female, age 17, a cheerleader, active marching band member, and rugby player. Samantha has extensive prior service experience, the most of any of the participants in this study, and spent a vast majority of her time before enrolling in the program working at her church in Willow Falls. Samantha was in the AM section of the service-learning program and described herself as highly motivated and academically focused. Samantha received very high grades during her high school career and viewed herself as a competitive student. Samantha was the only participant who was added to this study later in the semester as she was identified as one of the students who were
struggling with their service and coursework (Research Memo, November 20, 2015).

Samantha had moved around a little early in her teens and settle in Willow Falls later in her schooling. Prior to Willow Falls, she had attended schools in other local suburbs and a school within a nearby Midwestern city. Samantha’s service sites included an animal sanctuary for abused and neglected animals of all types (goats, pigs, horses, etc.) and an elementary school in Willow Falls.

Vincent is a white, 18 year old male from a large family and during our interviews he was proud to talk about his mother who had just had a newborn son, his new little brother. Vincent is a football star and well-known athlete in the community. He is well liked and social with friends but very reserved and hesitant to talk in the classroom during projects and site debriefs on Thursdays. Vincent described himself as uninterested in academics and with average to poor grades. Vincent had worked for the last two years in his own landscaping business with another senior at Willow Falls, and was well known in the community due to this business and his athletic exploits. Vincent moved to Willow Falls in 3rd grade and viewed the town as his home. Vincent’s site placements included a Willow Falls elementary school, working with special needs and students with disabilities and a large Children’s hospital in a large nearby metro area.

Regarding the teachers, Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, both have been teaching at Willow Falls for over a decade and are well respected among staff, administrators, and students. Ms. Ananda has been the head of the service-learning program and teaching English classes for fifteen years, and presently, the service-learning class was her only teaching assignment. Mr. Johnson has been teaching Government class in the program
for seven years but also teaches AP U.S. History. Both teachers are National Board Certified and held Master’s Degrees in their respective fields. Ms. Ananda is the lead teacher and organizer in the program; she dealt with site placements, trip planning, a majority of the admission/application processes, as well as personal communications with students, logistics, site managers, and school teachers/administrators. If there were major decisions to be made, problems or issues, or questions, students would typically contact Ms. Ananda. Both teachers are well respected in the building and the district and receive high praise from the principal, their co-workers, and their students.

The Service-learning Course. Students in the program engage in yearlong service-learning experiences, consisting of local sites in surrounding urban, suburban, and rural settings. The program culminates with a trip to a small, rural town in Appalachia where students do service work in a community that has been hosting this program for over a decade (future research could be aimed at getting community members from the Appalachia region to express their experiences and relation to these students, the teachers, and the program).

For a course specific context, the design of the program is directed towards goals of personal growth and experiences with difference. The service-learning course selects students from the senior class through an interview and application process. During the admission process teachers paid special attention to student personality, volunteer history, and family involvement. The program was highly valued in the district by administrators, teachers, students, and families, but as recently as four years ago had been
the subject of possible cuts or re-workings as the school was dealing with staffing/budgetary concerns.

There are two class periods of service-learning students in Willow Falls. “AM” which met for a double period (100 minutes) from 8:50 am-10:45 am, and “PM” which also meets for a double period from 11:40 am-1:15 pm. There was also a shared period, with all 65 students from 10:45 am-11:40 pm. This time was often used for journaling, documentary films, large group discussions about current events/issues in service, and generally social and educational activities, took place. Each section (AM or PM) was divided into two parts each day (~50 minutes each) when students met for class; one for English and one for Government.

The course schedule was organized to allow for class and service site time. To that end I believed it to be important that I was present in as many components of the course as I could be. I wanted to visit and work student service sites, talk to them in class and the hallways, go on retreats, participate in discussions, and work on assignments and projects in class. It was important students saw that I valued service-learning, was interested in their opinions and perspectives, and designed my research to give students as much say as I could in our work together. This approach was challenging at times, and I found myself having to reflect deeply about moments in these interviews that were contradictory or complicated in regards to our service work but I believe it helped to humanize and connect student participants and myself as researcher.

**Data Collection**
I collected data related to three different components of this research study (see table below). Each component was selected to address each of my research questions, with regards to student experiences in the program, in order to either directly address these experiences through personal data (for example, interviews), or to provide context or a program structure within which the student experiences were inextricably situated. Each of the research questions were addressed across multiple forms of data, and each research question was specifically used to link questions, observation emphasis, and field note emphasis, as I collected the data and conducted interviews and observations.

There were three broad categories of data collection selected to complement and triangulate findings in this study:

1) **Personal and Contextual Data**: The main data collected was as follows;
   
   Student semi-structured interviews and small group discussions, classroom artifacts, student journals, state service-learning standards and requirements, and class/site observations.

2) **First-person student data**: Students were also engaged as part of the data collection process through a simplified version of Photovoice methodology by contributing site and class photographs. Also, students were required to keep journals by the service-learning teachers, which I had access to through IRB approval. These two data sets provided ample amounts of student generated photographs and writing.
3) **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) data:** Finally, an intercultural instrument was used to conduct a pre/post assessment of intercultural sensitivity.

These three data categories allowed for student statements and information to be used from multiple aspects of their experiences and the program. Each category was purposefully selected to connect with specific research questions in order to tease out meanings and themes. Table 3 shows the direct links between research questions and data categories:

*Table 3. Data Generation and Research Question Links (Maxwell, 2012)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding civic-mindedness and community within a service-learning program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do students construct meaning (if at all), experiencing difference with people of diverse ages, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study focused on five key types of data in relation to the research questions above. Data was collected over the course of nine months at Willow Falls High School, student service sites, service trips, and during interviews in a school office as well as local coffee houses. Table 4 showed the timeline of data collection:

Table 4. Research Collection Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Collection Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| IDI                              | IDI 1: Mid-September, 2015  
                                  | IDI 2: End of May, 2016                                       |
| Observations                     | Two-Three days per week; September, 2015 through May, 2016 |
| Interviews                       | Interview 1: Dec., 2015/Jan, 2016  
                                  | Interview 2: March, 2016/April, 2016  
                                  | Interview 3: May, 2016                                |
| Student Artifacts                | Throughout duration of the study, first collections occurred in September of 2015, final collections occurred May 27, 2016. |
| Program/District/State Artifacts | Throughout duration of the study, first collections occurred in September of 2015, final collections occurred May 27, 2016. |

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** I approached interviews with the aim of interacting with students to gather data on experiences in the service-learning program over a nine-
month course and I structured the interviews accordingly. Taking inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu’s critique of “tape recording sociologists” my main focus was to use the interviews to reflect about our work together in the class as well as to project a “scholarship of commitment” towards working with students as a service-learning partner (Bourdieu, 1999, 2000).

In-depth semi-structured interviews, designed to be conversational, were organized to cover yearlong service experiences through a three-part series of interviews. The focus was on what Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) term a “life world interview” with questions aimed at trying to understand student experiences in the class, their site work, and their internal struggles or realizations throughout the course of the year along with sharing some of my own experiences and internal thinking as I experienced the course. This structure bridged Bourdieu’s views within the framework of Seidman’s (2013) qualitative interviewing style.

The structure and schedule of the interviews were based on the course schedule and the key temporal “markers” of student work during the year; this included site placements, class interactions, coursework, and class trips. I conducted three interviews with each of the original twelve participants over the course of a traditional school year. Each interview was conducted in series through Seidman’s (2013) three-interview approach, which included interviews addressing a focused life history, details of experience, and reflection on meaning.

Most interviews were conducted during school hours in a makeshift office attached to the service-learning classroom at the high school. The exceptions occurred at
a local coffee shop, about three miles from the high school, and directly after the school day. Each interview consisted of different questions and topics (i.e. citizenship, service background, site experiences) but with consistent themes such as democratic thinking, identity, community, and working with difference.

The first interview was structured around Seidman’s *focused life history*. This interview consisted of questions about prior student experiences, family histories, and preferences in regards to service-learning and community service. This interview focused on family and friend histories with service, how students ended up applying for service learning, how and what they knew about the program, how they viewed the program in context of the community in which they live, and what prior experiences they had, if any, regarding community service or service-learning. Some example questions from the first interview that connected to their life world include (Please see Appendix E for full questions):

1. To expand on your early experiences, why do you think you become interested in service and community work?
2. Can you describe what the Willow Falls community is like in regards to service of others? Why do you think that is?
3. Do you feel people who engage in service contribute more to a democratic community? Can you elaborate on that?

The second interview was structured to reflect Seidman’s *details of experience* interview format, specifically focused on student experiences in class and at their service sites, in both the Fall semester (site #1), and the Spring semester (site #2). This interview
was designed to allow students the ability to share their stories as well as to provide examples of events or service-experiences in which they felt they embodied their vision of service, or struggled to do so. The interview was structured so that participants could share information and examples from their assigned sites as well as from external service experiences. Students were also asked to view pictures from the first five months of site work (within the Photovoice data collection structure, see below) and to comment on these “frozen moments” at their sites. This interview was structured to allow a return to larger themes embedded in the research questions, such as community, democratic thinking, and working with difference as well as to allow an altered power dynamic between the researcher/participant through student voice, directly from their sites and through their own photography, to maintain a presence in the interview. Relating to details of experience, here are examples of questions from the second interview (Please see Appendix F for full questions):

1. Thinking back to your first semester, what were your initial impressions of service learning, what was it like to start the year in this class?
2. What have been some of the best, most exciting, moments at your Spring site?
3. How has your site work contributed to your local community? How has it contributed to your own citizenship and public action?

The third and final interview was based on Seidman’s *reflection on the meaning* interview structure. During this interview, conducted the week of their high school graduation, asked students to look back at the year in service-learning and to make sense of their work, experiences, and actions. I asked about their final thoughts and meaningful
experiences as well as how they thought service would impact the community and their lives. This interview was scheduled purposefully after the student trip to Appalachia as well as after their last day at their Spring site, yet before their high school graduation. The intent was to allow students closure on the year in order to discuss the impact that they felt they had in their work, as well as their personal experiences now that the school year was over. This interview also revisited topics such as democratic thinking, community, working with difference, and citizenship as students were asked to put their experiences into these larger contexts linked to the research questions of this dissertation. Below are examples of questions from the third interview, regarding reflection and meaning-making (Please see Appendix G for full interview questions):

1. What is important to know about the course itself, in the classroom… what makes THIS SL course the way that it is?
2. How do you think this course, service learning, will shape your life?
3. How have those you serve impacted you? How have your experiences with those people and animals changed you?

Since the study was a yearlong design the focus of the data collection schedule was on yearlong growth. The three-part interview objective was linked with important program “markers” along the way in regards to personal experiences at service sites, especially interesting or trying cultural experiences, and realizations or key moments. For example, students switched sites in January to a second service assignment; therefore I wanted my second interview to coincide with this switch, allowing 2-3 weeks for students to settle in. This approach allowed me to ask questions asking for comparisons
in experience at their Fall site and their newer Spring sites as well as how their coursework was going. This approach to interviews allowed me to focus on various components of the class at different junctures in student experience, as well as to address consistent themes throughout the year that emerged from journals, my research and observations, and my initial research questions.

In addition to Seidman’s long-term structural approach to the type of questions and scheduling of the interviews, I also used Rubin & Rubin (2005) to guide my approach and disposition as I interacted with students during our interviews.

I used a responsive interviewing approach and focused my questions on stories, narratives, and building rapport to enable a productive and comfortable interviewer/interviewee relationship. These relationships were admittedly much easier to initiate and sustain with my dual role of researcher/teacher and my known status as a trusted teacher in the Willow Falls school district, these were important aids in establishing rapport as well as a conversational/responsive interview style. This relationship approach allowed for what I perceived to be deeper and more trusting conversations, especially when discussing program critiques or negative experiences in their site work. Lastly, I organized the more structured questions in the interview along Rubin & Rubin’s guidelines for introducing the topic, asking easy questions first, showing empathy with their service work, and then asking the tougher, more pointed questions in later stages (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, pgs. 114-121; also, please see Appendices E, F, & G, for examples).
Each participant interview was digitally recorded (audio only) and I jotted notes pertaining to student statements or interesting experiences on prepared documents containing the main questions and optional probing questions. I utilized open-ended questions and follow-ups to allow the participants to bring in their own ideas and thoughts to help establish the direction of the interview. I wanted to provide some structure around the main research themes but also to honor the student experiences in the class and at their service sites.

**Student and Program Artifacts.** Utilizing program documents, visual images, and written reflections about their sites and work, students were asked to collect data for use in recall and discussion (with the researcher) during interviews as well as prompts for their journal writing.

Student journals. The weekly journals were a mandatory assignment in class and required written entries and reflections for credit as well as a tally of the weekly service hours students accrued. This approach, along with quarterly site supervisor evaluations, was how the instructors were kept track of student hours at their service sites. Student journals are numbered as the students did, as they did not date the journals in a traditional way. Journal labeling examples included a coded number, for example “4/1,” referring to the fourth journal entry of the first nine weeks, or grading period.

I was granted access to the student journals and reflections through the student/parent consent form approved by the university’s Internal Review Board (IRB) process. Student journals provided specific quotes and experiences as context for the interviews for me as a researcher, as well as provide an arena for student reflection as
individuals. One of the most overlooked elements of service-learning work and can be critical in developing reflective students (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Popok, 2007). The journals allowed me to access reflections regarding community, citizenship, site experiences, and self-efficacy.

During the course of my research window I asked to contribute a prompt to the journals twice throughout the year, each time I focused on research questions or themes in the prompts and this allowed me to specifically ask questions regarding their experiences outside of the interview process (Research Memo 6, November 5, 2015). The two themes I focused on in my journal questions were tied directly to my research questions; I asked about student feelings about their local community and service work, as well as student conceptions of citizenship. Examples of prompts I wrote included:

1. How does your work in service-learning influence your ideas about citizenship in the United States?
2. How would you describe your community to someone who is not from this area?
3. Is service valued in the community of Willow Falls? What examples do you have that inform your conclusion?

In addition to the two weekly prompts I wrote, there was also a third instance that I contributed to a journal question but did not write myself. Ms. Ananda and I were discussing some of the language used in student reflections in class (she termed it as “me” language), and we both arrived at the suggestion to assign the students a journal
question from the perspective at their site of someone other than themselves (Research Memo 3, September 24, 2015).

Photovoice. One of my goals in the design of this study was to allow student voice and input in the data collection process. I decided to utilize the methodology of Photovoice to allow students to use their mobile devices to document their work at sites and other service events. Used first in health fields to document pain in China, poverty in Flint, MI, and medical experiences of senior citizens, Photovoice has been increasingly used to show youth interpretations of community, to form narratives and pull themes from their lived experiences (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchison, Bell, & Pestronk, 2004; Wang, 2006). Photovoice was a fascinating way for students to collect site data, which could be used within interviews and journal writing, to point to specific times or instances when the student was confronted by a cultural difference or important event. This aim was to give students agency over some of the data collection and allows another layer of student experience to permeate the study.

Students were happy to document their work in this way, and many (if not all) were already sharing photos on their social media accounts on the first day of class. Students were also sharing photos with Ms. Ananda in class reflection settings, and with each other and as an example, one student shared photos of a fence they built at an abused animal sanctuary, and in class, students compared it to another photo of students who had done similar work at a therapeutic riding center.
Student site/class photographs were interpreted with the photographer/service student within the interview format (specifically during Interview 2) and were used to identify student perspective as well as for recall purposes during the interview. I chose Interview 2 because at that point they had site experiences in both of their main sites, and had pictures from both sites, so converging/diverging themes that emerged as we flipped through the pictures. Students were asked to describe their actions, thinking, and approach within their site visits and will be asked to work through the photographs to explaining any experiences they had around the time the photos were taken. My main aim was to use the photos as a way to access their lived experiences and to activate their memories of specific moments at their sites for more in-depth, rich conversations.

**Program Artifacts.** Ms. Ananda was very open with providing the course materials for the program as well as some of her own photographs as well as district materials such as publicly available curriculum statements, state standards, and course advertisements. I was able to gain access to the course syllabus, student assignments, class lecture notes and Power Point slides, as well as supplemental documents and course readings.

**State Artifacts.** In addition to program artifacts, the state within which the district resides provides a 45-page “guidelines” document for service-learning and community service work in schools. The document outlines state expectations and requirements for such courses, as well as ways to start programs and to implement the state standards of service-learning in the initial course building if service-learning is new to your district/school (State of Ohio, 2014). Ms. Ananda referred to the service-learning
standards numerous times in our discussions and said she does indeed use the “guidelines” document to direct her course planning and emphasis, as well as English and social studies standards required for high school seniors in government and senior English. These standards were used as reference documents to triangulate the Willow Falls program aims and approach with state recommended approaches.

Observations. Observations took place in class during coursework and group reflection periods, out at service sites, during interviews for the next service-learning class in 2016. Observations were also conducted during a one day overnight camping retreat in October to Camp Acorn for “team building” as well as group service projects in the campground. The second service trip, ASP, took place during the final weeklong service trip to Appalachia near the end of the year, in which students are expected to work and stay in local Appalachian communities. For example, my personal roles on the trip mixed together as a combination teacher/researcher/chaperone/servant, and I experienced a variety of sites and activities with the participants in this study. Specific sites I worked included a local Head Start, the recycling plant, a goat farm, the veterans’ home, and an organic vegetable farm. Activities I participated in varied and consisted of sorting recyclables from trash on a conveyer belt, shoveling and leveling an animal pen, playing with pre-K students and reading, and talking with veterans about their lives and experiences. I also helped to pack lunches, drive the vans to shuttle students, and helped organize students in the mornings for site arrival.

These observations were intended to provide context to the program and a “from afar” view of students doing their site work using my research and personal perspectives
to inform the data collection as a researcher/teacher. The two overlapping duties as a researcher were described in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2011) as such:

First, the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know the people involved in it… participates in the daily routines of the setting, develops ongoing relations with the people in it, and observes all the while what is going on… second, the ethnographer writes down in regular, systematic ways what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of the lives of others.

(p. 1)

Therefore, during observations I recorded field notes in a variety of spaces, including during class, at sites, and on service trips. The field notes written during these events provided another perspective and rich context in addition to student interviews and journals. These field notes triangulated with “up close” student perspectives in journals, interviews, and photographs and my own service work enabled close proximity as students engaged in their own service at their home sites and on the Appalachia trip in the Spring.

Observations in the Classroom. Over the course of the nine-month class I usually visited the classroom twice a week, in total I was in the classroom 41 times, mostly on Thursdays and Fridays as students were out at their sties for Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Early in my observations Ms. Ananda suggested I focus on Thursdays as those were 90-minute block classes that consisted of 30-40 minutes of sharing about student site experiences that week as well as student anecdotes about extra service opportunities. Students also shared and discussed site pictures on Thursdays. Fridays
were reserved for journaling and final discussions about student service experiences, this was important as I discovered the journal would sometimes lead to table or large group discussions about the week’s events or about some class topics.

In my observations in the classroom I paid specific attention to a) who was speaking b) how many times students spoke c) what they spoke about, or statements about what had impacted them that week d) what the classroom mood was e) the physical space of the classroom f) how Ms. Ananda responded with her own stories and experiences as students shared their weekly work anecdotes, and g) how my position as a teacher/researcher affected how I participated, or sat back as the discussion unfolded. These categories emerged out of my initial observations in August and September and became a more intentional focus as the year went on.

**Observations at Service Sites.** I was able to check in at the sites with site supervisors and see students working in service capacities. Some key sites I took in around the local community and surrounding areas were a local animal rescue farm, a local Montessori school, a charitable organization that raised funds for other local charities, and two retirement communities in the next town. I was able to visit these sites because they fit into the service-learning schedule and my own teaching schedule at a local university, and sites were both inside and outside of Willow Falls, which was a way to try to gauge student placements both in and out of their hometown. For each site visit I talked with site supervisors, participants, and some of the people they were serving (elementary students, teachers, retirees, administrators, etc.).
I initially approached the observations of student site work in a more traditional research manner; separated from student activity and there to observe. However, as time went on and I was involved more and more with the students and teachers in class, I was asked more often to engage in reflective activities (such as one-on-ones reflections on Thursdays) and service work. After some initial reflection and memo writing, I decided to participate as often as I could within the classroom and service site contexts. To support this decision, I found some literature encouraging researcher engagement including works by Bourdieu and his work on reframing the position of the researcher in social research.

I wanted to visit student sites, talk to them in class and the hallways, go on retreats with them, participate in discussions, and work on assignments and projects in class. It was important students saw I valued service-learning, was interested in their opinions and perspectives, and designed my research to give students as much say as I could in our work together. This approach was challenging at times, and I found myself having to reflect deeply about moments in these interviews or discussions that were contradictory or complicated in regards to our service work but I believe it helped to humanize and connect student participants and myself as researcher in the data collection process.

Throughout the year I visited my participants, as well as other students who signed up as participants but did not make the final selection, at their sites. I did so not only to see students at work and how the interacted with their site supervisors, but also to participate in site activities and to chat with students informally as we worked. I visited
three schools, one therapeutic riding center with horses, a local charity office, and three retirement homes.

**Observations on Service Trips.** In addition to student sites I spent part of one evening at Camp Acorn with the service-learning classes. This event was held early in the year (October, 14\(^{th}\) 2015) as a class social event and consisted of students spending the night in cabins on a Tuesday evening, then working around the campground the next day to prep the grounds for winter. I did not stay overnight due to a teaching assignment the next morning. The evening consisted of dinner, dancing, and large group discussions about expectations and working together as a service-learning class. I was asked to help serve dinner as well as to mix with the students as they socialized with their classmates and the teachers/chaperones.

The largest continuous single on-site observations came during the Appalachia Service Project (ASP) trip in the Spring. The total time spent on the trip was five days, with days one and five consisting of travel and organization, and days two through four consisting of eight-ten hour work days at local sites, procured and scheduled by Ms. Ananda over the last fifteen years of working with this specific community. I chaperoned, drove shuttle vans (for which I had to get certified by the state and local district), worked at sites, and stayed with the students as they lived, worked, ate, and played, and helped Ms. Ananda and the other staff and chaperones (almost fifteen in total) work to coordinate student site drop-offs and pickups, meals, social activities, and excursions to local places of interest. Based on scheduling and Ms. Ananda’s willingness to allow me access, I spent time with most of my initial twelve participants at their sites
or in the pick-up shuttles before/after their work. I was able to observe and work directly with eight of the twelve participants at their sites and was able to visit and work at almost fifteen sites during the week.

**Observations in Student Application Interviews.** For one day, February 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2016, Ms. Ananda asked if I would like to see how new students were interviewed for the program for the 2016-2017 school year. As a trusted teacher in the district, she suggested I sit in, ask a few prepared questions, and debrief with Ms. Ananda about what she looks for in a student for her service-learning classes. In total I sat in on three interviews, totaling around fifteen minutes each, and two of the three students' are presently enrolled in service-learning this year. During the interview I stayed within my teacher role, only writing up a summarized research memo immediately after the debriefing with Ms. Ananda (Research Memo 10, February 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2016).

**The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).** The IDI was developed as a framework to measure intercultural competence in global and domestic contexts (Bennett, 1993; Bennett, Hammer, & Wiseman, 2003). The current IDI is in its third version, with an updated theoretical framework known as the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC). The instrument uses the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) framework and proprietary scoring to place individuals along a developmental continuum. This framework is outlined in detail on the IDI website (Intercultural Development Inventory, 2016) and described as such:

The Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC\textsuperscript{TM}) describes a set of knowledge/attitude/skill sets or orientations toward cultural difference and
commonality that are arrayed along a continuum from the more monocultural mindsets of Denial and Polarization through the transitional orientation of Minimization to the intercultural or global mindsets of Acceptance and Adaptation. The capability of deeply shifting cultural perspective and bridging behavior across cultural differences is most fully achieved when one maintains an Adaptation perspective.

The IDI instrument and reporting organize student survey answers into a proprietary, scholarly-validated continuum, placing scores within five major categories and with variations between each labeled “mindset.” Below is the IDI continuum, on the left are designations that are characterized as a monocultural mindset, meaning that one cultural perspective is experienced and valued, to the right, is an intercultural mindset, in which other cultures and perspectives are more accepted and valued:

*Figure 1. IDI Continuum (Intercultural Development Inventory, 2016)*

This instrument can be used to assess a person’s openness to new cultures or experiences with difference along a continuum of intercultural sensitivity and allows for pre/post use.
within the structure of intercultural experiences, like a service-learning course. Though typically associated with international learning, study abroad, or cultural exchanges, the IDI can be used for a multitude of cultural experiences with difference including difference corporate cultures, institutional cultures, employment needs, or personal experiences (Intercultural Development Inventory, 2016). For instance, in Westrick’s (2004) quantitative work on international school students in Hong Kong, the IDI was used in a pre/post fashion to investigate the effects of four different models of service-learning in the school, using an experimental design and the IDI as the quantitative instrument. Other studies, such as Westrick (2005), Bielefeldt, Paterson, & Swan (2010), Erasmus (2011), Russell & Morris (2008), used they IDI as they looked at service-learning programs and their influence on a variety of topics such as student voices and meaning-making, engineering and project-based learning, international study abroad, and intercultural attitudes and outcomes, respectively.

The IDI was used as a key component in this study as well as a tool to use in participant selection and narrowing processes. The IDI was administered first in September (near the beginning of the course and during their first week of site work) and once at the end of the year in April/May (after their last day at participant service sites). The administration of the IDI within this study design fits within a pre/post survey model and provided a valid, research-based, instrument for yearlong information on any intercultural changes that did or did not occur as a result of the service-learning course (Hammer, 2011).
Engaging in Service as a Researcher. As I engaged in service work I also encountered difference and working with people and in contexts I was uncomfortable with. For example, in the Veteran’s Home assignment I went into it being wary of working with senior citizens as well as being unsure of how to engage them in discussions or interactions. Through the six hours we were at the site I walked the grounds and spoke with vets on walks and in the lunchroom, visited veterans in their rooms, and saw a morning musical performance by veterans for the veterans as a member of the audience. It was uncomfortable at times and it was important to recognize my own comfort zone and initial trepidation. I did feel like I had to be a role model for service during the trip as well. Students looked to me as an adult, teacher, and chaperone, and I felt the need to exemplify the character traits that the WFHS program espoused and valued. If I were to lead student groups in service work, I felt I had to represent the program and the school in such a way that it fit the ethos and expectations of Willow Falls and the service-learning program.

Data Analysis

I approached data analysis through the creation of a data analysis design (Maxwell, 2012). To do this, I created an analysis structure based on the general procedure for qualitative data analysis outlined in Creswell (2014), utilizing grounded theory analysis procedures from Charmaz (2014). Although described as “hierarchical” and structured in theory, Creswell emphasizes the interactive nature of analyzing the data, describing the process by stating “the various stages are interrelated and not always
visited in the order presented” allowing for an iterative and transactional approach to the analysis (Creswell, 2014, p. 196).

Each stage of the data analysis was constructed to follow Creswell’s structured approach to general analysis. The approach is laid out in Table 5 in a step-by-step manner (from top to bottom) on order to provide a simplified visualization of the process (detailed steps follow Table 5):

Table 5. Data Analysis Approach

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing the raw data:</strong> Reading and listening to interview audio and transcripts, reading journals, artifacts, reading observations/field notes, looking through student pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Organization and Preparation of data:</strong> Reading and getting a more nuanced sense of the data, seeing initial emergent categories/themes and organizing into the analysis design stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Description of data:</strong> Utilized codes to describe, in specific detail, key themes, categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Representation of data:</strong> Using a narrative approach allowed for direct links to research questions and codes/themes within the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Interpretation of data:</strong> What major takeaways were found in the data, how did this connect with the initial research questions? What are the findings “saying?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grounded Theory Analysis.** Within the structure and analysis design outlined above, and specifically relating to the research questions of this study, I chose a grounded theory analysis approach to analyze data as a way to ground my work and findings in the wide array of data collected. The research questions informing this interpretivist
qualitative study design are open-ended, focused on student experience, and do not assume “right answers” or a “truth” to be uncovered. Instead, my research interests aim to capture diverse student experiences within a program, through interviews, observations, artifacts, and working along side my participants, and the grounded theory structure allows me to explore varied data sets and participant experiences while at the same time allowing for category identification and comparative analysis for emergent themes/categories (Merriam, 2002). Grounded theory pairs well with constructivist work (see Charmaz, 2014), and can be used to identify qualitative themes and categories within a constructivist research design (Hatch, 2002; Schram, 2006).

Within my research design and posed questions, utilizing grounded theory to capture student-meaning making and experience is appropriate, especially within the context studied (Charmaz, 2014; Merriam, 2002; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Incorporating grounded theory does pose possible conflicts in attempting to over-generalize the findings to other programs or participants, however the aim of this study was not generalizability, but instead transferability and description of student experiences from which the reader could apply into their own settings, contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within this study the aim is to close in further on student identity regarding intercultural experiences and civic mindedness through service-learning, and regardless of how accurate these experiences may be able to be captured, identifying student experiences and using grounded theory methodology enabled recognition and appreciation for the student experiences and the research conducted within the service-learning context.
The first month in the research setting I collected and analyzed IDI scores as well as participant information out of the forty-six initial students who signed consent forms. Through the IDI and initial observations and site work, as well as talking with Ms. Ananda, I narrowed the participant field to twelve. For each of the twelve students I created a dossier, consisting of site placements, IDI scores, demographic information, course schedule and section, initial field notes about class activity and participation, and any specific discussions/field notes with Ms. Ananda. These dossiers allowed for an in depth look at the twelve participants and after the first interview with all twelve, allowed further context to narrow the participant field to the five included in this study.

After spending the first month organizing and creating the participant dossiers, listening to audio from interviews, and reading through observation notes, field notes, memos, and transcribed interview texts, I used specific coding approaches in order to identify emergent categories and themes in the data. To digitally track and organize my codes I used NVivo qualitative analysis software to house my documents as well as identify codes, themes, and data categories. NVivo enabled me to combine, separate, and organize my codes (or “nodes” in NVivo) into categories and themes as well as to keep codes related to specific participants and contexts well organized.

Using Charmaz (2014) as my grounded theory reference, I proceeded to organize and code the data from observations, interviews, journals, pictures, and field notes. Initial coding involved a line-by-line coding approach with specific attention paid to important, compelling events. As categories from this coding process emerged and some lines contained multiple, layered understandings, this complexity allowed for a deeper
look into the participants made-meanings and understandings as they were confronted with their site work and class emphases.

Second, I coded the codes, using focused coding to organize and being to synthesize the meanings and events among the participants and their experiences (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). The aim of using multiple stages is meant to provide trustworthiness and fidelity to the research design. According to Charmaz (2014, p. 142) “the strength of grounded theory coding derives from this type of concentrated, active involvement in the process. You interact with and act upon your data rather than passively read them.” This approach to constructivist grounded theory analysis is important for this study for two reasons; 1) the participant experiences are so varied and complex that there needs to be a central analysis through a systematic, organized approach to bring the data together in order to look for themes and categories, and 2) using Charmaz’s constructivist approach allows for important connections with the research questions, the study design, the data collected, and the analytical approaches used in the methodology. Below, in Table 6, is a brief excerpt of the coding approach used in participant interviews. This specific passage is from Samantha (Interview 3, May 16, 2016):

Table 6. Excerpt, Grounded Theory Analysis Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Text</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Q- What makes the classroom part of service learning I guess unique, what’s it like in there that makes it like a unique experience? What else kind of makes service learning, service learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A grounded theory approach allowed me to analyze student data in order to identify meaning making processes and identity formation. Interpreting student data and coding significant passages, then recoding these passages enabled a recursive approach to the data and allowed me to revisit participant statements multiple times in order to identify emergent themes and categories (Merriam, 2002).

**Methodological Challenges**
There were specific challenges to this study that influenced why I chose the design and analysis approach as well as why I decided to narrow down my participant pool to five.

The participant pool and prospective data in regards to this qualitative study design proved to be large as twelve initial participants and multiple data sets (see below) provided a vast amount of field notes, interview transcripts, pictures, and IDI data. This amount of data was a concern from the outset of this dissertation (and within the proposal defense process), and multiple steps were taken in the study design to mitigate these concerns.

Limiting the number of participants through initial discussions, collected data, and filtering through IDI results, was deemed necessary by myself and my dissertation committee members; this limited data collection on the class but allowed for more thorough depth in key participant data sets. However, this was also a limitation in the study as interviews and documents were collected for all twelve participants, but the experiences of only five would inform the work in this study.

The way participants were narrowed also allowed access to a larger participant group, twelve participants initially, in order to inform decision-making as the group was finally narrowed to five using initial data coding and the creation of participant dossiers for a more robust picture of each participants experience in the class. The aim of this process was to make sure participants with varied, interesting, and unique experiences would be a central focus of the study. This use of data to narrow the participant group
was incredibly helpful in early theme-detection and coding category generation from a larger data pool.

The time frame of the study was also a challenge. Nine months of fieldwork as well as multiple overnight trips and at least two days a week in the classroom/school was not easy to manage. The amount of interview audio and transcription was a major challenge and an outside service was used for roughly half of the transcription work. The layers of the study also contributed to the difficulty of this design; student sites, classrooms, and service trips required an immense amount of time and commitment, and the time spent in observations and service work was in the hundreds of hours.

Throughout the process, key adaptations allowed for a smoother schedule and approach that still allowed for access to the participants in class and at their sites. Consulting with Ms. Ananda about student schedules and site placements allowed for early identification of participants who had unique site placements and were available for interviews.

**Changes in the Study**

The design of the study underwent a few changes as the research process progressed. First, two students were added to the initial ten considered for full participation, one of the students Samantha, was selected as one of the final five participants. The reason the two students were added was based on recommendations to include students who might not be “getting it” and were struggling with aspects of the service-learning Program. Ms. Ananda recommended both students as students she
identified as struggling, and after discussing the approach with my dissertation director I decided to add the participants to the pool.

Second, although it was not initially part of the intent of the research design, engaging in researcher service work became part of the expectations almost immediately. I was not expecting to be asked to take part in service, or to contribute in the classroom as a “teacher,” which I did in class discussions when asked (I never did lesson planning nor did I run activities or class procedures). Visiting sites and working in the classroom with students, Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson both asked for contributions during class, at sites, and in reflection periods. I engaged in all of the activities presented with the motivation to not only seek out similar experiences to my participants, but also to become part of the “family” in the sense that I was not looked at simply as an outsider, there to observe and research, but in the fashion of Bourdieu’s construction of a researcher/doer, leading to a more authentic relationship with participants and teachers in this specific context.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is in integral part of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The influence of the researcher, especially as a teacher in the district within which I am researching, must be addressed and explored. Within this study design my aim was to become part of the service-learning community. I did this through service work, informal conversations, participating in some class activities and discussions, as well as to function as a chaperone/leader on the service trips students took throughout the year. I wanted to be seen as a researcher with my participants but also as someone who valued what they were doing in service-learning and someone who was trustworthy. I asked open-ended
questions as well as encouraged critical thinking and follow-up probes to address concerns participants had about the class or their work.

**Prolonged Engagement.** In addition to the concepts outlined below, one main focus of this study design was prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Working with participants in the field for an extended amount of time allows for a recursive experience as observations, interviews, and participant data are experienced for weeks and months. From Creswell & Miller (2000):

> Being in the field over time solidifies evidence because researchers can check out the data and their hunches and compare interview data with observational data. It is not a process that is systematically established, but constructivists recognize that the longer they stay in the field, the more the pluralistic perspectives will be heard from participants and the better the understanding of the context of participant views. (p. 128)

Through prolonged engagement a holistic account of the context of the study and the interactions and processes of the participants can be observed and experienced. Working with people over a period allows for confidence in researcher assertions.

In addition to my researcher presence and positionality, and my prolonged engagement in the field, I actively incorporated three important data collection concepts to engender trustworthiness: 1) triangulation, 2) peer debriefing, and 3) transferability.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation was a major focus of this study and was a key justification in collecting the amount of data that I did for this study. Using different sources of data referring to specific events or experiences allows for a "coherent
justification for themes” (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). Interviews, participant journals, observations and field notes, and student pictures were all intended to provide a large swath of experiential documentation from both the researcher and participant’s perspectives (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This collection structure allowed for multiple data points regarding each experience or set of experiences. For example, one participant named Samantha wrote about her experience with an abused pig at the animal rescue site where she was placed in a journal entry. This animal also appeared in her photographs of the farm, and came up in one of our interviews regarding a tough experience she had. Each data set contributed details to her experience with the animal and allowed us to reference the experience multiple times together in the data collection process.

**Peer Debriefing.** For peer debriefing, I recruited a “critical friend” (a fellow doctoral candidate in my Curriculum & Instruction program) to help screen initial coding work. This peer debrief occurred after initial coding had occurred and categories were emerging from these coding attempts and functioned as a sounding board for ideas and approach (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Using a peer to read and interpret data was meant as a “check” on my initial coding approach as well as my early analysis regarding emergent themes and findings. The meeting was meant to open my work to a fellow scholar to gain insight into approach, design, and possible missed opportunities or blind spots.

My peer and I met once for two hours to discuss coding processes, organizational approaches, and initial findings and my critical friend allowed for important interpretative questions as well as providing insight from outside of the study and setting. The critical
friend looked through my NVivo files as well as parts of the findings chapter as we discussed how I collected, analyzed, and coded the data during the analysis. Finally, we discussed the participants and some of the findings as well as how the research questions were constructed.

**Transferability.** Finally, the concept of transferability informed this study design and helped establish trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tuckett, 2005). In order to provide rich reporting and examples I described the context of the town and school setting, as well as the service sites and the examples of student service work. I used purposeful sampling and a prolonged participant identification process in order to create a wide range of participant experiences and backgrounds. Finally, through prolonged engagement and detailed findings write-up in Chapters IV and V in this study, student quotes and examples, backgrounds, and purposes, were reported and shared.

**Ethical Considerations**

I started this study by gaining university IRB approval and working through the proposal and committee processes to make sure that initial steps were taking to protect my participants, the school district, and myself. I attained proper clearance from the school district and my university through the IRB process. Finally, through informed consent forms and two presentations; one to students in the class and one to parents at the school open house in August, 2015, I was able to articulate the purpose and design of this study.

There were few major ethical concerns in the implementation of this study and there were no incidents or issues with student or teacher participants, nor from the district
administrators, throughout the duration of the nine-month study. However their were two areas that I felt should be reported here; one, my teaching history in the district and status as a known teacher/researcher, and two, complaints about the program and teachers during student interviews.

The first concern was how students viewed me as I had multiple roles in the program during the year. First and foremost I was there as a researcher, but due to my connection to the district and the teachers, students knew who I was and knew a great deal about my teaching background. Most students thought of me as a trusted teacher in the classroom and at site as well as chaperone on the trips, and they viewed me as someone who was a valued part of the program. Students had my cell phone number and email throughout the trips in case they needed help or picked up with a van, and I was expected to help keep students motivated and working at their sites during the Camp Acorn and ASP excursions.

Second, was the concern students would avoid criticism of the program and teaching in our interviews as I was a teacher in the school district where I was conducting research. However, multiple times students complained of classroom or teaching approaches as well as their site work. These complaints ranged from workload and assignment issues, to grade complaints, to site placements. At no time did I report their statements to Ms. Ananda or Mr. Johnson and I chose to follow up with probing questions to try to identify some of their struggles through the interview process in the name of this research study, not to report their complaints to the teachers of the program.
I had to receive approval for this study design and data collection processes through my research institution the Internal Review Board (IRB). This was especially important as my participants were minors, and one level of ethical consideration was that only participants, who provided their own approval, and their parents, were allowed to participate in the study. Students and their parents were required by the district and the IRB process to sign consent forms. Detailed informed consent forms for parents and students, approved by the Kent State University IRB, included language regarding interview process, audio recording protocol, opt-out, and a benefit/cost description. In order for participants to take part in this study they had to sign an informed consent form along with their parents (please see Appendix A and B for copies of the approved consent forms).

In addition to IRB and district approval I made sure participants were reminded in each interview, while the digital recorder was running, of the opt-out script and their rights as participants to withdraw consent for the study at any point. I also made sure to include language explicitly stating that their standing in class, with the service-learning teachers, and with school administrators would not be affected by any decisions to either stay in, or withdrawal from, the study.

Participants (students and teachers) were also assured that any generated data was confidential, password protected, and for use within the context of these study and future publications regarding this study. Student confidentiality was maintained through a password-protected laptop and storage medium (Google Drive) as well as a password
protected external hard drive. Student pseudonyms were used in place of real names in all of the data outside of a participant pseudonym “key” with actual participant names.

Finally, there were a few students in the service-learning course that I had taught in previous years of high school. Two of these students ended up in the initial round of twelve participants, with one of these students (“Samantha”) selected for the final group of five participants. Samantha and I had a good rapport as student and teacher in prior years and the participant was willing to do the study after I discussed my concerns with her about having been her teacher in the past, namely that she would feel inclined to paint the program in an overly positive light or that she would want to help me in my work. The participant assured me she understood my concerns and that she wanted to do the study. As for worry about how she portrayed the program in our interviews, she was the most critical of my five participants and was very honest about her issues in the program and with some of her service site problems.

**Conclusion**

In Chapter III I wrote about the methodology of this study, the theoretical framework that influenced this study design, and the specific methods used to collect and analyze contextual and participant data. Exploring the theoretical frameworks and related literature in Chapter II, I linked my research to an interpretive research design, through a bricolage approach, and informed by democratic and critical social theory. I described the context of the study as well as descriptions of the participants, the service-learning program, and my approach as a researcher/servant. Finally, I outlined the key
components of my data analysis approach as well as important considerations of ethics and trustworthiness in the study.
CHAPTER IV
PROGRAM AND CONTEXT

Introduction

In this dissertation I wanted to explore student conceptions of service, citizenship, community and civic identity, working with difference, and intercultural learning as they enrolled in a yearlong high school service-learning course. I focused on three major questions for this study:

1. How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?

2. What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding civic mindedness and community within a service-learning program?

3. How do students construct meaning (if at all), experiencing difference with people of diverse ages, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?

   a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?

   b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

The purpose of this study was to learn about students in a service-learning classroom “in action” and to explore student experiences, conceptions, ideals, beliefs, and challenges. Using data from participant interviews, observations, student photos, and researcher
participation in service I looked at how student conceptions emerged throughout the nine-
month course as well as specific experiences that informed their thinking.

As a social studies educator the main goal of teaching my students, whether it is
in government classes, world history, economics, sociology, or psychology, is to expose
students to different ways of thinking and being, to encourage “variation of action” in
regards to citizenship and civic identity (Dewey, 1927). Schools must incorporate varied
experiences with difference into their classrooms because, simply, we can no longer
avoid different ways of thinking, being, different cultures, languages, perspectives, etc.
The emergence of rapid human migrations (forced and voluntary), media expansion to
new places exposing new cultural practices, and an inherent need for cultures to
communicate and negotiate to address global issues such as climate change, water
shortages, and transnational warfare has created much greater demand for human
interaction, understanding, and working together. Human cooperation and working with
difference must be the order of education as we move forward to deal with these issues.
Understanding and valuing difference and constructing experiences to enable these
understandings, over ignorance and fear, must be the focus of our teaching and learning.
Arguably, learning to work together with difference, to have cooperation among humans,
is seen as the very key to species success and survival (Hammerstein, 2003, p. 8).

Study participants wrestled with these understandings and during their
experiences working with difference. This was not linear, neat, or straight-forward, but
was instead messy, recursive, and complicated. Students experienced tensions in their
places as citizens and local/national/global community members. The aim of the service-
learning course (according to teachers and students) was to contribute to others, to change their sites for the better, and to be there, “in the moment” with those at their service sites. The goal was to become, in their words, “servants.” This study was designed to capture moments as students worked through their own backgrounds and experiences and struggled to understand their experiences with difference.

This chapter begins with reporting about the research context, specifically in how the context informed the study as well as the data collection and experiences as a researcher. This section includes a brief introduction to the participants and their roles, as well as an introduction to the program structure and pedagogy. In addition to the students’ lived experiences in this context there are official state and program documents such as service-learning state standards, syllabi and assignments, as well as research site spaces/physical structure, and the school district itself. The chapter is then broken into two main sections, summaries of individual participant experiences and statements (five in total), and the emergent findings as they pertain to key themes and understandings, culled from participant interviews, journals, pictures, and class observations.

**Context Introduction**

For this research study design there were three important factors in how I went about collecting data. With the aims of triangulation and rich description in mind, I developed a specific rationale for how I collected context data. This rationale was dependent on three key hallmarks of this study design and my researcher positionality; 1) the duration and context of the data collection process allowed for a wide variety of experiences, interviews, and artifacts. 2) My personal interpretive research lens currently
fits within a broad, emergent process regarding the research approach of a *bricoleur*. Finally, 3) I wanted to go beyond the researcher/participant power dynamic and paradigm, choosing to engage in service along with my participants, as well as working with my participants to collect and interpret data (photographs). These three factors, along with my diverse research questions regarding community, citizenship, and intercultural skills, pointed my work towards a flexible qualitative approach.

**Program Context.** The design of the service-learning program was meant to be a structured, academic, approach towards goals personal growth and service experiences for accepted students. The service-learning course selects students from the senior class through an interview-centered application process; in selecting students for the program, special attention was given to personality, volunteer history, and family involvement and is widely considered to be an important part of the school and community. The program was highly valued in the district and by administrators, but has been the subject of possible cuts or re-workings as the school is progressing through budgetary concerns.

Program participants engaged in a yearlong service-learning program, consisting of local sites in surrounding urban, suburban, and rural settings, this program culminated in a trip to Appalachia in which students engage with a community that has been hosting this specific service-learning program for over a decade (future research could be aimed at getting community members from the Appalachia region to express their experiences and relation to these students, the teachers, and the program). The stated goals of the service-learning program include personal, moral, ethical, and cultural growth.
The teachers, Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, state and local documents and mission statements, class observations, site observations, doing service with the students in the program, and engaging on two service trips, informed the context of this study and allowed for a deep look into how the program was constructed.

**Teacher Participants.** I interviewed the two service-learning teachers, one English and one social studies, to provide context into the aims and objectives of the service program, as well as to explore the teaching approach and pedagogical methods used to achieve these aims. I wanted to interview the teachers not only to better understand the context and approach to the course, but also to identify the key purposes of the course.

**Ms. Ananda.** The lead teacher in the service-learning course, Ms. Ananda has been teaching in this program for fifteen years. She has been the driving organizer, teacher, and curriculum writer for the course and utilizes her experiences in college in a similar program to inform how she thinks about schooling, service and the link to community and citizenship. Ms. Ananda is in her late thirties, a white female, and she considers herself as politically liberal. She is National Board Certified, and holds a Master’s Degree in English from a large, rural, Midwestern university. Her experiences with a professor there, as well as her work as a Girl Scout in the women’s community, resonated with her and her teaching and drove her to seek out a teaching position that would allow her to continue her service teaching and learning.
In looking at her life history in service in our interview, there was one moment in Ms. Ananda’s early life, in particular, that stuck with her as the turning point in her interest in service work.

One of the biggest turning points of my life… and I was like, a bratty 12 year old. We went to Washington DC and we are all eating our lunch, just sitting out in a common area, I don’t remember where, and one of my fellow Girl Scouts dropped her apple on the ground, and refused to eat it. It had one bite in it and she put it in the trashcan. And this man came over, and he took it out of the trashcan, and started eating it and a couple of the other girls in my troop were so disgusted by that… and I just remember this feeling of ‘WTF’… this moment of clarity and shift, like, what is this? And I remember my Girl Scout leader going over to this man, and she had a soda bottle and all of our food, and he started crying… and that for me was one of the biggest points in my life. (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

This experience led Ms. Ananda to seek out service experiences that confronted her with the layers in this story; the reason a girl threw her food away with abandon, the stark reality of poverty as she saw it, the way her leader recognized what was happening and made a decision, and the way Ms. Ananda felt as she struggled with seeing something so shocking, sad, and confusing.

Ms. Ananda continued to be interested in service work and got more involved in Girl Scouts through her teenage years. Once in college she expanded her service work as a Resident Assistant and Resident Director, which required service as part of the
appointment. These experiences led to an important realization; these experiences left her doubting that required service was the way to go, and that it had to be a choice. This frustrated Ms. Ananda because there was no organic “buy-in” for her or anybody else in the college program.

This set of experiences as an RA shifted Ms. Ananda’s focus in her current teaching to working towards student “buy-in” in the program in order to ensure organic human connection and true intentions are there. Ms. Ananda realized she needed to see the bigger picture when human interaction was involved and she talked specifically about her struggles to see how required service and “labor” forms of service would be as beneficial as those that involved human interaction and working with diverse groups. One example of her realization that this was a critical part of service work happened in college:

I was a Resident Director and we partnered up with a local elderly home and we did a casino night, and I was teaching a leadership course at school then, and I brought my whole group with me. Then, it brought a much different meaning to me, we were not just labor, but making a connection with this group of elderly that really don’t get a lot of visitors. (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

Ms. Ananda’s RA experiences showed her what she did not want, a required course, something that was necessary to graduate or gain credit; she was interested in self-motivation and selection for service work, which in her mind allowed for more meaningful experiences.
Ms. Ananda’s own classroom experiences as a college student also had a profound influence on her thinking about service and teaching. Ms. Ananda had an experience with a college professor, whom she affectionately referred to as ‘Doc,” who challenged her to question why she was in education and to consider her privilege.

He totally shifted my perspective… have you ever questioned your privilege in your entire life? I remember a lot of people in class getting defensive, and this man, Dr. Jamal, a strong African-American man who researched Malcolm X and MLK, and he can come across as a very loving but authoritative persona and I remember, I thought… oh my gosh, what has happened to me? And he would say education is a spiritual, progressive, political experience. (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

This perspective shift set the stage for Ms. Ananda’s teaching in service-learning, especially at Willow Falls. According to a story relayed by Ms. Ananda, she felt conflicted about teaching at Willow Falls, due to the relative privilege of the school. She had the opportunity to take the WFHS job or one in a more rural, economically disadvantaged area, but took the job at Willow Falls on the advice of Dr. Jamal, as he told her that WFHS may be where she was needed, to address privilege with the privileged.

It was apparent that Ms. Ananda’s approach and life lessons in service work set the structure and tone in the classroom and at service sites. The language, syllabus design, course assignments, and the overarching themes in the service-learning program emerged from her work and teaching style and students viewed her as the driving teacher in the program. Often referred to as “mom,” (more on the “Family” aspect of this course
later in this chapter) and was viewed as the compassionate role model of which to emulate in students’ own work. There is a definite gendered component to this arrangement, as Ms. Ananda is viewed consistently as the “compassionate mother” figure while Mr. Johnson, more so as the fun-loving, academically oriented “father” figure. For example, when asked about her role in the class, students responded in a variety of ways, almost all positive, and all referring to her presence and style as a teacher. Most specifically she was referred to as an example, a way to teach and do service, to push outside of your comfort zone, in an exemplary fashion. According to Bernice, “yeah, she is like the Buddha on top, and you’re like… the goal” (Bernice, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).

Modeling the service behavior, the compassion, the ability to interact and treat her students as “human” was a common refrain from participants. For Bernice the fitting imagery revealed a Zen-like figure, wise and loving, and someone to emulate in service work. Another participant, Samantha, described Ms. Ananda:

I think Ananda’s just whole persona, like the way she treats you, like every time you answer or like raise your hand, she’s like yes beautiful or like there you go, you wonderful person. Or like if you did something wrong or missed a question, she would say ok, you’re still a wonderful person. (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016)

This quote addresses the “human” connection students often felt with Ananda as they believed she viewed them as something more than a student, or a test score. Academically-oriented Samantha notice that she was immediately treated differently in
class and felt that Ms. Ananda would not look down on a student for missing a point or an assignment. Finally, Jessica mentions a specific moment when Ms. Ananda modeled the servant behavior that was expected in the program; “I was at the slaughterhouse this week… I think it was a really memorable experience and Ananda was definitely out of her comfort zone (class laughs)” (ASP Trip Observation, April 21, 2016).

Leading by example, Ms. Ananda considered her self an important role model for the students, one that was able to model what she expected in personal interactions, teaching preparation, and service work. This approach showed how important it was for her to model servant behavior and to provide guidance through her teaching and actions. Her teaching approach, one that heavily involves group work and discussions as well as student agency, also mirrors her service approach and allows for students to envision their work and interactions with others as they engage in service.

Ms. Ananda had very specific goals for the course and they involved working with the community, student buy-in and participation, and the adoption of a servant identity. In our end-of-the-year interview, Ms. Ananda talked often about the meaning of the word servant. The word servant was present in many assignments as something to aspire to, an exemplar of a good service-learning student, and Ms. Ananda made a specific distinction between a “community member,” and a “community servant.” When asked to explain the servant ideal and why she used this word in the program, Ananda stated:

I’m looking for it in terms of, that the students aren’t just students… the goal is that you are giving yourself to the community, the goal is that you let go of “me”
and so it becomes “we.” And I think in part of that you are serving others, and so the noun of that is ‘servant’…There are some potential connotations to the word that can be seen as a negative piece, but the spirit of the word is that we are giving ourselves to the community so that the community can use us in a better way, to make all of us better. So that’s how we used it. (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

The servant ideal is something greater than a student who is engaged in community service. It is a journey of “giving ourselves;” this idea that students are expected to go beyond the act of service in order to embrace the higher calling of the class, set the parameters for how students thought of their own servant identity formation and their work.

As we continued to talk about her conception of the word servant and her own beliefs (she is a practicing Buddhist), Ms. Ananda stated that “education is supposed to be a spiritual journey” and she readily embraced that approach to the class stating that part of the experience is to find the students’ “spiritual” path as they learn (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). Ms. Ananda continued to believe that she was working through her own privilege each time she taught the class, the language, the authors in books the student read, and ideals of inclusivity, in order to enable the formation of a servant identity. A key component of Ms. Ananda’s approach was that she worked to enable as many opportunities as possible for students to experience difference in order to see new perspectives and contexts.
When asked if about how “exposure” to difference happens and how her “power” has influenced the way she thinks of the course, the subject matter, and her teaching. She explained:

I try to think about it [exposure to difference]. For me, I’m like, well what if someone is struggling with being in a biracial relationship? I always try to include at least one LGBT book, and always trying to be more inclusive. As far as being a white person, I am always going to benefit from white privilege, and when I first started working with Doc there was a lot of guilt, I had a lot of guilt… but instead of feeling guilty it’s about what am I going to do with this position of power… And I remember email Doc my very first year of teaching, somebody said that I was indoctrinating my students, and I asked Doc, what do I do with this… and he said, you are… but a part of that is opening up the world and looking at it from various perspectives. (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

Throughout our time together Ms. Ananda talked about the “guilt” she mentioned in this quote. She struggled with teaching privileged students in a wealthy school district, unsure of what her role is at times, and mentioned a job offer she had received fifteen years ago to run a service program in a poor, rural school district. She wrestled with her position often during the year, and says it does weigh ton her. Ms. Ananda’s exploration of how she chose literature for the service-learning course, allowed us to see her thinking about including difference and how she thought of the role it played in the service experiences her students had. Ms. Ananda’s “guilt” pushed her to think of teaching her
students from various perspectives and places, and hoped to use her “position of power” to change their worldviews (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

As a teacher, regarding the goals of the service-learning class, Ms. Ananda said that at this point she “really doesn’t care about English,” and that her biggest goal in teaching, is that her “kids” become more compassionate people; “compassion and community is the end goal” (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). Ms. Ananda’s statements show that her focus is on the service-oriented goals of the class, those that align with personal and communal growth, and allow for students to experience a change in themselves, through their work. Ms. Ananda looked for students that asked questions, engaged with their classmates and tried to respond to each other when they experienced issues. Some students looked for the answers from the teachers, according to Ms. Ananda, while others tried to search out their classmates and their friends; grades, deadlines, and academic performance were all viewed as secondary.

That being said, Ms. Ananda stated that she struggled this year with the group of students who took part in this study. In her fifteen years as a service-learning teacher, she said that this was her second-toughest year. She shared:

I keep replaying in my mind, well what else could I have done, to get them… to let go of ‘me, me, me, me.’ I don’t think I was as successful this year as I have been in previous years. I’m not as pleased as how it went compared to other years.” (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

The year prior, she and Mr. Johnson both claim, was an excellent class in regards to service and buy-in. And Ms. Ananda even went on to say that in terms of academics, this
year was the top of her career, but this year the group was not buying-in in the way she had hoped. In comparison, she described the previous years class as more challenged in academics, but much more involved in the aims of the class.

Last year’s students… I had to chase them around about late work, their grades were lower, and I’ve said to you, I really don’t give a crap about grades, because grades measure absolutely other than a single performance in a subject area. So… They were nice, they tried, they let go… they were willing to share with each other. I remember at the end of ASP this kid stood up and was talking about how, her suicide attempts, and that if it wasn’t for her community members in service-learning something would have happened…. Its there choice if they buy in, it’s their opportunity, and if they stay in their bubble, I can only force them out so much.” (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

These two statements give a brief look into her aims as the lead service-learning teacher and how she views students who are, or are not, “getting it.” Students who did not “buy-in” to the communal, personal, and servant aims of the course were not doing as well.

Ms. Ananda views academics as a necessary evil in many ways, and tries as often as she can to ensure that service aims are the center of the academic assignments in the course.

**Mr. Johnson.** Mr. Johnson was mostly responsible for teaching social studies/government standards, site visits, scheduling, and sharing of grading and service evaluations. Mr. Johnson is a highly respected teacher in the district, and like Ms. Ananda, is also Nationally Board Certified, and holds a Master’s Degree. His master’s is in History from a prestigious Midwestern university. Mr. Johnson considers himself a
moderate conservative, a practicing Catholic, and has been teaching in the district for fifteen years. He has been the social studies teacher in the service-learning program for a total of seven years (this is his second stint with Ms. Ananda due to scheduling changes) and according to Ms. Ananda, he is known as a good-natured, highly intelligent, and caring teacher. He teaches service-learning (the government periods) and AP U.S. History, he is well liked by his students in service-learning. Program students affectionately refer to him as their “awkward dad” and value his approach to class and his general enthusiasm for learning and service. Students extolled Mr. Johnson’s engaging, humorous personality, presence, and authenticity in their interviews. Some examples of the study participants’ views of Mr. Johnson and his teaching came up in our interviews; here, Vincent discusses Mr. Johnson’s teaching approach:

Like, Mr. Johnson can stay up there, and talk about government the whole time, but he likes to move around, he’ll like give examples. And like, throw some peoples’ names in there, and stuff like that, to like get peoples’ attention. And, it’s just like really fun, and he’s also like, a goofy dude. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Mr. Johnson’s personality is important in the classroom and out at sites. Seemingly always smiling and engaged in students’ lives, Mr. Johnson comes across as incredible knowledgably and caring. Known for his goofy sense of humor, it is no surprise Vincent refers to his classroom demeanor as “fun” and attention grabbing. Samantha explains Mr. Johnson’s ability to keep student attention:
I think when the Gov. evaluation [student surveys about the course]… like one of the comments I made was that he’s one of the few teachers who will like sit there and lecture and it doesn’t put you to sleep. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

His teaching style, an engaging teacher-centric approach with important essential questions, appealed to the study participants and Mr. Johnson’s personality was often cited as a positive force in the class. The way the service-learning students viewed Mr. Johnson was as something more than a classroom teacher, but as a role model and father figure, as well as someone who deeply cared about student well being and learning.

Mr. Johnson grew up in a large Midwestern city and spoke repeatedly about his service experiences in school and growing up in his community. Mr. Johnson went to all-boys Catholic schools during his formal educational years (grades 1-12) and he said public service was often “built-in” to school activities. Mr. Johnson talked about small service experiences like setting up for bingo nights, banquets, helping with school retreats involving mentoring underclassmen, and points to an early interest in a career in the church.

In high school [I engaged in service] because I was a member of National Honor Society and also Peer Ministry. And a lot of that we did was service to our own school… helped underclassmen in terms of religion classes and youth ministering to them. My service was largely through high school and helping out my immediate high school community… it wasn’t so much as going out into greater
Mr. Johnson’s first service experiences allowed him to engage with his community in a way he had not before, this experience was confined to his high school, however, it still provided a human connection with other students that he found appealing. Also, his role as a “teacher” or role model appealed to his initial ideas regarding teaching as a profession.

Mr. Johnson pointed out the Peer Ministry course was similar to service learning in that it was voluntary. However, Mr. Johnson made a specific statement regarding the course credit and how he viewed his Peer Ministry service differently than many of the students in the service learning class.

Peer Ministry was a pure elective, I chose to do it. It wasn’t anything in terms of ‘it will get me something special at graduation or something on my resume.’ I was toying with the idea at the time of becoming a religious… like a Brother [a Catholic religious title] or something like that… it really was the teaching aspect and why I ended up being a teacher…. I enjoyed that quite a bit and uh, NHS was a fun little group to be in, and part of it was the prestige, but it was something to also be involved with the other guys at times and do things around the school.

(Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

Mr. Johnson’s discovery of his teaching attributes in his service work in high school drove him to seek out similar experiences in college and then as a professional. But Mr. Johnson also alludes to his sense of belonging to the community here, especially with his
fellow classmates and school friends; service was a way to connect with them on a much deeper level as well as to work to form a more close-knit, family-like community with his classmates.

Mr. Johnson went into teaching against the wishes of his parents, who felt he should do something more substantial with his life. Willow Falls was his first teaching job, having moved to the area to be closer to his wife’s family when he took the position. He did not start in service-learning, but instead as a U.S. History teacher, but gravitated towards teaching in the program as his interests in community service, and good working relationship with Ms. Ananda, drew him to service-learning.

Within the service-learning class at Willow Falls, Mr. Johnson focused on the Government aspect of teaching as well as helping to assist with student issues at service sites, service site visits, and some service site connections with the site supervisors, specifically at the local hospitals. Mr. Johnson graded and lesson planned all of the Government assignments, as well as some shared projects between the literature and Government sections. He also took turns grading some of the more general service-related class assignments like student journals and reflection activities.

Mr. Johnson and Ms. Ananda both mentioned their synergy as teachers and the respect between the two instructors was present in our discussions about their roles in the course. Mr. Johnson specifically cited some organizational similarities they both had and claimed it was the key to their ability to work together. Mr. Johnson talked about similar work ethic, both being “Type-A” personalities, and relying heavily on lists (physical and email) in communications with each other (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).
Mr. Johnson discussed his role in the classroom at length during our interviews together. He felt that the class itself should be built around “empowerment and character building” and set up his Government sections to reflect that (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). During the first semester the class focuses on required state government content standards and creating wide-ranging, essential questions about controversial issues (for example, abortion and government poverty/welfare programs). The second semester opens the class up into a more deliberative approach with group projects, presentations about U.S. presidents, and original research and presentations on policy changes in the local community, operating within the knowledge about government operation carried over from first semester content.

Mr. Johnson also talked specifically about his role regarding the “mental health” of his students. This was a major theme in our year-end interview and it surfaced a few times in our informal conversations (as it did with Ms. Ananda). In Government classes he often addressed stress, work ethic, emotional issues, and personal problems with students. In this interview exchange, he explains how important the role of “counselor” has become in the program. He described this new role:

Increasingly as the years have gone on, I am doing less a teacher and more as a guidance counselor. It just seems that the students I deal with now, maybe it was always there but I wasn’t aware of it. It seems they have bigger issues in their personal lives… I increasingly spend more time talking with or working with students on personal, mental health, you know family-type issues, and less on ‘here is how you write a thesis statement’ or here is how you analyze a document.
Service-learning almost forces that [personal journey]. It’s not as intense curriculum-wise, as my AP US class… but there ends up being a lot more of the, uh, human, personal side that must be dealt with. (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

Further talking about his position in the class itself, Mr. Johnson expanded on his role as something more than a typical Government or social studies teacher. He viewed his role as part of creating an emotional safe space for students to allow themselves to say what they feel, and to be vulnerable. Mr. Johnson explained:

I think about it in terms of emotions, a class ending with tears, or for example, one of our students talking about one of her hospice patients that she lost breaking into tears. Where that same student, only four months early, was having a hard time like ‘what do I do with hospice’ it was very strange for her… Four months earlier she was having a hard time with it… now she is in tears over it? When I walk into my AP US class you are not seeing tears, unless they got a bad test back [laughs]. (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

As a teacher, this course represents an opportunity to reach students on a deeper, more personal, level. Both Mr. Johnson and Ms. Ananda value the relationships that are formed in the program and being able to teach something “more” than a typical class allows for a fulfilling and emotional journey each year.

As for his personal aims in service-learning, Mr. Johnson talked about his own work as a high school student in Catholic school. His service work focused on work ethic, creating human connections and relationships, and how it impacted his career
choice. For the students he taught, his service experiences linked pedagogically to his work in the Willow Falls program. Like in his own service history, social relationships were a major focus in Mr. Johnson’s work. Mr. Johnson talked about students letting go of cliques, past slights, or social strife and instead, they should be focused on the community of the program and each other. The relationships in class were a key focus in both teachers’ work and they constructed the class to setup interactions in the name of forming service-learning “community.” Mr. Johnson values student partnerships and work ethic and believes he is preparing students to work and live in their communities in the future, to be good citizens, people, neighbors, and workers.

Finally, Mr. Johnson talked about adjusting his teaching to fit the needs of his service-learning students and working to maintain a classroom and environment that enabled free and open discussion, without judgment and anger or fear. This was a key component of our interview and was an important goal in Mr. Johnson’s conception of the class and how it should operate, to best provide opportunity for the students to learn to research, discuss, debate, and make decisions.

Like Ms. Ananda, Mr. Johnson also stated that students had to meet the teachers part way, there was no magic approach to push the students forward, the students cannot be forced to become more tolerant of difference or more active in their work; they had to take the final step; “Again, are they willing to take that [final step]… we can’t force somebody, we can give them forum and all the full context, but they have to take the final step” (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).
This statement illustrates that pushing students out of the “bubble” in Willow Falls is not easy and the design of the course exists to provide a space to make the attempt. The mental health focus, “Family” atmosphere, student connections, relationships, and the work ethic all factor heavily into Mr. Johnson’s aims for the class, each focus playing an important part in how he sees his approach to his work as a role model in the class as well as his teaching.

**Situating the Program.** In the home state of Willow Falls’ school district, service-learning courses adhere to a variety of state and local standards and aims. While in the district itself, larger mission statements and community ethos provide the context for the class and it’s students. There are multiple official documents that outline the key expected outcomes of service-learning coursework. These standards were referenced in class with the students multiple times regarding assignments (for example, a college essay assignment that was done first thing during the first semester in English).

**Ohio Department of Education and Service-Learning.** Community-service programs are valued in the state of Ohio, specifically regarding student engagement and personal growth. House Bill 1, (updated via Ohio Department of Education, 2012) specifically outlined service-learning/community service projects and course structures. The state itself encourages community-service programs in relation to “21st Century” skills such as global awareness, civic literacy, health literacy, creativity & innovation, flexibility & adaptability, etc. From the Ohio service standards:

An array of Ohio’s key stakeholders—including legislators, educators, parents and community members—have agreed that schools should be encouraged to
pursue innovative educational strategies that place students in authentic learning environments. Among those proven and powerful strategies is Community Service-Learning. (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, p. i)

In the state of Ohio, service-learning is encouraged, though still rare. There are varying forms of service-learning but these standards allow for some strategic “centering” of service-learning programs as well as a resource for new schools looking into service-learning as a viable program in their curricula.

In service-learning coursework standards such as meaningful service (personally relevant, age-appropriate, in a social context, related to social issues), links to the curriculum (knowledge and skills), reflection (examine preconceptions, use art/literature/verbal/written activities, understand connections between public policy and civic life), youth voice (decision-making, planning, evaluating service), as well as community partnerships, progress monitoring, duration and intensity of service experiences, and diversity (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, pp. 8-9). Within these standards, the official state documents require that the structure of the course is cyclical in nature, with assessment throughout; this organizational requirement is outlined in detail in the document with a variety of stages;

Investigation: Teachers and students investigate the community problems that they might potentially address. Investigation typically involves some sort of research and mapping activity.
Planning and Preparation: Teachers, students, and community members plan the learning and service activities, and address the administrative issues needed for a successful project.

Action (Implementing the Service Activity): The “heart” of the project: engaging in the meaningful service experience that will help your students develop important knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and will benefit the community.

Reflection: Activities that help students understand the service-learning experience and to think about its meaning and connection to them, their society, and what they have learned in school; and

Demonstration/Celebration: The final experience is when students, community participants and others publicly share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service project and look ahead to the future.

Assessment: Is part of all activities to ensure that the learning and development are measured and to help diagnose student needs, provide feedback, and improve instruction. These components are the building blocks of any Service-learning project. (Ohio Department of Education, 2012, p. 9)

Ms. Ananda used these standards in her work and referenced these categories a few times in our discussions as well as in the class itself; she was very cognizant of the role standards play in how she organized and taught service-learning. It is incredibly important to her and the district officials that the service-learning class is exemplary and fits the best aims of the state and local community and she views the standards as a way to help ensure the program is one of the tops in the state.
To that end, the Ohio Department of Education document provided examples of community service/service-learning projects, rubrics, online resources, and guidance for local school boards, and awards/distinctions regarding K-12 programs in the state (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). Districts used the state documents not only to guide instruction through service-learning standards, but also as a way to conceive of, and implement, new service-learning courses in schools around the state, that being said, there were still very few schools in the state of Ohio with programs like the service-learning course at Willow Falls. Mr. Johnson claimed in our interview that in the entire state, only three programs are comparable to Willow Falls in the organization, curriculum, and placement (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

**Willow Falls Vision and Mission Statements.** In addition to state documents at the educational “macro” level, the Willow Falls School District provides two important frameworks for all instruction in the district at the “micro” level. These statements, one Vision and one Mission, provide insight to district values and educational ethos, and are important to provide further context for the service-learning program and the teaching and learning that happens:

Vision Statement: The Willow Falls school community will unite to empower our students to achieve uncharted levels of success.

Mission Statement: We provide an educational program that maximizes the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of each child in a safe, nurturing, and diverse environment. (Willow Falls Overview, 2013)
Each statement relates to parts or portions of the stated aims of the service-learning coursework and informs (along with state documents) official documents and assignments in the class. Ms. Ananda works to include the mission statement attributes in her course design and views empowerment of her students as the overarching aim of her work in the program. I did not hear any direct reference to the statements listed above in the course itself or in any interviews, journals, or assignments, however, the aims of the district did filter into the classroom indirectly, allowing for a focus on a many of the ideas outlined in the statements. One example of how she did so is through use of “RAKs,” or Random Acts of Kindness projects. These projects required students to create an event, interaction, or a gift for a group of people they felt uncomfortable with in the school or at their service sites. Some students chose local custodial staff members, or a local homeless shelter; these projects reflect values in both the Mission and Vision statements and showed how Ms. Ananda engaged her students in class assignments.

**Service-learning Program Documents.** The major program/class documents in service-learning specifically included the syllabus, as well as projects and assignments, rubrics, and content documents (PowerPoint lectures, artwork, photography). Each document was presented in relation to the specific purpose of the document, i.e. an assignment, and Ms. Ananda usually provided context as it pertains to the overarching service aims of the project.

The course syllabus was laid out, as a typical college/high school syllabus would be; the document included contact information, a course description, and assignment protocols as well as rules and acceptance policies and important course expectations. For
example, in the syllabus, two major emergent themes of this dissertation, specifically “service-learning as family” and “comfort zone challenges” are explicitly mentioned and addressed. Regarding “family,” the syllabus outright states this is a major aim of the course:

Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to be working alongside all of your classmates – not just the ones that you currently know. Service Learning seeks to create a “family like” atmosphere – and it is through working with all persons, that this bond is created. Therefore, now is the time to let go of the stereotypes that you may have of some of the classmates. Now is the time to accept your new brothers and sisters for who they are, where they are, and know that they will do the same for you. Everyone is given a fresh start within this room – take advantage of it. (Service-Learning Course Syllabus, 2015, p. 1)

Ms. Ananda is explicit about expectations of togetherness, it was expected to be familial in nature, and she viewed this aim as a requirement that was far beyond a typical classroom. Referring to the service-learning community as a “family” was a key way Ms. Ananda differentiated the program from other classes and programs at Willow Falls. The fact that “family” was named outright in the syllabus as a course goal reverberated through student documents and interviews; students readily talk about “family” in the classroom and in passing with each other. This concept was used as a binding term, one that made the program of exclusive belonging, and enabled the idea that like families, there would be disagreements and emotional times, but families must
stick together due to their familial bonds and responsibilities. This was a profoundly present concept in the course documents and assignments in the program.

Second, the idea that student comfort zones must be challenged through personal growth, academically and in service site work, is a major component of the syllabus. Teaching and learning is referred to as “in process” and recursive in the syllabus, and key challenges to student expectations and norms, openness to new things, personal growth and exploration, must occur in exciting ways according to the syllabus. For example:

I wish for you to keep a beginner’s mind in all that you do for this (and hopefully other) course(s). A beginner’s mind is characterized by openness, a questioning, and a quest for answers and experiences – with a congruent attitude of trust and doubt, along with a sense of simplicity. Learning is a state of excitement – as you will learn not only about yourself, but also about all of your fellow classmates. Each of you will have an opportunity to be both student and educator in this course [emphasis in the original]. (Service-Learning Course Syllabus, 2015, p. 1)

The “beginner’s mind” metaphor is one that allows us to see how the program expects students to approach their service work, but specifically their openness to new things, to difference. Continuing in the syllabus:

I truly believe in making the educational experience one that is challenging, and yet, at the same time, entertaining. I really want you to be able to grow as a student and a human being – and I know that I will be learning and growing alongside you. (Service-Learning Course Syllabus, 2015, p. 3)
The challenge that Ms. Ananda illustrates in the syllabus excerpt above shows that students and teachers are linked in the learning process; the community of the program is to be formed through these challenges.

The idea that students not only must accept this as part of the course, but to also readily embrace this process of challenge, was a constant theme. Students were expected to be open and willing to dive into uncomfortable situations and not only tolerate, but also actively work to fight the urges to avoid or hang back. Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson discussed this aim often, sometimes daily, and made sure to try to model their expectations. For example, Ms. Ananda, a longtime vegan/vegetarian, went with students on their service trip to a slaughterhouse, to see where meat is manufactured. Students viewed her actions, like the slaughterhouse example, as a blueprint for their own struggles with times when they had to expand their experiences and comfort zones. One student specifically mentioned Ms. Ananda, and her own struggles, in a large group discussion at the end of a day of service on their trip in April;

I was at the slaughterhouse… I think it was a really memorable experience. Ananda was out of her comfort zone [laughs]. And Wednesday I was at the recycling station and honestly it was the worst experience… I saw a lot of things there that can’t be recycled and it made me want to not [throw unrecyclable items into the bin]. (Lyla, ASP Debrief: Full Group Discussion, April 28, 2016)

Lyla’s recognition of Ms. Ananda’s ability to step outside of her comfort zone shows that students noticed; the teachers were expected to model servant qualities and when they
did, students were able to see teacher and classmate behaviors, and were expected to reflect about their own work, as Lyla did in this excerpt.

In addition to the stated aims and expectations in the syllabus, specific class assignments in both English and Government corroborate these ideals and carry forward the initial values outlined in the syllabus and program documents. Assignments in the course varied greatly; literary reviews, films and large-group discussions, non-fiction and fiction readings, research projects, citizen-action plans, site projects, reading and analyzing classic works such as *The Canterbury Tales*, designing service projects, and papers including college essays, research papers, and reflective journaling. Individual assignments often contained common themes and essential questions, some of which included studies on how literary figures exhibited “servant” qualities, how moral and ethical questions inform our values and how we view controversial issues, poverty and inequality, human nature, and social/historical figures and their own examples “service” throughout their lives. Assignments were most often done in groups; with the expressed purpose being that cooperation, logistics, and communication were key to service and community, and that projects were designed to enhance these aims. Typically, students followed group work with peer evaluations and reflective journaling about the assignments, exploring their role in the group, their value, and how they believed the project or assignment impacted the class.

For one assignment example in the large-group setting, *30 Days on Minimum Wage*, a documentary about poverty, was screened in early October. Students were asked to watch the film and contemplate underlying questions regarding poverty, expenses,
financial stresses, and related issues like healthcare and childcare. Students watched the film, generated key questions, and were asked to think of the film in the context of the class and the following questions:

1. What is the root of this problem? Is there even one?
2. To what degree does race/ethnicity play into working on minimum wage?
3. How can we, as a Service Learning family, make a positive impact?

- Moving towards a solution.
- Class project (Class Power Points, Oct. 5, 2015)

Students, 76% of the class voted in favor, chose to address healthcare as a related issue and discussed the political issues surrounding the Affordable Care Act in the United States and how it related to poverty and minimum wage subjects addressed in the film.

Another example of a course assignment, this time in the English periods, students were reading the classic epic poem *Beowulf* and investigating their perceptions of his role in the story as a community servant. The assignment involved studying and critiquing his actions and morality, focused illustration time, and large group debates including one day, for example, in which *Beowulf* as a “monster” was contextualized through class discussion on social ills as “monsters.” Ills were “drawn” as symbols and students had to guess what each picture symbolized as a social ill. Topics such as disease and sickness (Alzheimer’s was one example of a sickness), pollution, self-hatred, and apathy were illustrated using symbolism and compared to the literary devices and imagery used surrounding *Beowulf*. These “monsters” were then used to launch into a larger discussion about how they affected the students in the room, their friends and
families, and the larger community. Students drew on early site experiences (for example, Alzheimer’s patients at a retirement community in a neighboring town) to add examples regarding each “monster” (Class Observations, September 18, 2015).

Finally for assignment examples, during the Government periods, students were giving a variety of research topics in the spring and asked to formulate a public policy presentation, giving multiple sides to an issue that affected the community (some topics addressed were school funding, marijuana legalization, refugees and immigration, emotional health and well being, and teen suicide). Groups were assigned and students were required to present their findings, receive feedback from the class and local community members (politicians, business leaders, teachers, and school administrators were all invited), and then propose solutions or ideas for addressing the issues. Students were expected to research, present findings, and argue for solutions in a “defense” still question and answer session during the conclusion of their work. This was seen as one of the major projects during the year; taking skills and knowledge about government, how it worked, and how students thought of local problems, using this knowledge to identify issues, create solutions, and present solutions to local stakeholders. This project encompassed much of what Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson talked about when addressing course goals and content rationales.

The Service-learning Program Structure. The service-learning program was deeply respected in the community and school system in Willow Falls. According to Mr. Johnson, the design and implementation of the course was incredibly unique with only three like it active in the state (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). This unique
approach and design was centered on many of the values we have described previously; community building, pushing out of student comfort zones, working with difference, and creating a servant identity. Each component of the program was meant to provide opportunities for linking service and the classroom while providing a rich context for student service work and learning. The overarching aim of the program, allowed for a moral and personal growth and a change in identity.

**The Course.** The course was fashioned into a split design, a double period for each section for in school coursework, with each student being assigned to one external service site per semester (so a total of two main service sites a year). Regarding class content, the course covered two state-required classes, English Literature (12th grade) and U.S. Government (12th grade). The two teachers, Ms. Ananda, the English teacher and the lead service-learning teacher for the last fifteen years, and Mr. Johnson, the social studies teacher and the secondary teacher in the program, had been teaching in the program for seven years. Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson both recognized in our interviews that she was the head teacher, planner, and organizer for the program.

**Government Class.** In the Government periods, the class was focused on state government standards and linking what students are learning to service work; specifically, Mr. Johnson spoke about his focus on concepts and standards in the first semester, and larger philosophies, deeper issues, personal concerns and interests in the second semester. The focus was mostly on character development in Government, through issues and debates with a focus on democratic thinking, and different people/views. The aim was to try to better understand and work with different
people/views in a meaningful way (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). This class focus enabled larger, more involved projects, like the public policy project mentioned previously, and allowed students to build their political and social capacities through their knowledge of government structure and operation.

During an early assignment, students reviewed the election processes in the United States as the primary season unfolded. The key essential question for this lesson plan was; is the vote of every American citizen of equal value? This question drove a lesson given in a lecture format about election funding, primaries for political parties, corporate interests and lobbying, and voting rights. Much of the lecture focused on legal definitions and machinations of government in the voting process. Mr. Johnson spent a large component of the time differentiating between a Republic and a direct democracy; “we did not establish a democracy, the founding fathers hated democracy and called it mob rule.” Mr. Johnson went on to quote the founding fathers concerning the “tyranny of the majority” and stated they were fearful of a democracy. Mr. Johnson’s lesson also touched on the back-story regarding women’s right to vote, the shielding of women to keep womanly virtues for the republic, slavery, etc. as well as roles of other marginalized voting groups in U.S. history (Researcher field notes, October 23, 2015).

In another series of researcher observations, students had been assigned an “important president” to research and provide context for why they are deemed so influential. Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John F. Kennedy were just a few of the figures students being researched and presented to the class. Each presentation was linked to essential questions regarding leadership,
specifically, what makes a good leader as a President. Linking leadership with action and decision-making, Mr. Johnson critiqued each presentation and made sure to “complicate” each Presidential figure with historical events and controversies in the context of character and personality traits, citing for example, Roosevelt’s desire to hide his wheelchair in photographs during World War II to project strength to the U.S. citizenry.

Students were expected to ask questions and contribute, weighing in on how certain decisions were made (for instance, Truman’s order to drop the atomic bombs on Japan in World War II) in the context of the time period (Class Observations, January 7 & 14, 2016).

Student responses to Government class and activities were varied, but largely positive regarding the way Mr. Johnson teaches the course and presented opportunities for projects, presentations, and context for everyday living as a citizen. Here are some student journal responses when prompted about their government work; “how are you feeling about government? Is there anything your teacher can do better for you?”:

Government is going very good. This unit about laws is interesting and actually very important to know. It will also be cool to have Officer James come in and ask him questions. This is my favorite unit because of how it applies to everyday life. (Justin, Journal, 4/4)

Here, Justin referenced the everyday life” component of the class, something that was mentioned a few times during student and teacher interviews. Most students believe that Mr. Johnson shines when discussing government and law topics when applicable to the students’ lives:
Government is going really well, I think. I only wish that there was more stuff involving the whole class instead of the lecture style. Also, I feel like a lot of the things we do for homework some sort of tedious and a lot like busy work and I really don't feel like I benefit at all from it. (Samantha, Journal, 1/2)

Samantha regarded Government as “going well” but referenced some of her frustration with the type of work they are getting. She viewed it as “busy” and outside of the class discussions she desired. Lesson plans in the English section were typically more discussion focused, and Samantha may have been expecting the same treatment in Government:

Can we talk about what's going on with the campaigns? I miss our random discussions, you're the only person in charge me to think outside of what's right in front of me and see the bigger picture to charge me it's made me better. (Bernice, Journal, 4/3)

As in Bernice’s quote, the presidential campaign was in full swing during class this year and many students referenced the Republican and Democratic candidates in interviews and during observations. Students were especially interested in the “outside” candidates, Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, during class discussions and debates about policy and law. Most students refer to Government as interesting when it is useful to their own experiences as teenagers in Willow Falls and Mr. Johnson recognized this in his teaching, which he usually focused on more personal topics, such as Street Law, towards the end of the year before students graduated. The focus became everyday living as a U.S. citizen
within the law and how to navigate local, state, and national legal frameworks on a personal, daily basis.

**English Class.** English class periods delve into the state 12th grade English standards and link these standards with service standards and course aims. Like the aforementioned *Beowulf* assignment, many of the class observations involved literature, readings, and student work on literary criticism, personal reflections, and research. Literature assignments ranged from classics to more contemporary teen literature, and reflected state English standards for twelfth grade. Most of the days were spent engaged in group discussions or working in pairs/small-groups. In contrast to Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ananda rarely lectured, working most in a facilitator-mode as students worked.

Literary critiques are frequent and involve a variety of books, documents, films, and articles. Often classes involved controversial subjects or social norms emerging from student readings; these are as varied as sex trafficking, prison, drug use, sexuality and gender, and mental health. During one class period students critiqued Disney princess and prince imagery and tropes, working to deconstruct hidden meanings and messages in the figures regarding gender and sexuality. For example:

Characters were organized based on movies and each set of characters is deconstructed looking for larger gender tropes and how the men and women feel looking at the characters. Female waist size, hair, facial structure, male hair/baldness, body type, and also social norms regarding reactions of males and females to scantily clad versions of the opposite sex, are all discussed. The discussion was lively and many students [by a rough count, upwards of 80% of
the students participated in the discussion and talked about their interpretations and feelings regarding the images]. Disney characters studied include; The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel/Tangled, and Beauty and the Beast. (Class Observation, May 9, 2016)

Here, students were asked to address their conceptions of what Disney presents and what hidden messages were projected; the idea that students could work to peel back these layers and debate the merits, or concerns, regarding this depictions, allowed for Ms. Ananda to explore ideas of difference and diversity, as well as stereotypes and hidden meanings, all in one lesson.

In addition to the English assignments, often the more service-oriented projects in the class would happen in the English section of the day. For example, students were assigned to create “Random Acts of Kindness” (or RAK) plans. This meant identifying a key group in their service work or the local community, identifying a problem with this group, and then working on a solution and a random act to provide some sort of relief or support for the identified group (Field Notes, October 23, 2015). Like Government, students were asked to reflect on English class procedures, grading, and assignments, and gave a variety of responses about the class:

English is going well. The creative writings have been fun and quite interesting. That really enjoyed the one today about nature. On a completely different side note, we need to have a food day soon! [Also] the positive visualizations are nice and a good start to the class. (Justin, Journal, 3/4)
Justin’s views of English were incredibly positive. The English class often was the site of social events, birthdays and food-based celebrations often occurred during English periods. Students also meditated, did art projects, and “fun” activities like a Harry Potter trivia game, in English.

I feel pretty good about English, I don't really like all the poems but that's more because I'm not a huge poetry person. I also think that the creative writing is kind of hard. Would be a lot easier if we could have just a little more structure to what we are supposed to do. (Samantha, Journal, 3/4)

Samantha struggled with the creative aspects of English for most of the year and craved structure. Ms. Ananda often gave detailed instructions for assignments, but allowed students to organize the product of their works (i.e. papers, art work, posters, videos, etc.) in any way they wanted, some students, like Samantha, struggled with these options.

English is fun. I am very excited for Beowulf and SciFi [science fiction unit]. I love how we can choose how we arrange our summative and formative assignments. (Vincent, Journal, 3/4)

Here, Vincent referred to a major part of the English class grading system, the idea that students could choose when and assignment was do as well as how much it was worth and whether the grade was summative or formative. Students had incredible agency over assignments and grades in their English classes, not as much in government.

Students also spent English class-time on Fridays in a variety of personally reflective activities. Students wrote in their personal journals during English every
Friday (notebooks were provided by the school, program) and also engaged in specific activities that gave the students time to reflect.

The most consistent activity was meditation. Local community groups donated money to the program to purchase meditation cushions and most Friday’s Ms. Ananda leads the class in meditation time (roughly 10-12 minutes). I participated in meditation time four times during the year, and each time Ms. Ananda followed a similar pattern; lights off, soothing music playing in the background, and Ms. Ananda directed positive visualizations of self, friends and family, people in the service learning program, and student sites. Meditation often looked like this:

Starting with breathing exercises, and some very relaxing, smooth music. LB led these exercises which led to visualizations of self and loved ones bathed in light… the last visualizations were of the self, students had to visualize themselves in an uncomfortable position at their sites at some point this week and were instructed to say the mantra “its ok” regarding their discomfort. This final visualization was the longest of the three visualizations. Students sat on meditation pillows or on the edge of their seats in a meditation position. Lights were off, incense was burning in the morning as the students arrived to school. After 5-6 minutes of meditation and music, the lights were turned back on and students were asked to describe their feelings and experiences of the past week, LB asked if they were tired and almost all of them raised their hands. (Field Notes, September 4, 2015)

Much like the one-on-ones, students had strong reactions to the inclusion of meditation in English class, when asked how classmates have changed over the course of the program,
Bernice specifically brought up meditation, saying, “I think I’ve seen a definite shift. We were all gung-ho on the meditation train, for sure, mediations are no joke… it helps with stress” (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016).

Regarding visualization, stress levels, and perspective shift, Bernice viewed the meditations on Fridays as an important component to the week. By week four of my observations, most students readily embraced their meditation times. Ms. Ananda would often talk about meditation and focus, and if a thought arrived during meditation, acknowledge it and come back to focus on the meditative state. This impacted Sarah’s thinking about life stresses and service, mentioning it in response to a question about her mental health and her life experiences. Sarah’s explained:

And when we did meditation in Ananda’s class, she always said- ‘cause we wanted to think about one thing, you know- and she said, “If you have another thought, acknowledge it and move on.” And everyone- I think she said that the first week- but ever since she said that, I’ve reminded myself of that, even when I’m just trying to go to bed or I’m trying to focus on something. I usually acknowledge that and I move on, and I think that’s a really good way to go about things. Because it’s good to acknowledge what you’re thinking; acknowledge the feelings that you’re having; but that doesn’t mean you should let that hold you back from what’s happening in real life. (Sarah, Interview 3, May 20, 2016)

Meditation and other reflective exercises played a key role in the course. Besides fulfilling a state service-learning standard, Ms. Ananda viewed meditation as an important health activity. Sarah obviously saw it as a way to level and to de-stress when
many thoughts or lists of things to do got in the way. The idea of being focused also had practical uses when students and teachers talked of “being present” at their sites and with people they were serving. A “servant” approach required students to meet those they serve where they were and to engage with them in their service work authentically. Meditation was a way to practice this focus and attention.

**Schedule and Function.** There were two full “double-period,” 100 minute, sections of the service-learning class nicknamed “AM” and “PM” and each section got a full period of Government and a full period of English, three days a week. On Thursdays there was time in class set aside for weekly site debriefings in respective sections. There were 10-40 minutes set aside for large group discussions and questions about site, including time to show student pictures taken at sites, as well as to addresses any key moments or struggles that individuals had at their sites that week. Often the debriefing times were focused on major events at the sites; for example, a death in a retirement community that affected a student, or perhaps struggling to get children to pay attention in a Head Start classroom. Each time a student brought up an issue, Ms. Ananda asked for feedback or suggestions from the group, hopefully engaging enough students to get multiple ideas or approaches for the issue at hand.

Each debriefing started with a “one-on-one” random student pairing in which one student talked about their site work that week as the partner listened. This process left an indelible mark on the students as they made their way through the program. At first viewed as uncomfortable or “awkward,” students eventually fell into a certain comfort-
level with the one-on-ones and referenced their effectiveness frequently in our interviews. One-on-ones were an incredibly important part of the course.

Starting today discussing the past week’s site work. Students start in pairs with one talking about what they experienced, while the other listens silently. This is an extension of the listen activities that have been going on for the last few weeks. Students seem much more comfortable after three weeks of this listening exercise and are happily talking. Loud, engaged, fast talking as they are timed for two min. “Ok swap, and remember check that me voice, the goal is truly hear what they say, to really focus on their experiences and site,” Ms. Ananda says.

Students listening usually nod or smile, some look intent or concerned, and that awkwardness of the first few times trying this exercise seems much reduced. … Students sit in chairs, knee to knee looking into each other’s faces. Ms. Ananda sets and alarm [a yoga bell] and after two more minutes, students head back to their assigned [mixed up daily by Ms. Ananda] seats. (Field Notes, September 10, 2015)

In this description of the one-on-ones, reflection and personal connection were important. Ms. Ananda as making sure students mimic a site interaction with someone they are serving, with the idea that being present was the most important part. According to Ms. Ananda, this taught skills students would need at their sites (Class Observation, September 10, 2015).

Some students struggled with this part of the course and having participated in a few one-on-ones myself (paired randomly with a student, and I talked about my own
service work in the program along with theirs), it was important not to discount how much value Ms. Ananda places on this exercise. Justin explained:

I think the biggest thing that brought us all together, were the one-on-ones that we did. In my opinion, those are huge…. ‘Cause there would be people that you’re uncomfortable with in the class, that you don’t, never really talked to before, and you’re just like going in, and then you’re like. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

Justin talked about one-on-ones as community building exercises, times when classmates they did not know would be someone they had ended up talking and sharing with. Although the one on ones were meant for practice and to work on speaking skills with another person, the community building effects of the practice were another intention, so that each student spoke with others in the class about their site work as often as they could. Sarah expanded on this process:

I think when we sat down to do those one on one’s, that’s when I realized this would be a different kind of class because…. You just realized oh so this isn’t gonna be like a regular English and Government class. This is gonna be, like you’re gonna be family with these people. And that’s when it happened. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Sarah saw the one on ones much like Justin, as a way to challenge her communication skills and build towards her site interactions. She also directly linked the idea of a service-learning “family” to the one-on-one processes, speaking above, that’s “when it happened.” The community of the program, the “family,” emerged out of these
interactions and allowed for bonding interactions among the program participants even while they engaged in very different service sites and experiences.

In addition to these common practices during AM and PM class times, there is also one shared full-class period during the week that occurred between AM and PM sections and was 50 minutes long. This provided time for a full, 65-student, meeting that often focused on a larger issue in the class or community, and involved films, presentations, and informational meetings regarding service and expectations at sites or for upcoming events. For example, one of the main events in the large group part of the course was viewing the film “Oxyana,” about the opioid epidemic in the Midwest (near the area students visited for their service trip in April). After watching the film, students discussed the local impact of the opioids in Willow Falls and surrounding communities. This was a major event as it reflected much of the concerns regarding local overdoses and deaths in the community and in a state where the epidemic is one of the worst in the nation. This film and topic were exclusively viewed and addressed in the large group setting, enabling large group discussions, emotionally-charged debates about what to do about the epidemic, and also further discussions regarding local problems and social solutions.

**Service Site Schedules.** Time for students to visit their service sites during school was built into the program. Students provided their own forms of communication (typically text messaging with teachers and site supervisors) and transportation (typically student/family-owned cars). Tuesday and Wednesday, students were off-campus during class time and must complete at least five hours of service at their assigned sites with
extra service opportunities provided outside of school during evening hours. Students were expected to communicate with the service-learning teachers, their site supervisors (contacts at the site in which they are placed), and any other classmates that may have been placed at their site. Students were scheduled to be off campus for the two service-learning periods (AM and PM) and had to report back to campus for any other high school coursework during the day.

Incorporating service into the school day, and being able to use the school day as release time, enabled the students to be at their site for the required five hours per week. The structure of the course allowed class hours (roughly seven per week) to closely mirror site hours (five per week). The idea that service-learning was a balance of academic and site work was exemplified in how the schedule was created and implemented, allowing for equal time in both arenas of the program. Finally, the responsibility that came with allowing students off campus, on a strict schedule dictated by their sites as well as maintaining relationships with their site supervisor, was a major part of student servant identity. Teachers and students viewed the responsibility needed to maintain their personal schedule as an important component of their service and servant identity.

**Service Sites and Class Trips.** Throughout the year, most students were assigned to two service sites, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. One site was typically in Willow Falls, while the other was outside of the town and often near, or within the city limits of a nearby metro area. Most student service hours occurred during their work at
their individual sites and sites were the main avenues for experiencing difference in the program.

There were also two major class excursions during the year for additional service work; the first is a two-day trip in October to a local campground to bond and allow the classes to get to know one another better, as well as do service at the campground (cabin cleaning, grounds-keeping, winterizing). Second, the final service trip to a southern part of the state (commonly referred to in class as “Appalachia”) for five days, in which all 65 students were assigned to a unique service site every day, ranging from pregnancy services to recycling plants, farms, a slaughter house, meals on wheels deliveries, and head start schools. Through the course of the year each student would accumulate almost 200 hours of service as well as participate in a variety of service-related projects, presentations, course assignments, and community events.

There were ample opportunities to see students at work during a typical week in the program. At the sites I was able to visit I saw students working in a variety of context. At one site Sarah was corralling some of her students at the Montessori school and was settling in to a lesson after lunch. Sarah had a good amount of autonomy as her co-teacher was off with other students working on different tasks, allowing Sarah to direct her own students. When I visited Bernice’s site she was working at a community service organization and in an office-like setting. Bernice was using accounting software to keep track of charitable funds and prepare for an audit of the organization, she described the process as stressful but rewarding, and she felt that her work there had shown her how important different arms of service organizations and volunteers can be,
and how important it is to funnel money from the community to organizations and groups that need it (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016).

For an example of one of the service trips, the Camp Aspen retreat, program aims included bonding and activities to promote the key goals of the program. Ms. Ananda said that the program received reduced rates on the group cabins in exchange for helping to “winterize” the camp. This allowed students to both engage in service work and “earn” the space needed for class bonding and social interaction. Activities during the trip include social bonding, mental health awareness, guest speakers on social issues, and work ethic. It was also a chance to get away from the traditional mid-week schedule and to focus on service. Some activities that occurred were meditation, a Jazzercise program (students dressed up in 1980’s workout garb for fun), as well as a guest speaker who was a Holocaust survivor and shared stories of his time in camps in Poland.

The main service trip was what the program termed ASP (Appalachia Service Project). A four-day service sojourn to “Appalachia” involved taking buses from the town of Willow Falls to Mt. Benison, a small town, near a major state river. This trip was initially conceived, according to Mr. Johnson, as a way to challenge the preconceptions WFHS students had of poverty and difference, at home, in nearby urban areas, and in further spaces in the state. Mr. Johnson described the intent of the trip as such:

The original purpose of this course… created it in 1998, the whole reason, was the Willow Falls “bubble.” We had top-flight students in the 90s, no different form today who were heading off to these colleges, and thinking the world is this
[Willow Falls]. They were horribly naïve in terms of the way the world works, this was to get them…out, before they went to college, yeah that’s a major focus. One of the reasons Ms. Ananda and I started the Appalachia Service Project, was one of the things we bring up when we were in our [large group setting] course and we were doing like, an ice-breaker or some kind of activity to start a poverty unit, and we would ask them to draw poverty… and a lot of students were trying to reach for the brown crayons because they were going to draw blacks in the inner city. We realized well, that’s because were we send them heavily is urban/inner city and that’s what they think, where the majority is poor, white, rural. So to get them out there and give them that experience. (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016)

Mr. Johnson stated that, through purposeful design and years of experience, the service-learning course changed how it constructed spaces for interaction with difference. The ideas outlined in the previous quote show that the teachers viewed their students as exceptional academically, but naïve and lacking in understanding of the world and the people in it, as well as lacking in being critical the basic stereotypes the teachers had hoped to challenge in the course. The teachers viewed the service trip as a way to confront students in the program with difference in a variety of ways, but especially through experience with people in a new context, outside of the “bubble.”

Mr. Johnson went on to discuss the differences that students latched on to between their suburban, relatively privileged lives, and the lives of the people they served near Mt. Benison. He referenced encountering different styles of dress, accents, school
and career goals, and lifestyles and says that these differences provide healthy challenges students on the trip. The ASP program has now been part of service-learning for fifteen years (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

During the ASP trip students were organized into daily site teams and were rotated through a variety of Mt. Benison service sites. Students’ typically worked at one site each day and changed sites depending on need. An official chaperone from the trip and site supervisors were at each site working with the students. Some site examples include a large-scale recycling plant, a family planning center, various Head Starts and local schools, Meals on Wheels delivery trucks, farms, a slaughterhouse, and a veterans home.

Logistics for the trip were staggering; overall there were nearly forty sites with supervisors, five school shuttles/vans, a caterer for dinners, packed groceries for lunches, almost twenty-five hotel rooms, and more than fifteen chaperones. Vans drove most of the day shuttling students to and from sites, and Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, along with other chaperones and additional WFHS teachers (released by the school for the trip) help to make sure each day ran smoothly. At night there were activities; a bowling outing for social purposes, a “veterans’ prom,” which was an evening full of dance, music, and snacks with the men and women at a local veterans home, and a historic tour of underground railroad sites and old downtown in Mt. Benison.

On the last night after dinner, Thursday, there was a large group debrief about the week on ASP and the year in service-learning. This was an emotional event of nearly two hours and many students shared about making new friends, overcoming issues or
stereotypes, some discussed their work and work ethic, and shared their feelings as the nine-month class came to a close.

**Student Pictures.** Student photography (using mobile devices) was prevalent throughout the course and used in a variety of ways in the class itself. Throughout the week students were expected to take photographs at their sites or extra service placements and send them to Ms. Ananda via text message. Ms. Ananda then compiled pictures into Power Point slides and would show the class. Typically on Thursdays when the large group site debriefing sessions occurred, the weekly photo presentation was shown at the end of the debriefing, and students who sent the photos would comment on the activities or context in the photo itself.

Often in student photos the same staged poses and scenes were present; a smiling service-learning student, including those being served, typically a person or animal, and usually “in action.” The presentation in the picture was meant to project success and accomplishment, illustrating the process of “buy in” through visual evidence. Pictures were used mostly in class to bring up specific events or sites and there were times when students were asked to problem solve regarding a specific site issue (for example, one students’ elderly friend at a nursing home constantly pretended to be dead, drawing laughs each week as there was a new story to tell). The photos took on a specific meaning in the class, mainly that students were expected to demonstrate their site work through photographic evidence, which was one way to deem their servant identity and how it was being formed, or not. Pictures, like the ones included below, were used to
“show” service in action and allow the teachers and the class to see student site work in action.

*Figure 2.* A typical slide of site pictures shown during Thursday debriefings.

These pictures allowed me to see not only stills of site work and context, but also to see what participants felt was “worthy” of a photograph as well as how they interacted with those at their sites when documenting their work. These photos often found their way onto social media forums like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook.

**Program Context.** Through my yearlong participation in the program as a researcher/servant I was able to develop a deep understanding of the aims and practices of the service-learning program at Willow Falls High School. Through sustained
observations, two-three times a week, collecting artifacts such as syllabi, course materials, Power Point presentations, and journal entries, and joining in service my participants and their classmates the following context of the program emerged:

1. Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson had a clear vision of how the service-learning program should function and nurtured specific values and practices that informed this vision.

2. Key program values include exposing students to difference, self-reflection, strong work ethic, encountering controversial issues and topics, cultivating respectful deliberation and debate, encouraging decision-making and responsibility, personal growth, moral/ethical growth, and maintaining a positive, caring disposition.

3. Official class documents, assignments, activities, site work, and teaching strategies were purposefully tied to core programmatic values and created to provide open spaces for students to explore, and for the course vision to be possible.

4. The community-building processes in service-learning were a major focus in the classroom, every single day.

5. Community-building was uneven and messy. The separate classes, AM and PM, formed their communities differently, despite the same approaches, documents, and teachers.

6. Student mental health was a major focus of the service-learning curriculum and pedagogy.
7. Privilege (both individual and communal) was viewed as inescapable, damaging, and necessary for the program to exist as it does.

8. The personal journey of the students and the related reflection required in the context of this program, was seen as the key space for promoting “buy-in” to the program and its values. There was a level of “spiritual” presence in this process, stated and unstated, as students were expected to conform to the values and morality of the program itself.

9. Students were expected to provide consistent evidence of “buy-in” in their daily site work, reflections, and dispositions. They did so through journals, debriefs, pictures in class, and feedback to the teachers.

This program context helped provide a solid foundation for the experiences of the students as they articulated their service work at Willow Falls. Tied to the research questions, exploration of the program context filled in the background as student interviews, journals, and pictures show student experience as the work through their conceptions of self, community, citizenship, and working with difference.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

Now that the Willow Falls service-learning program and context have been established, the experiences of the five participants, in this study Bernice, Justin, Samantha, Sarah, and Vincent make up the findings reported in this chapter. Extensive background information including prior service and motives for joining the program, course experiences, and service site work make up a large component of each participant’s profiles.

In this chapter I am sharing each case with the aim of providing a detailed account for each participant about his or her experiences in service-learning. As a key gap in the literature is the dearth of “in process” research, it was my aim to fully report each participant’s experiences and work, in the classroom and at service sites. Each participant’s experience was unique and this section aims to explore these experiences through the students’ own words, journals, and pictures. Linked with their respective research questions, the following findings emerged from the data:

Question 1: How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?

Finding 1: Participants greatly valued their experiences in service-learning and believed they and their classmates had grown into better “servants” as a result of their service, classroom, and social experiences.

Finding 2: Students felt tensions as they were expected to “buy-in” to the expectations of forming a “family” in the program. Servant identities were inextricably linked to this “buy-in” process.”

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Question 2: What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding service, citizenship, and community within a service-learning program?

Finding 3: Participants constructed their “servant” identity and linked it directly with individual and societal ideals of citizenship and their community.

Finding 4: Students compared their own community to the areas where their service sites were located and noticed differences and unique characteristics between them. On a large scale, students saw service as bringing people together and allowing for a better community connection.

Question 3: How do students construct meaning experiencing difference with people of diverse age, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?

Finding 5: Students viewed their service work with difference as an important step in personal growth; with aims of understanding making a personal connection.

a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?

Finding 6: Privilege was an integral part of the service-learning program. Recognition of privilege as both a positive force (means, ability to serve, skills/talents) and a negative force (the “bubble”)

b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

Finding 7: Students regularly experienced working with difference in their site and course work. This led to experiences that influenced how they thought of themselves and others. Intercultural scores increased in four out of the five main participants in this study and showed that there was slight growth in intercultural sensitivity.

Finding 8: In large group reporting, intercultural scores improved as more students at the bottom of the IDI continuum, generally, moved closer towards Minimization.

Participant Experiences in Service-learning
As high school seniors the participants were entering their final year of going to school in their community, there were some overarching themes to their senior year that were palpable in our interviews. Each participant had complex and varied reasons for applying to, and working in, this service-learning program at Willow Falls. Although of similar age, economic status, and privilege, these students had diverse backgrounds and experiences that impacted how they view themselves, their community, difference, and their service work. These participants went to different sites, were in different course sections and interacted with teachers and classmates differently throughout the year. Each participant’s journey through the program reflects his or her own lived experiences and values.

Participants, while not varied much in age or educational background, had a variety of different familial, social, and prior service experiences. For example, Samantha had extensive service experience working with her church to build houses in poor rural areas, Bernice had almost no prior service experience, and Justin had worked a few times at a food pantry with his mother to pass out turkeys during the holidays. Participants also varied in types of service work in the course (some agricultural, some in schools, others in accounting work for a charity firm) as well as interests, political engagement, and intercultural survey results.

*Table 7. Participant Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Service Hours (class avg: 232)</th>
<th>Assigned Sites (first semester top; second semester, bottom)</th>
<th>IDI Continuum Scores (pre, top; post, bottom)</th>
<th>IDI Cultural Disengagement (pre, top; post, bottom)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Shift</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>School and Organization</th>
<th>SAT Scores</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>WF Charity Organization Urban Refugee School</td>
<td>110.6 (Cusp of Accept.) 109.4 (Cusp of Accept.)</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Urban Elementary School Urban UDS</td>
<td>108.96 (Min.) 109.6 (Cusp of Accept.)</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>WF Montessori School Hospice Care (Two sites)</td>
<td>88.9 (Min.) 91.5 (Min.)</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>193.25</td>
<td>Animal Rescue Farm WF Elementary School</td>
<td>89.03 (Min.) 93.09 (Min.)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>WF Elementary School Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>60.68 (Denial) 73.23 (Polar.)</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During our time together, Bernice, Sarah, Samantha, Justin, and Vincent experienced the course and their service work in very different ways. Thoughts about the community were complex, and each wrestled with human connection, time management, stresses of school, a variety of family issues, and wanting to do their service well. In this section, participant data is organized around the major research questions and emergent themes within each participant’s narrative, represented by interview quotes, excerpts from journals, and observations in group settings. Each participant section starts with an introduction, moves into specific experiences prior to service-learning, applying for the program, in the classroom and at their service sites, and then addresses elements of the main research questions in this study.

Student conceptions of who they were, their homes, their friends and what school can be, were meant to be troubled and agitated by the teachers, the coursework, and their
service sites. This “push” that service-learning brought to the students participating in this study was the method of exposing them to difference. This specific service-learning course, with these teachers, actively prodded, pushed, and used language to challenge student conceptions of their community, citizenship, and civic identity, even if these terms not directly addressed in class or in the assignments.

**Bernice.** Bernice was a typical high school senior in many ways, she was social, well liked, quick with a joke, and high energy. Bernice lived and went to school in Willow Falls for her entire educational experience, K-12. She was unique for Willow Falls in that she is African-American, highly involved in politics and current events, and thought of entering politics, though jokingly claimed she should not do so because she was not a “good liar.” She also spoke of someday working for an international non-profit organization.

Bernice described herself as an average student and chose her own pseudonym and pronunciation, in honor of Bernie Sanders, her favorite politician. Even though she had selected this name, Bernice had worked as an intern for a Republican Senator in Ohio and has experienced working with local conservative politicians. She was highly critical of the primary candidates, specifically Donald Trump. Bernice saw herself as a savvy person when it came to societal awareness and politics.

As for the service-learning program, Bernice was in the PM class section. She did her service work at a local Willow Falls charitable fundraising organization and at an elementary school for refugee families and children. She saw her best service skills (besides joking that her best skill is eating) as people-related. Bernice specifically looked
to find common ground with new people and to work from initial commonalities to a better understanding.

Bernice’s IDI scores remained relatively similar, with a slight dip throughout the year; she scored a 110.6 (Cusp of Acceptance) during her first attempt, and a 109.4 (Cusp of Acceptance) during her second. Another important metric in the IDI is a “cultural engagement” score, which means there may be feelings of a lack of engagement, or belonging, to a cultural community if below a score of 4; Bernice scored a 3.2 on her first attempt, and a 3.8 on her second, showing slightly more resolution in her sense of belonging to a cultural community.

**Experiences in Service prior to Service-Learning.** In our first interview we discussed Bernice’s prior service experiences as well as the story of how she came to be interested in service-learning. I used the first part of the interview to ask questions about these experiences as well as to try to define the link between her service habits before the program and how it impacted her work throughout the year in the program.

Bernice shared that she had been volunteering as long as she could remember, specifically with her church and her grandmother. She also referenced extensive leadership opportunities and her connection with her mother as a driving factor in how she approaches her political and social work that had in important impact on her desire to volunteer and join service-learning. When I asked Bernice about these experiences she responded with a story about her grandmother and a bit of insight into her own motivations to do service work:
So I’ve been volunteering for as long as I remember just through like, church things or whether it be like helping-, my grandma actually was like, huge into community service, so she would like, bring-, first of all, she’s not, she’s-, you just think of this like, little old lady taking all these like, sandwiches and like, bagged lunches by herself in her like, little red car down to like, downtown Cleveland and like, they all loved her and they would help her- Like, so that’s what I grew up around so I’ve been doing service all my life and I think it’s the gratification you get, you know-which sounds probably kind of selfish, but like, that feeling you get when you do something is like, it’s really unparalleled.

(Bernice, Interview 1, Feb. 27, 2016)

For Bernice service is part of her family life. Bernice also explores a tension that students and the teachers in the program wrestled with often, is feeling good, or special, a selfish reward for doing service? Does that change the intent of being a “servant?” Bernice’s statement that the feeling of engaging in service work is “unparalleled,” later on saying it is “good karma.” This gave a hint into her motivation to engage in service and that there is a very real reward, a feeling, that was attractive to her. Within this quote Bernice also highlighted the importance of examples of others who helped develop her understanding of helping others and learned service work by watching her grandmother do it. Later in the interview she claims that service was “ingrained” into her life through examples like her grandmother. She also talked of her mother’s influence and discussing political issues at home. We specifically talked about Ta’Nehisi Coates book A Beautiful Struggle and she mentioned that her mother had discussed it with her at home.
Bernice also valued her leadership experiences and mentioned them early in our interview as times when she engaged in character building activities and programs, which changed her views of her own role in the local community. Bernice attended the Hugh O’Brien Youth Leadership (HOBY) seminars, which she described as “service-learning on steroids,” first as an attendee and then in subsequent years as a program counselor and an older mentor for the younger students. HOBY encourages high school-age students to “recognize their leadership talents and apply them in becoming effective, ethical leaders in their home, school, workplace and community” (HOBY Leadership: About, 2017).

It is obvious in her statement below that her experiences at HOBY had a profound impact on how she viewed service. She shared:

I think my biggest like, my most-, I’m most proud of was volunteering at HOBY Youth Leadership Conference… because I went to the conference and it, it honestly changed my life, and then getting to go back and like, hearing the students like, getting to experience what I experience and just seeing all the good they did in community was like, one of the greatest things ever. And that’s why I like, continue to go every year so… I’m really excited about this year ‘cause I’m in charge of calling all the schools and like, getting kids to come, so it’s like, really exciting… I volunteered at two seminars last summer…. And then I’ll do two again this summer which is great yeah, it’s so cool so and all the people you work with are so amazing. (Bernice, Interview 1, Feb. 27, 2016)

From this, Bernice showed that she valued the experiences and “gratification” of her service work and had a multitude of service work outlets in her life. This excerpt from
our interview was important because it shows that to Bernice, the people she worked with, the students and the seminar staff, was where she made her connection. The social experiences in a service context are what she named here as the draw, including recruiting new students and working with the leaders again. This, paired with the “good” they do in the community, or the gratification, emerged as the key motivators in her service work.

**Joining the Service-Learning Program.** Consistent with some of the prior observations about the role that the social plays in Bernice’s service experiences, as she recounted how she decided to join service-learning, friends and prior service-learning students had a major impact in how Bernice made the decision to apply for the course. Themes of togetherness and “family” emerged early in our discussion of her decision-making:

[Friends were] like, you have to do it, you’ll love it, it’s so amazing. And they were like, Ananda’s so cool, and then they just like, talk about everyone in the class and how much they love it, and they’re like, we’re such a family, like, you’ll be so sad when you have to go--and everything so it was just like, really cool getting to talk to ‘em about it, and [her friends] all loved it. And actually my prom date last year, Johnson, was like, oh, my goodness, you have to do it, you’ll love it so much. And I was like, okay, okay, okay. And I already knew I wanted to do it, but just like, hearing from them, ‘cause like, if you’ve ever met Johnson, he’s not like a-, he’s pretty “football”, you know--but like, he was so excited
about it, so like, that and just like, everyone else who was talking about it.

(Bernice, Interview 1, Feb. 27, 2016)

In this statement Bernice made a few observations about the program, and the perceptions of the program, that appealed to her directly. The first was the “family” connection in the class; students and teachers bonding in a unique fashion, a way that allows for something deeper than a typical classroom experience. The second was the sense of belonging for someone (her date) who Bernice typically would not associate with a class like service-learning, someone who is “football,” and may not play the part of what she thinks of as a “servant.” Bernice’s search for a sense of belonging and social connection also mattered in how she saw the course, that her date’s difference as a football player, did not impede his love for the program and the service work involved. This realization allowed for space for whatever her perceived differences could be, to allow for them to fit, engendering feelings of belonging.

Another attractive quality Bernice identified in her decision-making process to join the program was the feedback from other students regarding Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson. Both teachers came highly recommended by peers who had taken the course and even though Bernice had not had the teachers in class before, she felt attracted to their style and approach, which she described in our second interview as unique and “non-traditional” (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016).

In this excerpt from our first interview, Bernice discussed how friends in the program in previous years described the service-learning teachers to her, as well as some
mention of other WFHS teachers who joined the program as chaperones on the service-learning trips throughout the year:

Everyone’s just like, she’s the most amazing human you will ever meet in your life, like, you don’t understand. And like, and I-, they would talk about it, and I’m like, you’re talking about the lady who wears like, the, the swishy pants? And Mr. Johnson, he’s crazy. And then they say that you get so close to all the-, everybody in the history department period-‘Cause they’re always on our trips and stuff. So that was really cool ‘cause like, I like history a lot and I like that class ‘cause the teachers always like, challenge me. (Bernice, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

For Bernice, teacher approach and personality was obviously a major draw (and was for the other participants as well). Each time the teachers were viewed as “atypical” in their personalities, approach, and by this quote, even dress. The final component, the knowledge that other, well liked teachers and the History department, were involved, was a bonus for Bernice as she was already attuned to the department’s reputation and she had experienced classes in social studies with the teachers involved, expecting to be challenged and pushed. This is another key theme in Bernice’s desire to join service-learning, the fact that she wanted to join a program her senior year that would challenge her as a student and person, while continuing her family service traditions within a school setting. Teacher reputation and peer referrals were key factors into Bernice’s decision making and impacted her thinking about applying for the program as early as her sophomore year (Bernice, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).
Class Experiences. Bernice described her site and classroom experiences in incredibly positive terms. She felt that the classroom is unique, special, and has important qualities that made the program work. These qualities included different teacher/student power dynamics from traditional classes, flexible expectations for coursework, and the focus on cultivating student “passion” and a drive to learn. Here Bernice shared her thoughts on the course:

The most important aspect is to not expect it to be like any other classroom you’ve ever been in… Because, a general classroom is, you sit, the teacher talks at you and then, occasionally asks you questions, and they make you answer it even when you don’t want to [laughs]… Service learning is structured, but in a way that we structure it. So like, they make you feel more empowered as like, a student… So, I think, it’s not one of those classrooms, where, don’t expect to be led into what you’re supposed to be learning, and go through the motions, like, you’re gonna have to actually be a student, and participate. (Bernice, Interview 3, May 12, 2016)

In this statement Bernice values the fact that her input is necessary for the class and that she felt empowered. She believes that the classroom in service-learning is markedly different from others she has experienced in the past and that this is special. Bernice also made note of the expectations regarding student involvement, the “buy in” that is expected in the course involved all aspects of the program, meaning that students had to adapt and be active participants.
In Government, Bernice stated that she felt she grew more and more in the class as the year progressed. She also mentions Government as her “favorite” and shared her thoughts and personal views regarding the class in a series of journal entries asking for responses to Mr. Johnson’s teaching methods. Early in the year she enjoyed reading and discussion “I like government I enjoyed the pages [articles we read]! We could have more discussions but I am glad we are practicing presentations” (Bernice, Journal, 1/3). Later in the year she described other aspects related to both pedagogy and teacher personality “I love government. History is my favorite class because it makes you look deeper and see all sides of an argument. I like the debates. Our teacher is swag” (Bernice, Journal, 2/1). By the end of the year it was still clear Bernice liked a particular form of teaching and at this stage, was asking for it. She wrote “can we talk about what's going on with the campaigns? I miss our random discussions, you're the only person challenging me to think outside of what's right in front of me… it's made me better” (Bernice, Journal, 4/3).

Bernice felt that in general, there was value in each course related to service and learning the “big picture” and that the way the course was structured and the way the teachers moved through the course of study, that there was a “foundation” built through the coursework on which to build your service skills and experiences. According to Bernice, the growth from the Government and English classes and her role as a citizen-servant tied directly into her service. Here, Bernice spoke using the skills and understandings she learned in class within larger society:
I think [Ms. Ananda] kinda like, gave us the building blocks that we needed to like, send us off on our way… And now that we have those, we’re taking what we learned from service and then bringing it back into the classroom and using it in like, government… What-, how to do actually do it and act what we see. Or what we’ve learned from first semester…. Which is good anyway, ‘cause you can’t do anything if you don’t understand. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Bernice illustrated the links between service and the classroom and how cyclical the course can be. The skills they learned in Government influenced their site work and how students thought and understood their experiences, which could benefit them as they went on to college and into larger society.

Despite these positive feelings and statements, there were criticisms including the way that students and teachers handled certain aspects of the program. One of the key complaints in Bernice’s interviews was that as a senior, many of the students (Bernice is speaking of herself and others) felt they should be able to back off their work and start to relax, especially towards the end of the year. This belief, which teachers commonly referred to in class as “senioritis,” provided space for critique, especially regarding what Bernice felt to be the “feelings” of the course. Although she did not include herself as one of the seniors who was complaining, she acknowledged that there were times when she wanted to avoid some of the deeper talk and that she felt it was losing its impact on her as the year progressed. Here, Bernice explains some of expectations about the end of the course workload:
But when you get toward the end, it also brings up some negative feelings too. So it’s kind of difficult. ‘Cause I know like, a lot of kids are like, I’m so tired of like, talking about my feelings, I don’t. And like, a lot of kids are getting very annoyed with the like, just straight feelings talk. Which, I understand. Honestly, like, I get it. We just are done, but that’s mostly because we’re 4th quarter. But I think that it’s what we needed though. Like, it’s served its purpose. So maybe now we’re just like, over everything and over it. But at the time, it was really helpful. So I think that it’s just like, anything. You get like, done with it.

(Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Importantly, Bernice tied emotional fatigue as a factor in the program. The idea that there could be an overload of emotional work in the course and students could “burn out” or “tune out” for the last few months of their service work is a unique insight. Bernice believes that the emotional content of the program is important and does matter, but that there is a limit to how much or how often students will want to share and be vulnerable or emotional.

Finally, Bernice reflected back on the year in our final interview, and when asked about how the classroom had impacted the way she thinks of herself and her service, she spoke at length about non-traditional components of the course. Considering the way the course was structured as special and unique, Bernice referenced times when she realized that service-learning was different and pushed her to see things in a different way, even things such as normal classroom activities such as discussions, assignments, and expectations of students. The way Bernice described the course; it was this uniqueness
that propelled her to feel like she had experienced something special, something atypical.

Thinking back on the year, I asked her what advice she would give to next years’ service-
learning students, Bernice opened up about the role the classroom, and her English and
Government experiences, and how they played a role in her personal growth:

[Mr. Johnson] wants you to like, seek what interests you, and we might have like, even the bill project, we had like a structure, like, okay, you have to write a bill, but he’s like, but you can write about what you want. You can make it what interests you. So, he wants you to find your passion, and like, same with Ms. Ananda and then, they help you, learn how to express that. (Bernice, Interview 3, May 12, 2016)

For Bernice, being allowed to explore what interests her within the structure of the course enables a space to work on topics that she is passionate about. Coursework in the service-learning program was flexible, open for student input, and meant to corroborate service site work. In Bernice’s experiences this led to further investigation into topics she enjoyed and wanted to know more about, making it more meaningful and impactful.

According to Bernice, the “unique” characteristics of the course allowed for student-driven learning, openness to new ideas and content, as well as deep connection with her service work. She viewed the courses as integral to her service-learning experiences and was motivated to learn and participate, especially in government. It was obvious in my interactions with Bernice that she felt comfortable in this type of class, and in the class observations for this dissertation, Bernice was often one of the more outspoken students and appeared to thrive in a discussion-based setting, which was a key
part of the structure of the class. Bernice summed up the class experiences and how it related to her servant identity, as an emerging, blossoming process that she was only starting to realize during our second interview:

    Compiling what I’ve learned before [in class and at site] and then the more and more they like… you don’t know that they’re teaching you all these like, important things until it happens. And it’s just like when you’re like, wait, what? Like, I’ve reached the mountaintop. But like, so it’s… all compiled and become really great (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

In recognizing the process of forming her servant identity, Bernice showed that the process of the course is slow and deliberate. The way the class intertwined with service work allowed for small realizations and experiences that add up over nine months. The long-term exposure in the course and the experiences Bernice had allowed her to feel like she had the realizations needed to become a better servant.

Service Site Experiences. Bernice had two very different service site placements over the course of the year; one, a funding group in Willow Falls that funneled donations and money to local charities, and the second, an elementary school that served poor refugee families and their children in a large metro area. Bernice described these two different experiences as incredibly important. Bernice felt she got to experience the accounting that went into a charitable organization; seeing how money was donated, earmarked for use, negotiated with the charitable recipients, and dispersed. While at her second site in the elementary school, Bernice was exposed to many different ethnic and cultural groups and their experiences of living in the United States as refugees. Bernice
valued both of her placements, and although she said she loved working with children, the school was her favorite, she felt that learning about the processes of charitable work helped her see a different side of service work (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016).

At her Fall semester site, Bernice described her work as accounting, making runs to the bank, calling donors, non-profits to link money to groups, any feedback or to talk to donors about new programs and how to do it. She also discussed how her site involved in the funding audit process, which was pressure filled and as she was in charge of double-checking much of the accounting, she felt responsible for making sure money and account balances were correct and to make sure all of numbers balanced. Bernice also talked about the moment when it felt “real,” she described moments when the organization would hand the “big check” and give it to the charities, at these moments making it worth it, as she was there to hear about what they do and how we can help these groups out so much. Finally, Bernice described the sheer amount of work the director did as well as the stress that came with the job, claiming that the role of mentor and role model was superbly filled by the site supervisor. Bernice talked glowing about how the relationship with the supervisor is incredibly important to the experiences doing service work (Bernice, interview, March 14, 2016). Describing her work at the Community Foundation as “nitty gritty” service, Bernice mentioned a pivotal moment that made her realize it was incredibly important to run the organization smoothly:

I think for me is like when I worked on something like, worked with a community member to like, get money to a certain place and like, did all the like, little stuff with them and I’d be like ugh, this is taking forever. But then when you actually
hand the check, ‘cause we have this like, big, big check that we like, take pictures
with, you like, are writing it down, you give them that big check, and you like, get
to hear all the great stuff that they’re gonna do with it. It’s like, yeah, it was all
worth it. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Here Bernice spoke of the “good feelings” she mentioned earlier in her case. The idea
that feeling good was a part of how she does her service work was an important part of
her servant identity.

In contrast to her charitable accounting work, Bernice struggled with her spring
site at first, which she claimed she did not like at first. She said that due to the fact she
was not in control of her schedule (coming and going was limited, due to the school
structure), it was a tough adjustment for her. She claimed she was used to a flexible
schedule, and with the scheme and system the school had in place, and expectations for
volunteers and how organized they were, it was hard for Bernice to figure out how to fit
in, but ultimately the site became her favorite part of the year.

They [the school] know what they’re doing. They really do. So like, so I’m at the
elementary school and it has literally been the best experience I’ve ever had.

Like, I really can’t put it into words. Like, I was at site and I was just like, taking
it all in and I was like, I wish I could just like, capture these moments. I was like,
telling my mom about it. I was like, it was the most like, crazy experience. Just
like, working with them when they come in and they’re just like, I want to tell you
about my day or how are you, they just like, I don’t know, that feeling. I can’t
explain it. But just doing that and the work that they do and I’ve been allowed to
like, teach lessons now, which is really awesome. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Here, Bernice was focused on the human connections she was making with her students at the refugee school. The moments with her students, the feelings they had as they interacted, and the responsibility she has been bestowed with, combine into experiences that help her form her servant identity. Bernice’s role as a servant was centered on good feelings and emotions, the “payoff” was a feeling she cannot describe, but was attractive and important in her work.

As the semester progressed she felt more and more connected with the site and her students. She later spoke about her initial frustrations as “selfish” because it was about her convenience at site, her own desires and needs regarding her schedule, and not about the service work. She discussed this in the context of trying to meet the students and the site supervisor in the best way, as a servant (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016).

Much like at Willow Falls in the classroom, Bernice began to use service-learning language, like “family,” to describe her work at the school. This showed her comfort level with the school community changing as she got more familiar with the students and the expectations, she used the word “process” to describe both of her sites, but specifically her acclimation to the refugee school.

At the school, you’re more of a part of the family, it, it’s like a home, it’s a family, and all, they all, even though they’re from different backgrounds, have the same like, you know, they just, they’re at the same place right now… And things
that they tell you, and like, sometimes they’ll be like, we’re gonna teach you a new word in whatever language they decide, sometimes it’s Spanish, sometimes I don’t know what they teach me half the time, I’m probably saying something bad… But you know, they’ll just be like, we’ll teach you a new word today and I, you know, I’ll just learn something new or anything like that, just being a part of it or just like, their smile it’s like, I have to tell you what I learned today and just like, being a part of the family… you’re a part of their daily routine now.

(Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Here again Bernice referred to student emotions and connection as her driving motivation for her service work. The smiles, her interactions, and the conversations all provide good feelings in her service work and the “payoff” that made her feel like she was in a family. The servant work she does links directly with the community of her site and she felt a part of the site community as she learned how to serve there.

Bernice’s daily responsibilities at the refugee school included lesson planning and teaching, as well as playtime with the students in the gym and outside. She worked with kindergarten and first graders for part of the week and middle school-aged students during the other part. She said she enjoyed both ages and spent most of her time tutoring, socializing, reading with students, and playing. She spoke highly of her time there and felt she had made an impact on the students’ lives.

In one of the more interesting exchanges in our second interview, she described a time that she felt helpless and had to work to try to solve an issue with a girl who was struggling with something happening at home. Bernice described the incident:
I know one of the girls in our group, she um, well, they’re not supposed to speak
like, have legit conversations in any language except for English. And she was
like, crying hysterically and she was speaking in Spanish and I’m like, I cannot
understand you, can you please speak English, like, I don’t know what you’re
saying. And another, an older girl who speaks the same language with her and
she’s like, she kept talking about it, it’s about her family, um, no she’s not
speaking in English and I didn’t know what to do. And I was like, I wanted so
bad to like, comfort her, but I couldn’t and she was being like, pressured by the
older girls to not speak in English what she was saying so it was just kind of a
hard time for me. But just like, hitting that blockade and not being able to help
kinda sucked, and then I couldn’t imagine like, being on the other side of it, if you
couldn’t speak English and you’re around all these people who could, like, just
putting that into perspective I think was hard. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14,
2016)

This challenge was one she pointed to as a time of growth for her, knowing that there are
limits to what we can do as servants, or what we can understand. The language barrier,
as well as being unsure about why the girl was upset, threw Bernice and she had to think
to try to problem solve:

A part of service is knowing your limits like, you can’t always do everything or
you can’t always be in the right situation at the right time, so you have to know
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other people who can and you have to be willing to just like, be like, okay, well I
can’t do it. But I trust you to take this situation and do the right thing with it.

(Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

In this statement, Bernice described an important perspective shift as a servant, thinking of the incident from the crying girl’s point of view, and trying to empathize with her. Bernice formed a more nuanced view of service, specifically that service may not always work as it should, or be good, but servants can still make an impact. Bernice ultimately got the site supervisor involved, working together with him to get the girls to calm down and to try to talk through what was happening. It was this moment that she openly wondered about the limitations to her service work there, and how it may not always be possible to be the perfect, empathetic servant.

Finally, in comparing her two sites, Bernice felt fortunate to be able to see multiple aspects of how service works, the layers needed to make “it” happen, and what the different roles are that need to be fulfilled in order to make sure that charity work and service happen smoothly and reach those in need. Bernice compared sites in this exchange, highlighting feelings of thankfulness for how she got to experience her site work over the past year:

[The charity accounting is] more of like, me directing like… I don’t know how to explain it. Like, the elementary school, is more like, me to a student. Like, I’m with you, I see the change, I’m directly seeing what I’m doing… And then the Willow Falls Community Foundation was more like, outside sources [of service]. So not necessarily working with that many people, but working with getting
money for the greater good or you know, like that… So in all important aspects of
service, they can’t work without each other. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14)

In this excerpt Bernice came to an important realization about her service work, namely,
that there were layered levels of service work and they may not always involve face-to-
face interactions with other people, which seem to be the most talked about and prized
roles in the service learning program. Recognizing that service was more than
conversation and human interaction allowed Bernice to internalize the different roles her
experiences play in how she thinks of her service work and the process of her servant
identity formation.

At both service sites, Bernice spoke of human connection and interactions.
Noting that individual conversations, with teachers, classmates, site supervisors, and her
students, have been the most important parts of her site work. Connecting to the research
aims of this study, seeing how others live, or are different, has been the main take away
of the year for Bernice; this understanding of the different lives that are lived by the
people she interacts with has helped her understand her service work, and place in the
community, in large part to her service-learning experiences. Also, Bernice’s formation
of her servant identity involved reconciling her desire for good feelings in her service as
well as realizing that her service work is complicated and may not always be successful
or lead to the “good feelings” she sought. (Bernice, Interview 3, May 12, 2016).

**Justin.** Justin was what many in the community would describe a “typical”
Willow Falls high school student. Justin is 17, white, well spoken and popular. He was a
highly skilled lacrosse player and is well known for his athletic exploits (he proudly says
his athletic skills come from his mom, who was an athlete in the 1984 Olympic Games). 

Very friendly, I talked informally with Justin most weeks and saying hello, we interacted early on regarding the study and he was enthusiastic about taking part in it. He was organized and when we scheduled interviews, was always punctual and pleasant. Justin described himself as an average student but talked openly about his ADHD issues, which affected his academic work. To that end, being able to get out of school was a major part of his desire to apply for service-learning.

Justin had mostly known the Willow Falls school district as he moved to the area in 2nd grade and had been Willow Falls resident and student since. Justin was typically smiling and very upbeat. He did not say much in the large group settings but would share when called upon. He was very active in the service-learning program, often engaged in extra service opportunities outside of his main service sites. Justin seemed to be very well liked by his classmates, teachers, and site supervisors.

Justin was in the AM class and his sites were both outside of Willow Falls, and he was one of the few students to be placed solely outside of the town. His first site was an elementary school in a large metro area near Willow Falls and the second was the United Disability Services (UDS) organization, providing an assisted living environment and a home for adults with disabilities. This facility was located in the same, large, metro area as the elementary school site. Justin said that his most valuable service characteristic was interacting with people, stating that he thought he was very outgoing and adaptable to different situations, especially with children. He explained:
I’m typically very outgoing so I mean talking to people isn’t hard at all for me, um- so going into a classroom not knowing anybody that first day [laughs] I remember I just walked in and a bunch of eyes all jumped up at me and I was like- kind of stressful for a second but then talking to people isn’t necessarily hard so I adapted pretty quick um- within learning about the kids and just talking with them. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

It was clear Justin felt the pull of attention from his service site and had his first interaction with the children he would be working with, feeling confident about this communication abilities, Justin believed he would have an easy time adapting to his students. Often Justin recounted times when he would “jump in” to his service work and ignored his nerves or trepidation, this approach fit with what the program hoped students would do when confronted with something outside of the student comfort zone, be fearless in their approach to their sites and work.

Justin also felt that he was incredibly hard working and would do anything his site supervisor or the service-learning teachers would ask of him, without complaining (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016). As for his IDI, Justin improved his intercultural score slightly during the course of the year in service-learning, from a 108.96 (Minimization) to a 109.57 (Cusp of Acceptance). Justin’s “cultural engagement” metric scored as “resolved” on his first attempt, a 4.2, while in his second assessment his sense of belonging and understanding some aspects of his cultural community, dropped to 3.4.

Experiences in Service prior to Service-Learning. Justin had few experiences volunteering prior to applying for service-learning. One of the reasons he was selected,
as a final participant in this study, was that he had few service hours on his resume by the
time service-learning started his senior year. The main type of volunteering Justin did
was working to organize and hand out bags of food at a local shelter during Thanksgiving
or Christmas. He did this with his family, specifically his Mom and brothers, and it was a
tradition in the household before his parents divorced. Justin describe his prior service at
the food bank:

   We had it [food bank volunteering] going for a span of like six years… every year
at Christmas, my family my Mom, Dad, and brother, we would all go to the
[nearby metro area] food bank and just help pack up the food, and hand out the
food. When I got older, my brother and I were actually able to walk the bags of
food out to people’s cars.

   So, initially I would be there and I would kind of be tending… there’d be a
lot of homeless people, I was young, I didn’t really know what was going on, um-
but yeah each year at Christmas we would go and help out at the Millersville
Food Bank. Initially yeah I would be- it’d be like me and my mom in there and
we would be like packing up the food, putting it in the bags, organizing it and
stuff. And my brother’s 7 years older than me, so we have a big difference so he
and my dad would normally be helping carry out bags to cars and stuff. (Justin,
Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Despite his limited experiences in a very controlled volunteer situation as a child, Justin
said that he enjoyed working at the food bank immensely. These experiences opened up
the possibility that he could do more volunteering, somehow, and that once he was in
Willow Falls high school as a freshman, hearing about service-learning and what the program did, piqued his interest.

Justin’s main motivating factor in applying for service-learning was to challenge the isolation in the community that he felt needed to be challenged. He referenced the idea of the “bubble,” a Willow Falls colloquialism that was used by parents, teachers, administrators, and students alike, in order to frame the privileged isolation the people and students experience growing up in the town:

I had always liked um- volunteering at the food bank. Even just talking with a lot of the homeless people there- um- where I come- I mean our backgrounds are just entirely different so I mean hearing what they have to say, and I mean- the whole Willow Falls “bubble” thing, we all talk about. I mean mainly people outside of service learning [live in the “bubble”], I know some people understand living outside of the Willow Falls “bubble,” but there are people who all they know is what we have and I like hearing what other people have to say and through living in Willow Falls, the service-learning program is really popular, you hear about it all the time, like senior year in high school you hear about the service learning program. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

The idea that the “bubble” surrounded Willow Falls and that service-learning was working steadfastly against its “protection” and isolation was a major theme in this study. Justin saw the bubble as an isolated in-group or as a barrier to interaction with difference. Justin was one of many service-learning students who spoke openly about challenging or popping the “bubble” as their main reason for applying to the program.
Here, Justin also referenced the exclusivity of the service-learning program; it was popular. The program was viewed as a senior capstone course and admission was very competitive. The idea that applicants viewed the program as unique and special, as an important stage in their senior year, was widespread among the service-learning students.

**Joining Service-Learning.** Justin’s main motivations for joining service-learning came from his interactions with older peers who had experienced the program and from school-wide reputation of the teachers and the program. Also, Justin had an English teacher his sophomore year, one who frequently chaperones the service-learning ASP trip, who pushed him to consider applying for the program. This was not a unique experience as other participants in this study spoke of teachers influencing them or identifying them as a “good fit” for the program, this encouraging them to apply.

According to Justin, his peers, the course structure, and the reputation of the program were the main influences in his decision to apply:

I would hear [an older friend], who I was really close to last year, he was in the program, just a lot of people, [another friend] he’s kind of in the program too, but yeah just hearing a lot through friends and just kind of like the reputation service learning has done in Willow Falls. Um, yeah a lot of the stories Mark would tell me would just be great and… he built some really good connections, just in terms of like- I think he might have been at Salvation Army? But he would just tell me the story of connections he’s built with people through service-learning. I know one of the people he still goes back and talks to and that’s how- I mean- close
they got through service learning and this um- yeah mainly like the people he would meet.

It’s definitely a positive reputation and I feel like a lot of people who do well within service learning- I don’t- just sitting in a classroom, I mean I have ADHD so just sitting in a classroom for me, trying to listen is just- I- that is just not for me, so being outside of the classroom, working with kids, or whether you’re working with- I’m specifically working with kids but whether you’re working with the elderly or working with special needs children just being out I feel like you learn different things but things that will take you further than, I mean obviously the stuff you learn in the classroom is important but you learn kind of more like life lessons. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Identifying the course as “non-traditional,” much like Bernice’s view on how the course was implemented, including a major focus on out-of-the-building responsibilities, was a major draw for Justin. His ADHD statement and his desire to do something outside of the traditional class structure at Willow Falls was a powerful motivator. Service-learning applicants seemed to believe and expect the course to be exclusive, different, and unique and this is a prime draw for students who do apply.

The English teacher who encouraged Justin to join was also a major factor. Justin spoke of a schedule anomaly in which he had the English teacher for two classes in a row, and the two became very close. This bond opened the conversations between the two towards service-learning and the suggestion Justin apply. The identification of Justin as a good candidate and the encouragement to apply was key in Justin’s decision-making
about the course. Describing his process Justin specifically referenced his teacher and the conversations they had regarding Justin’s fit. Justin shared:

I didn’t have Ananda or Johnson… [but] I did have Kelly and he did talk to me a lot about service learning. I had him for a- the class was here for like a year, it was like the active literacy class, I had him for that and then I had him for English… Yeah he told me about service learning and last year- it kind of all started when they started recruiting for the next class, he called me and he told me… to apply… [Kelly] kinda sold me on it- he told me I’d be great just because a lot of it is just talking with people and stuff and he knew I was good at talking with people. So he just- I think my personality is going to be perfect for service learning, so I think that’s kind of where he came from. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

With this example Justin alluded to the recruitment methods used for the service-learning class. Being identified by a teacher or friend as a “fit” played a major role in how students become interested and ultimately decided to apply. Multiple participants discussed their experiences being identified by teachers like Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ananda, or other teachers in their high school courses, to apply to service-learning. Others spoke of a general reputation of the course as unique, atypical in approach, and with a schedule that allowed students to leave school two days a week to accrue their service hours. The program is well known in the school and program allies, including teachers who accompany students on the service trips and help as chaperones, often speak with students about the benefits and activities of the program as well as applying.
Class Experiences. Justin used the word “unique” to talk about his experiences in the service-learning classroom. Like Bernice, he had mostly positive things to say about it and felt that the class fit his learning style and preferences well (Justin, Interview 3, May 12, 2016). Specifically, Justin referred to the teacher personalities and approaches as the most unique aspects of the course; their personalities, teaching styles, and the different approach to assignments and class structure all surfaced as qualities that set the class apart from others at WFHS. The way that Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson ran the classroom was something that Justin felt was impactful not only to the service and coursework learning components, but to the feel and connectivity in the class as well.

In English, Justin, like other students throughout the year, often referenced the flexible assignment topics and dates as the part that most stuck out to him as a positive characteristic of the class. Often these statements are accompanied by context involving stress levels. A common theme that many students in service-learning talked openly about was being stressed or frazzled during the year, with service-learning functioning as an escape. Justin was no different in this way as he wrote about service-learning in his journal entries throughout the year. For example, Justin talked about various elements of English coursework but most often referencing stress, relaxation, and visualizations (meditation):

English has been great. Every time I walk into English I feel relaxed and I think it's because of the classroom atmosphere. A happy calm a relaxed atmosphere is where I work best. I also like activities we are doing with empathy right now.

(Justin, Journal, 3/3)
The atmosphere of the class, which often included music and work that allowed students to progress at their own pace, obviously appealed to Justin as a space that felt calm. Students reference stress levels on a regular basis in their journals and spoke often of incredible levels of testing and homework that accompanied their work at Willow Falls. This is not out of the ordinary at a top-ranked school and this course is seen as a reprieve in that high-stakes environment (Demerath, 2009). “The creative writings have been fun and quite interesting. That really enjoyed the one today about nature… The positive visualizations are nice and a good start to the class (Justin, Journal, 3/4).”

Justin also referred to meditation/visualizations as a key component of the relaxing atmosphere of the course. These Friday activities often involved a positive visualization of self and others and encouraged students to reflect on their service sites in their journals afterwards. Ms. Ananda prompted the meditation and reflection activities and her approach was meant to provide time for reducing stress and balancing personal well-being with student work in the program and rest of their secondary coursework (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

In government, Justin found that he valued Mr. Johnson’s teaching style and approach to grading, allowing for straight-forward approaches in class as well as the ability to engage in debates. Justin described, “Government has been great so far. The teacher is very funny and I enjoy his teaching style. Also, I love the debates and I hope we continue that. I'm ready for the rest of the year” (Justin, Journal, 1/3).

Teacher personality, humor, and style were important characteristics of the classes, the students in the program conflated teacher disposition and pedagogy with the
atmosphere and feel of the class. This link highlights the importance Justin saw in who the teacher of the course was and how they interacted with him and his classmates. Regarding the coursework itself, working in groups for presentations, as well as seeing and talking to guest speakers (a Willow Falls police officer) were both referenced specifically in government entries in Justin’s summary of the best parts of the course (Justin, Journal, 1/3; 4/4). Through his educational experiences Justin struggled with ADHD and the hands on learning in his site work and the class itself appealed to him.

When I asked Justin about how he felt about the overall class component (English, Government, and the large-group meetings) of the service-learning program, he spoke about reflection and how it impacted his coursework. When asked what makes service-learning class the way that it is, he responded:

I think it’s really unique because it’s kinda based off of like, kind of a reflection. From what [has] happened at your site … Umm, so like, a lot of it isn’t necessarily, the service-learning part of it, but like, during English, like, right when we first get Ms. Ananda will always say, like, does anyone wanna share anything from site? So, being able to hear people’s experiences, and to see how they, like they’ve grown.

At a site that they are at, umm, makes it unique, because, in every other class, you’re just kind of, either doing a worksheet, or reading a book, and then coming back and reflecting on that, but this is people who are reflecting on like, their actual experiences. (Justin, Interview 3, May 12)
The reflective practices of the course were an important component for Justin. He saw reflection not necessarily as coursework (like other classes her references) but as something found only in service-learning. Justin also alluded to the purpose of the reflection periods and group debriefs when time is reserved for students to share their sites and to provide evidence of their growth. Having heard what other students have experienced, asking questions, and listening to Ms. Ananda respond to problems or questions provided a dialogue about servant qualities and expectations. Ms. Ananda used these times to assess students to see if “buy in” is happening and students are forming their servant identities within course expectations.

Justin continued in speaking about reflection and the role it played in how he saw the class and connected his practices into the experiences at his UDS site in the Spring, including one specific assignment, a “gratitude board,” listing what service-learning students are grateful for in their lives. Justin spoke of the impact this assignment had on his site work and linked his coursework and site experiences. He explained:

I like [the service-learning class] a lot. ‘Cause a lot of it is like, kinda like, reflecting back on to what we do. And, even just like talking about the thing we’re grateful for, and then like, going, like we go to site, and it’s like, you see like, how fortunate we are compared to, I mean a lot of these people who are at these specific sites that we go to, umm, it’s like, I don’t know. I like the reflection part of like the things we learn, I mean, kind of all apply back to like, at site. I feel like seeing the things we’re grateful for, and then like… if they get a gratitude board at UDS, or at the school. Just like, how different [the board]
would change. I don’t what made me think of that, but I just feel like being at site, their, what they’re grateful for would be like quite a bit different than like, what we’re grateful for… And… if they would have those like fun random things too, or like, in terms of, the basics, like, being able to drive. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

In this excerpt Justin referred to reflection as a venue for being able to change perspective and to see those he is working with in a different light. Being able to reflect about ability and gratitude for his own capabilities and life pushed Justin to think about the what those he served would be grateful for, and how that would contradict the students at Willow Falls.

In this passage Justin also wrestled with privilege, mostly in regards to ability and being “fortunate” in his physical/mental capacities, regarding things as simple as being able to drive or eat properly. He noticed that those he is serving were not able to do some of the tasks or actions he considered very basic and normal. As he recognized this privilege and his abilities, he also switched into the perspective of a UDS resident, wondering would they would be grateful for, and how they would think about their own privileges. Justin also referenced this perspective in a journal entry and spoke about his own abilities in comparison to the residents; “I feel so much gratitude when I'm outside because of seeing these 20, 30, 40, etc… year olds with these various disabilities. It makes me feel so thankful for my basic abilities” (Justin, Journal, 4/4).

Recognizing difference in ability and responded through reflective practices, Justin confronted the differences and had to ask difficult questions about his standing and
abilities versus those he interacted with at site. The application of his reflective practices at site showed the overlaps that impactful service-learning can orchestrate and use to facilitate awareness and growth as students engaged in their service work.

In referencing his whole-class experience, Justin continued with his focus on reflective practices in class, especially English, and Justin specifically mentioned the role of “one-on-one” sharing exercises in class, how the brought the service-learning students together as a group, and how they connected at his sites. Justin was adamant that the exercises in class made the students in service-learning interact and therefore connect on a much deeper level than a traditional class would have. From our second interview:

I think the biggest thing that brought us all together, were the one-on-ones that we did. In my opinion, those are huge. ‘Cause there would be people that you’re uncomfortable with in the class, that you don’t, never really talked to before, and you’re just like going in, and then you’re like. You’re face-to-face, and then, like, after doing that, it’s been like, not very bad. You’ll be like, okay, I just stared in this person’s eyes as they talked to me. And then just like, in class conversation, you’re not like uncomfortable with them at all. So… yeah… In my opinion, the one-on-ones are huge in terms of bringing everyone together. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

Justin felt that the class work fed directly into his site work, and vice versa. The program aims that students should be able to see the value in both areas of the course, and share what they have learned in both components, were present in Justin’s interviews and journal entries. Justin’s interviews and journals were unique in that he understood the
reflective aims of the course better than many of the other participants and students I spoke with. Justin felt it was the most important element of the course regarding his site experiences.

**Service Site Experiences.** Justin’s two sites were both located outside of Willow Falls, which was not typical of most service-learning students. Justin’s sites were similar in that they were both institutions that worked with populations who were underserved and both required Justin to interact with new people, in different stages of development and cognition, on a daily basis. Justin’s main roles at his Fall site, Wilson Elementary, included working in class with the teacher as a teacher’s aide, tutoring students, playing with students, organizing activities and lesson ideas, and making sure students had help if they needed it. At UDS, Justin worked in a social capacity, meeting residents and playing board games or discussing the daily history topics (provided as an activity by UDS). Justin also helped with some of the residents who had a work responsibility at the site. Residents would bag and count Q-Tips and are paid an hourly wage to do so. Justin would help oversee the residents working and talk with them as the prepared the bags. Justin felt that each site was important in his time in service-learning, and mentioned his work with the students at Wilson Elementary as his favorite.

At the elementary school, Justin spent most of his time in class working on assignments and tutoring students. Justin felt that he was highly valued there by his site supervisor, Ms. Miller, and he enjoyed working with children. Despite his confidence during our second interview, Justin described his early experiences at the site as uneven and talked directly about being unsure and nervous about his initial placement and going
into the school. He referenced Ms. Ananda as a role model in trying to adjust to this new place and new responsibilities. Describing his early site experiences:

I was kind of nervous and uncomfortable, but like I didn’t know exactly how to umm, I don’t know. I just like wasn’t fully comfortable yet, I would say. So, even going in site, even in class. Like, I didn’t really know, like, exactly how Ms. Ananda, like rolled with everything [Teacher expectations].

I would go to the site, and like all the kids, I hadn’t really connected with them, so at first, it was kind of hard, umm, but Ms. Ananda always said like, dive in, and like, fully engage. Just being fully engaged, it’s not, instead if there’s moments where like, oh I could just sit here, and like, not do anything, or I could be out, or I could like, if the teacher’s planning something, I could just be sitting in the back of the room, or I could be like walking around trying to like, if a kid looks confused, like trying to help him. Instead of just kind of sitting back…I feel like some people will take a lot longer to just kind of like fully dive in. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17)

Ms. Ananda functioned as a role model for many students in this capacity. She often encouraged students to face fears and discomfort when confronted with difference, and to focus on the moment and the person being served. The idea that students in the program had to consistently challenge themselves and engage in uncomfortable scenarios was a major theme of the course and Ms. Ananda’s interactions with students. Extolling the virtues of pushing outside of student comfort zones Ms. Ananda felt it was the only way
for students to really learn service, and to experience perspective shift in their identity formation.

From his journal entry during the second week of going to site, Justin further discussed his attempt at diving in, and trying to get more comfortable. He wrote:

One of my problems last week was that I wasn't really comfortable talking to everybody. This week I talked and bonded with a lot more people. I've learned every student's name in the class which has become very helpful. The students are also beginning to become a lot more comfortable with me too! (Justin, Journal, 2/1)

Here, Justin referenced course expectations that he actively look for spaces to engage with his site supervisor and students at the school. It was expected he is direct and thinking about his service, specifically, that he was open to new experiences and getting uncomfortable. The ideas that service-learning students pushed their comfort zones, or their personal boundaries and expectations, permeated every talk and class activity in the program. It is expected, and service-learning students are informally evaluated often, on how “open” they seem to be. In this interview excerpt, this has obviously connected with Justin and he actively thinks about it as he is engaging with his site and students at Wilson Elementary.

On a typical day at Wilson, Justin arrived and helped the teacher prepare lesson materials, he also engaged with students socially. Justin also acted to help with managing informal discipline of students, and he described one of his key contributions to class as helping Ms. Miller keep her students on task. He expected to work in the classroom as an
aide (Justin described himself as a “teacher figure”) and talked about specific details of a standard day at the school:

I would come in… The way they had their plan, kind of like, school day structured, typically, when I came in, she was like explaining something, so I would just kind of wait until she was done teaching, and explaining whatever she was doing. And then, whenever the kids had worksheets, I would always be walking around, helping them with their worksheets and stuff. Kind of just like acting as a role model, and at some points where they’d be done with their worksheet, instead of them just like getting off task, or messing around, or whatever. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

As an extra “adult” figure in the room Justin assumed the role model approach and works to get students on task with whatever lesson Ms. Miller has for the day. Being an older male and an athlete, Justin believed students, especially the boys, listened to him and looked up to him. This hook in their attention allowed Justin to become more of a teacher figure and to have an in with his students. This connection influenced Justin’s servant approach at the site and he felt the responsibility of his placement, especially in working with the children.

In addition to the schoolwork and tutoring, Justin was expected to interact with the students socially. One of the other commonly stated expectations in service-learning is to meet those being served “where they are.” This is often used in conjunction with retirees or Alzheimer’s patients, with adults and students with disabilities, and with people who are outside of the Willow Falls social circle. Justin referenced this
expectation when he discussed his role with the students at Wilson, and explicitly
discusses his interest in the students’ worlds and interests like what they did over the
weekend, the sports the liked, and if they were playing any videogames (Justin, Interview
2, March 17).

One of the more pivotal moments in his elementary experiences came during a
private discussion with a few of the Wilson students when they mentioned that they eat
breakfast at the school everyday together. Justin talked about some of the perceived
differences and this important morning ritual of breakfast, whereas at Willow Falls most
students ate at home; Justin noticed this difference in the school right away and brought it
up in our second interview when I asked him about a time when he noticed things were
different from a Willow Falls school day:

So, I guess I kind of remember that ‘cause a lot of kids would go to school
without breakfast. Umm, so I got there [on a typical day] like right when they had
finished breakfast and like, pretty much just went back to the room and she started
teaching.... it kind of made me think more. ‘Cause I actually didn’t know until
like a month in that they had breakfast. ‘Cause I was like, umm, I forget how it
came up. Somehow it came up, and they’re like ‘oh yeah breakfast, we had
something good.’ I was like breakfast? They were like yeah, we all have
breakfast. So it just made me, yeah, it caught me off guard. I was like oh, I never
even really thought about that. Obviously a lot of them are coming to school
without their parents feeding them breakfast. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17,
2016)
Justin’s realization that the students he was interacting with came from different socioeconomic backgrounds and that their families may not have food or the time in the morning to have breakfast was a key moment. Justin went on to say he was not aware that a majority of the students had not eaten, prompting him to wonder if his own school had breakfast programs. This moment came as we talked about issues at his site and was one he identified; Justin was more aware of his students’ backgrounds and did place this as “different” in his mind, prompting a recognition that the students he worked with had different means than his own.

In addition to some of Justin’s observations about economic/access differences with his students at Wilson, he also mentioned an event in class that made him wonder if his students’ lives at home were different, or worse off, and how it could be impacting their schoolwork and attitudes. Justin specifically mentioned one exchange in class, while Ms. Miller was leading a discussion on medieval weapons:

They were reading some like, medieval story about guns, and umm, one of the little kids like rattled off like three different brands of guns. He walked in, sits down, and just like rattled them off. And Ms. Miller obviously knew that they were different guns, and she was like, how do you know this? And he was just like, my dad has a bunch of guns. How does this 5th grader like, know all these different types of brands of guns?...

I mean, a lot of these kids who are between the age of like 8 and 10, probably some of them have probably gone through more hardships in their like, 8 years than I have in my like, 18 years. So like, you really don’t know what’s
going on like in the background of, I mean, like all these kids. Just looking at
them, you’d be like, okay, just like a general student, but you don’t know what’s
going like, in their home life. What they’re going home to… Yeah, you’re not
sure exactly. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016).

In some ways, Justin was wrestling with his own pre-conceptions as he discussed the
student and his ability to name guns. Was it the student’s home life or life experiences
that made Justin take notice? Is the student in danger or is his father involved in
dangerous activities? Or was it also the context of the school, the metro area, the African-
American student, and the stereotypes regarding race and violence, and the differences
between Willow Falls and Wilson Elementary? Justin’s statement showed he was
thinking about what their lives could be like, and how it could impact their learning,
especially regarding their family backgrounds, but may be still informed by expectations
and stereotypes comparing Willow Falls and the Wilson Elementary metro area.

This connected to his reflective practices and does show engagement in his
service work especially as he wrestles with difference; in this sense his work is
challenging him to recognize the difference in his students lives just twenty minutes from
his hometown. In both statements, the breakfast observation and the gun discussion,
Justin recognized difference and internalized it as something to think about as he works
with his students. Later in the interview, he crystalized his thinking and applied it to his
work in the classroom. Speaking specifically of how home life can impact schooling, and
what his takeaway was from this realization, Justin said:
The main thing I would say, is just like, it’s kind of like what I just said before about like, you really don’t know what’s going on, and what they’re going home to. So, kinda like keep, I would say like, an open mind. And like, don’t, I like, I never judge them, but don’t judge somebody just because at school, they’re like, they’re in a bad mood or something.

But, it could easily be because what’s going on at home, puts them in a bad mood at school. So kinda like, don’t judge somebody. Or not like, I don’t know exactly the right word. ‘Cause you don’t know what’s going on in their home life. That might be why they’re angry, that might be why they have sass or whatever you you’d say. That might be why they’re like acting that way. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

Justin’s view that he needed to take his students’ home lives into account, without judging them or avoiding the urge to “put them in a category” showed important reflection on his part. The students may be dealing with issues at home that are unfamiliar to Justin, and he attempted to take a step back to try to understand the situations of those he is serving. This approach fit in with the aims of the class, and even though his thinking was uneven, and does include wrestling with his own preconceptions, Justin showed evidence of service-learning teachings and approaches in his site work, constructing (in process of course) an identity of openness and reflection.

At Justin’s Spring site, UDS, he talked glowingly of his time there working with the residents. It was obvious this site placement had an impact. In talks with Ms. Ananda regarding UDS, Justin told me that Ms. Ananda claimed he would be a
“celebrity” at UDS and that without fail, the residents would take to him and want to spend time with him whenever he was there. Justin stated that this was indeed true, and seeing the faces of the residents’ light up when he walked in was one of his favorite things every week in the Spring (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016). Justin talked about being overwhelmed by their attention when he would show up, and how working with the residents, and a fellow service-learning classmate at the same site, allowed him to have some of the best moments of the year:

I love it. Umm, if you walk in there, and Ms. Ananda said this before I even got placed in the site, that she said like oh like, the UDS is working with like the special needs kids. When you walk in, you feel like you’re famous. And that’s just like spot on. The first day I walked in, everybody just like, a ton of heads turned, and they were all like, come talk! Yeah, I can’t like, I can’t talk to like, everybody at one time. But, umm, yeah, it is really, you walk in there, and you just feel like, you’re some famous guy. (Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016)

In this excerpt, his “celebrity” status not only made Justin excited as he talked about it, but it was obvious that this was “service feedback,” in the sense that he felt he was doing good, embracing being open and diving in. Justin specifically talked about “building connections” with the residents and working to talk with residents about their interests. One UDS resident loved bowling, so Justin asked him about the times the resident got to go out and bowl. Other residents were very interested in the primaries and coming 2016 Presidential Election, so this prompted Justin to organize a political debate and election at UDS, consisting of residents running for various “positions” on a resident committee.
Justin got permission from the site supervisor and created offices such as President, Vice President, others, and then he organized the election. This process included campaign posters, debates, and speeches. Justin detailed the election setup:

They [UDS residents] wanted us to kinda like, set up this committee [to meet with the supervisors regularly], and so the people, and they would run for different positions. So, president, vice president, secretary, two reps from the workshop, and two reps from the social side [department of UDS]. And then had like a little primary election, to eliminate down to like ten… we had like little posters with their pictures on all of them, like, why you should vote for them. But, they’ll like meet like, in the office. They have like, an office conference room, and they’ll like, meet for lunch, and just like, kinda talk.

We also did, for the 10 [residents] who had made it like kinda like after the primary, we did little speeches with them. So, we wrote out on little note cards, like what they wanted to say. And we practiced with like all of them, and just ran through it. Like, they were short. Like, twenty seconds. But just like, seeing them, like, their excitement, about the whole thing, about running… So just seeing their excitement I would say, was one of the most… exciting parts.

(Justin, Interview 2, March 17, 2016; Justin, Journal, 7/3)

Incorporating resident interests shows further recognition of connection his service work. Justin wanted to connect with topics and interests of those he served, this connection allowed for further bonding and made the social components of his site work more immediate. The political election process reflected the news and interests of the residents
and gave Justin an avenue to further his relationships with those he served. This allowed further integration into the community at UDS as well as deeper personal connections.

The election was part of Justin’s main site project. Each service-learning student, in conjunction with their site supervisor, had to develop a project or activity to enact at his or her sites. Each semester, service-learning students were expected to identify a need, an interest, or problem at the site and design a project to address it. Justin’s election project led to the formation of a real committee, made up of residents, who would meet and talk with the site supervisor. The excitement and the investment of the residents in the election project was an obvious draw for Justin and he spoke excitedly about being able to connect with residents in that way, and to see them get excited, and nervous about the speeches, and talking about who one, it was obvious from our interview that he felt this was an important work.

Like Bernice, Justin spoke mostly of human connections and working with difference, as he saw it. Working in the classroom and at site, he focused mostly on forming relationships with those he was serving, while attempting to meet them “where they are” in their world. Justin’s basic approach was to try to talk more about the person he was interacting with, and less about himself in his conversations (Justin, Journal, 4/3). In each of his site placements, it was important that developing a rapport and understanding with two populations who were very different in age, background, and ability.

Working with difference at both sites produced awareness and experiences that Justin was from a different, privileged background. In his work Justin’s servant identity
formed around the status he carried with him at each site, namely that he was “important” and viewed as a celebrity or role model. The celebrity treatment functioned as important feedback for Justin’s servant identity formation and showed him that was doing a good job and fulfilling the mission of the program. Justin recognized this interactions and the responsibility that came with it to uphold a “good” image was apparent in our interviews and his journals. Finally, Justin viewed this role as integral to how he thought of himself as a servant and a member of the site communities. It was obvious that Justin valued these interactions and worked to dive in, to get involved, and he used Ms. Ananda’s teachings and approach as a template for his own interactions, basing much of his understanding and approach at his sites on course expectations.

Sarah. Sarah was a measured, self-reflective, white female who was 17 years old at the time of this study. Ms. Ananda regarded as one of the best students in the service-learning program. Sarah was friendly and smiled often; she was very well liked by her peers, and maintained a quiet presence in class rarely sharing about her sites or service experiences. Multiple informal conversations with Ms. Ananda over the course of the year involved Sarah as an example of what happened when service-learning is done right and there was full “buy-in” from a student.

Sarah described herself as smart but not academic, more hands on, and as someone who was not interested in academic competition or AP classes; she prided herself in her artistic abilities, especially in photography. Sarah also had a long family history of volunteering in her local church as a youth leader and her family had as strong presence in the city. Sarah’s grandfather and mother ran a major international
organization that existed to combat hemophilia (a disease which runs in their family, and which her mother researched as a medical doctor). Sarah was a 2nd through 12th grade attendee of Willow Falls schools and considered herself a part of the local community, which she valued highly.

More than other participants, Sarah talked about having an innate drive and desire for service. While other participants enjoyed service work and talked about it happily, Sarah was the only participant who talked about it as a need. Service was something she felt she had to do with her time and focused on it as an outlet. From our first interview it was apparent that service was a major part of her personal identity:

I think [service] kind of made me more compassionate towards another and to- I always wanted to be the one to help out, whatever’s happening. So I think I innately want to help out whatever I’m doing. Because I don’t- if you don’t have the drive, I don’t see the point in you being there. I mean I firmly believe that you shouldn’t spend your time doing something that you’re not- that you don’t have a passion behind. So I personally have a passion for service but if someone else doesn’t I can’t hold it against them for that. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Viewing her service characteristics as “natural” Sarah termed her servant identity as being formed around the idea of compassion and help. Sarah viewed her role as privileged and she viewed her relative relationship to those she served as that of a “helper.” This natural drive or passion for service that she felt was integral to how she viewed the concept of a servant and was so important that she viewed others who did not
have it as incapable of being able to serve. Sarah viewed some students in the program as missing this characteristic and states in this excerpt that she did not blame those who were not passionate, but did not feel they should be in the program if it was absent. Here, Sarah positioned herself as a servant with specific qualities that she valued and felt were required as a servant.

Sarah saw her best service quality as being compassionate and giving room for different voices, specifically when it comes to meeting people “where they are,” which was often said by Ms. Ananda in class. Sarah internalized this approach; here she illustrates this idea with a scene from her Fall site:

> You know, I’m not there to necessarily give my voice, you let them give their voice so that you can give your voice, I think that’s kind of important, especially with little kids, I have to listen to what they’re saying even if it doesn’t make sense, a lot of times it doesn’t make sense, but you know you hit on those points and then they get excited and that’s what’s worth it is when they- you know, and you get that reaction out of them, so- yeah I think that that’s something that’s- I think that having a voice and listening to their voice, that’s pretty important.

(Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Sarah was in the AM class and regarding Sarah’s intercultural communication scores on the IDI, Sarah scored an 88.9 (Minimization) on her first assessment, with slight growth and a score of 91.5 (Minimization) on her second. Sarah’s score of 3.60 on the cultural disengagement metric showed she has some detachment from her “cultural group” while
on the second attempt she scored slightly lower, a 3.40, meaning slightly further detachment from her group.

*Experiences in Service prior to Service-Learning.* Sarah had a moderate amount of service work prior to joining the service-learning program and had experienced enough that she felt it was important that she apply. Sarah had two major service experiences before service-learning, the first was organizing and helping with her church’s youth programs, and the second was unique to her and her family; her grandfather had started an international charity organization for hemophilia, which runs in Sarah’s family and both her grandfather and brother have it.

Regarding her church work, Sarah was a youth leader in the church and spent time in what she termed as a “role model” position. According to Sarah, the program was very well organized, had specific schedules and roles for participants. The program was popular among Willow Falls community members who belong to the church (the largest church in the town). Sarah’s work involved working with a lot of younger children and making sure the program was running well:

I guess the earliest thought I can remember I was part of what’s called Kids’ Arena. My church was called Arena and so I helped teach belief classes pretty much. And it’s kinda ironic how it happened but um- I worked with the age group that I’m working with now at Willow Falls Montessori, so that has helped me in a sense but you’re working with very different topics. But I loved it, it shaped me to become a mature person. Because I think service you are given a responsibility no matter what kinda service you have so you have to have a little
bit of maturity to get that down. Because a lot of times with service you’re not gonna have a lot of set guidelines that everyone’s gonna be hounding you to do, you just kinda have to take initiative and do it yourself. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Sarah claimed that autonomy was an important element of her servant identity. She believed that it was important a servant was aware and cognizant of their work, and was a self-starter. The idea of responsibility, the need to be in the right places doing the right things, was an important component of her identity structure. She felt she was responsible and mature enough in her work to do so. When asked to explain what she meant by “maturity” and how she experienced that in Arena, Sarah stated:

Because if you have kids who are upset that their parents are it church, you cant let them just burst into church while there’s a service going so you have to just get on their level, that’s pretty important, then you have to know what- how to cope with what’s happening. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Here Sarah discussed being able to work with young children (in Arena, or in the context of her site, kindergarten age) involved, for Sarah, being able to relate to them at their age, and developmental stage. Sarah’s focus on maturity in this quotation gave a clue as to how she viewed herself in her service work and also, why Ms. Ananda talked about her routinely as an example of someone who “gets it.” Sarah exuded a quiet confidence in our interviews and speaks in a very measured and with a calm tone of voice and her presence was noticeably calm and even keeled.
As far as the role she had in her family’s work with the hemophilia foundation, Sarah focused on her creative attributes and said that her main role was art direction and making posters, or visuals, for the foundation to use and to promote the message regarding hemophilia (in a sense, “public relations”).

With hemophilia foundation, my brother has hemophilia… so the world hemophilia foundation… I help a lot with that, with my mom, because she works at Jefferson Children’s hospital so she does research for that department so I always- I help with more art projects because that’s where I’m at home, with art projects, um… yeah [laughs]. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Different roles in service made sense to Sarah and she seemed to value her contributions in Mosaic and in her artwork for the hemophilia foundation. The varied service skills, which Sarah used when she could in her site work for the program, show openness to utilizing the specific skillset Sarah had as a servant. This passage also alluded to a world perspective and understanding that her family history with a disease can and should be viewed as a worldwide problem. The community of those with hemophilia was linked to this service organization Sarah saw this link in her work and how she viewed the art she did for the foundation.

*Joining Service-Learning.* Before deciding to apply for the program, Sarah, as a junior, had talked to a variety of upper classmen who were in the program. The first thing that attracted her to the course was the structure of the schedule and how she felt it applied to her learning style. The idea that you could leave school and interact with different groups of people, as well as be able to continue that work in the classroom,
appealed to Sarah. She explained, “when I heard that service you know- gets you out and you get to leave school and go and interact with new people, and that’s something that excites me is interaction. So that’s- that’s what really turned me on to [the] service learning [program].” (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016). Leaving a traditional school structure and engaging in more experiential learning appealed to Sarah. She viewed herself as a good student, but one that did not quite fit the high-performing WFHS academic track. The interactions with others, with her classmates, with difference, appealed to her desire to do something unique in her senior year. The idea that she could do that in service-learning program made it more attractive.

Sarah also mentioned the prevalence of Advanced Placement courses in the school as well as the other senior capstone course, Horizons, as something she had been interested in as well. Willow Falls is intensely oriented towards academics, with almost thirty AP courses and a multitude of post-secondary options. Sarah felt that path was not for her and was searching for an alternative program in which she could use her creativity and desire to work with people.

I talked to a few seniors about it, because I knew that I wanted to be a part of you know, either Horizons or service-learning, those are the big things that you- Well I never wanted to go into AP classes, for me- that’s not necessarily- I’m a smart person but that’s not- I don’t need that academic challenge for my life. Um, so I knew I wanted to be a part of something that’s more unique and I knew that those two you have to interview for it. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
In this case Sarah viewed the service-learning program as special, but less academically oriented. To Sarah the program was more focused on experiential learning and interactions with other people and groups. She wanted to be challenged in a different way and felt that being a unique experience was more important. Sarah found these reasons attracted her to the program, especially given her prior service experiences in church and with her family foundation, and her focus on creative expression and the arts.

Despite looking for something less academic, the culture of the school and her peers still had an impact on her choice to apply for service-learning. Sarah spoke of service-learning as “something” to do her senior year, meaning something above and beyond traditional courses. Many of the seniors at Willow Falls aimed to take Horizons or service-learning as a capstone course, there is definite prestige to joining one of the two programs, and if you don’t get into one, there is a feeling of being left out of a more rigorous or unique Willow Falls experience. Sarah explained her final decision:

I think it was related to everyone [who] was applying. Everyone was trying to get into something and I was like, oh I don’t wanna get behind because I don’t like feeling that way of getting behind- especially what’s happening in school, um-so… once I figured out like, oh- I need to sign up for this and do it and do it and then I did the interview and I’m like- wow- this is gonna- this is gonna be good- when I talked to Mrs. Ananda, I didn’t realize how amazing she is- you know- anyone who gets to interact with Mrs. Ananda, knows that it’s a special thing- so I think that was a changing moment for me, when I realized what I would be doing. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27)
In a school like Willow Falls there is incredible pressure to keep up and to maintain standing in the class, either through GPA, test scores, academic awards, or course load. Sarah, despite claiming she was not academically oriented, she still felt pressure to take a capstone course and to do something unique. In this sense she values the exclusivity of the course and its meaning, and desires to maintain standing (social or educational) through membership.

The final reason Sarah applied to service-learning had to do with a friend’s experiences the year before. In Sarah’s estimation, Kylie’s demeanor and the way that she carried herself was different as a result of her service experiences. She explained:

I could tell by the way she was talking about that- you know, she just had a lot of passion about what she was talking about. More outgoing. I think she was more aware of how she was promoting or- portraying herself and I think that- that’s pretty inspiring I think. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

This seemed important to her and when asked about this related to herself she shared that, “I think that, you know, it’s not a bad thing to want to improve yourself so I saw that she kinda came into her being, in that- you know- her own sense” (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016). The possibility of personal growth through service experiences appealed to Sarah and in her experiences service was the best way to achieve this personal change. By applying to service-learning, she hoped she would experience this growth. Sarah could see this was possible based on how Sarah saw Kylie’s experiences in the program. Through Sarah’s ideas about the program, namely that she needed to be
responsible, would get experiences outside of class, and would work with difference, Sarah hoped for a similar change in herself.

**Class Experiences.** The class experiences in service-learning were incredibly important to Sarah. Although she focused mostly on site work and her interest in volunteering as she talked about wanting to join the program, she was adamant that her work in the classroom became just as important. Sarah saw the overall program and classroom atmosphere as a “family.” All of my participants talked about this at some point in our interviews or in their journals, but Sarah mentioned it most frequently. The sense of belonging that she felt in the class was important for how she saw her service work and her classmates. In our second interview, Sarah talked about how the “family” environment formed through conversations, and how it became the most important part of service-learning. Sarah describe the class:

> It’s more of a family than fellow students and that’s something you can’t- you know- you can’t wish for, I think that’s pretty special. I think that’s probably what the teachers wanted us to do. I think that those one-on-one conversations when we first started, you know- everyone was like- ugh we do this such a weird thing but even then those conversations, [are meaningful] when you’re asking someone what’s going on. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Referring to the structure of the course and teacher intent, Sarah expands on a key finding in this study; forming a “family,” or community atmosphere was one of the most important components of the program. The idea that students would enter the program as strangers and leave as family members was entrenched in documents, assignments,
discussions, and day-to-day conversation. Teachers encouraged this phrase and used it and most students adopted its usage and drive to form a “family.” The formation of “family” had very much to do with the program; other stakeholders and more immediate figures were included in some fashion as the year progressed.

Sarah also noticed that the teachers were different in how they approached the class, in comparison with teachers in other classes she had at WFHS. In a broad sense, Sarah talked about the service-learning teachers being more “real,” in that they were willing to listen to the students, hear what they had to say, and actually valued opinions and student choice, unlike some of the other class she had experienced. Sarah also defined the teacher-student relationship differently in service-learning and valued the directness and the willingness to be open about student and school issues. Sarah explained:

Yea, they were just so real. [Other teachers were] like a teacher mask put on... Like just going through the motions, [in service-learning] it’s more like, yeah no, lets enjoy the day, I wanna know how you’re feeling and all that, and its, I don’t know, it’s different. It’s not like a teacher/student, it’s almost like a, I don’t know how to put it, like a role model and student I suppose. Yea, it’s very real and raw there. They [service-learning teachers] aren’t gonna bullshit you, to say the least… they don’t, they’ll take anything you tell them and they won’t flinch when you do, ya know? (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Here, Sarah was identifying a key characteristic of the teachers that most of my participants talked about; the relationship. Other students in this study also identified the
marked difference in service-learning teacher demeanor and how this impacted the class and the way students felt about communicating and interacting with their teachers. This teacher disposition allowed for Sarah, and others, to view them as role models, especially as it related to servant characteristics and actions.

In English classes, Sarah focused most on the reflective practices built into the class, and less on the more traditional course content. Here, she spoke about the moment she realized this would not be a typical English class. Sarah described how reflective practices had woven their way into the course and how she thought about school and her service work. She shared:

I think when we sat down to do those one-on-one’s, that’s when I realized this would be a different kind of class because- That first day. You just realized, ‘oh so this isn’t gonna be like a regular English and government class. This is gonna be, like you’re gonna be family with these people’… It’s not like, you’re talking about the next assignment coming up or like ‘oh this person is annoying or whatever,’ not like school talk. It’s like ‘oh how is your conversation with Mary today? Was she having a good day? I noticed the other day she was a little bit cold or something like that,’ so it’s more meaningful. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

To Sarah, the reflective characteristics of the course immediately set it apart from the other coursework she had been experienced in high school. Regarding community, the relationships she formed were much deeper than typical classrooms and she deeply valued the “meaningful” conversations. Social interactions were key in forming the
familial connections the teachers of the program expected and Sarah felt the reflections and interactions enabled familial-styled bonding.

One of the more specific English activities that Sarah remembered, and that impacted how she thought about being a servant, was the literary critique unit of *Beowulf* in English class. This assignment is an excellent example of how Ms. Ananda worked service ideals into more traditional assignments and state standards frameworks. Ms. Ananda used the book and its characters to illustrate and explore student conceptions of being a “good servant” and how that related to their service work.

According to Sarah, the *Beowulf* critique and the subsequent discussions about being a servant first began to develop. I asked Sarah about this assignment, and how she thought of *Beowulf* in the way that Ms. Ananda and the AM class talked about him, as a servant:

[Beowulf] was said to be a good community servant because he took his stand and he took his fight against Grendel and everything like that so I guess that was his way of being a community servant, but- you know- there’s debates whether or not he was actually a community servant or if he was selfish, you know- for greed, for that power. So I guess that’s a big thing, especially with being a volunteer it’s- you’re not doing it for your self gain, you have to kinda do a mental check all the time, that you’re not just doing it for yourself, you’re gonna need to do it for who you’re helping. I guess in my opinion I don’t think he’s necessarily the ideal hero. I think he is a hero in a sense because he did save a lot of people from Grendel but I don’t think that’s the true mark of a hero. I think a hero should
have humility and compassion and I don’t know if that’s- if those are characteristics that Beowulf had. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2017)

The idea that he was not acting out of good for the community or as a servant, but instead for power or personal gain, did not fit with Sarah’s conceptions of being a good servant. She viewed his story as heroic, but not exuding servant qualities. For Sarah, heroism and victory did not equate to good servant qualities, as she named compassion and humility as preferred characteristics. Other classmates did not share Sarah’s perspective and found Beowulf to be a good community servant, but there were heated discussions about what a community servant should do, and how they should go about doing it so that the community would benefit most in the end. This debate soundly focused on servant identity and the assignment did much to dissect specific ideals and characteristics of servant motivations.

In Government Sarah felt that the class was well run and enjoyed Mr. Johnson’s approach. Specifically, she mentioned the way the course was organized and that the values of the Government course were different than any other social studies class. Here, Sarah returned to the idea that the class was “less academic” than others in the building and talked about how government forced you to think differently, not less. As she explained it:

You’re using a different side of your brain, so you’re thinking more, like, about human interaction, and you’re debating if you have to think about your own opinions and formulate them so that you have a good argument, or you’re thinking more empathetically... So it’s not like your typical English or history
course. I would say its less academic and more about learning how to be a
human- like, learning how to be an active citizen. Things that you don’t usually-
you know, up until now, we hadn’t really talked about it. Like, learning how to
care for another person, and how to be fully aware of what’s going on in your life,
and how to, like, cope with things. I think it’s just a good, healthy way to kind of
work through what’s happening. (Sarah, Interview 3, May 20, 2016)

In this passage Sarah referenced her civic identity. In her mind the work they did in
service-learning was conducive to a citizenship that requires debate, an open perspective,
and it required empathy. Her citizenship was personal and involved the ability to learn,
understand, discuss, and cope, in essence, to be “human.” Sarah felt the course, and the
program in general, has promoted this civic identity and has given her a different way to
think.

In her journal entries about the class, Sarah praised Mr. Johnson’s teaching
approach. In each entry about Government she mentioned that Mr. Johnson’s teaching
was excellent and that there were no issues or complaints about how the class was run.
Like Bernice, Sarah especially enjoyed the final units in class regarding Street Law and
basic legal knowledge (Sarah, Journal, 4/4). She also applied the work service-learning
students did in Mr. Johnson’s government class to the “family” and the servant identities
being built in the classroom. Sarah saw this work as an important component of her
servant identity and her own conception of her classmates and the program community.
The acceptance of different viewpoints emerged, as a theme in Government and the
service-learning program, and Sarah believed this could be nurtured. She described her thinking:

I think since we all have that serving mentality, it’s more like I respect that you have different opinions than I do. Especially when we have debates in Government, it’s more like I actually wanna know your opinion, if you have a different one, I want you to explain it to me so that I can understand where you are coming from. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Here, Sarah’s focus was on relationships and perspectives. In the context of the course, these relationships were important to Sarah and the way the class was structured facilitated the openness and connection she valued. The opinions and perspectives that were different were important to discover, and both classes facilitated this approach in her schoolwork and service. This constituted difference in the program, political, social, and in some ways student backgrounds, and this difference did matter to the students and obviously in this passage to Sarah. In her experiences, the connections with those served, the teachers, and her classmates were what she became the most excited about in the service-learning program. This “human” element was how she felt she was doing well, and doing good work in her service.

**Service Site Experiences.** For her sites, Sarah was placed in a Montessori school in Willow Falls for her Fall site, functioning as a teacher aide and tutor to very young students (mostly kindergarten age). In the Spring, Sarah worked in two hospice settings, one in Willow Falls and one which was in a neighboring suburb; and this major age
difference change (5-6 year olds to senior citizens in hospice) was a key component of her service work this year.

The difference between Sarah’s service sites centered on age. We talked together about having a site where life was just beginning and blossoming and one in which life was at its end (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016). Sarah’s site responsibilities at the Willow Falls Montessori school involved helping the teacher with class organization, tutoring, playing, and helping to make sure students were on task and involved in class. Sarah spoke glowingly of her placement and also about her family history with Montessori schools, her younger brother attended one, and how they did not seem like a good fit for her. Despite this critique, she appreciated the educational approach and understood what was expected of the students and in her role as a teacher aide. During the Spring semester, in the hospice placements, Sarah’s role changed and was focused more on social interactions with the residents. She was specifically placed in the dementia ward, which housed six hospice patients, and she would typically go to her site when patients were out and more active in the common areas (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016). Her service at the hospice sites involved talking and interacting with people, asking questions, interacting with visiting family members, and also meeting and talking to the employees of the hospice centers.

At the Montessori school Sarah was often on the students level, working with them on assignments, talking with them about their day and their time at home, and trying to convince them to eat their lunches, to play or interact, or to take the students outside for recess. Regarding her Fall site, Sarah spoke of her interaction with the
students the most, referring to students by name and openly discussing how she worked with the younger students and played with them at recess; she valued the children’s perception of her as “not a teacher” and felt that the students looked to her as someone different, fun, trustworthy and she actively chose to interact with the students on the playground during recess. She felt this allowed her to get to know the students better, believing that the communication barriers between a teacher and student were not present. She described a typical day:

I usually went out on my own to be with the kids, um and the teachers would just like sit on the pavement and everything, but so I went and played with the kids, that’s usually where I made the kids more comfortable with me. Because they saw me where they were, having a good time and they’re like ‘oh so she’s not just a teacher, she’s like wants to get to know me.’ They would’ve looked at me a little bit differently, and maybe that’s how I should’ve done it, I don’t know, but I liked the way. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

It is obvious Sarah valued the connections she made with her students and felt that was her purpose at this site. Her drive to ignore the perceived norms of the playground in order to interact with the students showed that her intent was to focus on those relationships. The willingness to bend the rules, at least how she perceived them, allowed for a look into how she thought of herself as a servant; Sarah wanted to do what she felt was best and was willing to do so. This independence was indicative of her approach to the program and her site work.
Sarah also spoke about relating to the students after they came in from recess and described what an important time of the day it was for interactions. Sarah embraced this time period as a window, before schoolwork and after play, to socialize and interact with the students in the classroom as they settled in to start on their schoolwork. Sarah talked about bonding with students at this time, as well as some of the skills she had to pick up along the way to make sure she was interacting with all of the students in a personable way. Sarah also discussed the transition times between recess as a time when she had to transition herself, from more play-oriented behavior with the students to more “teacher” behavior. This transition was important and was a key part in how the students moved from play and being outside to working on reading or math inside, back in a classroom setting. Sarah discussed her role:

I usually came back in and it was lunch time so I ended up having a system where I went to different tables without any order because they used to get pretty frustrated if I said like oh I’ll go to you 1st, you 2nd, and they’ll be like wait, you spent more time with them. So I’m like ok, there’s no system today, so I’m just doing whatever. I had to adapt and to see how to go about the situation because little kids remember things. They really, really, really, remember. Reading time usually came after that so that was where I kinda went in that teacher mindset so you had to keep them on track because usually they just want to talk to you and tell you stories, because they really like sharing what’s going on in their life. So that was mostly what the rest of the day was spent on, keeping them on their assignments. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)
Sarah valued both roles at her Montessori site, on the playground and social, and as a teacher in the classroom. Sarah viewed her job as one of organizing the students and working to make sure they transitioned into their class activities after recess. Sarah also understood her students’ development and tried to divide attention to them so they could all interact with her, and she valued speaking with them, engaging in dialogue with each student. Fairness was an important component of Sarah’s interactions with the students and she felt it was her job to fairly interact with all of them.

Sarah and I also discussed the differences in Montessori education, especially compared to Willow Falls. Sarah felt she had a general idea of what Montessori was when she arrived at her site in the Fall, due to her brother’s experiences, but she talked openly about the differences she noticed and how this affected her thinking when it came to tutoring and helping the students with their work. Sarah spoke of needing to be flexible and to be different with each student, to “meet them where they are,” and how the different ability levels and personalities made it important to have this flexible quality (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016). This phrase, “meet them where they are” was a common refrain in the course and often said by Ms. Ananda. The idea that good servants check their own lives, their own voices, and meet those they serve where they are, is a key mantra of the course.

One of Sarah’s more challenging roles at the school was negotiating student social circles and she witnessed students beginning to bully or exclude others. Retelling this story was one of the few times she spoke up during Thursday group discussions about sites and it obviously had an impact on her.
While sharing, students in Sarah’s service-learning class were surprised to learn that 5-6 year olds were already engaging in this behavior. Sarah’s story was one of the moments that week when Ms. Ananda asked the class to try to help Sarah talk through the experience, and what, if anything she could have done differently to handle the situation. These group problem-solving discussions happened often on site-sharing days, and it was expected that service-learning students contribute to problem-solving discussions about individual sites, issues, and barriers as they happened. Sarah’s approach in this case was to try to let the Montessori students work it out, and to help if needed, this obviously was a struggle for Sarah and it was apparent she was still thinking about how to handle it as we spoke, a couple months later, in our interview. Sarah relayed the event:

So Millie and Jessica were the ones who were, they’re just more exclusive, and so Kennedy who’s a sweetheart, who always invites other girls to come and sit with her, um, she was trying to play with them but then, I saw this from a far, but then Kennedy came up to me and was like Millie and Jessica said that I can’t play with them today, and I’m like well did you tell them that you would like to play with them? And she’s like yes, but they said that it’s not enough room for me, and then Anna came up and played with them.

Kennedy was like, well then why did Anna come play and with them, and so I was getting a little frustrated with Millie and Jessica, but ya know, I had to keep on the cool face, um so I’m like well Kennedy, you can go tell them how that makes you feel. So she did, and they didn’t, they were in their own world, so
I was like ok Kennedy, let’s go play by ourselves. So then we started doing other activities and then the other girls came and sat with us and so we made our own little group and then the other two came over and were like, well can we have Kennedy back, we actually need her over here now and Kennedy was like um no, but you can join us. And so I think that was a little more of a tough moment because I wanted to go intervene with Millie and Jessica um but I think it was something that they needed to work out, but if it got out of hand I would’ve intervened. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Sarah spoke often of this balance, trying to decide when to get involved, to let the students work things out, or if needed, to bring in her site supervisor, the lead teacher, to help with the situation. Sarah felt it was her responsibility to try to help and figure it out, and to work with the unique needs of students who were all on “different roads,” which was something she worked on for the entire placement. This story obviously lingered for Sarah and spoke to her in a very meaningful way; she viewed the treatment as unfair and needing intervention, but was unsure how to do so. Sarah’s servant and civic ideals show through here as she works to allow for students to solve the problem, but gets involved to ensure fairness and to begin the process.

For her Spring site, Sarah was stationed at two separate service sites, the only participant in this study to have this type of service placement. Sarah went to Meadows on Tuesdays, and Rolling Hills on Wednesdays, and both sites were hospice-care facilities at which Sarah had similar responsibilities and expectations. At both sites Sarah was stationed in the dementia ward, and had the responsibility of interacting and talking
with the dementia patients when she was there. This presented obvious challenges in building rapport and connection, which Sarah valued in her service sites, but throughout her work at the hospice centers Sarah developed strong relationships and familiarity with the residents and their needs.

As her site work started in the Spring semester, one of the initial realizations Sarah made in this type of placement was the difference in care that each home provided, and the difference in cost associated with each home. Despite her personal responsibilities, which were relatively similar, Sarah focused on some of the major differences in the environment in her interviews and journals. It was obvious these differences touched a nerve and Sarah talked about navigating these different facilities as a volunteer. It was apparent that Meadows, the more expensive of the two sites (and in Willow Falls), was much more comfortable, well run, and well staffed. According to Sarah, these differences were obvious and this caused her to wonder about finances and retirement, and how these facilities functioned for their residents. Sarah noticed the facility and the overall presence of staff and residents at Meadows. She described the facility:

It’s a wonderful facility. Its full of people that are so good at what they do um and there’s always someone there to be watching over, and it’s more like you’re walking into this home, it’s almost like a getaway, which is really nice, so you walk in this huge foyer with really nice furniture. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)
Physically, Meadows felt good to Sarah. She noticed a home-like feel and felt this was how a hospice care center should be. The care, the space, and the demeanor of the residents felt right to Sarah.

Regarding the less exclusive Rolling Hills, Sarah noticed a different feel and level of attention by the staff, including a specific instance when residents where being transported back to their rooms from the common areas:

It’s a different vibe, it’s more like the patients are on their own, there is always someone who takes care of them when they need to be taken care of, but there’s moments when you walk through the hallway and there’s just wheelchairs lined up where people just left them because they were done with lunch but they don’t wanna go back to their rooms. So they are just lined up in the hallway in their wheelchairs not talking to anyone. [The facility] was just like a cement floor and then a pretty cold environment so it was very loud and very chaotic and then the rooms, there was like construction going on, so it was a more fast-paced environment, for a nursing home. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Rolling Hills was not as comfortable or acceptable to Sarah. These descriptions give insight into how Sarah viewed those she served, she thought of them as people and she believed it was her role to make connections with them. Sarah was considered a star in the program by Ms. Ananda and it is in passages and discussions like these that you can see why Ms. Ananda singled Sarah out; she was incredibly compassionate and attuned to the people she worked with at her sites, and Sarah worked very hard to interact with them and meet them “where they are.”
In addition to the facilities and some of the physical features she noticed, Sarah had issues with the basic legal requirements of her volunteer position, which she thought affected how she could do her service work. At both facilities she was asked to sign a standard legal waiver, barring her from moving the residents physically or handling them in any way. Sarah agreed that this was important but struggled with these perceived limitations during certain times, for instance, when a resident, Gladys, asked to leave the residence:

When Gladys has bad days, um, and when she starts getting like vocal, like yelling, that’s when I get a little bit like ‘Oh, ok what do I do now, gotta think through what to do,’ um, because especially when she’s asking, I need to get up, I need to go, help me, help me get out or something like that… and I physically, I’m not allowed to help her get up because, it’s just like a, I signed a waiver and I can’t do that. [This] is very frustrating, because you’re just like ‘well I just wanna help you but then you know,’ [but] I have to say, let’s just sit here, can I talk with you more? Before you go can you talk with me more? And then I start asking her questions so that she can get her mind off of that, off of leaving… so you just kinda, you try and calm them down because when they get really nervous then you start to get nervous but if you get nervous then they can sense that, even if they can’t see or anything. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Working in the balance of helping and being there for the residents, while understanding when to call for help with staff, is a space that Sarah negotiated throughout her placement. However, she realized that her role as a servant in this space is to be there to
be social, to talk, and that she needed to rely on others at her hospice sites to help her when she needed it. Sarah had to be quick in her responses in trying to calm Gladys down and personal communication skills were at the center of these interactions. Sarah had to read and react in the situation, while at the same time being conscious of how and when she needed to contact a supervisor. Sarah reflected further:

   It’s just, it’s interesting because you’re like, I’m there to serve this person and I’m there to be with this person so if they want me to go and get them a glass of water, I went to go get them a glass of water but I think it’s more I just need to respect that other people are there to do that so you know, there are people there who will get her a glass of water, will help her up to go to the bathroom, but I’m here to be talking with her and they aren’t so I’ll be here to talk with her. (Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

Sarah explained the core of her servant ethos in this passage. Sarah truly believed that personal connection is the most important component of her servant identity. The human interactions, the empathy, the compassion, and the care all form the backbone of Sarah’s servant identity.

At both of her sites, Sarah worked on defining her role as a servant, as someone who should be compassionate and involved, present with those she is serving, but also cognizant of the responsibilities of her service work. Sarah struggled in both placements with the fact the she is limited in what she can do as a servant. For connection with this study, Sarah’s experiences were also an example in working with difference, specifically age and ability. Each student and resident required different handling and skills on
Sarah’s part, and each situation required Sarah to adapt and regroup, especially when it came to student behaviors and issues, or resident needs. Some residents and students opened up to her and she felt she had made connections, and some did not, each person needing their own handling and attention, which Sarah was very aware of in our interviews. In addition to her personal adjustments, Sarah’s recognition of economic means and the level of care residents received was important to her understanding of how the sites functioned as they did.

**Samantha.** Regarding volunteering programs and hours, Samantha was by far the most experienced volunteer in the service-learning course. She had participated in multiple Appalachia Service Project trips similar to Habitat for Humanity, had prior service organization experiences at Willow Falls High School, and attended mission trips through her church.

Each of Samantha’s service experiences was somehow related to her church work and Samantha viewed her enrollment in service-learning as a continuation of the years of work in service-based organizations. Samantha is a white female, 17 years old at the time of this study, academically driven, and involved in a variety of extracurricular activities including women’s rugby, band, and cheerleading. Samantha was placed in the AM class section in the service-learning program. She spoke mostly of her mother’s influence, especially pushing her in academics. Samantha spoke specifically of having to negotiate with her mother to join service-learning as her mother was unsure if the program was rigorous enough (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
Despite her extensive service experiences, Ms. Ananda flagged Samantha early in the course as a student who was “not getting it.” If Sarah was Ms. Ananda’s example of a student who had bought in and was learning service the way the class intended, Samantha was struggling with “buy in” and showing personal growth. I had multiple conversations with Ms. Ananda about Samantha, specifically regarding an issue with a classmate; if Samantha was not with a specific friend during her service work, Howard, she would opt out and withdraw or show anger. Ms. Ananda was very concerned about this habit and had multiple, private conversations with Samantha throughout the year:

Samantha has exhibited a temper throughout the semester and has written about it [in her journals], this student also has been the subject of side discussions with the site manager and Ms. Ananda. According to the site manager this student is often disengaged and not working on the difficult tasks, she is located at an animal sanctuary and often pawns off work onto a male [Howard] service-learning student also placed at the site. Ms. Ananda wondered aloud this morning if this student was just checking the boxes to get the class credit, avoiding deep thinking and engagement… Ms. Ananda said this has been a growing worry and it would impact the placement of this student for the next semester’s site. (Research Memo, November 20, 2015)

Ms. Ananda needed to see evidence of Samantha’s growth and servant identity formation, as well as her contributions to her sites and the service-learning “family,” and in this instance Ms. Ananda could not see this evidence. Samantha referenced Ms. Ananda’s concerns on a few occasions, specifically being late to her site the first few times at the
animal shelter during her Fall placement. In her first journal entry of the school year she mentioned her issues in arriving on time and according to Ms. Ananda, this was evidence and one of the first instances when Ms. Ananda realized Samantha was not “buying in” to the program. Samantha wrote:

I will leave my house earlier and be on time, so I would leave about an hour earlier and that way I would be able to help get more things done that way I also wouldn't feel as panicked and rushed to get there. (Samantha, Journal, 1/1)

Student responsibility was a major component of being a good “servant” in Ms. Ananda’s view. Showing up on time and being actively engaged was not only good for the student’s personal growth and identity formation, but it was also imperative for the program. If students did not perform well at their sites, the site my not participate in the following year, causing Ms. Ananda to have to find a new site to place students. Site problems were of great concern to Ms. Ananda, who worried often of losing sites or looking bad if a student was late or disengaged. Samantha’s arrival issues were also referenced by the site manager in the quarterly evaluation and in their first discussion about service expectations in the program, Ms. Ananda addressed this problem with Samantha at the end of the first week of site work and had multiple conversations with her throughout the year.

With that context, Samantha’s sites were as follows; in the Fall she was stationed at an animal rescue farm in a rural area out side of Willow Falls, it was in this initial site placement that she struggled with meeting the expectations of her site supervisor and Ms.
Ananda. In the Spring, Samantha was placed in a Willow Falls district elementary school as a teacher’s aide and worked with students in first and second grade.

Throughout her year of service, Samantha had multiple meetings with Ms. Ananda regarding service work ethic, social issues and cliques, academic performances, student anger issues, and stress levels. Samantha mentioned most of these problems in our interviews and was open about trying to meet expectations in the class but often made statements about how she was not getting much out of the program. By the mid-point of the year Ms. Ananda was still frustrated with Samantha and was concerned she did not take much away from the course and that she had not fully “bought in” to what service-learning was intended to be about (Research Memo, March 31, 2016).

Samantha’s IDI scores were in the minimization range, and she improved her intercultural score slightly through the year; on her first assessment she scored a 89.03 (Minimization) and on her second, a 93.09 (Minimization). Samantha’s cultural disengagement scores showed that she had resolved her sense of cultural belonging, with a 4.0 mark in the first assessment, with a slight decrease into the “unresolved” category by the end of the year to a 3.8.

Experiences in Service prior to Service-Learning. Samantha had many volunteer experiences through her church. She said she enjoyed her service work with her church and looked forward to doing more in the future. Samantha was keenly aware that service would set her apart from other college applicants and views her first site, working with abused and neglected farm animals, as a key part of her preparation for a
future career as a veterinarian. As she contemplated her service work the summer before the program started, she had this realization about the class and her site placement:

I was like well, semester wise- at least one of them is somewhere you kinda wanna go and then I figured if I could be on a farm, then that gives me time around animals, and I don’t know that it’ll really count as like a shadowing thing or anything but any vet school is gonna be like, ‘oh you spent a semester, two days a week on a farm, with farm animals?’… like, that would look pretty good.

(Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

Within this context, Samantha talked about her desire to experience a farm setting that could get her job “shadowing” experience. Samantha spoke of value in the service experiences and she felt working a farm would advance her college and career ambitions to be a veterinarian. Samantha talked often in our interviews of needing service to mean something to her. This attitude was seemingly in conflict with the aims of the course, which focused on suspending personal desires in the name of being present and actively engaged in service.

Regarding her extensive prior service experiences, Samantha talked mostly about her previous volunteer work building housing in a poor, Appalachian area in rural Midwestern state. The trip to build houses, according to Samantha, was the most influential volunteering experience in her life and she state that she felt it was more important than her work had been in the service-learning program (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016). Samantha viewed the community and the work relating to her church as the most important in getting her to seek other volunteer opportunities. In
speaking of her prior volunteer work in the rural state and at a childcare facility in a large urban area near Willow Falls, Samantha recounted the impact her church experiences had on her service inclinations. She recalled:

[My service experiences are] mostly church related, especially throughout middle school, I was really involved with youth group. I was in a small group but I know we actually went to Tiny Tots- when I was in 6th grade and folded baby clothes. Um, for their little mommy workshop thing that they could use their little points to buy, so I remember doing that in 6th grade. And then sophomore year between freshman and sophomore year I went on a mission trip with my youth group to [rural state]. And uh- it was probably one of my favorite weeks. We helped rebuild a house for someone down there and then we also ran a bible school for a couple days for some little kids… that was my favorite service experience.

(Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

It was important to Samantha to see results in her service work. The housing experience was rewarding to her because she saw her daily progress as she worked, the same with running a bible study or working with youth group. Samantha needed feedback in a tangible form, as a reward, for her work.

I asked Samantha about the church housing experience and why it was so important to her, and she responded that the entire time working on the house, the service and the context of the town made her excited to be helping out. It was obviously a very different context than her life in Willow Falls and Samantha spoke openly about the
poverty, the difference, and the interactions with people there. Regarding her actual service work during the housing trip, Samantha shared:

We were assigned to separate groups, I’m pretty sure my group was cleaning, because I wasn’t in charge of cleaning every single day, we were more in charge of like setting up a schedule for who was cleaning so like a different group would cook dinner one night and a different group would set up. So my group was in charge of like the schedule for cleaning but I only had to clean a couple times personally. Um… so we kinda did more the finishing touches…and helped fix stuff. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

Samantha’s role seems to be administrative and she admits to only cleaning a couple times, she also did not include much detail about her actual service work on the house. The memorable moments come from the difference she encounters and the excitement she had with her friends. The social aspect of the church trip was the most important to her and she described her experiences in the most detail when it came to her friends.

In addition to the work on the house, Samantha also spoke of her role in a bible study group with local kids and the activities she and her partners setup for the local children:

So we set up that and then we led them in like songs and like a little lesson and a craft and then we went and played with them. And so we did that one day and then the next day we went to like a [recreation] center and did like a kind of separate bible study with different kids. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
More so than her housing details, Samantha recounted the work and events she did with the children. Samantha’s rural experience was obviously the main event in prior service work and it set up expectations for what she thought service-learning would be like. Samantha viewed her prior service work is very rewarding and hoped that service-learning would continue the experiences she had with her church (Samantha, interview, April 14, 2016). In later interviews, these perceived differences between her church work and service-learning did play a part in Samantha struggling to “buy in.”

**Joining Service-Learning.** Samantha’s prior service experiences were a key motivator in applying for Willow Falls’ service-learning program, but like her classmates, she had discussions with upperclassmen from the previous years’ class as well. Samantha also spoke with some of her teachers about what the course was like and how Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson conducted the program. The other attraction to the course was that Samantha knew about the service-learning ASP trip and thought of it in comparison to the rural experiences she had through her church. The possibility that she could go on another trip similar to her church trip was very attractive and Samantha had hoped to be able to be involved in another ASP-styled trip in service-learning. From our first interview, Samantha describes the impact that her other extra-curricular activities and interactions with upperclassmen had on her decision to apply. She stated:

Since I’m in band and rugby I’ve always been exposed to upperclassman since I was a freshman… I remember my squad leader in band who was also um- the one who dragged me into playing rugby recently, she was in service-learning, most of her friends were in service-learning and from the get go she was always like, ‘join
service-learning.’ Then one of the girls who was on my mission trip with me—she was in service-learning and my [cheering] squad leader sophomore year… [she] was in service learning [too]. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

The connection with her squad leader in band, as well as the links with other upper classmen, her mission trip, and her personal interests in service compounded Samantha’s desire to apply for the program. Having upperclassmen she admired push her to join was convincing and Samantha applied after hearing about the program from her friends. For Samantha, these interactions and discussions were important social links with her friends that she felt could continue in service-learning. Being with her friends, and people like her, was important in her decision to apply.

Samantha also referenced the importance of social media in “advertising” the course to her and the other under classmen in previous years. The pictures and posts on social media allowed her to see the program as it was portrayed by the service-learning students, and this appealed to her as a freshman and partnered with upper classmen stories and her own service experiences, made the program more appealing:

I remember just like seeing pictures on Instagram and Facebook and everything else and like ASP, and they’re like there, people talking about it. Because not only did [a friend] do it but other girls she played rugby with did it and like— the kid I went to homecoming with— his older sister was in it and so like— just like I guess seeing pictures [online] is kinda like overhearing them tell stories and everything else especially [to] the freshman… it was kinda like so cool to see, I was in awe. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
The awe-inspiring social media posts and stories from her upperclassmen teammates made the program attractive to Samantha. She wanted to be a part of something so important and to have those experiences and to post those pictures. The narrative of the class, the exclusivity and the uniqueness of the experience compared to other students, appealed to Samantha.

The decision to join service-learning was complicated by Samantha’s belief that she had to convince her family, especially her mother, to allow her to apply. Samantha relayed conversations with her mother about how they both viewed service-learning as a program that was less academic than she was used to in her Advanced Placement courses. Samantha felt she had to convince her mother to apply and spent time linking the course and possible site placements at the animal rescue, as a link to her future career choice as a vet:

I never thought my mom would go for it because I’ve wanted to be a vet for so long and she’s always been super focused on like- you need to like take hard classes, set your preference learning thing, um- it’s always something I thought would be like cool but not really realistic. Then I thought about it and I was kinda like looking for ways because the more and more the applications came out, the more my friends were interested, and I was like- it does seem like something that would be really cool and it’s something I would really like if I just had a way to make it seem more appealing. I figured if I could be on a farm, then that gives me time around animals, and I don’t know that it’ll really count as like a shadowing thing or anything but any vet school is gonna be like, oh you spent a semester,
two days a week on a farm, with farm animals like that would look pretty good.

(Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

The implication that service-learning was not rigorous was consistent in our interviews during the school year. Samantha felt the coursework was not academically challenging and was not especially difficult for her to master. The tangible regard for her service, the animal experiences, were the most important component of the class and Samantha felt that an experience like that would be worth it for college.

Samantha was not the only student who felt service-learning was not rigorous and she spoke of two other friends who felt they had to convince their parents to let them apply. Samantha’s reasoning for the conflict was that the course was not viewed as academic or relevant enough when it came future majors, college, and careers. Samantha recounted the process of she and her friends convincing their parents to allow them to apply to the program:

We were all kinda talking about it and they were like- yeah it’s cool, I think I’ll do it. And two of us were like I have to sell my parents on it first, but we all went and got applications and we started ‘em. So I kinda decided I would at least attempt to try and talk my mom into it. And then when I talked to my mom about it, she was like- she wasn’t like completely on board but she wasn’t like flat out telling me no, and I was like, everyone is applying, because I know my grade even then, I knew that so many people were gonna apply. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
In trying to convince her mother that the program was a worthwhile attempt, Samantha invokes the idea of competition with her classmates at Willow Falls and the exclusivity of the program as a rationale to join. Like Samantha, most service-learning students thought of themselves as unique and special in this way, they were selected from an applicant pool, with top teachers, a flexible schedule, and the highest responsibility. This appealed to Samantha in that it was something exclusive and unique to Willow Falls. Service-learning, and the other capstone senior course, Horizons, collectively received almost three hundred applications for the 2015-2016 school year. This was out of a senior class of around four hundred; so a unique, elite, student identity formed around the program. This identity was used to appeal to Mom to convince her to allow Samantha to join the program. This rationale was used to convince her mother to feel better about the value, or perceived value, of the program regarding Samantha’s college and career plans.

**Class Experiences.** Like the other participants in this study, Samantha was especially struck by the different atmosphere and structure to the class. In both English and Government sections, Samantha felt that the teachers, the curriculum, and the teaching styles were unique and an important part of the program experience. Samantha had her own critiques of the course, specifically how the community of the AM class failed to coalesce, but her favorite elements of the class were centered on the course design and approach. However, the reality of the AM class and her site experiences did not match what she felt the stated aims of the course were.

For Samantha, the most important element of the class was the approach of the teachers and their teaching style. Samantha talked about student/teacher relationships,
and similar to Sarah, believed it was the key to forming around the course aims and ways of thinking, especially regarding service. When I asked her what she noticed first about the service-learning course she identified Ms. Ananda’s approach to teaching, grading, and learning as the key difference from prior classes at Willow Falls:

I don’t know, I was kinda just like almost in awe I guess of just like how different it was from anything I’d ever really done before. I think Ananda’s whole persona, like the way she treats you, every time you answer or like raise your hand, she’s like ‘yes beautiful’ or like ‘there you go, you wonderful person.’ Or like if you did something wrong or missed a question, she would say ‘ok, you’re still a wonderful person.’ If you’ve taken a specific AP class or something and you’re like not catching on or whatever, I’ve had like teachers kinda treat you like you’re an idiot as opposed to like its ‘ok, there more things going on in the world than this one essay.’ (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016)

The atmosphere of the course and the way she felt supported gave Samantha a different feel than other more academically oriented courses. It was apparent that Samantha felt a personal touch from Ms. Ananda and enjoyed the teaching approach. It was interesting that Samantha felt the course was less rigorous and lamented that fact, but did not link this feeling with the focus on personal well being and emotional learning.

Interestingly, Samantha mentioned the course schedule as her favorite part of the class, including the fact that she got to be outside of the building on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Being able to leave school was important for Samantha, representative of the responsibility she enjoyed. Other students also spoke about this as part of the unique
feature of the course, but Samantha was the only one to claim that it was the best feature. She also linked it to college and a college schedule which she viewed as a positive as it would be similar to what she would be experiencing the next year as a university student:

Instead of having like full classes and everything, and like more like a college schedule, where you don’t have class every day. Um, I was really excited to not have class every day and to have that as site time. (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016)

Being able to get out of her traditional schedule and into three-day weekly schedule was a major perk. Students spoke of being able to be away from the school day on their own, enjoying autonomy, as they traveled to and from sites.

Finally, Samantha spoke regularly about the social aspects of the course. Her friends, especially Howard, had a major impact on her feelings about the course and how she viewed her site work and in-class assignments. Samantha referenced her friends so much so that Ms. Ananda mentioned it to Samantha as an issue to work on. Ms. Ananda believed that Samantha was not fully engaged in her service or projects in class unless she was with the people she wanted to be with, as she did her service or course work (Research Memo 7, November 20, 2015). The social interactions with friends were by far the most valued set of experiences that Samantha had during the year. Her relationships with Howard and her other classmates were part of her application, acceptance, coursework, and site experiences. Building stronger friendships with people she had known as acquaintances for years at Willow Falls was a major theme in our second interview (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016).
English class was one of Samantha’s strong suits (despite a joke about her terrible grammar skills) and in her journal entries she often mentioned how she felt at ease with the assignments and the expectations coming from Ms. Ananda.

I really like English this year. I like how open ended everything and how we relate non-Englishy things to what we need to be doing. I also really like the [teacher feedback] sheets telling us what we're good at and what needs and proved. (Samantha, Journal, 3/1)

Samantha believed that connecting site work and larger issues in society, what she jokingly calls “non-Englishy things,” was a valuable part of the English class.

Samantha’s motivation for class depended on the value she perceived to be gaining from it, and the topic variation as well as the teacher feedback was important in giving her markers to gauge her work.

However, Samantha did have issues with a few class procedures, especially during presentations regarding points and point deductions. As an academically oriented student concerned about her class standing, Samantha was incredibly focused on points and scoring for grades during the courses to the chagrin of Ms. Ananda, who tried to avoid a heavy weight on letter grades and assignment scoring (Samantha, Journal, 3/3).

It obviously bothered Samantha when she missed points and she also was concerned about the perceived lack of structure for assignments and projects:

I feel pretty good about English, I don't really like all the poems, but that's more because I'm not a huge poetry person. I also think that the creative writing is kind
of hard. Would be a lot easier if we could have just a little more structure to what we are supposed to do. (Samantha, Journal, 3/4)

Here, the rigor of the course is under question once more. Samantha viewed the creative and loosely defined projects as less structured and lacking direction, causing consternation and frustration regarding assignments.

Despite some of these misgivings, English and Ms. Ananda still appealed to Samantha at the end of the year. She felt thankful for having been a part of the class and the English section. From our last interview, Samantha looked back on her time in English with Ms. Ananda and had changed her perspective. She felt that it was more than a class, or assignments, and that this connection had become the most valuable part of her experiences in service-learning:

Like you can tell she actually cares about your stress level and that doesn’t mean she doesn’t assign essays or whatever- But she still focuses on you and even like if you do bad on one of her [assignments, activities], she makes sure to tell you, like yea you’re grade wasn’t that good but that’s in the grand scheme of everything, that’s not what matters here. It’s so much more than just a class…

(Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

This was a marked change from Samantha’s earlier statements about rigor and her focus on her GPA. She continued to focus on her academic work and her college goals but the critique of service-learning as less rigorous has dwindled, replaced by the belief that the class is something more, something unique and supportive.
Like other students in the English classes in service-learning, Samantha referenced her stress levels and how the way the course is constructed includes reflection, and this functions as a built in check for stress and feeling overwhelmed. Stress was a constant discussion among the teachers and the students, and Samantha’s mention of it in her interviews (and multiple journal entries) was not a surprise. Many of the due dates and rubric expectations in English were decided by the class as a collective whole, with input from students about other class schedules, events, or exams that would be in the way, or impact, the due dates or stress levels during certain assignments.

In the Government section of class Samantha initially felt much more at home with Mr. Johnson’s more traditional teaching style and expectations. Samantha described his approach as an engaging lecture style and felt that government content was useful, well organized, and timely regarding current events and political issues during the primary season. She appreciated his commitment to discussion and debates, especially involving controversial issues and local problems. Samantha also made an important connection between Mr. Johnson’s teaching and the expectation that what she was learning in Government should carry over into her every day life, and vice versa. In this passage from our final interview, Samantha made a direct connection between her daily knowledge and know-how and her coursework, a major aim of the program, and one that is not lost on Samantha as she reflected back on the year:

I think when like [I wrote in] the Government [student] evaluations, like one of the comments I made was that he’s one of the few teachers who will sit there and lecture and it doesn’t put you to sleep. And like most of the people I talk to said
something similar to that- plus I don’t think most classes cover like- you just learned everything about the three branches of government but now I’m gonna teach you this is why you should have a credit card, this is what you need to look for when driving a car, the stuff you need to know before college. Its actually application stuff and you can tell they care about you so much more than as just another student… Like you don’t just learn school stuff- you don’t just sit there with a textbook and everything, you learn about people and life and places outside of Willow Falls. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

Samantha values what is useful in these classes and believes that she is getting incredible “real life” information from her Government teacher and the topics he addresses in class. Mr. Johnson recognizes student interest, like Samantha’s, in this type of knowledge and he tries to include it as often as he can in his lectures (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

Samantha went on to discuss her interest in the final units of the year, what Mr. Johnson sometimes terms as Street Law, or more common knowledge, every day legal understandings that can impact student lives. This was obviously her favorite content and she felt that it was important because it was “relevant” to her life. In her journals, Samantha focused on this aspect of the unit, stating that she was happy the content and discussions in class were so relevant to her life:

Honestly this is probably the most I've enjoyed Government. It's stuff that actually applies to life right now and we're learning things that everyone should
know before going off to college, it's been really helpful and interesting.

(Samantha, Journal 6/4)

The way that Mr. Johnson organized the course within service-learning contexts also appealed to Samantha. She was most engaged when she felt the class content impacted her life. Samantha’s statements in our interviews and in her journal entries showed that she had to feel relevance and applicability when she was learning something, and by and large she felt that the entire program did that, but especially Mr. Johnson’s teaching regarding government; she felt this knowledge allowed for a better understanding of how service can impact the larger “community” function:

But I know like Mr. Johnson would always like tie in things like whenever we were learning about the Judicial Branch and everything he would always talk about like the City Council office, which is one of our sites, so like he could tie things in to make it more about service. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

Linking the classroom to service is an important step for most service-learning students. Like Sarah, Samantha saw the value in the coursework as it applied to her site, but spoke only of it in the context of Government. Regarding her civic identity, Samantha was able to articulate connections between the course, local government, and her service work and valued the application of class information to the “real world.”

Samantha was the most academically focused of my participants. Her drive for grades and assignment requirements was a common subject in our interviews and in her journal entries. Samantha struggled when she could not place the learning or service work as something useful to her career or college plans and she often got frustrated or
stressed when she was confronted with ambiguity during assignments and site activities. She felt most comfortable with specific plans, instructions, and directions both in class and in her site work. Despite these misgivings about the technical aspects of class, by the end of the year, Samantha felt that the intent of service-learning, linking site work and coursework in a meaningful way, had happened for her. She felt that she realized later in the year that every activity and assignment had intent and was not busy work or a hurdle to clear just for a grade, but an important component of class. When I asked her to reflect on a realization she had during the year in class, she made the links between the service and classroom explicit:

The biggest thing is that you’re gonna do things that you wouldn’t even- not necessarily expect to be uncomfortable with but you’re still- like its still everything little thing is just pushing you to become a better person and like learn more about yourself and everyone else and everything around you- and just pushing you in every little way but in like the best way.

Right now coming to mind would be just the like projects like getting assigned partners because I remember at the beginning of the year I did a project with Mark on Beowulf and like we- it’s not like we fought or anything, we just didn’t really know each other so . . .we did the bare minimum, like we got by, we got a good grade, we talked about the project and then like later we were in the same book- like recently for The Kite Runner, and now we’re like super good friends. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)
So despite her conflicting experiences and critiques of course rigor Samantha still felt value in both major parts of the program, and especially felt that social connections, the friendships, the relationships, cemented her good feelings towards the class and program in general. Samantha also recognized that the assigned books and classroom work was integral as part of the formation process of her servant identity. She felt that each activity was purposeful and informed her growth as a servant. This was a marked contrast from Samantha’s earlier struggles and complaints.

**Service Site Experiences.** Each of Samantha’s site experiences were unique; one at an animal rescue farm that was located forty minutes from town and the second at her Spring site at a Willow Falls elementary school. Samantha was one of the only participants who did not leave Willow Falls for site work with different people, although she did attend optional sites for extra service hours on weeknights after school (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016).

Samantha was very vocal about her site experiences in class and had some issues with being late and staffing as discussed previously in this section. Samantha also had a strong connection with one of her site partners, Howard, and this was an important aspect of her social behavior during her fall site at the rescue farm. That being said, Ms. Ananda was concerned throughout the year that when Samantha was not in with immediate friends, or in her social circle, she would be reticent to participate (Research Memo, November 20, 2015).

At the animal rescue, Samantha talked about her relationship with the animals, especially a pig, and the physical labor issues she experienced at the site. One of the key
disagreements emerging from her site work was the perception that she was not doing enough and allowed Howard to make up for her lack of work ethic. The site supervisor and Ms. Ananda commented on this in her official site evaluation (Research Memo, November 20, 2015).

Samantha described her work at the site as animal care, which involved feeding, maintenance of the grounds, play, and moving animals for cleaning pens, common areas. Her main job at the site was feeding the animals (especially two dwarf horses) housed there, and this took up a large portion of her typical service days on Tuesday and Wednesday. She also spoke of a project she and Howard constructed, a teeter-totter for the goats. She shared:

When we got [to the site] it was usually time to kinda make sure everybody had food and everything, so Howard would take one pale and I would take the other and we would feed the two horses. Mabel and Katrina, they are dwarf horses. You had to make sure they had all their food but also make sure they got the pills and everything that were in the bottom.

From then it always varied where there would be helping clean or pick up, clear out routes from pastures or we would move hay or whatever. We spent a lot of time on our site project because we did two separate projects, we did a tetherball for the goats and then we did a seesaw thing... The finished seesaw only took us maybe an hour, half an hour, after we spent like a month or 2 working on the first design that was a complete disaster. We ended up giving it to
the chickens to use as a roost or something. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016).

Samantha gave a good description of a typical site project; students were expected to show initiative and responsibility with their site projects and figure out a solution to a problem that they identified with the help of their site supervisor.

One issue that emerged with scheduling conflicts was that Samantha stopped going to the farm on Tuesdays, choosing to spend Wednesdays there to get her five service hours for the week. This is where the issues with the site supervisor and Ms. Ananda came into play as Tuesday tended to be more maintenance and physical work, Wednesdays were more focused on the animals and feedings. Howard typically went both days according to Samantha, while she went usually on Wednesdays and stayed longer:

On Tuesdays our site supervisor Betty wasn’t there, so it was more Jim who was in charge and that was a lot more of this fence needs to be fixed, this whatever needs filled. Then Wednesdays with Betty was a lot more of we need to do this with the goats or this with the pigs or this with the horses. So it was a lot more animal-based when you were with Betty and a lot more structural stuff with Jim, so it kinda depends on when you were there… I went a couple days because it got to the point where like between like this or whatever got in the way and I was like ok, I need these hours so I’ll just make it work but. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)
This arrangement, although fitting within the structure of the class and time frame, was part of the issue with the site supervisor questioning her work ethic and drive, according to Ms. Ananda (Research memo, November 20, 2016). Samantha was willing to work with the animals, which she valued, but seemingly avoided the hard labor on Tuesdays, which she left to her site partner.

Samantha’s work at the farm did have its moments of levity and she spoke often of working with Howard as the highlight of the time spent there. Samantha named moments when they joked around, sang songs, and working with Howard on the teeter-totter as the main memorable moments of the site (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016). One moment that challenged her and made her question why the animals were mistreated involved a pig at the farm, Vernon. Samantha specifically pointed to Vernon as the eye-opening service experience she had at her fall site:

I think there are a lot of people who would have the eye-opening experience that service brings them like just because I was at a farm, doesn’t mean it didn’t like-like I wasn’t exposed to extreme poverty but I saw this poor pig who had been beaten with a metal pipe.

Because this guy wasn’t gonna hit his girlfriend but I he knew he could emotionally hurt her by hurting this pig and like as someone who’s loved animals their entire life, like has always wanted to be a vet, like that was a huge thing to just stop and be like, like I couldn’t even fathom the idea of having that. And like because we had rescued horses where they were like in- like people said it was the worst case they’d ever seen. Like they were locked in stall for years and just like
up to like the top of their legs just in their own poop because they were just stuck in this stall for years and they were just starved and like- it was- if so many people could just stop and see that, I think that would be- because people would be much more willing to stop focusing just on them and focus on everybody, like every once and a while you need to look out for yourself and like you’re entitled to have your own issues but like sometimes there’s just so much- so much bigger stuff going around. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016).

Samantha’s encounter with Vernon was also mentioned by Howard in one of our interviews not included in this study, it was obvious this story had a profound impact on both of them. Samantha questioned why this could happen and related it to her future career as a veterinarian and animal lover and processed the issues with Vernon (and some of the abused horses there) as things she could not fathom as being possible (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016). In this quote Samantha explicitly linked service and empathy towards animals and saw these experiences with animals as an important component of her own ideas about connecting with them and working as a vet.

Samantha’s second site was located in Willow Falls and was a local elementary school (Weston Elementary). Samantha worked with special needs students during most of her time in the school and received positive reviews from her supervisor and Ms. Ananda during her work, a contrast from her first site in the Fall. Samantha described her work in Willow Falls as surprising, especially because, as she stated below, she did not realize teachers in Willow Falls needed help as she assumed that because the town and
schools were so well off, they did not need service. Here she discussed the week she would be gone for the service-learning trip:

I’m at Weston Elementary so you wouldn’t really expect them to need that much help but we were talking yesterday because I was like just to let you know I can’t come back next week because we have ASP and they were like ok, whens your actual last day, and I was like I think it’s the 11th or whatever. They’re like what are we gonna do? They’re trying to think about how they are going to make it work without having me as an extra set of hands there. I was just like you don’t stop and think about stuff, especially in a town like Willow Falls, so you’re kinda just like more aware, I guess, of just everything. (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016)

The realization that service might be needed in Willow Falls was an important one. Although most students had sites in Willow Falls, the realizations that all was not in order, or working perfectly in some of the Willow Falls experiences, was a surprise to some students, like Samantha. Many of the service-learning students think of themselves as serving “others” outside of Willow Falls, possibly “others” who look differently or reside in a different income bracket, and according to Mr. Johnson, this is one of the reasons that the class has changed structures to include more sites out of the city as well as the ASP trip (Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

On a typical day at Weston, most of Samantha’s service work came in the form of working in reading groups with a variety of students including two with downs syndrome, a few with ADHD, and others with behavioral and cognitive disabilities.
Samantha described the reading groups and her tasks as an “extra set of hands” for the teacher and was surprised to find that she enjoyed the educational setting as much as she did. Here, Samantha describes a typical day in the classroom focused on reading and writing skills:

They come down and they kinda do like little groups so they work on a level whatever reading book and they have to kinda work their way through it. At the same time, one of them at a time will be pulled out to do like EdMark [an Education Application] or something… it’s kinda like sight words, so like flashcards of specific words that they should recognize.

[I’m] kinda like an extra pair of hands. But then I’m also like a teachers’ helper, or whatever when I’m actual in the general education class. And then when they do the second round of daily writing, which is basically just like they have a mini writing prompt, or they play like word games, or play on the iPad with spelling or listening to a story or something. (Samantha, Interview, 2, April 14, 2016)

Here Samantha described her activities as tutoring and working with students and technology. She viewed herself as a “teacher’s helper” and takes on the responsibilities of a teacher in the classroom.

Samantha described a lot of one-on-one work with the students and valued her time with them immensely. Compared to her Fall sight with a focus on Howard and the relationships with classmates and friends at other service sites, Samantha was focused on the students and her work with the teachers. She was more engaged with the work going
on in the classroom compared to some of the more physical work at the farm and seemed to understand that her engagement at the site depended on her social connections, whether it be with classmates, or with the students she was tutoring at Weston (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016). Samantha shared a moment where she realized she would be missing the students at Weston and their end of the year field trips. It is obvious in this excerpt her focus on social relationships and the connections with the students was the most valued part of her service. Samantha shared:

That was one of the hardest things about saying goodbye to the kids at Weston is, I can’t go back because um first of all taking that last step was hard enough to, so I was like planning to go back but then I was like they go to the zoo tomorrow so I couldn’t go there and then graduation stuff and then the luncheon (Ed. Note-annual service-learning luncheon to welcome the new class) so like I knew I couldn’t do it for me or them to have to go through that round of goodbyes… but like once this week is- not this, once their school year is over I can’t go track each and every one of them down to first grade and everything else, and I’m sure some of them will move and everything else so like I can’t go visit them but I’ll always kind of have memories like every time I drive past Weston I just think about it.

(Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

As evidence in this excerpt, Samantha was concerned motivated through her connections with others at both sites, human or animal. Despite her placement she extolled the high value of experiences that returned something to her, either a skill or knowledge she could use, or in the form of a social interaction.
Samantha was one of the more critical students in the program and struggled with stress, temper, and motivation issues during the school year. Relating to this study, Ms. Ananda felt that Samantha never really “bought in” and had numerous discussions with Samantha throughout the year about the problems at site. Although they improved during the second semester, Ms. Ananda spoke of students, in general, as having to meet her “half way” on the journey to really get the most out of the service-learning experiences (Research Memo, March 31, 2016).

Samantha became an example of someone who did not “get it” and her interviews and journals showed it was an uneven journey in many aspects. Samantha’s experiences were complicated by her desires to work exclusively with friends and to engage in the class as it related to her career, college goals, or interest level. Despite her focus in these areas, Samantha said she did enjoy her service and felt that she had changed, becoming more open, by the end of the program in our final interview. Samantha had an uneven year, impacted by her expectations of the program, prior experiences, and motives for joining.

**Vincent.** Vincent was an 18 year old, white male who came from a proud second-generation Italian family in Willow Falls. His family moved to the town when he was 9 years old and he has gone to Willow Falls schools the entire time he has lived in the town. He was popular with friends, was a star football player on a successful high school team, and he enjoys his role as a local celebrity and well-known figure on the football field. Vincent is known for his sense of humor and goofy attitude and considers himself a poor academic student and hoped to get a 3.0 during his senior year for the first
time as a high school student. Vincent was also well known in the community, not only for his athletic exploits, but also because he had started a very successful landscaping business with a friend; together they had over twenty-five clients and five employees in the summers and they have plans to continue expanding when both main partners go to college (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).

Vincent’s service sites started in Willow Falls, at a different local elementary school (McGrath Elementary) working with students in general education and special education classes and he was in the PM section of the program. Vincent often said that enjoyed his service work immensely and although quiet in class, he was friendly and outgoing at his sites and in our interviews. He talked about his best qualities for service as people related specially with children:

Well, I mean- best qualities. I do feel like I can relate to people, like um- just like my first day at McGrath, like they I just start a conversations and then they say something and then I can, like jump on that and relate to that and then the conversation goes and you can build relationships with that. And also, I like to just include everybody to like not leaving something out because they’re were kids that would jump up on me, like throughout the year, because like I played football, and they’d see me on TV and stuff, they’d be like- they’d be easy to talk to them because they’re like aw, how’s football and everything versus, kids that are kinda like quiet and they just wanna be quiet.

And um- I always think to myself, because I was a quiet kid, I mean I am still- still am a quiet kid, I would put myself- and that’s another thing I feel like I
would put myself in other people’s shoes and um- to think that if I was as a little kid and this football dude came to my school and he was like chilling with us, like that was awesome like I would not have the courage to go up and say like, what’s up- but um- so like going over to them and saying like ‘hey how ya doin?’

(Vincent, Interview 1, February 27)

Vincent valued his ability to connect with people and identify students who may not be as outgoing or willing to speak up as others. His personal identity as a reserved person influenced the children he sought out in his service site and he used his local celebrity to make the students he interacted with feel special.

His Spring site was at a local children’s hospital in a large metro area about thirty minutes from Willow Falls. In both sites Vincent worked with children of different abilities, physical and cognitive, and had responsibilities ranging from tutoring and socializing, to helping teachers and nurses prepare for their respective daily tasks. In multiple interviews Vincent talked glowingly about service-learning, the teachers, his placements, and his service work and it was obvious he valued his time in the program. Vincent’s IDI assessment scores were the lowest out of all forty-six participants in the instrument; he scored a 60.68 (Denial) on his first assessment and a 73.23 (Polarization) on his second. Vincent scored a 3.40 on his Cultural Disengagement score, and dropped to a 3.00 in his second survey, showing he has not resolved his sense of belonging to a cultural group. Vincent was viewed as a model student in the program and Ms. Ananda spoke highly of Vincent as someone who will dive into his service and live in the
moment, according to her, he “got it” and did an outstanding job during the year (Research Memo, March 31, 2016).

**Experiences in Service Prior to Service-Learning.** Vincent’s prior service experiences were all church-based, out of the local Willow Falls Catholic church, St. Benedict’s. Vincent considered himself a devout Catholic and spoke openly of the links he saw between his service at the church, his faith, and his work in service-learning.

When we spoke about why he likes to serve and why he was interested in serving at his church, he referenced scripture and the practices of engaging in service in the Catholic faith:

> I serve uh-through- I go to St. Benedict’s and we do like uh- volunteering a lot- I did a lot like my sophomore year, so it’s all about like uh- like being like the hands and feet of like Christ and stuff, like how it’s just like- and that’s what I believe in... So… My program, like one uh- volunteer thing [I do] is called Servants for Christ. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Vincent was one of the few students to link his religion and his service work and as we spoke in the interviews (he mentioned his faith in each of our three main interviews during the year) it was obvious that this link was an incredibly important part of his servant identity.

In detailing his prior service work, a lot of it had to do with his mother requesting that he engage in service to build his resume for college. Vincent was one of the few students who talked openly about trying to appeal to college admission counselors with service and his mother had talked to him about the importance of service when applying
for school. In fact, Vincent had joined other service clubs like Key Club and BUDDIE, a local peer mentoring organization, but had not kept track of his service hours or responsibilities. This had irked his mother, who suggested he take service-learning to make up for some of the missing time and paperwork, and to look good for college applications (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).

During one of his first service experiences, Vincent recalled working for local Catholic service organization in a large metro area to dispense of food during the Winter holidays. He described these experiences as he recalled his first service work during his freshman year in high school and the reactions from the people he was serving:

I think it was Christmas and Thanksgiving. It was my freshman year. My mom wanted us to go up there and like- uh- you give out like potatoes and turkey in bags, you run them out to people in their cars, that was like my first hint of being helpful and you uh- you get a ton of ‘thank yous’ and just like ‘oh my gosh’ like- like all these people like ‘oh lord bless you,’ like this is like awesome and stuff… so just like putting a smile on their face and like getting that reaction and saying like- wow- just like- I mean [at first] I didn’t wanna do it at all. But like my mom kinda forced it upon me because I was a freshman… And so like- just that little gesture taking time out of my day [to help], I feel like I coulda put something over it but doing that little help, just- just impacted their life it looked like just because like we’re bringing them food that they may not be able to get. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
For Vincent there was a payoff when he brought food out to people during the holidays, the reactions and thankfulness was something that made him feel like he had impacted their lives in a positive manner. He realized in his first service experiences that the happiness they felt might have been due to the fact they could not get food on their own. This realization, that the people he was serving were struggling to get food, is an important one and shows Vincent awareness. This early feedback made it a positive experience and his interest in service grew especially as his role in the church grew and he valued the feelings he got as he contributed to others well-being.

Vincent’s service continued as he got older and as he got more involved in the youth organizations at his church. I asked him about his positive feelings at the food bank and he brought his faith into the discussion further as a major catalyst in his interests, especially regarding a youth camp he attended. Vincent again referenced his religious beliefs and described his later service work:

With like my relationship with God and stuff, like with my church, there’s this camp called Camp Joy at our church for little um… its middle school kids actually. I did camp counseling there, with a buddy and we just had like 8th grade boys and we were their counselors and it was like really fun, it was so cool to be with them. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Faith showed up here as well, Vincent specifically referenced his work in church and his personal relationship with God as something that motivated him to get more involved in service. Vincent’s servant identity was inextricably linked with his religious background and it formed an important context for how he thought about his work in the program.
This continued as he discussed his other service works with Servants for Christ, which included construction and beautification of a local “trailer park” as well as using his landscaping business to mulch and landscape homes where the residents were too old to do it themselves and could not afford their services. Vincent felt that it was important that he do what he could, either in the church or with his business, to those who could not do it themselves (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).

**Joining Service-Learning.** Joining service-learning for Vincent was similar to some of the other participants in that he sought advice and was encouraged by upperclassmen to apply, but also that his mother pushed him to do it for college. Vincent also saw the program as an opportunity to gain experience at a medical site due to the desire to major in physical therapy in college the following year. However, Vincent did not consider this a major reason to join the program and actually talked more explicitly about wanting to continue his service work in the church, through the service-learning program at Willow Falls. Unique to Vincent still is the role of the church, and as he described an interaction with an upperclassman and a fellow Catholic, he was encouraged to join to continue his interests in church service:

My friend Caleb, last year, he applied and he did it and he was like talking about how it was really fun and stuff and he was talking about it was like that classroom tucked in the corner. There was a ton of people in [service-learning] and he’s like yeah we just do like service work and stuff like you do so much through the church so you should probably sign up. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
Again, Vincent spoke about his key desires to do service and the reinforcement from a friend that he could keep working, continuing his church service. This rationale was opposed to the justification of others to sign up, specifically, as a resume entry, and appealed to Vincent’s personal reasons for considering the program. Even though he admitted his mother had pushed him to do it for college, Vincent did not describe college as his personal reason for signing up:

I was like, alright, so I like grabbed one and there was like a ton of other people that were grabbing these like- uh- these signups and like throughout that like process, a lot of people were doing it like- ‘aw, this will look like really good on your resume for college and stuff.’ And I’m like really? Everyone’s doing service work, I didn’t know how that would like mix in so I didn’t look at it like that… as other people did it for college, it was just like hey- I do a lot of this stuff at my church so that’d be really cool and plus like it’s part of my day, it’s like half school half doing volunteer work which I find like really uh- good. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Vincent’s main impulse to join the program was to further his early service experiences and continue what he had enjoyed at church. However, as he saw the course syllabus and site possibilities in the application, it did pique his interests and he thought further about possible careers and majors as he signed up. Vincent had multiple reasons for applying to the program and each seemed valid to him; work, college, continuing his church work, and the feelings he got from completing his service work, all factored into his decision to apply (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016).
Finally, Vincent also referenced the competitiveness for the course as a concern when he decided to sign up. Applications for the program can regularly top 150 students (with an acceptance rate of roughly 60-65 every year), and Vincent was concerned it would be overly competitive when he signed up. Vincent again mentioned motives for signing up for the program as being college and career driven, or for “hours” for graduation requirements, and although not critical in tone of those people and motives, he felt that his motives were not entirely aligned with other service-learning students (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27).

The final key elements that influenced Vincent to sign up for the course were reputations of the teachers involved, Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson. Although Vincent never had the teachers involved in the course personally, reports from his friends and classmates were positive. Vincent knew of the teachers and their focus on service-learning and had interacted with them briefly, but it left an impact on him when he decided to apply. Vincent shared:

I’ve always seen Ms. Ananda walking around and I’ve always wondered like who is that lady? (Laughs). Like she would wear the bandanas, she’s got all like the peace signs. Like whoa, what is she about, what is this class she’s teaching? And then um- I’ve seen like Mr. Johnson like with his suits and everything he’s very professional… and it’s crazy like I’ve seen of him and like heard of his AP teaching…But I didn’t know either of them. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
Like other participants in this study, the attraction of powerful teaching personalities was incredibly important to the students. Vincent viewed the teachers as unique and highly competent, as well as mysterious in a way, their contrasts and style of dress even, influenced his curiosity and opened his interests to at least investigate what service-learning was and how these teachers approached the program.

**Class Experiences.** Vincent did not view himself as strong academically and mentioned he has struggled in past years to get above a “C” in most of his classes. Willow Falls was highly competitive academically and Vincent had never felt that he fit into that category, instead opting to focus on athletics and now in his senior year, service-learning. Vincent described the classes in service-learning as very different and he sees the overall motives as more unique than a typical high school class. He attributed this mostly to the teachers and how they lesson planned and taught. He talked about their coursework as deeply reflective and thought provoking and stated that he often was surprised at the unique interpretations and discussions that happen in class with his classmates.

One of the two participants enrolled in the PM course section in this study, Vincent also recognized that the PM section had bonded together tightly in class, while the issues in the AM course, and some of the social divisions there he recognized as detrimental to their progression in the program. He described this general division in our second interview, hearing it from friends and Mr. Johnson directly in class:

I definitely know Mr. Johnson has been like, ‘Guys, like, AM is dead; like, you guys are so fun and you guys are always asking questions.’ He said that today.
He was like, ‘You guys, like, you’re so talkative it’s crazy, Like, don’t go to lunch, just stay here and keep asking questions.’ But I know my friends, like the one that was at the food pantry, like he’s in the AM class. He’s like, ‘Oh, like, I don’t like the girls in this class; they all fight with each other; they all go after each other; they put each other down.’ Like, geez, that doesn’t sound like the PM.

We’re all at least, understanding, and I feel we can all- I feel like I can have a one-on-one with anybody, and to just get along is not awkward. Versus, maybe in AM they still have that boundary where, like, “I am this type of person; we wouldn’t get along,” and they don’t open up or talk you. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent obviously felt that the climate of the class, especially the supportive section in PM, allowed for more authentic communication and community building in the program. Linking to the “family” theme, PM seemed to bond more as a family according to Vincent. Other students talked about the split and conflict in AM as well, but Vincent was direct about why he thought it was occurring, and in his thinking he referenced boundaries, which would be in direct opposition of the stated aims of the service-learning program. Vincent also explores his servant identity in this excerpt as he expects people to let go of their personal identities to become something more open and accepting. Vincent values being able to open up to others and to talk with people who are different and he sees being able to interact with difference as part of being a good servant.

In English, Vincent focused mostly on the reflective activities, especially meditation, as a major feature of the class. He also enjoyed the content and being able to
chose readings and assignment types, especially during group readings. From multiple journal entries throughout the year, it is apparent that Vincent enjoyed Ms. Ananda’s approach. Vincent explained, “English is fun. I am very excited for Beowulf and SciFi [a literature unit]. I love how we can choose how we arrange our summative and formative assignments” (Vincent, Journal 3/1). Especially for Vincent, recalling in-class activities brings to mind Ms. Ananda’s teaching style and general approach to English. He talked excitedly about her non-traditional focus in English and grading decisions as well as the content they covered.

Class activities that jump out at him often involve the reflective quotes or assignments with deeper meanings and interpretations, which tied into his service work. Vincent also referred to Ms. Ananda as a servant role model in the way she encouraged students’ actions regarding “diving in” and pushing comfort zones. These phrases and ideas were consistent themes in class and assignments during English:

Ms. Ananda, she’s like, she’s, I mean like, it’s just like the questions she has in English. Like about, like quotes and stuff. It’s like deep thinking. Like, when I get a quote on the paper in front of me, like I don’t know what to think about it, I just kinda write whatever, and she’ll ask people to share what they thought, and [a classmate] will say a really deep answer to what the quote meant. Whoa, like how did I not think of that? (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent valued the reflective practices in class and he especially linked deeper thinking and meaning to what he heard from his classmates and teachers. It was obvious he was
attentive and thinking when he worked in class, and that he values being able to engage in assignments that search for meaning.

Class has gone pretty good. It’s different, obviously in English, ‘cause Ananda’s a different teacher… And, it’s very fun. Like, we get to meditate. Ms. Ananda, she always talks about like obviously just jumping in and saying ‘hi my name is Vincent’ blah blah blah… like how can I assist you… and I’m just always asking what can I do to help you and then, for sure she’s a great role model. (Vincent, May 31, 2016)

As a service role model Ms. Ananda set the tone on multiple levels. Here, Vincent describes her utilization of mediation as well as her focus on jumping in to service in order to be a good servant. Vincent’s servant identity has been greatly influenced by Ms. Ananda’s approach and expectations and Vincent has picked up important cues from her regarding the expectations of his service work. Vincent finds her teaching “different” and has adopted her way of engaging in service in his own work.

Vincent obviously felt comfortable in the English environment and given his admission of issues in school with grades, I broadly asked Ms. Ananda about his performance in English and how he was doing academically. Not only did he have some of the top marks in class but Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson stated that he was the best male student in the program (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

Teaching-style and approach played a major role in Vincent’s Government experience as well. Vincent was effusive in his praise of Mr. Johnson’s teaching style and seemed to enjoy the debates and lecture style as much as Ms. Ananda’s reflective
approach. Vincent vacillated at times, once describing the week of class content “boring,” but happy that Mr. Johnson was teaching it to make it interesting (Vincent, Journal, 1/2). In general, Mr. Johnson’s personality was a huge draw for Vincent and he viewed the humorous, informative lectures as important for staying engaged and enjoying the class:

Mr. Johnson, he’s just so enthusiastic when he teaches like jumping up and down, he’s so goofy and awkward and he like makes it, like I don’t really like hearing lectures from teachers but I love listening to him talk about government- It’s the funniest thing because he’s really passionate about it and like so goofy with it and you just enjoy watching it and he makes like good examples like if people can’t like connect the dots about what he said the first time, he’ll make an analogy and it’s like oh like that, and it’ll be like funny too and it’ll like keep you involved, and it’s just like wow that’s a great guy, like that’s awesome, he’s a great teacher. (Vincent, May 31, 2016)

Vincent obviously noticed Mr. Johnson’s passion about class and teaching. Both teachers received high marks from their students in the program regarding their passion and commitment. The enthusiasm Vincent felt in class was noticeable in observations and other student interviews. Both teachers were widely loved and respected in the program.

Vincent was another one of the students who hooked into government more towards the end of the year during the Street Law and personal finance units. He specifically mentioned learning about banking, loans, and credit cards as his favorite part
of the year, and spoke of the personal stories and advice Mr. Johnson gave in those areas as meaningful (Vincent, Interview 3, May 31, 2016).

**Service Site Experiences.** Vincent felt valued and engaged at both of his sites throughout the year. He enjoyed working with children and felt that he did an excellent job building rapport and interacting with kids at McGrath Elementary and the children’s hospital. Although both sites involved one-on-one interactions with children, Vincent had different responsibilities with the teachers at McGrath as well as with the nurses and therapists at the children’s hospital. One of the more important aspects at both of his sites was fitting in to the “team,” with Vincent being needed to support the staff at both institutions and provide personal attention to the students and patients. By all accounts, including site feedback and grades, he was outstanding in his work (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

One of the unique themes in his site work, compared to the other participants in this study, was Vincent’s impression that younger students viewed him as a celebrity due to his status as a star athlete. This “celebrity status” gave him an amount of capital to work with the children and to talk to them about his exploits and to make connections with their own interests in sports. Although not his only approach (he spoke of using music, video games, and interests as conversation starters), Vincent used his athletic background, and his interpersonal skills, as a way to connect with his students and patients.

It also affected Vincent deeply when he encountered students at the school and patients at the hospital, who were not able to play sports or to control their own body
movements. The focus on the body is no surprise given his focus on sports and the initial idea that he wanted to major in physical therapy in college; this focus, and the way he interacted with those he served, added a unique layer to his site experiences.

At McGrath Elementary Vincent typically had service hours during their science lessons. This was an anomaly with the schedule but according to Vincent, he did not mind working with the students and felt he was confident enough to tutor and help to teach the content. Typically an aide in student group work, Vincent described a typical day with a lot of interaction with students in their science groups, working on classroom tasks or projects:

I usually just walk in, they’re in the middle of like a class. And once the teachers are done talking, like they’re talking about abiotic and biotic factors… then everyone dismisses all the kids, they go into their groups and they talk about all this stuff, and I was just like going around, asking questions, seeing how they are doing. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent viewed his work as teaching support and focused on his interactions with the students. He felt his responsibility was to help with tutoring and subject matter, making sure students were on task in class, and connecting with the students socially.

In particular, Vincent focused on one student in our interviews to describe his activities at McGrath. Helen was a student with cerebral palsy, and due to her IEP, had a physical therapist visitation typically when Vincent was there during the week. The physical therapist and the teachers suggest that Vincent should help Helen with movement and to work with her on stretching and moving her body; Vincent spoke about
a typical interaction with Helen using a bike-like device to help her move around. He explained:

Her physical therapist wanted her like, always moving, and stuff like that, trying to keep her muscles loose. So, what I would do, I would during lunch, I would strap her up to this bike, and we would just like, bike around the hallways. And she would just like, bike, and I would just try to keep up with her. And umm, we would have fun doing that. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent had incredible responsibility here and although the therapist was nearby and watching, Vincent said he often handled all of the movements and transfers to and from the bike. Vincent focused on making the interactions fun and physical so that Helen’s exercises were completed, this connection linked Vincent’s physical traits and focus to his service work and he spoke glowingly of his interactions with Helen throughout the year. Vincent also interacted with Helen socially during their work. They would chat during their bike rides and the personal connections made their relationship one of the highlights of the year for Vincent when he reflected back in our final interview:

Just like, talking to her. Like, she would always have, problems with like, her, she had like family problems. And when we would go on like a bike ride, she would always talk, and kinda like get out whatever was on her chest, and I felt like it was good for her to like, talk it out, and have someone to talk to. (Vincent, Interview 3, May 31, 2016)

This personal space obviously impacted Vincent and seeing that Helen needed to speak with someone, or perhaps needed a connection, was a major part of Vincent’s
experiences at McGrath. Working through his thinking about what is “normal” ability and the difference presented by Helen gave Vincent pause and caused him to reflect on his own ability and physical control as well as his role as a servant at McGrath.

At times during his site work Vincent had issues with maintaining a “teacher” or “friend” line with the students. He felt caught in the middle, not quite a teacher, but also wanting to be social and to play around with the kids. This impacted his ability to carry out discipline and he struggled with the balance, discussing his issues openly in our second interview and critiquing his abilities to try to maintain an even response to kids acting up or testing him as a “friend.”

One kid, his name was Jeff, and in the very beginning, he loved to like mess around, and like, umm, he thought he could like, I’m his friend, and he could hit me, or like, joke around with me…obviously they didn’t have much respect [for me as a teacher], they were just like oh cool, he’s gonna be my friend. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent spoke of a few other examples, with kids wrestling with him and want to goof around in class, or even as simple as asking him to sharpen their pencils, just so they could talk to him and interact (Vincent, Interview, 2 April 7, 2016). Understanding how to do his service work well, and be a good teacher, but also to interact with the students in a friendly, “role model” manner was routinely a balancing act for Vincent. He valued his time with students and the instructor, and received very high reviews on his site supervisor evaluations.
At the children’s hospital placement Vincent again was working mostly with school-aged children and was expected to be social and talkative, visiting room-to-room with a nurse or therapist and striking up conversations with patients. Vincent had to follow hospital protocol with masks and gloves and worked with a site supervisor, Jenny, who had a list of rooms for him to visit when he got to his site. Vincent spoke of his placement in a very positive light and talked openly about how much he enjoyed giving parents or visitors a break, as well as interacting with the nurses on the floor and seeing them do their jobs (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016).

One of the major realizations during the service-learning program for Vincent was that he decided to change his college major to nursing, and that this placement was the main convincing factor in his decision. According to Mr. Johnson, this was incredibly common, and students often figured out an interest or specific field, or maybe they learned what they didn’t want to do, and this was a key part of the experiences for a sizable group of students (Mr. Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

Vincent’s described his typical day at the hospital with patients as social and jumping from room-to-room to meet with as many children as he could. The aim was to be present and try to make sure the children always had a visitor, also, the goal was to relieve parents or visitors to get lunch or take a break, and Vincent knew it was important and tried to relieve as many parents as he could while he was at his site (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016). Here, Vincent walked through his approach to the patients he had on his visit list on site days:
There could be nurses in there, and you just come back later. And they could be in there by themselves, and like hey, wanna play a game? And they’re like sure. And I would always write down like the games we have like in the room, And so they’re like, oh yeah, I wanna play this, and then I’ll come back, and honestly I just talk to them, I play with them, umm, and then try to just like hang out with them. Give them like, a friend. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Relating to the patients, like a friend, was something Vincent cherished. He valued it in our interviews and that he felt he was doing good. In our talks he often spoke of making links through conversation and working to improve his communication skills with children at McGrath and the hospital. He felt he had honed these skills at McGrath and used them to better effect in the hospital, and the fact his site work involved similar age groups was unique to his placement. Vincent was also very excited that the nurses noticed his ability to work with children and to get them to open up. Vincent explained:

So I mean, just knowing, like, they’re noticing, like oh my gosh. That’s so cool. Or even some nurses were like wow, that kid like, Vincent, he’s working with kids, they’re smiling and everything, which is awesome. They’re like, impressed. Like whoa you cracked that kid, man. But it’s just such a cool feeling to see like, man, I really am like, making an impact…. But… the nurses are always joking around like, you’re not the one putting needles in them. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Vincent received positive feedback regarding his service work and understood his role as a servant. His rapport with the nurses seemed to be very positive and they value his work
there, and Vincent noticed their support in how he approached the children in the hospital. The positive reinforcement from the nurses provided sound feedback and helped to reinforce the formation of his servant identity.

At his Spring site Vincent struggled further with seeing children, and some teenagers, with physical ability issues. As he recounted some of the patient experiences, he focused most often on James, a patient with cystic fibrosis. Especially in the face of Vincent’s impending graduation and his excitement about college, Vincent recognizes that his life is vastly different than James’ and struggles with understanding how it could be so unfair.

Like, how grateful I am just from obviously, like, James, this kid, he’s got cystic fibrosis and will only live ‘til 35; I get to go home and be a whole environment-like, do activities and go to a great school... like, those- these kids are, like-they’re in the hospital, you know? It just is awful. Like, a kid that has cystic fibrosis knows he’s gonna die at 35, and he’s got to come in for treatments. I’m trying to, like, make sure that I can make him smile and I can make him laugh, ‘cause that’s gonna make me feel better.

Like, if I ever have a problem with high school or college- like, some kids, I’m like, “Wow, like, this kid’s (James) never gonna go to college,” or like, “I’m going to college and he’s not gonna go there,” and stuff like that. Like, he helps me live in the moment. Even if he’s like, “Oh, like, I want to go, like, ride my bike; I’m training to ride my bike-“ that’s, like- just live every day.
Like, what did that dude- he didn’t ask for anything. He didn’t ask for cystic fibrosis. How is he the one in the bed gonna die at 35, and I’m the one having, like, options for colleges and living in Willow Falls? Being able to live… but he can’t. (Vincent, Interview 2, April 7, 2016)

Being confronted with James’ situation was one of the toughest parts of the semester for Vincent. He tried to figure out a way to reconcile James’ disease and limitations and had a hard time coming to grips with the differences between James’ life and his own. Vincent’s desire to go into nursing was one examples of how he attempted to cope with situations like Helen and James, and Vincent felt he could offer his people skills and desire to bond and make connections as a nurse or therapist for children like those at his sites.

Marked as one of the top students in the course, Vincent’s ability to empathize with those at his sites made him a favorite of Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson. It was obvious in our interviews that he enjoyed the course immensely and felt that he brought a lot to the class and to his site work, believing he made a difference with the children at both sites. For the implications in this study, Vincent’s thinking about difference in physical ability at his site troubled his views of himself and his “normal” classmates. Vincent spoke of these differences openly in our interviews, often in conjunction with personal anecdotes or stories about the students or patients, like Helen and James. These personal relationships were important to Vincent and he saw the people he served as needing his help, as well as his interactions with them, as valuable and important.
Participant Themes

This section of the dissertation builds on personal participant experiences and explores larger contexts, emerging out of these experiences. Through interviews, observations, and journal prompts students were asked to think about their service-learning experiences and how they informed their views of self, community, and citizenship. The following three “macro” themes were created to organize the chapter and tie similar findings together. These themes emerged out of discussions and topics from class, site, and personal experience and were meant to explore the influence of service-learning, if at all, on student thinking and behavior:

1. **Linking Community and Service.** This finding emerged in a multitude of ways but specifically in the formation of “in group/out group” identifiers. A “family” identity in the classroom, the isolation of “bubble” in Willow Falls, and the role of social media played important parts in the community formation process. How students and teachers saw and spoke about the course allowed for the emergence of binding concepts and expectations.

2. **Servant and Civic Identities.** Forming service and civic identities were unique to each participant and varied due to experiences in the classes and service sites. Student “buy in” and demonstration of learning service was uneven. Students saw their work as linked to the community and internalized the expectations of the course and teachers. Participants viewed their work as important and experiences as personally fulfilling.
3. **Working with difference.** Specific aims of the course were constructed to allow students the opportunity to get outside of their comfort zones and to meet new people, in new places, engaged in service work. Students experienced these interactions in various ways throughout the course, and their responses and thinking, or learning, through these interactions was often complicated and messy.

**Linking Community and Service.** Community, including the local school district, the service-learning classroom, and social formations among students, was a consistent theme in the participants’ lived course experiences. Participants experienced community as multi-layered and transactional, classroom/site/city, and these ideas all weave to form a complex view of students’ service experiences.

**The Service-Learning Community.** One of the key assumptions in the class observations and discussions with the teachers of service-learning was that the classroom itself would develop as a community, or “family,” as a group of people who had a much tighter bond than a typical Willow Falls classroom or academic group. This bond was something expected and practiced and one that included all members of the service-learning team (including myself as a researcher). The syllabus included a statement that captured this focus:

Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to be working alongside all of your classmates – not just the ones that you currently know. Service Learning seeks to create a “family like” atmosphere – and it is through working with all persons, that this bond is created. Therefore, now is the time to let go of the stereotypes...
that you may have of some of the classmates. Now is the time to accept your new
brothers and sisters for who they are, where they are, and know that they will do
the same for you. Everyone is given a fresh start within this room – take
advantage of it. (Service-Learning Course Syllabus)

And, this idea was further revealed in one of the journal prompts used by Ms. Ananda in
week six of the school year. The prompt was:

How are you continuing to push yourself outside of your comfort zone? Either at
your community service site or within our service learning family? How can your
teachers help you in this area? (Italics added for emphasis, Journal Prompt, 6/1)

Sarah specifically linked the approach of the classroom teachers to creating the “family”
atmosphere, especially through the use of one-on-one conversations in which students
were asked to discuss their site work, and something interesting or challenging that
happened to them that week:

So it’s more of a family than fellow students and that’s something you can’t- you
know- you can’t wish for, I think that’s pretty special. Yeah. And I think that’s
probably what the teachers wanted us to do. I think that those one-on-one
conversations when we first started, you know- everyone was like- ugh we do
this… such a weird thing but even then those conversations, when you’re asking
someone what’s going on…it’s obviously had a big impact. (Sarah, Interview 1,
February 27, 2016)
These three examples across the duration of the course show how the concept of “family” was present in the service-learning course. Students and teachers used this phrase and bought into its meaning on a wide scale.

From the first day of school in the classroom, Ms. Ananda made sure students knew that expectations in the classroom involved actively learning about and getting to know the “community” of service-learning. Each day Ms. Ananda switched student seats around the large tables (each one seating 6) in the room and had initial activities for table-mates to start on when the entered the room. Her methods varied, sometimes specifically partnering students she saw had not interacted, or created mixed-ability groups, or randomly selecting the names. This was especially consistent in the beginning of the year with a specific focus on getting to know everyone in the room, and to get to know the teachers. It was expected that students actively talk to and engage with their “family members” and work to get to them on a more personal level than a typical class would require.

Students like Sarah felt that service-learning had become her ideal home and talked openly of how important the course was to her identity and feelings of belonging. Sarah specifically referred to the “special” nature of the course and how it was obviously different from a typical class. Service-learning allowed her to find a new way of fitting in with friends, more so than her other courses, even if it meant disagreements and differing opinions, because that should be expected in a family-like atmosphere:

So it’s more of a family than fellow students and that’s something you can’t- you know- you can’t wish for, I think that’s pretty special. Yea, and I think that if
you’re looking at any real family there’s always gonna be different personalities and when you have this many people coming in one room, and if they’re all pretty open individuals then there’s going to be different perspective from things.

(Sarah, Interview 2, April 6, 2016)

As Sarah alluded to differing personalities and disagreements, this was expected. But the teachers and students worked to make sure that student were open and accepting of their classmates, and felt belonging in a more meaningful way when compared with a typical classroom. Within this family atmosphere, conflict did indeed emerge, especially in the AM section. Students in both sections of the class challenged this theme of “family” when it came to the uneven formation of the courses. Teachers and students often connected phrases about social divisions and cliques with the beliefs that they caused an incomplete “family” process. Here, Bernice talks about the right mix of student personalities needed to truly achieve the “family” aims of the course:

Yeah, especially like, AM, okay, we [PM] all get along, and it’s like, a family…I’m so happy I’m not in that class. Like, not to be mean, but like, there’s so much drama and like, just the negative energy in that class. And I’ve heard it from so many AM people that were like, wish we were in PM, I’m so tired of these people, they’re so rude, like this and the other. So like, there’s definitely been kinda that negative backlash which is like, I, which I’ve realized now how like, lucky we are. ‘Cause it’s very hard to get that perfect combination.

(Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)
And from Samantha, who was in the AM section, agreed that there were differences among the groups. She explained:

I know PM seems like they are a lot closer than we are as like a group because I know they have like a Christmas party and did like a bunch of stuff together. So I think PM gets along a lot better than AM does, but I think most of that clique [of certain students] is the issue in AM. (Samantha, Interview 2, April 14, 2016)

When community is not formed as expected in the program, students and teachers notice. All of the participants in this referenced the AM “split” and felt it was unfortunate and not conducive to service-learning. The students in AM were viewed by Samantha and Bernice as a “clique” and that this separated group provided negative energy and thwarted the aims of the service-learning course. Personal interactions, connection, and support were missing in the AM section. Bernice touched on a final point, getting a combination of students in a class section, and getting it right so that the aims of the course are realized, is difficult, and the social relationships and community formed in these classes is important to becoming good community servants in the context of the course.

*The “Bubble.”* Moving out of the classroom and the immediate “family” of the service-learning community and into the local suburb of Willow Falls, the students and their service work, their experiences in class, gave them further means to investigate past assumptions and ideals. The city of Willow Falls is widely considered one of the best places to live in the state with regard commonly cited metrics such as lack of school
performance, low crime rates, and high median household income; participants readily acknowledged the schools and community and the way they felt safe and comfortable.

One interesting community theme that emerged throughout the year that deserves some attention is a colloquialism that students referenced time and time again in our interviews, in class, and in journals, and a word I feel is important to the broad aims of this paper; this colloquialism referred to life in their local suburban community as living in the Willow Falls “bubble.” Teachers, students, administrators all used this word as I was in the district gathering data. This word took a variety of meanings, some positive and some negative, and dependent on context and who was using it. The “bubble” could be used derisively to challenge students to grow, as in, “don’t get stuck in the bubble,” positively as a metaphor for protection from outside problems, “we have safety, we are in the bubble,” and as a very real concern of the teachers in service-learning, a concern that students would not transgress the borders of the “bubble,” instead staying stuck in their status quo, relatively privileged, thinking. The teachers viewed the “bubble” and the students’ lives as isolated, missing exposure to difference and the “real world” and often mentioned the aim of the class was to address this isolation, in essence, aiming to pop or burst the “bubble” with student assignments and service experiences.

As I learned more and more about what the “bubble” was in service-learning, I focused on it in our interviews and in one journal assignment, asking students what it meant. Explanations often referred to it as a “stereotype,” but one that was referenced over and over. For example, one participant, Vincent, discussed the “bubble” as
homogenous and limiting, and due in large part to the high-income brackets in the area. He linked the “bubble” to a lack of difference in the community:

The community of [Willow Falls] is not cultured at all. High paying taxes of this little city only allow a middle-high to high-class residents. [Willow Falls] is known as “the bubble,” there is no diversity in the community whatsoever.

(Vincent, Journal Entry, 5/1)

Justin, saw the “bubble” as something that had to be challenged and he felt service could do that for Willow Falls students, based on his own family upbringing and his work in food banks. Understanding it as a limitation, Justin advocates service-learning and community service as a way to experience the world, the larger community, outside of the immediate city limits of Willow Falls. Justin stated:

Well I had always liked volunteering at the food bank. Even just talking with a lot of the homeless people there- um- where I come- I mean our backgrounds are just entirely different so I mean hearing what they have to say, and I mean- the whole [Willow Falls] “bubble” thing, we all talk about. I mean mainly people outside of service-learning, I know some people understand outside of the [Willow Falls] “bubble”, but there are people who all they know is what we have and I like hearing what other people have to say and through living in [Willow Falls]. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

For Justin, the program was a way to address the issues of the “bubble” and he felt Willow Falls students outside of the program did not experience the same exposure to difference that service-learning students did.
Other participants viewed the “bubble” as real, and present, but not necessarily something that needed to be challenged like Justin articulated in the previous quote. Samantha talked about the “bubble” as a more positive concept, as something to be recognized but a space for opportunity and excellence, however, still isolating. Samantha talks specifically about the larger community of Willow Falls and how this “bubble” had important markers of success. In Samantha’s view the ‘bubble’ did not need to be challenged for levels of privilege or questioned about its existence, but should be something that is celebrated and accepted:

I saw on TV one day that [Willow Falls] was rated like one of the safest cities in the country and people were kinda like- ‘oh stupid bubble.’ And I was like, that’s not a bad thing- you grew up in like a very nice area, like my mom always complains about people here being snotty, and it’s just like they’re not all just spoiled rich kids, this a nice area, there are good people here, we’re surrounded by good opportunities for everything- you’re almost guaranteed to get into a good college, and we have such a high acceptance rate at the college and people actually go to college.

Like, the basketball team played [Mason] last week and we were at [Mason] and around the gym they had posters of each class that was there, and it had everybody’s signatures on it and originally one of my friends she was like- oh that’s really cute and I looked a little closer at it and it was like a commitment to graduate and I was like- you’d never see that in Willow Falls because we all graduate. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
A third student, Sarah, saw the “bubble” as a negative metaphor for the town and school, one that is the manifestation of the limiting characteristics of the isolated community in which she lived, and she talked specifically about service-learning as an antidote to the limitations of the bubble and how its restrictions can be mitigated through service work:

I think it’s wrong to just be in a bubble, they call it the [Willow Falls] bubble. I think that’s a big thing, and I think that bubble needs to be burst you know? And I think- being a part of service learning and being a community servant in a sense, it’s broadened my awareness of what’s happening. I didn’t wanna be a part of this [Willow Falls] people, that’s something that you don’t wanna- like ‘oh no, I’m not that person’ but I was- and I think I’ve definitely come out of it…I’ve definitely had my eyes opened. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Finally, Vincent describes the “bubble” as something more physical and tactile, and he uses the word “money” and a description of the imposing lampposts that signify the city limits, the “bubble” in a physical manifestation. This change in “look” and “feel” was something that gave the “bubble” an air of separation, exclusion:

Um, I would say there’s a lot of money here, I would say there is no diversity. Obviously like we live in a bubble, I said like you can go- you can start in [Billings], drive up 93 into [Lakeview], from like the [Markenburg] into [Jensonville], and you can see a change in a town, it’s not like I’m driving with my dad somewhere and I’m like okay what township are we in, it’s like we’re driving and you’re like whoa these lampposts are nice, there’s the clock tower and there’s all this stuff and there’s lights and just the cars. Everyone’s got a Jeep,
everyone’s got a BMW or like a Mercedes and stuff and like the cars is one thing is- there’s a lot of nice cars… Physically you can tell you’re in Willow Falls.

(Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Vincent’s view of Willow Falls and the “bubble” is a place that looks and feels differently from surrounding towns. This is manifested in the lampposts and streets as you enter the city limits and also in his statement about “no diversity,” which refers to ethnic and economic difference, and the “whiteness” of the town.

The conception of the community when illustrated by the “bubble” metaphor is one of privilege and isolation from the outside, or the perceived other. Combating the “bubble” is the reason service-learning exists in the first place and although the aim is to challenge this thinking, it is a difficult process. To illustrate the struggle of combating years of a collective “bubble” experience, Mr. Johnson recalls that after a few years of running the service-learning program without an ASP component, the teachers realized that something had to be introduced, the ASP trip to further push the students to interact with and experience difference, even while staying in their home state. Mr. Johnson recalled one moment in the years before the ASP trip when Ms. Ananda asked students to draw their idea of what “poverty” looked like in a class assignment, and immediately students began to reach for brown crayons (Mr. Johnson, interview, May 25, 2016).

**Service in Willow Falls.** Another local community theme that emerged in my research was that of an intense local push for service in the city. A large number of churches sponsor mission trips, there is a community organization specifically used to direct local donors money to local charities, and there are multiple participants that have
a history of family outings structured around community service or charity. The Christian churches (majority, Protestant denominations) functioned as a common entry into service (7 of the 12 total participants went to church in some fashion and were active in church service work) with many participating in holiday food drives, Salvation Army bell ringing, food pantry kitchen help, and out of student mission trips and Appalachian Service Projects (ASP) to build homes.

Most of the participants stated that community service was an important part of the Wilson Falls community and that it was a way to help out as a citizen of the city. A majority of participants also linked the importance of community service in the city itself, to the acceptance of community service in the school and breadth of organizations focused on service in the school (Key Club, National Honor Society, and cheerleading charities, were all cited as important vehicles for charity work in the school itself). When asked how the community and the school think about service, Bernice believed service was one area where students and parents can be amazing in Willow Falls and noted that there was no social stigma regarding volunteering, as there could be:

It’s a lot, there’s a lot of opportunity for service if that’s what you’re-, something that you enjoy. And I think that um, uh, I don’t know how to say this, but it’s just not, it’s not weird. You know, like, some places you’d go and you volunteer a lot and people would be like, literally what are you doing, you’re so weird- -but here it’s normal… So it’s more acceptable I would say. You would-, you don’t feel like, odd or nerdy or something. (Bernice, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
There was no social stigma or loss of social capital, and in many cases it was a popular activity to volunteer. Participants viewed their service work as part of a larger community trend, and Bernice believed that this acceptance was a unique part of the community. Another student, Samantha, recounts her experiences in church and how that has translated to service in the community and the schools, linking the way the church talks about service to the way the service learning course does. Samantha explained:

Because you look at- like my church, like I go to the [Willow Falls] Chapel which is huge, and we have so many and we’re like all through the high school and everything, we have- like you can go on a mission trip as soon as 6th grade. Um, so I feel like that is definitely a pretty common thing (in the community) and like there are people I know through Christian service learning that has done like multiple mission trips like, people have been to Haiti on mission trips.

Like we do every other year, like. an oversea mission trip, like people go to Rome and everything else. So I feel like that’s pretty common and then also if you look at like St. Benedict’s [in Willow Falls] and a couple other churches, they have ASP trips every summer that people do and then you have like- NHS requires you to have so many service hours and everything else so I feel like even if part of it is just because people are like, oh ASP is so much fun or like I just have to get these hours for NHS, it’s strongly encouraged. I don’t’ know if it’s all completely for like the right reasons but a lot- like there’s a lot of it. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)
As mentioned in his participant section, Vincent is another student with extensive church service (at St. Benedict’s Catholic Church in Willow Falls) and he made explicit connections to his religious beliefs, the church, and the local community when asked about his conceptions of community service:

I go to St. Benedict’s and we do like uh- volunteering a lot- I did a lot like my sophomore year, so it’s all about like uh- like being like the hands and feet of like Christ and stuff, like how it’s just like- and that’s what I believe in and stuff. My program, like one uh- volunteer thing [at church] is called Servants for Christ.

(Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Students felt that service was normal and expected in Willow Falls. In a town of privilege, students, teachers, and community members created and enacted a narrative that expected the town of the “fortunate” to engage in service to those “less fortunate.” This expectation was part of the existence of the program and as teachers tried to work to confront the students’ privilege, their “bubble,” students were reminded and encouraged to realize their position and privilege for good.

In addition to the impact of the classroom practices, as well as the local church, and community, participants routinely discussed the social aspects of community service in the city and the school. Participants often referenced their friends and the social rewards of doing service, like getting to spend time on a service trip or being able to connect with each other on Instagram or Snapchat, sharing photos and posts about their service that day, as something important and necessary to document their work and share it with their “digital” service-learning community and beyond. These social links were
often the driving force, or at least a way to be recognized socially as the students engage in service, or to join certain clubs or the service-learning class itself. In addition to social media, students shared stories of applying for the program with friend groups of 4-6 hoping to all get in, or in some cases, applying hoping to meet new people in service-learning, in the “family,” in order to continue bonding and enjoying the service work. The social interactions, personal and digital, were a major component of the participants service-learning worlds.

For example, one particularly funny moment came at the end of the weeklong service trip that the entire service-learning class took to the southern part of the state, to help with service-projects in that area. Samantha recalled how she and a few other service-learning students had met some local high school students and talked to them about their lives, and despite their differences and initial awkwardness, hit it off. The pairing of the two groups had extended to the digital world by the end of the day:

I was going through my Instagram feed this morning and I follow one of the girls from the FFA that we went to on ASP (a service site) and it was a picture of all the cards from our class to whoever was in charge of that- that went to that high school and um the caption was just like my heart is so full, thank you Willow Falls High School students. (Samantha, Interview 3, May 16, 2016)

Samantha’s interactions with the students were memorable and important that day, and in field notes there are notes with other students discussing the same interactions with their new friends, and sharing photos of their service sites on Snapchat with the new followers. Being able to extend the interactions from that day, even just digitally, allowed further
connection and interaction between the service-learning students and the local high school students. Bernice also spoke about these interactions and how service-learning students would use Twitter to organize social gatherings outside of school, for service-learning classmates:

Like, when, especially, you guys don’t see this, but like, Twitter. Service learning is honestly, we are so annoying on Twitter… We don’t even care. Like, we’ll, like, someone will be like, oh, man, I wish I had someone to eat with, and I’ll be like, be at your house in… We’re all just like, that kind of like fun stuff.

(Bernice, interview, May 12, 2016)

All of the participants, students and teachers alike, valued the role social media had on the program. Students used to further the “family” and community building, to check in on each other’s sites and experiences, and to keep in contact with new friends on ASP. Teachers viewed social media as an important component in communicating and for the students to interact with one another further in the context of the course.

It was in this social media space that participants and I used their photos from service sites to discuss what they were doing and how their service in that photo was connecting to some of the key community themes we have discussed so far. Students were happy to view their photos with me during their second interviews, as well as in class, as we discussed their work in service sites and how that impacted their view of the community of Willow Falls and the surrounding areas where they were conducting their service.
The photos often had similar staging; smiling students posing with someone at their site, posing “at work,” and often engaged in some shared activity with those they “served;” bingo at the retirement center, playing with kids at a local single-mother focused daycare, or working in a field on a local animal rescue farm. Each picture was not only created and shared with me for research purposes; these were on their social media accounts, circulated among classmates and peers in service-learning, and beyond. I did not anticipate this form of digital sharing, or digital community, was not something I had even thought to include in my original research focus, but it became a clear part of the process across the nine months of the course. Below are a few examples of student created service site pictures from the following participants (in order, first to third): Samantha at an animal rescue farm; Alayna at a Salvation Army kitchen; and Kevin at a retirement community.
Figure 3. Samantha and Friend

Figure 4. Alayna (left) and Kristin (right)
These photos represent a vast majority of those taken by the students. Posed with people they served at their sites and shot in as a “selfie,” students often portrayed themselves smiling and posing in action. The staged scenes were meant to capture a quick snapshot of their work and to demonstrate their actions at site. In many of the photos there are interactions and smiles and there are only positive images that seemingly reflect the course aims and expectations for site work.

Bernice also talked about how her service site, a charity organization in Willow Falls that worked to give money to local charitable groups, had gifted $50,000 to a local group and that she thought it was cool they could share and support the charity via
Facebook, to spread the word and pictures of the event to share how the money would be spent, and how the organization would use it. This social media layer in the act of service allowed a different sort of connection, one that can be shared and posted to other service-learning friends and Willow Falls community members. It became a sort of promotional tool or advertisement, or a way to further connect with the charitable act for the participant and the service work done with the charitable organization:

I think for me is like when I worked on something like, worked with a community member to like, get money to a certain place and like, did all the like, little stuff with them and I’d be like, ugh, this is taking forever. But then when you actually hand them the check, ‘cause we have this like, big, big check that we like, take pictures with, you like, are writing it down, you give them that big check, and you like, get to hear all the great stuff that they’re gonna do with it… it was all worth it… I think that was the best part. And even if I wasn’t there, just getting to like, look at the pictures later on Facebook or something really cool. (Bernice, Interview 2, March 14, 2016)

Bernice’s views of the event and the promotional possibilities, as far as extending the range and knowledge of the service happening in this context, are an important realization. Bernice saw that by using social media and bringing the digital world into the service it was a way to not only preserve the moment and they excitement, but also to extend the message to others.

Within the layers of community in the service-learning course, students navigate the expectations of their teachers, classmates, social media norms, the Willow Falls
community members, and those they serve. It is apparent that student conceptions of their community are diverse and sometimes conflicting, with expectations of “family” and popping the “bubble” of their hometown lived experiences. Forming the heart of the class community, students are expected to simultaneously embrace their backgrounds and their ideals about Willow Falls, and then push back against them, readily placing themselves out of their comfort zones, as Ms. Ananda says often, and into situations that are uncomfortable but allow the ideas of the “bubble” to be challenged, while at the same time providing a healthy support structure within the classroom community through “family.” Students have reacted in different ways to these expectations, and there were those who were viewed as “not getting it,” students who were not able to fit within the model of community expressed the course itself and the city community as a whole (Research Memo 7, November 20, 2015). These expectations made up the core values of the course and the construction of the community of the classroom and beyond was a deliberate focus in both the aims of the teachers and district, as well as in a presence in the language of the students themselves as they worked through their own views and backgrounds in the context of the course.

**Servant and Civic Identity.** The formation of student identities emerged as a major theme in this study. Students began forming their “servant identities” as the program progressed and brought a myriad of personal histories, experiences, desires, and aims to their service work. Identity formation as a “servant” was the most pressing aim in the program and every assignment, discussion, journal prompt, and conversation with the teachers and their peers involved student conceptions of the self. In addition to
servant identities, the civic identity of students was also present in many of the course components. Understanding that students should be servant’s doing good in the community, as a political and social animal, was a direct focus. To this end, identity formation theory is an important pillar of this work, especially for adolescents, as they experienced their service-learning work and felt their identities changing or adjusting within the framework of the program.

The second research question in this study involved student conceptions of their own citizenship as well as what it means to be a good “citizen” in the United States and beyond. In this part of the study the extension of how service can inform citizenship and civic identity was integral to the discussions we had and set the structure for student definitions of citizenship. Student visions of what citizenship is came at an important transition period, as many were turning 18 years old, and legally an adult, within the nine-month school year. Couple that with a major presidential election campaign throughout the school year featuring two polarizing candidates, and much of the discussions concerning citizenship veered into politics, duties, and responsibilities within a U.S. context.

In Willow Falls, the teachers expected students to be engaged and actively seeking solutions, while being democratically motivated and aware. Another aim of the service-learning course in regards to the formation of these skills is the idea that humans belong to a larger community together. Service-learning teachers Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson work to create a class where students view other human beings, in the classroom and beyond, as equals and worthy of respect, dignity, and attention. This ideal transcends
the traditional view of a “servant,” “citizen,” or “community member” to something more than a legal or official distinction, but into something that reflects a larger, human community.

Participants were asked about their views of citizenship and service, multiple times during the nine-month data collection period. From journal entries to interviews, class discussions and government assignments, to informal discussions after visiting, for example, a veteran’s home in a rural area. Couple these talks and experiences with a highly polarizing presidential primary season in the fall of 2015, and students were actively thinking and discussing government, citizenship, and political machinations on a daily basis.

However, I found a major challenge in this research was to explore how the students thought about their servant work and how it connected with citizenship. Understanding how service might impact the way they think of their role as a citizen, as well as how, in general, the United States or other societies might benefit from more citizens being engaged in service work. For instance, Samantha readily discussed citizenship as getting along with others and making connections, but had a more straightforward approach when linking service and citizenship. Samantha defined a “good” citizen this way:

In kind of a schoolgirl naïve way, [a citizen] is just someone who is accepting of others. And their opinions and like does their part, does their research, goes to-votes for elections and everything and not someone who sits there and posts on Facebook, and like critiques.
I think someone who can kinda sit back and realize that in relation to others, someone who lives in [Willow Falls] is not gonna have the same needs as someone who lives in a tiny little town in West Virginia, like- so I think someone who can just sit back and actually realize that like yeah you’re fully entitled to your own opinion, but your own opinion is formed because of ways you’ve been living your life so like, everyone else is allowed to have their other opinion so I feel like if we all just stop like critiquing each other’s opinions and like could work together to form something that helps everybody else, I don’t know- that could be a decently naïve way to look at it. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

Samantha viewed service influencing citizenship through acceptance of difference and recognizing that other opinions and views were important. And when pressed to see if there was a direct link regarding service and citizenship, Samantha demurred, saying that at times there could be and that it comes through seeing others’ perspectives. When attempting to link her service and citizenship, Samantha explained:

I mean I guess partially- I don’t know how much specifically to service-learning it has but I mean like going through mission trips and everything. Especially like going to Kentucky and everything. I’m sure ASP [the week long trip at the end of the course] will have a very similar feel, it’s just like that was a very bad area, and like we would take the kids to play and they would be like you can’t run around, they have to have shoes on, because there’s a very high chance they could step on a used wrench somewhere in the field and we were like oh, okay.
So like, I guess like- and like coming back to [Willow Falls], not that [Willow Fall’s] is a bad place but it does have a judgmental feel to it. And so there are people who complain about this [place], and I’m like your issues are so minimal compared to like, this kindergarten aged kid who can’t even run around the field by his house without having to worry about getting some kind of infection or like AIDs from a used syringe that somebody left in a field somewhere. So I feel like it’s like, people could actually stop and like consider other peoples’ what’s going on and go on these mission trips and kinda just have these eye-opening experiences. (Samantha, Interview 1, January 28, 2016)

Describing her experiences as “eye-opening,” Samantha felt that moving out of Willow Falls, and the seemingly inconsequential issues or problems, and into another context, allowed for awareness. For Samantha this sense of awareness formed a drive to be involved and more active, and to see her civic duty as something greater than Willow Falls.

Whereas Samantha valued the respect of multiple opinions and ideas, Justin was more focused on economic goals and work, and how working towards these successes and goals can aid you in your daily citizen actions and how you see yourself, your identity, as a citizen. Justin stated:

Yeah, thinking of this, because there’s so many different um… I would say someone who, kind of like wakes up in the morning and does what they need to do during the day to- whether it is to succeed or do better, to make a living. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)
This individualistic approach showed Justin thinking of citizenship as an individual responsibility, one that if we all engage in, made society and our lives better. Though when asked how service might fit into that, he replied in similar fashion to Samantha, specifically referencing the need to step outside of what you know, and your previous life experiences. In this case that meant an interaction Justin witnessed involving one of his “students” at his service site at an inner city elementary school:

A lot of the things you learn through doing service, you can put forward to help you succeed, so even things like learning about areas outside of [Willow Falls], learning about kids who, um- there was one girl named Leana in my class and I don’t even know how to start talking- we started talking about parents and Leana talked back to the teacher and Ms. Martin goes, oh I’ll call your mom and she turns to her and goes, oh I don’t have a mom. And it’s like, things you learn through doing service that you can’t necessarily learn doing really other things, um- I feel like build you up, they make you a better citizen, also things just like- um- Ms. Ananda always says how you want to go into a site that you’re not comfortable with. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

In contrast, Sarah and Bernice had more basic definitions of citizenship in the beginning of the year; following laws, voting, and being of age to participate, but by the end of the year, both had developed a more nuanced definition. In these journal and interview passages both participants showed emergent thinking on how their personal actions may have impacted society, especially through their service work. In Sarah’s beginning journal entry she wrote that:
Since I was born an American citizen I have been brought up with the mindset of one. [The] responsibilities and rights are to abide by the laws and accept the punishment if I break one. It's important to exercise my freedoms as a US citizen for example my freedom of speech. (Sarah, journal, 5/1)

And in our interview, Sarah focused on individual responsibilities and drives as well:

I would define them as someone who does their part, so someone who doesn’t-it’s lazy in a sense so they- they take initiative in their own life, and they do what they need to do, not necessarily what everyone else needs them to do. So if they have a passion they need to do it because we have plenty of accountants out there, we don’t need a thousand of them. Yes, you will get stable money but you do need those specified jobs, you know- I think that if you’re a member of the American society and you have a chance to do all that, you need to take advantage of it because in other countries you might not be able to take advantage of it. Um, so I think that’s important. I think it’s important to be a community servant as we talked about. I think it’s important to be a part of what’s happening in your town and not just go through the motions. (Sarah, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

But by the end of the year, Sarah had a broader scope regarding individual responsibilities and impact; “I think I will be a more active participant, as I should have been based on my experiences this year. I'll make sure to be aware of issues and use my voice to help others” (Sarah, Journal, 7/4).

Sarah’s views on civic engagement broadened throughout the year as she became more attuned to her servant identity as well as how she was situated in the community.
We see Sarah discuss awareness in the interview passage as well as the openings she feels exist in the United States. Being able to take advantage of opportunity is an important part of her civic role but she expands to include action, especially the use of voice. In the final quote she describes her voice having the ability to help others, here we see a differentiation between her, as privileged and not needing help, directing her energy towards the underprivileged. This help/helper relationship is reflective of the program desire to show privilege in the course and the high school, and make sure students understand they must use their privilege to help others.

Bernice stated in the beginning of the year that as a minor, she did not have much to contribute and felt there was a limited amount of impact she could have. However, she did link a sense of personal responsibility with citizen. Leaving the world as “better” could be linked directly to service aims in the program; “I don't have much to say about anything that happens in my country, I think the biggest responsibility is leaving my nation better than when I came into it” (Bernice, Journal, 5/1). At the end, both in a journal entry and interview excerpt, she viewed citizenship more in terms of identity and agency and linked her experiences and knowledge to the development of a greater society. She explained: “I will be more open to new things and to take a chance and embrace an experience I really think this will make me a better member of society” (Bernice, Journal 7/4). When we spoke she included more:

I think um, a good citizen understands the importance of their standing like, with other people, so how much um, they have an impact in their community, whether it be service - or just like, doing the right thing by putting their trash in the right
bin or cleaning up the streets… or anything that they can do for their city or America. I think that is what a good citizen is. (Bernice, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

For Justin there was a direct link between being a servant and citizenship in his interview. We discussed at length how citizenship is tied directly with service and how it could impact the U.S. if more people were exposed to a class like this one. Justin drew on the exchange of service, the servant and those being served, as the space to make his case that it could be beneficial:

Yeah, I definitely think it does, the people who are receiving the service, I mean I know- a lot of those kids I mean I like it- um, would definitely be- with having high-schoolers come in, I feel like we’ll look up to them and I- just kinda look up like a role model, like I wanna succeed, I wanna be like him… playing lacrosse and stuff, half of them ask like are you playing lacrosse and college, and all that stuff and kind of be a role model to set them up to try to succeed, I would say.

And then on the other side, the people who are giving the service, I definitely think it’s important because I mean, people just learn lessons that they can’t really learn anywhere else. (Justin, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Justin linked his servant status as a role model, as someone for students to look up to, to his service identity and how it defined his role as a high school student-athlete working with younger children. He saw the children receiving the service as being able to look at him as an example of what to do right, how to act, and how to be successful. He also shared his feelings on how service experiences had taught him lessons that he could never
learn outside of the course. The unique nature of his service work has obviously impacted his thinking and perspectives and he feels his servant identity has formed around the values of the program.

Finally, one of the most interesting exchanges linking service and citizenship occurred with Vincent. Vincent felt especially connected to service work through his church, and thought it was important that being a servant was for others and he referenced his views like those of Christ, service should be for those being served, not you.

In one interview, Vincent openly talked about his family’s religious and political views and especially his conflicted feelings about his mother’s concerns regarding Muslim refugees from Syria and supporting Donald Trump. Through reconciling these perspectives, Vincent was able to link service and citizenship in a completely unexpected way as we talked. Vincent was convinced that his servant work was important for citizenship and had to occur so that perspectives could change. In response to a question about how important service could be in the U.S., Vincent’s answer was that it was very important for all people to engage in service, but especially for minorities in the United States:

I feel like they [minority groups] just don’t understand some people like they look at us [white, Christian, majority] and think oh we think we’re better than them like oh we live in nicer houses it’s because you’re black, we’re white it’s because we have nice houses, that’s not the case at all… I feel like a lot of other minorities would understand another culture [if they engaged in service].
Yeah. I believe just because like- like um- like you’re a minority, like you were born in this country, you’re just as American as I am- just from like our skin color that’s like it, you have your family and your beliefs like religions you grew up with, like to bring up stuff from the past [referencing Black Lives Matter from an earlier interview] and to look at people different ways I feel like they have to understand other people too not just we have to understand them.

So I feel like if they- I feel like if some minorities or not minorities, I’m just- I’m just putting it out to all people, I mean some people- because there are very nice people I have met through service learning- and I’m not like um- racist at all towards people… but I do believe there are some people that like to say, look what you did to us back in the day, I can act like this or can say this because that [injustices] happened. (Vincent, Interview 1, February 27, 2016)

Vincent’s examples are especially interesting because as the year progressed, more and more time was spent discussing privilege and how important it was that service-learning, the course and the service work, should be used to expand perspectives, challenge preconceptions of others. In Vincent’s case, his servant and civic identity formation proved to be uneven and challenging. He simultaneously held fast his church teachings and beliefs regarding helping others (and he was recognized by his teachers multiple times as a “great” service-learning student) while also struggling to reconcile his home life and beliefs regarding Muslims, refugees, and minority groups. His example provided excellent insight into the type of dissonance that the service-learning course could facilitate with a student’s experience. This unevenness was a true look into the
dissonance of the class, the students’ experiences with the dissonance, and their struggles to reconcile it with their own backgrounds, relative privilege, and familial upbringing.

**Working with Difference.** One of the main tools of this service-learning program is to expose students to new situations, institutions, people, cultures, beliefs, and practices through their service work. The third research question in this study involves student interaction with difference, and how they perceive their interactions and experiences in their service work. The expectations of students in service-learning include the acceptance and embrace of being pushed out of student comfort zones to face difference, in the name of new experiences, and a shift in perspective or thinking, in essence a “deprogramming” (Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). For example, “culturing” can be thought of as the recursive nature of culture formation or the “programming,” so in this study, the culturing of service, as students interact with difference at their sites and in their classroom through discussion and reflection (Bakic-Miric, 2008; Rodriguez, 2002). Students were expected to adhere to the culture of the course, and each year the culture is unique, some more challenging, like this year, or successful like in 2014-2015, than others (Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016).

Generally referred to as “difference” in this study, this broader context of interaction is used as a method for service students to gain important experiences and hopefully, according to course documents and teacher aims, a perspective shift. When a student is “getting it,” or has bought in, this perspective shift is apparent in the way they talk about their service, engage with essential questions in the class, and interact with their peers, teachers, service sites and supervisors, and other stakeholders in the program.
These experiences with difference are at the heart of the program’s mission and are extolled as the main conduit through which students will confront and wrestle with their privilege.

**Pushing Out of the Comfort Zone.** One mantra of the program was that students should always find where they are uncomfortable and push out of their comfort zone to engage with their discomfort, and the difference that is forcing those feelings. Service-learning students were able to choose one area of “comfort” for a service site and one area that was “uncomfortable.” This setup made sure that students would be forced to engage with difference that they had misgivings or fears about, and that they confront these misgivings to better establish an understanding, or to mitigate broad generalizations or stereotypes, and to hopefully leave a personal comfort zone.

For Bernice, this experience involved working with children, which she did during her second semester site at an urban school for refugee children. The stories and experiences of the refugee children had an immediate impact on Bernice and she was drawn into their lives, especially compared to her own privilege and experiences. This exchange happened after I asked if she recognized any differences through the work she was doing with the refugee students and the difference in their life experiences up to this point:

Yeah, I noticed, and also, it made me feel so petty. And the stuff that I complain about on the daily, like… [laughs]… It’s so stupid. Because, at the school, there’s a lot of refugees, like children, and then adults, that also help out there, and volunteer their time. And just like, the lady there. She had such a struggle,
like, getting from her home country, and all this stuff, and like, when I left, she
like, gave me this nice card, she like, gave me all this stuff, and I know she
doesn’t have that much money, but just the fact that she just wanted to give me
something. And that, she’s always happy. She’s always in a good mood, because
like, even with that, she’s still not in the situation she was before, and same with
the kids. They’re so happy, and so vibrant, even though they’ve had such hard
times, and to me, that was just like, my problems are not real. (Bernice, Interview
3, May 12, 2016)

For Justin the exchanges with school kids and disabled adults opened up his
communication and ability to connect with different people in different scenarios.
Justin’s realizations came at the end of the year, and he viewed himself as more open-
minded because of his interactions with difference, which he felt led to better
communication and understanding:

I’m more open-minded for sure, so just hearing their stories, hearing um-
especially with a lot of the kids- I think I’ve said this in an interview before but a
couple of the stories that I’ve heard from kids at school hearing that, you look at
them, you would never think that’s happened in their background. So in terms of
open mindedness of what they’re going through and what they have gone through
so that’s definitely um- everyone kind of has their own background so you don’t
want to judge because you really don’t know what they’re going through, so yea it
makes me more um open-minded when I’m communicating. (Justin, Interview 3,
May 12, 2016)
Sarah referred to her sites, one in Kindergarten and her two hospice sites, as the “beginning and end of life” and how this difference, one of age, impacted the way she thought of both groups and herself. Pushing out of her comfort zone here, she had to better understand how the hospice context operated and struggled at first to adjust, especially after spending her first site in her comfort zone, in a local Montessori school in Willow Falls. This experience taught Sarah about understanding and generational communication:

So it’s a different challenge from going there to going to hospice. I’m very young there. The youngest is probably, like, 75- to like 95. So to them I am like a great-grandchild. And, like, they would love to hear about my life and what’s happening; while with the kids, it’s more focused on their life. And you ask them questions.

That’s a thing I- I find that very interesting- that the older always asks the younger the questions about their life. Some of them, they ended up asking me, like- they’re serious about my life ‘cause I’m a big older kid, you know? But, and then I started asking questions because they deserve to be asked, and that’s why I’m there. I’m not there to talk about me, but about them.

But both present very different challenges ‘cause conversation with little kids is super easy and they’re usually about topics that are quite easy to talk about. Like goldfish or their pets or what I’m doing today. Or them sharing a story that takes, like, forever to tell. You know, a very short story takes five minutes [Laughs]
While the conversations [in a hospice settings] are more like reflecting on their life and their challenges and hardships in their life, or just trying to get a conversation with us. There’s a lot of repetition, you know? Whether or not they can hear you, or whether or not they are comprehending what is happening—sometimes they are not very responsive; their mind is elsewhere, basically, absent. So both are very, very different situations, but I’m thankful for both ‘cause they kind of show me a different perspective- from beginning of life to the end of life.

(Sarah, Interview 3, May 20, 2016)

In both instances, the difference Sarah dealt with was age-related. Later in our third interview, Sarah discussed how these interactions allowed her to respect the process of life and especially her “elders” and she said she realized how important family can be. She viewed the fact that her hospice patients were there as something uncomfortable for her and she retreated to talking about the importance of family support, and the desire never to end up in a hospice-type setting. Her work there made her uncomfortable and she left with a respect for the people there, but a personal conflict regarding the possibility she could end up in a hospice care center as well (Sarah, Interview 3, May 20, 2016)

**Personal Growth through Difference.** There is no question that the community and the school district of Willow Falls is one of privileged. Willow Falls is far above the national and state averages in median household income, consistently ranks high on national “safe community” lists, low in crime statistics, and earns high marks in
education, and after school community programs. A vast majority of residents are white, well educated, and upper middle class.

The aim in the course was a perspective shift for Willow Fall’s privileged students. Through the participant profiles and themes of community and citizenship, this shift, if it happened, was often incomplete and uneven. However, each participant in this study believed that they had grown as a result of the course. Whether it was personal or with friends, through interactions with teachers or a broader maturity, students believed they had experienced an important marker in this program. Ms. Ananda openly discussed her desire to confront her students’ privilege, in order to teach in a transformative way, and to force them to recognize societal issues and problems. Pedagogically, agitating students was part of the initial transformative approach and contributed to initial recognition of privilege. Ms. Ananda hoped that students would leave upended and go out seeking these problems in order to engage and work to being to solve them constructively (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 3016).

In service-learning the idea of privilege does engage these ideas in a superficial way, the beginning links are acknowledged and the teachers work to try to get “buy in” into the concepts of privilege and oppression and learning to “deprogram” the thinking that students enter the program with, in the way that Pease (2010), Curry-Stevens (2007), and others suggest.

These varied excerpts show a range of emergent student views of citizenship and civic identity, often contradictory and at times in stark contrast to what the aims of the program may be. Like community connections and service, constructing a civic identify
through service learning is arduous and uneven, as students engaged in service in this study, they were able to speak more fluidly and readily about how experiencing difference can lead to better understanding, or at the very least, knowledge. Although student conceptions of citizenship and service may not be a “holy grail” definition of what a compassionate citizen-servant could be, in many of the quotes and evidence in this section, there is ample space to see that students are engaged, thinking, and motivated to engage with the world as citizens.

As far as perceptions of community, the inextricably interwoven nature of the classroom, the school, and the city was apparent in all of our discussions and my observations. The school, the city, and the service-learning classroom allowed for students to experience their service from a place of relative privilege, and force them to reconcile their backgrounds with the stated aims of the course, to push them beyond the “bubble” and into a new, “unfinished” awareness (NCSS, 2013). Students lived experiences up to the class were incredibly influential, we can look at Vincent’s views about service as one piece of evidence, in how they viewed the class activities, the service, and their friends. Harkening back to Dewey’s vision of the “Public,” the transactions constructed by the course itself and taken on by students’ own agency was an incredibly powerful tool to trouble student visions of community. And although students may not fully buy in, or know how to articulate the “right” words, the interviews and journal passages showed students wrestling with their new experiences in class and site.

Finally, in wrestling with the aims of the course, to expose students to spaces outside of the “bubble” and to challenge their conceptions through serving and through
interactions with difference, the influence of the course was there, although wide-ranging
in how it occurred and how closely it fit to the aims of the program and the state goals
from the teachers. In Ms. Ananda’s interview she talked throughout our time together
about being able to move the students, just an inch, to get them to think differently. She
recalled her college professor, Dr. Jamal, as encouraging her to do her work in Willow
Falls, a place of privilege, because that would be her calling. Her work with these
students and her ability to run a program that had the possibility of shifting their thinking
and behavior, to be more inclusive and aware of difference and perspective, was what she
valued in her teaching in service-learning (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). It
was obvious this allowed for victories in her work and a way forward in her teaching,
with aims to improve.

Conclusion

Through analysis of program context and participant experiences, the following
findings emerged out of the data:

1. Participants’ experiences in service-learning program contributed to
   shifts in how they viewed themselves and their classmates as well as
   their relationship as servants to those they served. Participants worked
   in class and at their sites to expand their perspectives and worldview.

2. Aiming for “buy-in,” teachers challenged participants through program
   specific-aims to think about their position and context and were
   encouraged to push out of their comfort zones in order to do so.
Discussions and confrontation of privilege were important parts of this challenge.

3. Participants were purposefully challenged to accept exposure to difference in a variety of capacities and internalized these challenges.

4. Participants found a variety of outlets for community-making in their service-learning experiences; in group/out group distinctions, class sections, site experiences, and bonding activities.

5. Citizenship and democracy were linked with service work in an uneven fashion, with some participants making direct connections while others made partial or nascent links.

6. Personal growth and community change for participants were incomplete. Teachers and students recognized that there were barriers to fully achieving program goals.

The service-learning program at Willow Falls was designed to challenge student perspectives and comfort levels. Every aspect of the course, from coursework to site placement, one-on-one sharing activities, and service trips, the students were expected to be open to new experiences and “buy in” to the program values. Participants had a variety of experiences and feelings about the process and through their service work were troubled as their conceptions of self, community, and society were challenged by their service work.
CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is organized to present and discuss the five key findings of this study with a link to the literature and gaps in the research outlined in Chapter II, as well as a discussion of how this study addresses those gaps and created inquiry lines for further research and study. In this chapter I explore the implications for service-learning programs in high school, teaching service-learning, new service-learning programs, as well as the impact on structure and pedagogy of service-learning programs at the high school level.

For the participants, Bernice, Justin, Samantha, Sarah, and Vincent, service-learning and working with difference formed servant identities that were complicated and uneven and the process of “buy-in,” or joining the service-learning community, was an important rite of passage that the students experienced in different ways. This service-learning program and the findings in this study are not meant to provide the “correct way” to do service or design a program, but instead to show the complexities and difference in the journey can be for the participants and stakeholders. Each student had a different journey and varied realizations about their work. Each set of experiences led to different places for each participant regarding conceptions of service work, citizenship, community, and working with difference. These varied paths, encompassing their coursework, personal service history, site experiences, and social interactions in the
course, provided rich experiences that complicated their worldviews and their own ideas about themselves, service, citizenship, and community.

**Overview of the Study**

Student “servants” do not magically become tolerant or accepting of others as a result of a nine-month course and site work, but this study shows that the opportunities can be created to at least begin the life-long process. My main goal in designing this study was to explore service-learning in a high school describing all of the nuanced and messy nature that it entails, while challenging some of the ways that it unfolds throughout the year. What I felt needed to be addressed was the inherent privilege in this program at Willow Falls as well as the assumptions and actions by teachers, students, and administrators that affects the program and its aims.

For this study I used an interpretive qualitative design and utilized a variety of data, through a *bricolage* design framework to study the experiences of high school seniors in a service-learning program. Using grounded-theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014) I analyzed and coded study artifacts as well as research and analysis memos. This process identified key findings and through the nine-months of research provided a mountain of data. This study allowed for an immersive approach through observations, interviews, journals, student photos, and service work; as I studied students at work in class, at their sites, and on service trips, these research questions guided my work:

1. How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?
2. What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding service, citizenship, and community within a service-learning program?

3. How do students construct meaning (if at all), experiencing difference with people of diverse ages, education levels, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?
   a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?
   b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

The suburban setting for the study, Willow Falls High School, is the site of privileged students and their families with high household incomes, low crime rates, “Excellent” rated schools, a very high 4-year college admission rate, and a focus on academic and personal success. The school is considered a model public school by the country and state and the service-learning program is one of the most recognized, yet one of the few, that exist in the state. I followed students in the Fall of 2015 as well as the Spring of 2016 as they worked in class, at their service sites, and on two trips for service work outside of their normal schedules, one trip to a campground forty minutes from Willow Falls for a “retreat,” as well as the week-long capstone trip, ASP, when students traveled to one of the most impoverished counties in the state to engage in service-work.

In this chapter I explore the findings regarding broad themes of Personal Growth, Community, and Working with Difference further drawing these conclusions:
**Personal Growth**

a) Participants greatly valued their experiences in service-learning and believed they and their classmates had grown into better “servants” as a result of their service, classroom, and social experiences;

b) Through their self-reported growth students constructed their “servant” identities and linked it directly with citizenship/civic-mindedness and their community;

**Community**

c) Students felt tensions as they were expected to “buy-in” to the expectations of forming a “family” in the program. Servant identities were inextricably linked to this “buy-in” process;

d) Students viewed their communities; the program, classes, and Willow Falls, as distinctly separate from, but coalescing, with those they interacted in their service-work;

**Working with Difference**

e) Students viewed their service work with difference as an important step in personal growth; with aims of understanding making a personal connection;

f) Privilege was an integral part of the service-learning program. Recognition of privilege as both a positive force (means, ability to serve, skills/talents) and a negative force (the “bubble”); and finally

g) Student intercultural scores increased in four out of the five participants in this study and showed that there was slight growth in intercultural sensitivity
while in a large group report (n = 46) intercultural scores generally improved as more students at the bottom of the continuum moved closer towards Minimization.

Being able to see the high school program and student identity formation “in process” addresses a key gap in the literature and allows for a more intimate look at how service-learning experiences shape student perspective. Through the work in this study I hoped to allow for other scholars, teachers, and students, to be able to envision individual student experience in an “exemplary” high school service-learning program at work.

**Discussion of Findings**

The participants in this study applied for and entered the program believing that it was a unique experience and something that would provide value for them; whether it be for a college application, life experiences, or as a way to continue the service they had enjoyed in prior experiences with their local school, community, or church. The process of the program was intended to accept students, challenge their worldviews and inherent privilege through exposure to difference, and then aid in forming servant and civic identities, while expanding student notions of community. In this section I am organizing my discussion of the detailed findings into three main sections, one section for each research question and centered around a larger, overarching, and emergent theme in the research: Personal Growth, Community, and Working with Difference.

By and large students felt that they had grown personally and saw the world differently as a result of the program. The experiences they had with their classmates and teachers, sites, and coursework had impacted them greatly through our time together
during the school year and the research process; their experiences informed their servant identities, ideas about citizenship, and their sense community belonging.

Students expected to experience difference in the service-learning program and believed they would change as a result of these experiences. Students encountered difference at their service sites and through working with difference they challenged, albeit incompletely, assumptions and practices that informed thinking. Exposing service-learning students to difference in order to grow personally and push them “out of their comfort zones” encouraged students to change perspectives through their service work.

Student participants also believed they were entering a program community with unique characteristics and aims; the service-learning program is setup to be a senior-level capstone course that provides unique, highly sought after, experiences through service and learning, and this community is deemed “special;” being accepted and then building their capacity for service was a highly desired set of experiences that students and parents alike aimed to capture. Through their work in the program, students’ sense of belonging and community formation happened in an uneven fashion, and emerged as major theme in the data.

Finally, participants wrestled with their positions as privileged servants in relation to those they served and those who were outside of the program; this privilege was recognized and explored directly by all the participants involved in this study, with a variety of experiences informing the way the participants viewed their service-learning work and their privilege.
Personal growth: Discomfort, learning service, and the journey towards a servant identity.

I would say service learning is a lot about getting outside of your comfort zone and really learning more about yourself that you never thought you knew about yourself, um like I learned a lot about myself, I’ve matured a lot. (Vincent, Interview 3, May 31, 2016)

Students felt they would grow as a result of their work in service-learning and by the end of the program felt that they had grown in some capacity. The idea that learning service meant pushing outside of one’s comfort zone into a new boundary, as the path towards becoming a servant, is a major component of the program at Willow Falls.

Students felt more empowered and confident in their ability to communicate with new people in new situations as well as how their experiences shaped their perspectives and prior judgments of people. Students and teachers also spoke of being a servant throughout the study duration, and specifically how experiencing discomfort was the main path toward this aim. This identity formation, as a servant, was touted as one of the most important goals in the program. Students were expected to demonstrate their journey during identity formation in a variety of ways; through journal entries, in-class sharing about site work (every Thursday), and in informal conversations with Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson (Johnson, Interview 1, May 25, 2016). This perceived growth allowed for a tool-kit that enabled the development of a “servant” identity for each student. Different in construction, the “servant” identity was encouraged by the program and adopted as an ethos by the teachers and students.
During this process students internalized servant aims and experienced discomfort to varying degrees. Some “bought-in” quicker than others and were able to communicate or show evidence of “buy-in” in their journals and in-class discussions. For instance, the AM class was widely viewed by teachers and fellow students as less cohesive and less likely to demonstrate “buy-in” during the year. Most participants mentioned this split in interviews and they viewed it as unfortunate regardless of their own section placement. In general, student satisfaction and motivation waxed and waned through the year, but for the most part students reported that they believed in the course and felt that their work was important and deserved to be respected, linking this servant identity work to concepts of self and capacity.

This idea that to buy into the servant mentality is a rejection of “normal” or “comforting” was an important opening into the process that students went through on their servant journeys. Wrestling with discomfort was the most cited finding that contributed to what students perceived as their own personal growth and it was a major feature of the program and expectations set forth by both the teachers and students involved.

Vincent’s quote to start this section uses the word “maturity” to tie into the expectations of the course. Vincent and others spoke of personal maturity and being able to see things differently as a result of their work in the program. The concept of the “buy-in” is the process of accepting the norms of the service-learning program, as they promote discomfort, in order to demonstrate learning to serve. The process was not always perfect, for example, in Samantha’s case, Ms. Ananda was concerned about work
ethic, demonstrating a willingness to serve beyond individual goals, and being willing to place others at the forefront of her service (Research Memo 7, November 20, 2015). This unevenness and varying degrees of buy-in by different students was to be expected according to Ms. Ananda and she linked the different approaches to student openness to the expectations of the course and the need for students to meet her “half way” in the process (Ms. Ananda, Interview 1, May 25, 2016; Research Memo 7, November 20, 2015; Research Memo 13, March 31, 2016).

These participant journeys towards a servant identity provide a multitude of results and concepts and contribute a detailed view of the complicated process of forming a servant identity to the field. The call to explore the idea of servant identity is well articulated in theoretical works and this study allows for an “on the ground” view of the beginnings of an explicit identity formation in the service-learning course at Willow Falls. Recalling Erikson’s (1959/1994) identity formation work, students progressed through identity and role confusion and more fully discovered their roles as servants as well as “who they want to be” in the service-learning program. This formation, through the service-learning community and in confronting their privilege, influenced student conceptions of self and community as well as how they viewed their role in larger society through their service work. The role of activity in identity formation allows for a recursive, transactional approach among context, action, and identity formation through time (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Bosma & Kunnen, 2001).

Greenleaf (1977/1991) promoted the idea of servant leadership as an identity formation in which a leader must view themselves first as a natural servant of others, this
idea, constructed through a literary critique, sets the identity as servant first, one that is willing to become uncomfortable and embrace the strenuous journey. Moely, Billig, & Holland (2009) explicitly state that research in identity formation and service-learning is a clear path forward in the field and must be the focus in future work. This gap is a key focus of this section and part of the argument that “in process” studies are lacking and need to be conducted to advance the field.

Claar, Jackson, & TenHaken (2016) extend Greenleaf’s work to explore the theoretical idea of a servant, but strictly in the theoretical sense surrounding the ideal servant and how to attempt its construction while other publications identify key personality traits that contribute to inculcating servant leadership (Washington, Sutton, & Field, 2006; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Other studies show servant identity conceptualization as it relates to politics, government, and public office, but not in process and not within a service-learning program, especially at the high school level (Caron, Giauque, & Horton, 2006; Bourgault & Van Dorpe, 2013). The concepts illustrated in these publications allowed for a focus on what the servant could indeed become, but did not outline explicit experiences of those engaged in forming their servant identities, especially as adolescents. This study addresses a key gap in servant research.

Other studies have shown results of service-learning that follow familiar paths to these participants, but again, outside the scope of this study regarding the actual process of formation. One study was built around a large survey of service-learning alumni (conducted as participants were adults and past their service experience) in which much of growth in critical consciousness (in stated program aims and actual student...
experiences) was reported after the completion of a wide-ranging survey of diverse service-learning programs in K-12 settings (Cipolle, 2010). In a large-scale study in Chicago high schools, Kahne & Sporte (2008) studied service-learning effects on citizenship and student commitment to civic participation, with some discussion of formation of civic identity and agency. Another pre/post designed study with no “on the ground” data, focused on college students, and showed how students form ideas about career choice and how they saw themselves and their job skills, but again, no servant identity construction (Coulter-Kern, Coulter-Kern, Schenkel, Walker, & Fogle, 2013).

That the study participants actively adopted the concept of “servant” and formed their approaches to the program around the ideas built into it shows that planned, purposeful identity formation can influence how students see their roles in service-learning and within the program goals itself. This conscientious approach to identity shows that a concerted effort to push students out of their comfort zones and into a new way of thinking about themselves and their work is a powerful tool that can guide service-learning students in their mission. This identity formation, although incomplete and uneven, showed student willingness to engage in service and discomfort in order to experience a perspective shift.

**Community: Belonging and the service program, the social, connectivity, and citizenship.**

Like, when I deal with people, or when, like, when I see other people in the classroom, dealing with people, we have like, more of a, I don’t know how to explain it, like, we don’t have that stereotype attached to class… We talked about
According to Battistoni (1997), a key link to be made between service-learning students and the community allows for the widening the concept of “community” to incorporate a large and more inclusive construction. Democratically oriented service-learning can be the vehicle of this process in schools:

Where the school does not reflect the diversity of our larger pluralistic society, as is true of too many of our public school systems, service with members of the larger community can be an effective way of engaging students, themselves from somewhat similar backgrounds, with people of diverse backgrounds (p. 151).

Service-learning programs can provide an opening, one that enables a larger engagement with difference. The program at Willows Falls aims to create community in a layered fashion; one within the program, and one extending the students’ own constructions outward, through their service work.

Within the program, participants expected to form a unique community with specific aims that centered on belonging to a “family” which worked to include different viewpoints, experiences, and people. The desire to join and be a part of the various layered communities was a strong component of the participants thinking about themselves, their service, and their work. Ms. Ananda orchestrated the social component of this process; interactions were structured to be varied and inconsistent so that students had to interact with their classmates in an intimate setting, often sharing about sites, life stories, or personal concerns/triumphs. Student conceptions of community involved their
own complicated ideas about citizenship and belonging to Willow Falls as well as their fellow classmates and in a broader scope, being citizens in local levels and in the United States.

Students felt varying degrees of belonging at various times with the communities outlined in this study. Regarding the program, besides the aim of a servant identity, forming a community within the service-learning program was of paramount importance to the teachers and students.

The syllabus, daily class interactions, and student language all reflected the idea that “family” was how they should be, should act, and should strive to attain. Teachers addressed “the family” and spoke of dynamics in the family including disagreements and quarrels. This dynamic was a key way that the program elevated its status as a course/class/experience and maintained a unique bond to which students were expected to “buy-in.” The idea of “family” was universally accepted as a way to name or define the community in the program, however students felt varying degrees of association with the word and meaning. Most adopted this language, which shows that this program specifically encouraged and structured student relationships around this study, with expectations that they would form bonds and links that were larger than a typical class setting.

Socially, students were expected to interact with all members of the program as well as stakeholders and those they were serving. Being “in the moment” was a common refrain during Thursday site debriefs and it was expected that human (and animal) interaction and connection make up a major part of a students service site (Ms. Ananda,
Interview 1, May 25, 2016). Most stories during Thursday debriefings as well as most of the recounted events during one-on-ones and our interviews involved a social interaction, typically in conversation, with someone who was out of the student comfort zone. This expectation of social action was important and drove the process of learning a student servant identity. It was imperative that students have these interactions, this discomfort, in order to grow personally (as in the previous section) as well as to engage social and to widen the student views of community.

Participant approach to a social interaction often centered on trying to meet the patient where they were, another common refrain in the program, and being able to adapt to the social norms of those being served was prized and students often focused on being able to adapt as a key trait of a good servant. Whether it was children in Head Start, co-workers at a soup kitchen, fellow students in the program, or farmers on ASP, participants focused on forming this key trait in their service work.

Finally, students extended their personal social interactions within the community, to the digital realm. This was an important tool for students to share their work, their experiences, and their interactions, but also to present themselves as servants. Using photography to tell their servant story was expected and integral to student meaning-making and teacher assessment of student progress. Pictures were actively encouraged and were shown in class to link students to sites that were not theirs, open dialogue about the scenes in the photos, and to show evidence of having a key, documented, “moment” in servant-making (Research Memo 12, March 17, 2016). The ability to share and interact with service-learning members became an integral part of
extending the program beyond the classroom walls, and to include classmates in each participant’s personal experiences of service work. As most participants were alone at their sites, the digital world became an extension of the Thursday debriefings for sharing site data and also allowed for demonstrations of service work to Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, as well as the larger Willow Falls community. This class is exclusive, and being able to share the exclusivity of their service experiences with others “outside” of the family, was an important part of participant behaviors.

Regarding the local community, students had a variety of perspectives and both acknowledged their privilege as something to confront, and accepted it as their “bubble” from which they hoped to emerge as a different or more mature person through their service experiences. Cranford (2011) conducted a study involving 58 high school seniors in AP Psychology selecting to engage in a service project over a research paper. Cranford engaged in qualitative research with a focus on student meaning-making and identity as well as on how students thought of their community through their project experiences. Although not nearly the size and scope of this program, the high school age and emphasis on community linked with this study; namely, students who conducted their service projects felt more engaged and connected.

This formation of the community can carry over in a larger sense of increased connectivity through service-learning; for example, Mitchell & Donahue (2009) suggest one-on-ones over group discussion as a way to include voices in the classroom community, as well as though not the focus of this study, others have looked at dropout prevention and service-learning in high school (Bridgeland, Dlulio, & Wuslin, 2008),
increasing intercultural skills and building links to the local community with undergraduates (Yook, 2012), and university-led study abroad programs focused on being able to increase connection with the host community through service-learning (Parker & Altman Dautoff, 2007). Despite the variations in age and design, each publication offers links to this research study regarding connectivity and service, how students form ideas about their community and their personal connections to it, and how they work through this process, is missing. A major focus of this study was community formation and how students view their class, their local community, and how difference influences how they think of their community over the course of the service-learning program.

In discussing their home community, participants viewed it as unique, supportive, and highly privileged. By comparison areas outside of the town were not as privileged and students felt that Willow Falls existed in a protective “bubble” that could be transcended through service-learning experiences, accomplished by exiting their community (either by location, out-groups, or experience) during their site work. By and large students were able to articulate personal views of their own community of privilege in Willow Falls, and the “bubble” while recognizing the value of expanding this view in the name of personal growth. Participants talked openly of feeling more comfortable with those they served in that capacity, but it was unclear whether participants viewed those they served as becoming part of their community, or if they viewed them as “outside” and separate from their own. The concept of “family” was used exclusively for those in the program and the participants never directly extended the meaning to include those they served nor stakeholders (administrators, chaperones on ASP). This suggests a
limited view of community and inclusion in the program, still adhering to the initial exclusivity of the program in the school and also in how the program operates as a “servant/served” dichotomy comes into play.

When exploring student ideals of citizenship, participant views of their role in society as citizens, were muddled and partially formed. Technical definitions such as thinking of themselves as citizens because they were born in the U.S., or that citizens must respect the flag or the president, or through enacting certain rights and responsibilities (speech, voting), were most common in interviews and journal entries. Although students struggled at times to place their own personal views of citizenship, especially for some as “yet to be” adults, they saw the value in service-learning as it pertains to democracy, morals, and citizen action. This finding fits within other citizenship/service-learning studies that exist in that service work has a positive impact on student views of their own sense of belonging and of how they think of their role as citizens, from passive to active and is imperative to civic education (Lin, 2015).

As personal conceptions of what citizenship meant to them were incomplete, the idea that service could contribute to larger civic society and democracy was apparent to the students. So although some participants did not see themselves as fully formed citizens in many ways, they did connect the value of their service work to democratic thinking and citizenship. Key themes show emerging understandings from student experience and thinking regarding citizenship, mainly, that service-learning is a space that can challenge larger views of democracy and function in society, as well as create the possibility (though not guarantee as shown by the variations in these five participants) of
changes in perspective regarding personal civic responsibility and identity. Students saw their roles as citizens in a very basic manner, but saw service-learning as a way to influence society and civic action for the better, possibly contributing to better democratic processes and more tolerance, acceptance, and awareness.

The uneven response in this study, regarding perceived individual versus perceived civic goals, builds on mixed scholarship regarding service-learning and community service and civic efficacy. Yates & Youniss (1998) show direct links with civic engagement, other studies show more tolerance and acceptance of diversity (Niemi, Hepburn, & Chapman, 2000) while some show a service-learning influence on understanding citizenship, little evidence is shown regarding changes in action such as voting or community involvement (Perry & Katula, 2001, also Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005). While Kirin (2002) believes that service-learning programs may be failing to directly address civic skills such as expressing opinions and working collectively. Finally, Morgan & Streb (2001) use a pre/post quantitative study to find that students with voice and ownership in service-learning show concepts of self, political engagement, and tolerance towards out-groups increases during their service work. In essence, service alone does not build citizenship capacities, but can only do so if underlying problems and practices are addressed with civic engagement, or citizen action, in mind (Battistoni, 2000).

The work in this study corroborates some findings and addresses gaps in service-learning and citizenship literature. Participants struggled to show a nuanced understanding of citizenship beyond a technical conception, while simultaneous feeling
more connected to their home community, their classmates, and their work with
difference at their service sites. This program has multiple layers of opinion-based
assignments and activities and addresses working collectively on a daily basis, both in
class and at their service sites. This study shows that adolescents view their status as
citizens in a complicated fashion; a “not yet” in which they view their future access and
ownership as citizen actors positively, but do not feel they have achieved this status yet.

Despite these individual views, participants had no problems linking service and
citizen action on a larger scale. Students in service-learning specifically linked service
and citizenship and thought service work promoted a more just, equitable, and fair
society that valued other views and ways of living. Although linking directly with
personal views of their own citizenship was uneven participants were able to place
themselves as actors who had experienced service work, and now possessed, however
loosely, the qualities they believed society at large could have if service-learning was
more widespread. Perspective shifts, connections, and working with difference were the
key results of student experiences in community and identity building through
experiences in the service-learning program.

**Working with Difference: Confronting privilege, changing perspectives, and
making connections.**

My site made me realize our differences, but in such a positive way. And that
goes back to your little survey thing. The one that you gave us before, I was so
confident in my answers, I was like, I know this, I know this. I don’t even
remember what I put down, but when I was doing it this time, it was much harder.
For me to say like, do you think people have differences? ‘Cause I was like no! We’re all the same. No we’re not! And that’s what I love about this class, is like, it’s okay to be different. It’s okay to say that people are not the same as you. And that’s perfectly fine. Like, that’s actually better. It’s made me realize that being different is not bad. It’s just like, being different. And so what makes like, the world so much better, so I think that, the survey, was actually a very eye opening experience. (Bernice, Interview 3, May 12, 2016)

For Bernice, being different became something to accept, admire, and value. Her shift from the first IDI survey to the end of the year and the recall of how her thinking changed showed important perspective shifts due to her site and classroom experiences. Bernice directly tied her work to exposure to difference more explicitly than the other participants. This quote shows important growth in how she saw herself and her work as well as fundamental change in values.

Participants had numerous opportunities to work and think about interacting with difference. For example, course assignments were specifically designed to include different voices, from Stanly “Tookie” Williams’ life story as a Los Angeles gang member, to historical “servants” or fictional characters, like Gandhi or Beowulf. The expectation was that Willow Falls students’ voices were checked in favor of voices of difference, like the previous examples, but also at service sites and in their work in class and on trips. The “me” voice was to be avoided, instead opening space for the voice of difference, literary, personal, or at their sites, in favor of a different kind of interaction or communication, meant to challenge assumptions and judgments.
The main focus and design of the program was to put students in situations that necessitated an interaction with a voice, person, or situation that was outside of student “comfort zones.” Defining teaching and learning as the “engagement and production of difference” Bill Green (1998) articulates a key through line of my personal research and personal teaching stance, the arc of this study, and a connection to the aims of the service-learning program at Willow Falls. Namely that:

Teaching for learning can be conceived as the engagement and production of difference... (and the) understanding of pedagogy- (with) emphasis on ‘difference,’ ‘context,’ and ‘process,’ on the priority of ‘relations,’ and ‘exchange,’ on transformation. Importantly this is a matter of referring equally to the three ‘agencies’ of ‘teacher,’ ‘learner,’ and ‘knowledge.’ All are subject to transformation, all undergo ‘crisis’ and ‘change’ as a direct result of their interaction. (Green, 1998, p. 185)

Within the design and framework of this study, Green’s work allows us to link the processes of working with difference (i.e. age, location, background, cultural, sexual orientation, gender, economic, religion, language, etc.) and identity or “becoming” within the service-learning context at Willow Falls. The idea that the interaction of the emphasized traits (difference, context, and process) and the priority of transformation through relations and change, allows us to see the results (crises and change) through the experiences of the interaction agencies (teacher, learning, knowledge) illustrates the strength of service-learning. The construction of a program like Willow Falls engages many of Green’s components in teaching for learning and each is a space that can be
emphasized within a service-learning structure. These spaces allow for emergent themes like “buy-in,” “servant,” and “pushing out of your comfort zone” to exist as well articulate and thought out aims by the teachers and students at Willow Falls, backed by Green’s theoretical conceptualization.

That being said, service-learning has long been defined as a “pedagogy of privilege” requiring special attention and commitment to mitigate, and Willow Falls is no exception (Mitchell & Donahue, 2009). The relationship of servant-to-served is fraught with complications and the ideas that program participants can consume their service work, allowing them to benefit through academic work, self-satisfaction and feeling good, and college application enhancement through service hours, is very present in the Willow Falls program, with “difference” mostly being represented by the communities targeted for service (Mitchell, 2008). Butin (2003) sums the process up best when aiming to identify the inherent privilege in a college service-learning environment:

These structural conditions make clear that service learning, as a classroom-based practice, privileges the students (and teachers) in a particular course: They gain knowledge and insight, they participate in a quasi-experimental study on the so-called community for academic gain, they feel good about themselves, they gain peer and institutional approval and recognition, and they gain real-world experience that can be easily put into a resume. Once the privileging of a course-based structure is made clear, it becomes possible to rethink the issue of how community impact can be increased outside of these constraints. (Butin 2003, pp. 1685-1686)
In the Willow Falls program the teachers and students are well aware of, and addressed frequently, their privilege. This study shows that the way participants conceptualized their privilege, as the “bubble” in many instances, the privilege of Willow Falls goes beyond access and socioeconomic status. The program would not be able to function as it is, without the inherent privilege the Willow Falls students enjoy; cell phone access, cars to drive to sites, and the administrative and parental support for the program as a means to enlarge the worldviews of their children, allows for it’s existence despite the structure and operating costs. Participants accepted their privilege and believed that due to their position that by and large, they should give more. The message that Willow Falls service-learning students are privileged, and must confront that privilege in order to change their perspectives, is hardwired into the course and is the reason for the existence of service-learning in the first place (Mr. Johnson, interview, May 25, 2016).

Regarding awareness and perspective changes, there are a multitude of studies that show links between service-learning and awareness of, and connections with difference, while being critical of power and the status quo. This study confirms much of the findings in these studies that there is greater awareness of community and difference as well as a shift in how participants view themselves and others. The largest study in this vein, by Voglegesang, Ikeda, & Yee (2000), looked at standardized test scores and some qualitative data in a mix-methods study of 19 universities with service-learning programs. This study showed key evidence of the growth of awareness through “an increased sense of personal efficacy, an increased awareness of the world, an increased awareness of one’s personal values, and increased engagement in the classroom...
experience” (Astin et al, 2000, p. iv). Other works such as Eyler & Giles, (1999), Billig & Furco (2002), Butin (2010), and Van Brummelen & Koole (2012) look at awareness in a variety of forms including community awareness, cultural awareness, intercultural skills (also using the IDI instrument), and teacher impact on effectiveness of service-learning in creating awareness. Through this study it was clear that “awareness” did not necessarily mean connection or perspective change and that participants often held contradictory views of their work, difference, and their community simultaneously.

While most service-learning studies show some elements of awareness and perspective change, this research adds to the literature in two ways; it corroborates Butin’s (2003)’s worries of service-learning structural issues between privileged servants and those being served, and it allows for a qualitative, in process, look at the way participants wrestled with their privilege. Participants simultaneously embraced it as a vehicle for the service work that they did, and also as a “bubble” that needs to be challenged by moving beyond the comfort zone and into challenging situations that disoriented their perspectives. The connections students made, among themselves, their teachers, and with those at their sites were impactful and this study added important qualitative evidence of student think regarding their site work and those they served. The participants in this study found their relationship with their service-learning and the difference they encountered as complex and dynamic; some embraced it at times, others did not, and throughout their experiences students were pushed to be more open and outside of their comfort zones in order to experience the differences the program sought.
Linking Research Questions and Findings

In order to synthesize my findings and organize them according to my initial research questions, the table below provides a specific link from each research question to the key findings emerging from the data. Following the table, I provide context for each question and set of findings in order to succinctly present the important themes from this study.

Table 8. Findings Aligned to Research Questions

Question 1: How do senior-year students experience a high school service-learning program, both in the classroom and in their service work?

Finding 1: Participants greatly valued their experiences in service-learning and believed they and their classmates had grown into better “servants” as a result of their service, classroom, and social experiences.

Finding 2: Students felt tensions as they were expected to “buy-in” to the expectations of forming a “family” in the program. Servant identities were inextricably linked to this “buy-in” process.”

Question 2: What meanings/new identities are constructed (if any) regarding service, citizenship, and community within a service-learning program?

Finding 3: Participants constructed their “servant” identity and linked it directly with individual and societal ideals of citizenship and their community.

Finding 4: Students compared their own community to the areas where their service sites were located and noticed differences and unique characteristics between them. On a large scale, students saw service as bringing people together and allowing for a better community connection.

Question 3: How do students construct meaning experiencing difference with people of diverse age, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds through service-learning coursework?

Finding 5: Students viewed their service work with difference as an important step in personal growth; with aims of understanding making a personal connection.
a. How does privilege impact these student conceptions of self, community, and service work?

Finding 6: Privilege was an integral part of the service-learning program. Recognition of privilege as both a positive force (means, ability to serve, skills/talents) and a negative force (the “bubble”)

b. How do service-learning student views or understandings change or influence (if at all) their intercultural development as a result of their experiences with difference?

Finding 7: Students regularly experienced working with difference in their site and course work. This led to experiences that influenced how they thought of themselves and others. Intercultural scores increased in four out of the five main participants in this study and showed that there was slight growth in intercultural sensitivity.

Finding 8: In large group reporting, intercultural scores improved as more students at the bottom of the IDI continuum, generally, moved closer towards Minimization.

Figure 6. IDI group results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDI #1 (October of 2015)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Developmental Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cusp of Adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cusp of Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cusp of Minimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusp of Polarization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Resolution of Polarization (Cusp of Polarization, Polarization) from Defense and Reversal

- Defense: 46%
- Reversal: 54%

ID #2 (May of 2016)
Student experiences in the Willow Falls service-learning program were laced with tensions regarding privilege and exclusivity and the uneven realizations of course and personal aims. All the participants in this study found value in the program and part of the “family,” they felt that their experiences challenged the “bubble” and pushed them out of their comfort zones, believed that service work contributed to citizen action and democratic society as a whole, and felt their were more open, mature, and aware of difference through their experiences.

Implications

The experiences of Bernice, Justin, Samantha, Sarah, and Vincent allow for the further discussion of implications and how their experiences could impact teaching and learning in service-learning courses. By understanding service work as complicated and layered with prior experiences and student preconceptions of service work teachers, administrators, and stakeholders can better understand the complex surroundings of implementing and operating a program with aims of personal and communal growth. By and large this study has three key areas that can be impacted by the findings: learning,
teaching, and research. Regarding learning, a) experiencing a service-learning course is demanding of students, specifically in regards to openness and being willing to step outside of assumptions and comfortable practices; b) forming the “servant” concept was important to facilitate identity formation and student expectations about the course, this was an important component of maintaining program aims and should be a focus of other service-learning courses; and related to teaching, c) teaching in a service-learning program requires incredible commitment and focus, but confronting privilege and status through exposure to service-learning activities and difference is possible, albeit it complex and uneven.

**Implications for Students.** First, service-learning is a space that is well suited for challenging norms (personal, communal, and democratic) and biases in a high school setting. The program at Willow Falls is unique in that it exists as a double-period, humanities–based course with a large service component… true “service-learning” as defined in Chapter II. If students are asked to confront their assumptions and judgments of others in every facet of the program; academics and service must form a true marriage of aims with personal growth, community formation, and working with difference. Students should expect to be challenged and face complications as they work through their service-learning work.

Second, although the program is set up in this fashion there are spaces of tensions and unevenness in how students experience the program. Student’s who join service-learning programs should expect to feel discomfort and conflict in their work, especially in working with difference and being expected to engage fully, for long periods of time,
with those they serve. For example, Samantha’s dissatisfactions related to whom she was working with, and whether or not she felt she could contribute, and this impacted her commitment to her site and the program. Whereas Vincent, who loved both of his sites and the people he interacted with, never stepped outside of his own interactions with people of different cultures and backgrounds, and continued to speak in racially charged, stereotypical ways regarding ethnic groups that he and his family felt were threatening. Finally for Bernice, as an African-American and one who struggled with a sense of belonging at times in Willow Falls, service-learning allowed her to feel valued and part of the “family,” even though she had issues with the high school community at Willow Falls and the town itself.

Third for students, the process of forming a servant identity was the main, overarching, contribution of this research study and this identity was important as for cohesion and to articulate the goals and aims of the program. Student servant identities will no doubt vary with each program and teacher, and school and community values will influence how student perceive their service work, but the binding idea of a servant showed students what was expected of them and how they were viewed as “successful” in the course. The processes, through which students experience the course and all of its expectations, the social structure, and site work, and the academic orientation, are complicated but important to set expectations and maintain program goals. The consistent message that students must serve, either through assignments like the *Beowulf* literary critique or Government bill proposals, in their reflective pieces as they journaled, shared site stories on Thursdays, or in class talks and discussions with Ms. Ananda and
Mr. Johnson; students were expected to evolve as servants and show evidence of their progression. Students will experience different levels of connection and progression towards being a servant and many factors, including site placement, teachers, social connections, and personal value, impact the progress in identity formation in service-learning programs.

**Implications for Service-learning Programs.** This study suggests that the ability to teach students of privilege and build towards aims of inclusion, respect, personal growth, community and working for difference is possible yet complex and uneven. Through interviews and observations with Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, it was apparent that they were deeply committed to their craft and to the ethos of the service-learning program. The focus on teacher efficacy as a component of how impactful service-learning can be was reinforced on a daily basis in how each teacher approached their work as they used essential questions, assignments, debates and discussions, reflection, and feedback to work towards “servant” and “family” goals.

Finally, one component that was a constant, and both loved and critiqued by participants, was student reflection about their service work, the class, personal lives, and their experiences. Cited as a key component to successful service-learning programs, reflection was a major hallmark of the Willow Falls service-learning structure (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Astin et al, 2000). One-on-ones, mediation, journaling, art projects, and debriefings in class on Thursdays and on ASP; all were utilized consistently in the class to setup time for student engagement, problem solving, and deep thinking about their work. This work is key to student meaning-making and identity formation as well as an
incredible important foundational process to the formation of the service–learning community and “family.”

**Implications for Future Research.** Scholars that have access to schools and districts with these programs and look to get more involved in bridging their research, practice, and connection with teachers in service-learning and community service contexts, can conduct such research and engage in their own service work as they do it. Scholars should look to design studies that focus on identity formation (civic, servant, and otherwise) in service-learning programs as the processes by which identities are formed through encountering difference was an exciting arena in this study. Scholars should also address the area of privilege in their work on service-learning programs as the traditional concerns outlined in Chapter II were present in this program, even though there were specific aims to address privilege; just because privilege is recognized and addressed, does not mean it can be mitigated in a nine-month course. Finally, future research should be aimed at teachers’ dispositions, aims, and personal backgrounds in service-learning as Mr. Johnson and Ms. Ananda were incredibly important in creating the ethos of the program, and functioned as role models and support throughout the duration of the school year. Their work facilitated much of the personal growth and community formation that occurred throughout the year with the participants in this study.

**Limitations**

This study did not attempt to follow participants in a longitudinal fashion as they entered college in the Fall of 2016. One of the key suggestions by advisors and related
faculty was to try to fit a long-term study design into the architecture of the research
design in order to follow the participants as they went to college. Second, the teachers in
the program were secondary participants, interviewed mostly for context and to gather
data on teaching aims and processes. Although there were a series of a dozen or more
research memos regarding teaching and informal discussions, there was only one long-
ranging interview with each teacher towards the end of the school year.

Further Research

I hope to continue the contact with Ms. Ananda and Mr. Johnson, and have
already done so by attending this year’s ASP trip as a chaperone. Although no research
was conducted, the contact with the program has been very rewarding personally and I
hope to design a future study involving a series of service-learning classes and using a
comparative case study approach in order to distill further themes and experiences into a
cross-generational data set. Although I do not anticipate repeating this study again, I do
feel that the data collection and analysis approaches allowed for a, sizeable, yet important
collection of rich data.

I would like to conduct a similar study in a program like this in a less privileged
area. The emergence of the relative privilege of the participants in this study was one of
the most important themes to emerge in my early months of data collection. The
“pedagogy of privilege” bore out its name and it is important that service-learning
program designs be adjusted to the school and student population. This study would
need to be restructured and designed in a less privileged context, but could provide a
careful counterbalance to the results and findings in this dissertation.
Finally, as an academic researcher I also hope to incorporate service-learning, community service, action research, and participatory action research into my regular research design and implementation. I hope to utilize service-learning components in teacher education, specifically paired with action research and collaboration with local stakeholders like students, cooperating teachers, administrators and community members (akin to the Random Acts of Kindness projects in Willow Falls’ program) The constructs of bricoleur and researcher/participant have changed how I view my work and my research designs and in addition to my focus on practitioner research, can allow for unique studies that topple the traditional power structures and research dynamics.

Conclusion

The aims of this study, following Bernice, Justin, Samantha, Sarah, and Vincent as they experienced a service-learning program in Willow Falls High School, were to document student experiences in a service-learning course as they wrestled with forming identities, communities, privilege, working with difference, and the demands of their sites and coursework. Embedding myself in the program as a research and participant allowed for a key “in process” approach to the research and allowed for this study to address gaps previously identified in the literature of service-learning studies.

The key findings in the study were that students and teachers intentionally developed a servant identity within the program community, which they dubbed the “family” of service-learning. The data, consisting of interviews, journals, observations, pictures, and service work showed that teachers and students had uneven experiences in the formation of these identities and community and experienced tensions in various
arenas of the program. Throughout the course and site work, participants felt they were creating work of incredible value for themselves, their community, and larger democratic society. Students also viewed their membership in the program as part of an exclusive community, or “family,” and felt that journey towards a servant identity was being fulfilled through their service work. Students stated they felt more open to difference, aware, more mature, and more engaged through their experiences in the service-learning program and that these changes were important for personal growth and their future experiences in college and beyond.

Through this study my aims as a researcher were to better understand student experiences in a service-learning course. My focus on educational opportunities that expose our students to difference, and how this shifts their perspectives if it does, will continue to be a major focus of my research in the future. Knowing how students react to learning experiences that are intended to challenge their worldviews, or “bubble,” is imperative if the lofty aims of experiential learning and doing are meant to be seriously achieved. This service-learning study found that through incorporating identity formation, civic and servant, as a binding ethos, challenging student awareness through exposure with difference, in the name of expanding notions of belonging and community, that personal growth and changing perspective was possible. As students became servants, this process allowed for a reframing of self and community and enabled influential experiences that contributed to new, complicated, ways of thinking and being.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: STUDENT CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX A

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: Teaching and Learning Experiences in a Service Learning Classroom

Principal Investigator: Dr. Alicia Crowe and additional researcher Gabriel Swarts

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of teachers and students in a service-learning classroom. Aims of this study include:

1. How do teachers/students form personal visions of civic mindedness and community within service learning structure?
2. How do service-learning experiences empower (if at all) and/or connect students from diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic status?
3. Do service learning-based experiences increase intercultural competence?
4. How do teachers think about and organize curriculum, pedagogy, and aims in a service-learning course?

Procedures
Service-learning teachers and class participants will be asked to share their service journals, formally interview with the researcher 6-8 times this school year (30-45 minutes per interview) on a volunteer basis, as well as volunteer to take no more than two intercultural surveys. Students will also be asked to take photographs of their service-sites to share in interviews, and asked to participate in small-group discussions (3-7 students) concerning their service-experiences in the community. Students will also be observed in class and at their service sites.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography
Interviews will be audio recorded then transcribed by the interviewer. Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. There will be no photography or video of the participants.

**Benefits**
Potential benefits of this study include greater understanding of the school district’s service-learning program administration and insight into best practices for high school students and teachers in the program. This research will not benefit the participants directly however your participation will help us better understand the experiences of service-learning teachers and students.

**Risks and Discomforts**
There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life or outside of the research experience. There are no anticipated questions or topics that may make you uncomfortable, as the focus of this research is trained on the program as a whole, not the participants themselves. However, students, they may feel undue pressure to participate in the study due to teacher/researcher and student power dynamics. Your participation or non-participation will have no bearing on your class standing, your standing with me, your teacher, or your grade and you may opt out at any time during the study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**
Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. No identifying information will be collected and privacy will be detected through pseudonym usage and coding. This consent form will be kept separate from research data and will not be linked to any information collected during the study. Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, to local guidance counselors, or to certain federal agencies. In the case of federal agencies or school guidance counselors, confidentiality may not be maintained if you indicate that you may do harm to yourself or others in the course of the research.

Regarding publicly available course materials and student work, due to FERPA guidelines, only with student permission outlined on this consent form, will work be accessed during class. No written assignments or homework will be consulted for this study outside of student journal entries. Class observations can cover student presentations or debates/discussions, and any documents produced in those scenarios, i.e. Power Points, photo collages, artwork, will be interpreted through class observation,
not collected or archived as artifacts in the research. There will be no data from student grades or assignments included in this study.

**Compensation**
There are no forms of compensation for participation in this research study.

**Voluntary Participation**
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Gabriel Swarts at 440.670.3507 (gswarts@kent.edu) or Dr. Alicia Crowe at (advisor's 330-672-0634 (acrowe@kent.edu). This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

**Consent Statement and Signature**
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

________________________________  _____________________
Participant Signature     Date
APPENDIX B: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: Teaching and Learning Experiences in a Service Learning Classroom

Principal Investigator: Dr. Alicia Crowe and additional researcher Gabriel Swarts

Dear Parents.

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what your students will be asked to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your students’ participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you and your child ask any questions and fully understands the research in order to make an informed decision about study participation. Your student has been asked to sign a separate consent to document their personal approval in participation of this research study, however, if the student is under 18, it is required that parents sign an additional consent form to allow participation in the study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of teachers and students in a service-learning classroom. Aims of this study include:
1. How do teachers/students form personal visions of civic mindedness and community within service learning structure?
2. How do service-learning experiences empower (if at all) and/or connect students from diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic status?
3. Do service learning-based experiences increase intercultural competence?
4. How do teachers think about and organize curriculum, pedagogy, and aims in a service-learning course?

Procedures
Service-learning teachers and class participants will be asked to share their service journals, formally interview with the researcher 6-8 times this school year (30-45 minutes per interview) on a volunteer basis, as well as volunteer to take no more than two intercultural surveys. Students will also be asked to take photographs of their service-sites to share in interviews, and asked to participate in small-group discussions.
(3-7 students) concerning their service-experiences in the community. Students will also be observed in class and at their service sites.

**Audio and Video Recording and Photography**

Interviews will be audio recorded then transcribed by the interviewer. Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. There will be no photography or video of the participants.

**Benefits**

Potential benefits of this study include greater understanding of the school district’s service-learning program administration and insight into best practices for high school students and teachers in the program. This research will not benefit the participants directly however your students’ participation will help us better understand the experiences of service-learning teachers and students.

**Risks and Discomforts**

There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life or outside of the research experience. There are no anticipated questions or topics that may make you uncomfortable, as the focus of this research is trained on the program as a whole, not the participants themselves. However, your student may feel undue pressure to participate in the study due to teacher/researcher and student power dynamics. Their participation or non-participation will have no bearing on their class standing, their standing with me, their teacher, or their class grade and students may opt out at any time during the study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. No identifying information will be collected and privacy will be detected through pseudonym usage and coding.

Regarding publicly available course materials and student work, due to FERPA guidelines, only with student permission outlined on this consent form, will work be accessed during class. No written assignments or homework will be consulted for this study outside of student journal entries. Class observations can cover student presentations or debates/discussions, and any documents produced in those scenarios, i.e. Power Points, photo collages, artwork, will be interpreted through class observation, not collected or archived as artifacts in the research. There will be no data from student grades or assignments included in this study.
This consent form will be kept separate from research data and will not be linked to any information collected during the study. Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, to local guidance counselors, or to certain federal agencies. In the case of federal agencies or school guidance counselors, confidentiality may not be maintained if you indicate that you may do harm to yourself or others in the course of the research.

**Compensation**
There are no forms of compensation for participation in this research study.

**Voluntary Participation**
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to your child and you. You and your child may choose not to participate or your child may discontinue their participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you and your child are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Gabriel Swarts at 440.670.3507 (gswarts@kent.edu) or Dr. Alicia Crowe at (advisor’s 330-672-0634 (acrowe@kent.edu). This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

**Consent Statement and Signature**
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

________________________________  _____________________  
Parent Signature     Date
APPENDIX C: TEACHER CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX C

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study: Teachers

Study Title: Teaching and Learning Experiences in a Service Learning Classroom

Principal Investigator: Dr. Alicia Crowe and additional researcher Gabriel Swarts

Dear Teachers,

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of teachers and students in a service-learning classroom. Aims of this study include:
1. How do teachers/students form personal visions of civic mindedness and community within service learning structure?
2. How do service-learning experiences empower (if at all) and/or connect students from diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic status?
3. Do service learning-based experiences increase intercultural competence?
4. How do teachers think about and organize curriculum, pedagogy, and aims in a service-learning course?

Procedures
Service-learning teachers will be asked to share their course materials (only those publicly available), volunteer for classroom observations, and formally interview with the researcher 6-8 times this school year (30-45 minutes per interview) on a volunteer basis, as well as volunteer to take no more than two intercultural surveys.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography
Interviews will be audio recorded then transcribed by the interviewer. Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will...
be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. There will be no photography or video of the participants.

**Benefits**
Potential benefits of this study include greater understanding of the school district’s service-learning program administration and insight into best practices for high school students and teachers in the program. This research will not benefit the participants directly however your participation will help us better understand the experiences of service-learning teacher.

**Risks and Discomforts**
There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life or outside of the research experience. There are no anticipated questions or topics that may make you uncomfortable, as the focus of this research is trained on the program as a whole, not the participants themselves. Your participation or non-participation will have no bearing on your class standing, your standing with me, your teacher, or your grade.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**
Audio files will be kept during the duration of the research and publication schedule, after which they will be destroyed. Transcripts of the interviews will containing no identifying information and will be coded with pseudonyms for each participant. No identifying information will be collected and privacy will be detected through pseudonym usage and coding. This consent form will be kept separate from research data and will not be linked to any information collected during the study. Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, to local guidance counselors, or to certain federal agencies. In the case of federal agencies or school guidance counselors, confidentiality may not be maintained if you indicate that you may do harm to yourself or others in the course of the research.

**Compensation**
There are no forms of compensation for participation in this research study.

**Voluntary Participation**
Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.
Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Gabriel Swarts at 440.670.3507 (gswarts@kent.edu) or Dr. Alicia Crowe at (advisor’s 330-672-0634 (acrowe@kent.edu). This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

Consent Statement and Signature
I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

________________________________  _____________________
Teacher Signature     Date
APPENDIX D: AUDIO RECORDING OPT-OUT SCRIPT
You have volunteered to be interviewed for an ongoing study about teaching and learning in a service-learning classroom. You and your parents/legal guardian have signed a consent form allowing your participation in this study. Please remember that you may withdrawal from this study at any point, and during any phase of the research or data collection. You may also refuse to participate in specific questions or lines of questioning in any interview or survey, of which you have volunteered to participate. Again, you may withdrawal from this study at any point and without penalty of any kind. Thank you!
APPENDIX E: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #1
APPENDIX E

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #1

Interview #1: Focused life history

Student: ____________________
Date:______________________
Place:______________________
Time:______________________
Audio File #:______________

IRB Opt-out script:

You have volunteered to (be interviewed/take a survey) for an ongoing study about teaching and learning in a service-learning classroom. You and your parents/legal guardian have signed a consent form allowing your participation in this study. Please remember that you may withdrawal from this study at any point, and during any phase of the research or data collection. You may also refuse to participate in specific questions or lines of questioning in any interview or survey, of which you have volunteered to participate. Again, you may withdrawal from this study at any point and without penalty of any kind. Thank you!

Introduction
*Servants and service

1. In class and assignments, I have noticed your teachers, your classmates use the term “servant” to describe yourselves and what you do. How would define, or characterize what a servant is?

Section I
*Focused life history

4. Thinking back in your life, can you remember any specific service experiences? Say, your first service opportunity? Any specific things you remember with your family, friends, church, or school?

5. To expand on your early experiences, why do you think you become interested in service and community work?
6. What skills or attitudes do you feel that you have that are conducive to service learning, or service?

7. Before you joined service learning, how did you view previous classes of seniors in service learning? Did you talk to any of them before you applied? What did they say about service learning?

8. Ultimately, why did you specifically decide to join service learning, what was the main reason, or reasons, that you decided to apply?

Section II
*Community and Service

9. Can you describe what the Willow Falls community is like in regards to service of others? Why do you think that is?

10. How do you think living and going to school in Willow Falls has impacted your desire, ability to engage in service work?

11. More generally now…. Can you describe what the Willow Falls community is like to live and go to school in? How would you describe it to someone who is not from Willow Falls?

Section III
*Citizenship and service

12. Could you, in your own words and define what a good citizen is?

13. How do you feel your prior service experiences have contributed to your views of citizenship?

14. What role do you feel service plays in a democracy, locally, nationally, globally… how important is service?

12. Do you feel people who engage in service contribute more to a democratic community? Can you elaborate on that?

13. Finally, do you think service is valued in our democratic society?
APPENDIX F: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #2
APPENDIX F

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #2

Interview 2: Life Experience Questions

Student: ____________________
Date: ____________________
Place: ____________________
Time: ____________________
Audio File #: ______________

IRB Opt-out script:

You have volunteered to (be interviewed/take a survey) for an ongoing study about teaching and learning in a service-learning classroom. You and your parents/legal guardian have signed a consent form allowing your participation in this study. Please remember that you may withdraw from this study at any point, and during any phase of the research or data collection. You may also refuse to participate in specific questions or lines of questioning in any interview or survey, of which you have volunteered to participate. Again, you may withdraw from this study at any point and without penalty of any kind. Thank you!

Introduction

4. In broad terms, what has this year in service learning been like for you? How have things gone this year?

Section I – Site I
*Experiences and Contexts

5. Thinking back to your first semester, what were your initial impressions of service learning, what was it like to start the year in this class?

6. What was your site like in the Fall? What were your responsibilities? What was a typical day like at your Fall site?

7. What were some of the best moments at your Fall site?

8. What were some of the most challenging moments?

9. Were there any moments that challenged your worldview, your perspectives?
Section II- Site II
10. Now to this semester, how have your class experiences in service learning, changed?

11. What is your site like now? What are your responsibilities? What was a typical day like at your Spring site?

12. What have been some of the best, most exciting, moments at your Spring site?

13. What have been some of the most challenging moments?

14. Have there been any difficult moments that challenged your worldview, your perspectives?

Overall site questions:
15. How would you describe your interactions with people at your service site?

16. How have those you serve impacted you? How have your experiences with those people and animals changed you?

Section III
*Community, citizenship

17. How have your sites challenged your views of living and going to school in Hudson? Do you think about Willow Falls differently now, in what ways?

18. Are you seeing a difference in how your classmates talk about Hudson, the local community, their role in it?

19. How has your site work contributed to your local community? How has it contributed to your own citizenship and public action?

Section IV- Conclusion
20. What will you do differently in your service work these last two months?
APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #3
APPENDIX G

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #3

*Interview #3: Final Reflections Student Questions*

Student: ____________________
Date: ____________________
Place: ____________________
Time: ____________________
Audio File #: _____________

**IRB Opt-out script:**

You have volunteered to (be interviewed/take a survey) for an ongoing study about teaching and learning in a service-learning classroom. You and your parents/legal guardian have signed a consent form allowing your participation in this study. Please remember that you may withdrawal from this study at any point, and during any phase of the research or data collection. You may also refuse to participate in specific questions or lines of questioning in any interview or survey, of which you have volunteered to participate. Again, you may withdrawal from this study at any point and without penalty of any kind. Thank you!

**Introduction**

4. I have never been through service-learning, neither have many of my readers… how would you describe your experiences to someone who doesn’t know what it is?

   a. Is SL important? Why? What examples/evidence makes you say that?

**Section I – The course**
*Experiences and Contexts*

5. What is important to know about the course itself, in the classroom… what makes THIS SL the way that it is?

6. How do you think this course, service learning, will shape your life?

7. What impact could a course like service learning have on the future of Willow Falls?

8. What impact can service learning have on the future of our democracy, in the US? What will service learning change in our society?
Section II- Meaning

9. What experiences did you have in service learning in working with people who are “different?” Can you describe what those experiences were like?

10. How do you feel working with people who are different (i.e. age, socio-economic status, race)

11. Do you think you are more of your place in the world due to these experiences? How so?

ASP

12. How was ASP? What did you learn on that trip?

13. How did that trip impact your feelings about service learning?

14. What was the best part, the most memorable part of the trip?

Final thoughts:

15. What do you feel will be your most vivid memory of service learning? Why?

16. How have those you serve impacted you? How have your experiences with those people and animals changed you?

17. What would you say is the most important thing you will take away from SL?
APPENDIX H: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
APPENDIX H

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher Questions

Teacher: ____________________
Date: ____________________
Place: ____________________
Time: ____________________
Audio File #: ____________

IRB Opt-out script:

You have volunteered to (be interviewed/take a survey) for an ongoing study about teaching and learning in a service-learning classroom. You and your parents/legal guardian have signed a consent form allowing your participation in this study. Please remember that you may withdrawal from this study at any point, and during any phase of the research or data collection. You may also refuse to participate in specific questions or lines of questioning in any interview or survey, of which you have volunteered to participate. Again, you may withdrawal from this study at any point and without penalty of any kind. Thank you!

Introduction

*Focused life history

1. Thinking back in your life, can you remember any specific service experiences? Say, your first service opportunity? Any specific things you remember with your family, friends, church, or school?

2. To expand on your experiences, why do you think you become interested in service and community work?

3. What skills or attitudes do you feel that you have that are conducive to service learning, or service?

4. What is unique is unique about teaching a class like this?

5. What were some of the more difficult moments for you this year?
6. How would you illustrate, or define, what a “servant” is? And what do characteristics do you hope your students adopt from this definition?

Service Learning at WFHS

7. I have never been through service learning, neither have many of my readers… how would you describe your experiences to someone who doesn’t know what it is?
   
   a. I’m assuming because you teach it that SL important to you? Why? What examples/evidence makes you say that?

Section I – The course

*Experiences and Contexts

8. What is important to know about the course itself, in the classroom… what makes THIS SL the way that it is? (students cited your presence and classroom approach)

9. How do you think this course of service learning, if it does shape your students’ lives… and if so, how does it shape your students’ life?

10. You’ve seen 10-15 years of SL classes… how have these students and their experiences changed the community, if at all?

11. What impact could service learning have, if any, on the future of our democracy, in the US? What will service learning change in our society?

Section II- Meaning

12. What experiences have you seen your students having in working with people who are “different?” Can you describe what those experiences were like as you worked with your students?

13. How do you feel working with people who are different affects your students (i.e. age, socio-economic status, race)?

14. Do you think your students are more of your place in the world due to these experiences? Do you hope they are? Is it mixed? How so?

ASP

15. How was ASP this year? What did you learn on that trip?
16. How did that trip impact your feelings about service learning this year and this years class?

17. What was the best part, the most memorable part of the trip?

Section III
*Citizenship and service

18. Could you, in your own words and define what a good citizen is?

19. How do you feel your prior service experiences have contributed to your views of citizenship?

20. What role do you feel service plays in a democracy, locally, nationally, globally… how important is service?

21. Do you feel people who engage in service contribute more to a democratic community? Can you elaborate on that?

Final thoughts:
22. What do you feel will be your most vivid memory of service learning this year? Why?

23. How have those you serve and taught impacted you, personally?

24. What would you say is the most important thing you hope students will take away from SL?
APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE ANALYTIC MEMO
APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE ANALYTIC MEMO

Memo: 3
9/24/15
WFHS
SL Classroom
How students felt they were impacting their sites

Today I noticed language still dominating the discussions about site. Students talking about how they made someone feel, or how much of an impact they had somewhere. The major class focus today was how to stay busy, how to take advantage of downtime at the site. Major suggestions for this were talking to other people and trying to help out outside of the main site contact… maybe a classroom next door or another administrator at the site.

This seems very procedural to me, and maybe the sites where the students have down time are not sure how to utilize the student best, or how to work with a volunteer constructively. A lot of the volunteers seem to be completing tasks given to them when they get there. For example, at the therapeutic riding center I observed students cleaning and brushing horses, then learning how to navigate the indoor arena for future riders lessons that the WFHS students would be facilitating. Bernice has stated she does a lot of filing and clerical work, others that they are cleaning a lot.

Part of Ms. A’s message is to make sure students know that every activity impacts their site in immense ways. These connections are important to work into the conversation and I hope it sinks in so that students do not view their service as superficial or meaningless. I can imagine Ms. A keeps hitting this point over the next few months as students’ initial excitement begins to wear off (according to Ms. A).

Lastly, the morning class seems to have a little more energy than the afternoon. This is tough to quantify, but as a teacher I feel very attuned to this and I am seeing slightly deeper and longer discussions in AM, it will be interesting to see if this noticeable difference stays or if it swings, or changes, or the excitement increase in the AM group. Something to watch for.
APPENDIX J: IDI APPROVAL
APPENDIX J

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY (IDI) APPROVAL

Lea Hammer <lhammer@idiinventory.com>                      Fri, Feb 12, 2016 at 3:03 PM
To: "gswarts@kent.edu" <gswarts@kent.edu>

Hello Gabriel,

I realize that you are getting communications from a number of different people at our office. I just wanted to thank you for your proposal and to convey that Dr. Hammer has reviewed it; you are now approved. In terms of referencing the IDI, however, your proposal needs to cite either the 2003 or 2011 validation article) and you need to indicate whether you will be using the DMIS (old) or IDC (new) model for the IDI interpretation.

Best regards,

Lea Hammer

Program Advisor

IDI, LLC

Hammer Consulting, LLC

Safe Dialogue, LLC

Phone: 971-339-2966

www.idiinventory.com; www.icsinventory.com; www.safedialogue.com
APPENDIX K: DATA LOG
APPENDIX K

DATA LOG

Types of Data Collected

Analytic Memos

Artifacts from Class

Artifacts from Program Documents

Artifacts from the state Department of Education

Artifacts from the School District

Artifacts from Students (Pictures)

Artifacts from Students (Journals)

Field Notes from Class Observations

Field Notes from Service Site Observations

Field Notes from Class Trips including ASP

Participant Interview Questions #1

Participant Interview Questions #2

Participant Interview Questions #3

Teacher Interview Questions #1

Teacher Documents (Lesson Plans)

Teacher Documents (Service Hours Log)

Teacher Documents (Handouts)
References


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learning with students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*. 32(3), 219-229


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