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Title: The Effect of Service Learning on Multicultural Awareness

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Abstract: Using qualitative analysis, this study examines the effects of service-learning on multicultural awareness for students enrolled in an undergraduate community-based learning course: Spanish in the Community. Student interviews revealed six themes: cultural empathy, broadened cultural knowledge, cultural appreciation, perspective gains, effect on stereotypes, and limitations to the class. Service learning courses, such as this one, can reinforce stereotypes without proper implementation of a service-learning program and well integrated reflections. Overtime students became more comfortable in their volunteer environment which led to an increase in tolerance of other cultures. This research suggests that students increased their multicultural awareness through first-hand, real life experiences in the community.

annotated bibliography: Borden, A. W. (2007). The impact of service learning on ethnocentrism in an intercultural communication course. *Journal of Experiential Education, 30*(2), 171-183._

In this article, Borden is trying to answer the question: Will students who participate in a service learning course, involving people of a

different culture in which they are not members, show lower levels of ethnocentrism than they did at the beginning of the course. 40 students took the Generalized Ethnocentrism (GENE) scale to test their level of ethnocentrism at the beginning of the course and again after they have completed the service learning course. The results showed that the mean level of ethnocentrism decreased throughout the course. The conclusion was made that when students frequently interacted and came into contact with people of a different culture they experienced a decrease in ethnocentrism. The limitations to this study include using no control group and basing the results on the mean scores from the GENE scale rather than individual scores. This evidence shows intercultural relationships reduce ethnocentrism, therefore leading to growth of intercultural competence.

This article is applicable to our research topic because it defines service learning. The use of the GENE scale and the study's results provide us with background knowledge of past research done on intercultural awareness. The GENE scale is an example of a possible method that we could use when developing our questions for interviews. We could base some of our questions off of the type of information asked in the GENE scale.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education, 67*(2), 221-239.

The article defines service learning as a "credit-bearing education experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and 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 enhance sense of civic responsibility." It emphasizes the positive effect on student, faculty and community. However, in order to achieve positive and effective outcomes the organization must strategically implement a Service Learning program. It states that proper implementation should follow the Comprehensive Action Plan for Service Learning (CAPSL). CAPSL states that it should focus a sequence of activities and tasks on institution, faculty, students and community. The implementation of Service Learning should create a strong foundation with key faculty players in order to sustain quality Service Learning programs.

This article assists the research project by clearly defining Service Learning. It lays the step-by-step guide of how to implement a program. This information can be used as a foundation and background that will better assist in critically critiquing other studies

on Service Learning.

Crabtree, R. D. (1998). Mutual empowerment in cross-cultural participatory development and service learning: Lessons in communication and social justice from projects in El Salvador and Nicaragua. *Journal of Applied Communication Research Special Issue: Communication and Social Justice Research, 26*(2), 182-209.

The article describes the outcomes of groups of students who travel to El Salvador and Nicaragua to work collaboratively with the locals in three different sectors, medicine, construction and public health. One of the main objectives of this program was to reach mutual empowerment. The article states that through literature reviews it is noted that when a participatory development is grounded in the themes of social justice, intercultural communication, and service learning then mutual empowerment has the potential to take place.

It also states that Service Learning fulfills many educational objectives- including active learning, collaborative learning, applied intercultural communication, perspective taking, respect for diversity, and critical reflection (Commission on National Community Service, 1193; Ganson, 1997). It emphasizes that education should not revolve around only possessing knowledge but using knowledge, which Service Learning lends.

This article identifies the positive and tangible outcomes of participating in Service Learning program. It specifically shows how both parties, the students and community, gain from the experience. However, it emphasizes the importance of knowledge exchange. Also, it notes the importance of a systematic approach in the implementation of the Service Learning program, for example pre-departure seminars, journal entries, discussions among students during the program.

Giles, D. E., Jr., & Eyler, J. (1994). The impact of a college community service laboratory on students' personal, social, and cognitive outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence, 17*(4), 327-339.

This article reviews the question; can a required Service- Learning experience of limited intensity and duration have an impact on the development of college students as participating citizens of their community? This study was based on one- one credit required course offered to undergraduate students majoring in Human and Organizational Development. They used questionnaires at three

different point of the course, first day of class, five weeks into the semester – after the students surveyed their filed and selected their sites- and at the end of the course. These questions were created to assess personal values and social responsibility and student's understating of their client's problems.

The course was divided into two sections. The first section was five weeks of seminars, where representative of various social services agencies. The second section was eight weeks in which they volunteered three hours per week at one site. In addition to attending the seminars and volunteering, the students were required to write reflections at the end of each seminar and during their volunteer experience.

The findings of this study through the reviews of the three questioners and reflection papers showed the students' perception changed. Through the experiences and interactions they were able to remove their stereotypes and see the person for who they are, increased their understanding of the people they worked with, and an increased understanding of volunteer service. Some students have identified that the greatest accomplishment was either the service they provided or the knowledge they gained while providing service.

This article identifies the outcome of Service Learning that is related to intercultural communication, i.e. the increase awareness of the person and removal of the stereotype. Also, this article gives insight on how to conducted research in order to evaluate the outcomes of Service Learning experience.

Li, X., & Lal, S. (2005). Critical reflective thinking through service learning in multicultural teacher education. *Intercultural Education, 16*(3), 217-234.

In this article, Li and Lal compared two different groups of students' multicultural autobiographies, one group enrolled in a service learning course, the other enrolled in a regular course. Both courses were teaching the same material, using different methods. The autobiographies were taken at the beginning and the end of their courses. King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model (RJM) was used to compare and contrast the two groups' progress of critical reflective thinking. The model of reflective judgment measures reflective thinking in connection to real-world problems, like multicultural education. Evidence showed that service learning stimulated the development of students' critical reflective thinking. The lack of autobiography examples presented in the article and the small selection of eight examples, may cause biases, were both limitations to the study.

This article is applicable to our research because it discusses the history and definition of service learning. The researchers were detailed with their methods and form of measurement, the Reflective Judgment Model. King and Kitchner's model provides possible ideas for our interview questions. We could include questions based around what level of reflective thinking the students have developed. A detailed chart of RJM and Banks' six-stage of cultural identity are included in the article and will be good sources of information for our research on service learning. Understanding these developmental stages will be beneficial to the development of interview questions.

Oster-Aaland, L., Sellnow, T., Nelson, P., & Pearson, J. (2004). The status of service learning in departments of communication: A follow-up study. brief reports. *Communication Education, 53*(4), 348-356.

This article communicates the findings when they compare a survey that was conducted in 1995 and again in 2001. In 2001 they mailed 356 surveys to US undergraduate programs that offered speech communication, compared to the 358 surveys sent in 1995. In 2001 there was a 51% return rate compared to a 73% return rate in 1995. The compared responses were of the department chairs.

The article defines Service Learning "accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth- a marriage of service and learning" (cited in Stanton et al., 1999, p.2). Its states that effective service learning has three stages: (1) orientation to the process, (b) meaningful service, and (c) structured reflection (Trethewey, 1999).

Through their findings they noticed a decrease in effective reflection produced by the students. This raised the need for developing programs that are sustainable with quality and not quantity. To continue the effectiveness of Service Learning the organization must develop ways to incorporate the new educational focus of broad base education. They also noted that their has been an emphasis intercultural communication and regard for cultural difference.

Paoletti, J. B., Segal, E., & Totino, C. (2007). Acts of diversity: Assessing the impact of service learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 2007*(111), 47-54.

This chapter addresses the challenges with assessing multicultural learning in a service learning course. Qualitative, interpretive methods are said to be the most appropriate method of assessing multicultural learning. Challenges include establishing where

students are at the beginning of the course and how they have changed by the end in relation to multicultural learning. The authors suggest using the minute paper, student reflective writing, and a final writing portfolio. Identifying how students have changed from the beginning to the end of the semester is difficult but methods such as analyzing reflections in conjunction with student observation at the service learning site are helpful. Issues such as students writing socially acceptable responses are addressed as a limitation to this method. By the end of the semester, a more comfortable relationship is established and students are more likely to be open with their responses. Using Banks's stages of cultural identity, it was noted that students move back and forth along the stages, sometimes skipping them as well.

This chapter is helpful to our project because it looks at the best way for assessing multicultural learning. We hope to find the impact of service learning on intercultural awareness and this information about assessing the change is beneficial to our research. While we are not able to conduct "before and after" service learning research, we can incorporate this information when conducing interviews with the students and possibly the instructor. This chapter also emphasized the importance of reflective essays. This is another idea we could incorporate into our research, possibly reading some of the students' reflections to get a better understanding of their service learning experience.

Salz, A., & Trubowitz, J. (1997). It was all of us working together: Resolving racial and ethnic tension on college campuses. *Educational Forum, 62*(1), 82-90.

The article exposes the on- going issue on diverse college campuses. It states that colleges are very diverse but very separate. Students of diverse backgrounds work together in classroom settings and then separate into their own subgroups after class. It states that the colleges must remove itself from the naïve idea that placing everyone together in one setting, i.e. a college campus will automatically increase interaction of people from different backgrounds. Instead the colleges must create calculated integration, which there are meaningful interactions that will allow the students to remove their stereotypes of others.

The article focuses on a Big Buddy Program facilitated at the Queens College in New York. The program brings 50 students from various backgrounds and matches them with a little buddy from the community. The students have many opportunities to bond, for example all day training and over night retreats. In this experience

the students have the common goal of making a difference in their little buddies lives, therefore much collaboration occurs amongst the students. This program started decreasing the growing racial tensions. The foundation of this program was Allport's (1954) multidimensional model, which identifies key elements needed to create positive social outcome. The model states the program must include the following: (1) satisfying interaction between people, (2) there must be a sense of equal status between all people involved, (3) the authority, in this case school administration, must be giving guidance and support, and (4) an environment must be created in which cooperation is needed to reach a common good.

This article gives great insight on the direct effects of Service Learning. It exposes a common issue on many campuses and brought it to the surface. It then shows the reader how Service Learning can have strong positive effects and increase intercultural awareness.

Sperling, R. (2007). Service learning as a method of teaching multiculturalism to white college students. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 6*(4), 309-322.

Analysis of multicultural service learning (MSL) was conducted to evaluate the true change that occurs as a result of white students' experience with serving stigmatized social groups. The article criticizes MSL by noting it may be reinforcing stereotypes or teaching the "correct response" rather than influencing students to change their core assumptions. The article also notes the uneven power dynamic promoted through MSL, saying it reinforces white superiority over others. Sperling argues that in order for MSL to be effective, it must be promoted so students actively challenge racism in themselves and among others, rather than just serve minorities.

This article is beneficial to our project because it provides a description of multicultural service learning (MSL) and why it is increasingly being used. Because we want to study the effect of service learning on intercultural awareness, this information is greatly connected. This study critiques past research on MSL, noting that self-report methods may reflect an ability to convey a socially acceptable response overtime rather than a change in core values and assumptions. This article criticizes MSL by providing a different perspective on the development of multiculturalism, noting that many times it can be a shallow form rather than genuine multicultural awareness. Being aware of these critiques and understanding a different perspective on our topic of interest will

help us to be critical of our own research.

Teranishi, C. S. (2007). Impact of experiential learning on latino college students' identity, relationships, and connectedness to community. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 6*(1), 52-72.

This article used qualitative and quantitative measures to research the impact of experiential learning on 11 Latino college students' identity, relationships, and connectedness to community. Daily journals were written by the students throughout their study abroad trip. The students participated in a service learning component while abroad. This study's purpose was to see the affect of experiential learning on Latino college students' development, measure the extent that service learning affects their attitudes toward service learning, and measure the extent that experiential learning enhances their awareness of diversity issues and multiculturalism in their communities. Grounded Theory was used in the qualitative research process and four main themes developed in the final coding of the students' reflection journals: self and identity development, relational development, awareness of structural inequalities, and connectedness to community. Evidence showed that all four themes benefited from the students' service learning experience. Surveys were administered to study changes in the students' attitudes toward career preparedness, self-efficacy, and civic participation and their understanding of diversity and multiculturalism. The survey results showed significant changes in all four themes except self efficacy which was only marginally significant. One limitation of this study is the small sample size, making the results less statistically significant.

This research used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. We can use this in our research by utilizing some survey questions from a table provided in the article. Also, the use of qualitative analysis and the examples located in the literature will also be applicable when analyzing our responses to interview questions. Background knowledge about service learning and how it relates to experiential learning, provided in this article, will help us to have a broader understanding of our research topic.

Question: **To what extent does participating in service-learning effect one's multicultural awareness?**

Research Questions

1.) What effect does participating in service-learning have

on one's multicultural awareness?

2.) What effect does participating in service-learning have on one's tolerance of other cultures?

3.) What effect does participating in service-learning have on cultural stereotypes?

Plan: Spanish in the Community was selected for this research project because it utilized service-learning in its curriculum and was applicable this research project on multicultural awareness. Seventy undergraduate students are enrolled in Spanish 232: Spanish in the Community. After visiting two sections taught by both teaching assistants, students were asked to volunteer for a brief interview regarding their experience with the class and in the community-based learning experience.   Six students volunteered to interview (5 females and 1 male).   The ages ranged from 19-23 and students' majors included: Spanish Education, English with a Spanish minor, Spanish, Spanish Education, Advertising with a Spanish Minor, Marketing with a Spanish minor.   Their community-based learning project varied: 3 volunteered at a refugee center, 2 volunteered at elementary schools, and 1 volunteered at the Child Care Resource Center.

The professor interviewed first to understand a broad overview of the course and its objectives.   Student interviews were conducted with the 6 students who volunteered. Grounded theory was used to analyze their responses, locate reoccurring themes, and examine relationships among themes and data.   Data from the interviews were transcribed into Word documents.   After reading over the transcriptions, common reoccurring themes were identified and coded in an Excel spreadsheet.   Sixteen broad codes were used initially: background, future application, cultural empathy, understated stereotype, direct stereotype, perspective of permanent worker, comfort over time, class connection to community work, client attitude, broadened cultural knowledge, appreciation for own culture, loss of appreciation for own culture, Spanish abilities, appreciation for diversity, and personal growth.   After further analysis the codes were condensed into six overarching themes, encompassing the information from the related codes.   The main themes identified were: cultural empathy, broadened cultural knowledge, cultural

appreciation, perspective gains, effect on stereotypes,

and limitations to the class.

Data: Results

Qualitative analysis was used to examine themes that

emerged from the student interviews.   Six over-arching themes were

developed: cultural empathy, broadened cultural knowledge,

cultural appreciation, perspective gains, effect on stereotypes, and

limitations to the class.

Cultural Empathy

All students identified acquiring cultural empathy through

their service-learning experiences.   This over-arching theme was

identified through statements of personal growth and direct

comments of cultural empathy.   Students stated that it challenged

their weaknesses, their perspectives reviewed with a new light, their

attitudes were transformed, and their knowledge of other

individuals' challenges grew.

Bob shared that his opinion of his project transformed, as he

understood the humanistic aspect of his work.   Bob, working at the

Child Care Resource Center, was assigned to translate a training

manual of how to open a day care.   He stated that this was not his

favorite task, and he saw it as a mundane.   However, as he

continued to engage in his project he stated:

" So, it is kinda like a change of attitude that is definitely

positive… Like everybody is going to need help in some way. So, kinda broadening your perceptions on the communities."

Linda was able to see first hand the challenges that are associated with being an immigrant when working at the refugee center she stated:

"I knew it was really difficult for these refugees and that they had to jump through a ton of hoops. But, I don't think I realized to what extent it was. Even things like making doctor's appointments… Just some of the lack of cooperation they feel from working with the state or the country as a whole, to have those little things going on. I'm also hearing these larger issues they are facing when I'm listening to the news, to know they have all of that going through their head every single day and with a lot of them trying to learn a new language on top of that, I'm just completely in awe."

This statement shows the growth of empathy Linda has for the culture of an immigrant. The experience increased Linda's knowledge of the government system and how it affects the immigrants. She also was able to acknowledge the fact that the immigrants not only face the challenges of the government system but the challenges of learning a new language.

Another student, Kate, encountered two challenges that she was not expecting, (1) the need for necessities and (2) language as a barrier. Kate stated:

"And I was like what are these things (blankets and clothes) for and they said people need these things… I guess I didn't realize that language could be such a barrier (referring to a situation when one client was not being

> treated fairly by their landlord); I mean I did understand
> that. I mean in my mind I wouldn't rip somebody off
> because they didn't understand English, other people
> would and they do."

This experience opened her eyes to see what the issues and challenges the immigrant culture can face because of the negative influences of society.

Lastly, Megan was able to empathize with the paperwork process of immigrating to the United States. In addition, Megan identified how the marginalization of some immigrants due to the language barrier and lack of societal culture rules. Megan explained:

> "I am realizing how much paperwork people go through in
> immigration. All the documents you have to sign and
> translate and the adversities and how slow the government
> is… I am seeing more of the legal side of it… To see
> how the immigrants can be marginalized, I guess because
> they are not speaking a lot of English or because
> sometimes not knowing all the different cultural rules of
> America."

Cultural Empathy is a theme that each student possessed. They were able to identify the various aspects of cultural challenges and struggles that immigrants face.

Broadened Cultural Knowledge

To identify if students increased their cultural knowledge we

analyzed their background, their comfort levels through the duration

of their program, general increases in their cultural knowledge, and

their future applications.   Of the six students interviewed, two

students never had many experiences in diverse cultures; three

students have travelled abroad through study abroad programs or as

a missionary trip.   One student identified that she has been

surrounded by different cultures but never encountered

poverty.   Students expressed in some way the gains in cultural

knowledge acquired through their service-learning experiences.

  For example, Bob was creating a survey to elicit information

the organization needed to request for more funding and was

translating a day care manual.   Through these projects, he had to

place himself in the mindset of his clients to ensure he was creating

questions that would elicit the responses needed and translate to

ensure the phrases made sense to his population.   Bob said:

> "I think just having to keep in mind, when creating this
> survey and translating this day care manual, just think of
> how someone could read it.   Putting myself in, if I were
> this person, what information will I need the most?   So
> how can I present the information to them?   So, just
> putting myself into that mindset."

Students have identified that by having direct encounters instead of

just reading or discussing a situation helped create a different

perspective. Grace said:

> "I think it definitely has (broadened cultural knowledge)
> we are there working with the kids so you have better
> relationships with them.   Which you like, understand them

> better. Like, instead of looking at a situation and trying to understand it by looking at it, you look at the situation with them. It's a different point of view I guess."

The students identified that their experience in the community has future applications in their lives. Two of the students will be able to apply this experience in their future endeavor of study abroad. The experience has increased their Spanish abilities and increased their knowledge of different cultures. Patty said: "So it's been really helpful because next semester I'm going to Spain." Two students indicated that this experience either encouraged them or reinforced their desire to volunteer in a diverse setting in the future. For example, Megan said:

> "Next semester I would like to continue it by like volunteering in the Latino and Latina Boys and Girls Club and help in that way so I can talk more and get more vested."

Students have also indicated that this experience has influenced their post- graduation aspirations. Megan also stated:

> " When I graduate I kinda want to teach, aide in adult education class. Because, one day I helped this 60 something person teach English, they were so sweet and so patient and it was really rewarding."

Cultural Appreciation

Students' experiences in the community were transferred to an appreciation (or non-appreciation) of one's own culture. These levels of appreciation led to an overall appreciation for diversity as a whole. By interacting with people first hand, students began to notice how fortunate they are and how accepting their own culture can be. Linda reflected on how simple things like making a doctors appointment can be done very quickly for her, however it is timelier and more complicated for a person who does not speak English to get information translated and coordinate with hospitals about appointments. This understanding showed that Linda was able to empathize with the clients she worked with and reflect back on her own experiences in relation to the difficulties that her clients have. She demonstrated critical thinking by creating this form of comparison and analysis.

In addition to appreciating everyday cultural activities, Megan noted how accepting our country can be of others:

> "…we read articles in the class and see how other countries treat immigrants and they want their immigrants to be treated so well in American but when you look at that country's system it is worse than ours…It was a great positive impact on me…It made me appreciate what I have."

Class readings and discussion complimented Bob's experience in the community, providing external information that aided in the

comparison of his own country with that of an immigrant's. This

comparison allowed the student to appreciate how accepting

America is to immigrants.

Specifically in comparison to other countries Megan reflected on the

security felt in America:

> "A lot of countries are war torn and there are kids out
> there that they know nothing but war, they have no
> electricity and a lot of violence.   We don't have to
> worry if our government is going to be there
> tomorrow. I just appreciate what we have here."

This example showed that Megan has the ability to comprehend the

differences between countries and develop an appreciation for the

environment and government system in the U.S.

Contrary to the increase in appreciation of one's own culture

that some students experienced, Kate demonstrated a decrease in

appreciation when considering knowledge of labor raids and the lack

of acceptance among U.S. citizens:

> "It is awful because they are ripping families apart,
> the children are left behind, and whatever happens is
> never positive...there are a huge percentage of people
> who don't care and they are never going to make an
> effort to make people feel more welcome into this
> country."

Kate's experience with the class and developing a broader cultural

knowledge has created a negative association with the United States.

An appreciation for diversity as a whole developed when

students were able to use their experiences to form an appreciation

or an alternative perspective to their own culture. Grace said:

> "I think they have a great opportunity to go to school
> with mixed cultures…like with Spanish speaking kids
> and English speaking kids and they all play together
> on the playground with so many differences."

Grace described how she wished she would have had those diverse

experiences when she was in school.   Megan described how the

community can benefit from diversity:

> "The international community is a positive thing
> because it kind of forces the Champaign-Urbana
> community to broaden their horizons and prepare
> their students for that larger work world by being
> bilingual. So being bilingual at a young age is
> positive."

This shows that experience volunteering in a diverse environment

helped to foster a belief that diversity is an impactful and an

important component to communities and real-world experiences.

Perspective Gains

Perspective gains, as a theme, involves a students' ability to

recognize other people's personal characteristics and

attitudes.   Students specifically noticed the attitudes of the clients

and permanent workers at their volunteer site.   When students

recognized those positive attitudes they were motivated to emulate

them. They also developed information applicable to their

future.   Often their recognition of the permanent workers

responsibilities involved appreciation and admiration of how much

time and energy those workers put into their careers.   Grace said of

her experience working with elementary education students:

> "I am majoring in Secondary Spanish Education and
> for a while I was regretting not doing Elementary
> Spanish Education but when I had been tutoring the
> students I work with in reading I know that is not

what I want to do because it is so frustrating.   It's so
frustrating when they make up words, like the word
will start with 'a' and they will just start guessing,
like they won't read it, and they tell me stories when
looking at pictures instead of reading it."

Grace has taken on a perspective of an elementary teacher. Not only

has this experience reinforced her career decision for the future, it

has also made her realize how much work and patience it takes to be

an elementary teacher at a bilingual school.

Linda, who volunteered at the refugee center, discussed her

perception of the permanent workers:

"I didn't think they would affect me so much but I
just can't believe that they give their time to this all,
they don't have the kind of training that would you
have to have to be able to do this legal process. It's
pretty much just them wanting to help then learning
what it takes, then they just help other people do it all
the time.   They are so willing, I think this one lady
working with Vietnamese people spent like seven
hours at the doctors office with this one woman to
help translate…after the surgery she just stayed with
her to comfort her because the woman was
distraught.   They have such an appreciation for the
cultural differences which is amazing."

Linda was surprised by how impacted she was by the permanent

workers.   She took on the perspective of the worker and realized

how much they help the people in need and how selflessly they do

it.   Bob, who volunteered at the Child Care Resource Center, had a

similar experience:

"I was surprised to see how much work they
(permanent workers) really need to do. Like not the
quantity but how necessary it is in the community and
how much people appreciate it. It definitely showed
me how important community service is."

By understanding the strong need of the community; Bob was able

to justify the importance of community service. He will likely take this experience as motivation to continue community service in the future.

Not only did students understand the perspective of the workers' attitude, they also observed the characteristics of the clients they served. Patty said:

> "I just kind of learned to take a step back again and view something so different than I had ever seen before and learned to kind of accept differences and they were very accepting of me coming to help them and it just worked out really well because of the acceptance level and the respect I have gotten from the teachers and also the students."

Patty took the positive, accepting attitudes she observed and emulated them in her own characteristics.

Effects on Stereotypes

All students were asked if they thought their participation in the community reinforced stereotypes of the people they worked with. The responses were mixed with two students saying it did, one saying it contradicted a stereotype, and three saying it did not. Stereotypes are an important issue in service-learning because service-learning has the potential to expose students to only one segment of a population. In this class for example, students are working primarily with Spanish-speaking people who are Hispanic, poor, in need of help, speak little or no English, struggle with school, and have personal or family problems. That segment of the Spanish-speaking population can be considered a

stereotype.   Therefore students are only developing opinions and experiences with one small segment of the entire Spanish-speaking population.   This single-sided experience has the potential to reinforce stereotypes of Spanish-speaking people, most often Hispanics.

Due to the interview process it is suspected that some students chose to say socially acceptable responses, claiming that no stereotypes were reinforced.   The socially acceptable responses are assumed because essentially the majority of people that the students worked with are real-life examples of Hispanic stereotypes.   When directly asked if the community work reinforced stereotypes Patty said "…not for me I mean".   Later in a discussion about what she learned from the course Patty explained:

> "It's kind of made me appreciate a lot of
> things I had growing up that a lot of these
> kids will never know and just how some if the
> kids who are struggling and I never had to
> that struggle.   And trying to learn two
> different languages…the students are trying
> to work and trying to understand and they are
> having family issues at the same time that I
> wouldn't even understand"

This description of the children that Patty worked with could be

considered a stereotype of Hispanics and is only one segment of the Hispanic population.   This is evidence of stereotype reinforcement.   Because Patty claimed to not see stereotypes reinforced in her volunteer work then later described the children she works with in such a manner similar to a stereotype, it is assumed she answered the interview question in a socially acceptable manner.   Although Patty may not hold stereotypic associations with Hispanic people, being in an environment with only one segment of a population has the potential to reinforce stereotypes.

 Not all stereotypes that could be reinforced are necessarily negative.   Linda said, when asked about reinforced stereotypes:

> "A lot of their family values and their strong ties to their family.   Like the example of the grandson coming with his grandfather and spending the entire day and went with us to the office…the people who come in automatically start talking about their families…I think that says something about their cultural appreciation for their family, that close nit group."

Although this stereotype is not a negative one, it is still categorizing a segment of the Hispanic population into one description.

Megan dealt with a situation where a Spanish-speaking person was unfairly charged by their landlord. The landlord was able to this because the Spanish-speaking person had poor English and

was unaware of the unfair charges.   Megan noticed a stereotype of white lower class being reinforced in this situation:

> "The owner of the trailer park was prejudice…and people that are racist can sometimes come from the lower class and can hold onto racisms as a sense of identity.   They are like 'I'm white and I am superior', in spite of their own economic disparity that they experience, it makes the racism feel more like superiority…a sense of self-value.   It kind of reinforced that stereotype by seeing this lady where I work and seeing that she was racist and falling under the stereotype."

Although some students saw stereotypes reinforced, Kate said: "I feel that everything I learned shoots against stereotypes because even though I didn't have any (stereotypes), it (service-learning) builds against anything anyone would ever say."   Again, this response is questionable due to the possibility that Kate was responding with a socially acceptable answer rather than the truth.

Limitations to the Class

Student interviews indicated that certain factors may hinder the students' potential to acquire a well-rounded, meaningful experience.   Based on statements from the students, it is concluded that most of the in-class time and some student's lower Spanish abilities decreased the

effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

Some students expressed that certain instances in the classroom assisted the students with their community experience. For example, Bob stated:

"Probably, just going back to the classroom part and hearing what other people have done and what other people are doing. So, I am able to see what interactions they have come into contact with and their reactions."

However, the majority of the students found that the in-class time was not relevant to their community experience. Kate indicated:

"My problem is that I don't think the class time reflects the community… You are learning stuff that you are not ever going to apply to what you are learning in the community."

Grace also responded by stating:

"We have to like, follow the book and it's just random stuff. We concentrate on stuff like learning our numbers and like last week we looked at a census of Champaign, and different counties and I don't know what we were suppose to get out of it. Just very random."

Research states that the reflection is the foundation of service learning. In the interview students expanded on the types of reflections they were assigned to complete for class. The statements were not positive, as they did not find that these assignments tied back to their community experiences. Kate described the reflections:

"We have six reflections. They are not based on the community. Like one is based on viewing a U-tube video,

regarding about the issues on the U.S. education system.   I
agree with a lot of those things but is it really dealing with
the community?"

Grace explained, "We have to do reflections but in class we barely

talk about it."

The other factor that hinders the effectiveness of this

experience is the lack of students' Spanish abilities.   If students'

Spanish abilities are weak, it may be more difficult for them to

interact in their service experience compared to students with

stronger Spanish abilities.

Megan expressed that she wished she had more verbal encounters

but because of her Spanish abilities, she was not given opportunities

that would lead to such encounters. Megan said:

"I don't think that my boss gave me many responsibilities,
but my Spanish isn't amazing.   I would say that because
of my Spanish abilities I was limited in what I can do, like
filing, answering phones.   I didn't get a whole lot of
interactions with the people."

Discuss: Discussion

Cultural Empathy

"A goal of education is to challenge students to become

knowledgeable of the social, political, and economic forces that have

shaped their lives and the lives of others" (Freire, 1970; Giroux,

1992; Hooks, 1994 as cited in Rhodes, 1998 p. 41).   This Spanish

course has achieved this goal in most contexts.   Students found

themselves questioning the system in which their "clients" struggled.   In some instances, because the students had real life encounters, they began to question the beliefs about documented verse undocumented individuals.   If the course were classroom based with case studies readings, the internal struggle and questioning would not have been created.   The fact that the students were engaging with true individuals and saw that the government polices they heard on the news were affecting real people, placed a sense of urgency to learn and to have a better understanding of the issues that would not have been otherwise created or developed in a stand alone classroom setting.

Broaden Cultural Knowledge

The immersion that the students experienced allowed students to increase their knowledge of other cultures. Base on the study in Queens College, the exposure of working with a diverse group of people allowed the students to see the difference yet the likeness among each other's cultures.   This realization helped the students of Queens College decrease cross-cultural tension.   The increase of cultural understanding can presumably have an effect on future reactions individuals may have in various situations, for example traveling abroad, being a minority in a group setting, etc.   The students of this class now have a broader understanding of their social environment and who lives in their community.   Students started to transform, at the beginning of the

semester, they were uncomfortable and did not know how to act or even react in their volunteer setting. These experiences have given students the tools to open their eyes to other cultures and not only accept them but allow another culture to transform their own beliefs. These experiences have aligned with Rhodes (1998) vision of critical multiculturalism, where the student begins to transform instead of just understanding.

Cultural Appreciation

Students' work in the community provided experiences that shaped their appreciation of their own culture. This new level appreciation, whether it has increased or decreased, was a result of a broadened cultural knowledge. Having a better understanding of all cultures allowed students to create a more reflective view of their own culture. The combination of broadening cultural knowledge and developing a different level of appreciation for one's own culture led to an overall appreciation for diversity. In connection with Borden's (2007) research, students did show a decrease in ethnocentrism by not simply viewing a culture by their own perspective but by appreciating a culture based on its own meaning and values. Although difficult to administer in a home-based undergraduate course, as suggested that the Spanish in the Community class provide a more thorough immersion into Spanish culture because, as recommended by Borden, this will most likely develop an optimum level of empathy, awareness, and a genuine

appreciation of another culture.

Perspective Gains

Students were able to take on a perspective of the permanent workers and the clients because they were actively participating in the community.   Those perspectives helped students to recognize the positive attitudes of the workers and clients.   Students would be less likely to develop such a thorough understanding of the permanent workers' hard effort if the students only learned from an in-class environment. Students would also not experience the positive attitudes that the clients displayed and not witness the appreciation that the clients showed. Students experienced critical multiculturalism because their learning process went beyond accommodating their ideas to a new culture (Rhodes, 1998).   The students internalized the attitudes they witnessed, recognized perspectives of the people they worked with, and eventually transformed their own behaviors and thoughts as a result.   It is the community-based service experience that allowed students to develop this new way of thinking.

By the results of the perspective gain students are motivated.   The positive attitudes impacted the students by motivating them to display similar behavioral and mental characteristics. Also, the hard work demonstrated by the permanent workers and the grateful attitude displayed by the clients will likely cause the students to aspire to be strong community leaders.   These

service-learning experiences foster a positive future for the students as civic volunteers.

Effects of Stereotypes

The students' responses about stereotypes were mixed; therefore it is difficult to make strong conclusions about whether or not service-learning in the Spanish in the Community class did reinforce stereotypes. After analyzing the responses it appears that the experience in the community does have the potential to reinforce stereotypes for some students. It is important that the students develop meaningful relationships and spend quality time with the people in which they work.

In congruence with Sperling's (2007) work, the students in this course may be involved in an unequal power dynamic because they are mostly white middle-class students providing aid to mostly Hispanic lower-class. The students may not be developing the quality relationships and critical thinking skills to understand that not all Hispanic people can be placed into a single category. Sperling emphasized the need to have quality relationships with people who contradict stereotypes of that particular group. He also discussed the importance of reflecting on issues of racism, students' own beliefs about it, and the ability to take action in trying to solve social injustices. It is suggested that this course develop a better reflection component to help students work through those conflicting ideas about stereotypes and

racism.   Combining past research with our results, it is

recommended that this course can make great strides in

counteracting stereotypes by incorporating components

recommended by Sperling and creating a comfortable environment

to discuss stereotype issues.

Limitations to the Class

Werner (1998) stated that service-learning would encourage

students to take more responsibility to gain a greater depth of

knowledge.   This study supports Werner's work, but the students'

ability to expand their knowledge base was stunted by the structure

of the classroom.   The students seemed eager and interested to learn

and absorb more, but they found minimal connection to what they

were learning in the classroom to what they were doing in the

community. According to Howard's (1993) ten principles to

incorporate when implementing service-learning "the unit provides

supports for students to learn how to harvest the community

learning" and the unit minimizes the distinction between students'

community learning roles and their classroom learning role" (as

cited in With Service in Mind, 1998, p.131).   Based on this research,

these principles were not thoroughly applied in the Spanish in the

Community course.   The classroom and the community experiences

are not well integrated and a division is apparent.

Lastly, the professor has incorporated reflection, what Eyler

(2001) calls the hyphen in service-learning. However, it does not

seem to follow the four principles, which Eyler has identified. According to the students' statements, the assigned reflections do not follow the principle saying that there must be a connection between the class content and community experience. Nor does it seem to follow the principle in which reflection must challenge the students' ideas, thoughts, assumptions, etc. This research suggests a reevaluation of the classroom component of the course. The curriculum should be adjusted in order to support the learning outcomes of the community and to emphasize reflection of community work experiences.

Limitations

Various factors placed limitations on this study. Timing brought two factors. One factor, the study started mid semester, therefore we were unable to conduct pre-service-learning interviews. These interviews could have assisted in developing a better sense of growth and change. In addition, due to the breath of the study, there were only six interviewees; therefore confounding factors may be present in the study. The students interviewed were volunteers, which caused selectivity, this begs the question: are these students more likely to engage and have effectiveness from the program compared to the students who did not volunteer. In addition to selectivity, course selection was also a limitation. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign does not have an extensive array of true service-learning course that was conducive

for this study. Lastly, the study was unable to observe the students,

which raised the concern that the students were responding to the

questions in a socially acceptable manner. If the study allowed

more time to observe the students, the results and conclusions would

be more reliable.

Reflect: We enjoyed doing the EUI project and learning the process of ethnographic research.

Recommendations:

Conclusion

As a result of this research, three arguments were

apparent. Stereotypes were reinforced as a result of improper

implementation of the in-class portion of the course. It was found

that as time passed, students' level of comfort increased which led to

an increased tolerance of other cultures. Lastly, engagement in the

community through service-learning caused the students to increase

their multicultural awareness. Intentional curriculum planning is an

imperative component to an effective and sustainable service-

learning course. Therefore it is suggested that the Spanish in the

Community course implement an intentional curriculum. For

example, reflection activities should be created with the purpose of

gradually increasing the students' awareness of their

transformation. In order for peak development, an environment

should be created where students can reflect on their experiences in

the community and challenge their ideas, beliefs, and

assumptions.   Specifically, it is recommended that the Spanish in

the Community course incorporate reflections with a close

connection to their community work.   Also, in-class coursework and

volunteer experience should be fully integrated. By implementing

these suggestions, students will be more likely to reach their

optimum level of development and increase their level of

multicultural awareness.