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The Relationships Between Service-Learning, Social Justice, Multicultural Competence, and Civic Engagement

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This study qualitatively examined how participants in a long-term service-learning program described their understanding of and commitment to social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. Interviews with members of a university-sponsored AmeriCorps service-learning program explored participants' perceptions of the effects of their service. Several participants in this study increased their awareness of inequality, but only some adopted a commitment to social justice. Participants also developed several multicultural skills while interacting with their clients, such as empathy, patience, attachment, reciprocity, trust, and respect. All participants expressed a commitment to continued civic engagement.

The goals of higher education include more than high academic achievement. The mission statement of nearly every institution of higher education refers to educating its students “morally, and for good citizenship” (Kezar, 2002, p. 15). One of the ways in which American higher education fosters the development of good citizens is through service-learning, a unique form of experiential education. Students in service-learning programs complete tasks that address human needs while also accomplishing learning goals through reflective analysis (Kendall, 1990).

Debate over how to describe the relationship between service and learning has been ongoing for over 30 years (Kendall, 1990). However, Jacoby (1996) provided a definition of service-learning that effectively synthesizes

much of the literature:

Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning. (p. 5)

Service-learning can be curricular or co-curricular (Jacoby). It is both a type of program and a form of pedagogy that enables participants to learn about the “historical, sociological, cultural, and political contexts of the need or issue being addressed” (Kendall, p. 20). Experience, reflection, and reciprocity are key aspects of service-learning.

This study examined a service-learning AmeriCorps program coordinated by a university outreach office. Students and community members participate in this program and complete considerably more service hours than most college or university service-learning programs. AmeriCorps members in this program are placed at a variety of social service agencies and commit to serving an agency for 300-675 hours over the course of several months or an entire year. Participants are required to attend conferences and training sessions and to complete various reflection activities. Participants also receive a modest living stipend and an education award upon completion of their service.

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ation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent federal agency, which has as a primary mission to foster civic engagement in college students. AmeriCorps serves the community to address public safety, education, community and economic development, human needs, health, and family self-sufficiency and stability. Since 1994 over \$1 billion of AmeriCorps Education Awards have been earned, and one in four institutions of higher education has received funding for programs (CNCS, n.d.). Moreover, the CNCS hopes to engage five million college students in service by 2010 and to ensure that there is at least one full time staff person dedicated to coordinating and supporting service on at least one half of college campuses nationwide (CNCS). Because of the strong presence of AmeriCorps on college and university campuses and the goal to increase that presence, it is important to examine the experiences of AmeriCorps members.

Charity Versus Social Change Paradigms

Scholars have varying beliefs regarding even the most fundamental nature and purpose of service-learning. Kendall (1990) posited that service-learning experiences should have a specific goal of moving students along a continuum from a mindset of providing charity toward promoting social justice. A social justice paradigm posits that service-learning experiences should equip students with the knowledge and skill to move beyond acts of charity and to address the root causes of systemic social inequality (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

In contrast to Kendall's (1990) continuum model of service-learning, Morton (1995) argued that we should describe the various approaches to service-learning in terms of paradigms. These paradigms have unique worldviews, or "ways of identifying and

addressing problems, and long-term visions of individual and community transformation" (Morton, p. 21). Instead of trying to move students from a mindset of charity toward social change, educators should challenge students to work more effectively within their existing paradigm (Morton). Additionally, students must be challenged to grapple with the tensions that exist between service-learning paradigms (Morton). There are several service-learning paradigms: (a) charity, (b) civic education, (c) project, (d) communitarianism, and (e) social justice/change (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Morton); this study focuses on the charity and social justice paradigms.

Charity is typically understood as the provision of direct service whereby "control of the direct service . . . [remains] with the provider" (Morton, 1995, p. 21). Boyle-Baise (2002) pointed out that approaching service with this paradigm can humble the receiver, reinforce the advantages of the giver, and fail to address the root causes for societal inequality. However, acts of charity founded in spiritual love or humanistic respect can foster unselfish motivation to "relieve destitution, restore human dignity, and build a more humane world" (Boyle-Baise, p. 31).

Service-Learning Outcomes

Although service-learning experienced significant growth during the 1990s, there has been a relatively small base of knowledge from which to advocate its implementation in higher education (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Previous research has provided evidence that outcomes of service-learning include self-confidence, social responsibility, civic-mindedness, self-esteem, and personal efficacy (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Eyler and Giles found that service-learning is strongly correlated with tolerance, personal development, and linking the college experience to the community. Research has indicated that participation in

reflective service-learning classes predicts increased “complexity in analysis of both causes and solutions to social problems” (Eyler & Giles, p. 75). This study examines how participation in long-term service-learning relates to attitudes about and commitment to social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement.

Social Justice. Research has shown that “students [can make] positive changes in their attitudes toward social justice [and] equality of opportunity” (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000, p. 15) as a result of service-learning experiences. Everett (1998) found that 87% of students in a sociology class with a service-learning component agreed that their service experiences “enhanced [their] understanding of social inequality” (p. 304). However service-learning should move beyond increasing awareness and should also promote action toward social justice (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004). A commitment to social justice involves an individual actively working toward equality for all society (Monard-Weissman, 2003).

Research on commitment and action toward social justice after participating in service-learning is varied. In one example, most students from an alternative spring break service-learning class stated a preference for volunteering to meet individual needs rather than addressing more systemic change (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004). In this study “activist views were rare for white students, but common for students of color” (Boyle-Baise & Langford, p. 63). In another study, students in an international service-learning program reported a deepened understanding of the world, while also committing to service and active citizenship of the world (Monard-Weissman, 2003).

Multicultural Competence. One of the most constant findings from the service-learning research is that service experience reduces negative stereotypes and increases tolerance for

diversity (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Service-learning facilitates an increased awareness of stereotypes and assumptions while students begin to understand larger social issues that affect their service sites (Jones & Hill, 2001). Students in service-learning programs consisting of regular interaction with people from different ethnic backgrounds were more likely to report growth in self-knowledge and personal growth (Eyler & Giles). For example, Marullo (1998) found that students enrolled in service-learning sections of a race relations class showed greater increases in diversity awareness than sections that did not contain a service-learning component.

Service-learning is an effective tool for developing multicultural competence because it “offers a structure for community based learning, collaborative in intent [and] responsive to local needs” (Boyle-Baise, 2002, p. 4). Programs with shared control listen to and consider the perspectives of those who are “disenfranchised or marginalized in our society” (Boyle-Baise, p. 4). In this way, service-learning is more than a means for those in power to serve the less fortunate, but rather provides students with a “multicultural education” (Boyle-Baise, p. 5) whereby they begin to understand local issues from a different perspective.

Civic Engagement. Research has documented the occurrences of civic engagement and the advancement of democratic values as outcomes of service. For example, Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found that performing at least 6 hours of volunteer work per week during the last year of college almost doubles the likelihood that a college student will continue to volunteer after leaving college. Astin and Sax (1998) found that participation in volunteer service positively corresponded with 12 outcomes related to civic responsibility. These outcomes included increased commitment to helping others, serving the community,

promoting racial understanding, doing volunteer work, and working for a non-profit organization (Astin & Sax).

Service-learning has also been found to increase a general sense of responsibility and commitment to social action (Monard-Weissman, 2003). Nevertheless, one study found conflicting results where participation in service-learning did not increase commitment toward civic or social responsibility any more than a traditional lecture-based course (Clague, 1995). It seems that under some conditions, service-learning is able to foster an increased sense of civic responsibility and engagement.

Many service-learning activities are linked to academic classes where service and reflection are incorporated with traditional classroom teaching (Mabry, 1998). These course-based service projects are typically brief, consisting of a 20- to 40-hour commitment. Another common service-learning format is the alternative spring break, whereby students participant in intensive service and reflection over a 1-week period. Although these brief projects can have meaningful outcomes for students, an extended service-learning experience can allow students to have more transformative and integrative learning. Research indicates that adequate time spent in service facilitates positive developmental outcomes (Mabry). This study examined the relationship of long term participation in service-learning with three main areas of a participant's development: social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What effect does participation in AmeriCorps have on participants' understanding of social inequality?
2. What effect does participation in AmeriCorps have on participants' multicultural self-awareness, knowledge, and skill?

3. What effect does participation in AmeriCorps have on participants' attitudes, values, and beliefs toward civic responsibility?
4. What effect does participation in AmeriCorps have on participants' commitment to continuing service after completing a term of service?

METHOD

This study investigated how participation in a university-sponsored AmeriCorps program related to the development of a participant's multicultural competence, understanding of and commitment to social justice, as well as understanding of and commitment to civic engagement. Methodology for this study was dictated by a constructivist theoretical perspective (Broido & Manning, 2002). Qualitative data were collected via interviews and analyzed through a constructivist, inductive process in which themes and patterns were discovered rather than predetermined (Manning, 1999). The guiding constructivist epistemology in this study affirms that reality is subjectively experienced and interpreted by people (Manning). Therefore, this study does not assume continuity and similarity between contexts, but rather investigates and highlights the differences from one context to another (Manning). Moreover, this study acknowledges the constructivist assumption that context—researcher, research setting, methodology, underlying theory, and respondents—cannot be absolutely detached from their subjective beliefs and values (Manning).

Participants and Procedure

Participants were selected from a university-sponsored AmeriCorps program that is not tied to any curriculum. AmeriCorps members who had successfully completed a full term of service—at least 300 hours of service in a local

non-profit agency—were eligible for participation for this study.

The study was conducted at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest. The AmeriCorps program has been active on this campus since 2005, with a total of 105 AmeriCorps members since its inception.

Ten AmeriCorps members were selected from 40 eligible participants. Purposive sampling methods were used to collect data from a diverse range of participants at multiple service sites so that comparison and analysis of multiple views within a variety of contexts and settings was possible. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the sample population reflected a diverse group in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and the variety of member placement sites and services performed.

Participants received an e-mail explaining the purpose of the study and inviting them to be interviewed. All 10 agreed to participate, however, one student was unable to schedule an interview session, making 9 the final number of participants. Participants were given a \$20 gift certificate to the university bookstore as an incentive to participate in the study.

The 9 participants included 6 women and 3 men. Seven of the participants were White and two were African American. Most of the participants were traditional-aged college students, 19–23 years old, but one participant was 65. Agencies where the participants completed their service included a community center, a juvenile teen court program, a residential facility for “at-risk” teenage girls, an after school center, a center for clients with developmental disabilities, and an English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol, with questions based on each of the research questions as initial prompts. The interviews lasted from 45 to 80 minutes and were held in a private conference room at the

university. Interviews were audio tape-recorded and transcribed, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to ensure confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions were analyzed through a process of open coding, using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method was utilized because of its effectiveness in allowing considerable flexibility in assigning and re-assigning codes to various categories as themes emerged and evolved from the data. This study incorporated a system of checks to be sure of the highest degree of accuracy, authenticity, and trustworthiness in its final analysis and interpretation.

Member checking ensured trustworthiness and authenticity of the conclusions. Reflective listening techniques employed during the interview gauged the accuracy of understanding of the participants’ responses as the interview progressed. Additionally, interpretations were confirmed through external reviews with an expert who has considerable expertise and familiarity with service-learning research and pedagogy.

Limitations

Although the interview data allowed for considerable depth of analysis, the conclusions in this study are based on interviews from a small sample size from a single institution’s AmeriCorps program. Replicating this study on a larger scale would allow the conclusions to be made with more confidence.

The data collected for this study were self-reported, which can skew the results due to participant self-monitoring. Participants have varying ability to reflect, express, and accurately articulate their experiences. Furthermore, several participants reported on experiences that occurred over the course of many months. The time delay between their early experiences

and interviews for this study might have affected or biased certain perceptions and recollections. In addition, the interviews asked for participants' perceptions of the effects of their service-learning experiences on social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. This does not imply a causal relationship, but rather the participants' self-reports of change.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are organized into participant learning and development that occurred in three major areas: social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. Length of service was an important factor in facilitating multicultural competence.

Social Justice

Participants had varying attitudes and approaches toward societal equality and social justice. Emergent themes within the larger category of social justice were equality and empowerment.

Equality. Attitudes toward the provision of equal treatment in society ranged from a general belief in the presence of equal rights to an understanding of pervasive systemic inequality in society. Several students reported that serving in AmeriCorps increased their awareness of societal inequality. For example Jack, a 20-year-old White man who served in a juvenile court system, stated, "I always knew it, but I really had not seen it and now I've seen it for my own eyes that some people do get, fall in between the cracks and they just get pushed away." Increasing one's awareness of social inequality did not automatically cause participants to feel responsible for promoting social justice and equality. Although Lindsay, a 22-year-old White woman, professed a commitment to continue volunteering at the residential "safe haven" for teen girls where she

served her hours, she also commented that people are responsible for helping themselves. Students with this mindset express that there is a degree of inequality within society, but that people are able to better themselves because there is help available. If a member of society is poor, there are services available that would level the playing field once again.

Two students generalized the inequality that they had experienced and/or witnessed at their service sites to other populations. For instance, Danielle, a 21-year-old White ESL tutor, had witnessed the unfair treatment of her clients because of their accent and nationality, as well as the significant barriers to obtaining legal citizenship. Danielle also discussed how one of her female clients experienced gender discrimination in addition to the discrimination that she received because of her nationality. Veronica, a 21-year-old African American woman working at an after school center, spoke of witnessing racial inequality and also described gender and religious intolerance and unfair treatment. In this way, she understood inequality at a more pervasive and systemic level beyond her own experience. Veronica connected social inequality to systemic multicultural insensitivity.

Empowerment. Education for social justice begins by increasing one's awareness of inequality, however social justice education must also equip and empower students to be change agents toward equality (Adams, 2007). Although most participants in this study became more aware of social inequality, some students reported only a limited sense of empowerment, whereas others reported having an infinite amount of power for change.

Many of the participants reported a sense of empowerment that can be likened to a "ripple effect," whereby the impact of one action is felt in widening circles. Danielle explained how this ripple effect would impact her ESL students:

I've always felt this way, but [AmeriCorps] definitely helped me realize a broader spectrum of how much you can affect in life. I mean maybe me just being able to help those 17 students—now they're going to be able to help their children, and their children are going to be able to help other people, and they're going to be able to do better in their jobs. They're going to be able to do better in their life here in America.

Brooke, a 19-year-old White woman, also spoke of discovering her power. After serving clients who were developmentally disabled she said, "I learned that I was a lot stronger than I thought I was." Brooke spoke of her newfound patience and perseverance, which gave her power. When asked if she had power to change things, Brooke said, "Everyone does. I just found it."

Although several participants described a sense of personal empowerment at their specific service site, some participants described empowerment at a more systemic level. Julia (a 22-year-old White woman working at a community center) and Veronica explained their empowerment in terms of groups and organizations. Julia noted the power of a collective age group to flex their muscles by voting and speaking out, and Veronica described the power of organizations such as NAACP or large corporations and government entities to make society more just.

Multicultural Competence

Awareness, knowledge, and skill are three components of multicultural competence (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). Awareness in this study refers to an individual's self awareness and how cognizant they are of their own values, culture, and assumptions. Knowledge refers to an individual's content knowledge of other culture groups. An individual with high multicultural skill uses her or his self

awareness and knowledge of other cultures to engage in culturally appropriate behavior with other culture groups (Pope et al.). Length of service was an important factor in facilitating the development of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill in the participants.

Awareness. Some of the participants reported an increased awareness of their privilege in terms of economic status or familial stability and upbringing. For example, Jack said about his service to juvenile offenders,

I didn't realize how lucky I was until I started doing all this, and thinking well I've really had a good life. . . . I've had everything that I've ever wanted and everything where some of these kids just don't.

Veronica had a good understanding of multiple dimensions of diversity as she cited examples of how religion, race, and gender impacted how people are treated. For example, Veronica noticed from her own experience that she had a harder time gaining the respect of the children in her after school programs than the male volunteers. She pointed out that

I could yell as much as I wanted to but they're not listening to me until [a male] volunteer starts yelling at them. . . . The other person has to mediate because they just won't listen to me 'cause I'm a female.

Knowledge. James described how his upbringing in a small rural town limited his multicultural knowledge and preconceptions at the beginning of his service. He stated,

I got fed that like, as sad as this is, that all African Americans are just moochers and they always want stuff. . . . I was always told you know, they're nothing but scum and stay away from them because they're trouble.

James said that at the beginning of his service that he "hated most of the kids." He

described how his service transformed him by challenging his stereotypes.

But now, [I] love the kids. Once I'm here I can't shut up talking to people. My whole view of the African American community has changed because there's some kids [at the community center] that act better than kids that go to my church back home. And that has been like the biggest thing, you know, changing my mind and my view of it, like all of them.

James also gained knowledge of the history of "White flight," and how it impacted the racial makeup of the neighborhood where he served.

Skill. Multicultural skill manifested itself in interpersonal and relationship skills. Many facets of multicultural skill, such as increased capacities for empathy, patience, attachment, trust, and respect, emerged from the interviews.

One of the most consistent findings from this study was the ability of the participants to empathize with those whom they served. Every participant described gaining a better understanding of the stories and life experiences of her or his clients. In addition to being more able to empathize with other people, the participants frequently reported they had become much more patient as a result of their service.

Many participants expressed deep attachments to their clients that formed over time. For example, when asked if she was attached to any of her clients, Veronica exclaimed, "Oh yea. Oh my gosh yea!" She said, "You got to know all the kids. . . . You know them deeply. And I didn't really get that experience [with] any [previous] volunteering."

Several participants described reciprocal relationships with their clients in which mutual learning occurred. For instance, Eric noted, "You learn more through and from them by listening rather than speaking." Veronica stated, "You're helping out. You're

here . . . to learn, . . . to absorb everything that these people have to offer you. And you're trying to better them, but you have to realize that they're bettering you as well."

As the participants worked to build relationships, themes of trust and respect consistently emerged from the interview data. Some participants articulated their respect for their clients while also discussing their efforts to earn the respect of their clients. James explained,

The kids need me and need a positive role model, especially guys because the only opinion that the kids have about guys is they come in, maybe sleep with their mom, beat her, use her, and then he's gone. . . . And being male, the supervisor has told me numerous times, you are already at the disadvantage with the kids because they don't think too highly of you and that actually has been a struggle with some of them, you know, like gaining their trust.

Length of Service. The significant length of service was a contributing factor to development of multicultural competence in the participants. Veronica described the importance of time in her experience:

AmeriCorps is continuous. It was every day pretty much. And I just got to know everyone so much better than normal volunteering experiences because I was there for almost a year. . . . People who were only there for like 2 hours a week, or 3 hours a week, they start to complain, "Oh these kids don't listen to me."

Increasing the length of service at a site provides participants with the necessary time to develop rapport and meaningful relationships with their clients. Moreover, serving several hours per week at a site is likely to increase participants' comfort with client interaction more quickly than episodic service. Forming these relationships over time is essen-

tial in continually developing multicultural competence (Pope et al., 2004).

Civic Engagement

For the purposes of this study, civic engagement was broadly defined as an understanding of active citizenship and a commitment to serving one's community. Several participants expressed a commitment to volunteerism and civic engagement that was in place before their service with AmeriCorps. Most participants articulated the necessity for citizens to be "other oriented." Several participants articulated a desire to "give back" to the community. Eric described a particularly strong need to give back to his community.

I wanted to give back to the community because, for example, my being involved with selling drugs and things of this nature, I took from the community and I know in so many ways corrupted children's hearts and minds. . . . But when I saw the light, I was able to try and have hopefully been successful with influencing a lot of the other kids and turning them away from the streets and to acknowledge how bad it is out in the streets.

Most participants described a good citizen as an active citizen. All participants expressed a commitment or a desire to continue serving their communities, however their differing attitudes toward citizenship dictated the form of their commitment. Some participants wanted to avoid political engagement, whereas others saw the necessity of being a part of the political process. Annie hoped to work around the government instead of through it. She said,

I learned patience but not that much! I think politics are a dangerous thing because it's crooked. . . . So I think [active citizenship is] the work you can do outside of the realm of the government.

In contrast, Veronica felt an obligation and a need to engage the political process. Veronica said,

Politically, if there is someone [who] is supposed to be representing [us], and you obviously aren't doing what's right, I mean, I have to step in. You know, I hear about it and I'm going to say something and I'm going to do something about it.

DISCUSSION

The wide range of attitudes, beliefs, and levels of commitment to social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement expressed by the participants in this study underscores the complexity of service-learning experiences. Jones (2002) pointed out that although service-learning experiences can spark significant development, this development is not automatic. Instead, there are some instances where service-learning experiences can be damaging to students and the community (Jones). The data from this study reinforce the potential for positive transformation through service-learning.

There are countless personal characteristics and situational variables that account for the personal developmental outcomes of the participants in this study. However, some major variables are important to mention. The participants who had previously experienced inequality generally had a better understanding of how inequality impacts individuals on a day-to-day basis than those who had not. These participants included two people of color and a White woman who had experienced being treated unfairly as a minority when volunteering abroad.

Each participant had been selected and placed at his or her service site through an interview and screening process. This process attempted to place individuals who exhibited prior commitment to and participation in service activities. Most of the participants had previous volunteer experience. Therefore, the pool of participants for this study may have been predisposed to a certain service paradigm.

A high frequency of volunteering did not necessarily imply a deep desire for social change. Much of the participants' previous volunteering had a charity paradigm rather than a social justice paradigm (Morton, 1995) and probably shaped the initial experience of participants when placed at their service sites. However all participants expressed a desire and commitment to continued civic engagement upon completing their service, regardless of their motivation for charity or social change. This indicates that a long-term service placement can foster a desire and commitment to continued civic engagement and active citizenship.

For some participants, their understanding of civic engagement was influenced by their high multicultural competence and commitment to social justice. For these participants, multiculturalism provided the worldview from which to address inequality through active civic engagement. Other participants became aware of social inequality as a result of their service but did not integrate an understanding of multicultural and social justice issues into their understanding and commitment to civic engagement.

Social Justice and Charity

Each participant acknowledged and witnessed inequality, however some participants developed a social justice paradigm and others adopted a charity paradigm. It is possible that these differences in paradigms were the result of varied backgrounds and personal differences. However it is also possible that some participants did not adopt a social justice paradigm because the ongoing training and reflection they received was not an effective form of social justice education. Social justice education should include "the analysis of oppression at individual, cultural, and institutional levels" (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004, p. 55).

Participants in this study reflected about social issues in their journals, however there could have been more structured analysis at monthly meetings to stimulate discussion about the social, cultural, and institutional systems that contribute to inequality. When students are exposed to frequent and high quality reflection, they are more likely to report a greater degree of learning and development (Eylar & Giles, 1999). The findings of this study emphasize the importance of the educator in helping students make sense of service-learning experiences.

Social Justice Education: Awareness and Empowerment

Spreading awareness of social inequality while also empowering students to work for social change are two key components of social justice education. In this way, social justice education produces citizens who are aware of social injustices. These citizens also feel empowered and committed to working toward social justice. Service-learning provides students with the opportunity to witness inequality first hand while also providing tangible experiences that can build confidence and feelings of empowerment. Participants in this study reported personal empowerment because they could see the impact of their service (Everett, 1998) in the personal lives of the clients they served. Providing experiences for students to engage social issues at institutional levels such as a local school district, university, or city government might enhance the confidence of students and empower them to pursue social change at these institutional levels.

Multicultural Development and Length of Service

The findings of this study were consistent with previous service-learning research on diversity

and multicultural competence. Research has consistently found that service-learning experiences reduce negative stereotypes and increase tolerance for diversity (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The findings in this study also provide insight into how multicultural competence can develop. Rhoads (1997) pointed out that service-learning, at its core, is a reciprocal and relational phenomenon. This relational phenomenon sparked the development of multicultural competence in the participants of this study. Participants became more aware of their background and identity as they compared themselves to the clients whom they served. Participants also widened their worldviews as they gained content knowledge by listening to the stories and history of their clients while observing how their clients experience and interact with the world.

Most importantly, the considerable length of service required by this program gave participants the time and opportunity to establish and maintain reciprocal relationships with clients who were typically very different from them. They were able to develop several interpersonal skills necessary for effectively interacting in a multicultural setting such as empathy, patience, attachment, reciprocity, trust, and respect. These findings are consistent with Armstrong's (2005) study, which found that service-learning experience fostered significant psychosocial student development, such as developing mature interpersonal relationships. Service-learning's transformative power is derived from mutually shaping relationships, which often cross racial/ethnic or social class lines. It was evident in this study that forming cross-cultural relationships through service over an extended period of time can enhance an individual's capacity to engage in meaningful multicultural interactions.

IMPLICATIONS

Social Justice through Civic Engagement

There is general agreement that individuals and institutions should civically engage, contributing to their communities. However the data from this study revealed that individuals have varying definitions of "civic engagement" because of their differing attitudes, backgrounds, and goals. Active citizenship can mean anything from going on a field trip with your kids to a lifelong dedication to fighting systemic inequality. This study reveals a lack of consensus regarding the definition of civic engagement and indicates the need for a common definition.

It is also important to explore the purpose of civic engagement. It is not enough to simply be an active or "engaged" citizen. Civic engagement and active citizenship in a democracy should be a vehicle for pursuing democratic ideals of justice and equality in a multicultural society (Hurtado, 2007). These democratic values are consistent with Warren's (1998) definition of social justice whereby society is constantly striving for equality, inclusion, peace, and active participation. In other words, an ideal democratic society is a socially just society. If the goal is to educate for democratic citizenship, then higher education professionals must provide social justice education and foster multicultural competence in their students. If the goal is to educate citizens for social justice, then one must carefully examine how one shapes educational experiences to foster a sense of empowerment and commitment in students to work for social justice. These educational experiences include everything from course work and co-curricular service-learning to programming efforts in residence halls, student activities, and judicial interventions.

Social Justice versus Personal Development

Although most of the participants in this study expressed a sense of personal empowerment, a majority of the participants did not express a commitment to actively pursuing social change for social justice. This was probably because the educational focus and structured reflection of the program in this study were directed toward personal development. Reflection activities for the participants in this study included goal setting, problem solving, conflict resolution, leadership, and active citizenship discussions. A personal development approach to service is helpful but does not analyze historical, economic, and political factors that contribute to social inequality in various communities (Snarr, 2003).

The overall lack of commitment to pursue systemic social change by the participants in this study is evidence that being exposed to situations of inequality and serving underprivileged populations does not automatically foster a commitment to social justice. This underscores the importance of the role of the educator in helping students to make the connection from their service to larger social issues. Effectively making these connections requires that service-learning educators have an adequate level of knowledge and expertise about relevant historical, economic, and political systems and structures that affect the populations that their students serve. Therefore service-learning educators must commit to learning about these topics as they relate to social justice. Collaboration with knowledgeable faculty in areas such as history, social work, sociology, and political science is an essential component of a co-curricular service-learning program that seeks to educate for social justice. Service-learning educators can then draw on their personal knowledge of social structures to creatively spark reflection

and analysis about how social justice issues directly impact their service experiences. In this way, service-learning experiences can foster personal development in addition to providing a more complex understanding of social issues. When students are exposed to frequent, high quality structured reflection they report significant learning and development (Eyler & Giles, 1999). As Rhoads (1997) pointed out, reflection and service must go beyond increasing an awareness of poverty issues. Action and reflection must work cohesively to inspire participants to commit to changing structures that cause social and economic inequality (Rhoads).

Integrating Multicultural Education

Lack of multicultural knowledge and skill are a driving force behind social inequality. Therefore a multicultural education is a necessary component of understanding structural inequalities and how to produce social change toward equality and justice. Reflection activities must be designed to foster an increase in multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill. These activities are important because they help students confront

the reality that if they truly care about the other and have a desire to alter social conditions they must consider community building and community service not as a one time endeavor but as a process demanding their continued attention. (Rhoads, 1997, p. 186)

The findings from this study indicate that participating in a long-term service commitment often facilitates the development of multicultural competence in participants. However intentional efforts by educators could deepen the multicultural knowledge and skills that naturally develop as participants enter reciprocal relationships with clients who are

different from themselves.

Moreover, the findings from this study reveal the tremendous value of developing relationships across cultural lines. Relationships have the power to prove stereotypes and prejudice wrong and to enable reconciliation. Educators should put students in situations where the students are able to develop positive relationships cross culturally through sustained contact with people of other cultures.

Further research could compare the outcomes of service-learning programs with guided reflection that focuses on personal development versus reflection that emphasizes an analysis of systemic social inequalities. Because the predominant reflection method for the participants in this study was personal journaling, it would be beneficial to investigate the varying effects of other forms of reflection, such as large- or small-group discussions, artistic expression, interaction with knowledgeable faculty, or interviews with individuals at the service site, on the development of and commitment to social justice through civic engagement.

The participants in this study were unique because they received a modest living stipend and monetary education award in compensation for their service. This could have had a considerable effect on the developmental outcomes resulting from service. More research is needed to understand how monetary compensation affects or does not affect participant multicultural competence or commitment to social justice through civic engagement. Researchers should look to various paid internships and community work-study programs for insight about how monetary compensation might impact student development. Although these programs do not necessarily use service-learning pedagogy, they might provide valuable information about money, service, social change, and motivation.

Future research could investigate how

service-learning participants are impacted differently by different kinds of service placements. How does working with homeless adults impact service participants differently than working with children with low incomes at a community center? How do personal characteristics and backgrounds mitigate this development? Knowledge in these areas could enable practitioners to carefully place students at service sites where their unique characteristics have the highest probability of stimulating growth and development.

The findings of this study are significant and important to educators because they provide unique and valuable insight into how participants make meaning of an extended service-learning experience. Much of the previous service-learning literature has focused on the outcomes of service experiences that are connected to a semester course and has neglected service programs that require a more extended term of service.

Participants in this study had a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences and were placed in several different service settings. In spite of these considerable differences, common themes emerged that provide educators with helpful information for how better to design service experiences to enhance student development. For example, participants are not likely to develop a commitment to social justice unless they are provided with opportunities to analyze social problems at the systemic level. Without such analysis, service commitment typically takes the form of charity, which can reinforce positions of privilege and dependence.

During long-term service placements, participants are able to develop strong relationships with their clients. Participants must hone their skills for multicultural interactions as they strive to develop meaningful and reciprocal relationships with their clients. These deep relationships can provide a catalyst for

multicultural learning and development. Therefore educators should provide students with the opportunity to develop long term cross cultural relationships through service programs.

A primary goal of higher education is to create responsible, moral, and productive citizens. Service-learning programs provide the opportunity for students to explore their understanding of citizenship and responsibility to society. There are many definitions of citizenship, however most of these definitions do not address how to be a citizen in a multicultural or pluralistic society (Hurtado, 2007). We propose that a responsible, moral, and productive citizen is committed to fostering social justice through civic engagement. This engagement must be informed by multicultural competence. In this way, social

justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement are interrelated and should not be seen as separate entities. Education for citizenship should not simply encourage civic engagement and active citizenship. Education should also equip students with the multicultural competence, understanding of systemic inequality, and empowerment to effectively pursue social justice through civic engagement. When carefully designed, long-term service-learning experiences provide a means for teaching and exploring this type of synthesized citizenship.

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