Student perspectives of service-learning at a private liberal arts college

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Student perspectives of service-learning at a private liberal arts college

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Education Leadership)

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2003

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of

Maribeth Iona Wright

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program
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CHAPTER 1 - OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Service-learning has become one of the innovative educational programs that is linked with the pedagogical shift in undergraduate education from an emphasis on teaching to learning. Service-learning has the potential to provide a means for higher education institutions to focus on student learning and development while contributing to the needs of communities and society at large. A qualitative research study was conducted to ascertain student perspectives on service-learning experiences and how these experiences contributed to student learning and self-awareness.

This study examined how learning was enhanced through service-learning, especially in regards to mastery of course content in order to use information effectively in real world situations, as well as how these service experiences contributed to students’ development of self-awareness. Understanding these two potential outcomes of service-learning will help practitioners better define and justify the full range of learning outcomes and measurements associated with service-learning. This study was conducted at Central College, a four-year, coeducational, liberal arts college affiliated with the Reformed Church of America, located in Pella, Iowa, which has a well-established service-learning program that is endorsed by the president of the college as well as many key personnel.

This first chapter includes a contextual background on service-learning, the purpose and specific research questions addressed, and provides definitions of terms that were unique to this study. The rationale and significance of this research are included as well as the theoretical framework that guided this study. The results of a pilot study conducted in October, 2002 are presented as well as the basic assumptions that I brought into this research.
Following the tentative presuppositions, is an outline of the organization of the study.

**Background**

Education has been and will always be a powerful tool in shaping the minds of individuals and improving the quality of life. In the 21st century, education at all levels plays a vital role in our society and global economy. In past decades, a high school diploma was considered the highest degree of education for most individuals, while a baccalaureate degree was reserved for the elite. Currently, almost all students are expected not only to graduate from high school, but also to complete some type of higher education to even be considered for a professional position.

Today, society is facing complex issues including economic instability, the war against terrorism, political uneasiness, poverty, and the changing demographic composition of our country. These issues have a direct impact on our higher education system and demand that our citizens have a "greater capacity for critical thinking, civic judgement, and flexible involvement than ever before" (Stanton, 1990, p. 177). Due to the changing expectations of our society, "the meaning and definition of educational credentials" are evolving (Lovett, 2002, p. 12). The well-defined "responsibilities of high schools, community colleges, and universities also are changing dramatically, requiring a re-examination of education policies and underlying funding patterns" (Lovett, p. 12).

The many challenges higher education is facing today relate to successes throughout previous decades. Institutions need to be responsive to the rising criticisms that are affecting higher education as a whole. Currently, American institutions are "caught in a paradox: public expectations have rarely been higher, public confidence and support rarely lower"
Throughout history, higher education has embraced the mission of educating students to be active citizens in society. Some would argue that higher education has lost this vision, but now there is an “unprecedented opportunity to influence the democratic knowledge, dispositions, and habits of the heart that graduates carry with them into the public square” (Presidents’ Fourth of July Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, 1999, p. 2). Higher education can be a catalyst in renewing the historic commitment to service that will promulgate a flourishing democracy.

Our higher education system can no longer function in a reactive mode, but must be proactive in its endeavors. Higher education must be “more vibrant, more stimulating, and more in tune with the needs and aspirations of our current age” (Rhodes, 1998, p. 14). There is a growing expectation by education experts, government and business leaders, and society in general that higher education be committed to addressing pressing criticisms and issues, while also resolving social problems and addressing human needs. In response to these challenges and criticisms from the national scene, higher education has been called to focus on student learning and development; to meet this challenge many colleges and universities have developed innovative educational programs such as service-learning. The linking of service with specific learning and development outcomes is beneficial to students, institutions and communities (Jacoby, 1996c).

Service-learning is one of the innovative educational programs that is linked with the pedagogical shift in undergraduate education from an emphasis on teaching to learning. The
basic tenets of the service-learning movement are the promotion of collaboration versus individual learning, the articulation of learning outcomes and assessment of learning success, the promotion of civic and moral learning and the enhancement of interpersonal skills (Jacoby, 1996c). Service-learning has the potential to provide a tool for higher education institutions to focus on student learning and development while contributing to the needs of communities at all levels and society at large.

Institutions of higher education are already shifting programs and services to deal with the changing demographics of the student population. The number of non-traditional and older students attending college is on the rise, but enrollments are stabilizing – there isn’t the growth in numbers of traditional aged college students as in other age categories. Today’s college students present many challenges to our higher education institutions compared to students of past years. Students “are more diverse by age, race, socioeconomic class, culture, gender, academic preparation, family support and stability, sexual orientation, mental/physical health, employment, enrollment status, time to graduate, and attitudes and values” (Upcraft, 1993, p. 7). Studies have also shown that the preferred learning style of students has changed to a more hands-on, active learning style, which incorporates practice and experience with theory (Cross, 1998; Kolb, 1984; Schroeder, 1993).

These changes in students’ learning preferences have led to deep-seated changes in learning environments and settings. The setting is no longer confined exclusively to the four walls of a classroom. Technology advancements have made it possible for learning to extend beyond even the local campus to provide access to information. Implementing service-learning in higher education provides a means to address these evolving changes in students and learning environments (Jacoby, 1996c).
Research Purpose

As political and economic tides turn, higher education is facing many complex challenges and criticisms; public expectations are high, confidence and support are low (Boyer, 1994; Boyt & Hollander, 1999; Edgerton, 1995; Kendall, 1990; Kerr, 2001; Rhodes, 1998). A fundamental goal of higher education is student learning and development (Jacoby, 1996). The effectiveness of achieving this goal has been questioned due to the neglect of undergraduate teaching in favor of research, fragmented fields of study, the narrow focus on career preparation, and the failure to promote moral character (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Jacoby, 1996c). In response to these challenges and criticisms, higher education has incorporated more of a focus on student learning and development, hence the emergence of innovative educational programs such as service-learning. It is clear that service experiences are related to higher education’s mission to promote citizenship, but current studies do not focus on revealing and analyzing the complexities of these experiences and do not capture the essence of the student learning and development process (Kezar, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning that students made of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contributed to student learning and self-awareness. This understanding helped clarify the connections students made between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences, and service-learning.

Research Questions

Specifically, I focused on the following research questions:
1. What meanings do students make of their actual lived service-learning experiences and how do they relate them to their self-awareness and academic achievement?

2. What do students perceive as the fundamental elements of service-learning experiences that contribute most to their learning and self-awareness?

3. How does participation in service-learning affect students’ perception of self?

Definitions

Throughout the literature, it was evident that there was no agreement on one definition for service-learning, as many practitioners interpret the term differently and have included multiple purposes in their programming. These included cognitive development, critical thinking skills, personal development, problem-solving skills, civic engagement, social action, academic knowledge and leadership development (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Stanton, 1990). As Timothy Stanton stated, “finding a single, firm universally acceptable definition of service learning is like navigating through fog” (p. 65). To find clarity, the following definitions of terms that were unique to this particular study are provided.

Service: Keith Morton (1995) described service as a continuum containing three elements: charity, project management, and social change. Service begins as an act of individual charity, progresses through project management, and culminates with a commitment to social change (Morton, 1996).

Learning: For the purposes of this study, learning was defined as academic achievement or understanding, mastering and applying course content. I looked at the role of service-learning experiences in students’ understanding and application of course content (Driscoll, et al., 1996).
Self-awareness: For the purposes of this study, self-awareness was defined as the understanding or changes in awareness of strengths, limits, direction, role and personal goals (Driscoll, et al., 1996).

Service-learning: Jacoby (1996b) described service-learning as 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” (p. 5). Reflection and reciprocity are key ingredients in service-learning programs. The hyphen is symbolic of the relationship between service and learning because learning does not happen just in the classroom but includes both curricular and co-curricular activities. Throughout the literature, service-learning was referred to as not only a program but also as a philosophy and pedagogy. As a program, service-learning “emphasizes the accomplishment of tasks to meet human and community needs in combination with intentional learning goals and with conscious reflection and critical analysis” (Kendall, 1990, p. 20). Service-learning can also be viewed as a philosophy of “human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community, and a way of knowing” (Kendall, p. 23). The element of reciprocity elevates service-learning to a philosophy of education that “emphasizes active, engaged learning with the goal of social responsibility” (Kendall, p. 22). Service-learning as an educational pedagogy is based on Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle. Service-learning is “education that is grounded in experience as a basis for learning and on the centrality and intentionality of reflection designed to enable learning to occur” (Jacoby, p. 9). In this study, service-learning referred to a type of program.
Community Service: Rhoads (1997) described community service as projects that extend student experiences beyond the classroom to external settings and provide students the opportunity to apply both academic and practical knowledge. Community service does not usually include a learning component, does not grant academic credit nor is it part of a course requirement, and does not typically have a reflective component built into the experience.

Collaboration: Chrislip and Larson’s (1994) definition of collaboration is a mutual relationship between two or more parties sharing all responsibility, control, and accountability in achieving a common goal. The purpose of collaboration “is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particular party” (p. 5).

Reciprocity: A key element in service-learning programs, reciprocity includes all individuals and organizations functioning as both teachers and learners (Jacoby, 1996).

Development: In assessing self-awareness and learning, Jacoby (1996) discussed the sufficient use of both challenge and support for development and growth to occur. Development “represents a redefining of the self in more complex and more distinct ways, yet at the same time putting all the parts together in an integrated fashion” (p. 56).

Citizenship: Citizenship is defined as a sense of responsibility to participate and contribute in a multicultural society. Citizenship refers to democratic participation, awareness of community needs, organizational skills, social action skills, empowerment, and a belief in the ability to make a difference (Rice, 2000).

Reflection: Hutchings and Wutzdorff (1988) defined reflection as “the ability to step back and ponder one’s own experience, to abstract from it some meaning or knowledge
relevant to other experiences” (p. 15 as cited in Morton, 1996, p. 285). Having the ability to reflect “is what transforms experience into learning” (p. 15 as cited in Morton, p. 285). Reflection is the key to linking service and learning in order to achieve learning and developmental outcomes.

**Mutuality:** Robert Rhoads (1997) described mutuality as “the belief that service ought to be a two-way relationship in which all parties give and receive and all parties participate equally in the planning of service activities” (p. 127).

**Rationale**

Since the term “service-learning” was defined in the 1960s, this teaching methodology “has found justification in educational institutions as both an alternative pedagogy and as a movement aimed at transforming the culture of American higher education” (Haque, Tai, & Vander Mey, 2000, p. 24). Service-learning spans the decades with its roots in experiential education, personal and social development, civic education and career education.

The traditional model of formal education is the passing of knowledge from teacher to students, where the teacher is the source of information, and students are the receivers. This information is transmitted through lectures, reading textbooks, and taking written exams. John Dewey (1938) led a movement away from this traditional model to incorporate experience into the learning process. Dewey ascertained that a knowledge base is important, but “experience in interpreting that knowledge, testing it in current situations, and analyzing its meaning is crucial for true learning to take place” (Duckenfield & Madden, 2000, p. 2). Students’ interest in a topic can be enhanced by direct involvement with the topic that is meaningful to them.
Interactive learning is more likely to help students make connections to develop higher-level thinking that will lead to new learning than a lecture or reading a textbook is. Most people will remember “10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they hear and see, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say and do” (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999, p. 50). Successful cooperative learning requires engaged faculty who structure learning with meaning for each student so that “students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998, p. 14). Patricia Cross (1998) contended that the notion of students actively involved in seeking knowledge is key to effective learning.

Combining service, career education, and civic education based in experiential learning is what Ernest Boyer (1994) envisioned as the *New American College*. It is a vision of collaboration between institution and community, classrooms without boundaries of four walls, desks and chairs, and students participating in experiences that connect knowledge learned with real life or what has been defined as service-learning. It can be said that “what is extraordinary about service learning is its capacity to weave in these youth development needs with the required academic curriculum, enhancing the curriculum and deepening the impact on the student” (Duckenfield & Madden, 2000, p. 4). In order for service-learning to survive and be successful in higher education, the value of this learning method must be demonstrated.

Service-learning has emerged out of a concern by both faculty and student affairs professionals in the development of students as whole persons. The view of a more holistic student is founded in the traditions of liberal education and the key role our institutions play in preparing students for citizenship (Rhoads, 1997). John Dewey (1938) addressed this
concern as he advocated for a more democratic society, which depends upon educated citizens who play an active role in local and national governance. Institutions of higher education are an ideal environment in which students can develop into such citizens.

This holistic view of students has long been stressed in the curriculum of liberal education and higher learning, although student affairs divisions have primarily been responsible for the development of students as whole persons (Rhoads, 1997). The issues of student experiences both in and out of the classroom and practical versus academic knowledge have been a source of disagreement between faculty and student affairs professionals for years. Somewhere throughout the years concerns with developing students that are community or civic oriented have been lost.

By involving students in the community, both faculty and student affairs personnel recognize that these activities "should be situated not simply as out-of-class learning but as an extension of the classroom into the 'real world'" (Rhoads, 1997, p. 35). Hence, the essence of service-learning is that "academic and practical knowledge may be integrated as students struggle to solve important social problems through action and reflection" (p. 35). It is through this shared knowledge that learning environments can be improved for students both in and out of the classroom. Service-learning can begin to bridge the gap between student affairs and academic affairs in the pursuit of an enhanced learning environment.

To further enrich student learning at our institutions, students, faculty and administrators need to work collaboratively and share the responsibility. A joint report by the American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (1998) offered the following principles that provide a framework for strengthening learning environments.
1. Learning is about making and maintaining connections - biologically, mentally and experientially - through in-class experiences combined with meaningful activities outside the classroom.

2. Learning is improved by “taking place in the context of a compelling situation.” This situation would balance challenges with opportunities, utilize the brain’s ability to conceptualize and allow time for reflection.

3. Learning is constructing knowledge and searching for meanings, which includes active participation by the learner.

4. Learning is “developmental” and holistic. It builds upon experiences to construct new knowledge.

5. Learning involves individuals who collaborate with others, which creates powerful learning environments.

6. Learning is influenced by the educational climate.

7. Learning requires “constant feedback if it is to be sustained, practice if it is to be nourished, and opportunities to use what has been learned.”

8. Learning often times takes place informally outside the classroom through social activities and casual contacts with faculty, staff, and students.

9. Learning is “grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences, requiring effort to transfer specific knowledge and skills to other circumstances.”

10. Learning involves individualized assessment of progress. (pp. 7-18)

These principles are compelling to the entire service-learning movement in higher education and are consistent with the philosophy of service-learning in enhancing higher learning for students.
The integration of service and learning extends student experiences beyond the classroom and provides students external settings, in which they are able to think about and apply both academic and practical knowledge (Rhoads, 1997). This is the key component in experiential learning. John Dewey (1938) pointed out that "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (p. 20). Building these connections between the classroom and actual lived experience has been an issue for many educators following the initial work of Dewey (Kolb, 1984).

Service-learning is an avenue to build these connections in our higher education institutions. Research suggests that curricular service-learning or service that is connected to specific courses can improve student learning especially in the enhancement of course content (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Morton, 1996). When service is integrated with the course content, it provides opportunities for students to use theoretical models and apply their knowledge in the context of real social problems. In this learning environment, students are faced with unique situations that "generate profound dissonance in their traditional ways of thinking" (Albert, 1996, p. 184). The integration of service into the curriculum is appropriate when it contributes to the overall educational goals of the institution.

Service-learning has considerable potential for improving the quality of the overall learning environment at educational institutions. The claims for the success of service-learning include enhanced relevance of course content, change in student attitudes, increase in volunteerism and support for community needs (Driscoll, et al., 1996; Giles & Eyler, 1994). The potential student learning and development outcomes derived from participation in service-learning include

1. civic education,
2. personal and spiritual development,
3. critical thinking skills,
4. values clarification,
5. integration of theory and practice,
6. application of content-based knowledge and
career and practical skills. (Albert, 1996, p. 184)

With all of this support, there is still skepticism about the value of service-learning to academic programs. Gaps in the knowledge base about the effects of service-learning exist due to the fact that "the outcomes of service-learning have not been clearly conceptualized, nor is there agreement about the intent of service-learning" (Driscoll, et al., 1996). The commitment to service-learning is growing, but there are mixed results on the impact service-learning has on participants.

Giles and Eyler (1994) suggested that most studies assess the impact of service-learning on learning through self-report. Students report that they "like it" and say they learn more, but we don't know what they learn about themselves throughout the process, nor is a clear set of learning outcomes defined. Due to the lack of defined outcomes, it has been difficult to document the relationship between student learning and service-learning. Once these outcomes are defined, the problem then lies in finding an appropriate way to measure them (Steinke & Buresh, 2002).

According to Adrianna Kezar (2002), the problem with the current assessment of service-learning programs is that 1) they don't "adequately capture students' complex development" and 2) the methods "often assess a narrow set of outcomes, leaning toward traditional cognitive outcomes such as critical thinking and GPA" (p. 15). These narrow
outcomes can limit our understanding of the potential of service-learning programs. As educators, we must think beyond the traditional boundaries of classroom learning and ask ourselves, “What is an educated person?” The learning outcomes of service-learning are complex and multifaceted and there is a need to broaden the concept of academic learning to adequately “identify the range of outcomes important to academic achievement and the conditions under which service-learning may contribute to these diverse outcomes” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 14). Therefore, this study went beyond survey instruments and self-reports to discover, through in-depth interviews, how students made meaning of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contributed to their learning and self-awareness.

Significance of the Study

Evidence shows that volunteer service drops dramatically in the transition from high school to college (Astin, 1991). Giles and Eyler (1994) noted in reference to Astin’s study that “attending college removes students from the web of activities and organizations that have tied them to their communities” (p. 335). This eradication could contribute to the decline in volunteer service during the early college years. It is important for colleges and universities to recognize and address this disengagement of students. Service-learning programs, even if they are of short duration, can “provide an organizational context for reattaching students to service opportunities” (Giles & Eyler, p. 336). These service activities can then become a frame of reference for their college years.

Giles and Eyler (1994) discovered that even limited service experiences could help form the way students view service opportunities and the individuals in need of social service. Giles and Eyler found that in a community service laboratory where students studied community agencies and then volunteered for a short time, students indicated that they would
continue service in the future. Around 81% of the students had been involved in service activities during high school, but only 39% had been involved in service during the semester prior to the lab experience. After completing the lab project, some students were vague in their future commitments; however, 71% indicated an interest in continuing their service at the same place and 78% gave an estimated number of hours they were willing to serve. This was evidence of student intentions; however, the researchers did not follow up to see if they did indeed continue their participation. The results of this study do seem to confirm that the impact of service programs, even those programs with limited intensity, can make a difference. Service-learning can become the bridge connecting students with their new college community that will contribute to an increase in participation in volunteer activities.

Even with very structured service-learning programs, the experiences of each student will be different. According to Eyler and Giles (1997), we know that “these idiosyncratic experiences and perceptions of students make a difference” (p. 69). These student experiences and perceptions were what I wanted to uncover to determine how they related to student learning and self-awareness. Service-learning is about making connections with personal and intellectual development and acquiring and applying new knowledge (Eyler & Giles, 1999). These connections provide the setting where academic learning begins and is cultivated. The emotional power of service-learning helps students connect with what is going on in the classroom; therefore, learning is enhanced.

I studied how this learning was enhanced through service-learning, especially in regard to mastery of course content in order to use information effectively in real world situations. I was also interested in how these service experiences contributed to the students’ development of self-awareness. Understanding these two potential outcomes of service-
learning will help practitioners in the future better define and justify the full range of learning outcomes and measurements associated with service-learning. At the same time, this research project will be of interest to both academic and student affairs as it relates to the meaning students made of their learning experiences and personal development. It will provide information to better enable educators to foster successful learning environments.

We must look at learning more holistically. Steinke and Buresh (2002) contended that to better define learning outcomes we need to focus on more than just content, because “students are more likely to learn content when pursuing meaningful, intrinsically interesting learning goals” (p. 9). Unfortunately, a narrow view of learning outcomes and measures to assess these outcomes could lead to negative consequences for service-learning programs (Kezar, 2002). Due to tight economic times and budget problems, programs such as service-learning could be cut due to the inconsistencies in the research on the impact of these programs. Therefore, research is needed to allow service-learning supporters to justify its costs not only in terms of dollars, but also in time and effort (Jacoby, 1996). This research illuminated the connections students made between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences, and service-learning in higher education in pursuit of a more holistic learning environment that engages students’ minds as well as their hearts.

Theoretical Perspectives

Service-learning has become a powerful programming effort that has great potential to enhance student learning and development. Knowledge about student learning and development provides an essential foundation for the design and implementation of service-learning programs. Several categories of theories are relevant to the various levels of development and ways of knowing for college students, including cognitive development,
learning style models, psychosocial development, identity development, and career
development. These theories "provide valuable perspectives for understanding students as
they enter service-learning experiences, how students experience the process of their
involvement in service-learning, and what their learning and development outcomes might
be" (McEwen, 1996, p. 54). These theoretical perspectives provide insights on the nature of
college students who participate in these experiences and the learning and development
outcomes that might be expected.

McEwen (1996) stated that "students will develop as more complex thinkers and will
understand their service-learning experiences in different ways depending on their own level
of cognitive development" (p. 58). This cognitive development will affect how students
"conceptualize course material, reflect on their community service, and make connections
among the formal classroom experience, their community service, and their own lives" (p. 86).
In addition, the psychosocial developmental issues that arise in the lives of students
provide filters that influence their experiences in service-learning and interactions with
others. This study focused on these two arenas of development and therefore the following
theoretical perspectives were most relevant.

Service-learning is a form of experiential learning; therefore, Kolb’s model for
experiential learning is key. This model draws on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and
Jean Piaget. It "offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong
process that is soundly based in intellectual traditions of social psychology, philosophy, and
cognitive psychology" (Kolb, 1984, p. 3). This experiential learning model provides a
framework for examining the connections among education, life experiences and individual
development. The learning cycle is summarized by Kolb as follows: "Immediate concrete
experience is the basis for observation and reflection. These observations are used to formulate concepts from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses then serve as guides in acting to create new experiences” (p. 21).

The premise of experiential learning is that students do learn from experience.

According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning theory is “a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (p. 21). This model provides a unique perspective on learning and development of students. Kolb presents an integrated model that shares the following characteristics of experiential learning.

1. Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes.
2. Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience.
3. The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world.
4. Learning is an holistic process of adaptation to the world.
5. Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment.
6. Learning is the process of creating knowledge. (pp. 26-36)

These characteristics of the experiential learning process can be summarized in Kolb’s definition of learning as the “process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). This definition incorporates several aspects of the experiential learning process.

First is the emphasis on the process of adaptation and learning as opposed to content or outcomes. Second is that knowledge is a transformation process, being continuously created and recreated, not an independent
entity to be acquired or transmitted. Third, learning transforms experience in both its objective and subjective forms. Finally, to understand learning, we must understand the nature of knowledge, and vice versa. (Kolb, 1984, p. 38)

The experiential learning process and Kolb’s (1984) model are central to service-learning in that students are exposed to multiple opportunities to move through the learning cycle; reflection is key to the entire learning process; reflection follows actual experiences and comes before the conceptualization phase. Providing a direct link to experience will enhance the effectiveness of students’ learning experiences.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) researched different ways of knowing in their study of 135 women and discovered five different perspectives in which “women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority” (p. 3). These different ways of knowing by their participants were silence, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and constructed knowledge.

The two perspectives that are most relevant to service-learning are procedural knowledge with the patterns of separate and connected knowing and constructed knowledge. Separate knowing was described by Belenky et al. (1986) as knowing through doubting what is right, questioning, accepting authority standards and separating oneself from the object of learning. The “separate knowers’ procedures for making meaning are strictly impersonal. Feelings and personal beliefs are rigorously excluded” (Belenky et al., p. 109). This is a typical way of knowing in many of our academic communities utilizing traditional teaching and learning methods. Connected knowing, on the other hand, builds on the conviction that “knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities” (p. 113). In connected knowing, the knower is connected to and has a capacity for empathy
with the subject manner. It involves understanding, believing and feelings rooted in relationships. Belenky et al. determined that both separate and connected knowing are needed for the next level of knowing – constructed knowledge.

Constructed knowledge, according to Belenky et al. (1986), is knowledge that is personally important and is integrated with knowledge learned from others. It involves “weaving together the strands of rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing” (p. 134). Therefore, knowledge depends on the context and is constructed with the knower playing an essential part in the process. This self-awareness allows women, in this case, to become passionate knowers and determine the “connection between what they are trying to understand and their own experience” (p. 141). This self-awareness came about through self-reflection and analysis on the part of the participants.

The structured reflection of service-learning relates to Belenky and her associates’ theory (1986) in that these reflective experiences help students develop as connected knowers. Through reflection, students will be required to think about their self-awareness and development and to connect their learning with the service experience. This is the essence of constructed knowledge.

Baxter Magolda (1992), in a five-year longitudinal study at Miami University of Ohio of over 100 students, discovered four different ways of knowing and three different gender-related reasoning patterns within the four ways. The first stage is absolute knowing, with receiving and mastering knowledge as the two reasoning patterns. The second is transitional knowing with interpersonal and impersonal as the patterns for reasoning. The third is independent knowing with interindividual and individual reasoning patterns. The fourth pattern of knowing is contextual knowing. In each category, Baxter Magolda described how
students view the teaching and learning process and their own personal learning preferences. The role of educators is to move students from where they are to more complex thinking, which is best accomplished with a balance of challenge and support. The notions of challenge and support draw on three important environmental factors in the development of students: confirmation, contradiction and continuity. Confirmation provides support for students in the learning process, contradiction presents challenges to move students to a new balance, and continuity provides the necessary connections for students to pursue learning. According to Baxter Magolda, “development requires a balance of confirmation and contradiction” (p. 227) to allow students to constantly reexamine their ways of knowing in light of new experiences.

The implications of Baxter Magolda’s (1992) work for service-learning lies in the three principles of practice that she developed for generating specific teaching and learning strategies. These three principles are “validating the student as a knower, situating learning in the students’ own experience, and defining learning as jointly constructing meaning” (p. 270). Students in Baxter Magolda’s study all commented on the value of learning as a relational activity and their development within that setting. Service-learning provides an excellent atmosphere for students to engage in all three of these strategies. Structured reflection activities can validate students as knowers and allow their voices to be heard. When given opportunities to reflect and share, “students can begin to sort through their perspectives and author their own” (p. 286). The nature of service-learning often situates the learning within the context of student’s own experiences. Through reflection, students can begin to define their learning as jointly constructed meaning not only with themselves, but with other students, their supervisors, professors, and community members.
Psychosocial development theorists look at the development of college students and define a certain progression of developmental tasks that occur in relation to the students’ interactions with their environment. Chickering and Reisser’s psychosocial model (1993) of student development is most relevant to this particular study on service-learning. This theory provides a framework for understanding the development of college students through seven vectors:

1. *Developing competence*: This includes intellectual competence, physical and manual skills, interpersonal competence and an overall sense of competence.

2. *Managing emotions*: The acknowledgement of both positive as well as difficult emotions and learning appropriate ways to handle and manage these emotions.

3. *Moving through autonomy toward interdependence*: Developing responsibility for emotional and instrumental independence, which leads to the recognition and acceptance of interdependence.

4. *Developing mature interpersonal relationships*: Developing tolerance and appreciation of differences and a capacity for intimacy.

5. *Establishing identity*: Developing a comprehensive and solid sense of self. This formation is dependent upon the first four vectors.

6. *Developing purpose*: Formulating goals and action plans in regards to vocation, personal interests, interpersonal and family commitments.

7. *Developing integrity*: Clarifying one’s own set of beliefs and values and developing congruence with socially responsible behavior. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, pp. 43-52)
Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that the first four vectors are prominent in the earlier years of the student's college life. Development in the first four vectors serves as the foundation for the fifth vector, establishing identity, which then is the foundation for the last two vectors. All of the issues described in this model can occur throughout the college years and even throughout a lifetime. However, the model reflects that certain vectors are prominent during certain points in the development of students.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors are significant to service-learning in that students may be dealing with different psychosocial issues, of which we need to be aware, as they are engaged in service-learning. This model is particularly relevant to this study as I am looking at the student's development of self-awareness, which is the culmination of development in the first four vectors. According to McEwen (1996), the design of service-learning "may facilitate development in one or more vectors, but which vectors are facilitated is likely a function of the interaction of the experience with the issues a student is facing developmentally" (p. 74). Thus, this psychosocial theory provided me with the lens to view the development of students through their service-learning experiences, especially in regard to self-awareness.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) also identified several key influences on student development: institutional objectives, institutional size, student-faculty relationships, curriculum, teaching, friendships and student communities, and student development programs and services. Of these seven influences, institutional objectives, student-faculty relationships, curriculum and teaching are the most relevant to service-learning. Chickering and Reisser hypothesized that student development is fostered when

1. institutional objectives are clear and taken seriously and as the diverse
elements of the institution and its programs are internally consistent in the
service of the objectives.

2. student-faculty interaction is frequent and friendly and when it occurs in diverse
situations calling for varied roles and relationships.

3. an educationally powerful curriculum includes the full range of activities and
investments that a student's college experience comprises.

4. teaching calls for active learning, encourages student-faculty contact and
cooperation among students, gives prompt feedback, emphasizes time on task and
high expectations, and respects diverse talents and ways of knowing. (pp. 266-272)

These influences can determine the effectiveness of service-learning programs
through the institution's support of them, as well as the interaction of students, faculty and
community personnel. Service-learning seems to provide an avenue for active, engaged
learning and addresses different learning styles and student development by providing a
variety of service and learning settings.

In designing these effective learning environments for college students, Astin's
(1984) involvement theory provides a foundation that is helpful to educators and is another
theory of student development that relates to service-learning programs. Student
involvement "refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that students invest
in the college experience" (Astin, p. 307). This involvement can include academic work,
extra-curricular activities, and students' interactions with faculty and administrators.
According to Astin, "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the
amount of student learning and personal development" (p. 307). The key to this particular
theory and what makes it stand apart from traditional learning pedagogies is that the focus is shifted to what students are actually doing, their motivation, and the time they devote to the learning process.

Student involvement theory “provides a unifying construct that can help to focus the energies of all institutional personnel on a common objective” (Astin, 1984, p. 305). Institutional policies and practices can be evaluated on the degree to which they involve students. Service-learning programs provide the setting in which strong connections between students, community members, and faculty are nurtured. These connections, then, encourage students to become more involved throughout their college experience and enhance student learning and development.

Knowledge about these particular content theories provided a basic foundation for studying service-learning and the meanings students made of these experiences, as well as their contributions to student learning and development. Students can be at a variety of levels of development throughout their college years, which will affect how they conceptualize course concepts, reflect on their experiences, and make connections between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences, and service-learning.

Methodological Perspective

Qualitative research provides a holistic view of a topic and presents multiple realities within a certain setting. In our postmodern society, many researchers have begun to question scientific, quantitative research methods. In answer to some of these questions, the “qualitative paradigm opens new vistas to understanding humans in society” (Brotherson, 1994, p. 102). In conducting qualitative research, a new set of beliefs is used in discovering
knowledge. The methods used to discover this knowledge include such things as observations, case-studies, individual interviews and focus group interviews.

Qualitative research methods were used in this study to provide a depth of understanding of student experiences in a service-learning program. This understanding comes from an “emic,” or participant’s perspective; I am, as the researcher, the instrument; the research will occur in a natural setting; the nature of the research is inductive; and the findings will depend upon rich description to tell the stories of the participants (Jones, 2002, p. 461). These elements of qualitative research played a role in designing strategies for data collection, analysis, and an overall personal responsibility in conducting qualitative research.

As a starting point, in developing this research project, I addressed the following questions:

What methods do I propose to use?
What methodology governs my choice and use of methods?
What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective? (Crotty, 1998, p. 2)

The answers to these questions provided the basic elements needed for my research design.

To further clarify the terms used above, Crotty defined methods as the techniques used to gather and analyze data; methodology as the strategies or theories that guide the use of methods; theoretical perspectives as the philosophical context that informs the methodology; and epistemology as the theory of knowing and understanding our world that guides the theoretical perspective and methodology. I intend to describe and define all four of these elements as they pertain to my study.
The data collection methods I used were a combination of focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis (student journals). I conducted a pilot study at Central College in October, 2002, with one student who was involved in an individual module of service-learning. The participants for the actual study were all students from Central College who had been involved in a specific course, Psychology 382 – Child and Adolescent Development, which incorporated a service-learning component into the course.

The theoretical perspective and methodological strategy I incorporated was phenomenology because I was interested in the actual lived experiences of my participants and wanted to uncover the phenomenon of service-learning. Phenomenology “addresses experience from the perspective of the individual and is based on the assumption that people have a unique way of making meaning of their experience” (Davis, 2002, p. 511). This strategy is concerned with the lived experiences of the participants and with discovering the crux of the particular phenomenon, in this case, service-learning.

Constructionism was the overall epistemology that guided this study. Crotty (1998) defined constructionism as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). From this viewpoint, all meaning is constructed “by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 43). Therefore reality can be interpreted in many different ways; there is no one valid interpretation as it is context specific. Another aspect of constructionism is that meaning is both subjective and objective (Crotty). For the purposes of my study, knowledge is socially constructed and it takes form within each individual rather than already existing, waiting to be discovered. My research
provides deeper understandings of the meaning students made of their service-learning experiences and how that contributed to their learning and self-awareness.

**Pilot Study**

I completed a pilot study (October, 2002) using a simplified version of the methodology used in this study. An interview was conducted with one female participant (Jennifer) who was involved in an individual service-learning module at an after-school program for urban children. The purpose of this pilot study was to engage a student in a conversation to preliminarily assess my research questions and interview approach.

Eyler and Giles (1999) found that the learning in students involved in service-learning was "deeper than merely acquiring and spitting back a series of facts about a subject; it engaged our students' hearts as well as their heads" (p. xiv). In the pilot study Jennifer's responses conveyed that learning was more than just mastering course content; it was learning about herself and learning from experience as well as from others. Going into the project, she expected to be the "white knight" who "was there to help them." She said, "I wasn't going to get anything out of it because they didn't have anything to offer me. I was going to go in and I was going to take care of everything." But throughout the experience things changed for her and she started to learn from the children. According to Jennifer, "I feel like they give me more than I give them." This statement relates to Belenky's et al. (1986) connected knowing where "learning involves feeling and is rooted in relationships" (p.121). As this participant became more involved with her experience at the Willkie House, her learning became connected with that particular experience and she was jointly constructing meaning with the children with whom she was involved. Jennifer stated, "I have the mentality now that each person that I come into contact with is there for a reason, to teach
me a lesson.” This had a profound effect on her. She wrote in her journal, as a final assignment, what she had learned from each child.

Jennifer also shared that through this particular experience she started to see how things were connected based on content from her courses, outside reading and speakers. The academic connections she found dealt with cultural influences, different learning styles and how environments influence behavior. In addition, she also noticed personal connections, such as the similarities between herself and the individuals with whom she worked. Even though they were very different from her, they shared some of the same feelings and thoughts.

This experience was significant to Jennifer because she watched how the kids developed and witnessed their excitement to learn, which in turn motivated her own learning. She also realized the importance of relationships and has changed her definition of success to a more personal one. This experience also altered her view on a future career. Jennifer stated, “I see success more as the people you spend time with, the quality of your relationships with them, the amount of respect you have for other people.” Jennifer felt that, through this experience, she had changed little by little and, as a result, spent much of her free time going to the Willkie House.

During this interview, I was surprised by the passion Jennifer expressed in sharing her experiences and her honesty in how much she had changed due to this experience, for example, in her career goals and attitudes on ethnicity. As a result of this pilot study, I restructured my interview protocol to allow future interviews to be more open and unstructured to allow the student’s story to emerge. This pilot study confirmed the context I chose for the research site and data collection methods to be utilized. In uncovering and
clarifying connections students make between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences, and service-learning, it is important to have the underlying context of these service experiences be integrated with an academic course. Therefore, this pilot study helped me define my criteria for participant selection, which were students who participated in a particular course, Psychology 382, which had a required service-learning component. By conducting this pilot study, I gained a sense of confidence in my research skills and again reconfirmed the purpose of this study for me personally.

Tentative Presuppositions

One assumption I brought into this research study was that service-learning has many benefits for students, both with regard to learning outcomes and personal development. The literature has pointed out many of the benefits, but some of the previous studies have had mixed results as far as the impact of service-learning programs on students. My interest in this particular study was to go in-depth with students to hear their stories and perceptions of learning and self-development.

A second assumption I had was that the research site of a small private liberal arts institution provided a conducive environment to implement and even institutionalize service-learning. These institutions have service embedded within their overall mission, culture, and strategic plans. The overall goals of a liberal arts education warrant active engagement of students with the community.

A third assumption that I brought into this research study was that the events of September 11, 2001 played a part in students’ engagement in service activities. Everyone, especially our students, has grappled with making sense of what happened that day. Most people have internalized the meaning of that event and new meanings of citizenship, morals
and values have developed. Students have witnessed the connections of world affairs to their personal lives. As students struggle to make sense of their role as citizens of a post September 11th nation, their ability to connect with others is essential. Therefore, I believed that this event would make service-learning more popular with students. Most of the literature on service-learning was written pre-September 11th, but I was open to the possibility that students would be compelled now more than ever to be engaged with others in service activities.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is the Overview of the Study and includes the background on service-learning, research purpose, research questions, definitions, rationale, significance of the study, theoretical perspectives, methodological perspective, results from the pilot study, and tentative presuppositions.

Chapter Two contains the Literature Review. This chapter is divided into the following five categories: the history of service-learning, the premises of service-learning, the institutionalization of service-learning, previous studies on academic learning, which include findings on learning outcomes, and Rhoads’ study of the caring self, which distinguished the connection between the development of self and academic learning. A summary of the literature and my research purpose are included as well.

Chapter Three reviews the Methodology and Methods that were chosen for this research project. Included in this chapter are the general methodological approach, the philosophical assumptions underlying the chosen approach, the specific research approach, the research site, participants, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, design issues, and limitations of the study.
Chapter Four presents the Findings and Discussion. The participants of the study are introduced, findings are reported, and a discussion of the findings in relation to previous literature on service-learning, as well as student development theories, is presented. Within the discussion the following sections are included: definition of service-learning, student learning, self-awareness, institutionalization of service-learning and connections to theory.

Chapter Five, Conclusions, is the final chapter. A summary of findings is presented according to the three research questions, which include student meanings, fundamental elements of service-learning, and self-awareness. This chapter also includes implications for practice, implications for researchers, recommendations for further study, a personal reflection, summary and conclusion.

References, appendix material, and acknowledgments are found after the conclusion of Chapter Five.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature provides first, the historical context of service-learning in higher education. Next, as noted in chapter one, many definitions exist for service-learning; therefore, the basic premises of service-learning are outlined. Previous research studies on the institutionalization of service-learning are then presented. Several studies on academic achievement related to service-learning programs that include findings about learning outcomes are also included in this chapter. These studies provided a foundation for my research. Finally, Robert Rhoads' research is outlined as he explored how students' sense of self develops through community service experiences. This study focused on the connection between the development of self and academic learning, which specifically addressed the outcomes I was interested in studying.

History of Service-Learning

It is important to provide a context for the current concept and practice of service-learning in higher education. There has long been a tradition of service in higher education dating back to the colonial college where the goal of education was to prepare citizens, or then, the clergy, for civic involvement (Boyer, 1994).

This tradition continued with the Land Grant Act of 1862, which tied higher education to agriculture, industry, and home economics. Boyer (1994) cited a statement by Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton in 1902: “It is not learning but the spirit of service that will give college a place in the public annals of the nation” (p. 48). Even over a century ago, distinguished academic leaders tied service to higher education.

Throughout history, service has been reaffirmed over and over again. During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt appointed distinguished scholars as consultants.
During World War II, universities worked collaboratively with the government in research efforts (Boyer, 1994). After the war, two national partnerships were founded: the National Science Foundation in 1950 and the GI Bill. In 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, higher education was called upon again to help improve our nation’s schools. The National Defense Education Act of 1958, by its very nature, connected higher education with the security of our nation (Boyer).

During the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy inspired many college students to be involved with community service by the emergence of the Peace Corps in 1961, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) in 1965, and the Civil Rights movement. These movements challenged institutions as well as students to promote social justice (Boyer, 1994).

The roots of service-learning are found in John Dewey’s theory (1938) of experiential learning. Service-learning and other forms of experiential learning, such as internships and cooperative education, flourished in the 1960s and 1970s on many college campuses. Many campus-based, service-learning programs started in the early 1970s with the founding of the National Center for Service-Learning. Interest in service-learning continued throughout the 1970s, and in 1978 the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE, as of 1994 NSEE – National Society for Experiential Education) was founded. This organization collected and distributed many written resources on service-learning (Jacoby, 1996b).

This early service-learning movement of the 1960s and 1970s in higher education did not last. Kendall (1990) outlined three pitfalls that led to the failure of many service programs.

1. Most of the programs were not integrated into the central mission and goals of
the schools and agencies where they were based.

2. Community service practitioners learned several important programmatic lessons about the balance of power and the pitfalls of “helping others” or “doing good.”

3. While it sounds great to help young people learn through service experiences in the community, the service experience alone does not ensure that either significant learning or effective service will occur. (pp. 8-10)

The lessons learned from these earlier movements are important to build upon today, in order to incorporate service programs into higher education.

With these lessons in mind, a group of committed educators, community leaders and students who experienced the great potential of service programs continued throughout the “me generation” of the late 1970s and 1980s “to identify the factors that can help programs be sustained over time” (Kendall, 1990, p. 11). A critique of what worked and what did not work was conducted to identify the necessary elements that should be incorporated into new programs involving students and communities. This was the beginning of defining several underlying principles of good practice for service-learning, including critical reflection, reciprocity, a balance of power among all parties involved, and institutional support (Kendall). This commitment to high quality service-learning programs has been the foundation for the more recent increase and interest in service-learning in higher education.

In 1985, service-learning on college campuses gained new momentum with the beginning of Campus Compact. The presidents of Brown, Georgetown, Stanford and the president of the Education Commission of the States joined together with the primary purpose of helping students develop values of citizenship through public and community
service (What we’ve done: A 17-year retrospective, 2002). This organization is a coalition of college and university presidents who are committed to and support academic service programs at their institutions. Campus Compact now has over 800 members from public and private two and four year institutions in 46 states and the District of Columbia, United States territories and one international site. Campus Compact has implemented a range of initiatives to make community service a component of higher education. In addition to the work completed at the national level, the individual state affiliates serve as liaisons to school systems, community and governmental organizations, and higher education to provide workshops and conferences for member institutions (What we’ve done: A 17-year retrospective).

During this same time period, a group of recent graduates established the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) to encourage college students to become involved in service. This has resulted in “many student-initiated service projects...and COOL has an ever-expanding national network” (Jacoby, 1996b, p. 14).

Due to this resurgence of service-learning programs and the awareness that learning and service don’t happen automatically, the NSEE started the process of defining a set of principles of good practice. This process culminated in a 1989 Wingspread Conference where the Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning were unveiled (Jacoby, 1996b).

This was the first of many publications and professional conferences related to service-learning in the early 1990s. In response to the need for published research on service-learning, the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning was established in
1994. This journal, as well as numerous other literary sources, is valuable to practitioners in higher education in developing quality service-learning experiences (Jacoby, 1996b).

The 1990s also saw an increased interest and support of service-learning by the federal government. The passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990 was a “culmination of George Bush’s 1988 presidential campaign recognition of ‘a thousand points of light,’ which inspired the creation of the first White House Office of National Service and the Points of Light Foundation” (Jacoby, 1996b, p. 16). Bill Clinton, during his presidential campaign, advocated for a national service program, which eventually led to the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. This led to the formation of the Corporation for National Service.

This corporation funded over 20,000 positions in the AmeriCorps service program, as well as service-learning programs in both K-12 and higher education settings, through what is referred to as Learn and Serve America. The corporation has been the foundation for service-learning programs in colleges and universities. Many partnerships have been established between higher education and community agencies to engage students in service that addresses a variety of community needs. Participants in this program receive living subsidies as well as a stipend to pay off educational debt or to finance future education (Jacoby, 1996b).

In 1994, President Clinton even sent a letter to all college and university presidents asking for their support in fostering a spirit of service in our nation. This was the first time any president ever did this type of letter campaign. In response to this letter, the American Association of Higher Education and Campus Compact convened the Colloquium on
National and Community Service. Since this first colloquium, many additional meetings, conferences and published materials have emerged in higher education (Jacoby, 1996).

The service-learning movement, throughout history, has experienced successes as well as failures within higher education. We can build on the important lessons learned from the past to continue to foster social and civic responsibility in our students through service-learning. Today, the mission statements of most colleges and universities include not only teaching, learning and research, but also service, which is needed now more than ever in our society. Boyer (1994) stated that "higher education and the larger purposes of American society have been - from the very first - inextricably intertwined" (p. 48). His vision for the New American College is one of a connected institution that supports teaching and research, but also takes pride "in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice" (Boyer, 1994, p. 48). The New American College would be committed to improving the human condition through academic integration, which would enrich our institution and communities; it would also bring the scholarship of service to the forefront.

Premises of Service-Learning

As noted in the previous chapter, service-learning can be defined in many different ways. It takes on different forms depending on the institutional mission and environment in which it exists. Researchers have been trying to establish a clear definition for service-learning for years in order to establish clear goals for these programs. Sigmon (1990) proposed three principles to guide service-learning programs:

1) Those being served control the service(s) provided.

2) Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions.
3) Those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned. (p. 57)

In establishing a more universal definition for service-learning there needs to be a balance between learning goals and service outcomes. The following typology (Figure 1) provides a basis for various forms of service programs that distinguishes them from other experiential education programs (Furco, 1996).

Figure 1: Service and Learning Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service-Learning:</th>
<th>Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE-learning:</td>
<td>Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning:</td>
<td>Service and learning goals completely separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE-LEARNING</td>
<td>Service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Furco, (1996).

Furco (1996) portrayed a pictorial of the distinctions among the various types of service programs. The following provides a continuum of where each service program lies, which is determined by the “primary intended beneficiary and its overall balance between service and learning” (p. 3).

Figure 2: Distinctions Among Service Programs

Adapted from Furco, (1996).
This continuum portrays the various types of service programs and distinguishes them by their purposes as well as focus. The intended beneficiary of the particular service activity and the degree to which service and learning are emphasized defines these programs. The idea of the continuum is that each service program type “has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other types” (Furco, 1996, p. 3). By defining these characteristics, we are able to come to a more universally accepted definition of service-learning. Using this model as a foundation, Furco provided a broader definition of service-learning “where there is a balance between learning goals and service outcomes” (p. 3). Furco’s concept emphasizes the interaction of service and learning, which goes beyond the independent contributions of each separately; therefore the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Service-learning can be further characterized as educational experiences where

1. students learn course content as a result of the service that they perform.
2. students apply course content in a community setting.
3. students are provided time and opportunity for reflection on the experience.
4. the relationship among participants is collaborative and the benefits are reciprocal.
5. the service is with, rather than for, the community participants.
6. community participants acquire benefits from the service, while students gain valuable knowledge and skills. (Buchanan, Baldwin, & Rudisill, 2002)

These experiences foster a dynamic interplay of theory and practice where content is situated in relevant social contexts, which brings legitimacy to coursework and adds credibility and personal meaning to theory (Buchanan et al.). Service-learning becomes an avenue through
which academic goals can be obtained in a way that is consistent with an institution’s mission of service to the community.

In the past decade, with the resurgence of service in education, there has been an increase in the popularity of service-learning programs throughout K-12 schools, colleges, and universities. As a result, at the 1989 Wingspread conference, the following Principles of Good Practice for Combining Serving and Learning were developed. These principles reflect and represent the experiences and expertise of numerous individuals, programs and national organizations. The purpose of these principles is to sustain current initiatives in service programming that will benefit from their roots in history (Principles of Good Practice Combining Service and Learning, 1990).

These principles state that an effective and sustained program that combines service and learning:

1. Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
2. Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.
3. Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
4. Allows for those with needs to define those needs.
5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
6. Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
7. Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.
8. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
9. Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interest of all involved.

10. Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

(Principles of Good Practice Combining Service and Learning, 1990)

In addition to these principles for effective programming, the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) developed the following Critical Elements of Thoughtful Community Service (1993):

- **Community Voice** – the essential building block to ensure that the needs of the community are included in the development of the service program.

- **Orientation and Training** – the important steps taken to prepare students for their service experience by providing information on the issues, community and the particular community organization.

- **Meaningful Action** – the service being completed is seen as being valuable and necessary to the community. Students want to know that the work they have done will make a difference and that their time was well utilized.

- **Reflection** – the crucial component of the service-learning experience. This should take place immediately following the service so that the student has the opportunity to share feelings, observations, reactions and stories about their experiences, while placing it into a broader context.

- **Evaluation** – this measures the impact of student learning as well as the overall effectiveness of the service to the community organization. (Mintz & Hesser, 1996)
These critical elements have guided many institutions in the development of service-learning programs. The literature suggests, however, that there does seem to be some disconnect between the development of these principles and the success in putting them into practice.

To extend the context of these underlying principles beyond the program level to a broader pedagogical level, the Principles of Good Practice in Community Service-Learning Pedagogy were developed. The following principles proposed by Jeffrey Howard (1993) focus on the challenges and opportunities in service-learning practice:

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service.
2. Do not compromise academic rigor.
3. Set learning goals for students.
4. Establish criteria for the selection of community service placements.
5. Provide educationally sound mechanisms to harvest the community learning.
6. Provide supports for students to learn how to harvest the community learning.
7. Minimize the distinction between the student’s learning role and the classroom learning role.
8. Re-think the faculty instructional role.
9. Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes.
10. Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course. (as cited in Mintz & Hesser, 1996, p. 32)

Use of these principles emerged from the history of service in higher education. Collaboration is the meta-principle, necessary to provide a foundation that is inclusive and reciprocal for building trust and community. The key is to move from these principles to practice.
Combining service and learning can be powerful. By linking service and learning, the literature presented the following outcomes for participants. Students will

1. develop critical reflection skills, which enhance life-long learning;
2. become more curious and motivated to learn;
3. strengthen their sense of civic responsibility;
4. be committed to discovering underlying premises of social problems;
5. develop complex understanding of issues and become creative problem-solvers;
6. develop sensitivity to policy issues and decisions;
7. respect cultural differences;
8. learn to work collaboratively; and
9. realize their efforts can make a difference. (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kendall, 1990)

By expanding the roles of learners through service experiences, these outcomes can become greatly enhanced. Knowing and learning shifts from the individualistic tradition to a more collaborative, contextual learning environment.

Institutionalization of Service-Learning

As witnessed throughout the history of higher education, service has played an integral part in the transformation and reform movements within the educational system. Many institutions are increasingly emphasizing and implementing service-learning programs to meet the needs of students, faculty, administrators, community members and society at large. Sustaining long-term involvement in service-learning is a challenge that many institutions face. Integrating service-learning into the broad spectrum of learning activities and opportunities within institutions is one step closer to institutionalizing service-learning.
The institutionalization of service-learning is a multifaceted process that involves many stakeholders. Institutionalization can be portrayed at the campus level by the mission statement, presidential leadership, budget allocations, publicity, administrative and staff support, faculty roles and rewards, and the integration of service-learning with other administrative offices. Institutional changes that support service-learning include

1. clarifying the mission and goals to produce congruence between mission and practice;
2. examining and modifying the curriculum to reflect community service;
3. investing in infrastructure to support service;
4. developing models for assessment; and
5. adjusting roles and rewards for faculty (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

For institutionalization of service-learning to occur, it is evident that many factors must be considered and defined.

Three relevant studies have looked at the success of the institutionalization of service-learning in higher education institutions. The first study, conducted by Campus Compact, involved 44 institutions that developed a plan for the implementation of service-learning. The findings from this study indicated that institutionalization was more likely to occur when

1) there was congruence with the mission and strategic plan of the institution, 2) resources were allocated to support service-learning, 3) faculty were involved in the planning stages, 4) incentives were provided to faculty, 5) faculty work was published, and 6) service-learning was integrated into the curriculum, which was completed over a duration of time and supported by a vast number of personnel (Morton & Troppe, 1996).
Holland (1997) conducted the second study and examined the relationship between organizational factors and the level of institutional commitment to service. Three factors were related to the success with which service-learning was institutionalized. The first factor was the congruence of service-learning with the institutional mission. The second factor was the institutional policies and resources that allowed service to be central to the work of faculty and an integral part of the student experience, not just an extra assignment. Thirdly, service-learning strategies had to be distinctive to the institution in order to reach sustainability.

This study resulted in the identification of four levels of institutional commitment and seven different organizational factors that characterize choices regarding service at institutions. Holland (1997) provided a matrix (see Figure 3) that portrays the four levels of commitment to service characterized by these organizational factors in order to assess the current state of institutions and facilitate institutional planning and decision-making that will foster the desired level of institutionalization of service-learning. The following organizational factors are relevant to the institutionalization of service-learning: mission; promotion, tenure, and hiring of faculty; organizational structure; student involvement and integration into the curriculum; faculty involvement; community involvement; and campus publications. This matrix provides a framework for institutions to compare and assess current status in order to engage in institutional planning and decision-making.
Adapted from Holland, (1997).

Bringle and Hatcher (2000) conducted the third study based on the Comprehensive Action Plan for Service Learning (CAPSL) model. He investigated the degree to which service-learning was institutionalized and studied the variables associated with differences in institutionalization of service-learning. The data were collected from questionnaire responses provided by 179 representatives from various institutions of higher education concerning the institutionalization of service-learning. The study found that greater institutionalization occurred when institutions established a centralized office to coordinate service activities, funded such an office with institutional funds, situated these responsibilities under the chief academic officer, and involved key personnel in Campus Compact institutes (Bringle & Hatcher). These are just the first steps in truly
institutionalizing service-learning. The next challenge for the leadership of institutions is to follow through on commitments to ensure that service-learning is integrated into the campus culture.

If such a challenge is to be met, strategies to link service-learning to the overall mission of institutions and higher education in general need to be understood in a more comprehensive way. Edward Zlotkowski (1996) summarized what needs to be done.

Without abandoning the moral and civic concerns fundamental to the very concept of service-learning, advocates must begin investing more serious intellectual capital in moving not just from student-led community service to institutionally sanctioned service-learning, but also from one-size-fits-all service-learning to service-learning as a pedagogy carefully modulated to specific disciplinary and inter-disciplinary goals. (p. 25)

In order to make an impact on higher education, Zlotkowski argued that institutionalization of this fashion is critical.

Collaboration is necessary to bring service-learning to the entire academy. In order to bring about this collaboration, the respect for service-learning as a discipline-specific pedagogy must be widely established. Secondly, a link between service-learning and other reform efforts in higher education must be established (Zlotkowski, 1996). Reform efforts to expand the role and reward systems for faculty are especially relevant to the service-learning movement. Service-learning has the potential to provide benefits for all those involved by achieving a wide range of educational outcomes and fulfilling institutional missions. A strong, institutionalized service-learning program demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to democratic values, citizenship and other core values; therefore, service-
learning should be at the forefront of issues relevant to the transformation of higher education in this century.

The institutionalization of service-learning is an issue that has been discussed thoroughly at Central College, the site for this particular study. The factors that Bringle and Hatcher (2000) and Holland (1997) discussed as important in the institutionalization of service-learning are identical to the aspects that the Director of Community Based Education shared as crucial to the success of the integration of service-learning at Central College. As the literature has shown, if service-learning is to be truly institutionalized, it must be integrated into all aspects of the college culture.

Previous Studies on Academic Learning

The evidence of academic achievement throughout the literature on service-learning has been mixed at best. Many of the studies on academic achievement have generally been limited in that they equate learning to course grades or GPA, which may not entirely capture the value added to learning through service. Although Astin and Sax (1998) found that overall GPA was somewhat higher for students involved in service than those who were not, their service involvement was not clearly linked to the classroom or a course subject. One explanation of the relationship between grades and service is that better students are more likely to become involved in service (Astin & Sax; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Fitch, 1991). Due to the fact that service participation is a choice at most institutions, students who decided to become involved in service may be more committed to their academic studies and more engaged in the community.

Students who are involved in formal service-learning programs tied to academic courses are excited about what they learn, but few attempts have been made to study the
academic learning in service-learning in higher education and again the results have been mixed (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Eyler and Giles found that 80 percent of the 1100 service-learning students surveyed reported that they had a good or excellent experience; 20 percent reported a poor or fair experience. When asked to compare their service-learning experiences with other classes, 58 percent felt that they learned more by being involved in service activities, 20 percent felt they learned less, and 24 percent felt they learned the same amount. The students who had positive experiences had more positive things to say about their learning; 60 percent reported they learned more than in their regular classes, and 12 percent reported they learned less.

Markus, Howard, and King (1993) found that students who were randomly assigned to service-learning sections of a political science course reported positive effects on learning and received higher grades than those students who were not assigned to the service section. Students who were not involved in the service section were required to write a research paper for their final assignment. Because the two groups were graded on separate assignments, it was unclear the extent to which course grades reflected different standards for each assignment (Markus, et al.).

Another study on academic achievement found that students in a child psychology course who chose a service option had higher course grades (Sugar & Livosky, 1988). Not all studies have had positive results. Miller (1994) studied two undergraduate courses in psychology with a service option in each course. The researcher found that course grades were not significantly different for the two courses. Kendrick (1996) compared both service-learning and control sections of a sociology course. Students either completed 20 hours of service in social service agencies or read articles from the New York Times to help them
apply course content to the real world. Kendrick found no difference in course grades between the two groups. In another study of college political internships, interns and those students who completed an advanced course in political processes took the same test and no difference was found in knowledge acquisition (Eyler & Halteman, 1981). As these studies have shown, when grades are the measure, service-learning students do not perform worse than students who are involved in traditional instructional settings, but it is not clear that they learn more or perform better.

What does it mean to learn academic material? The traditional answer would be the acquiring of information to demonstrate competency through examinations. Maybe a broader definition of academic learning is needed to better understand what it means to learn academic material. In the study conducted by Eyler and Giles (1999), students consistently identified two ways in which service-learning differs from traditional classroom learning: it leads to a deeper understanding and better application of course material. This finding is more consistent with the current views of learning in higher education.

The more current view of learning is what Dewey proposed many years ago in that knowledge should be learned in a context where it can be used to solve problems. Understanding academic material is the ability to see the relevance of such information in new situations; therefore, understanding “is distinct from the ability to recall information when prompted by a test; it is the ability to call it up when it is relevant to a new situation and the ability to use it in that situation” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 64). When material is understood in this fashion, it has meaning for the learner.

Baxter Magolda (1992) identified this type of understanding as contextual knowing where the student integrates and applies knowledge within a certain context and the voice of
self becomes much stronger. Also, Belenky et al. (1986) described understanding as the purpose of learning through the connected way of knowing. As students move from a connected way of knowing to constructed knowledge, self-awareness is key in making connections between understanding and students' own experiences. To foster interaction between learning and context, service-learning provides community settings in which students can begin to see first-hand complex situations unfold. Guided reflection of these experiences provides opportunities for students to discover meanings and uses for their new knowledge and understanding.

Although the earlier study by Eyler and Halteman (1981) of political interns and students in an advanced course in political science did not show any difference on an exam concerning the legislative process, the students with practical experience in the legislature were able to write strategic plans that incorporated the complexities of the political process. Those students who had been in the traditional classroom tended to rely on textbook solutions to the legislative process (Eyler & Halteman). Another study conducted by Batchelder and Root (1994) compared problem analysis essays of students written before and after some of the students conducted community service linked to a course. They found significant differences in the quality of analysis between those students involved in the community service and those who were not. Students involved in service-learning may not perform better on tests of information recall, but they don't necessarily perform worse. They may, however, gain a higher level of understanding and the ability to apply what they learn, which Eyler and Giles (1999) heard from students over and over again. It warrants expanding our thinking of how service-learning contributes to the differences in understanding academic material.
This Eyler and Giles (1999) study was a national survey of over 1500 students from 20 different colleges and universities, followed by in-depth interviews with students before and after the service semester to monitor cognitive change and additional interviews to explore student views of the service-learning process. Among the most important cognitive outcomes identified by students in this study were a deeper understanding of subject matter and complexity of social issues, and the ability to apply knowledge to real world problems. The application of course content, as well as opportunities for structured reflection, was associated with greater learning.

Other outcomes of this study included higher motivation in students in their service-learning courses than their regular courses. High quality service placements with meaningful and challenging responsibilities led to a higher level of learning and skill development. Integrated service and learning into the classroom and structured reflection led to an increase in student knowledge of issues and the ability to analyze complex problems. Finally, the quality of the service-learning experience was a predictor of most of the learning outcomes explored in this study (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

The empirical research discussed previously shows support for service-learning outcomes, which provide the foundation for institutions to integrate service programming into their academic missions (Eyler & Giles, 1999). These researchers found that the quality of the service-learning programs does make a difference. A number of characteristics that make a difference according to Eyler and Giles are 1) creating high-quality placements, 2) building application into service-learning, 3) planning for reflection, and 4) preparing for diversity, and 5) dealing with conflict.
In a longitudinal study, Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000) used a national sample of over 22,000 students to compare effects of service-learning and community service on cognitive and affective development of undergraduates. Eleven different dependent measures were assessed: "academic outcomes (three measures), values (two measures), self-efficacy, leadership (three measures), career plans, and plans to participate in further service after college" (p. 1). The service-learning participants showed significant positive effects on all outcomes such as GPA, writing skills, critical thinking, values, self-efficacy, leadership, and plans to participate in service activities after college. However, service-learning or community service did not significantly affect scores on standardized tests, such as the GRE, LSAT, or MCAT, used for entrance to graduate programs. More than four out of five students felt that they were learning from their service-learning experiences. These findings also suggest that integration of service as part of a course increases the benefits of service-learning. These benefits were the strongest for academic outcomes, such as writing skills and critical thinking. The act of processing or reflecting (both discussions and written journals or papers) on the experience was a key component to both community service and service-learning. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that service-learning needs to be designed to help students make connections between academic course material and the service experience (Astin, et al.).

Steinke, Fitch, McCrae, Williams, Johnson and Waldstein (2000) studied five different outcomes of service-learning and traditional classes at 12 private colleges in Iowa with 153 service-learning students and 155 comparison students surveyed. Five outcomes were identified in this study: civic engagement, intellectual development, cognitive learning, spiritual values, and community impact.
The study found that service-learning may contribute to the development of values and attitudes that are consistent with and encourage civic engagement. Student intellectual development was higher when students were engaged with the community and when faculty encouraged students to reflect on their experiences. Students working with individuals who were ethnically different from them felt more comfortable at the end of their experience than at the beginning. This finding may be indirectly related to intellectual development. The cognitive outcomes suggest that by using self-report measures, service-learning led to the enhancement of student learning. Student learning is also positively affected by instructional characteristics such as discussion, the use of reflection and instructor feedback.

Most students also reported a link between their service-learning experiences and their spiritual development. These experiences also helped students develop views in regard to community involvement, relationships with others, personal identity, vocational plans, diversity and ethical convictions. Finally, community participants had a positive attitude toward service-learning students and the projects that they performed. These findings indicate the importance of matching student abilities with the needs of community sites and the importance of building strong partnerships with the community (Steinke, et al., 2000).

A common theme that emerged from this study suggested that “model service-learning courses” are “those that fully integrate community service goals with academic learning goals” (Steinke, et al., p. 90). Service-learning can be viewed as an avenue in which students can better process information and begin to think in more complex ways about course content, societal issues, and personal beliefs, values and attitudes. The results of the intellectual development and cognitive outcomes of this study support the importance of
service-learning in promoting the academic goals of institutions and higher education in general.

These research findings provided a foundation for my proposed study of service-learning as these researchers included findings about learning outcomes that I was interested in studying – the ability to master course content and apply it to real world situations. This research also informed my study in that it was conducted at small private liberal arts institutions in the state of Iowa, and Central College, the setting for my study, was one of the participating institutions.

Rhoads' Study of the Caring Self in Community Service

Robert Rhoads (1997) examined the experiences of college students at three universities that were committed to community service. He explored how a student’s sense of self develops and may be challenged through involvement in the lives of others through community service experiences. The students’ exploring of the self and the caring nature of service was a source of student self-understanding and identity development.

This study was a six year project (1991-1996) where Rhoads researched and participated in community service projects associated with three universities: Pennsylvania State University, the University of South Carolina, and Michigan State University. Rhoads (1997) indicated that the data he collected “was more or less an outgrowth of the community service experience and was not the central objective” (p. 31). He distinguished himself throughout this process as a volunteer instead of a researcher. Rhoads utilized qualitative methodological strategies such as formal and informal interviews, surveys, participant observation, and document analysis (student journals). Over 100 students participated in the interviews, 66 students completed the surveys, and more than 200 students were observed at
various service sites. Ninety percent of the students who participated were undergraduates and ten percent were graduate students. Approximately 60 percent were female.

Rhoads (1997) drew upon the classic symbolic interactionalism and social theory of George Mead (1934) as well as more contemporary feminists such as Carol Gilligan (1982) and defined ways in which the sense of self could be considered with an ethic-of-care philosophy. Community service offers the caring context to nurture positive feedback that will have an effect on students' sense of self.

According to Rhoads (1997), students' involvement in community service needs to be a concern of both student affairs and faculty as it is an extension of the classroom into real life situations. In this setting, academic and practical knowledge is integrated to solve social problems. Students grapple with these problems through action and reflection, which brings together the “in-class” and “out-of-class” experiences. Understanding the unique experiences of college students is helpful in making sense of “the role community service plays in the broader goals of higher learning” (Rhoads, p. 35).

The majority of students who participated in this study were traditional-age college students (18 to 23). These students are dealing with transition from home, family and friends into a new environment, which becomes a time of increased autonomy, decision-making and personal growth. Chickering and Reisser (1993) have presented the seven vectors of psychosocial development to provide the lenses through which to see these changes in students' development. Most of this development centers on the issue of identity, and although this is in a constant state of change, the college years become the time when it is most challenged (Rhoads, 1997). Rhoads' project is critical for making sense of students' journey of self-awareness through their experiences with community service programs.
The work of Carol Gilligan (1982) is central to Rhoads’ (1997) study. Through an increasing concern for others, or the essence of caring, students are better able to bridge barriers presented in our postmodern society. Caring refers to the importance of fostering and maintaining connections with others. Gilligan’s “ethic of care” revolves around these connections with others (Rhoads). Using the ethic of care model in community service also relates to Belenky and associates’ (1986) concept of connected knowing, which involves the development of caring relationships. Community service, according to Rhoads, provides the avenue to explore students’ sense of self by learning and experiencing others. Gilligan’s research supports the premise that experiences gained through various relationships change and may influence the development of self, using an ethic of care (as cited in Rhoads).

In previous research conducted (Rhoads, 1994, 1995), educational setting, specifically the collegiate context, was found to contribute to students’ sense of self. Social interactions are key to the process of the development of self, and the power of the group helps shape the individual. These findings have implications for the educational setting that we provide for our students. The interactions between students and others, especially in community service, are significant in influencing their sense of self (Rhoads, 1997).

Educational experiences such as community service are crucial aspects of teaching and learning with a commitment to nurturing students. Students acquire knowledge through their interactions with others and also reevaluate their own thinking in terms of connections with others. This activity demands that students view knowledge and nurturance as connected rather than fragmented, a premise of Baxter Magolda’s (1992) constructed way of knowing. This becomes the bridge between academic affairs and student development and
one of the reasons I chose to study this topic – to determine how these experiences relate to students' perceptions of learning and sense of self.

Rhoads (1997) contended that the goals of higher learning and education should be to foster an "ethic of care." Community service is one avenue for encouraging this ethic of care because it initiates the development of community as interactive. Higher education, with the utilization of community service and the learning that comes from these experiences, can help foster students' sense of caring and concern for others (Rhoads). This involves students, faculty and community members in both a giving and receiving relationship (mutuality). Mutuality is a key component in service experiences that foster an ethic of care. Only when this notion is fully embraced will we see changes in our education systems as well as society at large.

The central idea of Rhoads' (1997) work is that the sense of self is derived from relationships with others. The role of education "is to challenge the sense of self students bring to higher learning" (p. 216). One answer to this challenge is to involve students in community service activities that provide opportunities for students to link the classroom, life experiences and the community. Students can then begin to make the connections between learning and the experiences of their lives, the premise of experientially based education (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

To bring community service to the forefront within institutions, Rhoads (1997) offered the following suggestions that incorporate faculty and student affairs perspectives, which are relevant to my study:

1. Community service must be central to the mission of the institution.
2. Community service must be a vital component of the formal curriculum.
3. Formalize expectations of faculty to foster community service opportunities for students through the promotion and tenure process.

4. Work to bridge the gap separating faculty and student affairs professionals through joint involvement with students in community service activities.

( pp. 226-227 )

Rhoads began his work with Dewey’s (1938) foundations of experiential learning and a democratic society to frame community service as an experience that not only has short term effects on individuals, but also long lasting changes based on the ideals of community building and mutuality through an ethic of care. Rhoads contended that “caring is good” (p. 233) and something we should all seek to foster in our students.

Rhoads’ (1997) study helped me frame my study on service-learning, particularly in my decision to examine how the connectedness to others influences the development of self or self-awareness. He also distinguished the connection between this development of self and academic learning, which is the combination I was most interested in studying. By understanding how service experiences contribute to student learning and self-awareness, I hoped to clarify the connections students made between learning, life experiences, service and their sense of self. Rhoads’ study was focused on community service projects, whereas I was interested in expanding this view to service-learning experiences specifically connected with an academic course.

Summary

As this chapter has outlined, the previous research studies on service-learning have had mixed results related to the impact of service on participants. Defining learning outcomes for service-learning is a complex process and the literature suggests that there is a
need to broaden the concept of academic learning in order to identify the conditions in which service-learning may contribute the most (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kezar, 2002). Our assessment of service-learning may be focusing too narrowly on traditional cognitive outcomes.

A variety of learning outcomes are available to be studied, but for the purposes of this study I wanted to provide a focused, in-depth picture of two specific outcomes: academic achievement and self-awareness. Therefore, this study contributed to the knowledge base by going deeper than survey instruments and self-reports to uncover the meaning students made of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences affected their learning and self-awareness. Because I researched the meaning students made of their learning experiences and personal development, the results are of interest to both academic and student affairs professionals. This study provides information to better enable educators to foster successful learning environments.
CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the general methodological approach I have chosen to use for this research to answer the previously identified research questions. Included in this chapter are 1) the general methodological approach, 2) the philosophical assumptions underlying the chosen approach, 3) the specific research approach, 4) details on the research site, 4) participants selected for the study, 5) data collection procedures, 6) data analysis procedures, 7) design issues, and finally, 8) limitations of the study.

General Methodological Approach

The research methodology used in this study is described in the literature as “naturalistic” or “qualitative” inquiry. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have provided several factors that describe the naturalistic paradigm that were relevant to this study on service-learning:

1. reality is multiplicitous and socially constructed and therefore must be examined holistically;
2. the researcher and the research subject interact to influence one another; hence, the knower and known are inseparable;
3. the aim of inquiry is to develop an interpretive understanding of social experience;
4. because social phenomena are highly interactive, cause and effect are difficult to ascertain; and
5. the various choices made by researchers reflect the values they hold. (pp. 37-38)

These aspects point to the appropriateness of qualitative methods for collecting data because they are more flexible in addressing multiple realities and provide great insight into the
relationship between the researcher and object of the study. The qualitative paradigm actively engages the researcher and participants in the construction of meaning, which was the purpose of my study.

Philosophical Assumptions

Qualitative inquiry is built upon a concern for understanding what individuals are doing and saying. Constructionism provides an avenue for addressing this issue. To achieve this understanding, it is important to realize that “knowledge of what others are doing and saying always depends upon some background or context of other meanings, beliefs, values, practices, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 201). Engaging in the act of gathering and interpreting data that answers questions about the meaning others make of what they are doing and saying, the researcher must deal with how knowledge is defined, practiced and linked with theory (Schwandt).

Constructionism typically draws on the everyday lives of participants. An underlying assumption is that knowing is not passive; rather it is active in constructing knowledge. According to Schwandt (2000), constructionism means that “human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it” (p. 197). Individuals develop concepts and images that make sense of particular experiences and then continuously challenge and examine these constructions in light of new situations. This is not done in isolation but within certain contexts and with shared understandings.

The assumption underlying constructionism is that no truth is to be discovered; rather meaning is existent during engagement with the realities of the world. Truth takes form within each individual; therefore, different constructions can be made of the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). From this perspective, “theory and practice inform one another
in a mutually shaping manner” (Broido & Manning, 2002, p. 436). Broido and Manning provided four tenets of constructionism:

1. The researcher-respondent relationship is subjective, interactive and interdependent.
2. Reality is multiple, complex, and not easily quantifiable.
3. The values of the researcher, respondents, research site, and underlying theory cannot help but undergird all aspects of the research.
4. The research product (e.g., interpretations) is context specific. (p. 436)

Constructionism seems to be consistent with educational research, especially in higher education. Knowledge was jointly constructed and therefore was pertinent for my study with students involved in service-learning to uncover the meanings they made of these experiences in relation to their learning and self-awareness.

Research Approach

The research approach I used was phenomenology because I wanted to address the experience of service-learning from individual student perspectives. Phenomenology is “concerned with lived experience and with uncovering the essence of a particular phenomenon” (Jones, 2002, p. 467). This approach is based on the assumption that individuals have a unique way of making meaning of their experiences. In order to truly understand a phenomenon, we must grasp it from another’s perspective (Davis, 2002).

Our cultural heritage shapes our thinking and behaviors throughout a lifetime. Culture provides the foundation for particular symbols and meanings that are an integral part of our past and allow us to move forward. This can be limiting in that it excludes others. Phenomenology “requires us to engage with phenomena in our world and make sense of
them directly and immediately" (Crotty, 1998, p. 79). Phenomena refer to the direct experiences of individuals and, in the case of this study, are the actual service-learning projects.

Phenomenology was relevant to this study in that it was a study of students' subjective and everyday experiences with service-learning. It entailed studying the service-learning experience from the perspective of the participants, as they understood it. Phenomenology is “geared towards collecting and analysing data in ways that do not prejudice their subjective character” (Crotty, 1998, p. 83). During the process, procedures are in place to minimize the researcher’s presuppositions or personal construction of the data. This is done by what is called “bracketing” the researcher’s own knowledge so that it does not distort the data (Crotty).

Research was gathered through in-depth unstructured interviews where the participants were allowed to tell their stories. Generated themes came directly from the data and the researcher did not impose them. This process is called “intuiting” the data and the participants were able to review the themes in order to support the fact that they emerged from the data. The emphasis behind phenomenology is to provide an understanding of the participants’ subjective experiences without any criticism from the researcher (Crotty, 1998).

In order to understand others’ experiences, Crotty discussed the idea of “putting oneself in the place of the other” (p. 83). Phenomenological research, therefore “emerges as an exploration, via personal experiences, of prevailing cultural understandings” (Crotty, p. 83). In other words, we are looking for a common understanding of the meanings of everyday experiences, which for this study were service-learning experiences.
How does phenomenology then contribute to social inquiry? The answer, according to Crotty (1998), is that it is “not only a beginning rooted in immediate social experience but also a methodology that requires a return to that experience at many points along the way” (p. 85). Experiences are the source of information from the beginning, middle, and end of the research. Phenomenology views the world as full of potential meaning waiting for our engagement with it in order to construct new understandings (Crotty). This is precisely what I was interested in doing with the phenomenon of service-learning; therefore, this research approach was consistent with the purposes and research questions I posed.

Research Site

This study was conducted at Central College, a four year, coeducational, liberal arts college affiliated with the Reformed Church of America, located in Pella, Iowa. The enrollment of Central College in 2002-2003 was 1,623 students from 40 states and 20 foreign countries (About Central, 2002). I chose this campus to conduct my study because they have a well-established service-learning program that was endorsed by the president of the college and many key personnel.

According to the Central College web site, their service theme was, “we create dynamic growth adventures that promote opportunities to improve lives” (About Central, 2002). The tradition of Central was “built not with bricks and mortar, but with people embodying our service standards: integrity, safety, respect, responsiveness, and energy” (About Central). In the President’s welcome letter on the web site, he discussed the key role of service to the institution by stating, “It is my hope that we’ll all continue to live out our service theme in the everyday lives of our young people at Central College.” Service was
very much embraced at Central College and was not only included in their mission statement, but also in the most recent strategic planning document (See Appendix A).

Service-learning emerged at Central when the institution revised its core curriculum in 1996. A Cultural Awareness Experiential Component (known as the “x” requirement) was added that requires students to have a significant experience with a minority subculture, residential community or international group. This can be completed through study abroad programs, courses that include the “x” requirement, or independent experiential modules. This “x” requirement not only broadens the learning and exposure of students to other cultures, but also connects service to others with the curricular program.

A common belief at Central is that learning not only takes place in the classroom, but also continues into different and diverse settings outside the traditional learning environment (See Appendix B). The goals of service-learning at Central College are to

1. provide opportunities for students to gain experience with diverse populations,
2. prepare students to be active and engaged citizens upon graduation,
3. enhance classroom experiences by providing opportunities for students to practice what they are learning, and
4. offer a means for the college to engage in reciprocal partnerships with organizations and agencies that serve the common good in our community and state. (C. Doane, personal communication, September 23, 2002)

Central’s commitment to service-learning is evidenced by their establishment of an Office of Community Based Learning, whose Director was my contact throughout this study. Organizationally, the Director reported to the Academic Dean with a direct link to the President. The Director served as the liaison with the college, service agency, professors and
students. The institution also provided funding for the students who were involved in service-learning by paying for their travel to the service sites (C. Doane, personal communication, September 23, 2002).

Participants

The participants for this study were students from Central College in Pella, Iowa who had taken a developmental psychology course, Child and Adolescent Development. This course is a 300-level elective course for primarily juniors and seniors, although some sophomores are allowed to enroll with the instructor's permission (See Appendix C for course description and syllabus). With the assistance of the professor and the Director of Community Based Education, I selected a representative group of students enrolled in the course. Ten students participated in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

I used the students' enrollment in the Child and Adolescent Development course as criteria for participant selection because service activities were integrated into the course requirements. Another important aspect of selecting this particular course was that structured reflection was required both orally (i.e., conversations with other students and the instructor) and in a written format (i.e., student journals). This course was a developmental psychology course; therefore, the students who participated were more primed, due to the course content, in both their own personal and intellectual development. Students were familiar with various developmental theories and were able to recognize their own personal growth and development throughout the reflective interview process.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection methods I utilized were a combination of focus group interviews, individual in-depth interviews, and document analysis (student journals). I used these
qualitative research methods in order to triangulate my data. The methods I chose shaped this project and provided an interesting picture of student learning and self-awareness developed through the service-learning experiences of students at Central College. Each method has its distinct advantages and disadvantages, but the various methods complemented one another.

Interviewing has historically been one of the most common avenues we as researchers use to try to understand individuals and/or groups. This process is much more difficult than it first may appear. It has become an important tool of sociologists due to the interaction that takes place between both parties. The interviewing process takes on many different forms and can be used for multiple purposes (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

I chose focus group interviews because they really are congruent with the qualitative paradigm. David Morgan (1997) emphasized that “much of what goes into conducting focus groups touches on the same issues that arise in any effort to collect qualitative data” (p. 7). Focus groups invite multiple realities to be shared and this is a “fundamental tenet” of this method (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996, p. 15).

Focus groups are popular for collecting qualitative information not readily obtained with other methods because

1) they provide qualitatively different information from that obtained in individual interviews, thus yielding a broad range of information because the group setting encourages spontaneous and candid reactions; and 2) for some topics, no other valid or reliable quantitative data-collection methods are available. (Quible, 1998, p. 29)
Focus groups can lead to a better understanding of attitudes and behaviors from multiple perspectives. These interviews “capitalize on group interaction to gain data and insights that would otherwise be less attainable” (Brotherson, 1994, p. 104). This was definitely an advantage of using focus groups and was valuable in my research with students involved in service-learning. I wanted to capitalize on students’ interactions with each other and determine how these interactions shape the information they provided about the context of their service-learning experiences. The focus group interviews provided a more conducive atmosphere for sharing among these students. It was interesting to conduct both individual and group interviews and compare the information gathered in both settings, to unveil the context of service-learning at this particular institution, as well as to perform member checks.

Focus group interviews can bring the researcher “into the most intimate contact” with the participants (Byers & Wilcox, 1991, p. 70). Again, this was important to my research, as well as any qualitative research project. I didn’t want to just be an observer in the process; I wanted to have close interaction with my participants, which enabled me to hear their stories and perceptions of their learning and self-awareness.

One strength in using focus groups is that the group interaction process provides the researcher with “insights into participants’ opinions and experiences” (Morgan, 1997, p. 13). When participants start comparing their opinions and feelings with other group members, the researcher is able to gain some deep insights into certain behaviors and motivational factors. Sometimes this information would not be as accessible without the group interaction. This was the factor that stood out to me in how I utilized focus groups in my research. Using focus groups was an efficient way to gather this type of collective data and the group interaction was key in giving the participants a voice in the process.
The second method of data collection I utilized was in-depth interviews with a semi-structured to unstructured format. The premise of this type of interviewing “is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 1991, p. 3). Interviewing uncovers the context in which people operate and, therefore, the researcher can better understand the meanings behind these actions. As a method of qualitative inquiry, “interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language” (Seidman, p. 7). It was especially pertinent to this study, as I was most interested in my participants’ stories.

The strength of using in-depth interviewing was that it provided an understanding of the specific details of individuals’ experience from their own perspective. We are able to see how “individual experience interacts with powerful social and organizational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context” (Seidman, 1991, p. 103). Various issues, structures, processes and policies were powerful influences on the stories that participants shared and made this type of research fascinating to me in uncovering student understandings of service-learning experiences within a specific context.

Seidman (1991) provided a structure for using in-depth, phenomenological interviewing. It is important in using this approach to use open-ended interview questions. The researcher will build upon and then explore the participants’ responses. The final goal of using this approach is that participants will reconstruct their experience.

Phenomenological interviewing involves conducting a series of interviews with each participant. It is important to set the context of the participant’s life so that the researcher is able to explore the meaning of his or her experience. This cannot be accomplished with only
one interview, but takes time to uncover the experience and put it into context for both the participant and researcher. The first interview set the context of the particular experience. The second interview allowed the participant to reconstruct the details of the experience within the set context. The third interview allowed the participant to reflect on the meaning he or she made of the experience. Throughout the interview process, participants are making meaning through the stories they are telling (Seidman, 1991).

Seidman (1991) recommended using this format for interviewing but also acknowledged that alternative structures may be needed. The important thing to consider when designing the interview structure is to make sure that the participants are able to reconstruct their experiences in depth within a certain context. For the purposes of my study, I used the focus group session as the first interview that set the context; then I proceeded with the second two interviews individually. This procedure was a modification of what Seidman defined as the phenomenological interviewing process and from what I originally proposed.

I conducted three focus group interviews with the first six participants in very small groups. The remaining four students were unable to attend these sessions due to their schedules; therefore, mid-way through the interview process, I revised my data collection methods and conducted individual interviews with the remaining students. The last two students agreed to participate late in the process; therefore I needed to condense the interview schedule in order to complete the data collection process and be sensitive to their upcoming finals and semester deadlines. All interviews were conducted on the campus of Central College during the spring semester, February through April, 2003. Working with college students and their busy schedules proved to be quite challenging in arranging times for
interviews. Three additional students agreed initially to participate in this study, but we were unable to find a time to meet.

I audio taped both the focus group and individual interview sessions and transcribed these tapes immediately following the interviews. The participants had an opportunity to read and respond to the transcription of each interview. I tried to space the interviews accordingly so that the participants had ample time to respond to the transcriptions but yet not too far apart so as not to lose the connection between the participant and myself. To keep this continuity, it seemed to work well to meet with each student once a week.

The final method I incorporated into this study was document analysis of student journals. With the students' informed consent, I reviewed their reflection on their service-learning experience. The professor provided each student with an outline of what was expected in the journal entries and provided several thought-provoking questions to shape the entries. Students discussed the specific details of the work they completed for the week, answered specific questions that related to the course content, and provided personal reactions to their experience (See Appendix C for journal guidelines). With this guided direction, the journal became an on-going dialogue with the professor as students had certain deadlines to complete these entries and turn them in. The students had the opportunity to discuss their journals with the professor as well as other students during designated class discussions (P. Fitch, personal communication, December 2, 2002).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), document review provides information that is "rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting" (p. 81). It allows the researcher to examine forms of communication in a way that does not disturb the setting. The student journals I reviewed assisted me in this research process because they
provided records of activities that took place during the service-learning experiences that I
could not observe. The detailed description of these activities provided the necessary context
for me to better understand how students made meaning of service-learning through the
stories they shared. The journals also provided students’ reflections on these experiences. I
performed a content analysis of the journals and examined the different forms of
communication and then documented any patterns (Marshall & Rossman).

I had planned to review the student journals after I completed the focus group
interviews and prior to the in-depth individual interviews to provide a deeper context of each
student’s experience and to prepare me for the one-on-one interviews. That was the case in
most instances, but some students didn’t give me their journals until later in the process;
therefore, I decided to use the journals as supplemental information to confirm and provide
additional details of students’ experiences. The journals did provide detailed information on
day-to-day activities that students performed, connections made between the service sites and
the course material, and students’ personal reactions to their experiences. I found the
students, however, to be more reflective during the interview process than what was written
in their journals; therefore, I decided to use the journals to triangulate my data. I received
journals from all but one student, who was unable to locate her journal and had deleted the
file from her computer.

Data Analysis Procedures

The initial step in the analysis of the qualitative data was to review the transcriptions
of the focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, my personal memos and the student
journals. According to Maxwell (1996), three options exist for the analytical process:
memos, categorizing strategies such as thematic analysis, and contextualizing strategies such as narrative analysis. I used a combination of these three methods to strengthen the analysis.

Analytical memos are any writing that the researcher produces that isn’t actually fieldnotes, transcriptions or coding. These memos are a reflection on methods used, theories or purposes of the study, but they also can capture analytical thought about the data. Maxwell referred to this type of writing as a way to “facilitate reflection and analytic insight” (p. 11). This is a tool to incorporate into the written report of the research results.

Categorizing strategies such as coding and thematic analysis look at the data and “rearrange it into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 78). The data are then sorted into broader themes and issues. The important factor of qualitative categorizing is that it is grounded in the data. Themes are developed by interaction with and understanding the specific data being analyzed (Maxwell).

Contextualizing strategies such as narrative analysis attempt to understand data within a particular context and determine relationships between various elements of the text. These strategies don’t necessarily look for similarities in order to sort the data into categories, rather they “look for relationships that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 79). Contextualizing and categorizing strategies used together offset the weaknesses of each in order to provide a well-rounded analysis.

The data analysis process was time-consuming, complex, and challenging. Two key processes were included in all phases of data analysis: data reduction, which is the sorting of data into manageable chunks, and interpretation, where the researcher portrays the meaning of the participants’ stories (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Raw data alone have no inherent
meaning, but my interpretation as the researcher “brings meaning to those data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 113).

One way to display that meaning was to craft a short profile in the words of participants. This transformed into telling stories both of the participants and the researcher. Telling stories is a compelling way of sharing the interview data with the reader (Seidman, 1991). A combination of storytelling and thematic connections provided a more dialectical process in which there is a “synthesis of what the participant has said and how the researcher has responded” (Seidman, p. 100). My contribution as the researcher was important in bringing coherence to the written report.

Throughout this process, there was no substitution for being totally immersed in the data. To really use qualitative data in the appropriate way, I personally did the work of transcribing, reading and re-reading the information to conduct a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data. The most important aspect of the analysis was actually going through the process, which becomes as important as the findings. Most of the big decisions on how best to portray the research were made throughout the research process. The goal of the written report was to connect the reader with the participants in the study.

In the past, the researcher’s voice has been silent in the write-up and reporting of the data. Readers have been provided with the “streamlined” version of the interpretations. In recent years, the social sciences have “come to grips with the reflexive, problematic, and, at times, contradictory nature of data and with the tremendous, if unspoken, influence of the researcher as an author” (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 69). Sharing this information along with my voice, as the researcher, makes the readers aware of the complexities of the interview process and also adds a dimension of reality to the study.
Design Issues

In judging the criteria for soundness and goodness in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) set forth the trustworthiness concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to replace terms such as validity, reliability and generalizability that are used in quantitative research. I will address each of these criteria and how they related to my selected methodology.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) stated that the goal of research is to demonstrate “that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described” (p. 143). In order to demonstrate credibility during my study, I triangulated my data by reviewing student journals as well as conducting focus group interviews and in-depth individual interviews. I performed member-checking by sharing the research purpose and questions, transcriptions of interviews, the interpretations, and analysis of the data with participants so that I could include their feedback into the on-going analysis process. By utilizing member-checks, I tried to rule out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning participants shared. I utilized peer debriefing with colleagues involved with service-learning at Central College, my major professor and committee members at Iowa State University to solicit their feedback, as well.

Regarding the issue of transferability, I provided rich and thick narratives (Maxwell, 1996) of students’ experiences in service-learning and the meaning they make of those experiences related to their learning and self-awareness. These narratives tell a story from the participants’ point of view to help uncover the crux of the phenomenon of service-learning. I incorporated several sources of data (triangulation) to “corroborate, elaborate, or
illuminate the research in question" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 144), which strengthens the usefulness of this study.

To answer the question of dependability, the literature suggested keeping an "inquiry audit trail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). I have my analytic memos and journal that include records of my design decisions and reflections throughout the process so that this information is readily accessible. I kept the audio-tapes of the interviews to maintain a trail to the original source of data and kept all collected data in a well-organized filing system that is easily retrievable for reanalysis. I communicated all aspects of my methods, analyses and interpretations with colleagues and my Program of Study Committee to solicit their feedback on the clarity and coherence of my research.

Finally, I addressed the issue of confirmability, which according to Marshall and Rossman (1995), answers the question of whether the data will help confirm the general findings that lead to implications. This was accomplished through the inquiry audit, triangulation and the reflexive journal or analytical memos, as mentioned earlier. Throughout this qualitative research process, "the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationship is the means by which the research gets done" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 66). This affects not only the participants, but also the researcher and the design of the project. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) described the term reflexivity as the recognition of the researcher as an active participant in the research process. I wrote in my journal throughout this research process, not only on my computer, but also in a notebook that I used frequently during the data collection phase.

As good researchers, Fontana and Frey (1994) stated that we "cannot let the methods dictate our images of human beings" (p. 72). The nature of interviewing involves human
beings; therefore care must be taken not to harm them. In the field and throughout the
research process, we as researchers need to “exercise common sense and moral
responsibility...to our subjects first, to the study next, and to ourselves last” (Fontana &
Frey, 1994, p. 72). The consideration of the researcher role and relationship with participants
was an essential component in the trustworthiness of the research.

Seidman (1991) referred to interviewing as a relationship that is built upon the
interactions of personalities of both the participant and researcher. There is a balance in
developing the appropriate rapport with participants. Seidman recommended a relationship
where the researcher becomes “an equal participant, and the resulting discourse would be a
conversation, not an interview” (p. 73). There should be a balance of what the researcher
contributes, in order to be responsive without taking away from the participants’ words to
keep the focus on their experiences, not the researcher’s.

In-depth involvement with participants and gaining access to their stories and lives
led to better rapport and common understanding. This “connection between researcher and
participant yields increased self-disclosure from participants and increased understanding of
the context on the part of the researcher” (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 471). Torres
and Baxter Magolda would contend that this is consistent with theories on student
development (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1986; Kolb, 1984), and in this case
students’ development academically and personally in the context of service-learning
experiences.

Reflection is key for development and the very nature of phenomenological
interviewing is to encourage participants to reflect and make meaning of their experiences.
This “offers participants opportunities to analyze their lives in ways that they report they
would not otherwise do" (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 478). Establishing this type of collaborative relationship was somewhat of a challenge in the research process but essential in unfolding the student stories, understanding and interpreting them in a way that was true to the participants and their experience.

The developmental aspect was evident in the interviews that I conducted with the ten students. We did establish collaborative relationships and by the third interview I felt a connection to these students; therefore, they felt comfortable enough to share more of themselves through reflection and go more in-depth about the meaning of their service experiences. Students were engaged in the reflection process and shared personal stories with me that would not have been so easy to discuss without some sort of personal connection. All of the students took a sincere interest in this study and the research process. Some of the students have kept in touch with me through email correspondence just to inform me on the progress of their job searches.

As the researcher and an experienced professional in higher education, I brought some biases into this research that need to be addressed. Working with students for the past 15 years, I have a genuine interest in their perspectives of their learning experiences during their college years. In my professional work at a small private liberal arts college, I have always been fascinated with how students learn and develop through their college experiences. Being in student affairs, I have also been interested in how we can best foster successful learning environments, both in and out of the classroom, on our campuses. Service-learning is an avenue that begins to bridge the gap between student affairs and academic affairs, which is the reason I chose this dissertation topic. Conducting this research provided me the opportunity to explore the phenomenon of service-learning and uncover the
meanings that students made of these service experiences in relation to their learning and self-awareness. Throughout my doctoral program, we have discussed the divide between student affairs and academic affairs; therefore, I wanted to research two aspects (academic achievement and self-awareness) that could be significant to both sides and begin to bridge the gap.

My passion has always been working with students; therefore I wanted to concentrate on their perspectives. The students who participated in this study did not know me, but I explained to them my purposes for this study and shared my background with them to make them feel comfortable with me throughout the process. The Director of Community-Based Education and the professor of Psychology 382 played a role in encouraging students to participate in this study. The participants were genuinely interested in my research and were excited to share their stories with me.

Limitations

As mentioned earlier, this study was conducted at one institution utilizing one particular course that incorporated service-learning into the course requirements. I purposely chose this site because all of my experience has been with small private liberal arts institutions, and most of the studies and literature I have examined have not included this type of institution in their research on service-learning. Therefore, a variety of institutional types were not portrayed through this study.

This study was not longitudinal to determine the long-term effects of students' participation in service-learning. I was more interested in the here and now and portraying the meanings that students make of these experiences. Due to time constraints, it was not
possible to follow the students throughout their collegiate career and beyond, but that certainly would be an interesting follow-up study.

Service-learning programs vary from institution to institution in scope, duration and definition. I decided to examine a service-learning format where the service experience was integrated within a specific course. Independent models and other forms of service-learning programs were not included in this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine students’ perspectives on their own learning defined as academic achievement or content mastery and their self-awareness. These are only two of several outcomes of service-learning that were possible topics of research, but other outcomes were beyond the scope of this particular study.
CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter outlines the findings of the research conducted in the spring semester of 2003 at Central College in Pella, Iowa where I interviewed students to ascertain the meaning that they made of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contributed to their learning and self-awareness. In this chapter, the participants in the study are introduced, findings are reported, and a discussion of the findings in relation to previous literature on service-learning, as well as student development theories, is presented.

Participants in the Study

A total of ten students participated in this study: eight females and two males. Seven of the participants were seniors and three were juniors. I have also included in the findings information from the interview that I conducted in the fall of 2002 during my pilot study, although this particular student was unable to continue with the actual study. Following is a brief description or profile of the key participants.

Jennifer (from the pilot study) was a senior originally from Pella, Iowa. She was majoring in Psychology and took Child and Adolescent Development during her junior year (Fall, 2001). Her service project was at an after-school program in Des Moines. After completing the service requirement for Child and Adolescent Development, she continued her work at the after-school program for two additional semesters through what is called Independent Modules. She went to Des Moines once a week and spent time at this Center with inner city youths, mostly African Americans, for two hours after school. Her previous experiences with service included spending the semester of her sophomore year volunteering with pre-school children through Latinos in Iowa and, in high school, serving as a peer helper for At Risk Youth. This student had a very rewarding experience with service-learning and it
changed her in many ways that came out throughout the interview. She was very eager to share her experiences with me, but during the spring semester of 2003, her schedule was very hectic and she was not able to continue with the study.

*Kelli* was a senior from Esperance, New York, majoring in Psychology. She took Child and Adolescent Development during her junior year (Fall, 2001). Her service site was with a Sunday School program at the Third Reformed Church in Pella. She taught a Sunday School class, called Faithful Bible Investigations (FBI), with another student. She worked with a group of six third-graders and continued to work there after the completion of her service project. Her previous experience with service included volunteer work at a hospital and summer Christian camp during high school. She had also been on several mission trips both in high school and while at Central. During her sophomore year, she went to St. Louis for the City Lights Program and also worked at a shelter for the homeless in New York City. She had been involved with Project Gear-Up where she mentored a Latina student. During this study, she was taking another service-learning course, Adult Development and Aging, for which she volunteered at the Pella Regional Health Center. Kelli’s excitement for service-learning was evident throughout the interview process. She was in the process of completing her undergraduate research project and so she was very interested in this study and asked for a copy of the final edition. She asked many questions about the research process and graduate studies. I think within the next couple of years she will enroll in graduate school. She was a very independent individual and was very open in sharing personal information about her life.

*Marie* was a senior from Iowa City, Iowa. She was majoring in Psychology with a minor in Spanish. She had an older sister who also attended Central. Marie played
volleyball throughout her career at Central. She had just completed Child and Adolescent Development in the Fall, 2002 semester. Her service site was at the Pella Daycare where she worked in the infant room the entire semester and helped with various duties. Typically there were six to eleven children in the room. She went once a week for two to three hours. She was interested in a site in Des Moines, but due to her volleyball schedule, she didn’t have the time to travel back and forth so she chose a site in Pella. Her previous experience with service included volunteering at a hospital during high school, two mission trips while at Central, one to St. Louis for the City Lights Program and the other to Reynosa, Mexico. During this study, she was taking Adult Development and Aging and her service site for that class was Hilltop Manor North, where she met with an elderly woman once a week. During our interviews Megan was very thoughtful when responding to questions and at times needed extra probing to go deeper, but she was very pleasant and was very conscientious about responding to my emails and requests for information.

Alison was a senior from Pella, Iowa. She was majoring in Social Science, which included Sociology, Psychology and American History. She took Child and Adolescent Development during the previous semester (Fall, 2002) and her service site was the Pella Daycare. She went there twice a week for one hour each visit and switched rooms each time she went. She focused on the pre-kindergarten and the three-year-old room. Her previous experiences with service had all been at Central. In her Urban Sociology class she worked at the Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter, where she had a choice of many different programs, and she chose their daycare program. She had been on several mission trips including two recently to Tucson through Campus Ministry. She was currently involved with service-learning for Adult Development and Aging and was visiting Willowbrook in Newton once a
week. During this study, she was interviewing for a position with AmeriCorps for the upcoming year in Tucson, Arizona. Alison was very soft spoken and was not real reflective without some probing from me. She did share some interesting stories of her time with the children at the daycare, but it just took some extra pushing for her to reveal them to me. By the third interview, she did come out of her shell more, but she still was pretty quiet. She does have a passion for service and is seriously looking into it as a career path.

*Jack* was a senior from Lacona, Iowa and was majoring in Exercise Science: Health Promotion. He participated in football and rugby at Central. He completed Child and Adolescent Development during the previous semester (Fall, 2002). His service site was at Jefferson Elementary School in Pella, Iowa. He was involved with a program called Literacy Army where he helped first and second-graders with reading, phonics and vocabulary. He visited the school on Tuesday and Thursday for one hour each day. This was Jack’s first experience with service-learning. He had been very active with volunteer activities throughout high school and college, including coaching a peewee wrestling team, volunteering as an EMT, participating in Big Brothers and Sisters, and various activities with the Central football team. During this study, he was taking Adult Development and Aging and was visiting Hilltop South where he met with an elderly couple. The husband was a former professor at Central. Jack was planning to go to graduate school and had applied at three different institutions. Jack was very talkative and liked to discuss his experiences that were related to his major. At times he could be very blunt and would express his feelings candidly. He was very active in a variety of activities on campus, evidenced by the difficulty we had trying to find time to meet. Jack was interesting to talk to and had a unique perspective on service because he often related it to his major and the athletic program.
Grant was a junior from Des Moines, Iowa. He was majoring in Social Science and Secondary Education. He completed Child and Adolescent Development during the Fall, 2002. His service site was at Pella Christian Grade School where he was involved with the America Reads/America Counts Program. He discovered this site through the Education Department and tutored two fourth-grade students on different academic skills. He met with them twice a week after school. He decided on this project because he wanted more teaching experience with this particular age group. In high school Grant was involved in community service through the National Honor Society and through a group called the Lincoln High School Ambassadors where he did service projects around the school and also helped at an elementary school. Grant was thoughtful, conscientious, and very thorough in the information he shared with me. He was always prompt in responding to any requests that I had. I found him very easy to talk with and thought he was insightful about his experiences.

Missy was a senior from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She was majoring in Psychology with a minor in French. She completed Child and Adolescent Development during the Fall, 2001. She was the oldest in her family and had two younger brothers. Her service site was at Webster Elementary with the After School Kids Club. She chose Webster because of the convenience and because she wanted to get a sense of a public after-school program. At the After School Kids Club she worked with up to 20 kids who ranged in age from kindergarten to fifth grade. In high school Missy was involved with service through student organizations and her church. She also took a child development class in high school that had a service-learning component. While at Central she was involved with the Kinship program her first two years and took Psychological Investigations where she did a research project for an organization called Connections for Women. During this study, she was taking Adult
Development and Aging and was going to Progress Industries to meet with an 80-year-old mentally disabled man. Missy described herself as being shy, but she was very talkative and outgoing during our interviews. I found her to be very insightful and reflective about all of her college experiences.

Ellie was a senior from Centerville, Iowa and both of her parents were alumni of the college, which is how she first became interested in Central. She was a Psychology major and participated in track for three years. She completed Child and Adolescent Development in the Fall, 2001 semester and her service site was at Webster Elementary with Literacy Army. Ellie worked with two kindergarten students one-on-one helping them learn the letters of the alphabet. She visited them twice a week. Ellie’s mom was a kindergarten teacher, which was one reason why she chose this age group. This was Ellie’s first experience with service-learning that was connected with a class. In high school she was involved with community service projects and she took Psychological Investigations where she did research on service-learning. She also spent a semester in Chicago at the University of Illinois Chicago Medical Center where she was involved with a Child Life Program, a psycho-social therapy program for children and their families. During this study, Ellie was taking Adult Development and Aging and working with her grandparents for her service project. Ellie was very energetic and talkative throughout this process. She was very family oriented and discussed staying in central Iowa upon graduation to be close to her family. Ellie also was very insightful and reflective on her experiences, and she was easy to talk to.

Elizabeth was a junior from Edloret, Kenya. She started out as a Music major but had changed to Psychology. Elizabeth discovered Central when her father visited the campus to discuss plans for an exchange program. Both of her parents are professors at Moi University.
She had six siblings; three of them were here in the United States, including her younger brother who was also attending Central. She completed Child and Adolescent Development during the Fall, 2002, and her service site was at the Pella Daycare. She chose this site because of the convenience of the location. She did not drive and therefore wanted a location close to campus. This was her first experience with service-learning. During this study, she was taking Adult Development and Aging, and her service site for this class was Hilltop Manor South, where she met with an elderly woman once a week. In Kenya, Elizabeth went on mission trips to help construct and build churches. While at Central she has participated in service trips to Easter Seals and this past Spring Break, 2003, she traveled to St. Louis to participate in the City Lights Program. Elizabeth was somewhat quiet and soft-spoken. It was difficult for her to be reflective and many times I had to explain a question more than once before she understood what I was asking. It was interesting to hear her perspective on service-learning as an international student. She was not the best at responding to my emails or requests for additional information, such as her student journal. She was the one student that was unable to share her journal with me.

Jill was a senior from Davenport, Iowa. She was majoring in Math with a minor in Psychology. She completed Child and Adolescent Development during her junior year (Fall, 2001) and her service site was at Quakerdale in Newton, Iowa. This was her first formal experience with service-learning at Central. Jill did in-home visits with a social worker to foster families. She observed the interactions between the social worker, children and parents. She did not have a set schedule because she had to work around the social worker's schedule. Instead of going once a week for an hour, she went every once in a while for three to four hours. She did more observing than hands-on work. Jill's previous experience with
service included many activities through her church such as teaching Sunday School, working in the nursery, and participating in special work days. Since coming to Central she had not been involved in any service activities, other than her service-learning experience for Child and Adolescent Development. At the time of our interviews, she was in the process of interviewing for a Service-Learning Coordinator position at her former high school. Jill was a talker and seemed to be very outgoing, although she indicated that she was somewhat shy. She asked me quite a few questions about the whole research process and took a great interest in this study. I found her to be very reflective and insightful about her experiences. She seemed very mature and was really excited about the service-learning job opportunity that she was pursuing.

Colleen was a junior from Aplington, Iowa. She was majoring in Sociology with a minor in Spanish. Colleen had been involved in intramural sports, Campus Ministry, and Community Choir. She was taking Child and Adolescent Development (Spring semester, 2003) during these interviews, and her service site was with St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Ottumwa, Iowa. She was matched up with a Hispanic family as an English tutor for the children. This family had eight children and six adults living in one house. She was interested in finding a site where she could practice her Spanish skills. Colleen spent a semester in Mexico and missed the contact with Hispanic families. She visited this family twice a week for about two hours each time. Colleen had two additional service-learning experiences at Central. One was assisting homeless and At Risk youth at an Outreach Center in Des Moines, Iowa. The other was working with immigrant families at a Lutheran site near Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. She had participated in community service in high school, such as Meals on Wheels, worked as a camp counselor, and volunteered at a daycare
for homeless toddlers. It was difficult to get together with Colleen due to her schedule. She was reflective on most aspects, although it was difficult for her to assess any changes that she noticed in herself because she was still actively participating at her site and completing Child and Adolescent Development. Because she had been active in a variety of service activities, she was able to draw on those experiences in our discussions.

This group of participants came to the study with a variety of service experiences throughout college and high school. Within the group there was a cross-section of academic majors and a variety of service sites represented. All of the participants were either juniors or seniors and many of the seniors were in the middle of job searches at the time of this study. Overall I found this group of students easy to converse with and they all seemed to take a genuine interest in my research. The students were reflective and insightful, some more than others, on their service-learning experiences. It was enjoyable for me personally to be working with college students again as they shared their experiences with me.

Findings

Throughout the process of interviewing these students, several themes began to emerge from the data that I collected. As stated before, each student brought a unique background to his or her service-learning experience, so it became apparent that each had a unique perspective on the phenomenon of service-learning. However, even with their differences, many similarities emerged with regard to the meaning that these ten students made of their service-learning experiences specifically related to their learning of the course material and self-awareness. The following themes emerged from the insights of the students who participated in this study.

1. *Structured reflection is key to service-learning.*
Reflection played a significant role in the students’ learning process and their personal growth. Structured reflection for this service-learning experience included in-class discussion and written student journals. The specific format for the journals for Child and Adolescent Development was divided into three parts. The first part included a brief description of what the students did while visiting their sites. The second part involved integrating and relating the service-learning experience to the course Child and Adolescent Development. The professor provided a list of specific questions related to the course material for students to answer. The final section was a description of personal reactions, feelings or thoughts about the service experience from the perspective of the student. A comprehensive journal entry that asked the students to discuss the implications of what they had learned throughout their service-learning experience was due at the end of the semester. Several days were set aside throughout the semester for students to discuss and reflect on their service experiences during class time.

Students indicated that structured reflection was important because it provided them the opportunity to discuss both positive and negative aspects of their service-learning experience and what they had learned throughout the process. It also was an opportunity for the professor to provide students with valuable feedback. The students felt that their views and feelings about specific projects and sites were being heard. Finally, even if their service experience was negative the students were still able to reflect on it and hence were able to recognize their learning and personal growth. Students shared specific feelings on the structured reflection process, specifically with their student journals.
Jennifer, who worked at an after-school program in Des Moines, felt that “reflection keeps things fresh in my memory. I can talk about [it] for hours, you know, what I’ve done, what I’ve learned. Through reflection, I’m constantly thinking about it.”

Kelli discussed reflection as part of her learning process. “I reflect on a lot of things. That is part of combating it, I guess, or refuting it. I think I do things and then sit back, and so journaling is like the best thing for me for class.”

Marie discussed the fact that writing in her journal forced her to think about things more.

I wouldn’t have gotten as much out of it without journaling. I have a bad memory if I don’t write things down. I guess that was what was beneficial about the journals because we were writing these things down. Those things have kind of stuck with me better than other things that we had just talked about in class.

Missy shared several thoughts on the reflection process relating to her learning and personal growth:

When you journal you are forced to make connections between what you are experiencing at your site and what you are doing in class. And those connections don’t come out unless you really think about them. It is definitely intentional; however, I managed to learn what I learned because if you are lazy about it you can just go to the site, hang out with the kids, and then go to class and never really realize that there are a lot of connections to be made.

I think because of all the journaling, I think that really develops your analytical skills, your ability to analyze a situation, what role you play in a situation, and maybe how you contribute to any conflicts or success with what happened in that
situation. You’re not just analyzing the population you are working with but really analyzing you and how you deal with that population, too.

Ellie, who was involved with the Literacy Army Program at Webster Elementary, discussed the format of the journals for Child and Adolescent Development:

She’ll [the professor] ask some questions that are specific to the course material and I really liked that because it gives us direction as to how we can apply the material. And I think it was much easier to understand the material with the right questions.

She also discussed the role of reflection in making connections from her site experience to the course material:

Yeah, I think for me it was just at the time, while I was actually at my site, I wasn’t thinking about the course material, so that was when I was reflecting and putting the two together. So, I was getting the class stuff in class, and I was getting the experience at my site, but the journaling was just the way of connecting the two.

Jill looked at the reflection aspect from the perspective of how time intensive this process can be, but as a student she still felt that she benefited from trying to make connections to the course material and her own life.

I think honestly from a student perspective you think that is one more thing that I have to do. Can’t I just go, isn’t that enough? But when you look back on it and you think about, because it did, it made you sit down and reflect. A lot of times, as I said before, I didn’t go that week and so I would have to really reflect on my own experiences. And then all of a sudden it would be like “oh” and you would think of these connections you had in life that went just directly along with
the book that you didn’t think of the first time you read it. You may have thought of one or two but you didn’t think of all of these things. And so I think I liked it. You would get done with the journal and you’d go, “oh my goodness, look at all of this stuff that relates to what I did in class.” So that is kind of the neat part of it.

She also felt that reflection was the avenue through which she could connect the service component with learning the course material. She said, “It’s connecting the volunteerism to the academic curriculum. It is making them reflect on what they are doing. It’s, you know, volunteering isn’t just the thing that keeps you learning.”

As mentioned earlier, time was set aside during class to discuss any issues or problems related to the students’ service sites and experiences. It was a time that students could receive feedback from the professor as well as other students in the class. Students felt that this was helpful in their learning and it seemed to add another dimension to the reflection process.

Jill shared that “it was always nice because we would take time to discuss things. We always took time, to not only reflect personally, but reflect as a class.” Jack expressed how helpful he felt the in-class processing was to his own learning: “Just learning other people’s problems or hearing other people’s experiences is pretty interesting. It is kind of entertaining. You know, you can’t learn it all by yourself, you learn from other people.” For another student, Kelli, this type of processing was a big part of her personal learning style. She stated, “I love those kind of conversations where you just sit down with a group of people and process what you are doing.” It also became a way for students to make connections to the course material. Alison thought that processing with other students was helpful: “It was good to be able to share experiences, and people would share other
experiences that they related to the material and you’d get different examples.” Sara discussed the fact that every student had a somewhat different perspective on his or her experience and she felt that was helpful to her.

I think it is helpful to see what all of the other students are going through because we are all at different sites. Like one is doing daycare in town here for divorced parents while they go through counseling and so they spend time with the kids. Other kids work at a daycare. There is a wide variety of what they are doing...and learning, because in mine I learned a lot about the language barrier and the language growth and that is what had the most impact on me. But some of the other ones are just like memory or seeing a child grow from week to week. I think it is helpful. Like when we have our discussion in class we all circle up and someone will just start talking and then the others will talk about what is special to them. And they are coming from a whole different perspective, so you get to see what the other students are thinking.

For these students, having the opportunity to think and process their experiences was valuable in making connections not only from their experience to the course material, but also to other courses and their own personal life in general. By making these connections, they seemed to gain more from their service experiences.

2. The experiential component of service-learning is helpful in learning the course material, retaining the information, and applying what is learned.

Experience and involvement are key to students’ learning, growth and development. Service-learning is a form of experiential learning where students learn from their actual lived experiences. Students in this study were exposed to various learning experiences,
which provided a direct link between their learning of the course material and actual application of what they learned to their particular service sites. The following student reflections on the experiential component of service-learning illuminate this point:

Ellie felt that learning goes beyond what she reads in a textbook.

Because for me anyway, I’m not just trying to remember something I read in a book. I have like these experiences, these memories, you know. They are a lot more tangible than just reading it to me in my mind. It’s a lot more clear cut because I actually experienced it.

Two other students, Elizabeth and Jennifer, concurred with Ellie and shared similar thoughts on being able to experience what they were reading.

Jill discussed the impact of experience on learning the course material, and in her case, many times she would see the opposite of a textbook case of child development.

But I really think that it did help me learn the material better because it’s one thing to read about how kids grow, and how they develop, and then it’s another thing to go and watch it. And the kids that I watched a lot of times I would see... you know, the book would say this is how a healthy child develops, this is how you want to do things, and then I would see this is what happens if you don’t.

It really does solidify the things that you learn. A lot of items it’s really easy to read a book and go “oh what do they know.” A fact doesn’t mean anything until you see it.

Kelli felt that the experiential component of service-learning was congruent with her personal learning style.

I’m a huge hands-on learner. I learn most if given a paradigm or topic and then I
have personal reflection and I can relate it to my life and I can relate it to whatever.
And then that is the same like relating it to experience so that is why I love all of my
service-learning stuff and all the different things I’ve done.

Kelli also discussed how the experiential component helped with retaining the course
material.

It definitely helped me retain the material, though, because I was taking the theory
and applying it to the setting. So now I remember a lot more from class than I would
from another. I just think that I have real people, real faces, and real things and that
just makes it that much more legitimate.

Another student, Alison, shared this same sentiment as Kelli about retaining information
from class. Jack also felt the same way, but extended it beyond just the class: “So just the
idea of actually being able to use it and putting information that you are actually learning to
work. And maybe not actually putting it to work but just seeing it so it’s pertinent to your
life maybe.”

Marie included this statement in her student journal on the impact that two of her
service experiences had on the learning process for her:

My service-learning has helped me better understand new course material
because I’m able to watch the kids and look for behaviors that we have
talked about in class. By watching the infants I am able to understand the
material better and am excited to continue to learn more because of things that
we have learned that I have seen to be true in the infants.
I can read something and it can hit home but it’s different when you’re actually in an experience. I can read about people living in dirt floors and a house with dirt floors but when I actually go there and see it, it’s different.

Grant described himself as a visual learner; therefore, his experience with service-learning was helpful in making connections to the course material:

Just seeing it in front of me, too. This is the stuff we have been talking about. Whatever the subject was I would be able to actually see it, “Wow, this is true,” not just from the classroom. I guess that kind of reflects a lot, too, of how just in general I learn. I’m obviously a very visual learner so obviously seeing it in front of me and actually doing it and interacting is another way that I learn best. I’m the type of learner where I can’t just sit there and have stuff thrown at me you know. I don’t have the attention span either - just the same as a 4th grader you know - that I’ve got to be doing something and learning it as I’m going along and not just having it told to me.

Colleen also felt that her preferred learning style fit well with the experiential component of service-learning and enhanced her learning of the course material.

Hands on is the best way to learn. I think from my site when I learned something pertaining to class material was when we were studying the development of language. I read the chapter, then that night I went to my site, and then the next day we discussed it in class. I think I really learned from that combination. I was able to make a connection from the material to my life’s experiences.

These students all point out that being involved with their service sites and actually having concrete experiences solidified their learning of the course material for Child and
Adolescent Development. Students were able to retain the information better and apply the course material to a real-life situation. Students were also able to identify areas of personal growth and changes that they noticed personally because of their involvement in service-learning.

3. *The role of the professor is important to the service-learning process.*

The professor provided the necessary support and challenge within the context of the class to facilitate learning. The professor also provided valuable feedback in both the student journals and during in-class discussions. When service-learning is integrated within an academic course, the role of the professor is important to students because this individual provides the necessary support and challenge so that students grow and learn from their experiences. The feedback that the professor provided to the students, both in their journals and during class discussions, was probably the most important factor that was shared by the students. It seemed to help students with their reflection and gave them more insights into their own learning. The following statements demonstrate how the professor’s role was helpful to students:

Kelli felt that the professor provided good feedback throughout the course, both in writing in her student journal and through class discussions.

If there’s like, if I have an idea and it’s good, she’ll write “profound idea here.”

As a student you’re just like, “yes I thought of something good on my own, alright we’re doing good!” She kind of meets you where you are at and encourages you to grow more, I think.
Alison discussed how the professor tried to tie student comments to the course content and help students make the necessary connections. If a point was unclear, she would effectively question individuals to uncover the meaning of their statements or issues.

I think when we come together for discussion and whenever a student says something she tries to tie it in with what we’ve learned in class. She always has us write journals every two weeks and so, you know, a lot of reflection. She always writes lots of comments in our journals and also lots of questions to get us thinking more. She always tries to make sure that we are happy at our site and that everything is going well. And if it’s not, then she’ll talk to us and try to find ways to make it better so we get the most out of it.

Alison also equated the instructor role to that of a supervisor by saying that “she teaches us the material but we’re in charge of learning ourselves mostly.”

Jack thought that the feedback she provided was helpful and he got his questions answered during class discussions.

That is the best thing I’d say overall is the feedback she gives us. She gives us information to use now and things to think about later. She just kind of questions you and makes you question yourself just about whatever you were talking about.

This type of feedback was so helpful to the students, especially those who had never been exposed to service-learning and the reflection process. From what these students shared, the professor provided enough challenge within this process for them to grow and learn, but also provided the necessary support along the way to provide a safe environment, both keys to structuring a learning-centered environment.

4. The definition of service-learning was not always clear for some students.
Service-learning can be a somewhat unknown and confusing phenomenon at first, but after experiencing it, students had a better understanding and changed perspective of service-learning. Students didn’t always know what they were getting into when first hearing about the service-learning component for Child and Adolescent Development. The concept of service-learning can be confusing unless students were involved in a previous course that utilized service-learning. However, those views changed once they actually were involved in a service-learning project. The following students shared their realizations.

Ellie struggled somewhat with the actual term service-learning, but didn’t really know what else you would call it, because she acknowledged the significance of both service and learning throughout her college years.

At first service-learning - and maybe it’s just the name service-learning – didn’t sound like that interesting to me or that enticing. So I mean I wanted to take Child and Adolescent Development because I was real interested in that and I really like taking classes with [the professor]. I don’t know, maybe it’s just service-learning, it just didn’t sound right. Yeah, it sounds boring if you just say service-learning...I don’t know what it is either because service is a good thing, learning is why we’re in school, but I don’t know....And maybe it’s just because I hadn’t heard of it before.

Grant reflected and shared his initial reactions and thoughts about service-learning in his journal:

Originally, I really did not know about service learning. I also thought that this was just an additional project that I did not have time to do. I did not really think that I would be able to learn anything from my project, that it would just be a waste of
time. I felt that this project is very valuable to this class. The difference between this type of project and regular volunteering is very apparent. With this service-learning you are not only volunteering your time, you are providing a service to someone or to an organization.

Before Grant participated in his service-learning project, he thought it was just something added to his workload. He said, “I think before it was just kind of like I said maybe just something that was added on that was supposed to be something that kind of sounds good ahead of time or maybe sounds good on paper...you should be doing this service-learning.” After his experiences with service-learning in Child and Adolescent Development, his feelings changed.

But kind of making it part of the class and basically a requirement so I think that my understanding now is it is beneficial; it’s not just a lot of talk. There has obviously been a lot of research done. But now, being a product of the research now and actually going through it, then I can talk about the benefits or say that it does work.

Another student, Missy, at first thought it was just another item to add to her already busy schedule, but now she wouldn’t miss a time to go and visit the elderly man she has been paired with at her service site.

I used to see it kind of as work going to the school [my] junior year. I was so busy. It was like I’m putting in an hour and a half, now I better not have to do extra reading for this class this week. And now it’s like – and I’m not sure if this is just the difference in my desire to learn or something in general – but I don’t really add it into time I’m putting in for Adult Development and Aging. It’s
like I’m going to go visit Chris and if I don’t I’m probably going to let him down
and I might miss out on a breakthrough in his...or just one more hour
might help me make more sense of what is going on for Chris.

When Jill took Child and Adolescent Development, it was her first experience with
service-learning; therefore, she didn’t really know what she was getting into. At first, she,
like Missy, kept track of the extra hours that it would take to complete her service project,
but as she progressed through the experience her views changed.

In the beginning I remember thinking “What in the world?” It kind of seemed like a
backward way to get you to do some volunteer work. Or I didn’t know if it was
some kind of thing, like the college said we will get so many students to do volunteer
work] and somehow do it that way. And I remember thinking, you know, trying to
calculate how many hours I was having to do in the weeks and especially just through
it. And also I have to admit that some of my other experiences do that, too, not only
service-learning. But learning about non-profit organizations and kind of researching
a little bit for this job, I realized how important it is and what a well-rounded person
comes out of it. I am not sure. And I think people who don’t experience it think
service-learning is the same thing as community service.

You know like...you know, service-learning is the same thing as doing 40
hours of community service, or picking up trash on the highway, or
recycling cans, or I don’t know what people associate community service with.
But community service always kind of sounds like a punishment, too, like people
get in trouble and they have to do community service or that kind of thing,
when it’s not that way. I’ve never seen it presented in a way that it focused you on
looking selfishly at what you got out of the situation.

As this last student shared, many times it is difficult to distinguish the terminology related to service, whether an experience is community service, an internship or service-learning. This directly relates to the following theme that emerged from the interviews conducted with students.

5. *Students found it difficult to separate their various service experiences from each other when discussing their learning and self-awareness.*

Students who participated in this study have been involved in various forms of service throughout their high school and college years. All of these experiences became meshed together and students found it difficult to separate one from the other. It becomes an intertwined web of service experiences that all play a role in student learning and self-awareness. The context of this research study was to interview students who had taken Child and Adolescent Development and participated in the service component for that specific course. I found throughout the interview process that students weren’t able to just discuss that one experience with Child and Adolescent Development. They brought all of their service experiences, whether it was service-learning, community service, internships or mission trips, into the discussions. All of these experiences together played a role in student learning and personal development.

When talking with Kelli about her experiences, she stated, “It is hard to remember what I got from that service-learning or from other service-learning. They are all jumbled together.” She found it difficult to separate all the experiences. She said, “But I know it did help me, I’m sure all of the different service things I have done have helped me be the person that I am in general, just the experiences that I have had in life.”
Other students noticed differences in themselves because of the different experiences they had been involved with at Central. Alison shared, “I think I’m a lot more worldly because I’ve taken a lot of trips since I started college. I know more about other cultures.” Jack discussed changes that he noticed in himself but he couldn’t identify the source of those changes exactly: “I can definitely say I have changed but I don’t know if it is from one thing or another. It’s just from everything in general. These Psychology classes have definitely changed my views.”

Ellie shared how she tries to take advantage of all the opportunities that come her way: “I think every situation presents an opportunity for you to see yourself from someone else’s perspective.” She went on to say that her background and internal motivation play a part in her growth and learning.

A lot of it I think comes from how I was raised for one thing, but all these experiences helping people, it’s even like the intrinsic rewards to me is more motivation than having a job that pays really well.

Students couldn’t always separate what they gained from one type of an experience over another in respect to their learning and self-awareness, hence the metaphor of the intertwined web. The educational setting, specifically the collegiate context with the vast array of opportunities available to students, seems to contribute to student learning and the development of self. This information has implications for the educational setting that we provide for our students.

6. The communication of service goals and purposes is essential to insure a successful experience for students.
Communicating the goals and purposes of the service component to all people involved, including the site supervisor and those being served, will enhance the experience for students. The communication of expectations not only to students but also to site supervisors and those being served is essential to making the experience beneficial to all involved. It fosters a sense of collaboration for all and provides a rich context for service and mutual learning. Students shared the following thoughts and feelings in regard to their sites and supervisors.

Ellie had both a positive and a somewhat negative experience at two different sites and shared her realizations of the importance of communicating the overall purpose and goals of the service-learning project.

I think it is good if the supervisors know what is expected of them ahead of time, too, because maybe they came in with just those requirements or needs and they don’t have time or whatever. Sometimes they don’t realize what they need to be doing if you don’t tell them what or why you are there.

On another experience, she stated,

Working with the teacher was a good experience, too, because it was like having someone there to encourage me and tell me, “yeah I have seen progress and I’m really glad you are doing this and they are getting a lot out of it.” That was really neat. She was a really good person to work with.

Elizabeth was more nervous about the actual site just because she wasn’t sure how the employees would react to her being there.

Actually I was pretty nervous, you know, I didn’t know if...I’m always nervous about new situations because if people will be nice to me so I wasn’t too sure what was
expected of me. But it worked out fine.

Jill discussed the importance of going to her site with a purpose and how that helped in the learning process for her.

But because I was there with a purpose it was like “oh my goodness” and you can start really working things through and learning things. If you had just kind of been there to volunteer it would have been like, “well I guess I can put it on my resume when I’m done.” Now you were realizing you were there under different circumstances with a goal in mind.

Kelli discussed her situation with her current service-learning project for Adult Development and Aging because she didn’t feel that things were going very smoothly. She expressed her dislike for her particular site.

I think just this site, I don’t know, I’m just having a hard time getting myself settled into it and feeling like I have a purpose with it. And so I guess that is key about service-learning, too. You’ve got to feel like you’re doing some kind of service, some kind of good, otherwise you’re just kind of there for your hour and it’s like, “what the hell am I doing, this is great, this is a waste of my time.”

Marie discussed her relationships with the workers and supervisor at her site and shared, “I didn’t feel like I really developed relationships with any of them.” She wasn’t there long enough to establish these relationships, “so I didn’t feel it was my place to question them and maybe it was.”

Alison was not always sure what her duties or her specific role was at her site. She said, “I guess whenever the kids were fighting or something I wasn’t sure what to do. I wasn’t sure if I should go over there and tell them what to do since I wasn’t the teacher.”
She didn’t feel like she ever established a relationship with the teachers and other workers at her site.

Sometimes I felt like they didn’t want me there. They just, I don’t know if, it wasn’t that they didn’t want me there, but they didn’t really show much...I think they have a lot of volunteers coming in there all the time. I just kind of came in and went.

Alison was never assertive enough to ask the teachers or supervisor if there were specific things that she could do with the children.

In the beginning Grant was not sure what his role was at his site or how much control he had of the situation with the children.

I didn’t know what my role was because I’m not really a teacher and I’m not going in there to student-teach or anything like that. I’m just going in there volunteering. Yet, I still may have had more control than maybe what I thought, but maybe I didn’t know.

After he had been going for a few weeks, things got better. He established a relationship with the teacher in charge at his site and they had regular conversations about the children and his techniques and strategies with them. Grant did, however, have to remind her that he was doing this for Child and Adolescent Development and not for an Education class.

Finally, Missy discussed the role of the site supervisor. In her case, she did not have a close working relationship with her supervisor. She thought that her experience could have been better if her supervisor had been aware of her purpose at the site. While Missy did not feel comfortable enough to speak to the supervisor, she did share the following thoughts and feelings:

I think it really helps when the person who’s overseeing your site or the supervisor
can know what your goals are and really kind of work with you in obtaining your goals. If they really know what you are doing in class and stuff, I don’t know how we could do that like maybe give them a syllabus and give them an outline of what material we cover. I felt directionless sometimes because the supervisor there didn’t know exactly why I was there and I kind of felt like that sometimes she took me away from the kids to do cleanup instead. So then it was like, “Do you realize I’m not just free labor and I do intend to learn and I really like working with the kids?”

As these students shared, the communication of the purpose and goals of their service experiences played a part in what they gained from the actual experience. Some students struggled with this issue, while others had good relationships with their site and the purposes and goals were clear to all those involved.

7. Service-learning is time intensive.

One of the negative factors that did arise through our conversations was the fact that participating in service-learning can be time intensive for the students. It does involve more than just going to class at a designated time each week. Even though this point was discussed in negative terms, students felt that the benefits they reaped by doing the extra work and visiting the sites was well worth it.

Grant felt that he had a somewhat negative attitude about the extra time commitment when he first started, but then he realized what he got out of the experience. It took him some time to come to this realization.

I think that going into it initially you go in there, especially if it is a requirement, you have not a negative attitude towards it but you kind of go in with the idea, like I said, it is just something added. And it is something added; it is more time but then like I
said it really does enhance what you’re doing with your classes if you work into it.
Maybe the first month you are there you might not see it but I think the more you
start looking into it and start realizing and noticing then it will kind of, I think it will
definitely enhance what you are learning in the classroom.

Elizabeth felt that her service-learning projects have been time intensive and that was
a negative aspect for her. She said, "yeah actually that is the only downside to it, though I
think the positives are more than the negatives."

Colleen discussed how sometimes it is tough to be motivated to go to her site because
of all the other things going on in her life. But again, she feels fulfilled when she does go.
I realize how satisfied and how good I feel on my way driving back every time. On
the drive there I’m thinking I should be doing homework and all this other stuff but
then, you know, driving back, I’m like, “okay that was a good night.”

She also felt, that because service-learning is time intensive, it has helped her be creative in
organizing her free time to complete all of her school work.

All of these students were very busy and had full schedules but yet they seemed to
find time to go and participate in service activities, whether it was service-learning for Child
and Adolescent Development or another course, or just volunteering their time. Initially the
time commitment was an issue, but as stated, most students gained so much from their
experiences that eventually the time commitment wasn’t a factor.

8. One of the most significant aspects of service-learning is the interaction and
 establishment of relationships with others.

Repeatedly, students discussed the importance of relationships and interactions with
others as one of the most significant aspects of their service-learning experiences. This
connection with others played a role in student learning and personal development that would not necessarily have occurred if they had not been involved in service-learning. The students shared some profound thoughts on the relationships and bonds that were formed with the children throughout their experiences.

Grant felt that one of the most significant aspects of his service-learning experience was his relationship with the children. He shared, “I had that bond with those two students that I wouldn’t have gained if I was not taking that class or not in that project and that is something that I am always going to remember.”

Missy did not establish an in-depth relationship with the children that she worked with, which caused her to struggle some with the experience.

Just being there once a week was really frustrating. I think if I would have had a one-on-one relationship with a kid then I think it would have been a little bit easier. I would have gotten to know the child better.

In her journal, Ellie discussed how her relationship with the two girls in the Literacy Army Program affected her attitude:

I feel as if the girls and I have formed some kind of symbiotic relationship. When I have a positive attitude, the girls are more enthusiastic about what we’re doing and they show more improvements. This makes me feel like I have accomplished something and that makes me more enthusiastic and positive.

Ellie also shared, during our interview, one of her most memorable moments during her service-learning experience for Child and Adolescent Development.

I think it was really the reason that I was there was to provide service and to learn but the moments that I remember the most were just the ones where I really felt like a
connection, a deeper connection, than just me helping someone or them. When I was doing the service-learning for Peggy’s class I was going to leave one day and the girl I was working with gave me a big hug and she said she wanted me to stay longer and she wanted me to come to the classroom and stay with them. I just felt like there was more of a connection than just me helping her with learning how to read.

Jill felt that the “important part of service-learning is building relationships.” During her experience she only spent a short amount of time with the foster care children and then never saw them again. She really thought that was the downside to her service-learning experience.

Colleen established a bond with the Hispanic family at her site the very first time she made a visit. She said, “Like I expected it to be a little awkward but they gave me a big hug the first night and the kids come running out of the house every time.” She was still visiting the family but the service-learning component was coming to an end soon and we discussed how she was going to end the relationship.

I don’t know. I’ve been thinking about that, like how I’m going to explain it to the family that I’m not going to be coming back and it is going to be hard because we made a connection. They are always interested in how I am doing and my family and everything. I don’t know how I’m going to do it. I thought about trading addresses with them just to keep in touch. Even if we don’t actually do it, like the thought of it.

Kelli reflected on the long-term effects of the relationships with individuals that she has been involved with through all of her service-learning experiences.

But now I think those experiences have probably helped me realize that people come
and go. Not everybody is permanent and going to be in your life forever and so I guess that is something that I’ve gotten out of it. I didn’t even realize the things that I got.

This connection with others through service-learning was significant in what students took away from these experiences. Students were able to explore their sense of self and these various relationships did influence the development of their self-awareness.

9. Service-learning is an avenue to expose students to new environments, varied perspectives and different cultures.

Exposure to new and varied environments, cultures, and individuals allowed students to respect cultural differences and develop a sensitivity toward various perspectives different from their own. Students became more socially conscious. This, in turn, led to a sense of appreciation for decision-making and policy issues in some areas.

Colleen shared the fact that she enjoyed being able to get away from campus and her college friends to spend time with children and their families.

Like one thing that I really appreciated is that it got me off campus. So I wasn’t so focused on the campus crowd and what was going on here but realizing that other things are going on and people are going through so much more trouble than I may have, you know, having to write this paper every week. It has helped me keep my mind open, I think.

Through her experiences with foster families, Jill’s eyes were opened to a variety of perspectives and issues that she had never had to deal with before.

And it is so great to start to meet people that are different than you and to realize that there are different ways to look at the world and all that kind of stuff. But then all of
a sudden you say, “but they aren’t that different from me.” So it makes you a little bit
more accepting of it. But I don’t think you can fully accept it until you embrace it
first. I don’t think you can really embrace something until you actually experienced
it.

Jennifer was placed in an after school program where she became the ethnic minority,
which was a little discomforting for her at first.

So I was very nervous, I guess, about going there because I’m from Pella and there
isn’t much diversity here and it was a real eye opening experience. I’m very glad
that I had the opportunity to serve, but initially there weren’t very many intrinsic
reasons.

A few students discussed how their service-learning experiences provided the
opportunity for them to directly face negative stereotypes. The following students shared
how exposure to different situations helped them deal with these stereotypes.

Ellie talked about her current service-learning experience with Adult Development
and Aging and how she has had to face negative stereotypes that she had about elderly people
and care facilities for the elderly.

Well, like in the past I kind of had a negative attitude about the homes for old people
because we don’t really have very much of those in my country because most of the
old people live with their families. So I kind of had a negative attitude about these
homes because I thought it was like neglecting them. You know, like visiting Ruth at
Hilltop, I just kind of realized that it’s a good thing for them because they have all
these activities and stuff they can do. It’s the whole cultural difference; so I’m just
beginning to think about the homes and the positive side to it.
Jennifer realized how her service-learning experience enabled her to overcome her negative stereotypes just by having to deal with them on a weekly basis. She shared, "So it is really interesting for me to be in this environment where I was constantly bombarded with stereotypes and show how they were broken down. So I guess I became more open than I was before."

In the beginning Marie had negative stereotypes of daycare settings but she resolved it "just by spending time there and seeing that they did care about kids and they took good care of them." Exposure to a variety of situations and people made Marie change her views or reevaluate her thoughts. She stated, "Yeah, because it's different because a lot of these are things that I have thought about before but it's different when you do actually, do have exposure to something."

Alison was thankful for the opportunities to be exposed to different and new cultures through her service-learning experiences. Without service-learning she may not have had the same opportunities.

Those were all experiences that I wouldn't have had otherwise because I didn't really know that the opportunities existed. A lot of the service-learning situations introduced me to new cultures and also to different ways of thinking that opened my mind a lot. I guess it just really made me think about a lot of things that I hadn't before.

Missy has a better sense of how to deal with people because of her involvement in service-learning.

But it just takes a lot of practice to deal with different types of people, different ages, different developmental stages, and you can't just get "book smart" and then go do it.
You really have to practice along the way and I think it has been really valuable practice.

Students came away from these experiences realizing the powerful effect that exposure to new perspectives and cultures can have on their learning and self-awareness. Service-learning provided an avenue for this exposure to occur and students recognized the fact that they may not have had these opportunities if it weren’t for these service experiences.

10. Through interactions with others, students developed a deeper sense of self-awareness.

Students learned valuable lessons about themselves (self-awareness) when they were challenged to interact with others in new and diverse environments. Through reflection during the time of their service and their interviews with me, students shared what they gained personally from their service-learning experiences.

Jennifer learned more patience and respect for others. She said, “I put myself in their shoes and think about where they are coming from. And I kind of have the mentality now that each person that I come into contact with is there for a reason, to teach me a lesson.”

Marie realized that different perspectives were important:

But it just made me see that there are different ways to do things and I can’t always assume that my ideas are better than other people’s [are] or like there is only one correct way to do things. I think that’s a big thing that I took away from the class and that was just one of those things that I guess that really stuck out for me.

Jack learned several things about himself during this process:

I don’t know, I learned a lot. I just don’t know how to explain some of it. I learned a
lot like in terms of me, probably patience, dealing with people, especially with kids. I’ve gained a lot of respect for elementary teachers, like I said last time. I guess I learned a little bit on how to teach somebody to read or help somebody to read. I kind of learned how to give and take, trying to get along, just I mean it’s kind of different because I didn’t really know the kids that well as far as their personalities and stuff like that. So I had to really learn kind of fast in like how they know something and how they react to different things. And sometimes I would make compromises with them; but just trying to deal with them and get along because I didn’t have time to say, “you have to sit in the corner, we have to get along and read.”

Grant gained confidence and shared, “I think I gained a lot of confidence with teaching and just being confident being with the kids.”

Missy developed empathy and patience because of her two experiences:

I think I’m better at empathizing, having worked with Ernie and Chris. I’ve probably developed more patience through having worked with kids in the two different settings. I think I kind of realized that I might have the ability to lead an organization or a program of some sort because I did see some of the things that Betty was doing and thought of different ways that she could do it differently.

Ellie gained a new kind of respect for educators:

I guess I have a lot more respect for - not respect - because I’ve always respected teachers. I know that my mom works really really hard but I didn’t realize how frustrating it could be and how patient you have to be and I guess that was one good thing just getting a new perspective.

Jill developed a sense of empathy toward others:
It definitely changed the way I look at other people. I’m a little bit more sympathetic to people’s situations and realizing that a lot of things that happen to people aren’t of their own doing.

All of these students came away from their service-learning experiences with a better sense of who they were. Through interactions with others, students re-evaluated their views, morals, and beliefs. They gained some valuable lessons and insights into their own personal awareness throughout the process.

11. Service-learning experiences provide students with information and exposure to various career paths for the future.

For some students, these service-learning experiences became a glimpse into their futures, especially related to their intended careers. I talked with a few students who did a complete one-eighty in the direction they were headed, either with their major or future career. As students prepared for their futures after leaving Central College, service-learning provided an opportunity for them to evaluate their career and personal goals.

Colleen shared her thoughts and feelings on the impact her service experience had on her future career plans.

I think this family is having an impact on me. I am a Sociology major but I never knew specifically what I wanted to do with it. After spending a few weeks with them, I have realized I would like to put my focus onto immigrants and the growing Hispanic population in the Midwest. I had always thought I would do something with At-Risk teens but I have discovered I have a much greater interest in the Hispanic population. I think this is because I am getting hands-on experience in seeing the frustrations that are there and what could be done for these families. I
realize I am also only seeing a small part of the picture from where I am coming from but that just entices me that there is much more to be done.

Missy discovered through her experience that she didn't necessarily enjoy working with children in big groups. She would not have known that if she had not chosen the After School Kids Club for her site.

It's a really good, service-learning is a really good kind of predictor for what kind of career you are going to like because how well you like different service-learning projects means a lot in terms of...I mean summer jobs, yeah, but you don't have that course material to back it up. And when you are a professional, you are going to have to have that knowledge to back it up. I mean, I love learning about kids but I figured out that I don't want to work with them in the masses. I never would have known that if I wouldn't have had some work and service-learning.

Alison had an idea that service would be part of her future career but did not have previous experience with non-profit organizations. Her experiences had such an impact on her that, during this study, she was interviewing for a job with AmeriCorps.

It made me think about if I want to do something like that beyond college. I've always known that I wanted to help people but I didn't know how. I didn't know about any non-profit agencies or anything like that until I came to college. And service-learning kind of introduced that to me. And now, I really think that I do want to do that beyond college with an agency like that. I feel a lot more confident now, how to get into it.
Grant specifically chose his site to help him with his future career in teaching. The professor for Child and Adolescent Development allowed the students to choose their own sites so that flexibility definitely was beneficial for Grant.

This is first-hand kind of what I want to do, working with kids, and so I went in there with the attitude that I was just really open and really was looking for examples or ways to improve. This particularly pertained to me and what I wanted to do.

This exposure to various future career paths could be an unintentional outcome of these service-learning experiences. Students did benefit from this exposure and it helped them sort out what they did or did not want for their futures. They may not have narrowed in on a specific job but many of them knew what direction they hoped to go once they graduated. Most of the participants were seniors so this was a real issue they were dealing with in the here and now.

12. Service-learning is a “win-win” experience for both the students and those being served.

Learning becomes a two-way exchange where students participating in service-learning experiences gain just as much, if not more, than those being served do. The service is not really for the community participants, but rather with them, and learning is reciprocal for all participants. Students shared how this reciprocal relationship was beneficial to their learning and their overall experience.

Most of the students shared how their views changed from the beginning of their service experiences to the time they were finished. The following statements reflect these views on the mutual benefit of service-learning experiences.
Marie had always thought that she would be the one providing the service to others, but in reality she found that to be the opposite.

I think in the past I have gone into some of those situations thinking that I am going to serve these people, but in reality I think whenever you are having some sort of service interaction or just whenever you’re interacting with another person, really both people benefit.

At first, Missy thought that service was the primary goal and learning would be secondary in the process.

When I was first introduced to the concept, I think I thought that I would be giving a lot to the organization and that learning would be just kind of a side-effect. But now, I really understand that you are really gaining a lot more from the people you are working with than you are really helping them so much.

Ellie could see the mutuality aspect of service-learning in her experiences. “I definitely see it as a mutual effort on both ends. Each person is benefiting from it and I really like that aspect of it.” Elizabeth shared very similar thoughts on the mutual benefits of these experiences.

Colleen realized that she was benefiting from the experience, probably more than the family she was serving did.

Like you hear this a lot, like you go there and you know you are going to be giving them a whole lot but, you know as much as you give, you are going to get back in some form, whether you realize it or not. For me, just feeling appreciated by them was just wonderful. And that is something that I hear from a lot of my friends. They tell you in class that you are going to give so much but you are going to get so
much more back.

These students discovered that these giving and receiving relationships that were formed through service-learning provided a positive experience for all involved and enhanced the overall experience for them. Students realized that mutuality is an important aspect in service-learning.

13. Students expressed a desire to continue their involvement with service in some capacity in the future.

Being involved with service-learning impacted students so that they wanted to continue their involvement with service in the future, either directly related to their career or as a personal interest. When talking about their futures, students always mentioned staying involved with service activities in some capacity. Student satisfaction with their service-learning experiences and the benefits that came from these experiences were mentioned as reasons for wanting to continue with service.

Jack discussed the satisfaction that he derived from his experiences: “I don’t know, I just get satisfaction from doing something. I can’t just sit in my room. I know I probably won’t go out and change the world but I can at least do something, I guess.”

Marie thoroughly enjoyed her time at the daycare center and realized that she wants to continue volunteering her time in the future.

I guess it has made me want to stay involved in service opportunities because it’s enjoyable for me. I feel like it gives you…it’s a good way to spend time I think. You can learn things, they can learn things, and you both benefit from the interaction. I think it is a good thing to do, a worthwhile thing.
Alison not only sees service as part of her life but also sees it as part of her career. She shared, “I’ve always thought that it would somehow be a part [of my life]. I’d like to make it a career if I could.”

Missy also viewed service-learning as part of her future career, as well as an opportunity to become involved in a new community, if she decides to move out-of-state. I definitely see it tied to a job. I also see it as just a way to continue to feel productive and helpful, I mean as far as volunteering, not just doing it as a job. When I think about moving out-of-state, like to Seattle, I think about how I would be totally like starting over. I wouldn’t know anyone or have any friends out there. So volunteer experiences would probably be a good way also to meet people, and be involved in the community, and feel like you’re an active part of a community, and not just kind of a little hermit or something.

Involvement in service-learning fostered positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal development for these students. Students recognized these benefits and wanted to continue reaping the rewards of service experiences.

14. Service-learning is not necessarily part of the campus culture at Central College. Views were mixed on whether service-learning was part of the campus culture. It certainly was within specific departments, such as Psychology, and some campus organizations, but service-learning was not embraced by all. However, many opportunities did exist to be involved with service in some capacity. Students had mixed perceptions of the institutionalization of service-learning at Central College. Even though the service-learning component was required for Child and Adolescent Development, students involved in this research chose to enroll in the class. Their service experiences extended beyond that
of this particular course, but again, they took advantage of many of the opportunities available on campus. The following statements demonstrated student perceptions of service as part of the culture at Central College:

Colleen discussed how personal motivation is a factor in whether students become involved with service-learning.

I can see how there’s a lot of options on Central’s campus but with a lot of them you have to make yourself involved. And if you don’t have that personal initiative to be involved, then you’re not going to be. So I think a lot…there’s the options there, but you have to have that personal motivation or some reason to do it. So, I think it is pushed on Central’s campus.

Ellie discussed the many opportunities available but didn’t feel that enough students were aware of them on campus.

I think there are a lot of opportunities but I just don’t think students are taking advantage of that; or I don’t think it is promoted that much. I definitely think there are a lot of opportunities for as small of a school as it is. There are definitely opportunities for that. I just think a lot of people don’t realize that or they don’t really care.

Jack, on the other hand, did feel that service activities are promoted and he felt that service was part of the campus culture.

Central College, in general, the whole service idea is there, maybe not like in Spanish or something like that, but in terms of extra-curricular activities or just in general, like in general student life, it gets promoted. The idea of service is pressed
upon, I think, everyone here. I think most people step up and go do something, in general.

Marie struggled with this idea and came to the conclusion that in "her world" service was promoted and in part of the subcultures of the Psychology Department, athletics, and some campus organizations.

I don’t know if it is. I guess I feel like it is integrated into a lot of things. I know it is into InterVarsity, Campus Ministry and it is in some of the classes. I know [with] my volleyball coach - we do service projects during the off season and stuff. So I feel like in a lot of those different areas it is something that they want to expose us to, or teach us, or just encourage us to do. The areas that I have had exposure to I’d say that it is true in all of them. But then I also know that there are people who don’t go to InterVarsity, who don’t have a coach who encourages them to do that, [and] don’t take these sorts of classes. So I guess I don’t know what their experience is and if they still feel encouraged to [do] service-learning. I feel like pretty much all of the things that I have been involved in, it was something that was promoted.

The majority of students felt that opportunities to participate in service type activities were available on campus but it was up to the individual to take advantage of these opportunities and get involved. As stated earlier and demonstrated through student comments, students had mixed views on whether service-learning was part of the campus culture.

Discussion

Previous literature suggested that service-learning can be defined in many different ways. Service-learning takes on different forms, depending on the institutional environment
in which it exists. Researchers have been trying to establish a clear definition for service-learning for many years to more clearly establish goals for these service programs. In establishing a more universal definition for service-learning, there needs to be a balance between learning goals and service outcomes.

**Definition of Service-Learning**

Students in this study struggled in the beginning with finding common language to define service-learning. Many of the students did not fully understand what service-learning entailed. According to Furco's (1996) typology of the various forms of service programs, students in this study were involved in a form of service-learning, where the service and learning goals were of equal value and each enhanced the other, for all participants. This type of service-learning program emphasized the interaction of service and learning, which goes beyond the independent contributions of each separately; therefore, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Service-learning can be further characterized as educational experiences where

1. students learn course content as a result of the service that they perform.
2. students apply course content in a community setting.
3. students are provided time and opportunity for reflection on the experience.
4. the relationship among participants is collaborative and the benefits are reciprocal.
5. the service is with, rather than for, the community participants.
6. community participants acquire benefits from the service, while students gain valuable knowledge and skills. (Buchanan, Baldwin, & Rudisill, 2002)
This definition of service-learning is consistent with the philosophy of Central’s service and community-based programs (See Appendix B). The service-learning component of Child and Adolescent Development was an avenue for students to achieve academic goals that were consistent with Central’s mission of service to the community (See Appendix A).

The Principles of Good Practice for Combining Serving and Learning were developed at the 1989 Wingspread Conference. The purpose of these principles was to sustain current initiatives in service programming (Principles of Good Practice Combining Service and Learning, 1990). As students described their service experiences at Central, and I viewed the specific course syllabus for Child and Adolescent Development and brochures from the Office of Community Based Education, it seems that these service programs are consistent with the Principles of Good Practice for Combining Serving and Learning.

Students at Central College had the opportunity to be engaged in the community and work with diverse populations. Structured reflection was a component of service-learning programs, especially in Child and Adolescent Development. Learning and service goals were provided in the course syllabus, as well as the strategic plan. These are all examples of how the service programs at Central College are consistent with the Principles of Good Practice for Combining Serving and Learning and are indicators of institutional commitment to service-learning.

The service-learning program at Central College is also consistent with the Critical Elements of Thoughtful Community Service developed by the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL). The most critical element is that of structured reflection where students have the opportunity to share their feelings, observations, and reactions to their actual experiences and connect those reflections to the course content. The literature suggested that
there does seem to be a disconnect between the development of some of these principles and the success in putting them into practice (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). However, this doesn’t seem to be the case at Central College where service-learning is integrated into the curriculum for some majors.

Jeffery Howard (1993) proposed the context of principles that go beyond the program level to a broader pedagogical level in the Principles of Good Practice in Community Service-Learning Pedagogy. These principles focused on the challenges and opportunities in service-learning practice, and from the information that students shared, Central College has achieved the following five of the ten principles listed:

1. Set learning goals for students.
2. Provide support for students to learn how to harvest the community learning.
3. Minimize the distinction between the student’s learning role and the classroom learning role.
4. Re-think the faculty instructional role.
5. Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes. (as cited in Mintz & Hesser, 1996, p. 32)

College-wide goals relevant to service and learning are explicitly spelled out for students, faculty, and the Central College community in the strategic plan. The professor included these goals in the course syllabus. The role of faculty, according to the strategic plan, is to “support the development of students as independent learners, responsible citizens, and morally responsible persons” (About Central, 2002). As indicated previously, students noted that the role of professor was key and she provided the necessary support and challenge within the context of Child and Adolescent Development to facilitate learning.
Structured reflection allowed students to integrate academic and practical knowledge within a community setting. Reflection played a significant role in the student learning process and their personal growth. It provided an opportunity for the professor to provide students with valuable feedback. Students' voices were heard through this reflection and they were able to make connections, not only from their experience to the course material, but to their life in general. Through student journals and in-class discussions, students had an opportunity to process and discuss issues related to their service sites in the context of a safe and collaborative environment, an essential element for the development of students.

For the students in this study, learning became much more than just acquiring knowledge to recall for an exam. Students were able to integrate and apply knowledge within a certain context, and as mentioned before, their voices became much stronger through reflection. Service-learning provided students the community settings in which they began to see first-hand, complex situations unfold. Students were able to discover meanings and uses for their new knowledge and understandings, which could be different for each student.

Collaboration is necessary in order to provide a foundation that is inclusive and reciprocal for building trust and community. This includes students, faculty, administrators and community members. The Office of Community-Based Education at Central coordinates many of the service activities for students and faculty, and facilitates communication with the many service sites. These collaborative efforts on the part of key personnel at Central, lead to inclusive and reciprocal relationships for all those involved. According to Howard (1993), the key is to put the Principles of Good Practice in Community Service-Learning Pedagogy
into practice. As evidenced through the findings of this study, this has been accomplished in
the structure of service-learning at Central College.

Student Learning

The literature also suggested that service and learning can be powerful. By linking
service and learning, the literature presented many learning outcomes, including critical
reflection skills, civic responsibility, a respect for cultural differences, a sensitivity to public
issues, and self-efficacy (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kendall, 1990). By expanding the roles of
learners through service experiences, these outcomes can become greatly enhanced.
Knowing and learning shifts from the individualistic tradition to a more collaborative,
contextual learning environment.

One of the students, Jack, reflected in his journal, on his feelings about service-
learning and what he gained from the experience that touches on several of the outcomes that
are presented in the literature.

Volunteering is just as great for you as it is for the people you help because you are
able to go home at the end of the day knowing you did something to make humanity
much better. One really learns to appreciate what and whom they have in their life
when they are around someone who is less fortunate than themselves. It gives a
whole new perspective to your life that more than likely you would have never
experienced any other time.

This semester between class and my service-learning project I have learned
things and thought about things that previous to this class I would have never thought
about till the distant future. What really pushed me to dig deep in the journals was
the idea that I really was not doing all this learning for me, I was also doing it for the fous kids I was helping out.

This contextual learning environment is one of the three principles that Baxter Magolda (1992) developed for generating specific teaching and learning strategies. The three principles are "validating the student as a knower, situating learning in the students' own experience, and defining learning as jointly constructing meaning" (p. 270). Service-learning provides an excellent atmosphere for students to engage in all three of these strategies. Structured reflection activities validate students as knowers and allow their voices to be heard. Students discussed the fact that reflecting in their journals for Child and Adolescent Development allowed them the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings within the context of a safe environment. According to Baxter Magolda, when given opportunities to reflect and share, "students can begin to sort through their perspectives and author their own" (p. 286). An example of this is when Missy shared that reflection was key to her learning at the After School Kids Club. She stated:

It has kind of helped me to question authority in a productive way, in a positive way, and to be able to provide a basis for why I think something should be changed. And it was a totally safe environment, you know, just journaling. It isn’t hurting the authority and isn’t making you look dumb if maybe you didn’t have the best idea. It’s just being able to think through stuff and see whether you might be able to put a different slant on it.

The nature of these service experiences situates the learning within the context of students' actual lived experiences. Through this reflection process, students begin to define their learning not only with themselves, but also with others.
The integration of service and learning extends the idea of classroom learning to the external world and provides students the community setting, in which they are able to think about and apply their new knowledge (Rhoads, 1997). This is the key component in experiential learning. Building these connections between the classroom and the actual lived experiences of students has been an issue in higher education following the initial work of John Dewey (Kolb, 1984). Students in this study shared that experience and involvement outside the classroom were key to their learning course material and to personal growth and development.

In promoting these effective learning environments, Astin's (1984) involvement theory provides a foundation for implementing service-learning programs. The key to this particular theory is that the focus is shifted to what students are actually doing, their motivation, and the time they devote to the learning process. Service-learning programs, such as the service component for Child and Adolescent Development, provides the setting in which strong connections between students, community members, and faculty are nurtured. These connections, then, encouraged students to become more involved throughout their college experience and enhanced student learning and development. Missy discussed how she is now willing to become involved in a variety of activities, due to her involvement with service-learning.

And with all that experience, then you are more willing, I think, to have more different experiences. Once you have stepped outside your comfort zone, you are willing to go a little further, you know, do it more cheerfully instead of like, “Oh man, this is going to be weird.”
Research suggests that curricular service-learning, or service that is connected to specific courses, can improve student learning, especially in the enhancement of course content (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Morton, 1996). When service is integrated with the course content, it provides opportunities for students to use theoretical models and apply their knowledge in the context of real social problems. In this learning environment, students are faced with unique situations that "generate profound dissonance in their traditional ways of thinking" (Albert, 1996, p. 184). One student in this study, Jill, discussed the connections she made between her service project and Child and Adolescent Development. She shared,

That is what really stands out to me is the quickness of how this got me to take what I learn and move it outside the classroom, not only to the site I was working at, but to my own life.

Through her service experience, she was able to, not only make connections with the course, but also with her personal life. Many of the participants shared similar stories with me, especially in regard to making some type of connection with the course material and then applying their knowledge.

One question that keeps coming to the forefront in the literature, as well as in everyday practice in higher education is, "What does it actually mean to learn academic material?" We have reached a time in our society where a broader definition of academic learning is needed to better understand what it means to learn academic material. In the study conducted by Eyler and Giles (1999), students consistently identified two ways in which service-learning differs from traditional classroom learning: it leads to a deeper understanding and better application of course material.
This finding is consistent with what I discovered about the students’ experiences with service-learning at Central College. They were able to understand certain theories related, for instance, to child development and either apply those theories, or observe and analyze children’s behavior based upon specific theories. Students shared many examples of a ha moments where they would be sitting in class discussing a certain issue and would remember an incident at their site that related to the topic, or vice versa. These were defining moments in their learning.

This view of understanding and learning academic material is what Dewey (1938) proposed many years ago in that knowledge should be learned in a context where it can be used to solve problems. True understanding is the ability to see the relevance of such information in new situations. Therefore, according to Eyler and Giles (1999), understanding “is distinct from the ability to recall information when prompted by a test; it is the ability to call it up when it is relevant to a new situation and the ability to use it in that situation” (p. 64). When students understand material in this fashion, it has meaning for them as the learner.

Two students from this study shared how their service experience made the course material meaningful for them. When discussing the benefits of her service-learning experience, Missy explained, “I think the most important benefit that comes to mind is that I learned how to make insightful connections between course material and real life experiences.” Grant shared his overall thoughts on his service experience during his interview with me:

I feel that service-learning is one of the best ways to demonstrate one’s understanding of the material. If a student is able to apply what he is learning in the classroom to
the outside world, then to me that is true knowledge.

He went on to share his feelings that “service-learning makes the information for the class real. I felt that I wanted to read more and learn the concepts a lot more, and then apply them to my project.” Both of these students shared the meaning of their learning related to their actual experiences. It went beyond just learning material to recall for an upcoming exam.

Baxter Magolda (1992) identified this type of understanding as contextual knowing, where the student integrates and applies knowledge within a certain context and the voice of self becomes much stronger. Also, Belenky et al. (1986) described understanding as the purpose of learning through the connected way of knowing. As students move from a connected way of knowing to constructed knowledge, self-awareness is key in making connections between understanding and students’ own experiences. Students discussed their self-awareness in terms of their understanding linked to their experiences. To foster this interaction between learning and context, service-learning provided the necessary settings in which students began to see, first-hand, complex situations unfold. Structured reflection of these experiences provided opportunities for students to discover meanings and uses for their new knowledge and understanding.

A significant finding in a national longitudinal study conducted by Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000), was that the act of processing or reflecting (both discussions and written journals or papers) on the experience was a key component to both community service and service-learning. Overall, these findings suggested that service-learning needs to be designed to help students make connections between academic course material and the service experience (Astin, et al.). Students’ perspectives on the reflection process at Central College were consistent with the findings of this national study. Students
felt that through structured reflection, both in their student journals and in-class discussions, was key in making connections to the course material and in developing their self-awareness throughout the process.

What Eyler and Giles (1999) found in their national study with students involved in service-learning is that they gained a higher level of understanding and the ability to apply what they learn. Among the most important cognitive outcomes identified by students in this study were a deeper understanding of subject matter and complexity of social issues, and the ability to apply knowledge to real world problems. The application of course content, as well as opportunities for structured reflection, was associated with greater learning (Eyler & Giles). The perspectives of students from Central College on their service-learning experiences were again consistent with the findings of Eyler and Giles in their national study.

Eyler and Giles (1999) discovered that the quality of the service-learning programs does make a difference. A number of characteristics that make a difference include 1) creating high-quality placements, 2) building application into service-learning, 3) planning for reflection, 4) preparing for diversity and 5) dealing with conflict. These characteristics provide the necessary foundation for institutions, such as Central College, to integrate service programming into their academic mission. The structure of the service-learning component, as well as the overall structure of the Child and Adolescent Development course, did make a difference in the student learning outcomes. As stated previously, many students shared their appreciation for the structure that was built into the course, for example, the three-part format of the student journals and the scheduled in-class discussions. Service-learning provided students with concrete experiences that solidified their learning of the course material for Child and Adolescent Development.
Steinke, Fitch, McCrae, Williams, Johnson and Waldstein (2000) conducted a study that included Central College and 11 other private colleges in Iowa. Five outcomes of service-learning were examined: civic engagement, intellectual development, cognitive learning, spiritual values, and community impact. This study found that service-learning contributed to the development of values and attitudes that are consistent with and encourage civic engagement. Student intellectual development was higher when students were engaged with the community and when faculty encouraged students to reflect on their experiences. Students working with individuals who are ethnically different from them felt more comfortable at the end of their experience than at the beginning. Student learning was also positively affected by instructional characteristics such as discussion, the use of reflection and instructor feedback (Steinke, et al.).

A common theme that emerged from this study suggested that “model service-learning courses” are “those that fully integrate community service goals with academic learning goals” (Steinke, et al., 2000, p. 90). The findings of my research are consistent with what these researchers discovered because students viewed service-learning as an avenue through which they can better process information and begin to think in more complex ways about course content, societal issues, and personal beliefs, values and attitudes.

Self-Awareness

The students who participated in my research study were all either juniors or seniors. Many of these students had dealt with transition issues in the past, as well as the here and now, as they prepared for their futures upon graduation. The senior year becomes a time of increased autonomy, decision-making and personal growth, which many of the students recognized and shared with me during our interviews. Chickering and Reisser (1993)
presented the seven vectors of psychosocial development to provide the lenses through which to see these changes in students' development. Most of this development centers on the issue of identity and, although identity is in a constant state of change, the college years become the time when it is most challenged. Robert Rhoads' (1997) study examined students' journey of self-awareness through their experiences with community service programs.

This study was key in framing my research on service-learning, particularly in my decision to examine the connection between the development of self or self-awareness and academic learning. Educational experiences such as service-learning are crucial aspects of teaching and learning with a commitment to nurturing students. Students acquire knowledge through their interactions with others and have the opportunity to reevaluate their own thinking in terms of these connections with others. One student, Ellie, shared her realization about herself through involvement in service-learning:

And I've always been around people who are like myself and so being around people who are different than me, it was just the fact that I was in a completely different situation. I had to change, there was no way around it really.

She went on to discuss further connections she made, "I have all those connections now. I mean not just the people who I was serving but all these other people who helped in the learning process." Therefore, connections with others are important in the learning process, both with academic material and personal growth. These connections involve students, faculty, and community members in both a giving and receiving relationship (mutuality). Mutuality is a key component in these service experiences.

This type of activity demands that students view knowledge and nurturance as connected rather than fragmented, a premise of Baxter Magolda's (1992) and Belenky and
associates' (1986) constructed way of knowing. This can then become the bridge between academic affairs and student development in fostering successful learning environments for our students. According to Rhoads (1997), the role of education “is to challenge the sense of self students bring to higher learning” (p. 216). One answer to this challenge is to involve students in service activities that provide opportunities for students to link the classroom, life experiences, and the community. Students then begin to make the connections between learning and their own life experiences, which is the premise of experientially based education (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

Three examples from the student interviews demonstrated how students began to make connections between what they were learning in Child and Adolescent Development to their own life experiences.

- You realize that you can connect everything you learn to your own life if you pay enough attention to that (Jill).
- Sometimes the personal stuff relates to the academic stuff. It just depends on the actual experience like sometimes it overlaps and sometimes it doesn’t….Usually the things I remember the most are the more personal things to me (Jennifer).
- I think I just looked at [it] from the standpoint, I’m in college, I’m away from home, I’m growing, I’m learning…and when I took that class I was like, you know what, I was depressed at that age and I was doing these things, I was kind of like a text book case if you want to put it that way (Kelli).

Institutionalization of Service-Learning

Many institutions are emphasizing and implementing service-learning programs to meet the needs of students, faculty, administrators, community members and society at large.
Sustaining long-term involvement in service-learning is a challenge that many institutions face. Integrating service-learning into the broad spectrum of learning activities and opportunities within institutions is one step closer to institutionalizing service-learning.

Institutionalization of service-learning can be portrayed at the campus level by the mission statement, presidential leadership, budget allocations, publicity, administrative and staff support, faculty roles and rewards, and the integration of service-learning with other administrative offices. Institutional factors that support service-learning include

- clarifying the mission and goals to produce congruence between mission and practice;
- examining and modifying the curriculum to reflect community service;
- investing in infrastructure to support service;
- developing models for assessment; and
- adjusting roles and rewards for faculty (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

The literature stated that it is evident that many factors must be considered and defined in order for service-learning to be institutionalized.

Students at Central College had somewhat mixed perspectives on whether or not service-learning was part of the campus culture or institutionalized. The institution clearly supported service activities, not just service-learning, which was evident from the mission statement, strategic plan and the website (See Appendix A). Service-learning had been integrated into the curriculum of some courses, concentrated in the Psychology and Sociology departments. Central College’s commitment to service-learning was evidenced by their establishment of an Office of Community-Based Learning. Organizationally, the Director of this office reported to the Academic Dean with a direct link to the President. The
institution also provided funding for the students who were involved in service-learning by paying for their travel to the service sites. However, students who participated in this study did not share with me whether or not they took advantage of this funding. Many did not because their sites were right in Pella.

Findings from a study conducted by Campus Compact indicated that institutionalization was more likely to occur when 1) there was congruence with the mission and strategic plan of the institution, 2) resources were allocated to support service-learning, 3) faculty were involved in the planning stages, 4) incentives were provided to faculty, 5) faculty work was published, and 6) service-learning was integrated into the curriculum, which was completed over a duration of time and supported by a vast number of personnel (Morton & Troppe, 1996). Again, from what I was able to observe and from what the students and the Director of Community-Based Education shared with me, Central had met many of these parameters including the resource allocations, faculty involvement, publication of faculty work, and the integration of service into the curriculum.

Holland (1997) conducted another study on the relationship between organizational factors and the level of institutional commitment to service. Three factors were related to the success with which service-learning was institutionalized.

1. The congruence of service-learning with the institutional mission.
2. The institutional policies and resources that allowed service to be central to the work of faculty and an integral part of the student experience, not just an extra assignment.
3. The service-learning strategies had to be distinctive to the institution in order to reach sustainability.
According to Holland’s study four levels of institutional commitment and seven different organizational factors characterize service at institutions.

Central falls into Level Three in which service is characterized as being of “high relevance.” Out of the seven organizational factors that Holland presented, this study was able to gain insights into four: mission, organizational structure, student involvement and campus publications. Promotion, tenure and hiring of faculty, community involvement, and faculty involvement were not addressed due to the nature of this study. Students expressed that many opportunities existed on campus to be involved with service activities both in and out of the classroom. Some professors were integrating service into their courses, especially in Psychology and Sociology. As mentioned before, an office has been established to organize community-based experiences. Service was an element of the academic program, the overall goals and mission of Central College, and embraced by some key personnel.

The institutionalization of service-learning is an issue that had been discussed thoroughly at Central College. The factors that Bringle and Hatcher (2000) and Holland (1997) discussed as important in the institutionalization of service-learning are parallel to the significant aspects that the Director of Community-Based Education shared as crucial to the success of integrating service-learning at Central College. The literature shows that in order for service-learning to be truly institutionalized, it must be integrated into all aspects of the campus culture. The students who had been involved in service-learning shared mixed perspectives on this topic and it was not unanimous that service-learning is integrated into all aspects of the Central College campus. All of the participants did, however, share that many opportunities were made available to them to participate in a variety of service activities.
Connections to Theory

As mentioned in Chapter One, knowledge about student learning and development provides an essential foundation for the design and implementation of service-learning programs. Theoretical perspectives provided insights on the nature of college students who participated in these experiences and the learning and development outcomes that might be expected. Students will be at various levels while they are going through these service-learning experiences. This study focused on both cognitive and psychosocial development of students related to their service-learning experiences.

Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors of psychosocial development were significant to this research on service-learning because students were dealing with different psychosocial issues as they were engaged in service-learning. The development of self-awareness is really a culmination of the first four vectors in Chickering and Reisser’s model: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Development in the first four vectors serves as the foundation for the fifth vector, establishing identity, which is then the foundation for the last two vectors.

Students in this study were primarily juniors and seniors who had dealt with issues of developing competence, managing emotions, and becoming more independent. Some of the students were struggling with interpersonal relationships, whether it was a personal relationship, or even the relationship with those being served, or the site supervisor. Students shared their struggles with establishing their identity, which is a continuous process, but they were comfortable and confident that they had a strong sense of self-awareness that was further solidified through their service experiences. The students who were preparing to
graduate were beginning the process of developing goals and plans for their futures, which seemed to be directly related to their past service-learning experiences as they expressed an interest in continuing with their service involvement.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) also identified several key influences on student development. The prominent influences that most relate to service-learning were institutional objectives, student-faculty relationships, curriculum and teaching. Chickering and Reisser hypothesized that student development is fostered when

1. institutional objectives are clear and taken seriously and as the diverse elements of the institution and its programs are internally consistent in the service of the objectives.

2. student-faculty interaction is frequent and friendly and when it occurs in diverse situations calling for varied roles and relationships.

3. an educationally powerful curriculum includes the full range of activities and investments that a student’s college experience comprises.

4. teaching calls for active learning, encourages student-faculty contact and cooperation among students, gives prompt feedback, emphasizes time on task and high expectations, and respects diverse talents and ways of knowing. (pp. 266-272)

These four influences determine the effectiveness of service-learning programs through the institution’s support of them, as well as the interaction of students, faculty and community personnel. Service-learning provides an avenue for active, engaged learning and addresses different learning styles and student development by providing a variety of service and learning settings. These four influences were evident in how the students made meaning
of their service-learning experiences, especially in the stories of Kelli, Missy and Ellie, which will be shared in the concluding chapter.

Service-learning is a form of experiential learning, therefore Kolb's (1984) model for experiential learning is key. The experiential learning model provided a framework for examining the connections among education, life experiences and individual development. As I have stated earlier in the chapter and in the previous chapter, students were able to make these connections due to the experiential component of service-learning.

Kolb's (1984) model and the experiential learning process are central to service-learning. Students are exposed to multiple opportunities to move through the learning cycle; reflection is key to the entire learning process; reflection follows actual experiences and comes before the conceptualization phase. Providing a direct link to experience enhanced the effectiveness of students' learning experiences for Child and Adolescent Development.

Mary Belenky and associates (1986) discovered different perspectives or ways of knowing that were relevant to service-learning. The two perspectives that were most relevant to this study were procedural knowledge, with patterns of separate and connected knowing, and constructed knowledge. The “separate knowers' procedures for making meaning are strictly impersonal. Feelings and personal beliefs are rigorously excluded” (Belenky et al., p. 109). Connected knowing, on the other hand, builds on the conviction that “knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities” (Belenky et al., p. 113). In connected knowing, the knower is connected to and has a capacity for empathy with the subject matter. Connected knowing is rooted in relationships with others.

Constructed knowledge is knowledge that is personally important and is integrated with knowledge learned from others. Knowledge depends on the context and is constructed
with the knower playing an essential part in the process. As noted previously in this study, students were able to determine the connections between what they were learning in class to their own experience. Self-awareness came about through reflection and analysis on the part of the participants.

Structured reflection relates to Belenky and her associates’ theory (1986) in that reflection helps students develop as connected knowers. Through reflection for Child and Adolescent Development, students were required to think about their self-awareness and development and then connect their learning to the service experience, which is the essence of constructed knowledge.

Baxter Magolda (1992) also researched students’ ways of knowing and the implications of her work for service-learning lies in the three principles of practice that she developed for generating specific teaching and learning strategies. As mentioned previously, these principles are “validating the student as a knower, situating learning in the students’ own experience, and defining learning as jointly constructing meaning” (Baxter Magolda, p. 270). Through service-learning, students were able to engage in all three of these strategies. Structured reflection allowed student voices to be heard, therefore validating students as knowers. Service-learning situated learning within the context of student’s own experiences. Students began to define their learning as jointly constructed meaning with other students, supervisors, professors and community members through their journals and during in-class reflection.

Students in this study also indicated that the fundamental elements of service-learning that contribute to learning and self-awareness were structured reflection, concrete experiences, the role of the professor, clearly articulated purposes and goals, interaction with
others and the establishment of relationships. These elements coincide with Baxter Magolda’s (1992) expectations of learners, peers, and professors in learning environments, as well as how learning should be evaluated. As students progress through the various learning patterns, the role of peers becomes more collaborative, which enhances learning through personal contributions and sharing. The professor promotes independent thinking, application of knowledge, and open discussion of various perspectives. According to Baxter Magolda, evaluation rewards independent thinking, understanding and application of course material.

The components of Child and Adolescent Development were key to the developmental process of students. Reflection, both through journals and in-class discussion, was important to the learning process. Students benefited from the professor’s feedback, as well as that of their peers. Missy stated, “I’m also grateful for the opportunities we had to discuss our service-learning experiences in class because the discussions helped me to gain insight into my own experience and to think more clearly about the course material.” The contributions from peers enhanced student learning and self-awareness. Students brought different perspectives into class discussion from their various service sites and Colleen felt that was very helpful to her. She said, “You know they are coming from a whole different perspective so you get to see what the other students are thinking.”

The professor also pushed students, through feedback in student journals and in-class discussions, to expand their thinking on issues. From what students shared, the professor provided the right mix of challenge and support, which was key to structuring a learning-centered environment. Evaluation was based on evidence provided by the students of their
understanding and application of course material. These components were key in students’ intellectual development and self-awareness.

Summary

The literature suggested that there is a need to broaden the concept of academic learning in order to identify the conditions in which service-learning may contribute to students’ learning and development at our institutions of higher learning. The findings of this particular research study were consistent with previous research on service-learning, although this study provided a more focused, in-depth picture of two specific outcomes: academic achievement and self-awareness. This research went beyond surveys and self-reports to uncover the meaning students made of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences affect their learning and self-awareness. Further discussion of the meaning students made of service-learning occurs in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the overall findings of this study on service-learning and a discussion of its implications. A summary of findings is presented according to the three research questions, which focus on student meanings, fundamental elements of service-learning, and self-awareness. This chapter also includes implications for practice, recommendations for further study, a personal reflection, and a summary and conclusion.

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning that students made of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contribute to student learning and self-awareness. This understanding clarifies connections students made between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences, and service-learning. The data outlined in Chapter Four lead to several important conclusions on these connections between experience, learning, self-awareness and service-learning.

Findings Related to Research Questions

Student Meanings

Research question number one focused on the meanings students make of their actual lived service-learning experiences and how they relate these experiences to their learning and self-awareness. The students involved in this study all have been highly involved in a wide variety of service activities. Throughout their college years service became a part of them, something that they want to spend their time doing. Even when service is a requirement for a course, it became second nature to these students.

These many experiences that students have had involving service also played a part in their learning and development of self. As discussed in the previous chapter, these experiences became an intertwined web all connected to each other, all contributing to how
students made connections between their life experiences, academic achievement, self-awareness and service-learning. This can be illustrated through the story of Kelli and how her experiences with service-learning changed her throughout her four years at Central College.

I'm just thinking big time because when I came in as a freshman I was still a very broken person, I guess, I don't know how you want to term it. I didn't care about school, I was just here and whatever, and I wanted the teacher to give me the answers and just that you can see that way, and just thinking things are black and white, there's authority...and now I'm not like that at all. I think I'm pretty independent in my learning and I seek out things that I want to know. Obviously, I understand that there's not yes and no answers to everything. That is what I'm studying now, too, so I put it in those terms. I've thought about that before.

I would have to say that I have no idea if it actually affected my style of learning or how I am now. But I know it did help me, I'm sure all of the different service things I have done have helped me be the person that I am in general, just the experiences that I have had in life. But I don't know how that one specific experience [Child and Adolescent Development] affected who I am. It definitely helped me retain the material though, because I was taking the theory and applying it to the setting. So now I remember a lot more from that class than I would from another.

I just think that I have real people, real faces and real things and that just makes it that much more legitimate. Maybe not so much in this course with children, but I think in a lot of the other service projects it forced me to be more socially aware
and responsible. I’m just thinking right now that I have had contact with Native Americans, I’ve had contact with homeless people, I’ve had contact with different cultural groups and I just, I don’t know, once you have had that contact, you have to feel responsible for the things that happen around you. You can’t detach yourself and say, “oh that’s not me.” That’s me now. I guess with kids that would kind of be the same with their development and their learning; but it’s not quite the same, I guess.

I think, like I know service, I kind of started to explain this that when I came to school I was a broken person and I don’t really want to elaborate on that too much, I just, there were a lot of things I was doing, and a lot of different things from my background, and I just wasn’t a strong person at all. And I don’t want to attribute it just to service-learning, like service-learning was my savior, but I think it definitely played a role in how I processed my world. It was tough. I mean you talk about Child and Adolescent Development, so I’m forced to look back at the past and see whoa that’s how I developed, that’s what is going on there, and how the good picture looks. But I think that also happens with all of the other different service-learning that I have done.

But I just know that if you take Perry’s theory, coming in I was definitely, this is authority, this is black, this is white, this is what I need to do, and this is what I don’t need to do. And I know that I am definitely at another stage, I don’t know what stage I’m in, but I’m definitely beyond that one, if that makes sense. I think that is a part of it. Just little changes, too, in behavior. Like I don’t smoke, I don’t drink, I don’t have sex with many people, I don’t, there are just a lot of things I
don’t do that I did coming in. I don’t talk to my mother anymore and I don’t feel bad about any of that anymore. I really just put it behind me. I still deal with them, it’s not like it’s just poof gone.

I don’t know how I view it [service-learning] much differently than I did before. I think that I have been involved in service-learning since forever, like I volunteered in high school, even at the hospital, and at camp, and different things like that. So, those aren’t service-learning but those are essentially, they are service-learning, you’re just not applying it to any formal thought. I guess that’s maybe what I’ve learned to do is apply it to different, more formal educational type things. But I still think, I thought it was important before I got here, and I still think it is important.

As I listened to Kelli share her experiences and basically tell her story, her openness and willingness to share her personal growth struck me. She has been on quite a journey of self-discovery and in-depth learning. She attributed these changes and growth to many factors, one being her experiences with service-learning.

Kelli referred to Perry’s Theory of Intellectual Development (1970) in her own assessment of her development or change in learning style. The changes she explained can also be explained through Baxter Magolda’s (1992) ways of knowing. Kelli basically had progressed from absolute knowing, where she only obtained knowledge from the professor, to an independent knowing, where she was able to think for herself and created her own perspective. Within her service-learning context, Kelli had even moved to the final stage of Baxter Magolda’s (1992) model to contextual knowing, where she had integrated and applied knowledge within the context of her service experience.
Kelli's story also demonstrates her progression and awareness of her development of self. Kelli's progression was a prime example of how she developed in response to her interaction with the environment. As described in Chapter One, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) psychosocial model of student development is relevant as we noticed what Kelli had to deal with as she was engaged in service-learning. Kelli had struggled through the first four vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Her progression through these first four vectors has led to her established sense of identity (vector 5), which has not been a smooth journey for her. According to McEwen (1996), the design of service-learning “may facilitate development in one or more vectors, but which vectors are facilitated is likely a function of the interaction of the experience with the issues a student is facing developmentally” (p. 74). Service-learning played a role in Kelli's personal development and, as she noted, it wasn't the end all for her, but it definitely has been an important part of her life and played a role in the development of her identity.

As noted in the previous chapter, experience and involvement were key to students’ learning, growth and development. Students learned from their actual lived service-learning experiences. These experiences provided a direct link between their learning of the course material and actual application of what they learned to their particular service site. This directly relates to Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory, which is “a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (p. 21). Through these experiences students made connections with the course material and the people involved in their service projects. These are powerful connections in the learning and
development process. Missy discussed in length the importance of these connections and the following is an edited version of her story.

I think the ability to make connections between what you are doing and what you’ve learned in the past is really important. When I read articles for class I am able to apply new concepts to the kids I’ve worked with there, and it helps to make the new knowledge more personal. In this way, working directly with children, helps me to do better in the course. However, there is also a sense in which taking the course helps me to be a more effective volunteer.

Missy shared the following thoughts on the reflection process in her journal:

Also it is definitely true that I benefit more from processing the experience (writing the journal entries) than I do just from putting in the time each week. I think the most important benefit that comes to mind is that I learned how to make insightful connections between course material and real life experiences. I think it is important not only to be able to relate course material to real experience, but also to be able to take the experience and seek out the corresponding knowledge.

I’m also grateful for the opportunities we had to discuss our service-learning experiences in class because the discussions helped me to gain insight into my own experiences and to think more clearly about the course material. The time spent working with the children at the Kids Klub and the time spent writing journal entries each week was well worth it. I have gained skills that I will continue to use in future school and work experiences.

Missy wrote in her journal how this service-learning experience helped her think about what lies ahead.
Future implications for myself are clear: finding ways to connect course material for any class with real life experiences of any sort are crucial to developing worthwhile insight into the subject. I've found that I do this naturally in some classes, but the challenge is being able to talk or write about the connections intelligently. This takes practice, and I know that writing weekly journal entries for this course helped me to develop a better sense of articulation and a more organized way of making connections. I definitely retain information better when I can relate it to an experience I've had.

By involving students in the community we recognize that these activities “should be situated not simply as out-of-class learning but as an extension of the classroom into the ‘real world’” (Rhoads, 1997, p. 35). Hence, the essence of service-learning is that “academic and practical knowledge may be integrated as students struggle to solve important social problems through action and reflection” (Rhoads, p. 35). It is through this shared knowledge that learning environments can be improved for students both in and out of the classroom and that we expand our ideas of what an educated person really means.

Another student story (Ellie) sheds even more light on the phenomenon of service-learning and the meaning that she made of her experience working with Literacy Army and how it related to her learning and self-awareness.

Well, this was the first actual service-learning project that I had done as far as, you know, like relating what I was doing to the course material, the first time that I had intentionally applied what I was learning to what I was doing and I think that was helpful. Doing the journals was really helpful for me to have some guidance as to how to sort my thoughts out and process the experience.
Well, I guess a lot of it, just looking back on it, looking at the overall picture, some things were really obvious at the time, like I’m really getting frustrated here, but, then there would be one moment when they’d get it and then it was a really good feeling and so things like that were, kind of like, instantly I was aware of that. But other things I just had to, looking back or doing the journaling, a lot of time, I would think about things when I was doing the journaling that I hadn’t thought of when I was actually doing it. And actually everyday that I went, I wasn’t going thinking, “okay I’m going to learn something today, this is what I’m going to learn.” I went into it thinking, “I want to use what I’ve learned, you know, and apply it here.” But I would always learn something new.

And I learned actually a lot about myself, too; probably because I’d never worked with, well I had worked with kindergartners, but usually when my mom had me go in, she’d have me do the fun stuff like, you know, read the story for story time or things like that. But she hadn’t really had me sit down and do something like this and it gets to be tedious after awhile. I had to be patient, I just wanted to be like, “just learn it, we’ve been working on this for four weeks now, it’s an ‘A’, just say it.” After awhile it gets frustrating but also you know it’s really rewarding when they finally get it and, I don’t know, you just have to keep at it because the rewards are well worth it, I suppose.

I also kind of had not a really negative experience but I just hadn’t really thought before that children are really perceptive. And if you’re kind of not really into it, or if you’re having a bad day, or if you’re in a hurry, or have other things to do, like they can kind of pick up on that I think.
Ellie went on to explain in detail this somewhat negative experience in her journal:

What matters most is my attitude, how they perceive me, and how I treat them. If the activities are fun and interesting it helps, but it is the positive reinforcement that has made Harley and Carley want to learn. Sometimes the things we were doing seemed boring and tedious, which made time drag on. One day Carley noticed me glancing at my watch. Awhile later she asked if she could go back to the classroom, which was really a wake-up call that I needed to be more enthusiastic about what I was doing. If there was an application to be made, it was that I need to set an example with not just my actions, but with my attitude. Anyone can walk into the doors of Webster Elementary and volunteer for the Literacy Army, but only those with good intentions and positive attitudes are going to make a difference in the lives of the students they are working with.

She went on to discuss the importance of service-learning to the campus culture:

Well, I think it is something that students should have to do at least once while they are in college. I don’t know that I would say it should be a requirement for all majors or whatever because I know like with business it’s not really about service…a lot of times, and with other majors as well. I just really think that it’s, I don’t know, I just benefited a lot from it. I think people aren’t going to get involved on their own. I hate to say that but I would like to think that I would volunteer on my own if I didn’t have to do it, and once I did, I was more than willing to go. But I think a lot of people won’t get involved in service if they aren’t kind of like pushed out the door and connections aren’t made for them. They have to make those connections on their own.
Even with a very structured service-learning such as the one with Child and Adolescent Development, the experiences of each student that participated were different. According to Eyler and Giles (1997), we know that “these idiosyncratic experiences and perceptions of students make a difference” (p. 69). Through their service-learning experiences, students such as Ellie, Missy, and Kelli all made connections with their personal and intellectual development. They also acquired and were able to apply this new knowledge. These connections provided the necessary links to academic learning. The emotional power of these service-learning experiences helped students connect with what was going on in the classroom; therefore, learning was enhanced. It became a more holistic learning environment, which engaged students’ minds as well as their hearts.

*Fundamental Elements of Service-Learning*

Research question two focused on student perceptions of the fundamental elements of service-learning experiences that contributed to their learning and self-awareness. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, students shared the following significant aspects of their service-learning experiences: structured reflection, concrete experiences to coincide with the course material, the role of the professor, clearly articulated purposes and goals, and the interaction with others and establishment of relationships.

*Structured reflection*

Students indicated that structured reflection allowed them the opportunity to process their experiences and sort out what they learned, both academically and personally. It is not enough to just go and put in time. Students needed the opportunity to reflect and make connections between their service site, the course, Child and Adolescent Development, and their own lives.
The structured reflection of service-learning relates to Belenky and her associates’ theory (1986), in that these reflective experiences help students develop as connected knowers. Through reflection, students are required to think about their self-awareness and development and connect their learning with the service experience, which is the essence of constructed knowledge.

Structured reflection provided opportunities for students to integrate their service experiences to the material they were learning in Child and Adolescent Development, which enhanced learning and self-awareness. Time after time students revealed how important this reflection process was during their service experience. Most students shared that they would not have had such a fulfilling experience without the reflection component. Therefore, reflection is a necessary element in the design of any service-learning experience as it fosters student learning and personal growth and change.

**Concrete experiences**

Experience and involvement within a community setting are key to students’ learning, growth and development. As mentioned in the previous chapter, students in this study have been exposed to various learning experiences, which provided a direct link between their learning of the course material and the actual application of this knowledge to their particular service experience, as well as to their personal lives. Students were able to go beyond reading theories and issues of child development, and actually begin to apply this material within the context of their service sites, as well as relate them to their own development, either as a child or as a college student.

Concrete experiences helped solidify learning of course material. Students were able to retain information better and apply what they learned in class to real life situations.
Through involvement in these experiences and exposure to new perspectives and cultures, students were able to identify areas of personal growth. Alison discussed important aspects of her service-learning experiences and shared, “I guess, just maybe being able to go out and experience the things that you are learning about. I think that is really valuable and helps me learn.” Grant also had some insights into the experiential component of service-learning:

So obviously when I was reading the book, learning about these different styles, I was like here I can put both of these guys in there and I'm seeing first-hand just how these are, and I'm not just reading it, or whatever. I was probably able to retain that information a lot better by doing the journals and having to think about it, and seeing it, and applying that as well.

Incorporating experience into the learning process is a movement away from the traditional model of formal education where the teacher is the source of information and students, the receivers. John Dewey (1938) was a proponent of incorporating experience into the learning process. Dewey ascertained that a knowledge base is important, but “experience in interpreting that knowledge, testing it in current situations, and analyzing its meaning, is crucial for true learning to take place” (Duckenfield & Madden, 2000, p. 2). Students’ interest in a topic and motivation to learn is enhanced by direct involvement with the topic that is meaningful to them. This was the case for the students in this study, where service-learning experiences were incorporated into Child and Adolescent Development.

The essence of service-learning is that “academic and practical knowledge may be integrated as students struggle to solve important social problems through action and reflection” (Rhoads, 1997, p. 35). It is through this shared knowledge that learning environments can be improved for students, both in and out of the classroom. Building these
connections between the classroom and the actual lived experience is what students in this study found to be significant in their learning and development of self.

**Role of the professor**

The professor provides the necessary support and challenge to facilitate learning. When service-learning is integrated within an academic course, the role of the professor is important because this individual provides the necessary support and challenge so that students learn and grow from their experiences. Feedback provided by the professor, both in students' journals and during class discussions, was the most important factor that was shared by students.

Students value learning as a relational activity. The nature of service-learning often situates their learning within the context of student's own experiences. Through reflection, students can begin to define their learning as jointly constructed meaning, not only with themselves, but also with other students, their supervisors, professors, and community members. This parallels the implications that Baxter Magolda's (1992) research had for service-learning. She developed three principles of practice for generating specific teaching and learning strategies. These three principles are "validating the student as a knower, situating learning in the students' own experience, and defining learning as jointly constructing meaning" (p. 270). In Child and Adolescent Development, the professor used a variety of strategies, such as student journals, class discussions, and student presentations, to allow students to construct meaning in the context of their service experiences as well as the classroom.

In addition, Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified key influences on student development, in which student-faculty relationships are relevant in fostering growth and
development. Development is fostered when “student-faculty interaction is frequent and friendly and when it occurs in diverse situations calling for varied roles and relationships” (Chickering & Reisser, p. 269). Alison defined one of the various roles of the professor during her experience as that of a supervisor because, “she teaches us the material but we’re in charge of learning ourselves mostly.” Even though the students were in charge of their learning, the professor provided support in helping students make the necessary connections to the course material.

The student-faculty relationship can determine the effectiveness of service-learning programs because of the importance of the interaction and relationships of students, faculty and community personnel. Service-learning provides an avenue for active, engaged learning, and addresses different learning styles and student development by providing a variety of service and learning settings.

The role of the professor is to move students from where they are to more complex thinking, which is best accomplished with the balance of challenge and support. Baxter Magolda (1992) discovered that the notions of challenge and support draw on three important environmental factors in the development of students: confirmation, contradiction and continuity. Confirmation provides support for students in the learning process, contradiction presents challenges to move students to a new balance, and continuity provides the necessary connections for students to pursue learning. According to Baxter Magolda, “development requires a balance of confirmation and contradiction” (p. 227) to allow students to constantly reexamine their ways of knowing in light of new experiences.

Throughout this research, students indicated that the professor for Child and Adolescent Development provided enough challenge within the context of the classroom for
students to grow and learn. On the other hand, the professor also provided the necessary support along the way to insure a safe environment for students to explore new connections in the learning process. Both of these factors are key to structuring a learning-centered environment.

*Clearly articulated purposes and goals*

Clearly articulated purposes and goals of the service component to all individuals involved, including the site supervisor and those being served, will enhance the experience for students. The communication of service goals and purposes not only to students, but also to site supervisors and those being served, is essential in making the experience beneficial to all involved. By articulating these purposes and goals, a sense of collaboration is fostered for all and provides a rich context for service and mutual learning.

During this study some students struggled with their roles at the service sites, and some of these struggles stemmed from the fact that the supervisor and those being served did not have a clear picture of why the students were there. However, many of these students did not feel comfortable enough to discuss these frustrations with their supervisors. This aspect played a role in what students gained from the experience. Jennifer summarized this point when discussing her relationship with the supervisor at her site:

In the beginning we didn’t really correspond with her very much...before we just kind of felt out of place and we weren’t exactly sure what was expected of us; so now we have clear expectations, open communication lines. Now, everyday before we leave she tells us to be careful on our way home...so she takes a very motherly influence on us now, which is kind of nice.
Jennifer actually took the initiative to go and speak with the supervisor to ask for specific responsibilities, which was a turning point in their relationship. By doing this, she was then able to gain more from her experience at the after-school program.

This refers to the mutuality aspect of service-learning. Robert Rhoads (1997) described mutuality as “the belief that service ought to be a two-way relationship in which all parties give and receive and all parties participate equally in the planning of service activities” (p. 127). The planning of service activities should involve all those who are involved in the service experience to identify community needs and priorities. This results in a reciprocal and mutual responsibility and respect for all individuals in the service-learning exchange. Learning and teaching become a two-way collaborative function, which creates a powerful learning environment.

Clearly articulating goals and purposes of service-learning with community partners, faculty and students leads to the establishment of partnerships in “an effort to increase each other’s capacities and power” (Jacoby, 1996b, p. 36). Everyone plays a role in the learning process and therefore, “this expansion of the community of learners and servers substantially enriches the outcomes” (Jacoby, p. 36). Students in this particular study realized this fact and tried to remedy the situation before it was too late. Many were successful in doing this, while others struggled with this issue throughout their experience. Learning and self-awareness were enhanced either way, because students recognized that these frustrating times were learning experiences. They were able to voice frustrations through their student journals and class discussions. Students also recognized and identified the fact that this communication should take place at the beginning of the service experience rather than in the middle or at the end, in order to gain the most from service-learning.
Interaction and establishment of relationships

As noted in the previous chapter, students repeatedly discussed the importance of relationships and interactions with others as one of the most significant aspects of their service-learning experiences. These connections with others played a role in student learning and self-awareness. Students were able to establish significant relationships and bonds with the individuals they encountered during their service-learning experiences. As one student explained, "the important part of service-learning is building relationships." These relationships with others were meaningful in what students gained from their experience and how they were able to make connections to the course material, the service site, and their personal lives.

Students' journeys of self-awareness were enhanced through their experiences with service-learning. These experiences provided the avenue in which students could explore their sense of self by learning and experiencing others (Rhoads, 1997). This essence of care for others also relates to Belenky and associates' (1986) concept of "connected knowing," which involves the development of caring relationships.

Educational experiences, such as service-learning, are crucial aspects of teaching and learning with a commitment to nurturing students. Students acquire knowledge through their interactions with others and also reevaluate their own thinking in terms of connections with others. This activity demands that students view knowledge and nurturance as connected rather than fragmented, a premise of Baxter Magolda's (1992) constructed way of knowing. Students shared repeatedly that, without their service experiences, they may not have had the interactions or connections with others that enhanced their learning. As Grant shared earlier, "I had that bond with those two students that I wouldn't have gained if I was not taking that
class or not in that project, and that is something that I am always going to remember.”

Through all of these interactions and relationships, students begin to make connections between learning and the experiences of their lives, the premise of experientially based education (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

Self-Awareness

The third research question addressed how student participation in service-learning affected students’ perceptions of self. Students developed a better sense of who they were, or self-awareness, when they were challenged to interact with others in new and diverse environments. For the purposes of this study, self-awareness was defined as the understanding or changes in awareness of strengths, limits, direction, role and personal goals (Driscoll, et al., 1996). Through structured reflection, students came to a better understanding of these aspects of self-awareness.

Students came away from these service experiences realizing the powerful effect that exposure to new perspectives and cultures had on their self-awareness. Service-learning provided an avenue for this exposure to occur, which in turn provided opportunities for students to explore their sense of self and develop a sensitivity toward various perspectives different from their own. This, in turn, led to students becoming more socially conscientious and appreciative of policy issues.

A good example of this was the benefit Jill gained from her experience with foster children:

I really think that the biggest thing that I learned was empathy and being aware of other people’s situation. And in this day and age, like now, I try to remind myself of that, you know, like I’m getting stressed and I’m getting mad and I’m getting
frustrated that I don’t have a job. And days I stop and think, but I have a family that loves me; I have a boyfriend who I adore; and I have so many people that aren’t going to let me fall on my face.

All of the students in the study, through their service-learning experiences, developed a better sense of self-awareness. Through interaction with others, students were able to assess their views, morals, and beliefs. They gained insights into their own personal awareness throughout the process. Rhoads (1997) contended that interactions between students and others, especially in community service, are significant in influencing students’ sense of self. Much of this development of self centers on the issue of identity and, although this is in a constant state of change, the college years become the time when it is most challenged (Rhoads).

Exposure and experience through service-learning provided the opportunity for students to evaluate their future career and personal goals. Students indicated that they did benefit from exposure to various settings, which assisted them in sorting out their goals for the future, both personal and professional. Many of the students in this study were seniors; therefore, they were in the process of interviewing for various jobs or applying to graduate schools, to prepare for life after Central College. Career issues were a priority and a source of stress for many of the students.

As students reflected on their service experiences, they were grateful for the opportunity to have mini career experiences prior to entering the real world. Service-learning provided opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge and exposure to various work or community settings. Some of the experiences were defining moments for
students, as they made career decisions based on their service experience. I heard this repeatedly from students.

Students in this study indicated an interest in continuing their involvement with service activities in their future. As we discussed the future, students always mentioned staying involved with service activities in some capacity. Students' involvement in service-learning had such an impact on them, that they shared a desire to continue their involvement with service in the future. Involvement in service-learning was an overall positive experience for students; therefore, they expressed an interest in continuing their involvement in the future.

Implications for Practice

Service-learning provides students with experiences that connect knowledge learned in the classroom with real life. By involving students in the community, learning extends beyond the four walls of the classroom and integrates academic and practical knowledge. It is through this shared knowledge that learning environments are improved for students and we see their development as whole persons. Determining the role of service-learning in students' learning and self-awareness were the underlying tenets of what this research set out to uncover.

Meaningful Aspects of Service-Learning

First, the biggest implication of the findings of this study is the importance of exposure to new perspectives and environments through community experiences, which allowed students to establish meaningful relationships with others. These concrete experiences and interactions with others were key in the meaning that students made of their service-learning experiences. Students were able to make connections between their life
experiences, academic achievement, self-awareness and service-learning. The impact of these experiences and relationships on student learning and self-awareness, in this study, was not too surprising, given the past research on experiential learning (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1986; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Rhoads, 1997).

These findings have implications for the educational setting that we provide for our students. Students’ involvement with others in service-learning is an important issue for both student affairs and faculty. By providing these service opportunities for students during their college years, learning is extended beyond just the classroom, to settings where students are able to integrate academic and practical knowledge to solve social problems. Service-learning brings together the in-class and out-of-class experiences, which fosters collaborative efforts on the part of faculty and student affairs in providing successful learning environments for students.

A second and equally important implication of this study was the role that structured reflection played in how students made connections between their service experiences, academic achievement, and self-awareness. Through reflection, students were able to process and connect their learning of course material with the service experience as well as develop their sense of self. Making these connections allowed students to gain more from their service experiences.

When given the opportunity to reflect and share, “students can begin to sort through their perspectives and author their own” (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p. 286). Through reflection students’ voices were heard and validated. Students began to define their learning as jointly constructed meaning not only with themselves, but also with other students, their supervisors, professors, and community members. Students indicated that their service experiences
would not have been as meaningful without the reflection component. Therefore, reflection is 
a necessary element in the design of any service-learning experience that fosters student 
learning and personal growth and change.

*Structure of the Experience*

How the service experience is structured can enhance the students’ experiences, 
learning and personal development. Throughout this process students discussed the positive 
and negative aspects of their service experiences with Child and Adolescent Development, 
which relate to the structural aspects of service-learning.

One of the implications of this study is that clearly articulated service goals and 
purposes are necessary for all individuals, including students, professors, site supervisors, 
and community members, to gain the most from the experience. Based on student 
developmental level and movement through Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors, these 
goals and purposes need to be stated prior to the actual experience. Once students were 
immersed in their service project, they did not feel comfortable addressing these issues with 
their supervisors.

One option in addressing this issue would be to involve community members in the 
development of service projects, and take time to share the learning goals and expectations of 
students. This could be accomplished by providing a shortened version of the course 
syllabus to all site supervisors and possibly the members being served. By articulating these 
purposes and goals, a sense of collaboration is fostered for all, which provides a rich context 
for service and mutual learning.

As mentioned earlier, it is essential that any service-learning experience allow for 
structured reflection. In this study, reflection in student journals, as well as during in-class
discussions, was crucial in students making the necessary connections between their service experiences, their learning and self-awareness. Feedback to students’ reflections was essential for personal growth and learning to occur.

**Institutionalization of Service-Learning**

As students reflected on the meaning of service-learning, they recognized the fact that an institution of higher education, such as Central College, may not be able to impose service-learning as a requirement for all students. Students had mixed views on whether service-learning was part of the campus culture. Within specific departments, such as Psychology, service-learning was integrated into the curriculum, but students didn’t see it as part of the overall culture. They did, however, see the potential to offer service-learning within elective courses in every major. Students also indicated that opportunities were certainly available on campus to be involved in service activities, but it was up to individual students to take advantage of these opportunities and get involved.

Students who participated in this study were willingly involved in a variety of service activities and acknowledged that fact. These students also recognized that not everyone on campus had been as involved with service as they had. Requiring service-learning would not necessarily remedy that situation. Students need to be willing to participate and need to be developmentally ready to derive meaning out of these service-learning experiences.

Sustaining long-term involvement in service-learning is a challenge that many institutions face, including Central College. Several items need to be considered, to further integrate service-learning into the campus culture. First, integrating service-learning into the broad spectrum of learning activities and extra-curricular opportunities within institutions is
one step closer to institutionalizing service-learning. According to the information that students shared, Central College has been successful in this effort.

Second, obtaining the support and commitment from the chief academic officer, as well as faculty, are essential to incorporating service-learning into the curriculum and the overall campus culture. To accomplish this, faculty need to be involved in community-based research, interdisciplinary work, and include service-learning in their teaching strategies.

Third, including rewards for service-learning in the promotion, tenure and hiring process will further foster the institutionalization of service-learning. The pursuit of community-based research and the teaching of service-learning courses are a significant commitment on the part of faculty; therefore, these efforts should be rewarded accordingly. Securing this type of institutional commitment will not be easy, but it is essential in order for service to be fully integrated into the campus culture.

To further integrate service-learning into the campus culture, Central College needs to cultivate alumni and Board of Trustees to provide service-learning experiences, or sites for current students. Students indicated, in this study, their desire to continue their involvement with service in some capacity in the future. As more students become involved in service-learning and continue to stay involved with service upon graduation, there will be a core group of alumni available in the future to begin forming additional community partnerships.

Implications for Researchers

Utilizing the phenomenological research approach was relevant to this research in that I wanted to study students’ subjective and everyday experiences with service-learning. It entailed studying service-learning experiences from the perspective of the participants, as
they understood it. This could not be accomplished in just one interview, but took time to uncover for myself, as the researcher, and the participants.

The data collection methods I utilized and the data analysis process was time-consuming, complex and challenging. As I spent time reading and rereading the interview transcripts, I struggled with how to sort all of the ideas generated, in order to portray the meaning of participants' stories. Categories were easy to determine, but many ideas overlapped. I used my best judgement in many of these cases and the final result was presenting themes that were generated from the students' stories.

During this process I became immersed in these student stories and it was difficult to bring closure to the analysis process. Each student had a unique story to tell about his or her service-learning experience, and it was impossible to include all of them in the written report; therefore, I used a combination of storytelling and thematic connections. This transformed into telling the story of service-learning from three students' viewpoints, as well as sharing my interpretation of those stories. My goal was to connect the reader with the participants in this study, and in order to accomplish that, I realized that I had to provide a detailed account of their stories, in their words, not mine. My interpretations became secondary to the students' stories.

Reflection was key to the interview process in order for participants to make meaning of their experiences. I realized throughout this process that as a researcher, I could not expect participants to be reflective on demand. Students needed time to think about the interview questions in order to reflect and tell their stories. As the researcher, I also found myself needing time and space to be reflective, and many times, that occurred much later after the interviews had been completed. Throughout this process, I learned that reflection is
powerful, but it is not something that always comes easy for individuals, including myself, and it must be nurtured and guided, in order for connections to be made. As students have mentioned and demonstrated previously, reflection is not something that can be turned off and on; it is a continuous process and a necessary element for growth and development.

Recommendations for Further Study

After reviewing the findings of this study, there are several possibilities for further research on the topic of service-learning.

First, a follow-up to this study could be to track the students that participated in this research in two to three years to see what they are doing and study how they make meaning of service-learning at that point in their lives. It would be interesting to see if they actually continued their involvement with service, as they indicated they would, and to see where their careers have led them. As indicated, most students had progressed in their development along Chickering and Reisser’s vectors during their undergraduate years, so including this element in the follow-up study would provide the researcher with insights into their continued development with self-awareness and identity.

Second, this study focused on service-learning connected with an academic course, but an additional study could focus on the independent module format where service is not directly linked to a course. This would be a study of the meanings students make of these types of experiences to determine if the structure of the service experience makes a difference in student learning and self-awareness.

Third, this study was a phenomenological study consisting of in-depth student interviews to determine their perspectives on service-learning. A case study approach could be used to gain an in-depth picture of service-learning experiences. This would include
interviews with students, professors, site supervisors and possibly the individuals being served. This approach would provide an understanding of service-learning experiences from various perspectives of all those involved in the process.

Fourth, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study of service-learning connected with academic courses at other private liberal arts colleges in Iowa, such as Wartburg College, Buena Vista University or Loras College. This study would ascertain the meanings students make of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contribute to student learning and self-awareness. The study would include a cross-section of institutions as well as courses where service-learning is integrated into the curriculum. The structure of each institution’s service-learning programs could add a new dimension to how students make meaning of their service-learning experiences.

Fifth, a study of service-learning connected with an academic course could be conducted at a large public university. It would be interesting to study the phenomenon of service-learning at a large university where size of the institution becomes an issue in the structure and organization of these programs. Again, this would add a new dimension to how students make meaning of their service-learning experiences at a different type of institution.

Sixth, one of the participants in this study was an international student and it was interesting to hear her perspective on service-learning. Although she had similar thoughts as the rest of the students, there were times when she talked about cultural differences that were unique to her experience. Further research could study how service-learning contributes to learning and self-awareness for international students, as they seem to come into these experiences with a slightly different perspective, mostly due to cultural differences.
Seventh, Central College is also in the process of establishing service-learning at several of their international campuses. When service-learning is established at these international sites, a qualitative study could be conducted to ascertain the meanings students make of those experiences. Another option would be to conduct a case study analysis to provide an in-depth picture of an international service-learning experience. Studying international service-learning experiences would add a whole new dimension to the current knowledge base on service-learning.

Eighth, this study took place at Central College, an institution that is strongly affiliated with the Christian tradition. Due to these strong ties to the Christian faith, it would be interesting to study service-learning and students' spiritual development through the lens of spiritual development theory.

Ninth, this study focused on two learning outcomes of service-learning, academic achievement or understanding, mastering, and applying course content, and self-awareness, which is the understanding of strengths, limits, directions, role and personal goals (Driscoll, et al., 1996). Other outcomes such as critical thinking skills, identity development, self-efficacy, and civic responsibility could also be studied. The study would include an in-depth picture of how service-learning experiences contribute to development in these specific outcome areas.

Finally, further research could study the impact of service-learning on younger students, such as first and second-year students. These younger students are developmentally at a different place than the students that participated in this particular study at Central College. Looking at the meaning that these younger students make of their service
experiences would be interesting due to the differences in their cognitive and psychosocial development.

**Personal Reflection**

Throughout my professional career, I have always had a genuine interest in how students learn and develop through their college experiences. Being in student affairs, I have also been interested in how we can best foster successful learning environments, both in and out of the classroom, on our campuses. Through this research, I have discovered that service-learning is an avenue that begins to bridge the gap between in- and out-of-class experiences, a topic of division for student affairs and academic affairs for years. One of the goals of this research was to provide information that would begin to bridge this gap. The findings of the study uncovered the phenomenon of service-learning and the meanings that students made of these service experiences in relation to their learning and self-awareness. This information is significant to both student affairs and academic affairs in providing compelling learning environments for students.

I entered into this research study with three assumptions. The first was that service-learning has many benefits for students, both with regard to learning outcomes and personal development. The findings of this study confirmed that students did benefit from their service experiences. As presented previously, participants shared what they gained from these experiences and, for some, it was a better understanding of the course material; for others it was establishing relationships, and others gained specific personal skills such as increased confidence, empathy for others, and a clearer direction for their future careers. The benefits were many, and different for each student.
The second assumption I had was that the research site of a small, private liberal arts institution provided a conducive environment to implement and even institutionalize service-learning. The findings proved this to be only somewhat true. It was true that Central College had service embedded with their overall mission and strategic plan, but according to the students, it was not part of the overall culture. The goal of a liberal arts education is to encourage active engagement of students with the community and Central certainly does provide many opportunities for students to do exactly this. The service notion, however, is not embraced by all and some students do not take advantage of these opportunities. All of the participants for this particular study did take advantage of many service opportunities and were very involved in a variety of service-learning experiences.

The third assumption I had was that the events of September 11, 2001 would play a part in students' engagement in service activities. Students have witnessed the connections of world affairs to their personal lives. As students struggle to make sense of their role as citizens of a post September 11th nation, their ability to connect with others is essential. Therefore, I believed that this event would make service-learning even more popular with students. However, students never mentioned that September 11th played a role in their engagement with service-learning activities. It is possible that subconsciously it may have had an impact on their involvement and connections with others, but it was never discussed.

Reflection was key for development and the very nature of phenomenological interviewing, for this study, was to encourage participants to reflect and make meaning of their experiences. This “offers participants opportunities to analyze their lives in ways that they report they would not otherwise do” (Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 478). Establishing this type of collaborative relationship was somewhat of a challenge in the
research process but was essential in unfolding the student stories, understanding and interpreting them in a way that was true to the participants and their experience.

This developmental aspect was evident in the interviews that I conducted with the ten students. It was interesting to notice how reflection and the developmental aspect of interviewing came easier for some student than for others. The findings of this study are evidence that students did engage in this reflective process and recognized the power of reflection, in relation to their learning and self-awareness. I believe this reflective process will be on-going for these students as well.

All but one of the students had completed Child and Adolescent Development prior to participating in this study. Some students were currently involved with another service-learning course with the same professor who taught Child and Adolescent Development. I believe that having some space and time away from the experience allowed the students to be more reflective and share thoughtful insights about their learning and personal development. One student, Colleen, was currently taking Child and Adolescent Development and struggled with some of the more reflective interview questions (See Appendix D).

The following statements by Jill and Colleen exemplify the reflective and developmental nature of in-depth phenomenological interviewing. Colleen was still enrolled in Child and Adolescent Development when I interviewed her and she said, “I think it is hard for me right now to see how I might have changed because I’m still in it.” Jill, on the other hand, had taken Child and Adolescent Development in the fall of her junior year and so had some time away from that experience and shared the following thoughts:

I think I’m just starting to realize how important it is...I don’t think if you would have interviewed me right after it was done, I would have been as, I’m not sure that
the reflection period stops. I think it is just kind of one of those things that does stick
with you, and you keep thinking about it, and it makes you grow as you keep doing it.

Obviously, some students were more reflective than others were. I think I
overestimated the developmental level of juniors and seniors in college. I had to probe and
use more follow-up questions than I had anticipated. Once I figured out what approach was
best to use with each student, and we progressed through the three-step interview process, the
interviews were more conducive to deeper reflection. It took me about two interviews to
realize that the students needed more time to think and reflect on the questions, hence I
started emailing students what I termed “the big think,” or the more reflective questions in
advance.

Even with these minor frustrations, I would walk away from the interviews with a
sense of appreciation for these students, and excitement for what I was learning from their
stories. All of these students had a variety of wonderful service-learning experiences, and it
was just fascinating to see the uniqueness of each individual’s story or journey unfold
throughout the interview process.

Through their service-learning experiences, students made connections with their
personal and intellectual development. They also acquired and were able to apply this new
knowledge. These connections provided the necessary links to academic learning. The three
student stories I shared previously illustrate the emotional power of service-learning
experiences.

Summary and Conclusion

This study examined how learning was enhanced through service-learning, especially
in regard to mastery of course content, in order to use information effectively in real world
situations, as well as how these service experiences contributed to students’ development of self-awareness. This understanding has helped to clarify the connections students made between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences and service-learning.

As identified by the literature and the information shared by students in this study, there is a need to somehow broaden the concept of academic learning in order to identify the conditions in which service-learning may contribute the most at our institutions of higher learning. The findings of this particular research study were consistent with previous research on service-learning, although this study provided a more focused, in-depth picture of two specific outcomes: academic achievement and self-awareness.

The following elements were found as key to service-learning and the meaning students made of these experiences: structured reflection, clearly articulated purposes and goals, the experiential component, the role of the professor, and the interaction and establishment of relationships with others. For students in this study, service-learning became a part of them, something that they wanted to spend their time doing. Even when service was a requirement for a course, it became second nature to these students.

The many experiences that students have had involving service also played a part in their learning and development of self. As discussed in the previous chapter, these experiences became an intertwined web all connected to each other, all contributing to how students made connections between their life experiences, academic achievement, self-awareness and service-learning.

Students developed a better sense of who they were, or self-awareness, when they were challenged to interact with others in new and diverse environments. All of the students in the study, through their service-learning experiences, developed a better sense of self.
Through interaction with others, students were able to assess their views, morals, and beliefs. They gained insights into their own personal awareness throughout the process.

Service-learning is an avenue where practical and academic knowledge become integrated. It is through this integration that we, as higher education professionals, can begin to foster successful learning environments for our students, both in and out of the classroom. The development and integration of service-learning into the college experience creates a more holistic learning environment, which engages students’ minds as well as their hearts.
Excerpts from the Central College Strategic Plan (2002) that demonstrate a commitment to service and learning.

Foreward
The Central College strategic plan presented in this, the fifth edition, reflects the continuing evolution of our successes and current challenges. It also reflects the continuity of our core values and the strength of the foundation laid by those who have served in the Central family before us. As we go forward together in executing the plans in this document, let us always be appreciative of the legacy we have inherited and the changing needs of our current students who entrust their undergraduate education into our hands, minds, and spirits.

This plan will continue to be a living document. It will evolve, first, as a result of the best thinking all of us in the Central College community bring to it; and second, as a result of our experiences with initiatives we try and environmental trends we see affecting our charted course. Its probabilities for continued success are directly proportional to the percentage of individuals in the Central College community who accept ownership of the plan and then put accomplishment of its goals ahead of personal agendas.

I ask all individuals and organizations who comprise the Central College community to give of themselves in every way they can in pursuit of the mission and goals of the College and in helping to improve continuously the evolving editions of our strategic plan. As one who believes in the importance and power of prayer, I thank God for the manifold blessings bestowed on Central College and particularly for the people who have made and are making it such a marvelous place for learning and growth. For those who share my belief in the power of prayer, I ask you to join me in seeking God’s continued blessings on Central College and the people who make Central what it is, God’s help in developing and executing this plan and its successor plans, and God’s guidance in deliberations of the Board of Trustees, the President’s Advisory Council, the faculty, the Student Senate, and all individuals and groups charged with decisions affecting the courses of action at Central College.

David H. Roe
President

I. THE MISSION AND GOALS OF CENTRAL COLLEGE
Mission
Central College, a liberal arts college in the Christian tradition*, is dedicated to helping students discover and reach their highest potential. We strive to engage each other in vigorous, free, open inquiry within the context of a caring community committed to the pursuit of academic excellence. To this end, the college offers a balanced emphasis on the development of mind, body, and spirit.

Central combines career preparation with programs to promote values essential to becoming responsible citizens in local, national, and international communities. Above all, Central seeks to cultivate the life of the mind, nurture depth of character, and foster habits of the heart that prepare students for a lifelong adventure in learning, growth, and service.

College-wide Goals
For Students
1. To develop integrated knowledge of the content, organization, assumptions, and values of a variety of academic areas, along with in-depth knowledge.
2. To acquire skills and habits of mind appropriate to liberally educated persons, such as effective communication, foreign languages, computation, analytical and critical thinking, creativity, and aesthetic awareness.
3. To become actively engaged with inquiry, to develop a sense of shared responsibility for learning, and to cultivate the intellectual habits and skills needed for life-long learning.
4. To prepare for all aspects of life beyond college, including work, service, and leadership within local, national, and international communities.
5. To develop personally, spiritually, culturally, socially, and physically through participation in the academic program and through programs of residential life, campus ministry, social action, and co-curricular activities.
6. To participate in governing the college, to provide input to the faculty for developing academic programs, and to enrich its cultural environment.
For Faculty
1. To develop a community of scholars in which teaching and learning are the activities with highest priority.
2. To be models and mentors who support the development of students as independent learners, responsible citizens, and morally responsive persons.
3. To participate in governing the college, developing its academic programs, and enriching its cultural environment.
4. To grow professionally, spiritually, and personally while contributing to the college and the larger academic community through research, creative expression, innovative teaching, and interdisciplinary dialogue.

For the Central College Community
1. To promote attitudes and values reflective of the Christian tradition: acceptance, mutual respect, justice, compassion, and service to others.
2. To promote and model appreciation of our natural environment and stewardship of its limited resources.
3. To foster examination and understanding of the Christian heritage and its implications for faith and learning.
4. To provide leadership and support for reform through dialogue with the broader communities of society, sustaining values while encouraging critical analysis of ideas and institutions.
5. To experience and appreciate the diversity of cultures present in the United States and the world, and to relate knowledgeably and sensitively to persons of diverse cultural perspectives.

*Definition of Christian tradition: Since its beginning Central College has identified itself with the Christian faith. Accordingly, the college celebrates the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. As an inclusive academic institution, Central College embraces and supports students, faculty, and staff from various spiritual perspectives that endorse the values of acceptance, mutual respect, justice, generosity, compassion, forgiveness, and service to others. Acknowledging that a liberal arts education requires diversity of thought and approaches to knowledge and that mature faith includes critical thought and inquiry, Central College maintains that academic freedom is essential to the development of mind and spirit.

II. PLAN PERSPECTIVE
This plan is written from the perspective that:
1. Central College is an enterprise engaged in a noble cause – nurturing, challenging, and preparing undergraduate students for a life-long adventure of learning, growth, and service in a multicultural world.
2. If we are to experience continued success in our cause, we must both be and be seen as a special enterprise, one that is worthy of significant investment:
   • Prospective students and the families supporting these students must see our enterprise as offering an opportunity for learning and growth that is superior to lower cost alternatives such as state-supported colleges and universities and community colleges.
   • Those who have generously supported us in the past, as well as potential new donors, must be genuinely excited by what they see us doing. They must believe that we will employ their funds wisely in ways that contribute to a betterment of the human condition through the life performance and contributions of our graduates, as well as the knowledge we obtain from research and innovation.
   • Our faculty and staff must feel deeply that they are parties in a noble cause, but they also must experience adequate appreciation for what they do. Such appreciation must take the form of both competitive levels of compensation (such that they can do more than simply provide for the most basic needs of their families), and recognition for their contributions to Central College and improving the human condition.
   • Employers and professional and graduate schools must see our graduates as prepared and able to perform successfully in the workplace or graduate school environment – in fact, they should want to seek out our graduates.
   • The Reformed Church in America must see that we are a vibrant center of higher learning committed to imbuing Central with a Christian spirit, which is both ecumenical and inclusive,
such that all individuals are welcomed and challenged to grow. This will promote a rich
diversity of experiences of benefit not only to Christians but also to students, faculty, and staff
of all faiths and traditions.

3. Success for the Central College enterprise in this environment will not be achieved if we sit back and
rest on our past laurels and reputation; rather it can be gained only if:
   • We commit to contributing our ideas, knowledge, and perspectives to develop a plan for
success, which will involve hard work, meeting challenges, and deriving benefits.
   • We work together as mutually supportive colleagues in pursuit of a shared mission and goals.
   • We undertake our tasks with the understanding that we, as individuals, will necessarily have
to learn, grow, and change along the way.
   • We practice and nurture the values we espouse, particularly acceptance, mutual respect, and
recognition that all human beings should be accorded dignity and worth.
   • We learn to embrace change as a way of life while preserving the core values that make
Central College a special place.

III. A 2002 ASSESSMENT OF CENTRAL COLLEGE’S STRENGTHS AND weakNesses

Strengths
   • Students who are caring, industrious, inquisitive, friendly, generally supportive and accepting of
others, and possess the intellectual acumen needed for good-to-excellent performance on the college
level.
   • A faculty comprised of talented and intellectually diverse persons who are collectively dedicated to
helping each student become the very best person that student can become. Some faculty members
have national reputations and many are truly gifted teachers.
   • A staff comprised of competent and talented professionals who are constantly striving for excellence,
and are dedicated to making the Central College experience the best for students and faculty alike.
   • Alumni who are productive, caring citizens of the world, many of whom are leaders in their chosen
fields.
   • A Board of Trustees whose members have been not only supportive and personally generous, but also
have been prudent fiduciaries who have exercised their responsibilities conscientiously.
   • Solid support from corporate sponsors.
   • A picturesque, well-maintained campus.
   • A history and tradition of academic excellence.
   • National recognition of international programs.
   • A history and tradition of athletic excellence.
   • National recognition of intercollegiate co-curricular activities.
   • A safe environment for students, faculty, and staff to live, work, grow, and learn.
   • Participation of student representatives on governance committees of the college, including the Board
of Trustees.
   • Significant numbers of students, faculty, and staff involved in community service.
   • The city and citizens of Pella support and nurture Central College and directly contribute to the safe
environment we enjoy.
   • An affiliation with the Reformed Church in America that provides an environment imbued by an
ecumenical Christian spirit while actively recognizing, respecting, and recruiting students, faculty, and
staff from other denominations and faiths.
   • A legacy of innovation, e.g., international education, cross-cultural experience component of core
curriculum, exploring program, service learning and use of computer technology in teaching.
   • Commitments to update the college’s technological infrastructure so as to remain competitive.

Weaknesses
   • Our shared values of acceptance, mutual respect, justice, compassion, and service to others are not
consistently demonstrated by all in our campus community.
   • Perception among prospective students, faculty, and staff that Central is not an inclusive community
because it appears to lack ethnic, geographic, and cultural diversity.
• Some faculty and staff feel that their sacrifice, efforts, and talents are not sufficiently recognized by the financial compensation and other recognition they receive; such feelings generate uncertainty and sap energies that are needed to accomplish the mission of the college.

• The marvelous story that is Central College’s to tell is known in Central Iowa but largely unknown beyond Iowa’s borders (except within some academic circles).

• The name Central College has market appeal only to those who know Central, and even many of them consider the name non-descriptive.

• The city of Pella is seen as being too small or too confining to support the variety of extra-curricular activities desired by today’s college students.

IV. PLAN GOALS

1. Become the liberal arts college most widely benchmarked in identified programs of distinction among nationally recognized private liberal arts colleges.

2. Become recognized by Iowa high school students and their families as THE IOWA college or university that best delivers on its promise to enable each student to reach that student’s highest potential.

3. Become recognized as a leader among Iowa colleges in service and experiential learning.

4. Continue to develop the Central College Institute for Extended Education in Pella so that it meets three objectives:
   • Builds a partnership with area businesses and community development organizations and provides courses to meet the continuing and professional educational needs of the community of Pella and the surrounding area as well as to provide lifelong learning experiences to neighbors of the college.
   • Generates revenues for Central College programs.
   • Does not detract from but rather enhances the basic mission of Central College.

V. PLAN STRATEGIES

Overview

The strategies that follow flow from those generally and broadly applicable across the campus community to those which are more specific. If we are collectively successful in executing all of them, we stand a high probability of achieving the plan goals and furthering the enduring goals. At the same time, these strategies are not the complete compendium of all plans and strategies extant on Central College’s campus. Rather they serve to focus and guide the operating plans and strategies being developed by each organizational entity within the campus and, hopefully, each individual member of the campus whether the individual is a student, a member of the faculty, or a member of the staff.

Strategy #1 – Continue to Emphasize Central College’s Excellent Liberal Arts Curriculum with Special Emphasis on the Core Curriculum

Strategy #2 – Embody the Mission

Central College espouses the “whole person” concept through a balanced emphasis on the development of mind, body, and spirit. We need to build an ethos and allocate resources such that faculty and staff continue to develop their minds, bodies, and spirits.

Executing this strategy hinges, for the most part, on personal actions and initiatives, especially for faculty and staff, to seek to learn from each other and from our students, to seek life-long learning opportunities for personal and professional growth, to commit to personal wellness programs, and to be free to share our own spirituality while, at the same time, demonstrating respect for and a willingness to learn from those who have a different faith or hold different beliefs.

Strategy #3 – Seek to Enhance the Development of the Human Spirit for All Members of Central College

All academic courses at Central College contribute to this goal, and faculty should continually strive to see that their students not only gain new knowledge or understanding but that they are inspired and challenged in the process.

• Maintain, promote, and nourish activities, events, and traditions, which have served to enhance the sense of community of Central College such.

Strategy #4 – Create a Learning Environment Geared to the Success of Each Student as an Individual

Strategy #5 – Create a Vibrant Center for Developing Teachers of Mathematics and Science
Strategy #6 – Embrace a Community Culture Committed to Continuous Change as a Path to Enhancing the Successes Our Students Experience Before and After Graduation

Strategy #7 – Employ the Lessons from the Customer Service Revolution to Enhance the Central College Adventure

- We recognize that the relationship between faculty and students is not the same as that between a business and its customers. However, while recognizing the differences, we can enhance both the work environment of our faculty and staff and the learning environment of our students by focusing on how best to serve our students in their legitimate needs and each other.
- As an aid to developing such a mindset and as a guide to priorities of behaviors, the President’s Advisory Council developed the following service theme and service standards which we commend to all members of the Central College community as guideposts for how we treat others in the special environment we are trying to create that is Central College in the 21st century.

Central’s service theme is reflective of our mission statement:
"We create dynamic growth adventures that promote opportunities to improve lives."

Central’s service standards in priority order:

- **Integrity** – We need at all times to be honest, candid and accountable in our dealings with our students and each other.
- **Safety** – Our campus must be a safe place for all who study, learn, work, grow and visit here.
- **Respect** – All persons who are a part of our community or visitors to it should be accorded full respect, as is their right as fellow human beings.
- **Responsiveness** – All of us, individually and collectively, need to be responsive to the needs, wants, fears, concerns, dreams and aspirations of our students and colleagues.
- **Energy** – The pace of events and change in the world around us is accelerating, thus expectations are that “things” happen more quickly these days. Meeting such expectations requires a high level of energy to be brought to the fore. At the same time, we need to be careful that racing to do something does not mean we mislead as to what can be accomplished, nor do we put safety at risk for speed, nor do we disregard the rights of others, nor do we short-change our responsiveness to one group of colleagues or students to respond more vigorously to other groups unless the priorities of our service standards mandate differently.

- Faculty and staff members are invited to nominate colleagues who demonstrate exemplary commitment to one or more service standards. At the end of each academic year the President’s Advisory Council will review all nominations received in the course of the year and select an individual or individuals who have achieved the status of Service Standard Bearer. These individuals will be recognized and given special awards at the President’s final update address each year.

- Each staff member will be evaluated on her/his performance regarding all five service standards as part of the annual performance review process.

- If we all embrace and live Central’s values, this strategy will lead to significant successes for the college community.

Strategy #8 – Recognize That Each Individual on Campus Has Responsibilities in Addition to Those Associated with Individual Job or Positional Responsibilities

Strategy #9 – Learn the Basics of How Central College Is Run

Strategy #10 – Provide Integrated and Comprehensive Technologies for Students, Faculty, and Staff to Enhance Learning and Improve Productivity

Strategy #11 – Build More Active Bonds with the Alumni Community

Our alumni are our most widely dispersed and useful assets. They represent our collective dreams, they have the means to provide meaningful support in the pursuit of our mission, and they can provide real world experience to our students and the college community. Accordingly, we need to continue to develop this resource both for the benefit of our future graduates as individuals and for guidance on how we can improve what we do to prepare our students to be responsible citizens.

Strategy #12 – Present the Central Story to External and Internal Audiences in a Consistent, Candid and Compelling Way

Key word descriptors of the Central story are as follows:

- Faculty committed to nurturing students and promoting their growth as whole persons; intellectually, physically, and spiritually.
- Making a difference through service to others
• Responsible citizens of world, national, and local communities
• Commitment to cross-cultural understanding

Strategy #13 – Enhance the Educational Environment of Central College by Strengthening the Representation of Underrepresented Groups in the Life of Central College

Increased understanding of and appreciation for diversity and disability throughout our college community is a foundation of several strategic plan goals: namely, to help the Central community “practice the values of acceptance, mutual respect, justice, compassion, and service to others” and “to experience and appreciate the diversity of cultures and persons present in the United States and the world, and to relate knowledgeably and sensitively to persons of diverse cultural perspectives,” and “to promote values essential to becoming responsible citizens in local, national, and international communities.”

Furthermore, before the end of this plan period (2007), performance evaluations of faculty and staff members will include an assessment of each individual’s set of competencies for working effectively in a multicultural society and will include building of plans tailored to each individual for overcoming any identified shortcomings in this area.

Strategy #14 – Enhance the Learning Environment Central College Provides Its Students, Faculty, and Staff by Integrating Fine Arts Experiences More Completely into the Curriculum and Daily Life on the Campus

Strategy #15 – Actively Pursue the Central College Community Goal “To Promote and Model Appreciation of our Natural Environment and Stewardship of Its Limited Resources”

Strategy #16 – Keep Our Sponsors, Benefactors, and Donors Well Informed

Strategy #17 – Successfully Complete the First Comprehensive Campaign for Central College

Strategy #18 – Central College Should Plan for and Promote Its Sesquicentennial in 2003

Strategy #19 – Central College Should at All Times Be a Constructive Corporate Citizen in the Community of Pella

• As the fourth largest employer in Pella, the college encourages students, faculty, and staff to give of themselves to community endeavors to the extent their time, talent, and interests permit.
• The President, Vice President for Academic /Dean of Faculty, and Vice President for Student Life will collaborate with the Student Senate to develop an on-going community outreach project anchored by a campus-wide day of service in the Pella community.
• The college also seeks active partnership with community endeavors such as the partnership between the college and Pella libraries, the Music Connection, student involvement in the community arts program, and Tulip Time activities.

Strategy #20 – To Help Reduce the Pressures Which Drive Increased Tuition for Our Students, the College Should Expand and Aggressively Develop Additional Sources of Revenue

Strategy #21 – Recognize and Respect that All Members of the Central College Community Have a Personal Life Outside of Central College
APPENDIX B

CENTRAL COLLEGE SERVICE BROCHURES
Putting your hands together for Iowa

Iowa Campus COMPACT

A project for public involvement and community service for colleges and universities
Our Commitment to our Community and our Students

Campus Compact is a coalition of college and university presidents committed to fostering in students values and skills of civic engagement through active involvement in community service, service learning and volunteerism.

"Service learning affirmed my personal responsibility to others. This experience will have a lasting impact."

Katie Blandstra
Elementary education major

What Presidents Are Saying

"I know of no other educational organization that has a track record like Campus Compact's over the past twenty years... it is a phenomenal success not just in terms of growth in numbers, but in terms of the impact it's had on communities, the impact it's had on campuses, and the impact it's had on individual lives."

Frank Rhodes
Former president of Cornell University

Benefits of the Campus Compact Program

The Iowa Campus Compact will significantly strengthen service initiatives in Iowa institutions of higher education by providing:

- opportunities for collaboration across the state;
- forums for faculty and staff development;
- increased visibility and recognition on a state and national level;
- enhanced service learning;
- resources for development partnerships with governments, for-profit and non-profit entities;
- opportunities to develop and participate in innovative research projects;
- vehicles for publishing the results of research and community service projects and;
- a sustainable organization that will support service and service learning.

Stronger service and service learning will result in:

- more effective recruitment and retention of students and faculty;
- more meaningful civic engagement and headship development opportunities;
- enhanced student learning;
- more opportunities for students, faculty and staff to address specific local and regional concerns;
- deeper, more meaningful ties between higher education and the larger community; and
- better articulation between the higher education curriculum and the co-curriculum.

Work on Campuses and in Communities

"I appreciated an opportunity to get classroom experience and at the same time make a difference for someone."

Katie Blandstra
Elementary education major

Awarding Grants to Member Schools and State Affiliates

Since 1992, more than $2 million has been awarded to member campuses and state affiliates by Campus Compact. The money, given in the form of grants, assists the faculty in building supportive structures and curricula that connect service with academic content, and assists the state affiliates in creating the necessary infrastructures for expanding Campus Compact's work.

For more information, contact:
Fredric A. Waidstein
222 9th Street N.W.
Waverly, Iowa 50677
Tel: 319-352-6259
Fax: 319-352-8982
Email: waidsteinf@wartburg.edu

"My service experience gave me an opportunity to do more than just read or hear about members of another culture. As a result, I've developed a new appreciation for others.

Stephanie Davis
Chemistry major
In the classrooms
A growing number of Central College courses include a service-learning component. In addition to courses offered on campus, students enrolled in international education programs may participate in service-learning projects while studying abroad. The Program for Learning Awareness of Cultures in Experiential Settings (PLACES) facilitates opportunities for students to earn cultural awareness credit in service settings in Central Iowa.

And as volunteers
Many students choose to engage in volunteer service that is not associated with academic credit. AOK, Big Hearts, Helping Hands, ACTION, and numerous other service organizations on campus provide opportunities for students to invest their time and talents to make a difference for others.

"Hands on experience is learning of the highest level. It's real life!"

Opportunities for non-profits
Non-profit organizations are encouraged to contact the office of community-based learning and discover how Central students might connect with the organization.

"The service-learning concept is at the root of what Central College is all about. Students are taking what they have learned in the classroom out into the real world. I have had the opportunity with my students and athletes to interact with our community via service learning projects. I would not trade that experience for anything — it's been a blessing and a privilege that flows both ways."

- Dan Mason, exercise science instructor, head men's basketball coach

For more information, please contact:
Cheri Doane
Director of Community-Based Learning
Central College
812 University
Pella, IA 50219
641-628-5332
doanec@central.edu

Central COLLEGE
Service Learning:
A teaching/learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility.
(Duckenfield and Wright 1995)

Through service-learning, Central students connect service activities with their classroom learning experiences.
- Students hone Spanish language skills while assisting Latino families prepare immigration forms.
- Exercise science students work with athletes with disabilities.
- Psychology students work with child and adolescent development programs.
- Urban sociology students work with the homeless population.
- Art students create murals in an urban environment.

The goals of service learning at Central are to:
- provide opportunities for students to gain experience with diverse populations,
- prepare students to be active and engaged citizens upon graduation,
- enhance classroom experiences by providing opportunities to practice what they are learning.
- offer a means for the college to engage in reciprocal partnerships with organizations and agencies who serve the common good in our community and state.

“I've enjoyed having a chance to apply things I've learned in class while serving others.”

“Connecting students with the community makes them more engaged with the course and that energizes my teaching; it's a win-win, win-win situation.”

“Service-learning gave me the opportunity to learn more about my community and myself.”

“Connecting students with the community makes them more engaged with the course and that energizes my teaching; it's a win-win, win-win situation.”

Above all, Central seeks to cultivate the life of the mind, nurture depth of character, and foster habits of the heart that prepare students for a lifelong adventure in learning, growth and service.
APPENDIX C

PSYCHOLOGY 382 COURSE INFORMATION
Dr. Marguerite "Peggy" Fitch, (641) 628-5148, Jordan 211
Office hours: 11:00 a.m. MWF; Tuesday 1:00 - 2:45 p.m.; or by appointment
Home phone: (515) 279-8973 (Des Moines)
EMAIL: fitchp@central.edu

Texts


College-Wide Goals Relevant to This Course
(www.central.edu/aboutcentral/strategicplan.html)

For Students:

➢ To become actively engaged with inquiry, to develop a sense of shared responsibility for learning, and to cultivate the intellectual habits and skills needed for life-long learning.

➢ To prepare for all aspects of life beyond college, including work, service, and leadership within local, national, and international communities.

For Faculty:

➢ To be models and mentors who support the development of students as independent learners, responsible citizens, and morally responsible persons.

For the Central College Community:

➢ To promote...acceptance, mutual respect, justice, compassion and service to others.

➢ To experience and appreciate the diversity of cultures present in the United States and the world, and to relate knowledgeably and sensitively to persons of diverse cultural perspectives.

Course Objectives

All of us in this course have at least one thing in common: We were once kids (some of us still are). Some of us share our lives with children now, as parents, siblings, childcare providers, friends, or relatives. Others might be planning to have children of our own someday, or care for children who began their lives with someone else. Even if we expect never to have anything to do with children on a daily basis, we will all rely on them in the future (that's right -- it's called Social Security, but if you
don't believe you will ever see your SS $s, consider global peace and stewardship of the earth as viable reasons to want to learn about children).

I have developed the following objectives related to the knowledge, skills and attitudes I hope you will develop in this course. If you participate actively in the course, you should:

**Knowledge**

1. develop a foundation of knowledge about child development and behavior; become familiar with primary terms, concepts, ideas, and competing theories;

2. understand how psychologists construct knowledge about child development through research; be able to distinguish between descriptive, correlational, and experimental methods and understand the conclusions that can be drawn from each;

3. be able to distinguish between popular psychological beliefs and knowledge that is supported by psychological research;

4. use your own experience to help you develop your knowledge base and to examine your beliefs about child development;

**Skills**

1. In journals and class discussions reflect on how you will apply what you are learning about child development to enhance your potential as parents, teachers, or caregivers;

2. practice the skills of cooperation and coaching to help each other learn;

3. practice critical thinking skills by using your knowledge about how psychological research is conducted to evaluate claims you read and hear about human development and behavior;

**Attitudes**

1. NOT let your developing knowledge base remain inert, but actively look for connections across the various aspects of development, and between psychology and other disciplines (e.g., philosophy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, literature);

2. appreciate the diversity of experiences across individuals and groups; understand the ways in which our knowledge about child development is limited (i.e., primarily to middle-class, white children in Western cultures, though this is changing);

3. foster a collegial atmosphere in class to help yourself and your peers learn; listen to your peers and respect their rights to express opposing views;

4. acknowledge that, while it appears that we know a lot about child development and behavior, there is still much to learn, and some questions we might never answer.
Requirements

Attendance, Participation, & Preparation

The success of this course depends upon the active participation of all members. Regular class attendance is required. You are responsible for all material and activities that occur in class; if you are absent, you will need to find out from me or another student what happened. Learning requires more than the reception of information. It requires production through participation; that is, you need think about, talk about, and make sense of what you are learning for yourself. Some of the material you encounter in this course might not make sense until you ask questions, listen to someone else ask questions, and discuss it.

Read assigned material before you come to class in order to discover what you don't understand about the chapter. Once you tell me what doesn't make sense to you, I'm pretty good at helping you understand it. Use the assignments and exams to show me what you do know; use class time to work on what you don't know.

I expect you to take exams on the days they are scheduled and to turn in assignments by the times and days they are due. Please contact me ahead of time if you are unable to meet a deadline due to illness or emergency. Each person will begin the term with a reserve of 20 points towards attendance, participation, and preparation. You can lose points in this area by missing classes, coming unprepared for class, not participating actively during class, turning in assignments late, or missing exams. Remember, it's easy to keep these points: Just do your job as a student well.

Reading

Five books are required for the course; three are available in the Central College bookstore and two are on reserve in Geisler Library. As you read identify questions you have about the material so we can discuss these in class. The reading schedule is provided at the end of the syllabus. Refer to this schedule because we will read selected chapters in each book. In addition to these books you will read other materials distributed in class.

Peer Teaching/Discussion Activities

To stimulate class discussion and help your peers comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate the course material you will work in pairs or small groups to help me teach a chapter in one of the five texts. Use the following guidelines to prepare your peer teaching sessions:

- Focus on the main points of the reading and the evidence provided; do not try to cover everything or it will be overwhelming for you and your peers. You may also want to develop relevant questions for class discussion, if the chapter lends itself to doing so.
- Provide visual aids and/or active learning opportunities (e.g., chapter outline, transparencies, handouts, videoclips, class exercises, etc.).
- Plan enough time for me to clarify points, ask questions, and add to the discussion. Your session should be about 20 to 30 minutes.

Each peer teaching session is worth 30 points: You can earn up to 20 points for your group's score and up to 10 points for your individual preparation score. Guidelines for peer feedback/evaluation of the sessions will be provided and will be considered in your grade for this assignment.
Exams

To evaluate your comprehension of course material and assess your critical thinking skills, there will be **two in-class exams** (60 points each) that include short-answer and essay questions. Exams will cover material in the readings, peer teaching/discussion sessions, videos and lectures. Dates for exams are listed in the schedule.

The readings have been selected to present different points of view, particularly about the role of parents in children's development. Your **final exam is comprehensive** and will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the various perspectives by comparing and contrasting them and to analyze and evaluate the perspectives to answer this critical question about the parents' role. You will be most successful on the final exam if you keep this issue in mind as you read and take notes and prepare your peer teaching/discussion activities. It is worth 100 points.

**Service Learning Project & Journal**

You will volunteer 2 to 3 hours of your time weekly during the semester to a program or agency in Des Moines, Newton or Pella and keep a journal of your experiences. **You can use this course to fulfill your "x" requirement if you do a service learning project in Des Moines.** Service learning experiences enhance your understanding of course material because they provide concrete examples of, and opportunities to reflect on and apply what you are learning. Writing a weekly journal is essential for getting the most out of your service learning experience. In your journal you will describe what you did that week, answer specific questions about how your experience relates to what we are studying in the course, and discuss your own reactions to the experience. Ultimately, the purpose of the journal is to help you relate what you are learning in the course to real people and situations in ways that will help you be a better parent, teacher, caregiver, or citizen advocate for children. Your final journal entry will be a comprehensive discussion of what you have learned about child development and behavior as a result of your service learning experience. Specific guidelines about the content and format for the journal will be provided. I will collect your journal entries to give you formative feedback (dates are listed on the course schedule). Your complete journal is due during the last week of class and is worth 100 points. On that day you will discuss the most important thing you learned from your service-learning project.

Through Cheri Doane and Mike Roman of the Office of Community-Based Learning and the Program for Learning Awareness of Cultures in Experiential Settings (PLACES), I have made arrangements for Central College students to volunteer at sites in Des Moines, Newton and Pella. For each site I will provide you with more details about what you might be doing, when volunteers are typically needed, where the site is located, and the name of the contact person.

**Academic Honesty**

I expect that you know what constitutes plagiarism (see the Student Handbook & Calendar. It is never acceptable to use the ideas or words of other people without crediting them; this statement includes electronic and printed material found via the Internet. Cheating on exams and plagiarism are grounds for failure on the exam or assignment, and possibly for the course. To ensure that the work for which you receive credit is exclusively yours, you will be asked to write the following statement on each exam/assignment and sign it:

*I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment.*
Students with Disabilities

Central College abides by interpretations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that stipulates no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap." Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, hearing, sight or mobility impairments, and other health related impairments. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see me and Nancy Kroese, Director of Student Support Services and Disability Services Coordinator, (x5247) so that such accommodations may be arranged.

Evaluation

I use **criterion-referenced** evaluation. I establish criteria or standards that demonstrate various levels of understanding. If your performance meets my criteria for an "A", you will earn an "A". I do not grade on a curve. This means that you are not competing with each other in this course, rather, you are competing with my standards. I believe students learn best when they know what is expected of them; therefore, I will provide you ahead of time with the criteria that I will use to evaluate your written assignments. Below is a list of the points assigned to each of the course requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, participation, preparation (5%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Teaching/Discussion Session: 30 points (8%)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams: 2 @ 60 points each (33%)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-Learning Project &amp; Journal (27%)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Final Exam (27%)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>370</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your final course grade will be determined by the percent of Total Points possible (370) according to the scale below:

- 95 - 100% = A Work of outstanding quality
- 90 - 94% = A-
- 87 - 89% = B+
- 84 - 86% = B Work of very good quality
- 80 - 83% = B-
- 77 - 79% = C+
- 74 - 76% = C Work of average quality
- 70 - 73% = C-
- 67 - 69% = D+
- 64 - 66% = D Work of substandard quality
- 60 - 63% = D-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed., 8/28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Syllabus; expectations; introductions; service-learning (SL) sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., 8/30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choices due for SL sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 9/2</td>
<td></td>
<td>LABOR DAY -- NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 9/4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 1: Nature or nurture? It's all in the brain</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Choices due for peer teaching/discussion chapters.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment to SL sites; journal handout distributed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., 9/6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 2: The basic biology of brain development</td>
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<td>Assignment to peer teaching/discussion chapters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 9/9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 3: Prenatal influences on the developing brain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 9/11</td>
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<td>Eliot, Ch. 5: The importance of touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., 9/13</td>
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<td>Eliot, Ch. 8: Taste, milk, and the origins of food preference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 9/16</td>
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<td>Eliot, Ch. 9: Wiring up the visual brain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 9/18</td>
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<td>Eliot, Ch. 12: Social-emotional growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., 9/20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 14: Language and the developing brain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 9/23</td>
<td></td>
<td>SL journal #1 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 9/25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 15: How intelligence grows in the brain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., 9/27</td>
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<td>Eliot, Ch. 16: Nature, nurture, and sex differences in intellectual development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 9/30</td>
<td></td>
<td>SL project discussion and feedback on SL journals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 10/2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliot, Ch. 17: How to raise a smarter child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 10/7</td>
<td></td>
<td>SL journal #2 due</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Berk, Ch. 4: Cultural variation in infants' sleeping arrangements: Questions of independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 10/9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berk, Ch. 11: Child-care policy in Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., 10/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berk, Ch. 18: Gender segregation among children: Understanding the &quot;cootie phenomenon&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., 10/14</td>
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<td>Berk, Ch. 20: Becoming bicultural: An Australian perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., 10/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>McAdoo, Ch. 6: Racial identity development in African American children: Cognitive and experiential antecedents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., 10/18</td>
<td></td>
<td>FALL BREAK -- NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., 10/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>SL journal #3 due (Under my office door -- class does not meet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Wed., 10/23 |  | McAdoo, Ch. 10: Sankofa Shule spells success for African American
Fri., 10/25 Berk, Ch. 23: School matters in the Mexican-American home: Socializing children to education

Mon., 10/28 McAdoo, Ch. 1: The dynamics of African American fathers' family roles
Wed., 10/30 Berk, Ch. 28: Risk, resilience, and recovery: Perspectives from the Kauai longitudinal study
Fri., 11/1 Exam 2: Black children (McAdoo, 2002)
Landscapes of development (Berk, 1999)

Mon., 11/4 SL journal #4 due; video: The Moral Life of Children by Robert Coles
Wed., 11/6 Continuation and discussion of video The Moral Life of Children
Fri., 11/8 Iowa Teachers of Psychology (ITOP) at the Graham Conference Center

Mon., 11/11 Cytryn & McKnew: Foreword, Preface, & Ch. 1: Childhood depression: The dawn of discovery
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 2: What is childhood depression?
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 3: The development of affective disorders in infants and toddlers
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 4: "I wish I wasn't alive"

Wed., 11/13 Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 5: The causes of childhood depression
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 6: Who is at risk?
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 7: Psychosocial treatment
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 8: Psychopharmacological treatment

Fri., 11/15 Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 9: Guidelines to handling depressed children
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 10: Prevention
Cytryn & McKnew, Ch. 11: Cutting edge
Cytryn & McKnew, Epilogue

Mon., 11/18 SL journal #5 due; discussion of SL projects
Wed., 11/20 Harris: Foreword, Preface, & Ch. 1: "Nurture" is not the same as "environment"
Fri., 11/22 Harris, Ch. 2: The nature (and nurture) of the evidence

Mon., 11/25 Harris, Ch. 3: Nature, nurture, and none of the above
Wed., 11/27 Harris, Ch. 4: Separate worlds
Fri., 11/29 THANKSGIVING BREAK -- NO CLASS

Mon., 12/2 Harris, Ch. 5: Other times, other places
Wed., 12/4 Harris, Ch. 11: Schools of children
Fri., 12/6 Harris, Ch. 13: Dysfunctional families and problem kids

Mon., 12/9 Harris, Ch. 15: The nurture assumption on trial
Wed., 12/11 Complete SL journal due (#6, prior 5 entries & final comprehensive entry
Final discussion of SL projects
Fri., 12/13 Evaluations and closure

Wed., 12/18
8:00 a.m. Comprehensive Final Exam
Part 2: Relating the Service-Learning Experience to Child & Adolescent Development

The purpose of this section is to provide opportunities for you to integrate your service-learning experience with the material we are learning in a way that enhances both aspects of the course. For Part 2 of your journal you will write a response to one of the questions below. The first three questions probably work best at the beginning of your service-learning experience while you are getting established at your agency. Once you are established and have begun working with the children you can choose from among the remaining questions for your response to Part 2. If appropriate you may use a question more than once.

1. Research your agency to learn more about it. Obtain written documents (e.g., informational brochure, policy statement, newspaper articles, training materials, fundraising materials, etc.) from the agency or from a source such as the agency's website, if one exists. Consider the agency's history, mission, population served, organizational structure, programs offered, how it is funded, etc.

2. Write a statement of goals for your service-learning experience based on both the needs of the agency and what you want to get out of the experience. Describe your goals with respect to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes you expect to develop as a result of working with children through this agency.

3. Explain why you chose this agency as your service-learning site. Include in your response any connections you make between your choice of this agency and previous courses, work experiences, volunteer experiences, and earlier life experiences.

4. Integrate the course material with your service-learning experience. Consider specific material you have learned at any point in the course and explain how it relates to your experience, how it is illustrated by specific events or aspects or your experience, or how it helps you understand some aspect of your experience better.

5. Reflect on how your service-learning experience has influenced how you view new course material. Discuss the extent to which it helps your understanding of the new material, challenges your prior beliefs and values, or makes you think about the new course material in a different way.

6. Analyze a problem or issue that has come up at your service-learning site. Explain whether the issue was resolved successfully or not and discuss why you think it turned out that way. Integrate relevant course material and explain how having this knowledge might be helpful to addressing the problem or issue.

7. If you have a chance to work with infants in your service-learning project, discuss some specific aspects of their development (e.g., sensory preferences, depth perception, attachment) that are described in the course material. Explain how their development is consistent with the patterns described in the texts and how it differs. Speculate about some possible reasons for any differences.
8. Identify some research questions about the children in your service-learning program that would be important to explore. Select one question and explain how you might design a study to answer it.

9. Describe one or more children in your service-learning program through the “lenses” of two different theorists, comparing and contrasting these approaches to child development.

10. Identify a specific problem children and families in your service-learning program are likely to experience and what you perceive as the underlying cause(s) of this problem. Explain how these problems might impact various aspects of children’s development.

11. Apply the course material to suggest strategies, policies, or programs that should be implemented to address problems faced by children served by your service-learning agency.

12. If you were responsible for managing the organization in which you are serving, discuss how you would improve upon the delivery of services to children. Apply the course material to your response.

13. Discuss any problems you have encountered through your service-learning experience this semester that you believe are caused by a larger structure or system. Apply the course material to your response.

Final Comprehensive Journal Entry (4-5 pages)

To assess what you have learned and how you might have changed as a result of your service-learning experience, re-read your prior journal entries, including my notes and questions back to you before writing your final comprehensive journal entry. Include the following components in your final entry:

1. What have you learned about
   (a) children and their development;
   (b) service/community-based learning;
   (c) yourself?

2. Evaluate the quality of your reflection over the course of the semester, supporting your evaluation with specific examples from your journals.

Your complete journal (all 6 prior entries with my comments written on them, log sheet with total hours, final comprehensive entry) is due during the last week of class and is worth 100 points.
Objective

The purpose of the journal is to create an opportunity for you to reflect on your service-learning experience and connect it to what you are learning in the course.

Content

The journal will serve as a continuing "discussion" about your service-learning experience. I will collect your entries periodically (due dates are listed in the syllabus). Write an entry for each due date (6 + the final comprehensive entry); draw on the sum of your experience up to that point to write your response to Part 2 (Relating your experience to the course). Each journal entry should have the following three parts:

1. By date, briefly describe when and where you met and what you did each week since your last journal entry (you will have multiple dates for this section). If you did not meet during a week, indicate why.

2. Integrate your service-learning experience with what we are learning in the course by responding to one of the specific questions (attached) or by answering a question of your own that relates to material we have covered in the course. Before attending your site each week, preview the questions on the attached list so you can look for specific examples of the concepts discussed. In your journal identify clearly which question you are responding to from the list or whether you are addressing a different question of your own.

3. Describe any particular reactions, feelings, or thoughts you are having about your experience, and discuss implications of your experience for you as a potential parent, caregiver, or concerned citizen.

Do not simply list what you did or what you learned (this approach will earn you a "C"--see below); that is, the journal should not be merely descriptive. Rather, focus your writing on specific events or insights or perceptions you have and develop them, supporting them with specific examples. In this sense the journal should be more analytic. When you find yourself still thinking about something that happened during your service-learning experience that week, or you find you still have strong feelings about it, you are probably analyzing the event or insight and this analysis may be a good one to develop in your journal.

Your final journal entry should be a comprehensive discussion of your service-learning experience and the implications of what you have learned (see the questions in Part 2 for more detail about what to write). Your complete journal is due during the last week of class and is worth 100 points.

Format

- Write about 2 pages per entry; date each visit in Part 1.
- Follow the three-part format described above and shown in the examples (attached).
- Your journal should be typed or word-processed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all around, pages numbered.
- At the end of the term I will evaluate your complete journal for both content (75%) and writing (25%). It is worth 100 points. Use the general criteria below to guide you.

A = A thorough, accurate, well-supported journal that answers the questions fully, explains concepts, offers examples, and discusses implications; is clearly written and mechanically sound.
B = A journal in which ideas are fairly well integrated though less so or supported less well than for an "A" journal, or one that excludes implications or personal reactions to your experience (Part 3); writing is mostly clear and generally mechanically sound.

C = A list of "things I learned" that are not integrated, not well supported with examples, or that excludes responses to questions about relating your experience to course material (Part 2); writing is wordy or awkward or mechanically unsound.

D = Journal is incomplete (e.g., includes only Part 1) or too simplistic; quality of writing makes it often difficult to judge what the writer is trying to say.

F = No journal.

* Parts of this document were excerpted from materials prepared by Pamela Steinke.
Service-Learning Sites

Cheri Doane, Director of Community-Based Learning and Coordinator of the Program for Learning Awareness of Cultures in Experiential Settings (PLACES), (x 5332; office in Central Hall 204; doanec@central.edu) will help you coordinate the logistics of service-learning projects in Des Moines and Newton. She can help you contact sites, file applications and other paperwork requested by some of the agencies and provide directions to your site. She will also help coordinate a training and orientation program for students who would like to earn their “x” credit through this course and will help you complete the necessary paperwork required by the Registrar’s Office.

To travel to a service-learning site, you may drive your own car and receive reimbursement for gas, or you may take a college vehicle. Either way, the arrangements will be made by the administrative assistant in academic affairs. More contact information will be available as soon as this person has been hired, but requests for the use of a college car for service-learning purposes or requests for travel reimbursement can be sent to PLACES@central.edu.

**DES MOINES**

*Adams Elementary School, 3720 E. 29th St., Des Moines, IA 50317*
Pam Rennie Curtis, Tutor (515-266-5169)

Adams Elementary School needs people to help students whose first language is not English. Many of the children of refugee families attend Adams, and teachers need extra assistants to help children work on reading and math in particular. This opportunity involves working with children individually or in pairs, usually on a specific task or worksheet, or listening while children read aloud. Times are somewhat flexible, but must be scheduled during school hours.

*Hispanic Educational Resources, 828 SE Scott Blvd., Des Moines, IA 50309*
Andria Castillo, Director (515-282-6542)

The mission of this agency is to improve the quality of life for Hispanics/Latinos in the Des Moines area. Comprehensive family-based services are provided in Spanish and English. Along with a multitude of other programs, the agency is home to a childcare center for toddlers and preschoolers at which Central students may assist. In addition to daycare service opportunities, the center invites Central students to provide special activities to elementary school children during the after-school hours. For example, students could lead a group for music, dance, or crafts. One group of Central students will be performing weekly science experiments, and if you’re interested in being part of this team, you are invited to do so. Some level of proficiency in Spanish is helpful, but not required, since most of the children speak English.

*Shalom Zone Ministries, c/o Gatchel United Methodist Church, 1900 Martin Luther King Parkway, Des Moines, Mary Ellen Evans (515-288-0475)*

Gatchel UMC has initiated “Shalom Zone Ministries,” an agency that serves an at-risk neighborhood of urban Des Moines. Their work is a collaborative effort of neighborhood leaders, human service providers and the church, designed to meet the diverse needs of the community. They sponsor an after-school program that is held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm and includes an evening meal. Central students will assist with the operation of the after-school program.
**Children and Family Urban Ministries**, 1548 8th Street, Des Moines, IA 50311
Carmen Lampe Zeitler, Director (515-282-3242)

This program addresses the concerns and conditions of school-age children, youth, and their families in the neighborhoods of the near north side of Des Moines. The agency strives to help improve the families' quality of life as family members grow in their understanding of themselves and the Christian faith. The Haven is a free faith-based after-school program meeting at CFUM Monday through Thursday 3:15 - 4:30 PM. The after school activities are followed by “The Supper Club” which meets at the same site from 4:45 - 5:30. Volunteers will assist with playtime, snacks, and creative activities including music, art, drama, and writing. The program's focus is on personal development including social, emotional, and spiritual development.

**Oakridge Neighborhood Services**, 1236 Oakridge Drive, Des Moines, IA 50314 (515-244-7702)
Sue Underwood, Youth Education & Work Program (Ext 139)
Laura Duncan, Early Enrichment Program (Ext. 148)

Oakridge Neighborhood Services is a private, non-profit, federally subsidized program for low- and moderate-income residents. It was founded in the 1960's and provides housing and support services for individuals and families. There are three opportunities for service learning here: (1) child care assistance for the Early Enrichment Program on weekday mornings; (2) Daily Reading Program 3-5:30 pm weekdays; (3) “Club” Days on Thursday afternoons during which children can participate in a variety of activities and organizations such as music, sports, computers, art, dance, Girl/Boy Scouts, photography, etc.

**Refugee Cooperative Ministries**, 3200 University Ave., Des Moines, IA 50311
Jennifer L. Gibson, Community Resource Coordinator jgibson@lssia.org 515-633-3060

This program is designed to help refugees resettle in Iowa. The office is staffed by people affiliated with Lutheran and Catholic Social Services and employs refugees who have already settled in Iowa. They need people to help with socialization and mentoring for the women and children in refugee families. Activities might include helping the refugees move in or find things they need for their homes, helping them practice learning English, assisting them with making telephone calls, teaching them how to use the city bus service, going with them to appointments and entertaining the children while they are there. Most of the refugees speak some English and translators are available through the office. An orientation program will be provided by the agency. A valid driver's license and proof of insurance are needed.

**Des Moines Afghani Community**, c/o Amy Graves, Grinnell College.

Amy Graves at Grinnell College has assisted in the sponsorship and settlement of five Afghani families who immigrated to Des Moines several months ago. Each family has several children, all of whom desire tutoring, mentoring, and friendship. Central students will be matched with families, and meet in the families’ homes.

**Willkie House**, 900 17th St., Des Moines, IA 50314
Michelle Taylor, Program Coordinator (515-243-7817)

Willkie House is a non-profit organization designed to help children from inner-city neighborhoods. It was established in 1917 and is the only independent community center left in Iowa. They have summer programs, after-school programs, and a tutoring program co-sponsored by Amerus Bank in Des Moines. There are two opportunities for service learning at Willkie House: (1) people are needed to help tutor children on Wednesdays from 4:00-6:00pm with other volunteers from Amerus; (2) people are needed to assist with the after-school program and tutor children at Willkie House, 3:15-6pm Monday through Friday.
NEWTON

Quakerdale of Newton (formerly Jasper County Youth Shelter), RR #14, Newton, IA  50208
Beth Andrew, Director (641-792-2225)  (Contact Cheri Doane initially)

This agency serves at-risk youth. Temporary shelter is provided, including educational services. Caseworkers provide counseling for youth and family. Central students can assist caseworkers or other shelter staff. In particular, students are invited to participate in recreational activities that are often scheduled at the Newton Y or other local agencies. Service can be scheduled during evenings during the week or weekends, but not daytime hours during weekdays.

Peck Child Development Center, 513 E. 5th St. N., Newton, IA 50208
Debbie Krampe, Director; or Kris Weston, Assistant Director (641-792-7228)

Peck Child Development Center provides day care and preschool for more than 50 Jasper County children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Peck works with the Department of Human Services to provide crisis care and protective services. Children are not grouped by age because the philosophy if to provide an “extension of family living.” Central students could assist at Peck on weekday afternoons.

PELLA

Mike Roman (VISTA) (x5917) (romannm@central.edu) assists Cheri Doane in the Office of Community-Based Learning. Mike’s office is located in Jordan 213 (inside the computer lab). He can help you coordinate the logistics of service-learning projects in Pella.

After School Kids Klub, Webster Elementary School, 401 Main St., Pella, IA 50219
Betty Phillips, Director (628-2235; dbzst@iuno.com) (10 students)

This program serves children ages 5-12 who need supervision after school and before parents get home from work. It is held every weekday afternoon in the gym at Webster School (on University Avenue across from the Maytag Center). The director needs people to assist her on different days, Monday through Friday from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Assisting involves helping serve snacks, playing games, doing crafts, restroom duty, and generally keeping children occupied. Knowledge of first aid and CPR are helpful, though not necessary.

Families First Program
Sherry Maakestad, Director; 1112 Prairie, Pella, IA 50219; 628-1658 (home); 780-3964 (cell)
E-mail: familiesfirst@se-iowa.net

Families First is an organization offering a series of programs designed to strengthen families by teaching effective parenting skills to all Pella parents. Central College will provide childcare during the parent education classes.

Meet and Eat: parent meetings- during the day
These meetings are held for parents with children of all ages each Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Pizza Ranch in Pella. Free childcare for preschool children is offered during the meetings at 2nd Reformed Church nursery from 10:25 a.m. to 1:10 p.m. each Tuesday. Two to three students are needed each week. Central students will need to be at 2nd Reformed Church from 10:20 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Meetings will begin on Tuesday, September 17 and continue through Tuesday, November 26.
Parenting with Love and Logic - evening class
This class is for parents of toddlers through teens and will be held at Trinity Reformed Church (407 Franklin) on Thursdays in October and November. Childcare is offered while the parents attend the class from 6:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., which means Central students will need to be there from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The classes will be held on Thursdays, October 10 through November 21. Children will be divided into two age groups; several volunteers are needed for each group. The “Love and Logic” program runs for only part of the semester, so if you choose this option we will need to find you another service learning opportunity for the remainder of the semester (e.g., After School Kids Klub).

Literacy Army
Mindi Kacmarynski, Volunteer coordinator; 641-628-3789; Kacmarynskim@central.edu

The Literacy Army uses community volunteers to improve student reading levels. Volunteers agree to give one to two hours a week throughout the school year. Central students will be allowed to participate for the semester rather than the normal entire year commitment, but may and are encouraged to continue throughout the year if they like.

Volunteers work with students who are reading below the acceptable level for their grade. The program focuses on students in kindergarten through 5th grade. Volunteers will be paired with two to three students throughout the semester and will spend time reading with them one-on-one. Hence, if they are paired with two students they spend 30 minutes with each per week or 20 minutes each if they have three students. Volunteers will meet students in the classrooms at Webster, Lincoln, and Jefferson schools. The time slot will be scheduled at the same time each week as teachers are giving class time to do this project.

All volunteers must attend a one-hour orientation. Two different orientations will be held depending on whether volunteers are working with K to 2nd grade students or with 3rd to 5th grade students. Volunteers should contact Mindi about scheduling a time for their orientation.

Pella Community Day Care Center
215 Main Street Pella, Iowa 50219
Hours of operation: 6am-6pm Mon-Fri
Director Bonnie Lovett 628-4845
Volunteer Coordinator Susan Canfield (w) 628-7642 Canfields@central.edu

The Pella Community Day Care Center, located 2 blocks from Central, is looking for volunteers to help lead or assist in daily activities for children ages 6 weeks to 10 years old. Volunteers will be needed to assist teachers as well as to lead activities. Examples of volunteer led activities are making crafts, teaching dances, playing games, tutoring, creating puppet shows, reading to children, singing songs and whatever else the volunteers feel comfortable in doing with the children. Be creative!

The day care is divided up into separate rooms so volunteers may be able to work with more than one age group in a visit. School age children arrive from 3:30 pm and stay till 5 or 6 pm.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Service-Learning Interview Protocol:

Background & Context
1. Why did you want to be involved in this service-learning project?
2. Describe a typical day at your service site.
3. How do you learn best? Share an example of when you really learned something or describe your best learning experience.

Learning
1. What did you learn by being involved in this experience? About yourself, others, etc. How did you learn it?
2. How did your participation in the service component affect your understanding of the course material?
3. Tell me about a time during your service-learning experience when you thought this is what learning/education is about (an “a ha” moment).

Self-awareness
1. Tell me about the most significant aspect(s) of your service-learning experience.
2. Tell me about a time during your service-learning experience when you were confused or frustrated (an “uh oh” moment).
3. How have you changed because of your involvement in this service-learning experience?

Overall Meanings
1. Given what you have said about your service experiences, academic achievement, and personal growth, how do you understand service-learning in your life? What sense does it make to you?
2. Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, where do you see yourself going in the future?
3. Is there anything else you would like to share to help me understand your perspective?
APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM AND PARTICIPANT LETTER
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Student Perspectives of Service-Learning Experiences: A Dissertation Research Study
Investigator: Maribeth Wright

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning that students make of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contribute to student learning and sense of self. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a student that is currently involved in a service-learning project. Your input will greatly enhance this particular study.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will consist of three interviews that will last for about one and a half-hours. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed. You will be asked questions regarding your service-learning experience and be asked to talk about what you have learned from these experiences and share insights about your involvement in the service-learning project. You will also be asked to share your journal that was completed during your service-learning project and will have the opportunity to remove any personal information prior to the document review.

The interview will be documented through the use of audiotape and researcher notes. These tapes will be erased within one month of our meeting and personally identifiable information from transcripts will be removed.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS
If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about student learning and development through service-learning experiences to promote citizenship.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION
You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: storage of data and notes in a locked filing cabinet; use of pseudonyms or code number instead of name; removal of personally identifiable information from transcripts and research reports. The researcher will be the only one with access to the data. The data will be stored throughout the research process but will be erased within one month after completion of the project. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact Maribeth Wright, 515-285-9297; mbwright@iastate.edu or Nancy Evans, 515-294-7113; nevans@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Human Subjects Research Office, 2810 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-4566; meldrem@iastate.edu or the Research Compliance Officer, Office of Research Compliance, 2810 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-3115; dament@iastate.edu

SUBJECT SIGNATURE
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Subject’s Name (printed) __________________________________________________________

(Subject’s Signature) ____________________________ (Date)

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent) ____________________________ (Date)
Letter to Participate

January 24, 2003

Hello! You are receiving this correspondence because you completed PSYC 382, Child and Adolescent Development, within the past few semesters.

Maribeth Wright, who is currently conducting research for her dissertation at Iowa State University, has asked Central College to assist with her study. She hopes to examine how students make meaning of service-learning experiences. Here is an excerpt from her purpose statement:

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning that students make of their service-learning experiences and how these experiences contribute to students’ learning and self-awareness. This understanding will help clarify the connections students make between academic achievement, self-awareness, life experiences and service-learning.

Would you consider being a participant in Maribeth’s study? This would entail being interviewed a total of three times over the course of this semester at times that are convenient for you. The interviews will be conducted here at Central College (refreshments included!) Each interview would last about an hour and a half, and you would be asked questions about your service-learning experience. In some cases, Maribeth would like to read the journal that you kept over the course of the semester. You could remove any personal information that you weren’t comfortable sharing, and of course the contents as well as the discussion will be held in complete confidence. She has a statement of permission that explains this in greater detail, and if you express a willingness to participate you may read the statement and decide at that time whether or not you wish to be part of the study. After you meet with Maribeth, she will transcribe the interview and forward it to you to make sure it is accurate. She’d like to begin the interviews in late January or early February.

We hope you will be willing and able to help Maribeth with her research. We have a lot of survey data on service-learning, but very few studies have actually asked students directly how they make sense of their experience. As you know, you are also likely to benefit from the reflection during the interviews. If you might be interested in participating in a study that will expand understanding of service-learning and how it affects students, please let Cheri know by January 30.

Cheri Doane
Director of Community-Based Learning

Peggy Fitch
Associate Professor of Psychology
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Second, I want to thank my three children - Grant, Jackson, and Kennedi - who bring joy to my life each and every day. Although they were too young to understand what I was doing most of the time, they always had a hug and kiss for me as I went off to work on the computer or travel to Ames for class. I always appreciated their questions as they tried to figure out in their little minds what mommy was working on. The most touching moment for me was on Mother’s Day, 2003, when Grant, age seven, wrote three wishes for me and one of his wishes was, “to get your dissertation done soon!” That was all the motivation I needed.

Next, I want to thank my major professor, Nancy, my committee, and the staff in the ELPS department. You all encouraged, supported, and challenged me along the way and I feel that I have learned so much from all of you. Nancy, you were always there for me, even during some hectic times with your commitments to ACPA, your travel schedule, and especially during the loss of your mother. I greatly appreciate all of your encouraging words, advice, and time that you have spent with me. To Flo, John, Larry, and Doug, thanks for all of your guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this process. Working with all of you has been a wonderful experience in my professional career. To Judy and Marjorie, I
want to say thank you for always making time for me, answering my questions, and for taking care of me these past few years. I appreciate all of your efforts.

I also want to thank my parents and in-laws. There have been so many times that you have been there for me, especially helping out with the kids when projects took me away from home. My father and father-in-law were both an inspiration as they completed this journey before me. I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful family. Thank you for believing in me and for all of your love and support.

Finally, I want to thank all of my friends, classmates and co-workers for tolerating me during this time, supporting me, and encouraging me in these efforts. I appreciate all that you have done for me personally as well as professionally. I am lucky to have such a support network and people around me who truly care.

I could not have embarked on this journey alone and so to all of those who played a part – a heart-felt thank you.