

## ABSTRACT

With origins as a critical pedagogy, service-learning has potential to facilitate students' development as active citizens. However, whether critical service-learning occurs in practice still remains unclear. In this study, we explored service-learning practice by examining students' perceived outcomes within at a midsize urban university in New England. The number of service-learning hours completed, course professor, and primary service site significantly associated with both academic and civic student outcomes. A narrative analysis found only a third of student responded from a critical learning frame. While students demonstrate perceived benefits of traditional service-learning, its efficacy as critical pedagogy remains unclear.

## Service-Learning: A Case Study of Student Outcomes

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Service-learning is a complex pedagogical and philosophical tool involving numerous stakeholders, including students, faculty, university administrators and community partners to support student learning and civic engagement, community development and university community collaborations. Researchers identify open communication between all stakeholders, institutional support, and thoughtful, structured reflection as keys to effective service learning experiences (Hullender, Hinck, Wood-Nartker, Burton, & Bowlby, 2015; Cooper, 2014; Harkins, 2013). Service-learning originated as a critical pedagogy, with a focus on integration and reflection of service and learning (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Since its inception, service-learning meets a wide range of goals across educational contexts.

Universities and faculty incorporate service-learning into institutional and departmental curricula for many reasons including: to meet university goals and to align with civic missions; to facilitate student growth and development; and to share university resources with surrounding communities. Demonstrated benefits include life skill development (Astin & Sax, 1998); greater integration of university members into their local

communities (Wolff & Tinney 2006); enhanced learning outcomes (Bettencourt, 2015); and student personal growth (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Hullender et al., 2015).

Service-learning offers unique experiences beyond those available through other service activities (e.g., volunteerism, practica, and community service). For example, an efficacy study at the University of California Los Angeles found participation in service-learning activities positively correlated with student increases in cognitive abilities, critical thinking skills, and personal values (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). Importantly, service learning as part of an academic course produces more pronounced effects than individual or extracurricular service participation. Successful service-learning leads to improved learning outcomes for students, increased critical thinking skills, and the ability to meet university-wide goals of sustainable and productive relationships with their surrounding community.

Recent meta-analyses indicate many student outcomes reliably associate with service-learning participation. For example, Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki (2011) analyzed 62 evaluations of service-learning programs, finding significant gains in civic engagement, social skills, academic performance, and attitudes in areas such as self, school, and learning as compared to controls. Similarly, Yorio & Feifei (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 40 studies revealing significant, positive associations between service-learning and understanding social issues; personal insight; and cognitive development. Several significant moderators identified included cognitive measures, required or voluntary service, and type of reflection. Research consistently demonstrates a wide range of benefits to students, with significant implications for factors such as course structure and the nature of the service requirement.

However, these benefits merely graze the surface of the original goal of service-learning as critical pedagogy. Mitchell (2008) distinguishes “traditional” from “critical” service-learning, arguing that critical service-learning holds social change as a larger goal. Within this perspective, critical service-learning engages students in the process of dismantling unjust systems, rather than encouraging participation in ameliorative service projects. As an example, a “traditional” program might offer students the opportunity to volunteer in a soup kitchen several hours a week with structured reflection around food insecurity and homelessness. A “critical” program would direct its primary aim at the sociopolitical structures creating and reinforcing food insecurity and homelessness. Students in such a program might serve at an advocacy organization founded and governed by individuals who have experienced homelessness, assisting with advocacy and awareness raising.

When explored in the literature, “critical benefits” are often examined using students’ outcomes related to diversity and civic engagement. For example, Holsapple (2012) critically reviewed 55 studies to examine the relation between service-learning and openness to diversity. Their analysis revealed that in most studies, students reported confronting their own previously held stereotypes; recognized the served population as a heterogeneous group; and reported an increased understanding of marginalization and oppression. Holsapple concludes that “diversity outcomes arise from service-learning participation,” but typically reflect context-specific and short-lived outcomes (Butin, 2010).

Research and experience suggests that while students, instructors, and programs may *believe* they participate in critical service-learning, their intentions often

do not align with impact or outcome. For example, a study analyzing faculty discourse around service-learning found even faculty with a strong commitment to service-learning failed to demonstrate engagement with a transformative pedagogy. Instead, faculty discourse remained enmeshed in traditional models, with descriptions clearly painting the faculty member as the authority and students or community partners as beneficiaries of service-learning relationships and experiences (O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009).

Some practitioners and theorists acknowledge service-learning's failure to live up to its full potential (Ehrlich & Jacoby, 2009). Despite significant advocacy for service-learning from *Campus Compact* as well as various research-demonstrated benefits, service-learning faces many obstacles. *Campus Compact* reports more than 1,100-member schools, which is less than 17% of the total number of higher education institutions in the United States (Digest of Education Statistics, 2015). *Campus Compact* also reports that in 2008, only about 30% of students at member schools participate in service or civic engagement activities—and not all member schools offer courses that involve service learning (Campus Compact, 2008). Relatively few universities in the United States participate in service-learning, and service-learning may not be available even at universities with a commitment to the pedagogy.

A study of faculty experiences in service learning found that some instructors view service learning as too time and resource intensive; worry that service learning will interfere with more "relevant" course learning; and fear negative effects on tenure or promotion directly resulting from service-learning-based curricula (Cooper, 2014). These faculty represented disciplines ranging from education and liberal arts to nursing and engineering, suggesting obstacles unrelated to a particular department or discipline. Thus, even with dissemination of service-learning benefits, political and sociocultural factors present significant obstacles. To be fully effective, full cooperation and a commitment to service learning must be present among all stakeholders at all organizational levels. If faculty and universities fail to effectively facilitate service-learning even as a traditional pedagogy, then meeting service-learning's original goal—to engage students in civic engagement and social change remains impossible.

This study examines a service-learning program as it exists within a mid-sized urban university, illuminating student outcomes as traditional versus critical. By examining the impact of several well-established variables in the context of a critical pedagogy, we seek to tease apart benefits that merely enhance student ability from benefits that transform student worldview and encourage participation in social action and change. Unlike other studies in the literature that look at single courses or compare pilots that impact ecological validity, we look at the effects of a service-learning program implemented by an urban university. Our research examines student outcomes and perceptions from an existing program, rather than from a single class designed to explore service-learning's potential. Besides offering a glimpse into an existing service-learning, this research offers possible strengths and weaknesses not captured by pilot studies or experiments, elucidating how critical pedagogies shapes student experiences.

While our research was largely exploratory, we identified three target variables based on the literature: the number of service-learning hours completed; the course professor; and the primary service site. Number of service-learning hours completed

consistently demonstrates an impact on the quality and strength of students' personal and cognitive outcomes (Astin et al., 2000). Similarly, the course professor associates with student outcomes, and determines factors such as the type and frequency of reflection as well as the integration of the service component into the course (Cooper, 2014; O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009). The service site contributes to student outcomes depending on the nature of the organization, its issue area, and available resources and support for student volunteers (Harkins, 2013; Mitchell, 2008).

We hypothesized that students' perceived outcomes would significantly relate to number of service-learning hours completed, course professor, and primary service site. Additionally, we explored evidence of students' critical outcomes. We conducted two phases of analyses. In phase one, we evaluated the quantitative relationships between factors and outcomes. This first phase revealed discrepancy between service-learning intention and impact. In phase two, we conducted qualitative analysis to examine whether students demonstrated critical learning outcomes.

### Phase One Method

Four hundred eighty-seven student surveys collected over six semesters by the university's community engagement office were analyzed. Surveys were not originally collected for research purposes, so we have limited student demographic information. Available demographics included: student-reported number of community hours completed; course professor; and sites where students completed service hours.

The survey consisted of open-ended and Likert-type items designed to assess students' experiences in a service-learning course. Two versions of the survey existed in the archive with one update in the fall semester of 2013, including an additional seven Likert-type items and two open-response items.

### Phase One Results

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Semester of course		
Spring 2011	82	16.9
Fall 2011	1	0.2
Spring 2012	152	31.3
Fall 2012	86	19.8
Spring 2013	20	4.1
Fall 2013	43	8.8
Spring 2014	93	19.1

Departments reported included: Education, English, Environmental Studies, Government, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, and Spanish. However, department was only reported on three semesters. Service sites included soup kitchens, environmental clean-up and protection organizations, youth mentoring programs, refugee and immigrant tutoring programs, homeless empowerment organizations, and animal shelters. Students reported completing an average of 27.15 hours (SD = 30.94), with a mode of 10.

To better understand the relation between our target variables and student outcomes, we conducted quantitative analysis using multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA).

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Number of service-learning hours completed		
Intention to participate in future volunteer/service activities	(30, 137)	1.742	.021*
	Course professor		
Connectedness to other students	(9, 137)	2.442	.013*
Intention to take another service-learning course	(9, 137)	3.505	.001**
Service-learning improved understanding of course material	(9, 137)	2.562	.01*
	Primary service site		
Perception that work benefited the community	(18,137)	2.389	.003**
Enhanced understanding of diversity and social justice	(18, 137)	2.298	.004**
Intention to take another service-learning course	(18, 137)	3.505	.003**
Intention to participate in future volunteer/service activities	(18, 137)	1.778	.036*

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

To investigate our hypothesis that number of hours completed positively impacts student's perceived personal development, we examined the number of hours of service performed during the course of the semester using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). As expected, number of service hours significantly associated with intention to participate in future volunteer or service activities,  $F(30, 137) = 1.742, p = .021$ .

Several students offered suggestions or critiques, primarily identifying the challenge of fitting a commitment to a service organization into a busy schedule. While some students requested fewer hours required, others noted that the solution may lie not in fewer hours, but in expanded options with only one student who requested "more options provided so that it's easier to make time and schedule outside of class."

Next, we analyzed the relationship between student development and course professor. Results of the MANOVA indicated that connectedness to other students,  $F(9, 137) = 2.442 (p = .013)$ , and intention to take another service learning course in the future,  $F(9, 137) = 3.505 (p = .001)$  significantly associated with course professor. In addition, course professor significantly associated with the degree to which students believed the service-learning component improved understanding of course material,  $F(9, 137) = 2.562, p < .01$ .

While some course professors mentioned in these surveys rely on the community engagement office to organize and manage service opportunities, other course

professors maintain close relationships with their community partners. This difference in course professor involvement may account for these significant relationships.

Finally, we investigated the relationship between primary service site and student's perceived personal development using a MANOVA. Results indicated that primary service site significantly associated with students' perception that their work benefited the community,  $F(18, 137) = 2.389, p < .01$ , and that through their service work, enhanced understanding of diversity and social justice occurred,  $F(18, 137) = 2.298, p < .01$ . In addition, primary service site significantly associated with students' intentions to take another service learning course in the future,  $F(18, 137) = 2.368, p < .01$ , as well as intention to participate in future service activities,  $F(18, 137) = 1.778, p < .05$ . A two-way MANOVA between course professor and service-site revealed no significant interaction between these two variables.

We explored narrative data from the survey to determine if students' descriptions of their experience related to these quantitative findings. In response to the prompt "Overall, how did you feel?" some students identified their primary site as central to their experience. One student answered, "I thought [my site] was a great place to work. The refugees and workers/employers were friendly. The refugees were eager to learn most of the time." Another student similarly shared, "I'm glad I could have helped such a quality organization help more people." While students were happy to help and felt they learned much, these comments suggest that students' reflections focused almost exclusively on their own experience, with little to no change in a transformed worldview.

Such comments permeated throughout students' narratives about service-learning. In exploring student comments to substantiate the quantitative findings, a pattern of incongruence emerged: While the data revealed that students perceived significant growth resulting from their service-learning experiences, the narratives within their comments failed to reveal the kind of transformative growth expected of successful service-learning programs. That is, we can see benefits associated with "traditional" service-learning with little evidence of "critical" service-learning.

### **Phase One Discussion**

Our results align with the current literature on service-learning: As anticipated, we found benefits and growth outcomes associated with participation in a semester of service-learning. We also found that three key variables—number of hours completed, course professor, and primary service site—significantly associated with student outcomes. These findings corroborate the current research literature on variables that affect quality of service-learning and associated outcomes (Astin et al., 2000; Cooper, 2014; Harkins, 2013).

Number of hours completed or required appears throughout the literature as a crucial variable, with a positive relationship between number of hours completed and student growth (Astin et al., 2000). Service-learning typically takes place over a relatively brief period, limiting the potential depth of engagement and relationship building. Research on service-learning curriculum building calls attention to this limitation, suggesting that faculty carefully structure time to maximize contact and engagement between the student and community partner (Maddrell, 2014). Our data bore out this relationship between number of hours completed and student perceived

outcomes, underscoring the importance of maximizing contact and participation to optimize outcomes.

The literature provides suggested reasons as to why course professor significantly affects student outcomes resulting from service-learning experiences. Cooper (2014) suggests that faculty experience obstacles that affect their willingness to implement service-learning as well as a perceived inability to integrate service-learning pedagogies into their curricula. These obstacles may differ across faculty members within a university or even within a department depending on factors such as tenure status resulting in varied service-learning experiences across professors. In addition, researchers find that type of reflection and course structure likely vary according to course professor (Yorio & Feifei, 2012). This suggests that while the professor likely contributes to variance in outcomes, other contributing factors might include amount and type of reflection within the course curriculum.

Similarly, our findings regarding the impact of service site on student outcomes aligns with previous research. Maddrell (2014) argues that the partnership with a community organization strongly influences students' experiences with service-learning. To facilitate critical outcomes, the service site must also provide opportunities for students to be exposed to and engage with unjust social structures (Mitchell, 2008). Exposure to social inequality may as a function of service site, such that some students may not experience sufficient interaction with inequality for transformative learning to occur. Thus, while some students have ample opportunity to engage with and learn from underserved populations, others may find themselves engaging in ameliorative activities not conducive to critical outcomes.

Initial analysis of the narrative data suggested that despite reports of strong positive outcomes, students did not demonstrate changes in worldview or commitments to social change. This discrepancy aligns with prior studies. For example, in one study, students reported enhanced professional skills, but failed to demonstrate changes in diversity awareness and sadly increased patterns of victim-blaming (Houshmand, Spanierman, Beer, Poteat, & Lawson, 2014). Instead of changing perspectives on poverty or initiating an interest in social change, many students reported that their experiences confirmed negative expectations about the community partner. In an evaluation of critical outcomes resulting from a service-learning course, Hullender and colleagues found that only 50% demonstrated transformative learning resulting from the experience (Hullender et al., 2015). These patterns raise concerns about service-learning's potential to reinforce or even strengthen power imbalances. With these concerns in mind, we turned to the narrative data to investigate whether students reported changes in worldview, attitudes, or commitment to social change was based on their service-learning experiences.

## **Phase Two Method**

Phase Two involved exploratory narrative analysis of student comments on the open-ended response items of the questionnaire. Our primary research question in this phase explored evidence of "critical" outcomes (or a lack thereof). This phase included the surveys with responses to more than one open-response item (N = 472). Each narrative consisted of all open-ended item responses for each survey submission.

We implemented the consensual qualitative research (CQR) method, which uses a team of coders to first identify salient domains and themes and then develop a narrative coding system based on consensus (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Our coding team consisted of three coders and one auditor; the three coders met in-person to identify themes and develop a coding system, and the auditor reviewed these themes and system.

### Phase Two Results

The coding team first identified two primary domains: community and non-community. “Community” responses included mention of a specific community partner or group or indicated collaboration or reciprocity with another party. Community-coded narratives included responses such as “meeting the clients, helping them and reading poetry out loud *with* the class.” “Non-community” narratives did not include mention of collaboration or the community or used vague and superficial language such as “helping others” or “giving back.” For example, a narrative that consisted of “learning new information” was coded as non-community.

70% of surveys (n = 333) were coded as community, with the remaining 30% (n = 145) coded as non-community. An independent samples t-test revealed a significant mean difference in the number of hours completed between the community-coded (M = 31.22, SD = 51.30) and non-community-coded narratives (M = 22.90, SD = 23.52),  $t(460.74) = 2.4, p < .05$ .

<u>Domain</u>	<u>Responses coded to domain</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Example phrases</u>
Community	333	70%	<i>learning from them and hearing their stories</i> <i>being a part of the community</i>
Non-community	145	30%	<i>learning new information</i> <i>helping others</i>

Within these two domains, the coding team then identified salient themes to explore critical learning through collaboration and development of reciprocal relationships. Two major themes within the community domain emerged: One-way relationships and two-way relationships.

“One-way” narratives were defined as responses that included descriptions of unidirectional relationships, where examples or language moved *either* from student to partner or from partner to student, but not both. Such narratives included language like “learned from the students,” or “helped the clients.” but not both in the same response. 165 narratives, or 50% of the community subsample, were coded as one-way.

“Two-way” narratives included language implying or describing bidirectional relationships with collaboration or reciprocity. These responses either included multiple unidirectional phrases that together implied a bidirectional relationship (e.g., “teaching the students and learning about their cultures”), or single phrases that evoked



collaboration and/or reciprocity (e.g., “connecting with the ESL students”). 160 narratives, or 48% of the community subsample, were coded as two-way.

Eight narratives in the community subsample, or 2%, were coded as “other.” These narratives either mentioned relationships only as a description of roles and duties or described community-building that involved the environment or animals rather than people. Interestingly, not all narratives describing environmental work were coded within the “other” theme, as some described reciprocal and collaborative relationships with peers or community members in addition to environmental service.

<u>Relational Themes</u>	<u>Responses coded to theme</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Examples</u>
One-way	165	50	<i>learned from the students helping the homeless</i>
Two-way	160	48	<i>See that your positive actions have an impact on the environment. make new friends, be more connected to {university}s communities being able to truly listen to the people I was working with and them being able to tell me their stories</i>
Other	8	2	<i>Very interesting experience. Loved all the people at [the site].</i>

We next investigated group differences and characteristics between the one-way and two-way relational themes. A MANOVA revealed no significant differences between one-way and two-way themes in terms of learning outcomes and personal development, though perceived likelihood to participate in future service activities trended towards significance,  $F(1, 5) = 3.61, p = .061$ . An independent samples t-test revealed no significant differences in mean number of hours completed between one-way-coded ( $M = 27.52, SD = 57.90$ ) and two-way-coded ( $M = 35.98, SD = 44.42$ ) narratives. Similarly, a chi-square test revealed no significant association between relational theme and primary service location. However, a chi-square test revealed a significant association between relational theme and professor,  $\chi^2(12, N = 152) = 26.91, p = .008$ .

Within professors who prioritize and work towards critical service-learning, student narratives revealed student exploration of social injustice and demonstrated preliminary understandings of privilege and inequality. For example, one student reported “awareness of societal oppression” as a way in which they had personally grown, while another student of the same professor described the most rewarding aspect of their service-learning as “Help[ing] the community, learning different ways to help the people through empowering them and using our privledge [sic] to help them do

this.” On the other hand, student narratives within a professor less associated with critical outcomes focused on their own growth in areas such as cooking, and as one student described, “I learned effective ways to cope with a group of children.” These narratives focused on interpersonal and professional skills alone, while narratives within “critical” professors contained an additional, deeper layer of social awareness.

### **Phase Two Discussion**

Our findings aligned with the literature on critical outcomes of service-learning experiences. Three-quarters of student narratives referred to a community partner or party they served with, and of those narratives, only half described two-way relationships. This corroborates a prior study’s findings that approximately 50% of students in a service-learning course demonstrated transformative learning (Hullender et al., 2015).

Mitchell (2008) describes three critical outcomes resulting from service-learning: A social change orientation; working to redistribute power; and development of authentic relationships. While remarkably few student narratives described the first two components, narrative analysis revealed evidence that students were developing reciprocal and collaborative relationships with community members, particularly within community partner organizations. Two-way responses provided evidence of development of authentic relationships, suggesting that students demonstrating this relational theme experienced critical outcomes. One-way responses did not provide sufficient evidence of such relationships, and therefore did not suggest any critical outcomes.

Further investigation revealed that despite this difference in critical outcome, the relational themes did not differ in terms of traditional outcomes. This suggests that traditional service-learning outcomes may remain stable across students, regardless of whether they experience critical outcomes in addition to traditional gains. Our findings suggest that critical outcomes occur above and beyond the gains associated with traditional service-learning.

While these relational themes (and inferred critical outcomes) were not associated with the number of hours completed or the primary service location, they significantly related to the course professor. Importantly, this suggests that faculty serve instrumentally in determining quality of service-learning and implicates faculty as a key leverage point with regards to facilitating critical outcomes. Our findings suggest that professor- or course-level variables may more closely relate to critical outcomes than amount of contact or other site-level variables such as service type or quality.

The literature offers possible reasons for these findings, demonstrating that obstacles at the faculty level may prevent critical outcomes and transformative learning. Faculty may be cautious to implement service-learning with goals of critical outcomes, fearing that this pedagogy may be perceived as “too political” and impact future promotion or tenure (Cooper, 2014). Faculty may also *believe* they are implementing service-learning as a critical pedagogy but remain entrenched in a traditional service-learning model (O’Meara & Niehaus, 2009). If faculty do not have sufficient training, nor thorough understanding of service-learning pedagogy, or full institutional support, students may fail to experience the benefits of critical service-learning.

To further examine these possible explanations, we compared several professors whose students’ responses were more often coded as one-way benefit from student

responses coded as two-way benefit. Two professors with the greatest proportion of two-way students were professors of psychology with longstanding commitments to and expertise in service-learning. Both of these professors incorporate structured critical reflection into their courses in multiple formats, including class discussion, journal entries, and reflective essays. Both professors also have longstanding relationships with their students' primary service sites. Conversely, two professors with the greatest proportion of one-way students are professors in the business and government departments, respectively. While these professors have longstanding commitments to service-learning, neither typically maintains a direct relationship with their students' service sites, and the reflection components as delineated in syllabi consist of broad open-ended journal assignments. From this brief review of these four professors, a pattern emerged in which professors with experience in critical pedagogies and deeper investment in the service component were more likely to be associated with critical outcomes than professors with less experience or investment in service-learning. Future research on critical outcomes should more closely examine the effects of professor discipline, pedagogical philosophy, and relationship to service-learning on critical outcomes.

## **General Discussion**

Overall, our results support the service-learning literature indicating that number of hours completed, course professor, and primary service site significantly impact student outcomes. However, narrative analysis of student perceived outcomes suggests that only a small proportion of students experienced world view perspective changes and engagement in social change consistent with critical models of service-learning. This finding also aligns with the current research literature, suggesting that transformative learning is not a given in service-learning contexts. Instead, certain conditions must be met for service-learning to result in critical learning. Research points to structured critical reflection as a key component to facilitate transformative learning (Guthrie & McCracken, 2014). Faculty are also noted throughout the literature—and in our findings—as significantly influencing student learning (O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009; Cooper, 2014).

Limitations of this study relate primarily to the nature of the data, which was originally collected for institutional program review. Demographic information is not available, limiting the ability to control for or investigate variables such as student age, race, ethnicity, and gender. In addition, this dataset does not include demographic variables about professors that may contribute to student learning outcomes, such as the professor's race, age, or gender. The survey explores students' perceived outcomes, and does not include validated measures of academic success, openness to diversity, or attitudes towards community engagement. Our investigation is also limited to students and their perceptions of service-learning. The literature indicates that all stakeholders in service-learning from community partners to university administrators should be considered in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of a service-learning program (Butin, 2010). More research is needed exploring how demographic information from students, faculty and community partners may interact to influence critical service-learning outcomes.

Our findings have important implications for the development and maintenance of service-learning programs. The data reveal students benefit from service-learning and enjoy it – the phrases “I loved it!” and “It was a great experience” permeated throughout responses. Some students demonstrated critical outcomes, providing support for service-learning as an effective means by which universities can inspire community engagement strongly suggesting that institutions should continue to support service-learning as a valuable pedagogy.

At the same time, our findings suggest that barriers exist that must be addressed in order for service-learning to meet its full potential for all students. Universities should evaluate what training and resources are available to faculty who wish to implement service-learning and minimize the possibility of negative repercussions. Faculty should build curricula and syllabi that implement key considerations highlighted in the literature, such as fostering strong relationships with community partners and utilizing effective, ongoing critical reflection (Maddrell, 2014; Harkins, 2013). Institutions should continue to evaluate student progress and outcomes resulting from service-learning, and work to identify variables that facilitate or inhibit success.

Several directions should be pursued given these findings and limitations. First, further quantitative analysis may explore statistical models that predict relations between student or course variables and student outcomes. Additionally, faculty and community partner surveys from this institution may be evaluated in tandem with student data, to form a more complete picture of how service-learning functions at this university. Analysis of outcomes by discipline or department may elucidate other key variables or factors that affect the quality of service-learning and its role in transformative learning. Finally, further investigation of factors related to critical outcomes will not only reveal mechanisms for transformative learning, but also provide key considerations for developing effective service-learning courses and programs.

Service-learning as a pedagogy holds great potential for students and communities, but in practice may be falling short of its promise towards preparing students towards active citizenship. Key variables such as the number of hours completed, course professor, and primary service site affect the quality of service-learning and need to be explored in more depth to understand how to inspire transformative civic learning.

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