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THE JOURNAL OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IS AN ONLINE, INTERNATIONAL, PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH REGARDING EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONAL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS. OUR PRIMARY EMPHASIS IS TO PROVIDE AN OUTLET FOR SHARING THE METHODOLOGIES AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES THAT LEAD TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED OUTCOMES. THE JOURNAL OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IS A SUBSCRIPTION-FREE JOURNAL WITH A REVIEW BOARD MADE UP OF VARIOUS ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES OF THE MEMBER INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM AS WELL AS OTHER NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

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Student Volunteers in a College Town: Burden or Lifeblood for the Voluntary Sector?

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Student volunteerism, in general, and service-learning, in particular, serves a number of purposes. For example, service-learning furthers students' education; promotes civic engagement; and benefits the community (Littlepage, Gazley, & Bennett, 2012). In college towns—towns where the university or college is the primary industry—student volunteers can potentially be the lifeblood of the voluntary sector, providing nonprofit and community-based organizations with an evergreen supply of motivated volunteers. These volunteers provide administrative or programmatic support, help with fundraising or special events, and transfer cutting edge knowledge from their professors. Or so the theory goes.

There is an assumption that nonprofit will supply students with opportunities and students will supply nonprofits with labor; however, Littlepage, Gazley, & Bennett (2012) argue the “service-learning research rarely examines whether either of these assumptions is true” (p. 308). It is possible that instead of being a lifeblood to the local voluntary sector, student volunteers can be a burden. This might occur when organizations do not have the volunteer administration capacity to support volunteers, when students are unprepared for volunteer assignments, or when the availability of students does not match the organization's need. Any of these factors might be intensified in the context of a college town.

Abstract

Student volunteers provide a valuable source of unpaid labor to nonprofit organizations, particularly organizations in college towns where students make up a significant portion of the population. Indeed, students may be the lifeblood for these organizations. However, students may also be a burden if organizations do not have the volunteer administration capacity to support volunteers, if students are unprepared for volunteer assignments, or if the availability of students does not match the organization's need. The purpose of this exploratory case study is to identify whether students were a burden to or the lifeblood of the voluntary sector in a college town. We surveyed 55 nonprofit leaders to identify their volunteer management capacity, experience of student volunteers (emphasizing the match between supply and demand), and their ideas for improvement. We found student volunteers comprise a significant percentage of their overall volunteer population and brought valuable skills and enthusiasm. However, we also found a mismatch between the demand for student volunteers and the supply of student volunteers, particularly as it relates to availability. We identified a number of recommendations to improve the overall service-learning experience. These findings are of interest to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions in college towns.

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to identify if students were a burden to or the lifeblood of the voluntary sector in a college town. We focused our research on Gainesville, Florida which, as we describe in the methodology, is a small town with a large university and community college student population. We surveyed nonprofit organizations and found that student volunteers comprise a significant percentage of their overall volunteer population and brought valuable skills and enthusiasm. However, we also found a mismatch between the demand for student volunteers and the supply of student volunteers, particularly as it relates to availability. We identified a number of recommendations to improve the overall experience of student volunteers. These findings are of interest to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions in college towns.

Background

In this section we review literature at the intersection of student volunteerism (including service-learning) and nonprofit volunteer management. Specifically, we look at the demand side (i.e., student volunteers) as it relates to the supply side (i.e., the nonprofit organizations). The research described in this section indicates there is high potential for a mismatch between the supply of student volunteers and the demand for student volunteers in a college town.

The Demand Side: Student Volunteers

As previously mentioned, there are numerous benefits of volunteering for students, including increased learning, increase civic engagement, and developing professional networks and skills (Littlepage, Gazley, & Bennett, 2012; Skulan, 2018). These benefits have been the subject of much research (see, for example, Kenworthy-U'Ren, 2008) which has indicated that service-learning can lead to a change in students attitudes about social issues (Caswell, 2018), changes in attitude about specific populations (Whitekiller & Bang, 2018), and lead to an increase in capacity across multiple professional and personal domains (Carlisle, Gourd, Rajkhan, & Nitta, 2017). Additionally, at least some nonprofit leaders see service-learning as an opportunity for students to “cross cultural boundaries and better understand socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic disparities in American society” (Worrall, 2007, p.10).

There are also challenges posed by service-learning. Mandated student volunteering can initially be perceived negatively (Henney, Hackett, & Porreca, 2017) and may potentially decrease their intrinsic motivations to volunteer (Beehr, LeGro, Porter, Bowling, & Swader, 2010). Additionally, college students may have time and resource constraints that may prevent them from volunteering or taking service-learning courses even if they wanted to (Gage & Thapa, 2012). These constraints may mean that, overall, the students who volunteer are the students who have more time and money—i.e., students often from middle or upper class households. Volunteering can yield valuable professional benefits. If primarily well-off students have more freedom to

volunteer, then volunteering in college may extend that privilege and actually contribute to continued economic inequity.

The Supply Side: Nonprofit and Community-based Organizations

From the supply side, there are numerous potential benefits of student volunteers to nonprofit or community-based organizations, such as free labor, the opportunity to train and vet potential new staff, affiliation with and access to educational institutions, publicity, and overall increased organizational capacity (Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001). The potential downsides can include an overall lower quality of work than professional staff, time and resource demands related to volunteer administration, security and public relations risks, and reliability and scheduling problems (Skulan, 2018).

An organization's ability to capitalize on the opportunities and to mitigate the potential challenges of student volunteers hinges on their volunteer administration capacity. Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett (2012) found that the same volunteer management best practices that are employed with traditional volunteers are also important to college student volunteering. Thus, the organization's overall volunteer management capacity is an indicator of their readiness to provide high-quality service-learning opportunities for students.

Volunteer management practices are similar to human resource practices (Pynes, 2013; Hagar and Brudney, 2004). For each volunteer position there should be a comprehensive job or position plan that should include an analysis of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed and a position description. Additionally, the organization should engage in strategic recruitment, screening, selection, including background checks as appropriate for the position. Once invited to volunteer, the volunteer should receive an orientation, regular training, and performance evaluations. Additionally, the organization should be strategic in how they recognize and quantify the contributions of volunteers. Beyond this, the organization must develop policies related to volunteer administration and consider insurance for volunteers.

Volunteer management best practices are, unfortunately, not widespread (Hagar and Brudney, 2004) in part due to lack of resources. While these functions can be carried out by a volunteer in a small organization, they really require the dedication of a paid staff member. And at least two thirds of the voluntary sector does not have more than \$50,000 in revenue (Jones, et.al, 2018; McKeever, 2015). Organizations in a small college town may be even less likely to have the resources necessary for effective volunteer administration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the match (or potential mismatch) between the supply and demand for student volunteers in a college town. Specifically, we ask if

student volunteers in a college town are more of a burden or a lifeblood for the voluntary sector. The specific research questions are as follows:

- What is the volunteer management capacity of nonprofit organizations in a small college town?
- How do nonprofit organizations experience college and university student volunteers?
- How can colleges and universities support nonprofit organizations' engagement of student volunteers?

Research Design and Methodology

To address the research questions, we conducted a case study of one college town, Gainesville, Florida. Specifically, we surveyed nonprofit leaders to identify their volunteer management capacity, experience of student volunteers (emphasizing the match between supply and demand), and their ideas for improvement. Gainesville, Florida is an excellent place to investigate these research questions because it is a small town (2017 population 131,591; U.S. Census, n.d.) with approximately 1,266 nonprofit organizations, only less than 400 of which have revenue greater than \$50,000 (Jones, Pracht, Simonne, Renfrow, & Hunter, 2018). Most organizations have insufficient revenue to hire a volunteer administrator. Gainesville is also home to both the state's flagship university, the University of Florida (UF), and to Santa Fe College (SFC), one of the best community colleges in the nation. Enrollment at UF is greater than 52,000 (in-person, University of Florida, n.d.) and enrollment at Santa Fe College is greater than 16,000 (Santa Fe College Office of Institutional Research; Santa Fe College, n.d.). These facts suggest students may be competing for limited volunteer opportunities at a limited number of nonprofit organizations.

The Sample

An online survey was emailed to 197 agency leaders from Gainesville, Florida and surrounding areas. The sample was developed by combining internal distribution lists from volunteering hubs around campus, including the David & Wanda Brown Center for Leadership and Service (BCLS), the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (which offers a nonprofit practicum/internship), and other similar programs that actively engage students in service-learning. Sixty-five people responded to the survey and fifty-five completed the survey (response rate of 28%). To accommodate the breadth of services opportunities, the distribution list included both nonprofit and government agencies with which students currently volunteer.

Eighty-seven percent of the sample were nonprofit agencies and 13 percent were government agencies that engaged student volunteers. The participants represented a variety of different leadership positions, including executive director/chief executive officer (27%), mid-level manager (not volunteer related; 25%), other volunteer administrator (22%), senior leader (24%), and founders (2%).

The sample included both large and small organizations but the majority would be classified as small. We were able to identify the annual budgets for 40 of the 55 nonprofit participants. These annual budgets ranged from a low of \$12,000 to a high of more than \$40 million. Removing the outlier (>\$40 million), the average annual budget was \$620,797. Twenty-nine of the participants have budgets less than \$500,000, 13 of which have budgets less than \$100,000. The number of employees ranged from 0 to 4,500, with an average of 31 employees (after removing the outliers of 3,000 and 4,500). Most of the sample had fewer than 10 employees. The number of volunteers ranged from 4 to 21,000 with an average of 374 (after removing the outlier of 21,000).

Data Collection and Analysis

We developed a survey that addressed three core areas: volunteer administration capacity, experience with student volunteers, and ideas for improvement. The survey was administered in February and March, 2018. The survey included thirty questions (5 open-ended; 25 close-ended). We drew from multiple sources to develop the survey questions. Specifically, we used a recent report on the nonprofit sector in North Central Florida (Jones, et al., 2016) to develop the scales for number of employees and volunteers; we adapted questions from Carter-Kahl's (2013) work on types of volunteers and challenges related to volunteer management; and we adapted findings about volunteer management activities from a report by Hagar and Brudney (2014).

Close-ended questions were analyzed descriptively. Open-ended questions were coded thematically using a process known as inductive coding (Patton, 2002). Specifically, we reviewed the data for each open-ended questions and inductively identified themes and noted outliers. The themes are presented in quote matrixes and the outliers are discussed in the accompanying text.

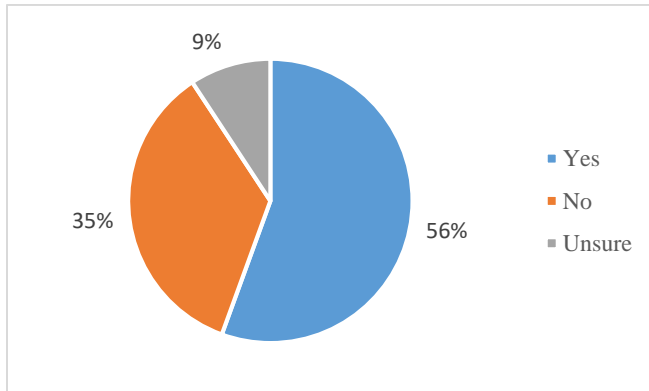
Findings

Part I: Volunteer Administration Capacity

Volunteer Administrator

Fifty-six percent of the sample had a paid volunteer administrator, 35 percent did not, and 9 percent were unsure (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Paid Volunteer Administrator



Time dedicated to volunteer administration. Of those that had a volunteer administrator, 67 percent had a full-time employee, 12 percent had a part-time employee, and 21 percent had a volunteer. The full and part-time employees often split their time between multiple responsibilities. Of those that had a paid employee designated, exactly 50% had less than one half of one full time equivalent (FTE) and 50% had more than a half-time person. Only three (8%) had an employee 100 percent dedicated to volunteer administration. In short, only a few organizations had a paid, full-time volunteer coordinator.

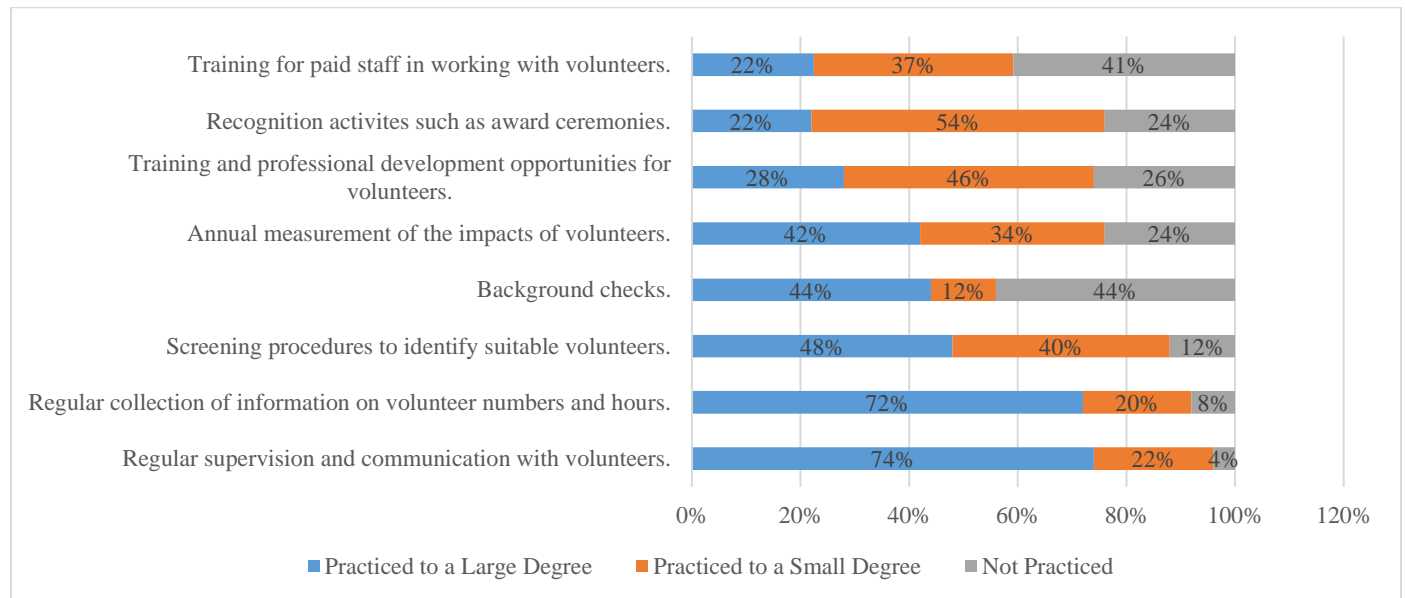
Tenure and education. Most of the volunteer administrators in the sample had generally been on the job between one and five years (50%). Thirty-four percent had less than one year on the job. Just less than half of the sample (47%) had at least a Bachelor's level of education. Most of their educational foci was not specific to nonprofit or volunteer administration but, rather, included a variety of programs such as political science, sociology, law, social science, public relations, or other related field. Those without a Bachelor's level of education reported having been trained by previous staff, taken classes at conferences, and/or engaged in field experience.

Volunteer Management Practices

The sample engaged in a variety of volunteer management best practices. Seventy-four percent indicated they regularly supervised and communicated with volunteers. Seventy-two percent indicated they regularly collected information on the number of volunteers and of hours volunteered. Alarming, less than half engaged to large degree in screening procedures or background checks, two steps critical to ensure proper

placement and to decrease risk, particularly when working with vulnerable populations. Approximately a quarter of the sample trained staff to work with volunteers, engaged in regular recognition activities, or provided professional development opportunities to a large degree. See Figure 2.

Figure 2 Volunteer Management Practices



About half or more of the sample had in place the core volunteer management documents or policies necessary for an effective organization (Table 1). Specifically, 73 percent conducted volunteer orientations, 71 percent had written policies and procedures pertaining to volunteers, 67 percent had volunteer job positions, 56 percent had liability insurance for volunteers, and 55 percent had a volunteer handbook or manual.

Table 1 Volunteer Management Documents and Policies

Volunteer Orientation	73%
Written Policies and Procedures	71%
Volunteer Job Positions	67%
Liability Coverage or Insurance for Volunteers	56%
Volunteer Handbook or Manual	55%

Types of Volunteers Accepted

Participants were asked to rank their demand for volunteers based on length of time. There was strong consensus that order of demand was as follows: long-term, short-term, and one-time.

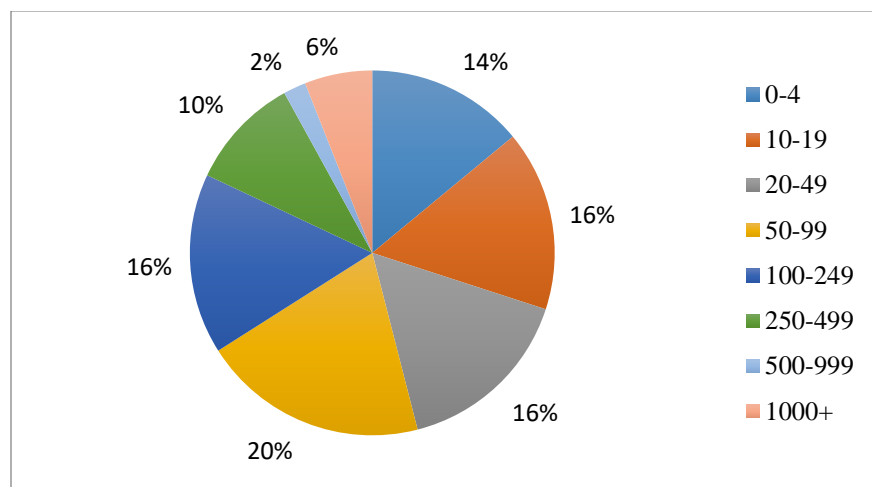
Eighty-four percent of the participants indicated their organization accepted groups of volunteers. Nine participants provided additional written comments which suggested their ability to accept groups varied based on time of year and available projects. The size of groups accepted ranged from 8 to 200.

Part II: Nonprofit Experience of Student Volunteers

Current Use of Students

As described in the sampling (see methodology), participants ranged in the number of volunteers they engaged. They also ranged in the number of college and university student volunteers they engaged on an annual basis (see Figure 3). At the low end of the spectrum, the majority of participants engaged 100 or fewer student volunteers in 2017. At the high end of the spectrum, a few organizations engaged more than 500 volunteers. See Figure 3.

Figure 3 Number of Student Volunteers in 2017



Student volunteers as percent of total volunteer population. The student volunteer population comprised a majority of the participants' overall volunteer population. On average, 54% of their volunteer population were students. The range was 2-98%, with the median being 65% and the mode being 80%.

Volunteer site locations. Participants reported that students volunteered in sites around the county, including outlying areas; however, the majority of sites were within the city of Gainesville and, specifically, within walking distance of the major university. A smaller percentage of students volunteered in various regions round the county (see Table 2).

Table 2 Volunteer Locations

Site Location Where Volunteering Occurs	Percentage of Organizations
City of Gainesville- Downtown*	45%
City of Gainesville- Midtown*	42%
City of Gainesville- Southwest	36%
City of Gainesville- Southeast	35%
City of Gainesville- Northeast	31%
City of Gainesville- Northwest**	29%
Alachua County- Alachua	18%
Alachua County- Newberry	13%
Alachua County- Hawthorn	9%
Alachua County- Archer	9%
Alachua County- Waldo	7%
Alachua County- Micanopy	7%
Alachua County- High Springs	5%
Alachua County- La Crosse	2%

*Near the major university

**Near the primary community college

Working directly with faculty. The majority of responded have worked directly with supervising faculty members. Specifically, 68 percent had worked with faculty, 30 percent had not, and two percent were unsure.

Benefits of student volunteers. Participants were asked to describe the benefits of student volunteers. Primarily, participants indicated students provided programmatic support (38% of respondents) and helped with programmatic expansion (7%). Students also brought enthusiasm and passion (24% of respondents) and creativity (5%). Another benefit of student volunteers was their ability to market the organization (13%), including allowing the organization to have a presence on the university campus. Some participants (11%) mentioned talent, but emphasized talent related to technology rather than talent related to course-work. See Table 3.

Table 3 Benefits of Student Volunteers

Theme	Sample Response
Programmatic Support (38%) and Expansion (7%)	<p><i>"Our volunteers are everything. They are the front line of our suicide and crisis intervention work."</i></p> <p><i>"Several projects per year are completed by student groups, also informal "office" work days have regularly assisted us in cleaning out and managing our warehouse."</i></p>
Enthusiasm and Passion (24%) and Creativity (5%)	<p><i>"Enthusiasm! Many student volunteers are pre-vet and really help to create an energetic, fast-paced environment that encourages a lot of in-the-moment learning!"</i></p> <p><i>"They bring creativity/design, youth perspective, passion, curiosity, & eagerness to help. All good things!"</i></p>
Marketing and Exposure (13%)	<p><i>"They are able to give our organization a presence on campus."</i></p> <p><i>"Many students have helped with outreach/increase in areas of volunteer recruiting and client recruiting, data projects, help us meet our yearly goals!"</i></p>
Expertise and Talent Related to Technology (11%)	<p><i>"Knowledge of current trends and issues among young people, well-informed about technology and social media, passionate about helping."</i></p> <p><i>"They are flexible in their hours, well versed on technology, passionate about our mission."</i></p>

Supply of vs. Demand for Student Volunteers

Participants were asked to rate their demand for students on a one to five scale, with one being "disagree strongly" and five being "agree strongly." There was more demand for individual student volunteers (average rating of 4.3) than group volunteers (3.4). There was less consensus in responding to the statement "we have the right amount of student groups." See Table 4.

Table 4 Participant Organizations' Demand for Student Volunteers

Statement	Average
We would like more student volunteers	4.3
We would like more groups of student volunteers.	3.4
We have the right amount of student groups volunteering with our organization.	3.3

When asked as an open-ended question what would need to change in order for the supply of students to adequately meet their demand, participants indicated the core

issues were availability, commitment, and professionalism. One person indicated it would be helpful to have a point of contact at the university or college. Three sample quotes are included below. These quotes address the key concerns articulated by many of the respondents.

“The transient volunteer circle is tiring but unavoidable in a college town. More involvement before they are seniors and about to move away would be nice (us recruiting more freshman/sophomore).”

“We would really like to see more long-term commitment from our student volunteers. We see many volunteers that need 20 hours of volunteer work for a class and never come back once the hours are completed. I personally think that should be eliminated from a course requirement as it only forces the student to be involved and not really want to volunteer on their own. We get a good amount of group volunteers and while we truly appreciate their help, we know that most of them will never come back.”

“Students are frequently unavailable during holidays, and may be juggling many other obligations/commitments that make it difficult for them to volunteer consistently.”

Student-Related Challenges

Participants were asked to identify the top three student-related challenges out of a list of fourteen potential options. There was strong consensus on the following four challenges (listed in order of participants’ perceived order of importance):

1. Students are unavailable at the times required.
2. Students are unavailable for the length of commitment required.
3. Students are unwilling to commit to the length of time required.
4. Students do not have transportation to the volunteer location.

Student Preparedness and Availability

Participants were asked to rate student preparedness and availability on a one to five scale, with one being “disagree strongly” and five being “agree strongly.” There was great variability of responses to the statements on student availability, with the sample’s average scores being 3.5 for “available for a length of commitment that suits our needs” and 3.4 for “available during the times of the years when we need them most.” The variability in responses suggests that the fit between supply of and demand for volunteer hours varies by organization—for some organizations the fit works well and for others there is a mis-match. There was less variability for the statements on preparedness, with the sample’s average score being 4.0 or above for both of those measures. See Table 5.

Table 5 Student Preparedness and Availability

Statement	Average
Students have the skills needed to be effective volunteers.	4.3
Students have the professionalism and "soft skills" needed to be effective volunteers.	4.0
Students are available for a length of commitment that suits our needs	3.5
Students are available during the times of the years we need them most.	3.4

Organization-related Challenges

Participants were asked to identify the top three organization-related challenges out of a list of fifteen potential options. There was consensus across the following challenges (listed in order of participants' perceived importance):

1. There are limited funds to support volunteer engagement.
2. Our organization does not have a staff member dedicated to engaging volunteers.
3. We are unsure where to find the volunteers we need.
4. We don't have time to post volunteer opportunities.

Part III: Recommendations for Improvement

Student preparedness. Participants indicated students could better prepare themselves for a meaningful volunteer experience by researching the agency before volunteering, following through on their commitments, improving their soft skills, and taking more initiative. One respondent suggested students organize a carpool/ride share program. See Table 6.

Table 6 Potential Student Improvements

Theme	Sample Response
Researching the Agency	<i>“Read through training and commitment requirements.”</i> <i>“Find out more about the site before they come.”</i>
Following Through on Commitments	<i>“They can plan to stick with a schedule and treat volunteerism as a job and resume building for the future.”</i> <i>“Be realistic about how much time and energy they actually have to offer to volunteering.”</i>
Improving Soft Skills	<i>“Ask questions and learn business etiquette.”</i> <i>“Focus on professionalism and commitment to the cause.”</i>
Taking Initiative	<i>“Be more proactive and ask for things to do when they have completed tasks.”</i> <i>“Come with ideas! We are a community space, we are here for them!”</i>

Organizational improvements. Participants indicated that their organization could better engage student volunteers by expanding their recruitment activities, creating more opportunities, improving their onboarding/training processes, adding volunteer management staff, and better recognizing their volunteers. See Table 7.

Table 7 Potential Organizational Improvements

Theme	Sample Response
Recruitment	<p><i>“Increase marketing for volunteers on-line, etc.”</i></p> <p><i>“Partner with student involvement, reach out to clubs, have incentive</i></p>
More Opportunities	<p><i>“Prepare daily activities when client numbers are not time-intensive.”</i></p> <p><i>“Set up department specific opportunities in more areas across the organization.”</i></p>
Onboarding/ Training	<p><i>“We can create mandatory group training so that volunteers can work together and all have the same basic training experiences, versus having to teach and train volunteers individually. It would also be beneficial to cross-train volunteers for every volunteer position we have so that we can utilize all volunteers to cover shifts that become available or need coverage.”</i></p>
Adding Staff	<p><i>“Have a staff volunteer coordinator to allow more organization of projects and volunteers.”</i></p>
Volunteer Recognition	<p><i>“Have more get togethers to celebrate the volunteers.”</i></p>

College and university support. Participants were asked how the local colleges and universities could support their organization’s engagement of volunteers in an open-ended question. The overwhelming theme of the responses was that participants wanted support recruiting students. In particular, they wanted to see more recruitment events on campus and in classrooms, promotion of volunteer opportunities, and updated contact information for student clubs and groups. The second most prominent theme was that participants wanted colleges and universities to promote different service-learning formats, including internships, smaller groups, more targeted courses, and encouraging volunteerism beyond service-learning. See Table 8.

Table 8 Potential Organizational Improvements

Theme	Sample Response
Recruitment	<p><i>“Allow us to have more visibility on campus, in programs, at special events.”</i></p> <p><i>“More opportunities to engage with students on campus, such as volunteer fairs.”</i></p> <p><i>“By hosting volunteer fairs as well as making it course requirements to volunteer with community organizations- that way students are forced to volunteer.”</i></p>
Change in Format	<p><i>“Find ways to volunteer in smaller groups, with more flexibility in timing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Require service learning through internships.”</i></p> <p><i>“Less one-time groups offered; instead more targeted course/major partnering to meet the needs of local NGOs working hard in the community. Support and instill high expectations and standards.”</i></p> <p><i>“Encourage volunteers to get invested in their community beyond just a class requirement.”</i></p>

In a close-ended question, participants were asked about what types of support they would use if it were made available. The responses again centered on recruitment, with participants wanting to participate in networking fairs, student volunteer websites, or meet and greet sessions with faculty. However, participants were also open to trainings on volunteer management and, to a lesser degree, trainings on student volunteers and how to develop service-learning opportunities. See Table 9.

Table 9 Desired College and University Support

Opportunities to present to University of Florida or Santa Fe College campus departments or student organizations	72%
Student volunteer website with information and tips	63%
“Meet & Greet” sessions with faculty who offer service-learning opportunities	63%
Training on volunteer management best practices	58%
Networking fairs to pair students with volunteer opportunities	58%
Opportunities to “table” at the University of Florida or Santa Fe College	56%
Yearly meetings to network with other local nonprofit leaders	53%
Training on how to develop service-learning opportunities	37%
Training on types of student volunteers	35%

Discussion and Recommendations

We analyzed survey data from 55 nonprofit leaders in Gainesville, Florida to identify their volunteer management capacity and their experience utilizing college and university student volunteers. We found that slightly more than half of the participants had a paid volunteer administrator and very few had a paid full time volunteer coordinator. Some but not all organizations regularly engaged in volunteer management practices such as training for staff, training for volunteers, volunteer recognition, background checks, and screening processes. Only about half of the sample had a volunteer manual or liability coverage for volunteers. On average, college and university students were 54 percent of their volunteer population. While these volunteers provided numerous benefits, participants identified student availability and transportation as key challenges. Participants also identified organizational related barriers to student engagement, such as the lack of funds, no dedicated staff member, and difficulties related to recruitment. Most of the participant-identified recommendations centered on recruitment and on encouraging students to engage in a long-term, ongoing manner.

Volunteer Management

As previous scholars have found, an organization's overall volunteer management capacity is an indication of its capacity to engage student volunteers (Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett, 2012). However, the overall volunteer management capacity of nonprofit organizations is generally quite low, as many organizations have no paid volunteer management staff and many volunteer management best practices are not wide spread (Hagar and Brudney, 2004). For some domains, such as supervision and communication with volunteers and the regular collection of volunteer hours, the Gainesville sample scored slightly higher than Hagar and Brudney's (2004) national sample. Additionally, more than 70 percent of the sample than a volunteer orientation process and written policies and procedures. However, on key safety measures such as volunteer screening, this sample scored approximately the same. Only 48 percent regularly screened volunteers, only 44 percent conducted regular background checks, and 22 percent regularly provided training for staff working with volunteers. Only 56 percent had liability coverage for volunteers and 55 percent had a volunteer management or handbook. These findings suggest that the nonprofit organizations that engage student volunteers in this college down are doing what we call "surface level" volunteer management—volunteer management which makes it appear the program is well constructed—without fully developing volunteer programs.

Supply and Demand

As identified in the literature review, there are many potential benefits to service-learning. However, the service-learning literature rarely examines whether its assumptions about these benefits are true (Littelpage, Gazely, & Bennett, 2012). One of the assumptions made in the literature is that the students provide a supply of labor

needed by the nonprofit organizations. However, there is great potential for mismatch between supply and demand. This study found that in one college town, there is indeed a mismatch. Specifically, nonprofits in the sample indicated they would like more individual student volunteers who are willing to commit for an extended period of time. They described the constant turnover as “tiring” and expressed frustration at students who came for a short number of hours during the semester and then never returned. While many organizations accepted group volunteering, their clear preference was for individuals. Group or short-term individual assignments may fit the students’ needs, but it did not fit the nonprofit organization’s needs.

Recommendations

There are a number of ways to improve the meaningful engagement of student volunteers in nonprofit organizations. From the university or college side, faculty need to be cautious when developing service-learning assignments. In particular, consider whether assigning students to volunteer for a small number of hours is actually benefiting the community. Depending on the organization, the costs may outweigh the benefits. Faculty can talk with students about the costs associated with their volunteering, and encourage them to realize that when they volunteer, they are not only giving of their time, they are also consuming the resources of the organization. Thus, students should arrive prepared, having done their homework on the agency, and ready to get to work. This pre-work is similar to the “layered learning” approach (Cooke, et al., 2017) that facilitates student skill-building in service-learning. Additionally, colleges and universities can help nonprofit organizations to recruit student volunteers and, in particular, find ways to highlight and celebrate students who volunteer with one organization over the course of a number of years or semesters (as opposed to students who provide small numbers of hours to multiple organizations).

From the nonprofit side, organizations can prioritize volunteer management by developing the aforementioned best practices. This includes background checks, liability insurance, written job descriptions, and policies and procedures. Additionally, nonprofit organizations can be strategic in how they describe their volunteer opportunities. For example, nonprofits could create a program whereby students who stay with the organization for a number of semester area eligible for more exciting or advanced opportunities, eligible to engage in professional development trainings with staff, or are giving a “promotion” (e.g., from Volunteer Receptionist to Volunteer Administrative Coordinator). These sorts of benefits are a low-cost way to encourage students to commit long-term.

Limitations

This case study described the perceptions of 55 nonprofit leaders in one college town—Gainesville, Florida. The findings may or may not be generalizable to other college towns. Additionally, the sample included a small number of government agencies that

frequently engaged local student volunteers. These government agencies represent a small group that does engage student volunteers locally and nationally; however, their experiences of student volunteers may be different from nonprofit organizations' experiences. Future research will need to tease out such differences.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, there are logical reasons to believe that student volunteers in a college town could be either a burden or the lifeblood of the local voluntary sector. This case study suggests students can be both. On the one hand, students compromised more than half of the sample's volunteer population and infused the sector with their valuable time, energy, and knowledge. On the other hand, students' availability and time constraints generally did not match the organization's needs. In short, there was a mismatch between supply and demand. Like trying to fit a round peg into a square hole, this mismatch is likely the cause of much tension between nonprofits, students, and the educational institutions. The good news is there are actions all three sets of stakeholders can take to ease the friction and improve the overall experience for both students and nonprofit organizations.

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Transforming Our Teaching, Incorporating Service-learning into Macro Practice Social Work Classes.

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Introduction

At the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Social Work, faculty began a review and redesign of our curriculum in 2015 and developed new course content standards. New educational standards from the social work educational accreditation board were a driving force behind this curriculum redesign. Fundamental to the new standards is a need for students to demonstrate, at minimum, an entry-level competency of the required practice behaviors of a generalist social worker. One method for students to acquire professional competency is through service-learning opportunities that integrate knowledge development, skill acquisition, and community engagement. Thus, we took this opportunity to designate the macro practice courses¹ in both our undergraduate and graduate program as service-learning courses. This allowed us to re-envision and transform how we taught these courses with greater intention in developing student self-efficacy in macro practice.

Journey Toward Service-learning

As social work educators, we are committed to sharing our knowledge, values, ethics, and practical experience in the classroom. Our mission is to provide students with a strong body of knowledge and content that allows them to institute change and difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Our teaching philosophies are fundamentally guided by the works of Benjamin Bloom and Malcolm Knowles. Specifically, we develop course assignments utilizing Bloom's (1956) cognitive domain as a guide to support critical thinking among students. The cognitive domain involves cultivating knowledge as well the development of

¹ While the particular foci of a class may change, macro-level practice courses emphasize working with communities and organizations to advocate and institute social justice-oriented change.

Abstract

This manuscript discusses how the use of service-learning in social work macro practice courses provided a foundation for the transformation of ourselves as instructors. By transforming macro practice courses with service-learning components, our central goal was to help students improve their self-efficacy in macro practice skills and, therefore, improve their self-efficacy as a generalist social worker. Our transformation as instructors involved two key aspects in our process, the first being co-teachers (across two sections of the same course) and the second being a reorientation of the course structure and plan. Incorporating service-learning projects prior to field placement provided our students an opportunity to apply what they learned in a course to a community setting. The transformational experience has implications for interdisciplinary opportunities utilizing a similar structure.

intellectual or critical thinking skills. Early course assignments are premised in promoting student's ability to recall acquired knowledge, whereas assignments towards the end of the course require students to internalize and evaluate content matter using advanced critical thinking techniques. The theoretical framework underpinning our teaching philosophies as it relates to the overall learning experience is from the work of Malcolm Knowles. Knowles's (1984) andragogy framework affords guidance specific to adult learners and can be employed in both face-to-face and online courses. Thus, we see our role as teachers to be one of facilitation and guidance as we collaborate with the students to develop learning and teaching opportunities in our courses.

As instructors, we acknowledge the heterogeneity of a classroom and strive to develop courses in order to accommodate various abilities and styles of learning acquisition. We tend to use a combination of lectures, supplemental readings and materials, interactive activities, and peer education in each class. As social work educators, we express our belief that all students have the potential to grow and learn; in turn, students begin to develop the belief that all their clients (be they individuals, groups, or organizations) have the potential to grow, learn, and change. In our work with students, we let them know that we believe that each of them will start some place along a spectrum in their critical thinking skills and in their writing skills. Finally, we let them know that it is our job to help them progress along the continuum, and, in the end, their progression will benefit the interests of their professional career and future clients.

Both of us constantly strive to maximize the learning environment through classroom experience, assignments, and student-educator interactions, as well as create an environment where students feel safe to express their views and ask questions. We want our classrooms to be a place where students do not need to have all the answers but simply a willingness to challenge old ways of thinking and develop new skills to address the ever changing needs of their clients and the world around them. One specific objective we have as social work educators relates to our own abilities to change and develop as educators in our field. Thus, we continually strive to be open to hearing and partnering with students in an effort to grow and develop.

Connection to Our Profession

A familiar debate in the field of social work is that the primary foci for practitioners is often argued as one of the following: clinical social work practice at the micro level or community social work practice at the macro level (see for example, Haynes, 1998). By contrast, generalist social work practice is one where practitioners integrate theory, methods, values, and research at all levels of practice; in theory, silos do not exist for generalist practitioners. Similar to primary care physicians with a generalist knowledge of medicine, generalist social work practitioners are prepared to work at all levels of practice. Our students are expected, through their education, to acquire the ability to function effectively as generalist social work practitioners at the undergraduate level. However, upon reflection of our discussions with students, we agreed that unlike micro practice courses, many (but not all) social work students come to their first macro practice class unfamiliar with its purpose or application, and lacking any relevant experience. The result of this lack of knowledge and experience are students who are

oftentimes unsure, or even apathetic, about macro practice. This idea of students' preconceived indifference toward macro practice motivated us to redesign the course by adding a service-learning component that would fully engage them and stretch their emerging professional skills. One of our central goals was to help students improve their self-efficacy in macro practice skills and therefore improve their self-efficacy as a generalist social worker.

Planned Change Process

Generalist social work practice involves applying the Planned Change Process (PCP) for clients, which can be done at all system levels, (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations, and communities). Though different iterations of the process exist, at its base, the process recognizes several steps including: (1) the movement from preparation, to begin work through engagement with the client, (2) assessment of the client's strengths and needs, to development of an agreed upon plan of work, (3) from application and monitoring of interventions, to an evaluation of the work completed and termination of the professional work. For our students, use of the PCP allowed them to better understand how skills and knowledge they perceived as being for use with individuals and families were also applicable with larger systems. Thus, the PCP is just as it sounds, a process that can be applied at any level of practice for any number of problems and populations. While it is not a one-size fits all process, it is one that can be applied across a wide array of scenarios. For service-learning assignments that require the students to develop the projects, as ours did, this process guides students in how to approach their work with community agencies.

Transformation as Instructors

Our transformation as instructors involved two key aspects in our process, the first being co-teachers (across two sections of the same course), and the second being a reorientation of the course structure and plan. The integration of these key aspects allowed us to improve the overall experience for students and for ourselves as instructors.

Co-teachers

The first aspect of our instruction that was transformed was an explicit decision to view ourselves as co-teachers and partners, during the course. While we have each sought intermittent guidance in course design or implementation from other instructors in the past, the nature of this course fostered a desire to more closely work together to help ensure successful completion of the service-learning components. Our co-teaching approach was realized through collaborative redesign of the course syllabus, weekly sessions both prior to and after the different course sections met to ensure fidelity to the course outline, and a unified response for student questions and concerns that arose over the course of the semester. Depending upon the topic and our own expertise with the subject matter, there were times when one of us would take the instructional lead in both sections of the course (e.g., Donna was the lead instructor for content, in-class activities, and team guidance about public deliberation and community forums; whereas Pam was the lead instructor for environmental justice theory, reflective processing, and related in-class activities). While we had different approaches to structuring our support

for students around their various group dynamics, we took additional time together to consult and ensure we were addressing each situation in a cohesive and consistent manner across course sections.

This collaborative approach helped facilitate the success of the students' service-learning projects as students were able to utilize both faculty members as resources. We were able to more readily help the students form connections for their related projects between course sections, which led to increased marketing and participation opportunities for the team projects. Our co-teaching approach facilitated full transparency between us as we shared and learned from both what went well and what would need improvement for future semesters. Ultimately, the decision to co-teach strengthened our individual teaching skills, benefited our students, and reduced the time that we spent in course preparation as the work was split between us. This last benefit held true even when considering the bi-weekly check-ins between the faculty that took place.

Reorientation

The second aspect of our transformation as instructors was a reorientation about how a course should be held and what our role was within the course. We let go of self-imposed expectations that it was necessary for us to establish projects for students in order for them to be successful. This expectation comes, in part, from realizing how busy modern college students are with a wide array of responsibilities. Developing the projects ourselves would have fit our schedule and would likely have been easier, but it would not have utilized the expertise and knowledge of our students or been as responsive to their needs or perhaps the needs of the community. Providing only a base framework of what the undergraduate students should accomplish (i.e., a community, a fundraiser, and an advocacy movement), opened the projects up to the students. More importantly, a paradigm shift happened where we moved from the role of project supervisors, do what we tell you, to the role of project consultants, how can we help you. We still utilized our professional expertise, still provided guidance, but this shift allowed students to more fully own their projects and, we believe, led to better outcomes. In essence we were not only partners in our teaching but, more importantly, partners with our students.

While it was critical that the projects were beneficial to our partner agencies, part of the process of letting students take the lead was also about letting go of the idea of perfection. Service-learning projects within the community can involve a broad array of participants. Having each course develop and implement three distinct components increased the complexity of the projects. This called for helping students understand, and reminding ourselves, that while service-learning projects experience delays and unforeseen complications, it is important to persevere and adapt. Acting as project consultants allowed us to help students move from the idea of a single right answer or approach.

Reorienting ourselves to a student driven service-learning class required us to have greater confidence in our students. We had to trust that they had or could develop the

capabilities to develop and manage their projects. Because projects were team-based, part of this project management involved managing group dynamics and their individual contributions to the collective success. While it is not uncommon for students to bemoan group projects, our students reported that these teams were both successful and enjoyable. Perhaps because there was a tangible benefit to the community partners and the scope of each project was outside the ability of one person to implement, students recognized the value in group work.

Final Reflections

As universities recognize the value and move to incorporate high-impact practices for students, including community engagement and collaborative projects (Kuh, 2008), a thoughtful reexamination of how to incorporate service-learning projects can reenergize faculty and benefit students. The challenge of incorporating meaningful service-learning projects that included partnering with local social service agencies revitalized our teaching of these courses.

The use of service-learning projects within our macro practice courses helped us move from a review and discussion of community-based social justice issues to providing students the opportunity to develop a hands-on advocacy based approach to combating social injustice. Similarly, partnering with non-profit organizations allowed students the opportunity to develop a new context and understanding of working with social service agencies greater than could be found solely in the classroom. Students' application of the PCP framework throughout the semester on their projects helped them gain a new perspective on how the knowledge they had acquired in previous courses could be utilized in a macro practice setting.

Students were able to apply the PCP in a way that had meaningful outcomes and had connections to their personal lives and communities. We found in our evaluative discussions with students that their self-efficacy of macro practice skills improved, and many agreed that macro practice was a bigger part of generalist social work practice than was previously thought or considered. While this is validating for us as instructors seeking to improve our student outcomes, more importantly it validated for us that the transformative approach worked.

All accredited social work education requires the inclusion of field education, the profession's "signature pedagogy" (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). The field education component of the social work degree is integral to students learning how to be ethical and competent practitioners. Incorporating service-learning projects prior to field placement provided our students an opportunity to apply what they learn in a course to a community setting. We believe that service-learning can act as a precursor to the types of projects students may experience in their field setting in any discipline, stimulating their critical thinking skills and, with our projects, allowing for a type of autonomy that can give students confidence as they move into their field placements. In addition, for students with limited experience in social services or with community partners, the service-learning project helped them gain experience with professional communication and behaviors that may also provide confidence as students enter field education.

The same type of benefits that social work students gain from service-learning also are of benefit to students across the array of disciplines. While this type of multi-course structure will take greater coordination, the success that we experienced has helped transform our approach to instruction and opened up possibilities for how we imagine our future courses. Ultimately, we envision creating an interprofessional learning environment for our students that helps to form connections not just between our students and the community but also between students across disciplines.

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Deep-learning practices in the Hispanic-serving and minority-serving context

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Introduction and Rationale

In recent years, universities have embraced the impact of service-learning on student learning outcomes and have worked to build courses into the curriculum as a way of institutionalizing the practice (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). Service-learning is a high impact educational practice that engages students in course material through experiential learning (Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013). Further, it is defined as a service activity—embedded into a course—in which credit is earned through student engagement with a community need, their role in addressing the community need, and personal reflection into how the experience contributed to their learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995).

A morass of literature details the benefits of service-learning courses on student learning such as material retention, opportunity for problem-based learning, (Brail, 2016; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013) as well as a self-reported improved sense of civic responsibility, interpersonal skills, and academic growth (Hebert & Hauf, 2015).

Service-learning courses provide additional benefits to students outside of the classroom. Kuh and O'Donnell (2013) found that engagement in service-learning has significant relationships with the following characteristics: deep learning, $p < .001$; general gains, $p < .001$; personal gains, $p < .001$; and practical gains, $p < .001$. It is clear that a strong argument can be made for the overall benefits of service-learning courses with benefits for students inside and outside of the classroom. This also supports the argument for institutionalizing service-learning practices.

Abstract

This paper details a semester-long service-learning project implemented at a Hispanic-serving and minority-serving university. This case study serves as a guide for future service-learning projects to be implemented in various disciplines at similar institutions. Over two semesters, students enrolled in two different service-learning courses in the communication studies discipline worked collaboratively across courses to present a healthy-eating event to the university community. The authors (re)designed courses to provide students with a learning experience that emphasized core lessons from the discipline of communication, while simultaneously employing the tenets of service-learning. Through this learning process, students engaged in deep learning constituted in the student-led activities of researching, planning, executing, and evaluating the event. The paper concludes with a section about future applications that discusses how similar projects can be implemented at similar institutions and in other disciplines.

This paper details a semester-long service-learning project, situated within the discipline of communication studies, conducted at a Hispanic-serving and minority-serving university. The purpose of this project was two-fold: (a) provide students with the opportunity to engage in the high-impact practice of service-learning where their schedule might otherwise preclude their participation, thus honoring work-life-school balance; and (b) bridge areas of study to showcase the variation as well as interconnectedness of areas of study. This case study serves as a guide for future service-learning projects to be implemented at similar institutions, in multiple disciplines, discussed in the Future Applications section.

University Context

The university carries both Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) and minority-serving institution (MSI) classifications with 82% of the student population identifying as a member of a minority population. Additionally, the student population includes a high proportion of first-generation college students, adult learners, and U.S. veterans. At the institution, many students express not having time for extracurricular activities while balancing busy schedules, which might include taking a full course load, full-time or part-time jobs, and family and community commitments. Taking time constraints into consideration, this project was developed to provide students with an opportunity to serve their community and advance their course work, while maintaining their dedication to other areas of their life.

The location of the campus in Houston, Texas, provides opportunities for students to engage with the university community as well as with the greater community of Houston. Further, a variety of community organizations are within easy reach.

In a longitudinal study of Harris County and subsequently, Houston, Klineberg (2017) studied attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of the citizenship of Houston over the course of 36 years. This study indicated that Houston was representative of future trends in the United States. According to Klineberg (2017), the citizenship of Houston was the most ethnically diverse city in the United States, a major shift from the population of the 1980s. Through these changing demographics came one of the greatest issues facing the city: inequalities in education (Klineberg, 2017). These inequalities were seen in African-American and Hispanic communities, as these communities typically had overcrowded and underfunded educational systems (Klineberg, 2017). Through their analysis of high impact practices in underserved populations, Finley and McNair (2013) found that these practices positively impacted all student groups, but that students from traditionally underserved populations particularly benefitted from equity effects, which close gaps in perceived learning and outcomes. As an institution dedicated to addressing these educational inequities, engaging our student population in service-learning projects provides a robust learning environment with a student population that might not experience these projects at traditional universities.

The HSI/MSI university, like many others, emphasizes the importance of providing students with service-learning opportunities aimed at enhancing collegiate experiences.

Leaders at the university understand the benefits associated with institutionalizing service with learning and provide numerous university-sponsored initiatives to encourage service-learning projects—understanding that critical attention must be paid to student success and must provide students with deep learning experiences.

In an effort to increase the deep learning practice at the university, the Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (CCESL) was developed to guide faculty members and students through design, implementation, and evaluation of community projects. The center encourages and supports innovative ways to engage students in service-learning courses that extend beyond the classroom, with an emphasis on experiential learning, real-world application, and improving the communities in which our students reside.

This paper details the necessary steps in developing a service-learning project, exemplified through the case study. This moves through preparation, design, implementation, and debrief and evaluation. It concludes with a discussion of how similar projects can be implemented at similar institutions and in other disciplines.

Service-learning Activity

Preparation

Groundwork for the service-learning project should begin several months before the actual project implementation. In the case study, preparation took approximately six months; it included establishing a relationship with the partner organization as well as course and project design. The first step in any community collaboration is to secure and establish a relationship with the community partner.

Partner organization. The present service-learning project was conducted in partnership with the Houston-based nonprofit organization, Recipe for Success. The organization approaches the issue of childhood obesity through educating youth and the community about proper nutrition and diet techniques. At their 10-year anniversary, Gracie Cavnar, the chief executive officer of Recipe for Success, estimated that a total of 30,000 children had been impacted by the organization (Recipe for Success, n.d.).

The partnership between the university and Recipe for Success was born out of the authors' desire to bridge, in a meaningful way, the studies of health communication and organizational communication. Additionally, the mission of Recipe for Success aligned with the authors' vision for the new service-learning project, and so the authors initiated the collaboration with the organization through a cold call that proposed the collaboration. Recipe for Success was responsive to the authors' proposal and expressed interest in engaging in practices that would expand its program to the collegiate level.

When replicating this type of work, it is best to collaborate with a local organization that aligns with the associated courses and faculty interests. There are a variety of ways that community partnerships can be developed. Two starting places are personal connections with community members or reaching out to a local nonprofit that aligns

with faculty interest, as was done in the present case. Various campus offices can also be useful resources to connect faculty with community organizations.

Project design. This service-learning project should be implemented as a semester-long activity that culminates in a community-service event designed and managed by the students. While the students do most of the planning, the professors should guide students by providing various forms of project support. In the case study, the authors oversaw administrative tasks of the project, such as the budget, working with vendors, and communicating with the community partner.

Courses should be (re)designed to work collaboratively with one another as well as with the partner organization, finding times to bring together the learning communities through meetings that honor student schedules, such as in-class or at an agreed upon time in-person or virtually. Due to the nature of the project across courses, professors must clearly identify project benchmarks as well as tasks associated with each course. When (re)designing the courses, it is key that learning outcomes specific to the courses that students are enrolled in are evident in their activities and contributions to the community project.

With this project, student learning should be guided, monitored, and refined to help students identify the ways in which courses are different and the varying roles that each curriculum adds to this project. This should include regular student check-ins as well as check-ins between the professors. Through their involvement in the project, students will gain real-world experience in a variety of functional skills: interpersonal communication, teamwork, research, marketing, and public speaking, all of which should be built into project design. The case study below provides a model for executing this type of project.

VegOut Case Study

In the case study, students enrolled in courses with the authors in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016, and then researched, organized, publicized, and evaluated the event purposed to provide the university community with education on healthy-eating practices. The project came to be known as University VegOut.

Students enrolled in service-learning courses are required to contribute at least 10 hours of service inside and outside of the classroom as well as provide midsemester and end-of-semester evaluations to the CCESL. To accommodate busy student schedules, most of these hours were embedded in the syllabus, such as a presentation from a Recipe for Success ambassador, research and evaluation activities, event design, and the event itself. Additionally, students were required to provide service-learning evaluations to the CCESL and, in turn, to the authors. These evaluations asked students to reflect on their role within the project, their professor(s)' role, the community organization's role as well as what they learned through the process. Findings from evaluations are detailed later.

One of the most unique aspects of this project was the collaboration between students enrolled in different types of communication courses. While in this case study, participating students were enrolled in courses in the same discipline, this type of project can easily translate to interdisciplinary teams; this is discussed in more detail in the Future Applications section. The courses were built to work in tandem in order to highlight and connect different traditions of communication studies. This design exposed students to a more robust view of communication studies, providing students with a look at the complex ways that communication is evident and applied. The primary task was to integrate the areas of study, determining ways for the students to work with one another, while maintaining tasks unique to each course and its specific learning outcomes. This was done in different ways throughout the two semesters.

Fall 2015. During this semester, students from communication research and small-group communication were integrated into the project. The two courses were back-to-back, which led to some overlap between students. This added ease to the project because those students acted as a link between the classes. This also allowed for a constant flow of information between the two classes, yet put a burden on those students in both classes. Students were informed of this project on the first day of the semester and were instructed on their role in researching, planning, executing, and evaluating the program.

The event, University VegOut, was a festival aimed at educating and encouraging members of the university community about the benefits of incorporating vegetables into their diets. At the event, the university community members were encouraged to try new vegetables—participants noted that Brussel sprouts, asparagus, mushroom, eggplant, radish, and cauliflower were new to them. In addition to tastings, participants played games such as veggie roulette and name that veggie. Participants could also have their photo taken with a custom Instagram cutout. It is believed that least 150 individuals were reached with the healthy-eating message. Many university leaders, including the university president, provost, and directors of CCESL, stopped by the event and spoke about the importance of this message for the university community. In all, it was a success.

Research students were tasked with all of the research components. First, students designed a survey to gather a baseline of knowledge about RFS; health consciousness; and what aspects of an event might draw the target audience, the university community, to take part in the event. Students collected 191 responses, then entered and analyzed the data. In addition, students conducted ethnographic research in the event space prior to and during the event. Research students also conducted an evaluation focus group with the small-group students.

The small-group students were tasked with event design and promotion. They determined the activities featured at the event, aspects of event set-up and clean-up, as well as volunteer management. Additionally, teams worked on social media, the creation and distribution of flyers, and classroom visits to invite students personally to the event. All students were required to help run the event, which included environment

set-up, retrieving and preparing vegetables, running tables and games, acting as ambassadors of the message, and tear-down.

Students were also asked to evaluate the event using three approaches: (a) attendee event evaluation surveys, (b) ethnographic participant observation, (c) and a focus group. In addition, students provided research reports, reflections, and manuals for creation of the next event.

At the conclusion of the semester, the authors debriefed the service-learning activity and determined how the activity could be improved upon in the next semester. Two important changes were made. First, the authors decided to try working in smaller groups in order to focus on the individual student-learning process. Second, due to the success of the event, it was determined that the program would be expanded to include a cooking demonstration in addition to the festival.

Spring 2016. In the second semester, students worked in smaller, more focused groups with students enrolled in service-learning special projects to run a larger event. Courses in the second semester built upon the work completed by the students in the fall and allowed the authors to work with groups of two to four through service-learning independent studies. Building upon the work conducted in the fall semester, student coursework this semester focused on strategic messaging and organizational development. The organizational development group planned a large, two-part event based on feedback from the previous semester while the strategic messaging group worked on the development of one-strategic message and publicizing the event. These students learned processes and theories related to strategic messaging and applied it to the promotion of the event. In addition, they gained experience working with various media outlets' organizational processes of disseminating messages.

Again, students needed to participate in a minimum of 10 volunteer hours, including a visit to Recipe for Success for a meeting with their head chef and marketing coordinator. Students could choose other ways to volunteer. A menu of options was provided to the students that allowed them the flexibility to choose the opportunity that fit best with their schedule and interests; these ranged from office work to attending and volunteering at RFS events, such as a fashion show fundraiser.

This event had two components scheduled, a festival similar to the one that took place in the fall and a healthful-food cooking demonstration. This major task was on schedule until a serious storm hit the city of Houston on the day of festival. The festival was then canceled and rescheduled to coincide with the cooking demonstration scheduled for two days later. With the initiative of the students to reorganize, the students and professors collaborated on a new plan to hold the event. This provided a rich learning experience for the students about adjusting and planning.

Both semesters offered different learning experiences for the students situated within the study of communication, showcasing the breadth and depth of the field. Projects such as this allow for assessment and constant improvement through debrief and

evaluation. In the next section, we discuss the debriefing process and student learning outcomes.

Debriefing

Students were debriefed and assessed through written and oral exams, journaling, and critical reflection. This revealed the impact of service-learning and the ways the project propelled beyond the classroom and into the real world. Both semesters offered different learning experiences for the students, showcasing the breadth and depth of the field. The various ways in which students were asked to debrief the process provides understanding of the impact of this project and direction for future projects. Student reflections were examined through a process of thematic analysis to determine the self-reported learning. Several themes of learning outcomes emerged out of the student reflections. These included research methods applications, small-group communication applications, general communication applications, interpersonal communication, with a subtheme of conflict management. Examples from each of these themes are represented in the table below:

Learning Outcome	Student Quote	
Research methods applications	“Learning about how to analyze quantitative data was confusing, but fun. Who knew that asking questions can yield such complex numerical results? ...The field work was enjoyable, both the survey, as well as the ethnography of watching people at lunch. Observing and taking notes on our observations, and particularly going over those notes in a group analysis was insanely useful. So many perspectives of the same viewing area gave valuable insight into researching.”	“What I like most about this service-learning project, is that it allowed me to really understand the concept of research. When I started taking this class I was a little lost, but after gather information, reaching out to students, and gathering important information to conduct this survey. Allowed me to dig deeper into my own personal research for this calls.”
Small-group applications	“Small group communication is more than communicating in a group of five to seven people, it is about creating a common goal and finding the possible ways to achieve the goal while developing, processing, leading, and	“After reviewing my first journal prompt of the semester, I found my exact words of my initial response to service-learning, which was sincerely positive. I’m proud to say that my initial response is still holds value to my true

	learning in the group, which is why this course is so vital to my knowledge”	feelings for service-learning. The amount of patience, caring, and understanding that is necessary for a service-learning project is something that I never thought I would have to experience.”
General gains	“The entire process and procedure of the VegOut event was quite a learning experience. Personally, my absolute favorite aspect of the service-learning project was being able to apply what I learned to a real-life event.”	“This project allows students to learn by doing and be a service to the community. I was able to use other communication skills that I have learned throughout this semester to hone my professional skills.”
Interpersonal communication	“Throughout the entire service-learning project, I loved every part of it, but honestly, I liked my station the most. I enjoyed the constant interaction of participants, between young and old and of all races/cultural backgrounds...We were constantly moving around, overlooking each station and acknowledging what was going on around us. It really was a fun learning project!”	“The more group members communicate with each other, the stronger their relationships become. Inevitably, members will discuss personal dilemmas that will ensure the development of interpersonal relationships amongst group members.”
Conflict management	“In some cases individuals who have different personalities can be challenging but in our case it was far from an uprising conflict. Throughout the project, we made sure to show respect and courteous for every members hard work and dedication.”	“I believe there are two traits [that] would be useful in our group, such as, surrounded in a positive environment and share responsibility. Be surrounded in a positive environment, this trait is important because even though there might be possible conflicts, a productive solution would be to resolve them in a respectful and open-minded manner.”

These reflections on learning outcomes help to further the argument that service-learning projects do indeed provide a deep learning experience. Further, it can be argued that these types of projects are well suited for experiential practices within communication studies because service-learning projects emphasize human interaction. Throughout class discussions, each professor was able to see discussion among peers evolve from surface-level understanding of course material to deeper understandings of content.

Evaluation

Embarking on a project this size, it is impossible to anticipate all of the challenges and opportunities that will arise. Throughout the course of the year, professors repeated the mantra, “This is all part of the learning process.” When students were frustrated or struggling with an aspect of the project, this served as a reminder that we grow and learn when we feel uncomfortable, that feelings like this contribute to learning outcomes. For projects like this to be successful, it is first important to ensure university buy-in and collaboration on all ends. This project would not have been possible without university support and belief in service-learning projects. The event was also financially supported by administration and various university centers, which proved to be invaluable.

There also needs to be student buy-in and commitment. One of the key aspects of this project is that it was completely planned and run by students. This empowered the students and developed ownership and dedication to the project. Students were proud to be a part of the University VegOut project. One student said, “What I liked the most was to be a part of creating the very first VegOut event. I have been a student at [here] for almost four years, and I have never attended or been a part of a school event” similarly, another student reflected, “My feelings towards the project itself was that it was an amazing idea and opportunity to truly engage students in what is being taught in class. I am taking 18 hours of classes this semester, and can honestly say I learned more from this course as well as [research] than any of my other courses, because of this project.” These sentiments were echoed by students in various colloquial and formal forms. Further, this provides evidence for progress on the learning objective of balancing work, life, and school obligations with service-learning as well as evidence for the necessity of providing service-learning opportunities within the HSI/MSI context.

Moreover, this healthy-eating message was particularly salient presented to the university community, many of whom live within food deserts, the university itself being surrounded by food deserts. Considering our student population and our social location, this service-learning event proved to provide students and faculty with an opportunity to reflect and have critical conversations about the importance of giving back to one’s community but also bringing awareness to an unspoken issue impacting the university community.

With an emphasis on student needs, this project worked to create a service-learning experience that honored student school-work-life balance. This partnership should serve as a model for future collaborations at our university and other institutions. In an

effort develop a healthy-eating message tailored to the university community, the authors continue to explore ways to develop infrastructure within the university to provide the healthy-eating message that focuses on the factors that impact our students most, including limiting social economic factors and healthy behaviors.

Future Applications

The context of the case study is a university setting, though this work could easily be conducted at the community-college level or potentially the high school level. This might require only some scaling in terms of student responsibility and placing more emphasis on the professor or instructor to design the event and guide students through milestones, while still ensuring this is an empowering process for the students because they work to fulfill a community need.

Conceptualization Though the present case study is situated within the field of communication studies, this work can easily translate to another discipline and/or into interdisciplinary work. For example, keeping with the theme of healthy eating, an interdisciplinary team might include courses in biology, kinesiology, or nutrition. After the service-learning faculty team has been established, the team members should work together to identify a community need to be addressed, while simultaneously seeking a community organization to partner with. It is key that this community need be of value and importance to the students and can even be evoked through their own experiences.

The community need should of course be within the scope of the disciplines and be broad enough that students can design and implement a community event around the topic. Examples of prevalent community needs might be homelessness, hunger, environmental safety, or financial literacy. The community partner may also have an influence on the community need addressed. As discussed, faculty can secure their community partner in several ways, such as taking advantage of university resources, through their networks, or through a cold-call to the organization. In the authors' experience, most nonprofit community organizations are eager to work in collaboration with students in higher education.

Institutional Support Two levels of institutional support made the present case possible: institutional buy-in through the support of the CCESL and in turn the administration, as well as financial support for the project provided by the CCESL and the Center for Critical Race studies. The faculty members applied for funding from both centers. The funds were used to buy materials for the festival, such as vegetables for tasting, decorations, and prizes to serve as reminders of the healthy-eating message. While this project can certainly be conducted without those levels of support, the support did make the project run smoother.

Student Requirements After faculty have established the basic outline of the project, it is important to define the student roles and responsibilities: first, to establish the tasks associated with the differing curriculums—often students may be drawn to certain aspects of the project that are not related to the course learning outcomes. While, students should not be discouraged to contribute in these ways, it is up to the

faculty members to establish the primary goal of the project as related to the class and to ensure that students are working toward that goal. For example, in the case study, students were provided with an outline of their duties at the outset of the class. One group designed the event, while another was responsible for the research or promotion.

In addition, to create structure for students, faculty should set a number of community service hours to be completed by each student, such as 10 hours. In an effort to honor work-life balance, students should be presented with a menu of options to complete their hours in a way that works best for their individual demands. Finally, activities and assignments should be built into the course that ask students to design and reflect on their experience. Some examples: goal-setting at the outset of the semester; a mid-semester evaluation of the project, such as a stop-start-continue; journal prompts that lead the student through thinking critically about the role of the project on their overall learning; final evaluations; and final reports instructing future students on developing a project such as this.

Event/programming With the project and student benchmarks in place, event planning and programming can begin. While this project is purposed to be student led, it is helpful for the students to have a clear idea of the authors' vision. In the case study, the professors established the culmination of semester activities in an event. The date and hours for the event were clear from Day 1 of the project. From there, students were responsible for researching their target audience, designing the event, and for setting up and running the event. In all, they were largely responsible for the successes and shortcomings of the event each that contributed to their learning experience.

Evaluation There are two suggested areas of evaluation that are formal and informal. First, it is critical for the faculty to discuss the project and to determine the ways in which the overall semester activity could be improved to enhance student-learning outcomes. In the case study, this was done between the two semesters. It was at this time that it was determined that the project might be more effective if carried out in smaller groups. Associated courses also helped to build upon work that was conducted in the preceding semester and also allowed the project to move into different types of coursework. Building upon the foundation set previously allows for a richer level of experience for the student and also allows the project to move through related courses/subject areas. For example, in the case study, during the first semester, research methods were incorporated into the project in order to conduct critical target audience research; the second semester built upon that research, which allowed the project to incorporate coursework specific to health messaging.

Second is student debrief and reflection. This should begin with a classroom discussion of the event to debrief and share opinions among the group in order to share in the learning outcome. From there, students should provide a written reflection of the service-learning project. The most reliable method of this reflection is through a final paper in which the students are asked to discuss the ways in which course materials were applied through the event project, what they gained through the experiential

learning process, and lessons learned that could be shared with others embarking on similar projects.

Concluding Remarks

Designing projects like these at HSI/MSI universities that are purposed to involve students in service-learning directly impacts their learning as well as their community. Such projects also provide students with deep-learning experiences that are tangible and intangible. It is our hope that this piece will foster continued work that empowers students to take a lead in their own learning. In turn, greatly affecting student success at the university and in their careers. Further, creating a positive impact on the health and wellness of their communities, providing for positive change for years to come.

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A Study to Determine the Impact on Attitude and Skills when Integrating Service-Learning for Pre-Service Educators

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Introduction

Cultivating students' commitment to engaged citizenship and preparing them for lives of service are central to the educational aims of the college experience (American Council on Education, 1949; Campus Compact, 2007; Dote, Cramer, Dietz, & Grimm, 2006). The higher education system in Lebanon has been trying to catch on to the change from content based learning toward a more student-centered approach. In this sense, a college education focuses on developing students' capacity to mobilize both the knowledge and skills needed to respond to various and diverse challenges in their personal, social, and work environment (Jerez, 2015). To develop students' skills in general, it has become necessary for universities to introduce active teaching and learning methodologies. One of the methodologies used most often to develop social responsibility, civic engagement, and ethics-related competencies has been the pedagogy of service-learning, which began to be defined in the 1980s. Generally speaking, service-learning is an educational experience centering on a curricular activity through which students receive academic credit and participate in an organized service activity that is based on real community needs and through which both the students and community partners benefit from the experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Sigmon, 1979). Faculty resources and research on service-learning have devised a four-stage representation for service-learning implementation (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). The stages are (1) preparation, (2) implementation,

Abstract

This article presents the results of a study regarding the effect of social learning on undergraduate students in the School of Education at the Lebanese International University, Beirut Branch in the education course Teaching of Reading. An electronic questionnaire was conducted before and after intervention to assess changes in students' self-perception towards helping their community, helping others in need, having sense of responsibility towards their community, sensing the need for community service, knowing that community service and that they themselves can make a difference, having the willingness to participate in community service, and believing that community service would impact them positively. Students also filled personal reflection papers regarding educational and professional skills associated with developing social responsibility competence after participating in a course that included service-learning. This study showed that service-learning had a positive impact on pre-service teachers personal outcome and self-efficacy, social outcome, and learning outcomes.

(3) assessment/reflection, and (4) demonstration with celebration (Fertman, 1994; Kaye, 2004). The purpose of this study is to prove that service-learning has effects on students' personal, social, and learning outcomes.

Literature Review

The literature will review the impact of service-learning on students' personal outcome and self-efficacy, social outcome, and learning outcomes. The studies in this literature review have indicated that for personal outcomes: service-learning has a positive effect on student personal development such as personal effectiveness and personal identity and that service-learning also has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the capacity to work well with others and communication skills. As for social outcomes: service-learning has a positive effect on social responsibility and citizenship skills. As for learning outcomes: service-learning participation has bearing on academic outcomes as demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development.

Service-Learning

"Service-learning is the various pedagogies that link community service and academic study so that each strengthens the other. The basic theory of service-learning is Dewey's: the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is key to learning. Students learn best not by reading the Great Books in a closed room but by opening the doors and windows of experience. Learning starts with a problem and continues with the application of increasingly complex ideas and increasingly sophisticated skills to increasingly complicated problems" (Thomas Ehrlich, in: Barbara Jacoby and Associates. *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass 1996)

Teacher preparation courses have been educating teacher candidates in a way that seems applicable to real life; otherwise students become bored and disengaged (Liggett, 2011). Research has shown that pre-service teachers can be placed in diverse school environments for as little as a week or as much as an entire school year and still build varying degrees of knowledge around diversity and multicultural education (Bleicher, 2011; Chang et al., 2011). A leading researcher in the field of service-learning and teacher education, Wade (2006), stated, "Field experiences with a service-learning component offer pre-service teachers and community members exciting opportunities to work together on needs or goals important to the community" (p. 22). While some researchers and universities have indicated adequately educating pre-service teachers on the topic of multicultural education and exposing students to different backgrounds (Bleicher, 2011; Bodur, 2010; Davis, Beyersbach, & London, 2008; Kang, 2010); however, other researchers have found preservice teachers are graduating "without adequate knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach diverse students" (Benton-Borghi & Cheng, 2011, p. 29).

Reflections

Generally, any type of reflection is advantageous in the development of pre-service teachers' knowledge (Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007; Johnson & Alkins, 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Zozakiewicz, 2010). Reflections have been used by university professors to comprehend the disposition of pre-service teachers when they enter teaching programs. The knowledge from reflections is used by professors to target the plan of study for pre-service teachers in the area of education (Ford & Quinn, 2010), often is synonymous with service-learning.

Outcomes

Personal development and self-efficacy

Service-learning has a positive effect on student personal development and self-efficacy. In Boss's (1994) study, one section of a two-section course was selected randomly to complete 20 hours of community service over the semester and to keep a journal as part of the course requirements. The other section formed the control group and had different assignments in place of the service requirement. The total sample was comprised of 71 students; 37 females and 34 males. The researcher hypothesized that moral development would increase more over the course of the semester for the community service group than for the control group. Students in the experimental group got higher ratings of their improvement as moral people in course evaluations. In another study, researchers presented a comprehensive case study model of service-learning assessment at Portland State University as a response to the need to measure influence of service-learning among four areas: students, faculty, community agencies and institutions. It was presented that service-learning affected students in their: awareness and involvement in the community; personal development; academic achievement; and sensitivity to diversity (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996).

In another study on self-efficacy and personal outcome development by Bernadowski, Perry, & Greco (2013), a pre/post survey examined students' self-perceptions for each service opportunity in regards to their perceived teaching self-efficacy. Results indicate that students' self-efficacy improved when service-learning was inserted in the framework of learning and connected to a specific course. These findings indicate course incepted service-learning has a greater impact on pre-service teachers' perceptions of their ability to be effective future classroom teachers. Therefore, course connected service-learning can be viewed as a best practice in pre-service teaching instruction.

Interpersonal development and communication skills

Service-learning also has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the capacity to work well with others and on communication skills. Gregorová, Heinzová, & Chovancová (2016) presented the findings of a study that investigated the development of key competences of two student groups enrolled in courses that incorporated service-learning strategies during academic years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 at Matej Bel

University. The findings of the study suggested that service-learning strategies have positive impacts on the development of students' key competences such as communication skills, leadership, cooperation with others, cultural understanding, responsibility, learning, problem-solving skills, and development of critical thinking. Based on the research findings, it was recommended that service-learning was as a suitable strategy for students' key competencies development.

Social responsibility and citizenship skills

Social outcomes: service-learning has a positive effect on social responsibility and citizenship skills. A study by Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omea, (2011), multicultural service-learning (MSL) looked into the development of pre-service teachers' capacities and commitment to teach diverse student populations. Survey data was collected from 212 pre-service teachers engaged in 22 MSL sites to assess the effects of pre-service teachers' social identities, MSL contexts, and university pedagogy on pre-service teachers' awareness of cultural bias, understanding of social inequality, and commitment to teaching diverse students. It was found that pedagogical engagement positively contributed to all three outcomes.

Engaging pre-service teachers in diverse and economically disadvantaged settings through service-learning experiences can help dismiss many misconceptions that pre-service teachers often believe about these populations. Service-learning can also empower pre-service teachers with knowledge of their ability to be agents of change (Hale, 2008). It can also help pre-service teachers gain confidence about teaching children from diverse backgrounds (Bollin, 2007).

According to Newbold (2006), Learn and Serve America, Higher Education (LSAHE) is the primary funding arm of the Corporation for National and Community Service. From 1995-1997, LSAHE funded roughly \$30M in service-learning research, granting funds to over 500 higher education institutions. A national survey of 42 institutions was sponsored by Learn and Serve America in Higher Education (LSAHE). According to Gray, Ondaatje, Fricker, & Geschwind (2000), LSAHE programs engage students in tutoring, working with the homeless, the poor and the elderly; improving neighborhood environments and community health; and preventing crime. Using data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman (CIRP) Survey, SAT and ACT scores, and enrollment data, thirty-five student outcomes were measured in five student cohorts from 1990-1994. Follow-up surveys were also administered to students in 1995. All 35-student outcome measures were favorably influenced by service participation. These included academic outcomes (GPA, retention, degree completion, amount of interaction with faculty, and increase in knowledge); civic responsibility (commitment to life goals of helping others, promoting racial understanding); and life skills (critical thinking, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, social self-confidence, knowledge of different races or cultures, and conflict resolution skills). Increases in knowledge, civic responsibility and life skills were measured by student self-report.

Academic outcomes

Learning outcomes: service-learning participation has bearing on academic outcomes. According to Butin (2005) the service-learning experience can be viewed through four distinct lenses: technical; cultural; political; and postmodern/ poststructural. Through the technical lens, there is the pedagogical effectiveness of service-learning, where learning is conceptualized as “one among multiple pedagogical strategies; it serves the function of better teaching for better learning” (p. 90). The technical perspective concentrates on the innovative elements that link the service to improved student outcomes at university level.

A study by Warren (2012) on 11 research studies showed that service-learning increased student learning. Results suggest that service-learning has a positive influence on student learning outcomes regardless of the way learning was measured. The 11 studies had a total student sample size of 2129. All studies were conducted using quasi-experimental designs and involved undergraduate student samples. An assortment of course disciplines were represented in these studies, including education, English, mass communication, pharmacy, political science, psychology, rehabilitation services, and sociology. Overall effects of service-learning on learning outcomes were that all 11 studies suggested that service-learning had statistically significant and positive effects on student learning outcomes.

As early as 1979, Sigmon described service-learning as a plausible means for students to learn about their community while connecting academic content. Service-learning is carried out in these stages of (1) preparation, (2) implementation, (3) assessment/reflection, and (4) demonstration with celebration (Fertman, 1994; Kaye, 2004), it will have effects on personal outcome, social outcome, and learning outcomes.

Hypotheses

The hypothesis of this study is that community service would impact pre-service teachers' personal outcome and self-efficacy, and social outcome.

Methodology

Participants

Pre-service educators. Participants in this one semester study were thirty undergraduate students registered for the course (EDUC347 Teaching of Reading) at a four-year education program in Lebanon at “Lebanese International University”. The teaching reading course is a major course for pre-service teachers of early childhood education and teaching English as a foreign language. Students registered in this course are typically in their third year mainly as seniors in their undergraduate coursework. Participants' age ranged between 20 and 23. Convenience non-probability sampling was used to identify and recruit participants. Thirty students provided a reflection report about the course which was analyzed using qualitative measures. Out of these 30 students, only 20 filled out the pre/post survey.

Procedure

The study started in February and ended in June for a total of 15 weeks. This service-learning project was one of other requirements that students had to fulfill in the Teaching of Reading course. For this project, students had to teach reading in English for underprivileged individuals that they chose based on the community needs in their surroundings. One group conducted the service in the Palestinian refugee camp of Sabra and Shatila for a group of women over forty to teach them English, another group adopted a classroom in an impoverished area of the suburbs of Beirut to make it a print rich one, another group worked with a Syrian refugee teenager, another group worked with a group of special needs students, and one group decided to come up with ways to encourage students at the university to read by pinning interesting articles in the cafeteria and in the green area. The students had the choice to work individually or in groups. For those who worked in groups, they were free to choose the members and to divide the tasks among themselves. Students created their own teaching material based on the individual needs of their target learners. As for their service-learning schedule in the community, it was flexible as long as they fulfill the required twenty hours. The purpose of the service-learning project was made clear to the students by emailing a document that highlighted the meaning of service-learning and provided the benefits to them as pre-service teachers. Students were emailed a student packet to document the minimum of 20 hours of service-learning. The packet also included a signing sheet for the supervisor – if one is available – at the site to verify to number of hours.

Measures

A quantitative-qualitative system was used which enabled the incorporation of multiple measures that explored a wide range of outcomes of the data. Some of the qualitative measures that were found could be supported by quantitative data. For this study, the primary assessment tools were a pre/post-survey and a reflection paper.

Student survey

The approval of the University's Committee on Research Ethics was attained before emailing the pre-survey to the students using Google forms. Students completed the survey voluntarily both before and after taking the service-learning project in the form of pre and post survey consisting of the same questions. All students were informed that survey results would be analyzed and presented anonymously. The survey included 47 questions. All questions were developed in a linear scale of 1 to 5 with 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5 strongly agree.

The survey maps the following domains of concern:

- Q1: Do students believe that there is need for help in the community?
- Q2: Do students feel with others in need?
- Q3: Do students have the sense of responsibility towards community?
- Q4: Do students believe in the need of good/useful community service?
- Q5: Do students believe that volunteering/community service can make a difference?
- Q6: Do students believe that they themselves can make a difference?

Q7: Are students willing to participate in community service?

Q8a): Do students believe that community service would impact them positively?

Q8b): Do students believe that community service would impact them negatively?

Student reflection

Students were asked to fill in a reflection form at the end of their service hours. They had to reflect on what they have learned, how they helped, difference they made, changes they may adopt next time they participate in such projects, how would they apply the skills they learned from this experience, and their thoughts and feelings while doing this project.

Results

Results showed a positive change between the pre- and post- questionnaire results across the eight domains under study (see Table 1). The most significant changes were observed in (Q6) students' belief that they themselves can make a difference in the community (+13.33%) and in their (Q7) willingness to participate in future community service projects (+25%). Moderate changes were observed in (Q1) students' belief that there is need for help in the community (+6.67%), (Q3) students' sense of responsibility towards community (+9.17%), and (Q8b) students' belief that community service would affect them negatively (+6.67%). The minimal change was observed in (Q2) students' feelings towards those in need (+1%), (Q5) students' belief that community service can make a difference (+3.5%), and (Q8a) students' belief that community service would affect them positively (+2.5%).

Table 1. *Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Results*

Question no.	Pre-Service	Post-Service
Q1	78.33%	85%
Q2	78%	79%
Q3	68.33%	77.50%
Q4	76.67%	81.67%
Q5	76%	79.50%
Q6	65%	78.33%
Q7	53.33%	78.33%
Q8a	90%	92.50%
Q8b	45%	51.67%

The responses in the reflection further support the questionnaire results. They also reflect the different skills that educators have acquired from their service-learning and that would contribute positively to their teaching and professional tracks.

(Q1) Do students believe that there is need for help in the community?

This domain included three items: (1) Community groups need our help, (2) There are people in the community who need help, and (3) There are needs in the community. Prior to their community service experience, 78.33% of the students believed that there is need for help in the community. This percentage has increased to 85% after the educators have completed their community service with disadvantaged children and women. One educator reflected: *“I learned that there are people outside that need our help”*. Another one said, *“ I realized how much society needs us”*. This shows that the direct contact with these unprivileged communities has made the educators aware that there are people around who suffer with the basic needs of life and who need any kind of help to overcome their bad conditions.

Table 2. *Do Students Believe That There is Need for Help in the Community?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	78.33%	85%	6.67%
Disagree	8.33%	5%	-3.33%
Neutral	13.33%	10%	-3.33%

(Q2) *Do students feel with others in need?*

This domain included five items: (1) Other people deserve my help, (2) It is important to help people in general, (3) When I meet people who are having a difficult time, I wonder how I would feel if I were in their shoes, (4) I feel bad that some community members are suffering from a lack of resources, and (5) I feel bad about the disparity among community members.

Although the positive increase in this domain was insignificant (+1%), 3% of the educators have acquired more positive feelings towards people in need as some of them have reflected: *“It made me feel with people who are less fortunate”, “It taught me to deal with people who are in need”, and “It grew my understanding and connection with the communities”*.

Table 3. *Do Students Feel with Others in Need?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	78%	79%	1%
Disagree	10%	7%	-3%
Neutral	12%	14%	2%

(Q3) Do students have the sense of responsibility towards community?

This domain included six items: (1) I am responsible for doing something about improving the community, (2) It is important to me to have a sense of contribution and helpfulness through participating in community service, (3) It is my responsibility to take some real measures to help others in need, (4) It is important to me to have a sense of contribution and helpfulness through participating in community, (5) I feel an obligation to contribute to the community, and (6) It is critical that citizens become involved in helping their communities.

A noticeable positive change was made in the percentage of students who gained a sense of responsibility towards the community (+9.17%). Prior to the community service experience, 68.33% of the educators felt responsible towards community. This percentage has risen to 77.5% by the end of this experience. One educator has reflected: *“I gained a deep satisfaction and sense of responsibility that no other job will grant me”*.

Table 4. *Do Students Have the Sense of Responsibility towards Community?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	68.33%	77.50%	9.17%
Disagree	16.67%	12.50%	-4.17%
Neutral	15%	10%	-5%

(Q4) Do students believe in the need of good/useful community service?

This domain included three items: (1) Our community needs good volunteers, (2) All communities need good volunteers, and (3) It is important to provide a useful service to the community through community service.

After witnessing the conditions of the unprivileged students and women they were teaching, educators became more supportive to the idea that there is need for good community service. The percentage has risen from 76.67% to 81.67%.

Table 5. *Do Students Believe in the Need of Good/Useful Community Service?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	76.67%	81.67%	5.00%
Disagree	11.67%	6.67%	-5%
Neutral	11.67%	11.67%	0%

(Q5) Do students believe that community service can make a difference?

This domain included ten items: (1) Volunteer work at community agencies helps solve social problems, (2) Volunteers in community agencies make a difference, if only a small difference, (3) College student volunteers can help improve the local community, (4) Volunteering in community projects can greatly enhance the community's resources, (5) The more people who help, the better things will get, (6) Improving communities is important to maintaining a quality society, (7) Lack of participation in community service will cause severe damage to our society, (8) Without community service, today's disadvantaged citizens have no hope, (9) Community service is necessary to making our communities better, and (10) Community service is a crucial component of the solution to community problems.

After taking part in this project and noticing the positive impact it had on unprivileged communities, educators gained more trust in community services and in their important role as one educator has reflected: *"Service-learning is very important; once we learn more about the struggles and injustices that other groups of people face, we are more likely to actively take part in making a change in the social structure that keeps certain groups from succeeding"*. Initially, 76% of students believed that community service can make a difference. This percentage has increased to 79.5% by the end of the project.

Table 6. *Do Students Believe That Community Service Can Make a Difference?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	76%	79.50%	3.50%
Disagree	10.50%	7.50%	-3%
Neutral	13.50%	13%	-0.50%

(Q6) Do students believe that they themselves can make a difference?

This domain included three items: (1) Contributing my skills will make the community a better place, (2) My contribution to the community will make a real difference, and (3) I can make a difference in the community.

Students have gained great belief in their abilities to make a difference by the end of this project. At first, only 65% of the educators believed in that and the percentage has increased by 13.33% to reach 78.33% at the end. Some of their reflections on this point were: *"We can trigger the love to learn in everyone around us"*, *"I learned that we can make a change by helping others instead of blaming them for what life and the environment have forced them to be"*, *"It made me practice good citizenship by making difference in the community"*, and *"I felt really bad to see the conditions that these students are living. My thoughts were that I have to give my best in helping these kids to change their future life. I know that it is in our hands to give these kids the opportunity for a radical change and step by step we can reach it"*.

Table 7. *Do Students Believe That They Themselves Can Make a Difference?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	65%	78.33%	13.33%
Disagree	16.67%	6.67%	-10%
Neutral	18.33%	15%	-3.33%

(Q7) Are students willing to participate in community service?

This domain included three items: (1) I want to do this (service-learning) activity, (2) I will participate in a community service project in the next year, and (3) Would you seek out an opportunity to do community service in the next year.

This domain has gained the highest positive change (+25%). At first, only 53.33% of the educators showed willingness to participate in community service. This percentage has increased to 78.33% at the end. Educators not only showed willingness to participate in community service, but also planned to make some organizations to support the underprivileged communities. This was clear in the educators reflections: *“I felt guilty that I don’t give time for such tasks in life”, “If I had time, I would have continued with the girl”, “I felt that I have value in life now since I was able to help others with what I’ve learned. Now, if someone asks me what have you done in life, I would say that I’ve helped others develop and that that won’t stop here. I will search for more opportunities to value myself more”, “I would do that again just to see the kids who are in need happy”, “I felt emotionally attached to these women and thought of making an organization to empower women”, “Next time I would participate in many service-learning experiences and I might open a small center to provide free education for those in need”, “We should make a club to provide less fortunate kids with the consistent help they need”, and “I like to continue in this project and I may open a small institution for teaching more women to read and write”.*

Table 8. *Are Students Willing to Participate in Community Service?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	53.33%	78.33%	25%
Disagree	21.67%	6.67%	-15%
Neutral	25%	15%	-10%

(Q8a) Do students believe that community service would impact them positively?

This domain included six items: (1) I would be contributing to the betterment of the community, (2) I would experience personal satisfaction knowing that I am helping

others, (3) I would be meeting other people who enjoy community service, (4) I would be developing new skills, (5) I would make valuable contacts for my professional career, and (6) I would gain valuable experience for my resume.

The majority of the educators (90%) have initially agreed on the fact that community service would impact them positively. This percentage has increased to 92.5% by the end of the project. This experience was very rewarding to the educators who have reflected that: *“At the beginning, I wasn’t that much interested, but when I started working on it, I was able to recognize my strengths and weaknesses”, “It connected me to my community”, “It gave me a sense of satisfaction”, “It is self-rewarding to see to see that these children have improved”, “I feel happy when I see the results of my hard work”.*

Table 9. *Do Students Believe That Community Service Would Impact Them Positively?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	90%	92.50%	2.50%
Disagree	7.50%	2.50%	-5%
Neutral	2.50%	5%	2.50%

Based on the educators’ reflections, this experience has provided them with plenty of skills that they would use in their professional life like teamwork skills, communication skills, leadership skills, commitment, patience, ability to empower, critical thinking, time management, problem solving, multi-tasking, time respect, and to never lose hope.

It has also provided with them with many skills that are directly related to teaching, as this was the first teaching experience for most of the educators. Some of them reflected that: *“I gained experience that would benefit me in the work field”, “I was nervous at the beginning since I had no experience in teaching”, “I gained hands-on experience”, “I learned how to be a teacher”, “It introduced me to the difficulties that I would face in the classroom as a teacher”.*

It has also given them the opportunity to apply what they have taken in their Education courses in real life context. Some have reflected that: *“It helped me implement my skills within my major (education) as the essence of guidance, scaffolding, problem solving and critical thinking”, “I learned how to use the information I got from the Teaching*

Reading course and apply it”, “I learned how to apply the techniques that I have studied in this course and in previous courses but in my own way to manage the different types of personalities”.

After this project, educators became aware that students are different. This was clear in their reflection: *“No matter how many years you spend learning, when you are in front of a class, it is completely different. You can see different behaviors, attitudes, and ways of thinking”, “I learned that not all students have the same knowledge even if they are in the same grade level”, “I learned that students are different; no two students react the same way”, “I learned that it is very important to keep in mind the different situations a child might be in”, “I learned not to favor one student over the other”, “It improved my skills in dealing with disadvantaged students/young kids”, “It improved my skills especially in dealing with students with learning difficulties”.*

Educators also became aware that motivation is a key factor in teaching as they have reflected: *“I learned to always reward and motivate the less fortunate students as some of them are gifted and just need attention to express creativity”, “I learned to reward students to motivate them to participate in class especially at a young age”, “I learned that with the right motivation, students would be able to accomplish anything”, “I learned how to talk to students, how to give positive reinforcement, and how to make them feel in a safe environment”.*

Moreover, the educators also learned how to manage and organize their class time. They reflected that: *“It taught me how to organization and time management as for preparing any lesson and finishing it on time”, “I learned how to move from one task to another at a manageable time”, “I should always have plan B ready because not all what I plan for my session works every time. I should do this to increase class time efficiency and avoid wasting time”.*

Because of this service-learning experience, the educators were also exposed to some teaching tools and methodologies. They have reflected that: *“I learned that I have to allow students to express themselves without interfering”, “I learned that I have to allow students to try things on their own first then I interfere to scaffold their learning”, “I learned to allow students to interact with each other”, “I’m now aware of the different educational tools that are used in teaching and their efficiency in the teaching process”, “I learned new strategies to teach children (games, using colorful papers,..)”, “I learned to integrate content with games”, “I learned that students are more engaged in learning if it was through playing”, “I learned how to do a lesson plan”, “In the first sessions, my student was all the time focused on the time when to finish so that he can go and play. For this, I have changed my teaching methods to grasp his attention. I included games and colors. I also allowed him to move while he is reading the lesson”.*

When asked about what would they do next time they take this experience, educators answered: *“Give students more examples and assessments. I also have to concentrate on students who physically challenged”, “Use drama and role-play to make learning more memorable”, “Use more visuals to help learners make sense of new information”,*

“Relate the lesson to real life examples”, “Make competitions among students and distribute rewards”.

(Q8b) Do students believe that community service would impact them negatively?

This domain included six items: (1) I would have less time for my schoolwork, (2) I would have forgone the opportunity to make money in a paid position, (3) I would have less energy, (4) I would have less time to work, (5) I would have less free time, and (6) I would have less time to spend with my family.

At first, 35.83% of the educators believed that community service would affect them negatively (schoolwork, energy, time to work, free time, opportunity of a paid position, and time for the family). This percentage has decreased to 27.5% at the end of the project. In their reflections, none of the educators has mentioned anything about the negative effects of community service; they were all impressed by the positive experience it has provided them with.

Table 10. *Do Students Believe That Community Service Would Impact Them Negatively?*

	Pre-Service	Post-Service	Difference
Agree	35.83%	27.50%	-8.33%
Disagree	45%	51.67%	6.67%
Neutral	19.17%	20.83%	1.67%

Discussion

The results of the questionnaire and the reflection showed that service-learning had influenced a change in the pre-service teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards disadvantaged kids and women as well as students with disabilities. It has developed their confidence (Bollin, 2007) and commitment (Chang et al., 2011) to teaching children from diverse backgrounds. It had also influenced their belief in the effectiveness and the necessity of service-learning projects. Although the change was not significant in some domains, the results sounded promising for this short-time experience. This project has allowed pre-service teachers to practice teaching for the first time in their lives and to gain hands-on experience. They were all impressed and satisfied by the positive improvement that their students had shown at the end of the project the thing

that improved their perception of their own ability to be effective future classroom teachers (Bernadowski et al., 2013). This in return had given the educators a great sense of confidence in their ability to make a change (Hale, 2008) as reflected in the results of question six. However, when compared to the results of question five, we find that students have acquired a greater confidence in their own abilities to make a change than in the ability of community service in general. This suggests that educators need to be engaged in different community services that are based on collective work rather than individual one, as this will promote their belief in others' abilities as well.

This project not only changed educators' beliefs and attitudes, but also inspired them to take initiatives as many of them have reported that they are thinking of having a center or an organization that provides free educational services for underprivileged kids and women.

Another gain for this project was the professional skills that the educators have acquired through their contact with their students and their parents and through their preparation and application for each session. Some of these skills are teamwork skills, communication skills, leadership skills, commitment, patience, ability to empower, critical thinking, time management, problem solving, multi-tasking, time respect, and never losing hope. These results further corroborate the findings of Gregorová et al. (2016) and LSAHE (1997).

As for teaching, this project proved a great success for pre-service teachers as it has provided them with the opportunity to explore teaching, to apply what they have studied in the Education courses, and to maybe make mistakes without any real consequences on students. This stress-free experience has made the educators aware that each student is different and that there is a disparity between the same class students and thus, they should approach them using different teaching strategies and techniques. The educators have explored and tried a variety of these techniques like using visuals, real life examples, gaming and role playing and have experienced their effectiveness in the teaching process. They have also experienced the effect of motivation and positive reinforcement on students' participation and involvement. Above all, educators got to know how to prepare a lesson and how to allocate sufficient time for each activity. They became aware of the amount of work that can be given in one session.

The study has two limitations. The first one is the small number of participants (20 pre-service teachers) which is not considered as a representative sample. Thus the results may not be generalized. A further limitation is the short duration of the service-learning experience.

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Mental Health Benefits of a Service-Learning Group Drumming Between College Students and Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Introduction

The prevalence of mental health problems among college students is on the rise, thus placing an increased demand on college counseling centers to address the growing number of students seeking treatment (Holland & Wheeler, 2016). College students report experiencing a considerable degree of stress. The American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment (NCHA) found that 53% of students reported feeling either "more than average" or "tremendous" levels of stress in the last 12 months. About one-third of U.S. college students had difficulty functioning in the last 12 months due to depression, and almost half said they felt overwhelming anxiety in the last year, according to the 2013 NCHA, which examined data from 125,000 students from more than 150 colleges and universities (American College Health Association, 2015).

Given that many counseling centers find it difficult to meet the high demand for mental health services (Gallagher, 2014; Simon, 2017), alternative ways of delivering services to students are needed. University counseling centers are employing new ways to meet these demands by offering not only traditional individual and group counseling, but also newer online counseling opportunities (Gallagher, 2014; Nguyen-Feng, Greer, & Frazier, 2017) and alternative experiential treatment options (Morgan, 2017). However, even with more options, there are still increasing numbers of students who struggle with seeking treatment for their mental health issues due to stigma associated with seeking help (Holland & Wheeler, 2016).

Abstract

Growing numbers of universities are developing service-learning community music-making interventions. However, there has been little research into their efficacy and effect on overall mental health for students. This study explored whether 4-weeks of dyadic group drumming could improve depression, anxiety, stress, social resilience, and enjoyment among 19 college students partnered with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). A paired sample t-test revealed significant findings on two subscales of the Perceived Stress Scale: 1) handling unexpected events, $t(18) = 2.535$, $p = .021$ and 2) controlling important life experiences, $t(18) = 2.364$, $p = .030$. Documented expressions by the students in the summative reflection noted: expressed joyfulness in the experience with their child and musicality of program; personal growth; stress reduction; and professional impact on their future careers. Overall, these findings indicate that a service-learning group drumming experience between college students and children with ASD leads to enhanced psychological states. Perhaps adding service-learning projects of this nature to college courses can alleviate the growing number of mental health issues faced by today's college students. It may also provide universities with unique opportunities to offer complementary service-learning as an additional form of non-stigmatizing therapy, lessening the demand on counseling services.

One option that can help in reducing the stigma of seeking out mental health treatment may be found in service-learning, where as part of a college course students serve others in the community (Haddack, et. al., 2013). Randy Moffett stated that, “Many people confuse service-learning with volunteerism, but in reality there is a strong academic component involved with service-learning.”(as cited in Moulton & Moulton, 2013). Nevertheless, volunteering and service-learning seek to balance the benefits to the student and the community partners. Research shows that helping others can aid in wellness and recovery. Known as “the caring cure,” Jenkinson, et al. (2013) reviewed 40 studies from the past 20 years on the link between volunteering and health, and found that volunteering is associated with lower depression, increased well-being, and a 22% reduction in risk of dying early. Researchers need to continue to explore innovative ways to expand services and work with faculty to incorporate aspects of mental wellness in the classroom by adding a service-learning component. Yet, little is known about the benefits that college students derive from their experience within the context of service-learning (Novotney, 2014).

Another, intervention that has demonstrated improvement in symptoms and reduced severity of conditions related to mental health is music, in particular group drumming (Fancourt et al., 2014). More specifically, after six-weeks of group drumming, results showed significant improvements in depression, social resilience and mental wellbeing among participants. In addition, at-risk adolescents who engaged in a drum circle reported feeling better about themselves and that the group helped them to feel more open. Half of the students reported that the group might have helped them with stress, anger and lack of motivation, as well as self-confidence (Snow & D’Amico, 2010). This type of alternative experiential intervention may enhance treatment seeking and engagement among college students Pederelli, et al., (2015). Interventions that enhance recovery, such as group drumming, can alleviate chronic stress, promote positive mental health and coping, and interrupt negative long-term health deficits (Joseph & Linley, 2008).

There is scarce research specific to group drumming in the context of service-learning aimed at enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of college students. Thus, the goal of the present study was to assess the efficacy of four-weeks of dyadic group drumming as a form of service-learning between college students paired with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as part of a summer college course. We hypothesized that by helping others, college students would experience a reduction in perception of anxiety, depression and stress, while improving resiliency and enjoyment.

Method

Participants

A total of nineteen students participated in the study. Fourteen students were enrolled in a summer graduate Recreation Therapy (RT) course. Ten of those students were RT majors, two were Recreation Administration majors, and two were Honors College students. The five remaining students were undergraduate RT students enrolled in an independent study course. Of the nineteen students, thirteen were females and six were

males. Participants varied in age ranging from 19-42 years of age ($M = 27.4$ years). There were two African American students, seven Hispanic students, and ten students were Caucasian. Participants were given a detailed description of the study before being asked to sign an informed consent approved by the Institutional Review Board. To be eligible for this study, participants needed to attend a minimum of six of the eight drumming sessions over the four-week period. Participants completed five pre and post self-assessments and a final reflection note to document any changes with the intervention.

Procedures

The primary investigator (PI) utilized assistance from fourteen Graduate Student Mentors (GSMs), and five Undergraduate Camp Counselors (CCs) all of which were college students who volunteered for the study. All GSMs and CCs attended an eight-hour orientation on strategies for working with children with ASD and the dyadic group drumming protocol. The PI trained the GSMs in program planning and implementation, therapeutic best practice approaches towards facilitating recreation programming with participant with ASD, as well as instruction on collecting data with the instruments used in this study. GSMs collected periodic data from child observations in both a pre-test–post-test all eight sessions, as well as session-specific collection of child data before and after each drumming intervention session. The PI facilitated the sessions with two GSMs all certified Drumtastic® Instructors. Drumtastic® is an evidence-based “All inclusive-no participant left behind” program that applies fitness, drumming, music and educational concepts designed to improve social, emotional, physical, and cognitive health, and well-being (Drums Alive, 2017).

All nineteen participants were assigned one child each with ASD to be their drumming partner. The Drumtastic® took place twice a week for one-hour for a total eight sessions at a four-week camp for children with ASD. The roles of the GSMs and CCs were to monitor behavior, enhance socialization skills, foster teamwork, and create a positive sense of social and emotional wellbeing without discouraging participation in individual or group activity. GSMs and CCs also assisted in the movement, drumming, and rhythmical model by assessing proper body mechanics and rhythmic timing.

The primary intervention was comprised of three main areas of the Drumtastic® curriculum. The first area focused on implementation of the multi-modular protocols that combined physical education, fitness, drumming, music education, mindfulness, and relaxation strategies. Next, we accelerated learning through movement and rhythm exercises that supported and reinforced “Motor and Sensory Memory” through targeted and continuous incorporation of multi-sensory inputs (Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, Emotion) to elicit immediate and measurable auditory, visual and physical feedback. Finally, we facilitated engagement of productive physical and cognitive activities to improve executive functioning and provide neural plasticity.

Drums Alive® (2017) provided each participant with an exercise stability ball (also referred to as a “drum”), a large bucket to hold the ball in place during the exercises;

and two pair of drumsticks (one set adorned with scarfs and one without). Drums were placed throughout the room in a four person “+” pod formation to accommodate all the participants and their GSMs and CCs to create a dyadic within-group drumming experience. Dyadic drumming involves the biological concept of rhythmic entrainment, whereby two rhythmic processes interact with each other in such a way that they adjust towards and eventually “lock in” to a common phase and/or periodicity (Trost et al., 2014).

Each one-hour Drumtastic® session consisted of seven sections. Section one was a five-minute warm-up that included fine motor dexterity exercises using drumsticks while children, GSMs, and CCs lightly bounced as they were seated on their exercise ball. Section two, consisted of ten-minutes of drumming and movement exercises on the large balls while simultaneously singing familiar songs and chants. The third section involved ten-minutes of cognitive and rhythmical clapping games using the various drum equipment and visual cue cards. The fourth section was a five-minute break for recovery with participants choosing from three resting positions. The fifth section was fifteen-minutes of drum and dance choreography set to music that was selected by the children. The sixth section was ten-minutes of yoga relaxation exercise including deep breathing and receiving a carefully monitored massage using lavender scented oil. Section seven, the final section, was a cool down period of five-minutes rhythmical Kirtan Krya chanting and positive affirmations statements.

Instruments

Our primary mental health outcomes were measured pre and post the four-weeks of Drumtastic® intervention. First, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) screened for multiple forms of depression and anxiety (Bjelland, Dahl, Haug &, Neckelman, 2002). Results were interpreted into three categories: Normal = 0-7; Borderline abnormal = 8-10; Abnormal = 11 - 21. The scale consisted of fourteen questions measuring symptoms of anxiety and depression based on the respondent’s feelings over the previous week.

Second, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) created in 1983, measured individual perceived stress levels and social function over the last month (Fancourt, et al., 2016). The PSS consisted of ten questions, each question used a five choice Likert Scale beginning with Never (0), almost never (1), seldom (2), fairly often (3) to very often (4). The PSS results were categorized into low = 0-13; moderate = 14-26; high = 27-40.

For our third outcome measure, the Connor Davis Resilience Scale (CDR) measured the resiliency of the participant under a variety of stressors (Fancourt, et al., 2016). Participants indicated which statement pertains to them in five categories ranging from not true at all to nearly true all the time. For example, statements such as, “ability to adapt to changes in one’s life,” to “overcoming obstacles that arise when trying to obtain goals.”

Fourth, the Physical Activity Enjoyment Scale (PACES) measured the level of enjoyment of a physical activity (e.g. dyadic group drumming) through eighteen questions on a bipolar seven-point scale. PACES was completed after the first Drumtastic® session and after the last intervention to determine level of enjoyment reached (Kendzierski & DeCarlo, 1991).

Finally, one of the methods recommended for service-learning projects in higher education is to assess effectiveness through the use of reflective writing (Moulton, & Moulton, 2013). Thus, participants were instructed to write a final reflection at the end of the eight Drumtastic® sessions based on their entire experience as it related to personal growth, changes in regard to mental health, and gaining professional experience in the field.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze college students performance on CDR, HADS, PSS, and PACES overall scores before and after the eight-session of intervention. A Likert Scale was used to measure all raw scores from each instrument measured. Paired sample t-tests were conducted on the CDR, HADS, PSS, and PACES scores to examine the significant differences between pre-and post-tests. Results were considered significant when alpha value was less than .05. Effect sizes (ES) was calculated for practical significance using Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Descriptive statistics showed that college students had higher overall scores on the post-test when compared to their pre-test scores on CDR, HADS-Anxiety category, PACES, and on the PSS total/subscales. The PSS total scores showed 8 out of 19 college students self-reported moderate stress levels pre and post. One additional student diagnosed with PTSD had high levels of perceived stress that was reduced to moderate post drumming. According to the HADS, the majority of students remained in the normal range pre and post.

The paired sample t-test revealed that college students scored significantly lower on the PSS post-test in subcategories of Unexpected, $t(18) = 2.535, p=.021$ and Important, $t(18) = 2.364, p=.030$ when compared to their pre-test scores. College students decreased 28.6% in Unexpected and 37.5% in Important in their post-test (see Figure 1). The effect sizes (ES) describing the college students pre-test and post-test differences were large on Unexpected (ES = .58) and Important (ES = .59). The moderate ES results indicate that the true effect of the pre-test and post-test differences in the populations may be moderate. These findings indicated that drumming activities improved college students' stress level related to being upset about something happening unexpectedly in their lives, and in the inability to control important things in their lives after eight-weeks of intervention.

Twelve of the nineteen students completed the reflection assignment. Nine of the participants spoke of "joy" experienced with their child camper and musicality of

program. Four made statements about personal growth. Three shared reduction in stress and one participant with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) shared a reduction in anxiety. Four spoke of the professional impact of the service-learning on their future careers.

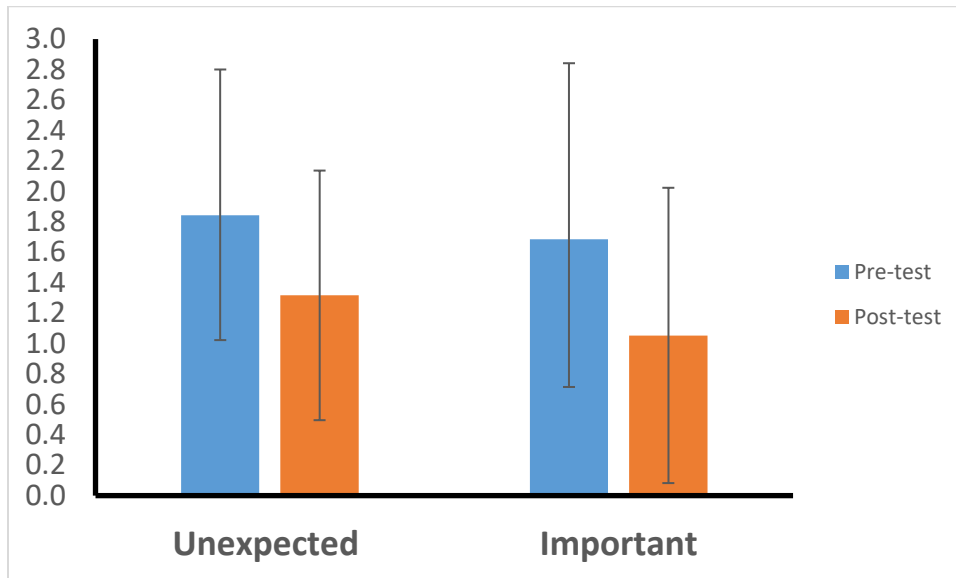


Figure 1. Perceived Stress Scale two Subscales. College students scored significantly lower on Unexpected and Important after the eight-week intervention.

Discussion

This study explored whether a dyadic group drumming service-learning intervention could improve mental health over four-weeks in college students when paired with a child with ASD. We hypothesized that across the four-week intervention there would be a decrease in symptoms of stress levels, depression and anxiety, and improvements in social resilience and overall enjoyment of the experience. This was demonstrated by overall higher scores in the post-test when compared to pre-test scores on CDR, HADS-Anxiety category, PACES, PSS total score/subscales. Furthermore, significant improvements were found on PSS subscales of control over important life factors and ability to handle unexpected life events. In addition, reflective statements provided evidence of a joyful experience that impacted personal growth, positive mental health outcomes, and professional development.

Our findings are comparable with previous service-learning studies involving the impact on stress. Haddock et al. (2013) found that college student mentors paired with at-risk youth mentees in a service-learning college course reported having increased confidence in their ability to manage challenges and stressful situations. We also found an improvement in confidence, optimism, coping skills in overcoming stressful situations. Reflective statements indicated reduction in stress by the college students. For example, “It provided stress relief.” “I also felt a decrease in my stress levels during the Drumtastics® intervention.”

Furthermore, our results are consistent with other researchers with regard to stress reduction and the impact of group drumming (Blankett & Payne, 2005; Snow & D'Amico, 2010; Winkelman, 2003). More specifically, Winkelman (2003) reported that drumming helped participants with substance abuse disorders calm down and deal with their high-stress lives. In addition, Snow and D'Amico (2010) found that a majority of at-risk high school students reported that the group drumming may have helped them with stress, anger and lack of motivation, as well as self-confidence. Finally, Blankett and Payne (2005) results coincided with ours, in that after seven-weeks of one-hour sessions of *HealthRhythms* drumming, participants in a substance use program considered the intervention to be particularly useful for stress reduction, emotional release, and provided a positive social group experience. Measuring perceived stress was vital to our study since students' perceptions of stress could affect their involvement and ability to interact successfully with their child with ASD. Furthermore, higher levels of stress are associated with avoidance coping strategies and increased students' depression which can often lead to decreased use of counseling services (Dyson & Renk, 2006). Overall, drumming has a positive impact on stress reduction, therefore this type of innovative service-learning may aid in providing a complementary experiential treatment option for university counseling centers.

A second positive finding of our study was that social resilience and anxiety showed a trend for improvement after eight 60-minute sessions over four-weeks. Our dyadic group drumming protocol and findings are similar to a recent study by Fancourt et al. (2016), who found that after six-weeks of group drumming there were significant increases in social resilience and a decrease in depression. More importantly, after ten weeks, there were significant improvements in social resilience and depression, and anxiety achieved significance. Moreover, all three variables remained significant at three-month follow up. Indicating that ten 90-minute sessions of group drumming involving call and response, rhythmic patterning and free improvisation techniques can have a lasting impact on mental well-being. Perhaps, group drumming should be considered by university counseling centers as a viable supplement for supporting college students' mental health status. In our study, social resilience and anxiety did not reach significance yet trended for the positive, with no decrease in depression. Perhaps it was that our study was shorter in duration, session length, and total number of sessions.

Enjoyment of the dyadic group drumming partnership in our study did show promising results according to the PACES and written participant reflections. Researchers have found that drumming induces relaxation and enhances theta-wave production and brain-wave synchronization. Drumming produces pleasurable experiences, enhanced awareness of preconscious dynamics, release of emotional trauma, and reintegration of self. It also creates a sense of connectedness with self and others, and drumming entrains the brain and stimulates pleasurable feelings (Winkelman, 2003). In a study by Kaplan (1999), short-term group drumming showed significant changes in mood and positive effects on cohesiveness and rhythm perception of undergraduate college students. Reflective statements from our study supported the positive experiences enjoyed by the college students. One student stated, "I was positively overwhelmed with

joy.” Another student wrote, “I want to spread and share the feeling of uninhibited joy.” Also expressed in reflective statements, “I personally enjoyed the challenge.” “Every day after camp I was noticeably happier and looking forward to the next time meeting with my child.” In essence, work with group drumming embraces the idea of fostering community expression via the joy of making music and the honoring of each individual within the group as an important contributor to the whole (Hull, 2006; Stevens, 2003).

Important implications of combining service-learning and group drumming philosophies enhances adaptive coping methods that students can utilize. This also may promote the use mental health counseling services and perhaps reduce the stigma of seeking help (Holland & Wheeler, 2016). Decreasing stigma among students is essential. The group drumming model of hands-on learning-by-doing engages students in a collective learning process that is expressive musically, teaches basic drumming skills, encourages initiative taking and leadership skills. Students are challenged to learn and to grow as individuals within a supportive environment (Hull, 2006; Stevens, 2003). The idea of service-learning in a collaborative group drumming process engages students to utilize knowledge learned in the classroom and apply it in addressing community mental health needs (Haddock et al., 2013). In addition, this creates a sound-based service-learning win-win situation for university and community persons in need (Fancourt et al., 2016). Encouraging student reflection affirms this win-win situation as noted in our study. “The feeling of playing together, being a part of something larger than an individual, contributing to a powerful and beautiful sound, and being emotionally moved and healed by that experience. I was excited to see how this feeling would translate outside this setting.”

A few elements of this study limit the extent to which the study findings can be generalized to other populations and contexts. First, the sample was made of current graduate students in a summer course, a convenience sample. Convenience samples often have similarities in that, participants are usually from the same geographical area, or have similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Ethnicity and gender also may affect overall data if these are groups are very similar (Emerson, 2015). In addition, summer classes are generally shorter, four-weeks of instruction compared to a normal sixteen-weeks semester, resulting in a limited length of time to compile data from each GSM and CC. This study was also limited by access to follow-up research on the residual or lingering effects described by participants. One important factor in resultant trends in research, especially in service-learning in higher education, is to understand the lasting impact on student retention and successful academic career culminating in graduation. “Therefore, experiential education opportunities have the potential to assist college students with a variety of personal growth opportunities that may enhance both academic and interpersonal functioning” (Morgan, 2017. p. 277).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that group drumming can reduce some symptoms of stress and provide benefits for anxiety, social resilience, and enjoyment for these college students. Since college students experiencing more stress are less likely to use counseling services (Dixon & Kurpius, 2008; Rosenthal & Wilson, 2008;

Yorgason, Linville, & Zitzman, 2008) it is important that university counseling centers partner with faculty to provide non-stigmatizing complimentary therapies that show a positive impact on mental health. Future research may wish to measure the impact of a service-learning group drumming on academic success and retention rates. We believe our research lays the groundwork for future investigations on student motivations related to service-learning and augment use of counseling services.

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