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### Service-Learning in a One-Year Alternative Route to Teacher Certification: A Powerful Multicultural Teaching Tool

Elinor L. Brown <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> An assistant professor in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky. Her major research interests include multicultural teacher education, global educational equity, alternative routes to teacher certification, and the influence of race and class on academic success,

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## Service-Learning in a One-Year Alternative Route to Teacher Certification: A Powerful Multicultural Teaching Tool

Elinor L. Brown

This five-year study examined the effectiveness of an innovative approach to service-learning embedded in a one year site-based alternative route to teacher certification. The ten-week school-based study investigated the influence of service-learning on the multicultural perceptions, cross-cultural communication skills, and social justice cognizance of future teachers. The study participants consisted of 73 secondary pre-service teacher candidates. Data sources included: participant reflective journals, debriefings and final reports, letters from and discussions with host school service recipients, and investigator interviews and field notes. Study results indicate that service-learning within the time constraints of a one-year alternative route to teacher certification can provide future teachers with insight into the politics of education, increase their interactive proficiency with culturally diverse students, teachers and administrators, raise their level of multicultural consciousness, and augment their educational foundations and content knowledge while connecting theory to classroom practice.

The educational foundation of “service” and “learning” in higher education began in 1862 with the Homestead and Morrill Acts (providing free land and establishing land grant educational institutions). The concept was expanded in 1897 by the Hatch Act (establishing the agricultural experiment station program) and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (creating the Cooperative Extension Service) (National Association of State University and Land-Grant Colleges [NASULGC], 1995; Pollack, 1996; Sigmon, 1979; Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999; Waterman, 1997a). These programs provided students with practical training in animal husbandry and agriculture while advancing farm productivity and rural development (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999). Several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Appalachian folk schools (for example, North Carolina A & T State University, Tuskegee University, Berea College, and Warren Wilson College) were founded and continue to operate on the integrated principles of work, service, and learning (NASULGC, 1995).

By the 1930’s, the experiential learning theory of Dewey was furthering the constructs of “service” and “learning” throughout academia by augmenting classroom “learning” with community “service” experiences

(Dewey, 1938/1951; Pollack, 1999; Rice & Brown, 1998). In 1965, the federal college “work study” program was instituted on the precept of “service” with the primary focus on assisting financially disadvantaged students in defraying the cost of a college education while providing a service to academia. Unfortunately, many of the “work study” opportunities did not connect the student’s academic pursuits with the service requirement in the context of Dewey’s experiential learning model.

Embedding service and learning within community environments in the context of rigorous academic requirements has moved these concepts to a new level in academia. To create and institutionalize a platform for social change leading to a just and equitable society, the concepts of “service” and “learning” were combined with Dewey’s experiential learning theory and expanded by social activists to include “action” and “reflection” (Freire, 1973; Kinsley & McPherson, 1995; Kolb 1984; Rice & Brown, 1998; Wade & Eland, 1995; Wade, Anderson et al., 1999). Student involvement in community organizing and demonstration projects exemplified the effectiveness of these expanded concepts during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Lisman, 1998; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999; Taylor, 1988). In 1969 the Southern Regional Education Board working in Tennessee, coined the term “service-learning” to describe “the accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational

Address correspondence to Elinor L. Brown, University of Kentucky, College of Education, 311 Dickey Hall, Lexington, KY 40506-0017. E-mail: elbrown@uky.edu

growth" (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). The group focused on providing community related service opportunities for students that encompassed learning in the process of social change. Service-learning experts have found that service-learning helps students visualize "service" in the context of social justice and allows educators to formulate a multiplicity of methods to emphasize student-centered experiential education (Astin et al., 2000; Barber & Battistoni, 1993; Kendall, 1990; Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997; O'Grady, 2000; Stanton, 1990).

The term "service-learning" was formally defined by The National and Community Service Act of 1990 as experiences that foster structured learning through organized participation in activities that address community needs (Kendall, 1990; Pollack, 1999). Further, these activities should be an integral component of the student's academic curriculum, provide opportunities for student reflection, nurture student compassion for others, and allow for the practice of newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life environments (Astin et al., 2000; Checkoway, 1996; Donahue, Bowyer, Rosenberg, 2003; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Stanton, 1990). The Clinton administration's National Service Trust Act of 1993 expanded the 1990 definition to include curricular goals and reflection within the following four themes: Collaboration, reflection, experiential learning, and caring (O'Grady, 2000; Stephens, 1995).

Service-learning has been further institutionalized by Campus Compact, a coalition of over 520 college and university presidents and federal agencies (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kobrin, Mareth & Smith, 1996; Waterman, 1997a). On today's college campuses, service-learning merges volunteerism, community service and experiential learning to the benefit of both student provider and recipient community. Waterman (1997b) and Astin (1996) indicate that effective service-learning outcomes provide students with a better grasp of the academic curricula and a greater sense of civic responsibility while promoting personal development and by providing tangible benefits to the group being served. Additionally, Sigmon (1979) indicates that the most powerful service-learning activities consist of the following three principles: (1) control remains with those being served, (2) recipients are engaged in and enriched by the activity, and (3) the providers learn from the experience and have input in the development of the outcome expectations.

In traditional teacher education, service-learning projects have often been couched as "field experiences" and implemented to: (1) familiarize pre-service teachers with the neighborhoods from which urban and rural K-12 student populations are drawn, (2) propitiously affect the cross-cultural perceptions and behaviors of future teachers, (3) provide experiential connections between theory and practice, (4) furnish necessary services to community organizations, and/or (5) take

on community social justice issues that impede the academic development of K-12 students from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 2001; Brown, 1998; Gay, 2000; Pang, 2001). However, the increasing shortage in qualified teacher candidate pools, the growing homogeneity of pre-service teachers (for example, white, middle-class, female, limited cross-cultural experiences), and the increasing diversity (for example, ethnic, racial, social-economic, linguistic) among K-12 student populations and their neighborhoods have produced alternative teacher certification models that severely constrain productive field experiences (Brown, 2004c; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002; Hodgkinson, 1992). Powerful service-learning activities in teacher education are field experiences that combine service, learning and academic outcomes to further the development of multicultural classroom teachers who have a propensity to foster social justice in themselves and their students (Bennett, 2003; Brown, 2004b; Densmore, 2000; O'Grady, 2000; Sleeter, 2000). The valid outcomes for these experiences should include: (1) reinforcing philosophical and pedagogical foundations, (2) developing collaborative and cooperative skills, (3) cultivating cross-cultural competence, (4) stimulating self-reflection, (5) encouraging civic responsibility and (6) providing self-satisfaction.

One such graduate alternative route to certification has effectively embedded service-learning into its fifth year secondary teacher education program by implementing service activities that focus student learning on the influence of internal politics, cross-cultural interaction (or lack thereof) and classroom teacher perceptions on the academic and social environment of the secondary school. The goal of each service-learning project is to identify and provide beneficial school community related services while assisting future teachers in: raising their cognizance of the diverse and often conflicting needs and political agendas of the school community, developing strategies to identify and meet those needs, and accruing the academic proficiency, collaborative skills and negotiating expertise to implement beneficial service-learning in the context of social justice in schooling. The requirements for each service-learning project is based on the principles of Sigmon (1979), Dewey (1938/1951), and Friere (1973), described previously, in the context of the following five criteria:

1. *Purposeful*, an element taken from the philanthropic approach that indicates service-learning activities should raise the self-esteem and academic skills of student providers as they perform needed services for the school community (Bandura, 1977; O'Grady, 2000; Speck, 2001; Wade et al., 1999; Waterman, 1997b)
2. *Reflective*, a component drawn from multicultural educators such as Banks (2001), Brown (2004c), O'Grady (2000), Pang (2001) and Rosenberger (2000) and the theories of

Bandura (1977), Freire (1970) and Kolb (1984) where examining service-learning activities and outcomes through debriefing, analyses, and discussions connect the need for and results of the activities to the foundations of teacher education pedagogy and social justice

3. *Experiential*, an element taken from the theories of Dewey (1938/1951), Eskow (1980) and Kolb (1984) that assists students in giving meaning and relevance to and making connections between academic theory, school political agendas, classroom practices, and student needs
4. *Reciprocal*, taken from the principles of Anderson and Hill (2001); Donahue, Bowyer & Rosenberg (2003); Jacoby (1996) and Sigmon (1996) that indicate that authentic service-learning shuns the one way volunteerism approach to service and provides tangible benefits for both the provider and the recipient (Kendall, 1990; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999)
5. *Transformative*, employing the theories of multicultural teacher educators such as Boyle-Baise (1998), Brown (2004b), Cochran-Smith (1995), Erickson and O'Connor (2000), Morton (1995), Irvine (1992), Pang (2001), and Rice and Brown (1998) that indicate that effective school based experiences have the power to raise the cross-cultural cognizance of future teachers by exposing them to issues of personal and institutional power found in public schools and providing them with the clarity and skills to become agents for social change. Additionally, Astin et al. (2000), Giles and Eyler (1994), Markus, Howard, and King (1993), and Sleeter (2000) suggest that service-learning activities can assist students in overcoming their biases, revising their perceptions, and solidifying their commitment to social justice.

The purpose of this five-year study was to explore the influence of service-learning activities when infused into the time constraints of a fifth-year graduate secondary teacher education program. The investigator examined the effect of the process and products of service-learning activities on the 73 study participants': (1) cross-cultural communication skills, (2) perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward diverse groups, (3) insight into the political underpinnings of educational agendas, directives, policies, and practices, and (4) ability to connect academic training to classroom practices. The findings confirm the importance of providing service-learning opportunities for future teachers, the value of these activities in site-based teacher education programs and the significance of using the five criteria shown above to assess the learning outcomes and benefits for both the providers and recipients. The service-learning activities were evaluated using the study participants' reflective journals and final reports, letters from and formal discussions with host school service recipients and investigator field notes during observations, class dialogues, debriefings and informal discussions.

## METHOD

### Context

The Master's for Initial Secondary Certification (MIC) is an urban, site-based, one-year graduate teacher certification program at a southeastern university. Prerequisites to program admission included: Graduate school acceptance, a bachelor's degree in an appropriate content area, 100 contact hours with adolescents in a school or community setting, an acceptable writing sample, and a successful program faculty interview.

Accepted candidates are assigned to one of four secondary schools in the metropolitan school area. Each school district busses the majority of its students. The teacher candidates spend the first ten weeks of the program immersed in the school environment with a cohort group of 16–20. During this period, the candidates are familiarized with the physical, social, and academic environment of a secondary school, the diversity of feeder neighborhoods, and the complex responsibilities of classroom teachers, administrators, and staff in culturally diverse schools. They are placed in classrooms to observe and interact with classroom teachers, secondary students, and teaching assistants, to make (with guidance) connections between education theory and practice and to acquire and reflect on constructive feedback from practicing teachers, peers, and university professors.

The secondary school site for this research study was situated in a middle class urban community with an enrollment of approximately 1,800 academically, culturally, economically, socially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. The student demographic data indicate that: (1) approximately 34% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch, (2) 63% were white, (3) of the 37% who were of color, the largest groups were Latino and African American, and (4) 11% were first-generation immigrants and refugees from over 40 countries (for example, Afghan, Bosnian, Congolese, Ecuadorian).

### Participants

The study consisted of 73 graduate teacher candidates (16–18 annually) enrolled in the MIC program and assigned to the same urban public secondary school over a five-year period. The candidates' content area specializations consisted of business, English, foreign language, math, science, school psychology, and social studies. There was limited diversity in the race and gender of the teacher candidates (approximately 94% Caucasian and 75% females annually). However, there was a broad spectrum of age, and prior professional experience within each of the five cohort groups. The study participants' ages ranged from early twenties to mid fifties with career experiences that extended from those embarking on

their first professional endeavor to retired military personnel and displaced or transitional corporate middle managers beginning a second career.

### Instruments

This qualitative study used a triangulation (Carney, 1990; Denzin, 1978; Stringfield & Teddlie, 1991) format of data collection: (1) study participant focus groups, weekly reflective journals, bi-weekly class discussions, and culminating reports, (2) school community (students, teachers, administrators, parents) letters, questionnaires, informal individual and group dialogues, and formal written reviews, and (3) the cohort leader's (investigator) field notes, observations and interviews.

Focus groups and informal discussions on observations and shadowing experiences were used to aid the graduate study participants in examining and comparing their perceptions of culturally diverse school environments with those of their peers, secondary students, administrators, and classroom teachers. These interactions provided a platform for self-reflection, the examination of attitudes and behaviors that influence academic engagement, performance and success, and a means to identify service-learning needs and potential activities. Interactions of this nature assist students in re-experiencing and re-examining their own subjective views of other cultures and help them recognize and reduce their own cultural biases (Astin et al, 2000; Brown, 2004c; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1993).

Reflective journals and culminating reports have been indicated as rich holistic data sources that provide flexibility in action research (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; O'Grady, 1997). These mandatory interactive journals provided the study participants with timely feedback through personal instructor/student interaction and became the foundation for the review and modification of course instruction and service-learning projects. Additionally, Brown (2004a), Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) and Jaeger (1988) indicate that a researcher's examination of reflective journals provides an opportunity to evaluate incremental patterns, changes, and differences that emerged in the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of future teachers.

Planned debriefings and facilitated class discussions are advocated by Haberman and Post (1992) as a means to minimize the propensity of teacher candidates toward selective perception and the reinforcement of stereotyping that can occur when students are immersed in other cultures. Additionally, Astin et al. (2000), Bennett (2003), Brown (2004a) and Gollnick and Chinn (2002) indicate that making opportunities available for students to participate in guided debriefings reduces the tendency toward reinforcing preconceived misconceptions.

### Procedure

At the beginning of each fall semester, a new cohort group of study participants was assigned to the secondary school site for ten weeks. On the first day the cohort was familiarized with the school's physical environment, student demographics, and building policies and procedures via scheduled discussions with the administrators and staff, given a group tour of the facilities, introduced to the department chairs in their content areas, and provided with the criteria, expectations, and rubric for their "service-learning" project. The following day each study participant was assigned a secondary student to shadow for the full school day (e.g., all classes, study halls, lunch, extracurricular activities). During the following week (in years one through three) the cohorts participated in bus tours of the communities that fed the host school. In years four and five, instead of a bus tour, the graduate students visited the four middle schools that fed into the host school (shadowing a student for one full day).

The study participants were then required to observe and interview classroom teachers, secondary students, and administrators to identify needs and to ascertain why they were not currently being met. During several meetings with various classroom teachers, students and administrators, the study participants individually or in small groups designed a service-learning project that met specific school needs, reinforced their content knowledge, and satisfied all five areas of the service-learning criteria. The project ideas were then presented to the entire cohort for discussion of the feasibility, time constraints, direct and indirect benefits and disadvantages, and potential residual effects on the study participants, the recipients, and others in the school community. Service-learning activities could not be implemented until the study participants secured the approval of the cohort leader, sponsoring classroom teacher, and school administration. When obstacles were faced, the study participants were responsible for resolving the issues and adjusting their projects accordingly without losing the original purpose. Over the next seven weeks, project progress and problems were reported and feedback provided during bi-weekly debriefings and in weekly reflective and critical incidents journals.

At the conclusion of the service-learning activity, each study participant was required to write a reflective final 10–15 page report, addressing the requirements in the rubric received at the beginning of the project and reflecting on the issues and concerns each faced throughout the activity. Each sponsoring recipient (teacher or administrator) wrote a letter to the cohort leader describing: (1) how the completed project benefited the school community and/or enhanced their instructional and management responsibilities, (2) their collaboration experience with the service providers (study participants),

and (3) how the project could be maintained and/or expanded in the future. On several occasions, the completed service-learning activities were enhanced by secondary students or augmented, the following year, by members of the next cohort. Finally, the cohort leader graded the service-learning activities based on the rubric, the quality of the final product and the recipient's written comments (see Appendix 1).

## RESULTS

The results of the study have been divided into the following three sections: (1) the effects of service-learning on the 73 teacher candidates who designed and implemented the projects, (2) the impact of project process and outcomes on the recipients, and (3) the benefits accruing to the larger school community.

### Study Participants

The study participants' (providers) reflective journals and final reports, group and class discussions, and investigator observations of the process and progress were the instruments used to determine the effectiveness of the projects in meeting the service-learning goals: (1) gaining insight into the internal politics and conflicting goals and agendas within the school community, (2) increasing proficiency in interacting with heterogeneous school community groups (e.g., parents, administrators, students, teachers, staff), (3) raising the level of commitment to social justice and equity pedagogy, and (4) making the connections between academic theory and classroom practices.

*Gaining Insight into the Politics and Conflicting Agendas of School Communities.* After initial contact with department chairs, 40% of the study participants indicated that they believed teachers were more interested in using them to perform mundane administrative tasks (e.g., cleaning and organizing textbooks, sorting and cataloging chemical storage room, making copies, taking attendance) rather than creating student-centered stimulating resources and activities. After observing and interviewing students, teachers, staff, and administrators, the teacher candidates began to voice their frustration with the politics that drive public education and all of the obstacles that these competing political agendas bring to bear on teachers, students, and academic engagement. The reflective journals of 72% of the teacher candidates expressed disenchantment with the overall educational system, school politics, secondary student motivation and the attitudes and behaviors of some classroom teachers. However, 85% believed they could positively influence student learning in spite of competing political agendas. The following excerpts are from the students' reflective journals and class discussions on their perceptions of the social strata and politics

within the school and how these agendas affect student achievement.

Mrs. . . . doesn't want us to develop activities for her regular class . . . just the gifted classes. I know that some of those kids are brighter than the ones in the gifted program but she just gives them busywork worksheets to do all period. . . . I'd put my head on the desk, too. I use to think tracking was good for all kids . . . now I see how teachers can use it to ignore certain kids. Guess which ones.

I don't care what Mr. . . . thinks about some kids, he shouldn't use SAFE [daily in-school suspension] to get them out of his class. I watched him let some kids slide and others he just looks for reasons to kick them out. How can they pass his class if they aren't there? I won't send kids to SAFE . . . some of them ask to go . . . They don't have to do any work and they see their friends. . . . What a waste of school time and money.

Thanks to our group projects, I have come to realize that many school mandates and policies with money attached have hidden agendas that keep black, Latino, poor students at the bottom of the success ladder. . . . I found some teachers prefer it that way and contribute to this anomaly. Just think, if too many kids progress out of remedial and special ed programs they would end up back with teachers who don't want them and funding may be cut, so keep them in.

An example of the students' determination to overcome what they perceived as social hierarchy and political agendas within the school community was the Flag and Sign welcome projects. The purposes of these projects were to diminish the isolation felt by the English as Second Language (ESL) students, to make the school environment a congenial place for the diverse parents and guests who visited, to showcase the disparate heritages existing in the school, and to promote social interaction across cultural borders. The study participants collaborated with the principal, ESL students, several teachers and the staff to identify an appropriate site and secure funding to implement the project. The final outcome was the purchase and installation of flags identifying the 40 countries of origin represented by first-generation student immigrants and refugees attending the school and the designing of four welcome mats to be hung at the front entry to the school. The flags were hung from the school's atrium ceiling, across from the theater. However, the welcome mats (designed in four languages saying welcome on the front and good-bye on the reverse) have not been installed.

Obstacles to the project surfaced on three levels. First, the students made several morning announcements explaining the projects and requesting that classroom teachers survey their students to ascertain how many students were first-generation immigrants or refugees and their countries of origin. During the first week, approximately 59% of the teachers failed to respond

to the announcement. Fearing this would inadvertently leave out some students, the graduate students went to each classroom to acquire the information. Second, the head custodian objected to the placement of the welcome signs and when the principal was out of town refused to allow them to be hung. When the graduate students took the problem to the associate principal, they were informed that he could not override the custodian until the principal returned. Third, the JROTC instructor observed the students hanging the flags, patiently waited until all were installed then informed them that some were not properly displayed, but did not tell them which were wrong or the proper way to hang them. The graduate students removed all of the flags, researched the proper way to display them and re-hung them. This added a full day to their project.

The classroom discussions indicated that all of the study participants learned several valuable lessons about the politics within a school: (1) the importance of securing the cooperation and commitment of all potential participants (minor and major) prior to beginning a project, (2) people perceived as subordinates have power and when not included in the process can thwart a teacher's best efforts, and (3) political correctness requires that one ask for support from those perceived as the school's "expert" on a subject.

I can't believe that Mr. . . . couldn't go over that custodian's head and let us put the welcome signs up. He knows Mr. . . . approved the project and said we could hang them there. [I] guess we should have just asked the custodian first. Bet I know who's in charge now!!!!

Mr. . . . ticked me off!! He just stood there and watched us hang all those flags before he told us some were hung wrong. . . . What does he know? . . . We probably should have asked him first and used his kids to help hang them. That would have included the JROTC and given them some credit.

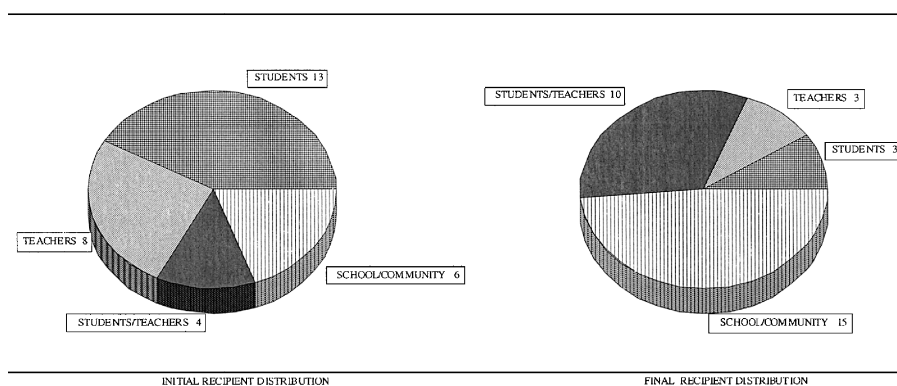
We took a lot of time to do those announcements and send the memos. . . . They just ignored us. . . . but when Mr. . . . made the announcement, we got the count the same day. . . . I guess we don't count for much.

*Increasing Proficiency in Communicating and Collaborating in a Heterogenous School Community.* On four occasions over the five year period, it became necessary for the cohort leader to facilitate meetings between the participant providers and their intended recipients to discuss differences and to reach acceptable compromises that provided a needed service and met the service-learning goals and criteria. Initially, 68% of the study participants perceived their role as creators of new activities, demonstrations, or methods to assist students in the learning process. On the other hand, all of the teachers (service recipients) perceived the service-learning role of the teacher candidates as volunteers who were not very knowledgeable and were there to assist the teacher in their daily tasks. The study participants' failure to negotiate or collaborate with potential recipients impeded and in some instances stymied the implementation of otherwise sound projects.

Of the initial 32 projects, 13% were unacceptable to the receiving teachers and new projects had to be developed, 39% required minor changes and through negotiation (between the receiving teacher and the graduate student provider) were modified and became acceptable to both, 22% needed major modifications and required some mediation involvement of the cohort leader, and 26% were acceptable as proposed (see Figure 1).

An example of an activity that required major renegotiations was the cleaning and reorganization of the English book room project. The English department chair articulated that having the students clean and organize the book storage room would be an effective use of the group's time and energy and would be of great benefit to the English department. However, the project as

DISTRIBUTIONS OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS



**Figure 1**  
Initial and final distribution of service-learning projects.

conceived by the recipient failed to meet all of the service-learning requirements. On the surface, this project did not meet any of the four goals and only one of the five criteria (purposeful). The project as envisioned by the teacher was rejected by the cohort leader (investigator). The situation became very stressful for the group because the department chair seemed inflexible and one of the study participants was applying for her first teaching position under this department chair. This situation brought the hierarchy of the social political order of the school community to the forefront.

After surveying the book room and interviewing other English teachers, the group began to develop a strategy that included the department chair as a collaborator. The group examined and reported organizational strategies used by other departments. Then the graduate students used these strategies to develop a range of methods to address the task requested by the English department. Finally they shared both their strategies and service-learning requirements with the collaborator. Together they developed a project that met all the service-learning requirements (exceeded the tasks put before them) was perceived by all of the English teachers as the most productive use of their time and talents, and satisfied the department chair's initial conditions. The final product was a well-organized book room, a computerized system to check books in and out, a bulletin board that listed the texts available and required by grade level, and other department information. The following excerpts are from the final reports generated by this group and focus on the development of their collaborative skills within the school environment:

The book project was a monumental task but we learned so much from it. I didn't think Mrs. . . . would compromise on anything. I didn't think she would even listen to us. After she understood what we had to do, she even helped give us ideas. The other teachers were great after we interviewed them and asked for their input.

When I talked to students in different classes, some said they didn't care, but when they saw me write their comments down and tell them how their thoughts would help me when I became an English teacher, they wanted to share. We exchanged favorite books . . . and I found ways to talk on their level without seeming condescending. . . . [It] was a great experience. I plan to continue. It's important.

This book room project was great. . . . I had a great time sharing the books I had read with the group and finding out about novels I didn't read yet. . . . I plan to read several more this summer.

When we interviewed teachers I got different techniques to teach grammar . . . the part of English I hated in school . . . but when [we] interviewed students, we found that some of those techniques didn't work for all kids. . . . I decided to look for strategies on the web searches and

found some good sites and methods. Our group will use these sites when we teach next semester.

*Raising the Level of Commitment Toward Social Justice.* Several groups focused on disadvantaged students. As they discussed potential projects, several problems surfaced as obstacles to the matriculation of talented disadvantaged students to colleges and universities. English and business students collaborated on several projects that could remove some of these barriers.

One such project was the interactive financial aid calculator. Seeing the overwhelming workload of the guidance counselors, the group surveyed students to find out who made appointments with the guidance counselors and why others did not. They found that many disadvantaged secondary students were reluctant or embarrassed to seek assistance or request information. After reviewing student surveys and concluding several weeks of research this group developed a self-guided interactive web site that provided financial aid terminology and definitions, a "what-if" financial aid calculator, deadlines for applications, and links to scholarship programs and college web sites. The site was so successful that the following year another group of study participants added a deadline calendar for each year of high school, sample resumes, college applications, essays, scholarship request letters and additional links to other sites. As an added commitment, both groups met with juniors and seniors to assist them in the process, teach them how to make the best use of the site, and to train them to assist their peers in accessing and navigating the site. The following are from class discussions and reflective journals focused on social justice:

I can't believe Mr. . . . is only interested in his gifted kids. I want to create neat activities for both classes. . . . Mr. . . . said "that's . . . wasted in regular class with those behavior problems." Isn't he supposed to teach with all the kids? I hope I don't end up like him—cynical.

I use to think tracking and ability grouping were good for all students, but after working on this project, I have changed my mind. I'm still not convinced that the concept of tracking is wrong, but how teachers use it to exclude kids they don't want to be bothered with. After working on my project, I know the advantages of heterogeneous cooperative groupings and can't believe that all teachers don't use it.

I didn't get any help from my parents or the guidance counselor with filling out financial aid forms or getting college information. . . . I had to search out the stuff for myself. . . . I guess mom didn't know and the guidance counselors didn't care. . . . I think this project will help kids in my situation. . . . I will always try to help kids go on to college.

*Augmenting Content Knowledge While Applying Foundations Theory in the School Setting.* The study found that in every project there was a component that either

applied foundations theory (for example, classroom management, multiple intelligence, learning styles, instruction, discipline) or content knowledge and often both. The following foreign language project exemplified this goal. After teaching several Spanish classes and surveying all of the first year Spanish students, one study participant used her foundations knowledge of learning styles and Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (Krathwoll, Bloom & Masia, 1965) to develop an interactive computer jeopardy game. The activity engaged and challenged students, reinforced grammar and definitions, and helped students correctly verbalize their Spanish vocabulary. The following excerpts are from final papers focused on connections made between theory and practice in content and foundations:

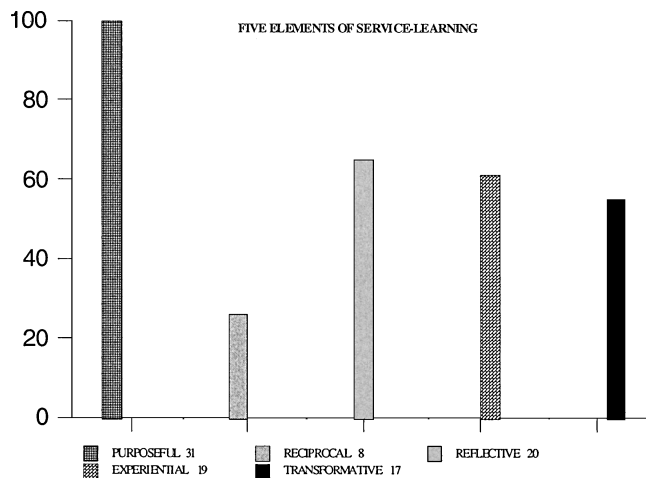
Our group learned a lot during our book room project... I know what novels and texts are used by grade and why... I got to share the books I read and find out about ones I didn't... I found out how kids interpret readings at different ages... We even talked about the books we hated and now love.

Creating three books full of geometry, algebra II, and trig math problems was really hard. I used the geometer's sketch pad to draw geometric shapes and test geometric theorems... I was really amazed at the resources available free on the web... Using technology supports instruction because it can help teachers reach some of the higher levels on Blooms order of taxonomy... engages students because instruction is more student centered.

I thought I was really up on my social studies content... when I worked on the ESL web site and started to research... the countries the kids came from. I was fascinated... I didn't even know some of the history of the obscure countries. It was more interesting to do the research and then ask the kids if the information was true... Boy, the stories they had to tell! I realize how history gets twisted... I will be doing a lot more investigating.

The projects also were required to meet all five of the service-learning criteria (purposeful, reciprocal, reflective, experiential, transformative). This study found that if the five criteria were met, then the four goals also were met. Of the 31 projects, only 27% initially met all five criteria: (1) 100% were purposeful, (2) 26% were reciprocal, (3) 65% reflected on the effect of relationships, attitudes, and behaviors on the teaching and learning process, (4) 61% made connections between either their academic content areas or foundations course work, and (5) 55% had the potential to be transformative (see Figure 2).

The initial target receivers of the 31 service-learning projects completed over the five years, were distributed as follows: Secondary students were the target recipients of 42% of the projects, individual teachers 26%, teacher/student 13%, and the school community (for example, students, administrators, and parents) 19%. However, by the conclusion of the study the actual bene-

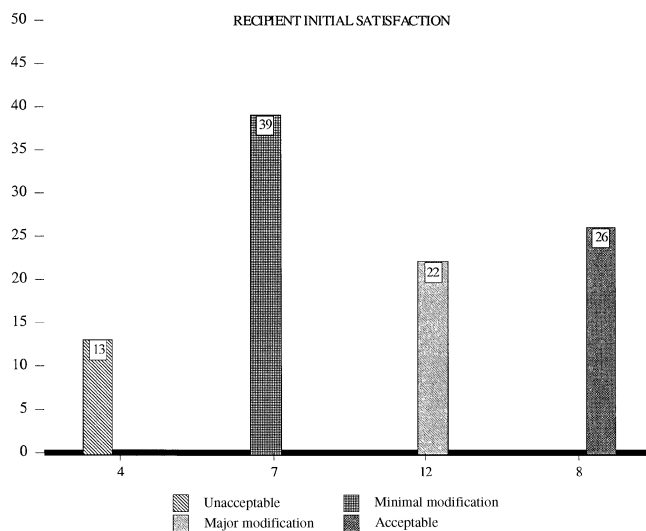


**Figure 2**  
Distribution of criteria met by the initial projects.

ficiaries of the 31 projects were distributed as follows: The school community 48%, teachers/students 32%, individual teachers 10%, and student groups 10% (see Appendix 2 and Figure 3).

### School Recipients

Informal discussions between the cohort leader and the recipients and the culminating formal letters submitted by each sponsor recipient indicated a general satisfaction with both the process and products produced by the teacher candidate providers. In the beginning, some recipients were concerned that the actual value of the projects would not be commensurate with the amount of time they believed they would be required to commit to advising on the project and felt that the graduate



**Figure 3**  
Distribution of projects that met initial recipient satisfaction.

students' time would be more valuable to teachers if the graduate students assisted with administrative tasks (for example, grading papers, tutoring, copying) instead of "grandiose" projects.

Discussions both during and at the conclusion of the projects found that: 16% of the teachers were uncomfortable with the perceived "arrogance" of some student providers and the "immaturity" of others, 11% believed that the projects would have been better if their (recipients') suggestions were more fully incorporated, and 73% indicated that they collaborated with the student providers from the onset of the project and the experience made the projects more productive and beneficial. However, by the completion of their sponsored project 90% of the providers and recipients had developed collaborative working relationships. This was borne out in the letters written by the recipients that assessed the usefulness of the project and evaluated the providers' performance and cooperation. The project recipients deemed all of the final projects relevant, well-executed, and valuable to the teaching and learning process.

### Larger Community

Initially, 19% of the projects were focused on meeting a need of the larger community in that these projects, though bound in the context of a content area, were focused on affecting parent and visitor perception of the school as the school engaged in a national competition to receive an "inviting school" award (See Appendix 2). However, by the conclusion of this study 48% of the 31 projects were found to positively affect the entire school community (see Figure 3). These projects included developing strategies to make the school more welcoming to visitors and parents; initiating web-based information that provided higher education tools for parents, counselors, and students to access and understand college information; using photograph exhibits and websites to showcase the diversity within the school to the larger community.

One such project developed individual web pages for each teacher in the math department. The finished products included a picture of the teacher, a listing of the courses taught, current syllabi, course prerequisites, and requirements, as well as homework. Though the project was for the benefit of the math department, parents indicated that the sites were informative and useful for them as well. The principal has since made web pages a requirement for all classroom teachers and administrators in the school.

Another project was developed after a study participant saw a teacher's frustration with the lack of response to important form letters sent to parents whose first language was not English. The service-learning projects of two foreign language study participants addressed this issue by conducting a survey to ascertain the three most

common languages spoken among the ESL students and the most important forms sent home by the school. Through their enterprise this became a collaborative effort between the sponsoring classroom teacher, the university's foreign language faculty, and several refugee families. The welcome letter, home language survey, truancy form, graduation requirements, and computer usage forms were translated into Spanish, French, Japanese, and Russian. The school district is currently evaluating the forms for use throughout the county.

### DISCUSSION

The results of this five-year research study indicate that service-learning embedded in the restrictive time frame of a one-year graduate teacher education program can positively influence the multicultural perceptions, cross-cultural communication skills, and social justice cognizance of future teachers. Further, this innovative site-based approach to service-learning can provide future teachers with insight into the politics of a school community; increase their interactive proficiency with culturally diverse students, teachers, and administrators, raise their level of multicultural consciousness; and augment their educational foundation and content knowledge, while connecting theory to classroom practices.

The study also found that when introduced as a component of a site-based teacher education program in a secondary school the concept of service-learning is often interpreted differently by the providers (graduate students) and the recipients (school community). Initially, the teacher candidates (service providers) perceive their role as creators of new activities, demonstrations, or methods to assist high school students in the learning process. On the other hand, the teachers (service recipients) perceive the service-learning role of the teacher candidates as volunteers whose tasks were to assist teachers. The investigator found that service-learning outcomes were more successful when the two groups negotiated an acceptable definition of service-learning in the context of the program goals and objectives. These negotiations not only provided appropriate parameters for service-learning activities but were instrumental in the development of collaborations between the providers and recipients. This synergy led to the creation and implementation of projects more suitable to the needs of diverse secondary students and building educators and assisted the teacher candidates in achieving their service-learning goals.

The investigator noted several additional benefits of school based service-learning in teacher education:

- A strong partnership was formed between the host secondary school and several colleges (non-education) within the university

- The service recipients (classroom teachers) grew to value and look forward to collaborating with the graduate students within the cohort
- The projects became more innovative and student centered as the years progressed and
- As the graduate students reflected on their projects, they became more enthusiastic and more committed to the concept of service-learning and most indicated a commitment to incorporate service-learning into their instructional strategies.

Though fifth year and one-year alternative routes to teacher certification programs operate within severely limited time constraints, this study found that well structured service-learning can raise pre-service teachers' cognizance of and competence in identifying and working within political environments that govern a school community; increase proficiency in cross-cultural collaboration, cooperation, and interaction (students, peers, teachers, administrators, staff); stimulate self-reflection; reinforce pedagogical and philosophical knowledge bases while connecting theory and practice; encourage civic responsibility; and provide self-satisfaction. In well-constructed service-learning activities teacher candidates (providers) are given the opportunity to do the following:

1. Examine their own perceptions and beliefs by observing current practices, reviewing policies and procedures, interviewing potential beneficiaries, and comparing what they have learned is "best practice" with the real world of the school community
2. Acknowledge and gain valuable skills in negotiating within the political environment of the school community by identifying the key players, recognizing what drives the system, and developing the collaborative skills to work within the environment in best interest of all students
3. Learn the appropriate verbal and non-verbal cross-cultural communication skills that increase the potential for student academic and social success and their own participation in parent/school, teacher/student, administrator/teacher/staff, novice/seasoned teachers, and school/community interactions by working collaboratively with various groups, observing how others successfully communicate across cultural borders, and by observing and interviewing staff (secretaries, cafeteria, custodians, and maintenance)
4. Recognize that accepting civic responsibility through service-learning can provide self-satisfaction, constructive outlets for their creativity and relieve some of the stress and frustration of intense one-year teacher preparation programs, and
5. Visualize the extent to which service-learning activities may have both short- and long-term benefits and that small inroads can have a significant impact

Finally, effective service-learning contains several forms of assessment that address the following questions. Have the students: (1) met the goal and objectives of service-learning in the context of the five criteria? (2) produced a tangible product or service that will benefit the school community? (3) made the appropriate bridges between foundations and content theory and practical application? (4) reflected on the educator's role and responsibility for insuring equity in schools? and (5) modified their own perceptions and behaviors to become culturally relevant educators who will practice equity and social justice both in their personal and professional lives? These questions are generally answered through weekly reflective and critical incidents journals, group discussions, observations, recipient evaluations, and rubrics associated with the culminating papers (see Appendix 1).

In summary, the service-learning goals of this research study were identified, defined, and assessed by the investigator and refined and met by the study participants and the service-learning recipients. The goals of this innovative approach to service-learning (providing future teachers with insight into the politics of education, increasing their interactive proficiency with culturally diverse groups, raising their level of multicultural consciousness and augmenting their educational foundations and content knowledge by connecting theory to classroom practices) can be accomplished within the time constraints of a one-year program.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Service-Learning Project Rubric

Project Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Title	Possible points	Your points
<u>PURPOSE OF PROJECT</u>		
a) Goal and objectives	3	
b) Why is it needed	3	
c) Who benefits	2	
d) Who will use	2	
	<hr/>	
	10	
<u>DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT</u>		
a) Describe the scope and sequence of the project	3	
b) Provide specific examples of how it will be used	3	
c) Integration of foundations and content knowledge	4	
	<hr/>	
	10	
<u>PROJECT REFLECTION</u>		
a) Learned about planning/organizing projects for schools	2	
b) Learned about collaboration/cooperation within a school	2	
c) Learned about working with peers in your cohort	2	
d) Learned about your content area/educational foundations	3	
e) Project influence on your cross-cultural perceptions	3	
f) Project influence on communication style	3	
g) Learned about politics and power in schools	3	
	<hr/>	
	18	
<u>MECHANICS OF PRESENTATION</u>		
a) Organization/grammar/spelling	2	
b) Clarity/creativity	2	
c) Appearance	2	
	<hr/>	
	6	
<u>PROJECT RECIPIENT FEEDBACK</u> (written statement)	6	
Total Points	50	

Your project report should be 12–15 pages and must include the recipient letter as an appendix.  
 Reports with a grade below 40 must be revised and resubmitted.  
 Include before and after pictures where appropriate.

## APPENDIX 2 Service-Learning Project Distribution

Initial Recipients	Final Recipients
Students	School Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archeological dig (Civil War Camp Nelson)</li> <li>College financial aid planner (on-line)</li> <li>Computerized Spanish pop-up game</li> <li>ESL International exhibit (Downtown)</li> <li>ESL students website</li> <li>ESL web pages (countries links and info)</li> <li>Gifted/talented (Geometry/physics/algebra)</li> <li>Junior/seniors college planning (on-line)</li> <li>Latin web games and Internet sites (on-line)</li> <li>Painted World Map (ESL students)</li> <li>Social Studies history website with links</li> <li>Spanish jeopardy</li> <li>Student voter registration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theatre stage lighting</li> <li>Career education website</li> <li>College financial aid planner</li> <li>Community exhibit (60 student photographs)</li> <li>ESL international exhibit</li> <li>ESL web pages (countries links and info)</li> <li>Four welcome/good-bye mats (4 languages)</li> <li>Junior/seniors college planning</li> <li>Landscaping school atrium</li> <li>Math teachers' web pages</li> <li>ROTC drill tape</li> <li>Student voter registration</li> <li>Translation of two school forms (2 languages)</li> <li>Translation of four school forms (4 languages)</li> <li>Welcome flags</li> </ul>
School Community	Students and Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community exhibit (60 student photographs)</li> <li>Four welcome/farewell mats (4 languages)</li> <li>Landscaping school atrium</li> <li>Translation of four school forms (4 languages)</li> <li>Translation of two school forms (2 languages)</li> <li>Welcome flags (40)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business department marketing program</li> <li>Computerized Spanish pop-up game</li> <li>Gifted workbooks (Geometry/physics/algebra)</li> <li>Latin web games</li> <li>Math KEMP pretests</li> <li>Social Studies primary/secondary resource pages online</li> <li>Social Studies history website</li> <li>Spanish jeopardy</li> <li>Star math worksheets</li> <li>Vocational education student name tags</li> </ul>
Teachers	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theater lighting</li> <li>Business department marketing program</li> <li>Chemistry chemical inventory and database</li> <li>English bookroom organize/catalogue/computer</li> <li>Math teachers' web pages</li> <li>MIC program name badges</li> <li>Star math worksheets</li> <li>Vocational education student name tags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chemistry chemical inventory and database</li> <li>English book room organization and catalogue</li> <li>MIC program name tags</li> </ul>
Students and Teachers	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career education website</li> <li>ROTC drill tape</li> <li>Social Studies primary/secondary resource pages</li> <li>Standardized KEMP computerized pretests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archeological dig (Civil War Camp Nelson)</li> <li>Painted World Map (ESL students)</li> <li>ESL student's website</li> </ul>

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**Elinor L. Brown** is an assistant professor in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky. Her major research interests include multicultural teacher education, global educational equity, alternative routes to teacher certification, and the influence of race and class on academic success.