

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

COLLEAGUES

VOLUME V, ISSUE I • SUMMER/FALL 2010

Service Learning



**Why Service Learning is
Such a Good Idea**

Engagement, Action, Results!

**Keep On Keeping On:
School/University Partnerships**



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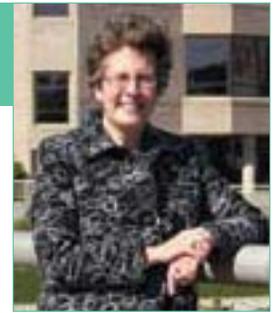
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DEAN'S CORNER



Ready to Engage

The term 'service learning' is one that is increasingly gaining attention and interest in the educational community. The College of Education's (COE) focus on service and community engagement prepares pre-service and in-service teachers to use service learning strategies in the K-12 classroom.

Last spring, I was proud to host the 2009 Dean's Professional Advisory Council (PAC) welcoming nationally renowned service learning expert, Cathryn Berger Kaye. Her presentation and engagement of a roomful of educators focused on the methodology and value of including service learning in the academic classroom. Ms. Kaye has written an article for this issue that examines how service learning engages students into action and yields results.

In August 2009, the COE hosted a Summer Institute on Service Learning, "Green Education" that assisted teachers from across Michigan to develop curriculum and grow service learning initiatives in their classrooms. The keynote presentation for the Institute featured Dr. Shelley Billig, whose research explores the link of teaching, curriculum, and student engagement. Her article, "Why Service Learning Is Such a Good Idea"

appears on page 8 of this issue.

Ironically, service learning is not a new concept. In 1990, the Community Service Act authorized the Learn and Serve Grant Program which was designed to provide opportunities for students across the US to participate in service learning projects.

The goals of service learning align well with the mission of the College of Education—allowing students to meet the needs of a specific community, foster civic responsibility, and develop a strong, enhanced curriculum.

While our past commitment has largely focused on community service projects and partnerships, our future vision will be to research and create opportunities for the COE to participate in and explore the use of service learning in K-12 classrooms. Already we have faculty who are working with local schools on several projects, and I expect these types of initiatives will continue to grow. Please watch for articles describing this exciting work in future issues of *Colleagues*. ☺

Elaine C. Collins, Ph.D.
 Dean, College of Education

Common Sense Meets Research Results

Letter from the Editor

While teaching a professional development course for the university centered on place-based learning, I always started with a simple question: What did graduate students remember from their K-12 experience?

The top three responses were recess, a particular teacher, and a field trip learning experience. Were these your top three? Sure, recess was fun and I vaguely recall four-square, but of greater value are the memories of trips to nature preserves and exploring the flora and fauna with a teacher and an ecologist.

Of the thousands of hours I spent in school, I can recall specific memories of lessons before and after those excursions. Tying lessons to experiential learning is a component of service learning and can provide powerful opportunities for life-changing learning.

So now we have place, next comes service. How does it translate to the classroom?

Harken back to your memories of K-12 once again: Was there ever something you were passionate about? If we are passionate about something, we are more likely to pursue

mastery in a subject. No pleading, bargaining, or coercion is necessary. A good service learning program empowers students to take initiative and research the community, identify a problem, and endeavor to help solve the problem.

Here is where the educator can tackle state standards without students even realizing the difference. As an example, let us say your students hear about medical waste in the form of old pills that are legally mandated to be flushed down toilets. As an educator you could work science lessons into developing a better understanding as to why some organic compounds do not break down or examine the law and why it requires something that is harmful to public health. The possibilities are only limited by your creativity or what you can get for ideas from sites such as servicelearning.org.

The main problem you might have with service learning will be too much enthusiasm, but is that really a problem? ☺

Clayton Pelon
 Editor-in-Chief

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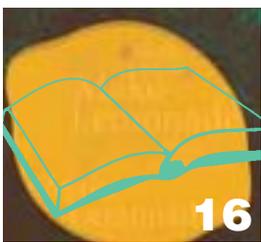
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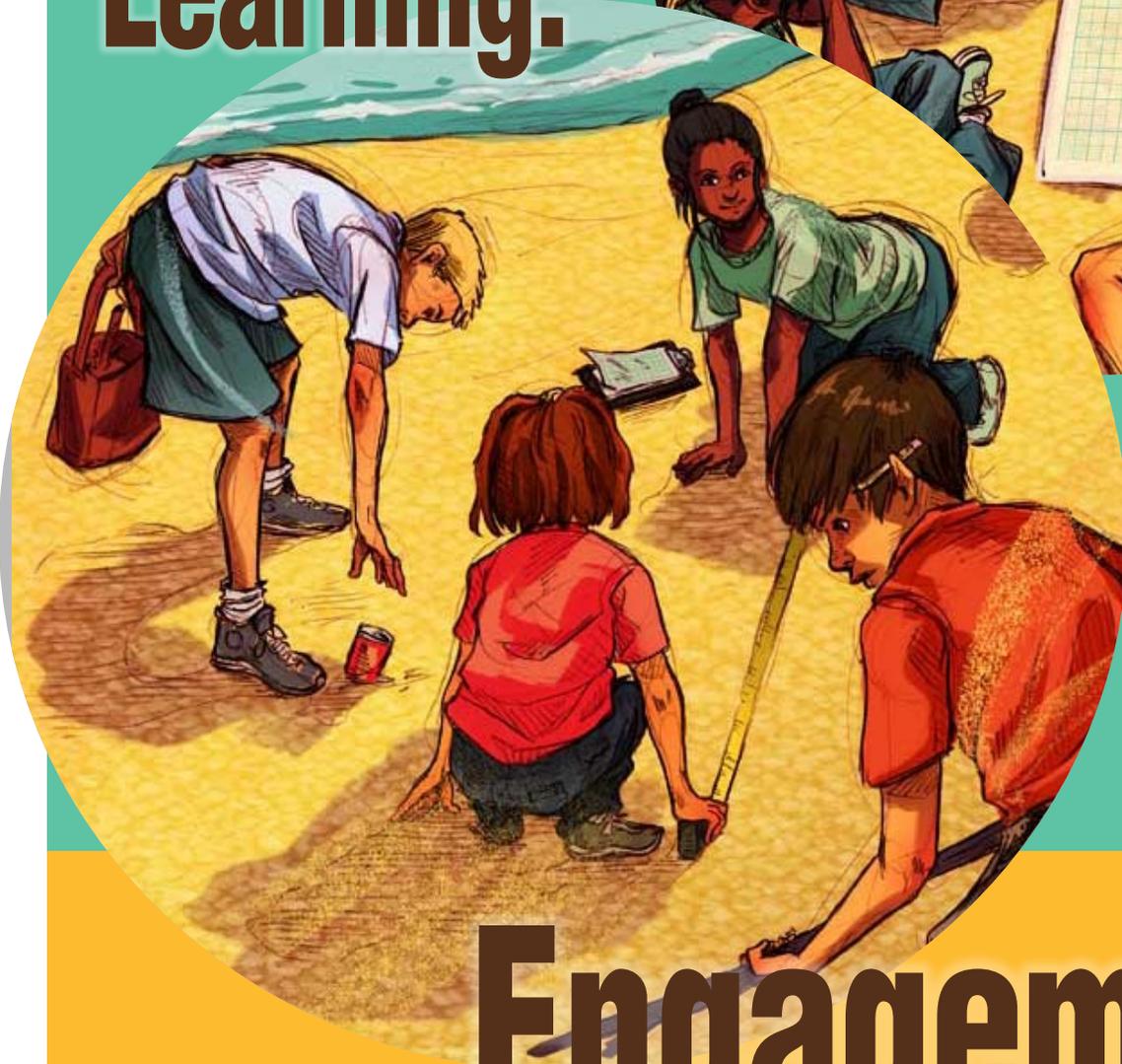


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Thank you to the many College of Education contributors that made this issue possible. If you would like to be an author or artist for the next issue or have a story idea, please contact the *Colleagues* editorial staff at 616-331-6240 or pelonc@gvsu.edu.

FEATURE

Service Learning:



Engagement, Action, Results!

Illustration by GVSU Student Corey Miller



By Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., author and international service learning consultant

Have you noticed? We are experiencing a global groundswell of service. The issues we face as a planet have now risen to a level that calls more of us to action. Through service learning, we can engage our young people in learning about and addressing critical issues—climate change, population migration, hunger, loss of habitat, illiteracy, and more—while contributing to the betterment of themselves and others. Young people, who are cognizant of the issues and have the problem-solving abilities to address them, matter. Providing them with the skills and knowledge to do this vital work, in their own communities and the larger world, adds relevance to the process of education.

While service learning may begin in a single classroom, the increasing value of this pedagogy often leads to a school- and district-wide initiative. In the early days, we thought service learning could be accomplished by adding a small project to whatever kids were studying, or by stopping academics to “make a difference.” Teachers and students from other academic areas or grades became interested and involved perhaps by lending a helping hand, providing information, giving advice, or otherwise joining by directly connecting their content areas to the service. Students from art classes would make posters, or a computer teacher or class would design and create brochures for a campaign on recycling. A math class might generate statistics for a civics or science effort. Service learning classrooms also can serve as natural incubators for school-wide initiatives.

This still occurs; the influence of one successful educator can be transformative. However, now we know more, and we know better. Service learning is a powerful teaching strategy that creates a conducive environment for developing transferable skills and knowledge, high engagement, and relevance that gives meaning and purpose to school—for teachers as well as students.

Teachers continually tell me that their students go beyond required assignments with service learning. They reveal hidden talents, apply themselves in ways that stretch their intellect, retain what they have learned, and transfer the skills and knowledge to new situations. With academic-rich service learning experiences, students are doing astounding work as they prepare our communities for emergencies, repair our coral reefs, protect animals, construct monuments to honor our veterans, and spend time with otherwise lonely elders. When they care about the subject

matter and have authenticated a need, students discover intrinsic motivation. This is the key.

Transferable Skills

While the actual service performed may involve reducing our carbon footprint or documenting events in a town’s history, the transferable skills developed through the process are of paramount importance. Consider this list and the intrinsic benefit gained from internalizing these skills and being able to access them in any learning situation. These foundation incremental skills can be deliberately woven into the Five Stages of Service Learning enabling students to:

- ask questions
- listen and retain
- be observant
- identify similarities and differences
- recognize diverse perspectives
- work independently, with partners, and in groups
- identify and apply their skills and talents
- acquire assistance as needed
- be resourceful
- gather and manage information
- summarize
- take notes
- effectively solve problems
- test hypotheses
- follow through with reasonable steps

Explicit inclusion of these skills and other such skills dramatically deepens the service learning experience and applies to all populations of students. Rather than assuming students have these competencies, service learning affords opportunities to develop skills in deliberate and explicit ways as students ask questions to investigate community needs, develop step-by-step plans, construct persuasive arguments, and role-play how to ask for help when a challenge arises. The results are students who can “read” the world around them and know how to apply their skills toward learning and life.

Gathering Information About a Community Need

All too often investigating the community need is cut short by relying on the obvious. For example, everyone knows there is hunger in the community so why can’t

we just step in and start planning a food drive? If we skip investigation, we miss an essential opportunity to conduct “research.” Often a teacher hears the same questions when a research assignment is given, “What do you want me to do?” or “How long does it have to be?” And for the vast majority of students this math equation rings true: Research = Google. In workshops, I dramatically alter this equation to: Research ≠ Google, as students and even teachers gasp!

In my approach to service learning, as students gather information about a community need, they explore four ways to do research:

- Media—includes books, Internet, radio, film, newspapers, magazines. If a newspaper has a cover story about homelessness three times in a month, that’s an indicator of need.
- Interviews—usually with a person who has expertise in the subject matter through experience or study.
- Experience and Observation—experience is usually what we bring from our past and observation is our deliberate noticing. This active process draws on many of the multiple intelligences.
- Survey—gathering response from groups of people who may have varying degrees of knowledge about the subject. Students develop diverse skills by compiling, conducting, and analyzing surveys.

Students usually gravitate towards interviews, observation, and personal experiences for their dynamic quality and the first hand learning. These processes also *add* to the body of knowledge which is the ultimate intention of research. As students genuinely investigate the need through these modalities they move beyond the obvious—there is hunger—to, *how hunger exists in our community*, and in this revelation the preparation needed and the plan of action becomes more obvious. Who did the work? Who uncovered this? The students! Yes, first graders can conduct interviews that reveal needs and similarly middle school students can design impressive surveys, and high schools students—you get the picture. The result is buy-in. Students begin to own the process.

The Power of Engagement

Youth want to solve problems and improve how we live. The most powerful incentive is engagement. People have long asked me, “How do you motivate

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students?" One day I realized I can't motivate anyone; motivation comes from within. What all of us can do is engage a person, and being engaged can lead the person to choose to be motivated. Intrinsic motivation—that's what we are aiming for!

Your engagement in high quality service learning prepares the young people you reach and teach to be the best students they can be, and to be valued contributors to our collective well-being, now and in the future. 🍀

This article is adapted from *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action (Revised & Updated Second Edition)* by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., © 2010. Used with permission of Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN: 800-735-7323; www.freespirit.com. All rights reserved.

Websites

Visit these websites for exciting opportunities for teachers and students to

advance service learning:

www.abcdbooks.org Author Cathryn Berger Kaye's Web portal for books, resources, and curriculum, plus information on scheduling Cathryn for a conference, school or district, university, or organization.

www.GoToServiceLearning.org GoToServiceLearning presents examples of best practice service learning experiences meeting state mandated academic standards. Written by teachers, this easy-to-use format is based on the planning tool from *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*.

www.RandomKid.org Designed for children, classrooms and youth groups, RandomKid takes kids ideas for a better tomorrow seriously and helps them solve real-world problems.

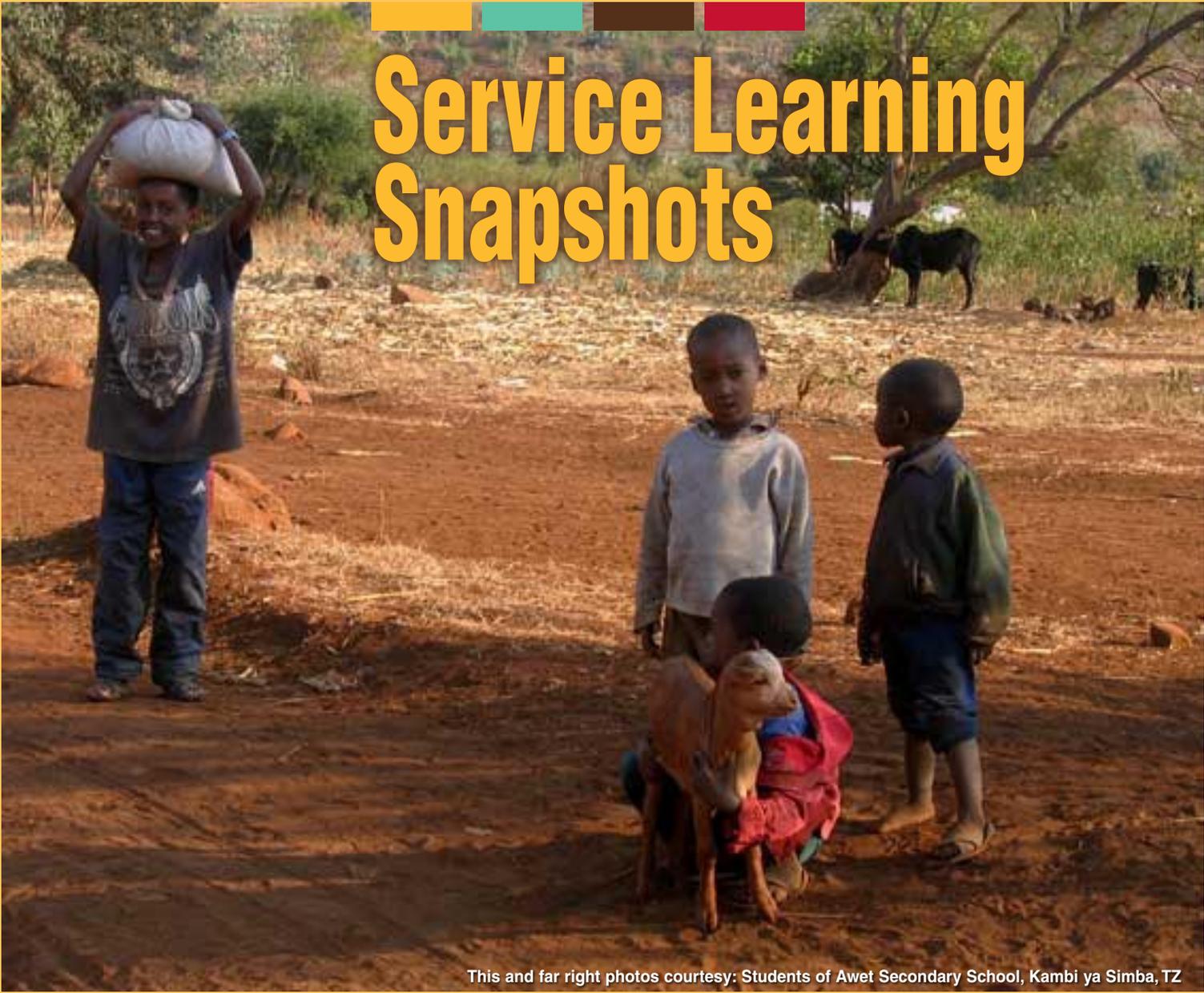
www.servicelearning.org The National Service learning Clearinghouse has

materials to support service learning in grades K-12, higher education, community-based initiatives, tribal programs, and programs for the general public.

www.WaterPlanetChallenge.org EarthEcho International's Water Planet Challenge engages middle and high school youth with science-based environmental education materials, tools, and resources to take action that restores and protects our water planet.

www.YSA.org Sign up for the weekly briefings from Youth Service America and keep up with grant opportunities and plans for Global Youth Service Day.

Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A. is the author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action* Second Edition (Free Spirit Publishing, March 2010) and the *Service Learning for Kids*



Service Learning Snapshots

This and far right photos courtesy: Students of Awet Secondary School, Kambi ya Simba, TZ

series (Free Spirit Publishing). Her newest book *Going Blue; A Teen Guide to Saving Our Oceans and Waterways* (Free Spirit Publishing) written with Philippe Cousteau and EarthEcho International will be available in September, 2010. She can be reached at cbkaye@aol.com.

Note: Documents for conducting Personal Inventory, Gathering Information About a Community Need, and Planning for Service Learning from Cathryn Berger Kaye's book *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action* Second Edition (March 2010) have been generously provided by her publisher, Free Spirit Publishing (www.freespirit.com) and are available on our website.

The Five Stages of Service Learning



As students follow this service learning process, they move from initiative through implementation and share the results, while participating in ongoing reflection.

Investigation: In pairs, students conduct a *Personal Inventory* by interviewing their peers to find out the interests, skills, and talents of the group and draw upon these as they move through all the Stages. Students conduct action research to learn more about the community need.

Preparation and Planning: With an authenticated need, students learn about the topic through a range of academic experiences that integrate critical thinking and social analysis and grow to understand the underlying problem. This leads to shaping their planned

response, often with community partners.

Action: All participants implement their plans to meet the community need or contribute to the common good. The action most often looks like direct service, advocacy, indirect service, or research, or a combination of these.

Reflection: At each stage, students consider how the experience, knowledge, and skills they are acquiring relate to their own lives and their community. The process includes cognitive and affective response.

Demonstration: Students provide evidence to others about of their influence and accomplishments. They also showcase what and how they learned and their acquired skills and knowledge.



Photos courtesy: Wayne-Westland Schools

Lincoln Elementary students plant trees to improve water quality of the Rouge River.

Planting for Our Rivers

Hands-on learning gained new meaning when fourth-grade students at Lincoln Elementary in the Wayne-Westland School District in Westland, Michigan, planted six trees as part of a service learning experience called "Rooting for the Rouge." The trees will help keep excessive storm water runoff and pollutants out of the Rouge River. This partnership in water quality involved local cities and schools with teachers and students learning from staff in the building and grounds department. Students studied local water quality and tree varieties, labeled storm drains while covering benchmarks and standards in language arts, science, social studies, and life skills, and educated their community. As a student explains, "We voted on which trees to plant. We all took turns putting things on the trees like dirt, mulch, and the woodchips. Best of all, the planting helped make the Rouge River cleaner."

Understanding Poverty

At Einstein Middle School in Seattle, Washington, 120 eighth graders did more than read about poverty. In English class, they read *Slake's Limbo*, a novel about a boy living on the streets. Students in math classes looked at the financial side of poverty, for example, costs associated with housing and employment statistics. And in science classes, students learned about the effects of poverty on health, from malnutrition to inadequate medical attention. They then led an Oxfam Hunger Banquet during which their peers were placed in groups and fed different meals based on actual world hunger statistics. Guest speakers talked about poverty in their community. Knowing this background, students volunteered in downtown Seattle agencies preparing and serving food, giving pedicures, and collecting needed hygiene supplies. Students next wrote reports, published zines, created digital video, and conducted an evening exhibition to extend their outreach. Visit www.hungerbanquet.org for more information about the Oxfam Hunger Banquet.

A Global Village

In a world of digital technology and designer coffee, the 5,000 residents of Kambi ya Simba, Tanzania, illuminate the night with lanterns and drink from streams and pumps that often carry illness. And yet, equipped with digital cameras and tape recorders, and with assistance from the U.S.-based nonprofit What Kids Can Do, 350 students at Awet Secondary School documented daily life in their village. They held cameras and tape recorders for the first time. They reflected on their work saying: "It stretched our imagination in so many ways. Before this, we had never seen a book with photographs. Of the larger world, we know only what our teachers have told us." Their

book, *In Our Village* has been read by over 30,000 students around the world. As a result of their book sales, students have received



Awet Secondary School students in Simba, Tanzania, participating in their documentary "In Our Village."

scholarships to continue their education. Visit www.inourvillage.org to learn more and participate in the In Our Global Village project.

Giant Steps for Animals

At Giant Steps of St. Louis, children with autism heard about the needs of The Shannon Foundation, a nearby wildlife rescue farm. Learning gained an additional purpose. Students began a dog biscuit company to raise needed funds (math and science). They also collected and learned how to fold needed blankets (life skills) and practiced animal care so on their visits they could help with grooming the dogs (personal safety). This ongoing commitment has helped students apply newfound skills while taking part in their community.



Explanations from the research

Why Service Learning is Such a Good Idea

People who participate in service learning often quickly understand the value of service learning as an activity that makes a difference in others' lives and makes the giver feel good. But why? The research and theories behind service learning illuminate why service learning is such a good idea.

By Shelley H. Billig, Ph.D.

RESearch shows that service learning is a popular innovation in schools, with about 38% of all students in the United States participating in school-based service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006). Anecdotes about the value of service learning abound, and rigorous research is beginning to validate the impacts that many practitioners note (see, for example, Billig, 2001; Billig, 2010; Furco & Root, 2010). The studies collectively show that service learning is a “value-added” proposition, with young people benefitting academically, civically, and personally. But why should this be so? What can the research tell us about why service learning is such a good idea?

This article provides a very brief explanation from two bodies of research that suggest why service learning works. First, the research on student engagement is

presented, revealing what works best to pique student interest and task persistence in any educational endeavor. Next, the research on service itself shows why people enjoy helping others. The match between service learning and the research findings are discussed. While other theories also apply (particularly ones that show how people learn), this discussion of the combination of student engagement and service begins to suggest why service learning should be a key feature of all of our educational institutions.

Student Engagement and Academic Performance

One has only to peek inside of many classrooms today to recognize that many students simply appear disengaged from their academic work. Engagement is defined as active participation in and enjoyment of school work. Studies of engagement show that, according to parents, 39% of females and 20% of males were engaged in school, K-12,

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and that the percentages decline dramatically as students enter high school (Spring, et al., 2004). Disengagement has been highly associated with poor academic performance, absenteeism, and dropout (Lippman & Rivers, 2008).

On the flip side, student engagement is highly associated with academic performance and closing the achievement gap (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2006); dropout prevention and school attendance (National Research Council, 2004); and reduction of risky behaviors (National Research Council, 2004).

Steinberg (1996) cited research that shows that students who are interested and involved in school score higher on measures of psychological adjustment (e.g., self-esteem, responsibility, and competence in social relationships), and are less likely to use and abuse alcohol and drugs, fall into depression, experiment with sex, and commit criminal or delinquent acts.

Deconstructing the Concept of Engagement

Barth (1999) found that engagement has three dimensions: behavioral, affective, and cognitive. Behavioral engagement is defined as active participation, persistence, concentration, task completion, and positive conduct, and has been documented to be highly associated with learning. Affective engagement refers to the level of interest, “flow,” and enjoyment of learning and is related to the relationships one has with instructors and peers. Affective engagement has also been found to be highly correlated with learning. Cognitive engagement, defined as incorporating the information into one’s knowledge base, seeking out information from other sources, and persistently trying to understand phenomena, going beyond the task, is less well studied, but is supported by research that shows its relationship to curiosity and interest in subject matters.

Student disengagement has been documented as being widespread on each of these dimensions. Several researchers found that students’ interest in challenging subjects declined because of the lack of active learning experiences (Anderson, Pruitt, & Courtney, 1989; Reyes & Laliberty, 1992), and several showed that if students were not given opportunities to experience academic success, they were more likely to become disengaged (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; McDill, Natriello, & Pallas, 1985, 1986; Wagenaar, 1987). Still others found that engagement was related to instructors’ expectations. Simply put, students expected to learn if teachers expected them to learn (Brophy, 1987; Stipek, 1988). Finally, Anderman and Midgley (1998) showed that students’ attitudes about their own abilities and interpretation of success affect their willingness to engage in schoolwork. Extrinsically motivated students tend to

become disengaged more easily than those who are intrinsically motivated.

Increasing Engagement

Researchers have shown that the disengagement epidemic can be stemmed by redesigning the learning environment. For example, Maehr and Midgley (1991) found that instructors increase engagement and student motivation to learn when they:

- Stress goal setting and self-regulation/management;
- Offer students choices in instructional settings;
- Reward students for attaining ‘personal best’ goals;
- Foster teamwork through group learning and problem-solving experiences;
- Replace social comparisons of achievement with self-assessment and evaluation techniques; and
- Teach time management skills and offer self-paced instruction.

Eccles, Midgley, and Adler (1984) showed that motivation to learn increased when students were given greater autonomy and control over their learning. These researchers recommended that schools create environments that stress task involvement rather than ego involvement. Ames (1992); Strong, Silver, & Robinson (1995); and Anderman and Midgley (1998) found that teachers who were most successful in engaging students developed activities that addressed students’ intellectual and psychological needs, including work that gave students a sense of competency and autonomy, encouraged self-expression, and allowed them to develop connections with others.

Other researchers recommended the following strategies to increase student engagement (cited in a review by Brewster and Fager, 2000, p. 7):

- *Ensure course materials relate to students’ lives and highlight ways learning can be applied in real-life situations* (Lumsden, 1994; Skinner & Belmont, 1991);
- *Help students feel that schoolwork is significant, valuable, and worthy of their efforts* (Policy Studies Associates, 1995);
- Allow students to have some degree of control over learning (Brooks, Freiburger, & Grotheer, 1998);
- *Assign challenging but achievable tasks for all students.* Tasks that seem impossible and those that are rote and repetitive discourage learners (Dev, 1997; Policy Studies Associates, 1995);
- *Stimulate students’ curiosity about the topic being studied* (Strong et al., 1995);
- *Design projects that allow students to share new knowledge with others.* Projects are more engaging when students share what they are learning in reciprocal relationships,

as in collaborative projects where each student’s knowledge is needed by others in the group to complete an assignment (Strong et al., 1995); and

- *Develop caring and trust between teachers and students* (Noddings, 2000, p. 36).

The Link to Service Learning

How does this all link to service learning? The answer is obvious. Service learning, when done well, has all of the characteristics associated with engaged learning. High quality service learning, defined as service learning aligned with the K-12 standards for high-quality service learning (National Youth Leadership Council, 2009), asks students to engage in setting goals to meet community needs; offers students choices and voice; provides many opportunities for teamwork in the planning and provision of service; engaging in reflection that reduces social comparisons of achievement and increases self-assessment; teaches time management; allows self-paced instruction; rewards students for goal attainment, all of which were cited by Maehr and Midgley (1991) as being highly associated with engagement.

Consistent with other researchers cited previously, service learning gives young people greater autonomy and control over their learning when they select the need to be met and design and deliver the services to meet the need. Students who participate in service learning report that they feel a sense of self-efficacy and competence, and they develop connections with peers and adults outside of school and family (Billig, Jesse, & Grimley, 2008). Eccles and others consider this essential for engagement. Clearly, service learning also relates to students’ lives and helps them to apply their learning to real-life situations, helping them to feel that their work is important and valuable to others.

When done well, service learning also helps students engage in challenging tasks, and they measure their own abilities to impact others and themselves (Billig & Weah, 2008). They typically become more curious about the service learning topics they tackle and engage in interdependent, reciprocal learning. Finally, their work is, by its nature, about caring.

Service learning, then, has nearly all of the characteristics needed to engage students in learning. Even better, once students are engaged in service learning, they most often want to continue to volunteer in the future (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006). The research on the benefits of volunteering illuminates why.

The Benefits of Volunteerism

Simply stated, volunteerism accrues considerable benefits for most of its participants, young and old alike. The Corporation for National and Community Service (2006), for example, found that students that participated in high quality service

learning reported that they thought they could make a great deal of difference in their communities, took a greater interest in current events, and talked more frequently with others about politics than their nonparticipating peers. High school studies showed that young people that engaged in high quality service learning felt good about giving back, making a difference, and seeing their place in the wider social world (Root & Billig, 2008).

Benefits accrue with continuing service. Thoits and Hewitt (as cited in Grimm, Spring, & Dietz, 2007), for example, conducted a longitudinal survey of adults and found that those who volunteered reported higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, and physical health than those that did not volunteer. Further, several other longitudinal studies (see Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999, Rogers, 1996, and Sabin, 1993, as cited in Grimm et al., 2007) showed that individuals who volunteered had lower mortality rates than those that did not, even when factors such as physical health, age, and socioeconomic status were taken into account. While these researchers also found that a certain “volunteering threshold” (variously defined as 40 to 100 volunteer hours per year) must be reached to derive such benefits (Lum & Lightfoot, 2005, and Luoh & Herzog, 2002 as cited in Grimm et al., 2007), the conclusion is inescapable. Volunteerism is good for you.

Conclusion

The research seems pretty clear that service learning is a good idea. Service learning has the characteristics of effective teaching and learning approaches for student engagement, and leads to lifelong benefits. No wonder service learning works and is good for you. Shouldn't it be offered to every student? ☺

About the Author

Dr. Shelley H. Billig is Vice President at RMC Research Corporation. She has extensive experience both as a researcher and professional development provider in service learning, and recently facilitated the project that led to the formation of the new K-12 standards and indicators for service learning quality. She is currently Principal Investigator for a national study of the impacts of service learning on high school students. She has authored or coedited over 15 books and dozens of articles on educational innovations.

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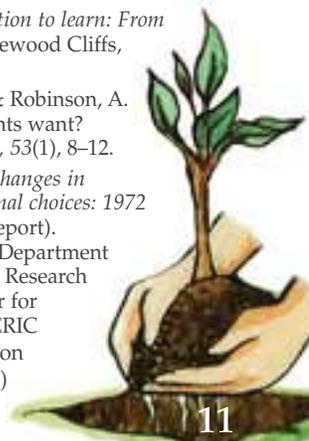
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Groundswell:



Illustration by GVSU Student BreeAnn Veenstra

Going Outside to Learn

By Erin Gallay

Service learning is a teaching methodology that is gaining attention and momentum across the country, and Grand Valley State University's College of Education is committed to its growth and spread.

My name is Erin Gallay and I'm the Groundswell Hub Coordinator—a service learning program taking place in Kent County, Michigan.

Groundswell was formed in late 2009 and is housed in GVSU's College of Education Community Outreach Office. Groundswell strives to provide opportunities for young

people to investigate environmental issues in their communities and decide on the best course of action they will take to resolve those challenges.

This is exactly what service learning is all about—giving students the chance to decide on what issues are the most important to them; providing them with the skills and knowledge to address those issues, ensuring the support and partnership of community members; all while continually addressing core curriculum standards required as a part of their education.

—Continued on page 14



In my mind, there are a couple of reasons service learning is particularly relevant right now: 1) the general public seems dissatisfied with the climate of the current political system; and 2) many people are “civically disengaged” from opportunities by which they can participate in their local communities. Service learning and Groundswell are poised to address this in our youngest generation. Groundswell provides and easily accessible content area for young people to be introduced to service learning and can serve as an avenue for young people to address these points—by tackling environmental issues affecting the Great Lakes and engaging them in civic action in their communities.

I am proud to be a part of this initiative’s work and more than impressed with the support of Grand Rapids communities’ for projects like these. As it has been suggested that “it takes a village to raise a child,” so does it take that village to develop and support young people as active citizens in their communities. Young people need parental and adult knowledge, help and willingness to let them have a voice that is heard.

Groundswell is a true coalition of community members. We are currently comprised of more than 35 businesses, government institutions, and community organizations partnering with 12 local schools. These partners provide expertise and guidance to students while taking an active role to ensure these young people can affect community change.

We already have local and state leaders interested in what these students are investigating and planning. Caring adults and curious students—this is service learning at its finest.

Let me give you an overview of current projects with our Groundswell schools:

Forest Hills Eastern Middle School

THE PROJECT:

Investigating campus wide storm water runoff and instituting landscaping practices to lessen river contamination.

Students are determining how the Eastern campus contributes to the issue of storm water runoff and will use best management practices to minimize the amount of contaminants the campus adds to the Grand River. Students have tested campus water to determine the need for filtering and managing storm water runoff. They will investigate whether installing a rain garden is beneficial. Students will learn best practices regarding water management and will create community awareness about using landscaping practices to filter runoff at home (rain gardens), collecting rain water (rain barrels), and fertilization practices to help keep the Grand River clean.

New Branches School

THE PROJECT:

Building a greenhouse to grow plants and study how fertilizers, pesticides and other substances for gardening affect both the plants and the water runoff from the gardens and educating the community about their findings.

This student project focuses water testing in an indoor educational classroom, a greenhouse on the school grounds. Students have set up experiments to determine the effects of pesticides, fertilizers and other substances used in landscaping both on plants and on water runoff.

Based on their experiments, students will hold informational demonstrations on open house days to inform the public about the effects of using fertilizers, pesticides and other substances at their homes that may end up in the water supply. Students will also have informational brochures about runoff and how the water travels from people’s yards through the watershed and then to their faucet. These demonstrations will promote alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides and what people can do to limit their impact on poor water quality in their homes.

East Rockford Middle School

THE PROJECT:

Creating a building wide recycling program.

East Rockford Middle School students are establishing a building-wide recycling program that includes plastics (numbers 1 and 2), paper, cardboard, telephone books, magazines, e-waste and compost items from lunch. Recyclable items which are thrown away instead increase landfill needs, pollute waterways, and in many instances, contaminate groundwater. This recycling project will impact the watershed immediately while creating a sense of responsibility in the school community. Staff, students and parents are involved. East Rockford students will share the program with the surrounding community to build awareness and encourage all families to responsibly recycle, reuse, and reduce their volume of trash.

Lowell High School

THE PROJECT:

Exploring water and soil issues due to food production and population growth.

One of the greatest factors impacting water is soil and food/agriculture. Lowell High School students are examining the ways in which farming affects water quality. Biology concepts will be brought to the problem of water usage and population growth showcasing individuals impacts on water and soil issues. Students will assess community perspectives of various constituents as well as water and soil quality issues locally and present their findings to the community.

City Middle School

THE PROJECT:

Mapping nutrient runoff from the Huff Park neighborhood and educating residents about nutrient overload in the wetlands.

City Middle School students are defining the topography of the Huff Park tributary and the area feeding into the park wetlands. Students will better understand where runoff from the neighborhood is an issue and contributes to poor water quality through nutrient overloads in the creek and wetlands.

Based on mapping and water quality data from various area sites, students will develop an educational campaign targeted at property owners in the area relaying local water quality concerns and what can be done to address them. This educational effort will attempt to protect the natural water filtration system of the wetlands of Huff Park.

Blandford School

THE PROJECT:

Study the complex flora and fauna associated with Blandford Nature Center’s Brandywine Creek, investigating the challenges to this unique freshwater ecosystem and implement solutions designed to protect and enhance Brandywine Creek.

After researching the flora, fauna and watershed issues affecting the Creek, Blandford School students are creating a plan to inform neighboring residents of their backyard natural treasure. Their goal is to bring nearby residents onto the site to increase their understanding of Brandywine Creek’s ecological dynamics. Students will incorporate this information into their work as trail guides for other school children visiting the Nature Center.

The Potter’s House School

THE PROJECT:

Investigating the degree of pollution and flooding in Plaster Creek while looking for appropriate and beneficial local responses to help the creek.

Potter’s House School students are assessing the highs and lows of the water volume flowing through Plaster Creek in their neighborhood. They will relate this information to the concern of the flash flooding that occurs in the creek due to storm water and the erosion caused by this flooding that leads to sediment pollution. With collected data and school grounds mapping, students will learn ways to respond to the issues they uncover, decide on appropriate action, and choose how that action should be conducted, such as suggesting where rain gardens and re-vegetation would be appropriate. ♻️

Learn more about Groundswell:
<http://www.colleaguesplus.com/groundswell.html>

GVSU: A Commitment to Service Learning



By Valerie Jones, Assistant Director of Student Life-Leadership & Service Initiatives,
and Bunmi Fadase, Coordinator, Community Service Learning Center

Commitment to the development of personal and social responsibility is integral to Grand Valley State University's mission of educating students to shape their lives, professions, and societies. GVSU has a rich and long history of civic engagement and serving the local community both through various academic disciplines and non academic engagement activities. In the past year, we have had the opportunity to examine its efforts and impact on the community as well as the resources and structure that supports them.

A Call to Action

During GVSU's accreditation process through the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 2008, GVSU was praised for various efforts of positively impacting the community through civic engagement and service learning, however, the accreditation report exposed a clear need for centralizing efforts for service learning at an institutional level. Additionally, the process of applying for national recognition for institutional commitment to service and civic engagement, the Presidents Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (awarded by the Corporation for National and Community Service) revealed similar challenges; GVSU was not comprehensively collecting data about students serving our community. Past data collection methods did not capture the true community impact of all the University's service endeavors. GVSU's Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 outlines several objectives that address the concerns articulated previously and laid the foundation to begin this process. The conversation to explore creating a service clearinghouse and centralizing resources to support faculty in their service learning endeavors became a priority for GVSU and it was at this time that the Community Service Learning Center (CSLC) was charged by the Provost's Office to engage faculty in service learning and create recommendations for institutional change.

CSLC and a New Charge

The Community Service Learning Center (CSLC), a subset of the Office of Student Life, is a center dedicated to engaging students in service and service learning opportunities with the mission to prepare students to become citizens of a global society and challenge them to be committed to a life of community service as active citizens. The Center serves as GVSU's representative with Michigan Campus Compact (MCC), a coalition of college and university presidents who are committed to fulfilling the public purposes of higher education, and annually reports the engagement of our students for state and national surveys. With a new charge to engage more faculty with service learning, the staff worked in conjunction with several campus partners including the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence and the Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership to explore concepts to engage

faculty. Two strategies that were implemented in 2009-2010 were the creation of the Service Learning web network and the Presidential Service Learning Scholars (PSLS).

Presidential Service Learning Scholars

Presidential Service Learning Scholars (PSLS) are a group of nine faculty who incorporate service learning into their curriculum. They were selected through a competitive departmental nomination process and represent several colleges. This group was honored at a reception held on November 11, 2009 and was comprised of Melissa Baker-Boosamra of Liberal Studies, Charlene Beckmann of Mathematics, Kevin den Dulk from Honors College, Julia Mason of Women and Gender Studies, Diane Rayor who was nominated by Honors and Classics, Marilyn Vander Werf from Nursing, Danielle Wiese Leek of Communications, Randy Wyble of Therapeutic Recreation, and Katalin Zaszlavic from Art & Design.

The initial meetings of this group centered around providing information about how GVSU engages students and sharing current resources that are provided by the CLSC. The PSLS were then provided with education about other university structures and models of supporting faculty in service learning initiatives, including a presentation from the staff of the Academic Service Learning Center at Grand Rapids Community College. The faculty also had the opportunity to attend the annual Michigan Campus Compact Service Learning and Civic Engagement Institute and participate in other MCC opportunities to further their involvement in this issue. A variety of topics were discussed throughout the meetings including: liability, service learning course designation, and experienced service learning faculty mentoring others in their academic discipline. Meetings also focused around increasing the visibility of current resources and opportunities for faculty; tasks often coordinated by areas like the CLSC. The PSLS provided direction and recommendations for the service learning web network, an online resource for faculty that is expected to launch in Fall 2010.

A report of recommendations from the PSLS will be provided to the Provost at the end of their term. This report will include the recommendation of creating a university task force to further examine the topics of service/service learning and how GVSU plans to centralize its efforts. The creation of a task force will ensure that all areas of the university that hold a vested interest in supporting faculty in service learning are included for collaboration. For the 2010-2011 academic year, additional faculty members will be selected for the PSLS group and will also be part of the planning process. Momentum around service and civic engagement on GVSU's campus is promising as we look to improve our internal structures and functions to better serve the communities around us. ♻️

READING

Keep On Keep On: On:

By Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle

What Can Happen Through

University/School Partnerships

Illustration by Lisa R. Termant

Paola began weaving in and out of the six straight rows of desks handing out “special fruit.” As an undergraduate reading intern in this classroom, she was responsible for captivating the students’ interest about the book *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Wolff (1993). So, she looked out on the sea of inquisitive faces, boys and girls looking skeptical about this “special fruit,” and began to reveal her Brazilian heritage, weaving Portuguese into her monologue. She then explained that her grandmother sent her this “special fruit” from Brazil called *Maracuja*. With gusto, Paola encouraged the students to taste this delightful, traditional Brazilian delicacy. The students tentatively placed the juicy, yellow, citrus-looking wedge onto their tongues. Faces crinkled and distorted as they discovered this “special fruit,” *Maracuja*, was actually a lemon. After the initial shock, Paola asked them to discuss the taste. Students suggested it was sour, strong, hard to like, and unappealing. Paola then made the analogy that she was “life,” giving them sour lemons. But, they could now “make lemonade” with the situation just like the book suggests. After giving the students a brief summary, she ended by handing out lemonade. The students’ faces brightened as they washed the sour taste from their mouths with the sweet drink.

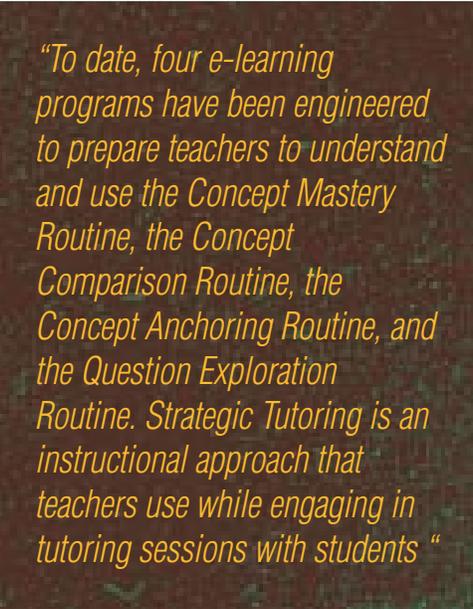
Paola’s book talk is just one example of many creative experiences which occurred in this ninth grade reading classroom. I embarked on this journey as a new graduate student over 7 years ago. My advisor asked me to supervise a service learning project, taking undergraduates interested in education into a high school classroom to work with struggling readers. As a former eighth grade Language Arts and Social Science teacher I was excited to work with high school students, establishing a reading community in this English/Reading classroom. However, I envisioned my former classroom and my former students, leaning on my prior knowledge of creating reading communities. Working in another teacher’s classroom pushed me to think outside the box and find alternative ways of creating this reading community. No longer could I just lean on my own personal experiences, doing it “my” way.

My hope is that through the telling of this project’s story—warts and all—I might inspire K-12 schools and colleges to collaborate in their own areas and start similar programs which will benefit all participants involved.

Finding our way

In this project, undergraduate interns met with high school students one period a day twice a week in their reading classroom. They facilitated book group discussions and served as reading mentors to the high school students. However, initially, in the first month of the project, all involved struggled to find this purpose. We knew we wanted to create a reading community among the interns and the high school students, but what does it mean to create a reading community? We knew we

wanted the interns to serve as reading mentors, but how? How could we best help these students grow as readers? These questions raced through our minds as the high school teacher, my university supervisor, and I met frequently to discuss various scenarios and options. As we tried different ideas such as Silent Sustained Reading, Journal Writing, and Strategy Modeling, I constantly discussed successes and challenges with the interns while encouraging them to brainstorm new and innovative ways to connect with the students. The high school students also assisted us in this process, articulating through surveys and informal interviews what they thought of the program. Their candid thoughts provided an authentic gauge for the project. We centered the students’ experiences around thought-provoking texts and discussions about these texts. Due to our



“To date, four e-learning programs have been engineered to prepare teachers to understand and use the Concept Mastery Routine, the Concept Comparison Routine, the Concept Anchoring Routine, and the Question Exploration Routine. Strategic Tutoring is an instructional approach that teachers use while engaging in tutoring sessions with students “

collaborative efforts, the high school teachers believed in the project and released control of one class period twice a week to the interns and me.

As facilitators, the interns focused on meeting the various needs of the high school students as individual readers and meaning-makers. Therefore, we combined and adapted different methods of book discussion groups (Daniels, 1994; Peterson and Eeds, 1990; Smith 1993; Short, Harste, and Burke, 1996; Brabham and Vilaume, 2000; Okura DaLie, 2001; Tunkle, Anderson, and Evans, 1999). As the interns and I observed and listened to the students, we adapted our practice, trying to find a method that met the needs of each group. Therefore strategies varied from group to group and sometimes altered as the group progressed. The one thing we always tried to keep as a constant was a space for talk. In fact, many of the students informed us that their teachers never provided opportunities to talk about texts within the classroom. Instead, teachers tended to talk to students about the text. Therefore, creating space for students to talk

about what was meaningful to them in the texts was a new concept for these students and became our number one priority. We wanted students to engage in grand conversations around texts (Peterson & Eeds, 1990).

As English majors applying to the College of Education, the interns enthusiastically worked with the high school students. However, because they lacked experiences and a theoretical grounding for their practice, the English Education professors and I supported their learning and development. The interns co-enrolled in the *Adolescent Literature* class where the professors taught the “how to” of literature circles, book talks, and analyzing young adult novels. I also met with the interns for thirty minutes after each session for instruction, planning, and reflection. The two comprehension theories I emphasized were schematic theory, or activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, (Anderson, 1984) and metacognitive theory, thinking about one’s thinking, organizing information, discussion, reflection, etc. (Erickson et al., 1985; Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). I hoped that the interns would understand the theory, and that the theory would inform their practice (i.e. help them frame questions and plan activities). Additionally, we discussed active learning and four specific reading strategies: connecting; questioning; predicting; and visualizing (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). Again, the interns used these reading strategies to frame their interactions within the discussions.

Facilitating the literature circles was tangible for the interns, something they could see and do—it required action. They worked hard to develop the needed skills, and took their role seriously. Together we brainstormed with the classroom teacher to find ways of engaging the students in the learning process and encouraging them as readers.

However, serving as reading mentors was more abstract, and this role emerged as the project evolved. When discussing books with the students, the interns demonstrated how a reader looks at the various literary elements of a book to find greater meaning by using literary terminology as they talked about what they found meaningful in the text. Students actively observed proficient readers asking questions of the author, making predictions, highlighting symbolism, and visualizing to understand the text. Observing this, we saw the high school students mirror these reading strategies as they questioned the text, contemplated character motive, and uncovered irony and symbolism. The demonstrations, along with the freedom to discuss what was on the students’ minds while reading, allowed the high school students to experience books in a new way. For the first time, some of the students saw enjoyment and meaning in a reading and a true relevance to their own lives.

For example, one student, became so excited about the book he was reading, *That Was Then*,

—Continued on page 18

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This Is Now by S.E. Hinton (1971) he stayed up extra late the night before to finish the book because he “just couldn’t put it down.” He could not wait even for class to start before he began asking his intern all the questions he formulated while reading. The intern felt pleasantly overwhelmed as the discussion group bubbled with conversation that day, spurred by the student’s excitement.

Students & Reading Growth

Another student, a curly haired boy, loped into the classroom just as the bell signaled the beginning of class. The other students knowingly assembled into their literature study groups, organizing desks into inclusive circles. However, the late arrival just pulled up a chair behind another student, not fully entering his assigned group. Plopping himself into the desk, he opened his text and made no comment as the group began discussing the book *Monster* (1999) by Walter Dean Myer, a story about an African American boy, Steve, accused of participating in a crime. The book is partially written in the form of a screenplay.

The intern nervously tucked his blond hair behind his ear, looking around at the group of students. Noticing the student separated from the group, he smiled, attempting to encourage membership in the group. The student responded with a faint smile, just barely turning up the left-side of his mouth.

Intern: Does anyone have any questions to start today?

Student 1: What does the bold text mean? Why is the writing all different?

Student 2: The lighter text is the speaking. The bold is what the camera is doing.

Student 1: It’s a script for a movie?

Intern: They’re diary entries like a movie.

Outlier Student: Is the character writing it? Is it an actual movie? It would be cool if they did make this into a movie.

Student 2: Steve, the main character, is writing it while he’s in jail.

Student 3: Yeah, he explains it well. You can see it. Sounds like it’s true.

Student 1: I feel sorry for him (Steve). I can see it, like watching a movie. You know, like the producers focuses on one character and then cut to another person to see their point of view.

Outlier Student: Is that one guy who’s only 14 in jail or just in court?

Student 3: I was reading that and went back to reread. I didn’t think a 14 year old could be in jail with older people.

Intern: It depends on the crime.

Conversations similar to this peppered the room on any given Tuesday or Thursday as students engaged in texts, trying to construct meaning and make connections. This particular conversation echoed in my ears as I observed students collaboratively working through a book while using the newly learned

reading strategies to assist in comprehension. This scene also is cemented in my mind because I watched an intern draw a marginalized student (both figuratively and literally) into the conversation. The outlier student entered the room ready to “tune out” for the period, but the intern encouraged his participation, validating his questions and participation. As the outlier student watched other students ask questions and propose their ideas, he felt safe to ask his own questions and posit his own ideas.

The classroom teacher also observed the students’ growth as readers. He believed, “The most important benefits were increased knowledge and ability in reading.” But, he also felt that having the interns as reading mentors “helped the students realize there are more than simply their teachers who care about their future.” This feeling of support impacted students – motivating them to read and explore their own thoughts about texts and the world.

However, growth also surfaced in the students’ scores on the Criterion Reference Test (CRT) (See Table 1: Criterion References Test (CRT) Scores). During the second year of the project, the freshmen students involved in this university project averaged a 25% growth rate in their reading ability. The teacher quoted, “This is unheard of!” His other reading class, who didn’t participate in the project, saw their test scores improve 17% while the school at large only increased 13%. This is significant, marking a quantifiable benefit of the program.

Table 1: Criterion Reference Test (CRT) Scores

	Service learning reading/ English class	Non service learning reading/ English class	Regular English class
% of growth in reading ability on CAT	25%	17%	13%

Additionally, an estimated 75% of the students in the two reading/English blocks moved onto regular English in their sophomore year, no longer needing a remedial reading class.

The interns also noted student growth and improvement. One intern articulated that, “I believe the students DID improve. My first group seemed annoyed and bored with reading because they didn’t really do it. As the semester progressed, however, students seemed to become increasingly engaged.”

Through reflection, the students noticed their own growth as well. One student, said, “I can understand what goes on in books better.” Another explained, “I see myself improving because I understand more than I did before and I’m into reading a lot more. I get more interested in books.”

Interns & Growth

Through this collaborative project, the undergraduate interns gained concrete

experiences. They learned valuable reading strategies, tried out various formats of literature circles, explored relevant young adult novels, and saw theory in practice.

But the interns noted they valued the relationships the most—both with the students and the other interns. Because of the trust developed between the interns and the students, the students could openly discuss their opinions without fear of chastisement. This relationship also motivated student learning and engagement because the students didn’t want to let the interns down by not reading or doing their homework. When college-age individuals take time out of their day to spend time with high school freshmen, students feel important and want the interns to be proud of their accomplishments.

However, the friendships developed among the interns also proved meaningful and helpful. John noted that he “loved the camaraderie among the interns.” Paige expressed, “I loved working with the other interns. I really relied on their opinions and their input.” My hope is that the interns remember the value and importance of collaboration as they progress in the profession.

What now?

I am no longer involved in this project; I passed the torch to another vibrant graduate student who continued this great collaboration. I trust this project will continue for years to come, and I hope more projects like this can begin across the country and the globe which bring together multiple ages to dialogue over books. Through these projects, mentoring relationships will help improve reading comprehension and encourage positive attitudes toward reading for high school students. Additionally, projects like this can provide incredible hands-on learning experiences for pre-service teachers.

In the words of one high school student, “I love what you guys are doing. Keep on keeping on.” So, that’s the message, students and interns find success in this service learning project. Won’t you join us in the adventure?

I’d like to give special thanks to: Alleen Pace Nilsen and James Blasingame for their help and mentoring with this project; Josephine Peyton Marsh for her advising and encouragement; Jan Kelly for her enthusiasm; Connie Kamm and Bruce Nyman for welcoming us into their classroom; the interns for the time and effort they contributed each week working with the students, and to the students for sharing their reflections and ideas about the project with me.

Follow Elizabeth’s blog on reading at www.colleaguesplus.com/stolle 

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Service Learning:

Linking Service and Academics in Urban Schools

By Christina R. McElwee, M.Ed.

The involvement of students in community service is not a new concept. How often have the students in your community schools been involved in food drives, picking up trash on the playground, or tutoring younger students? Why then do educational reformists act as if the shift from community service or mandatory volunteer hours is a new journey; a journey referred to as service learning.

Service learning is defined as a "...method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that are integrated into the students' academic curriculum...by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community." (Furco, 1996, p. 1) When implemented effectively, service learning can combine challenging curricular standards with authentic experiences. As an educator, it is often difficult to keep students interested and motivated in the academic rigor of daily assignments, writing compositions, history projects, etc. However, when students deal with real life issues in relation to their core curriculum, they become more engaged and are able to recognize the purpose of their learning.

However, with the onslaught of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the significant pressure for schools to describe their success based on student performance on standardized tests, is service learning a viable option for schools, especially urban schools? Urban schools often struggle to meet state and federal requirements. These schools must choose use methods that result in improved learning, retention of content, and an increase in standardized test scores (Soslau & Yost, 2007). Service learning is one of these methods.

Numerous studies have been conducted demonstrating the impact of service learning on student learning and motivation in inner city schools (Cohen & Kinsey, 1994, Kielsmeier, 2003, Moore & Sandholtz, 1999, Soslau & Yost, 2007). The results show that students who participate in service learning are more likely to make real-world connections. They are able to see the correlation between their academic goals and what they are experiencing in their community. But this is not the only benefit. Research also shows that students who participated in service learning made greater academic gains in reading and math. The results also show an increase in attendance and a decrease in the amount of students being suspended (Soslau &

Yost, 2007). From this we can make the assumption that students were more motivated to come to school because they see the purpose and relevance in the learning that was taking place.

In preparing for service learning projects, teachers and administrators work to identify community needs, align curriculum with community issues and determine resources (Glickman & Thompson, 2009). These resources come in the form of parental involvement, community members, businesses, agencies, and organizations. Student involvement begins with students understanding their community's needs and choosing an issue to address. Students then work to outline a problem and to determine steps toward a solution. By giving the students involvement from the beginning, the opportunity to make choices, and to play a role in determining the project steps, they become more personally invested in the service learning project. Throughout the service learning projects, students process their experiences and their learning through reflection. Through these reflections, students, "...identify ways to make positive contributions to the community, determine the impact of their contributions, and consider their roles as citizens of the community" (Glickman & Thompson, 2009, p. 11). Students are also allowed the opportunity to celebrate their service learning including recognition of participants, assessment of student learning, and evaluation of the projects (Glickman & Thompson, 2009). This process allows the students to seek feedback from service recipients and allows teachers to determine the instructional implications of the project.

Service learning projects provide the real-life contextual experiences that are not available within standard curriculum materials. Service learning activities help students make a connection between the curriculum and their lives, but how do urban schools integrated this authenticity into their curriculum?

As an educator at an urban school I have seen numerous examples of service learning. Older students have partnered with younger students for reading and literacy activities. The older students then reflect on their experience serving as literacy leaders. Through analysis of the reflection I have discovered that projects like this helped students to feel more responsible. They felt involved and invested in the younger students' learning. Second grade students have become partners with residents at nursing homes. They have created cards, volun-

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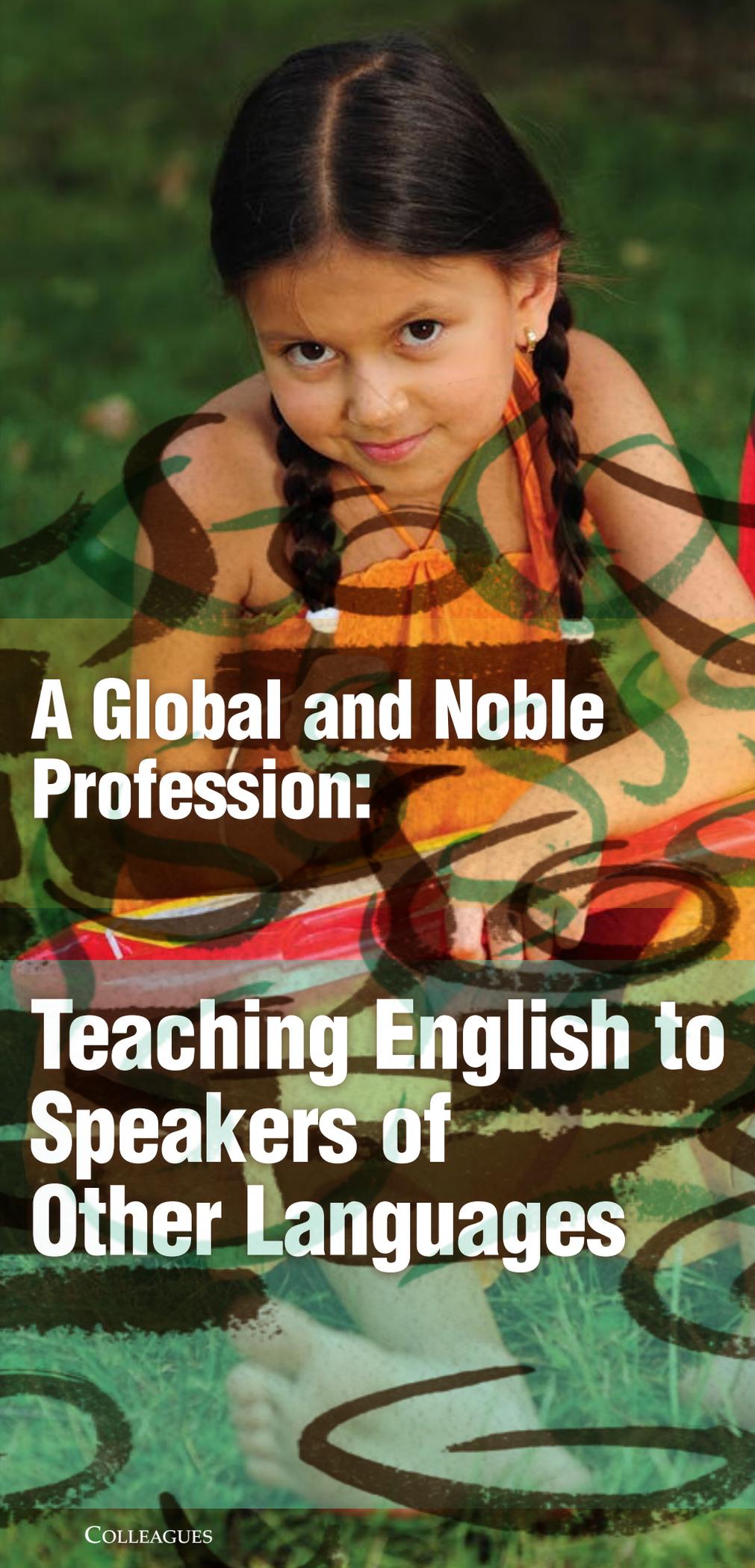
teered, and written biographies of several of the residents. This project met state writing and social studies standards while also providing great joy to the nursing home patrons. Our latest endeavor is a community garden, which has formed a partnership with our local neighborhood association. Students are primarily in charge of maintaining the garden with some teacher assistance. This project has helped to cover science, social studies, and language arts standards while forging a partnership with the community and parents. Older students commented on how service learning made them see the relevance of what they were learning and how the increased level of collaboration made them want to learn more.

Service learning projects are an excellent way for students to meet state and federal standards. Educators need to help the students of today gain the knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness to find the solutions to tomorrow's problems. Service learning is a way to give students the tools that they need to live prosperous, productive, and collaboratively with others. In an educational system that is filled with mandates, requirements, and federal regulations; service learning provides a way for students to be involved in their education, to enhance their academic performance, and to help their communities. How can we not do service learning in urban schools? 🗳

Christina R. McElwee is currently a Literacy Coach for Muskegon Public Schools and an adjunct professor for Grand Valley State University. Prior to her current position, she taught 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. She holds a Master's degree in Education with a certification in Reading and Language Arts.

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A Global and Noble Profession:

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

By Ismail A. Hakim, Ph. D

The 2005-2006 data of the National Clearing House on English Language Acquisition (NCELA) report that the Limited English Proficient (LEP) student growth since 1995 has increased by 57.17 percent while the PK-12 growth increased by 3.66 percent respectively. Furthermore, an estimated 5,074,572 LEP students were enrolled in public schools (pre-K through Grade 12) for the 2005-2006 school years. The Michigan Department of Education reported that the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Michigan schools have increased by 105% since 1990. Although Michigan's population is decreasing, the data reflect that its LEP student population is increasing. LEP students are English language learners who almost always need language instruction educational programs (LIEPS) such as dual immersion, bilingual, sheltered instruction, transitional, two-way bilingual, pull-out and push-in in order to help them learn both language and content. Many teachers in Michigan and throughout the country are faced with a number of challenges when it comes to educating these remarkable learners. As a result, the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program allows teacher candidates to teach English as a second language (ESL) in public schools, in private and for-profit settings, in adult settings and in international settings.

The Grand Valley State University College of Education's TESOL program collaborates with the Department of English in preparing teachers to teach in various LIEPS in the US and abroad. Dr. Nagnon Diarrassouba has joined the College of Education's TESOL program from Northern Arizona University. Besides being a polyglot, he has extensive experience

and knowledge in three global educational systems (Africa, The United Kingdom and The United States). In addition, he has taught in a number of areas from bi-literacy to African Studies. Between Education and English, TESOL candidates have 6 professors who represent much expertise such as English for specific purposes (ESP), second language acquisition (SLA), sociolinguistics, assessment, dialects, applied linguistics, grammar and usage as well as multilingual/multicultural education. Graduate candidates in the program are as varied, for they represent k-12 teachers (elementary and content areas), teachers of adults, and teachers of English as a foreign language (those who teach English in international non-English speaking countries). Many of the graduates in the TESOL program are teaching throughout Michigan and in places like Panama, China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Afghanistan and at The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (Monterey, California). Recently, the U.S. State Department's English Language Fellow Program sought to recruit Grand Valley State TESOL U.S. educators for ten-month fellowships in a number of overseas locations.

Qualified TESOL candidates can pursue various credentials such as a:

1. K-8 or 6-12 ESL endorsement (21 credits)
2. Masters in Education with an emphasis in TESOL and a K-12 ESL endorsement (33 credits)
3. Masters in Education with an emphasis in TESOL (33 credits)

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TESOL Terms

Dual language program: A LIEP that develops strong skills and proficiency in both the students' native language and English. It is also called a Two-way immersion program or Two-way bilingual program.

English for specific purposes (ESP): A field of TESOL that concentrates on teaching English for certain careers, such teaching business English to a group of Japanese Business men or medical terms to international doctors.

English as a foreign language (EFL): Teaching English in country where English is NOT the native language (e.g. Brazil, Algeria, Korea, etc)

English as a second language (ESL): Teaching English in country where English is the native language

Pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) or English language development (ELD): A LIEP that requires ELL students to leave the mainstream classroom part of the day to receive ESL instruction. The focus is mainly on grammar,

vocabulary, and communication skills, not academic content. There typically is no support for students' native languages.

Push-in ESL program: A LIEP that serves ELL students in a mainstream classroom, receiving instruction in English with some native language support if needed. The ESL teacher or an instructional aide provides clarification, translation if needed, and uses ESL strategies

Transitional program, Early exit bilingual program, or Early exit transitional program: A LIEP that develops proficiency skills as soon as possible by initially providing instruction the students' native language, but rapidly moves to English without delaying learning of academic core content.

Transitional, two-way bilingual: see Dual language program

Sheltered English instruction or Content-based English as a second language (ESL) program: A LIEP that provides proficiency in English while learning content in an all-English setting.

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The choice of credentials a candidate pursues provides various avenues to teaching English. Choices 1 and 2 are pursued by k-12 teachers, while choice number 3 is pursued by teachers of adults and EFL teachers (e.g. a student who majored in Business or an international candidate). The TESOL program has recently increased its international student population by over 300 percent, thus giving the candidates more contact with diverse peers and first-hand experiences of various cultures. Courses in linguistics and culture not only serve to enrich the candidates' teaching experiences but they also provide insight into the English language and how many languages are structured.

A vital goal of the TESOL program is to work closely with school districts in the greater Grand Rapids area in creating an Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP). The focus of this program is to assure equity in access to rigorous standards-based, college preparatory, curricula for Standard English Learners (SEL), English Learners, and other under performing students in Michigan. Speakers of different dialects of English should use Standard English as a strategy for increasing their academic performance. It defies logic to provide English language skills for only LEP students and not for historically underachieving native English speaking

students. Particularly, since both groups speak a language/dialect other than Standard English and a number of them share low achievement characteristics. The Los Angeles Unified School District's Office of SEL Programs/AEMP provides a model for the TESOL program's goal.

The United States is becoming more of a global partner, and the students in our schools must be prepared to represent the country to the rest of the world. The TESOL program provides graduate candidates with opportunities to teach linguistically diverse learners who represent various cognitive and learning styles. Furthermore, TESOL complements the changing demographics of the classroom while making candidates marketable almost in any learning institution. For example, the international TESOL organization in Washington DC, currently lists over 45 jobs in more than 12 countries in the Career section of its website (<http://careers.tesol.org>). Most listings on the site require a Masters Degree in TESOL. As we become part of a global world within the US and abroad, the College of Education's TESOL program leads the way.

For more information, please contact **Dr. Ismail A. Hakim** (TESOL Graduate Coordinator/Advisor) can be reached at (616) 331-6736 or e-mail hakimi@gvsu.edu



Reinken Retires with a Hallelujah!

By Dottie Barnes

Barbara Reinken traded in her grade book for a captain's log. After 14 years at Grand Valley State University, she retired in May and immediately set sail with her husband aboard their yacht, Hallelujah, to

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ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

travel around the U.S. and Caribbean for the next couple of years.

Reinken began teaching in the College of Education as an assistant professor in 1996 and became an associate professor in 2002. Her passion for literacy benefited Grand Valley and area K-12 students. In 2005, Reinken started a partnership with Godfrey-Lee Public Schools to establish the Grand Valley State University Summer Literacy Center, a four-week summer reading program that matches graduate students in the College of Education with students within the Godfrey-Lee Public Schools.

"When I came to Grand Valley, I wanted to find a way to continue to help and work with struggling readers," said Reinken. "My entire career has been in urban settings. The partnership with Godfrey-Lee allowed me to take a dream and put it into reality. When the program started we had 19 K-12 students; this summer we will have more than 200 students.

"It has always been my goal to try and piece together the puzzle as to why students are struggling so I can figure out where the needs are then support the students so they can be successful in developing literacy abilities."

Reinken received a bachelor's degree in education from Indiana University, a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a

doctorate in curriculum, teaching and educational policy from Michigan State University.

She was a student teacher in Gary Indiana, taught in inner-city Milwaukee and was principal at Taft Elementary in Wyoming, Michigan. She said the most important advice she can pass along to those wanting to teach is to know your students.

"It doesn't matter what the state says the curriculum has to be or what the political environment may be," said Reinken. "If we don't know our students, their interests and attitudes, then we can't put together an effective curriculum. If we don't know them, then we're only giving content and not really teaching. If we don't know them, we can't educate them or support them in learning."

Reinken said she is also proud of the work she's completed through membership on committees. "I love curriculum and accreditation," she said. "I was on the lead team for two NCATE renewals within the College of Education and served as one of three faculty members on the lead study team for Grand Valley's North Central Accreditation renewal."

She also chaired a state review process for the Michigan Education Department, which involved reviewing all state required reading courses, a massive undertaking completed in late 2008.

Reinken has served on several board and committees and has received many honors while at Grand Valley. She received the 2003 Albert J. Mazurkiewicz Special Services Award in recognition of her service to the College Reading Association. The Literacy Center she established was a finalist for the 2010 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award and received national recognition for university-community partnerships. Reinken is the only faculty member at Grand Valley to earn both the Outstanding Community Service Award (2009) and the Outstanding University Service Award (2006) since the awards were instituted.

The Hallelujah, a DeFever 44 Trawler, will be her home for the next couple years, as she and her husband travel the Great Loop, the water route around the eastern half of the U.S. — a trip they have been planning for 30 years.

"I was practically born on the water," Reinken explained. "My family lived on the water in Northern Indiana. Lake Michigan was my first bathtub. My dad was building our house and we didn't have plumbing for a while."

In retirement, Reinken said she is considering writing a children's book about boating and sailing. "We need to educate children about the waterways of our country and the fun they can experience on the water," she said. 🍷



By Clayton Pelon and Dottie Barnes

Susan Carson, associate professor in the College of Education, will travel in August to the University of Lucknow in India where she will research principles and practices of caring communities with an

emphasis on equity opportunities for young women and girls.

Carson's research aims to identify how teacher education faculty educate students about principles and practices of caring communities.

"The goal is to understand how these practices are identified, developed and integrated into pre-service teacher education curriculum," said Carson, "and to show ultimately how they might be used to construct a shared vision, reduce violence, improve communication, enhance relationships, address issues of gender equity and foster respect for teachers."

This will be Carson's second trip to India where she said cultural intersections bring wonderful learning opportunities. She said the University of Lucknow is a prime site for research as it offers courses in peace education, human rights education, value education and environmental education.

Carson shares equal passions for teaching and community service. "Teaching is service," she said, "and you dive into it in whatever community you find yourself."

Teaching at Grand Valley State University since 2000 and she has been awarded the university's community service award. At home, Carson is actively involved in local organizations and projects that focus on social

justice and peace, including the Triangle Foundation and In the Image. She volunteers at Riverside Middle School and works with other COE faculty in helping to educate homeless youth.

"I want my students to know how important it is to volunteer," she explained. "Those who enroll my classes must participate in five to seven hours of service work each semester."

This commitment has led directly to an innovative project with Grand Rapids Public Schools and the Kent School Services Network.

Susan Carson teamed up with Stephen Worst to provide an early school tutoring experience for students at the very start of their education course work. Two days a week, 60 freshmen and sophomores were given the opportunity to attend pre-requisite courses on site in an urban school with a diverse student population.

At the end of their college class, students remained to tutor elementary students on a one-on-one basis at the Coit Creative Arts Academy in the Grand Rapids Public School district and Pine Island Elementary in the Comstock Park district.

A transformative figure at the College of Education, Carson will use her extensive background and an open mind to investigate and work with the people of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. 🍷

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