Community perspectives in higher education service learning and volunteerism

Andrea Vernon
The University of Montana

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Recommended Citation
Vernon, Andrea, "Community perspectives in higher education service learning and volunteerism" (2001). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 9417.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/9417

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

**Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature**

Yes, I grant permission

No, I do not grant permission

Author's Signature: [Signature]

Date: 12-01-01

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.

8/98
Community Perspectives in Higher Education
Service Learning and Volunteerism

By:
Andrea Vernon
B.A. California State University Long Beach, 1991
M.A. The University of Montana, 1995
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Education

The University of Montana
2001

Approved by:
Chairperson
Dean, Graduate School

Date
This study is a qualitative analysis measuring community perceptions of college student volunteers and service learners. The purpose of the study was to examine college student service learning and volunteer activities from the community perspective through data gathered from community agency personnel who work directly with college student volunteers who are serving to meet the needs of youth.

Personnel from 15 community youth service agencies in seven Montana communities were interviewed to determine (a) how agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service, (b) the impacts that college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve, (c) the impacts that college student volunteers have on youth they serve, and (d) what views the community has about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies.

Data were analyzed using an open coding process and yielded findings in the following areas. College student volunteers positively impact programs operated by the agencies because they provide additional human resources for agencies, they have energy, they are typically young, and they have experience and knowledge that helps them to be effective volunteers. College student volunteers negatively impact agencies because they have varied schedules due to exams and school breaks, and they sometimes require additional supervision. When college students are committed and responsible about the service they provide they have tremendously positive impacts on youth in the areas of self-esteem, academic performance, and social skills. However, when college students drop out of programs early or are inconsistent, the impacts on youth can be devastating. Respondents generally believed the community perceived college student volunteers as responsible and helpful in addressing the needs of youth when the students were committed to volunteering.

The study concludes with recommendations for higher education service learning programs to improve the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer efforts.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people who have helped me throughout my academic journey that deserve recognition and my heartfelt gratitude. Dr. Lenoor Foster chaired my dissertation committee and provided me with ongoing support throughout each stage of the process toward completing my doctorate. Dr. Merle Farrier and Dr. Wes Snyder also served as helpful and supportive dissertation committee members. Dr. Paul Miller from sociology served double time for me. He first served as the chair for my Master's thesis in sociology and then served as a committee member for my dissertation. His inspirational and kind character remains invaluable to me.

Dr. Kelly Ward became my mentor early on and helped to keep me motivated professionally and academically, and her ongoing friendship is very meaningful. Dr. Gerald Fetz provided me with support and flexibility that allowed me to take time off from my professional work to pursue class work and my dissertation. He always believed in my abilities and helped to provide avenues for me to achieve my goals.

I am very thankful to the individual respondents at each of the agencies that I interviewed for sharing with me their candid remarks and insights about working with college student volunteers and service learners.

Finally, I thank my family for their ongoing support and encouragement. My parents have always shown their enthusiastic support for my academic pursuits, and my mother babysat for countless hours while I studied and wrote. My husband sacrificed many weekends and evenings to take care of our daughter while I was in school but his support for me never wavered. I thank my daughter for her smile, which always brightens my day and motivates me to be the best that I can. And to the child that has stirred inside of me throughout most of the time I spent writing my dissertation, thank you for motivating me to finish on time and I look forward to meeting you soon!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions Inherent in the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Story of Service Learning</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundational Theories</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning as Civic Education</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effects of Service Learning on Students</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Outcomes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Outcomes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with the Institution</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of Program Characteristics</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impact of Service Learning on Faculty</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Quality of Student Learning</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to Service Learning</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Integration of Service Learning</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Service Learning on Institutions</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment &amp; Availability</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Community Relations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the Engaged Campus</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Service Learning on Communities and Community Perceptions of Service Learning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Study</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures of the Study</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. RESULTS .................................................................................54
Section One: Case Study Backgrounds & Summative Information ...............55
Case Study #1 ..............................................................56
Case Study #2 ..............................................................57
Case Study #3 ..............................................................58
Case Study #4 ..............................................................59
Case Study #5 ..............................................................61
Case Study #6 ..............................................................62
Case Study #7 ..............................................................63
Case Study #8 ..............................................................65
Case Study #9 ..............................................................66
Case Study #10 .............................................................67
Case Study #11 .............................................................68
Case Study #12 .............................................................69
Case Study #13 .............................................................70
Case Study #14 .............................................................71
Case Study #15 .............................................................73
Section Two: Examination of the Data and Themes ..................................... 74
Category #1: Ensuring the Quality & Effectiveness of College Student Volunteers at the Agencies Where they Serve ............................................. 78
Concept: Volunteer Program Management ............................................. 80
Concept: Agency/University Partnerships .............................................. 87
Concept: Quality Management ......................................................... 97
Category #2: Measuring the Quality & Effectiveness of College Student Volunteers at the Agencies Where they Serve ............................................. 102
Concept: Publicity ........................................................................ 103
Concept: Formal Evaluation Tools .................................................... 105
Concept: Informal Feedback ........................................................... 108
Concept: Barriers to Measuring Effectiveness .................................... 111
Category #3: College Student Volunteers Impacts at Agencies ..................... 113
Concept: Programmatic Impacts ....................................................... 114
Concept: Positive Attributes of CSV ................................................. 120
Concept: Negative Attributes of CSV .............................................. 125
Category #4: College Student Volunteers Impacts on Youth ......................... 130
Concept: Demographics of Kids ....................................................... 131
Concept: Kids' Perceptions of CSV ................................................ 133
Concept: General Benefits to Youth ................................................ 135
Concept: Impressions on Youth ....................................................... 138
Category #5: Community Views of College Student Volunteers .................... 143
LIST OF DIAGRAMS

DIAGRAM 4.1: Open Coding Process of Data Analysis ......................... 76
DIAGRAM 4.2: Phenomenon & Categories ........................................ 77
DIAGRAM 4.3: Category #1: Ensuring Quality & Effectiveness of CSV Service ...................................................... 79
DIAGRAM 4.4: Concept: Volunteer Program Management ...................... 80
DIAGRAM 4.5: Concept: Agency/University Partnerships ...................... 87
DIAGRAM 4.6: Concept: Quality Management ..................................... 97
DIAGRAM 4.7: Category #2: Measuring Quality & Effectiveness of CSV Service .......................................................... 102
DIAGRAM 4.8: Concept: Publicity ..................................................... 103
DIAGRAM 4.9: Concept: Formal Evaluation Tools ............................... 105
DIAGRAM 4.10: Concept: Informal Feedback ..................................... 107
DIAGRAM 4.11: Concept: Barriers to Measuring Effectiveness ................. 111
DIAGRAM 4.12: Category #3: College Student Volunteers' Impacts at Agencies .................................................. 113
DIAGRAM 4.13: Concept: Programmatic Impacts .................................. 114
DIAGRAM 4.14: Concept: Positive Attributes of CSV .......................... 120
DIAGRAM 4.15: Concept: Negative Attributes of CSV .......................... 125
DIAGRAM 4.16: Category #4: CSV Impacts on Youth ............................ 130
DIAGRAM 4.17: Concept: Demographics of Kids ................................ 131
DIAGRAM 4.18: Concept: Impressions on Youth .................................. 138
DIAGRAM 4.19: Category #5: Community Views of CSV ....................... 143

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Within the past decade, many higher education institutions across the nation have increased opportunities for faculty and students to build civic responsibility and to actively participate in community service activities by developing programs that promote and sustain service learning and student involvement in community volunteer experiences. This movement has occurred, in part, as a result of critiques within the past two decades that higher education is inherently elitist and builds a disconnected relationship between academics and real life for students (Bok, 1982; Boyer, 1987). Benjamin Barber (1993) notes that the community is the point where education and democracy should intersect, whereby learning inspires community and community inspires learning. A deficit in one creates a deleterious effect on the other (Barber, 1993). Those involved in the service learning movement believe that productive changes in communities will occur when institutions for higher education uphold their mission to instill citizen leadership skills in their students. Educated citizen leaders will enhance individual action by helping to define public problems, engage in public discourse, anticipate consequences of options, resolve conflict, practice making informed choices, reach consensus, and take action on behalf of the common good (Putnam, 2000).
Ernest Boyer (1987) asserted that, "Service introduces students to new people and ideas. It establishes connections between academic life and the larger society" and is inherent to the mission of higher education (Boyer, 1987, p. 215). He believed leadership that is fostered through civic education will develop real capacities to work in complex communities, recognize diversity and use it as a resource in problem solving, and negotiate relationships of power and inequity while building community and civic responsibility. Boyer strongly urged the nation's colleges and universities to uphold their mission to develop civic responsibility as an important value among their students. From his point of view, the higher education system in America should act as a facilitator of civic responsibility and a catalyst for renewed civic interest.

In 1985, Presidents Timothy Healy from Georgetown, Donald Kennedy from Stanford, and Howard Swearer from Brown University offered a call for the integration of community in education as a step toward a civically educated and responsible citizenry, and the national Campus Compact was established (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Campus Compact became a national coalition of college and university presidents committed to helping students develop the values and skills of civic participation. Membership in the Compact grew steadily throughout the late 1980s and early '90s, as many higher education institutions began implementing programs to enhance student involvement in their communities to foster civic responsibility. In 2001, Campus Compact's membership included more than 654 college and university presidents nationwide (Campus Compact, 2001).
Higher education's response has been heightened, in part, due to federally funded initiatives to spawn civic interest and action such as the nonpartisan Commission on National and Community Service implemented by President Bush in 1990. Federal community service initiatives date back to the Depression Era in the 1930s when President Roosevelt enacted the Civilian Conservation Corps which put thousands of men back to work building the foundation of many of the national parks and recreational areas widely used today. In the 1960s, President Kennedy established the Peace Corps and Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) to promote civic responsibility to fight poverty across the nation and the world. The country's newest service initiative, AmeriCorps, was signed into action by President Clinton in 1993, and calls for citizens in rural and urban areas to provide a year or two of service to their communities in return for financial assistance to attend college. President George W. Bush recently renewed support and funding of the Corporation for National Service which allocates funding and oversees AmeriCorps, VISTA, and federally funded service learning programs in elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions.

There is strong evidence to indicate that postsecondary institutions have taken increased action to successfully teach civic responsibility and individual commitment to community involvement (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). As a means to this end, service learning was introduced to postsecondary curriculum. Service learning is a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that (a) is conducted in and
meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education and with the community, (b) helps foster civic responsibility, (c) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled, and (d) includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience (Campus Compact, 1999).

Students involved in service learning typically volunteer with non-profit community organizations and help address identified community needs in areas such as poverty, illiteracy, and environmental degradation. Service learning students' volunteer work is directly connected to course curriculum and intertwined with academic learning, as opposed to students who are volunteering with organizations as an extra-curricular activity. College students who volunteer as an extra-curricular activity may gain knowledge and skills that benefit them in their coursework or career fields, but their volunteer service is not directly linked to academic credit. Students involved in service learning receive academic credit for the learning that occurs as a result of their volunteer service experience.

Within the field of higher education service learning theorists contend that community service is a viable means for advocating social change and engaging college students as active change agents (Cotton & Stanton, 1990; Gugerty & Swezey, 1996; Howard, 1993; and Jacoby, 1996). Research on service learning and volunteer community service indicates that college student volunteers bolster their civic participation, and positively impact and help to meet identified community needs through their volunteer service (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, In press;
Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; and Rhoads, 1997). The movement of higher education institutions to actively engage college students in community service has developed through both service learning and extra-curricular volunteer activities while research to date typically focuses on service learning.

Statement of the Problem

Research pertaining to service learning as a viable pedagogy for teaching subject material and civic responsibility continues to expand as higher education institutions and school districts nationwide look to service learning as a means to enhance both community service and student learning. Existing literature makes clear that service learning engages students in meaningful service and provides learning experiences to enhance classroom teaching (Astin & Sax, 1998; Boss, 1994; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; and Eyler & Giles, 1999). Research also points out that service learning enhances students' psychosocial and moral reasoning abilities (Boss, 1994; Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994). Faculty also benefit from involvement in service learning through the application of theory and knowledge to local problem solving (Lynton, 1995). What is less clear, however, is the community's perspective on higher education service learning and volunteer activities, and the perceived impacts that college students have on the needs they are trying to address in the community either as service learners or volunteers.

Service learning as an educational tool has a twofold goal (a) to meet community needs, and (b) to provide meaningful learning experiences for
students. Further, it is a way for campuses to enliven their public service missions. Successful service learning collaborations between campuses and communities rely on equitable partnerships between both parties to meet the above goals (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Hollander (1998) describes this relationship as the "engaged campus" -- a place that blurs boundaries between campus and community and knowledge and practice. She asserts that "the engaged campus is not just located in a community; it is intimately connected to the public purposes and aspirations of community life itself" (Hollander, p. 3).

Service learning is a means to make the engaged campus a reality in higher education.

Service learning also seeks to develop a win-win-win relationship between the faculty, student, and recipients of service because principles underlying service learning are deeply rooted in both the campus and community perspectives (Sigmon, 1979). Research on service learning needs to reflect both the original goals of service and learning. If researchers of civic engagement and service learning continue to ignore the community perspective, then the movement is at risk of perpetuating the hierarchical and potentially destructive relationship between campuses and their surrounding communities that it purports to remediate. By failing to look at communities as active partners, those involved in service learning risk maintaining the status quo. Therefore, research that is grounded in the community and utilizes direct feedback from community agencies about the impacts of college student volunteers is necessary for the improvement and validation of higher education service learning activities.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine college student service learning and volunteer activities from the community perspective through data gathered from community agency personnel who work directly with college student volunteers. The study examined perceived impacts that college student volunteers have at the community agencies where they serve and on the needs of youth their service is addressing based on feedback from respondents at community service agencies who work with college student volunteers. The study concentrated on service to meet the needs of youth because this is the population the majority of college students' service learning and volunteer activities focus on (Campus Compact, 1999). More specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions.

1. How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?
2. According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?
3. What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts as perceived by agency personnel?
4. What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?
Importance of the Study

Communities across America are facing greater challenges than ever before. Burdensome social problems related to homelessness, environmental degradation, poverty, crime, and illiteracy result in societal dysfunction. Communities rely on social institutions for assistance and solutions to these pressing issues. When institutions, such as the family and the church, begin to erode and become less effective mediating sources, more pressure is placed on education. Historically, education has endured and been imposed upon to solve many societal ills (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Today's challenges require a unified effort within the institution of education to equip students with a sense of civic responsibility, renewed civic discourse, and democratic mindedness to begin to address the critical issues faced by communities across the nation (Parsons & Lisman, 1996). Higher education institutions are in a position to be able to offer this type of integrated education to students because these goals lie inherently within their missions. Historically, colleges were designated from their inception to be community-based organizations with the ability to cultivate citizenship (Parks Daloz, et.al, 1996). One mechanism in place to provide civic education to college students is service learning, an instructional methodology that integrates community service with academic instruction and focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility (American Association of Community Colleges, 1995). Through service learning and extra-curricular volunteerism, students are able to involve themselves in organized community service activities that meet identified needs.
within the community. Service learning is an effective pedagogy for teaching civic education to increase student involvement in the community and heighten levels of academic achievement (Lisman, 1998).

In order to prepare students to be citizens in a 21st century democracy, civic education is necessary. Based on projections by economist Jeremy Rifkin (1996), as the information age drastically changes our definition of the nature of work, educators face a dual challenge of preparing students to be productive in today's highly competitive marketplace while imparting the values necessary to sustain our society. Students must be educated to meet the demands of the new century, such as the value of social capital, and become skilled in the civic sector marketplace. A connection must be made between the responsibility to one's community and the enhancement of social capital. If members of a community share responsibility in creating a positive atmosphere in which to live and work by creating norms, networks, and social trust which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, the social capital of the community will be increased and more resources will be available to assist those in need (Putnam, 1995). A balance between need and resource will be achievable.

College and university leaders play a crucial role in continuing and supporting the service movement within American higher education. San Francisco State University president Robert Corrigan stated in a speech to the Western Campus Compact Consortium, that service learning and civic engagement are providing a number of important benefits to higher education.
It is giving us a range of effective ways to carry out our social responsibilities. It puts us, politically, on the cutting edge, demonstrating our capacity to effect important, positive social change...Service learning is the antidote to the precipitous drop in college student participation in civic life. Service learning is a spur to civic engagement, an expression of higher education's social mission, and an academic powerhouse, strengthening both teaching and learning...All in all, this movement in higher education has become a true wave, sweeping across the nation. We have, at this moment, an historic obligation and an unprecedented opportunity. Service learning and its outgrowth, civic engagement, promote everything we most value in the academy, and if we embrace this movement together, we can truly transform our students, our communities, and ourselves (Corrigan, 2000; p. 9).

In order to embrace and support the movement, higher education leaders must be informed about the nature and effectiveness of the types of community-based work that service learners and student volunteers are participating in. Corrigan (2000) points out that the heart of higher education civic engagement lies in the university-community partnership. He states that higher education leaders need to be aware that service learning takes "hard, and often sensitive, work to establish and maintain a true footing of equality between partners in the campus-community projects" (Corrigan, 2000; p.16). Without research to identify and lend merit to the community voice in the higher education service movement, higher education leaders will lack validity in their community partnership efforts.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions apply:

*College Student Volunteers* are unpaid individuals who volunteer their time as an extra-curricular or academic-based activity to serve as a human resource in meeting identified community needs (Kupiec, 1993).
Community Youth Service Agency is a non-profit community-based organization that functions to identify and address various needs of youth in a community (Kupiec, 1993).

Service Learning is a process through which students are involved in community work that contributes significantly to (a) positive change in individuals, organizations, neighborhoods and/or larger systems in a community, and (b) students’ academic understanding, civic development, personal or career growth, and/or understanding of larger social issues. This process always includes an intentional and structured educational/developmental component for students and may be employed in curricular or co-curricular settings (Minnesota Campus Compact, 1999).

Assumptions Inherent in the Study

For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that agency personnel had knowledge of which volunteers were college students and the type of service the college students were performing. It was also assumed that agency personnel were able to recognize any impacts on the youth as a result of the college student volunteers’ service efforts.

Delimitations

This study was delimited by the following foci:

1. The study focused on the impacts and effects of college student volunteer service as perceived by community agency directors.

2. This study focused only on the impacts of college student volunteers’ service intended to meet the needs of youth.
3. The study does not include analysis of other volunteers in the agency, nor volunteer efforts to meet other identified community needs such as the elderly, the environment, or animals.

**Limitations**

1. This study was limited to community-based youth service agencies in seven Montana communities that use college student volunteers.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The movement of higher education institutions to actively engage college students in community service has developed through both service learning and extra-curricular volunteer activities. In recent years, books and edited volumes have been published about community service (Rhoads, 1997), service-oriented faculty development (Howard, 1993), service learning concepts and practices (Jacoby, 1996), and the history of service learning (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999).

In addition, there are several journals that are entirely dedicated to service learning (e.g., The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning) or that regularly devote issues to service learning (e.g., Education and Urban Society, American Behavioral Scientist). A review of the current literature on service learning, however, reveals a general lack of attention to the community partner in service learning. If the community continues to be overlooked in service learning research, then service learning may be another example of an "ivory tower" approach to community "partnerships" where the community is a laboratory for colleges and universities and not a true partner (Holland & Gelman, 1998).

In order to ground the present study, a review of the literature pertaining to higher education service learning was made in order to (a) identify the foundational theories of service learning, (b) analyze current findings regarding the impacts of service learning in higher education on students, faculty, and institutions, (c) find the impacts of college students' volunteer service on
community needs, and (d) discover community perceptions of higher education service learning. Findings in each of these areas are described below.

**The Story of Service Learning**

**Foundational Theories**

To fully understand service learning and its intended purposes as it is used in the context within higher education today, an explanation of the foundational theories of service learning and the recent evolution of contemporary civic education is pertinent. The roots of service learning as a pedagogy date back to the turn of the twentieth century when John Dewey brought forth his progressivist views of education (Mooney & Edwards, 2001). He believed that true learning occurs when thought and action come together and intersect in the classroom as well as in real life settings (Dewey, 1938). He urged educators to utilize and expound upon experiential learning opportunities in order to make learning more real for students and more grounded in meaningful life experiences. Dewey believed there was a natural link between one's experiences and educational learning through the meaning one placed on the experience itself. He viewed experiences as a physically active process, not merely a cognitive one, whereby the value of an experience becomes dependent upon the meaning and consequences the experience provides for the individual (Dewey, 1944). Dewey's ideas held strength in some areas of academe during the first half of the century, but it was not until the 1960s when student activism and national service programs such as VISTA and the Peace Corps were
developed, that the notion of learning through service was reinvigorated (Mooney & Edwards, 2001).

In the 1970s, higher education leaders began serious consideration with regard to the idea of giving academic credit for student volunteer work. Service learning began to take a stronger hold, particularly in community colleges, because of institutional mission statements and program goals. Edmund Gleazer (1975), a former president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, observed that because community colleges are intimately involved with community agencies, and "since the purpose is to serve the community, the college is in a position to put equal emphasis on the service and learning aspects of service learning" (p. 14). He continued by saying that "it is in the students that community colleges have their greatest resource for combining service to the community with learning opportunities for the students themselves" (p.14).

Theories of college student development emerging during the mid 1970s served to reinforce the value of learning through service. David Kolb's experiential learning theory explores the critical linkages between real world experiences, formal education, and student development in which learning is a process acquired through experience. He believes that "learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984; p. 34). Kolb drew upon previous theoretical concepts developed by John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. For example, Lewin's study of group dynamics and methodology of action highlights the importance of an individual's
subjective, personal experiences and the impacts these experiences have on learning (Lewin, 1951). Piaget's theory of cognitive development states that one's intelligence arises as a product of the interaction between the person and his or her environment. Contrary to the rationalist perspective of development, Piaget found through his research that intelligence is not an innate characteristic. Instead, he believed the key to developing intelligence lies in the action and interaction that one experiences in his or her environment (Piaget, 1948).

Kolb utilized components from these theories to highlight the inherent connections between formal education and professional work through lifelong learning and personal development. The basis of his experiential learning theory explains that learning occurs in a cycle beginning when an individual perceives information either through actual experiences (concrete) or symbolic (abstract) representations of experiences. Individuals then process information through intentional and thoughtful reflection which guides further action, and the cycle continues (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb's experiential learning theory serves as a foundation to legitimize and substantiate service learning as a viable pedagogy in higher education. By showing there is a strong link between academic learning through service to the community, practitioners of service learning in the late 1970s and early 1980s aided in the creation of a national movement. In 1985, the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford universities formed the national Campus Compact as a means to bring stronger attention to the importance of service learning and civically engaged college students. Service learning was identified as a useful
vehicle to achieve academic goals and outcomes while at the same time imparting civic values to students, an area that research was beginning to show was rapidly decreasing among college students.

Research pertaining to college student values and political involvement in the 1980s and 1990s indicated strong levels of apathy and mistrust (Astin, 1995). In response to such findings, several books, articles, and government-sponsored commissions studied the gradual demise of social participation, increased levels of individual apathy and significant distrust in our political systems, and the general lack of involvement by Americans, especially college-aged individuals, in government at the local, regional, and national levels. (Boyer, 1987; Lisman, 1998; Putnam, 2000). The common result of such studies and inquiries is that levels of civic engagement are at an all time low (Putnam, 2000).

The following section examines the importance of civic education in a democracy and the use of service learning as a tool to impart civic values.

Service Learning as Civic Education

Civic engagement refers to sets of values held by people and actions that they pursue toward the “greater societal good” based on their ideals. Civic engagement occurs when people move beyond familiar circumstances, outside the curriculum, outside the neighborhood, or outside personal values and challenge themselves to explore new perspectives, attitudes and beliefs (Morse, 1989). Civic engagement is the process of individuals working to create a society that promotes and sustains the common good (Lisman, 1998). It is what
we rely on in a civil society to keep a common sense of order and a shared set of norms to guide public action and discourse.

Civic engagement leads to social capital. During the last century, the term social capital was re-invented several times. Social capital theory stems from the belief that social networks bring value to the greater good. Social capital is both a personal and societal attribute.

Some of the benefit from an investment in social capital goes to bystanders, while some of the benefit rebounds to the immediate interest of the person making the investment. For example, service clubs, like Rotary or Lions, mobilize local energies to raise scholarships or fight disease at the same time that they provide members with friendships and business connections that pay off personally (Putnam, 2000; p. 20).

Social capital then, is the glue that binds society. It is made up of components such as reciprocity, networks of mutual obligations, and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital is a web of interrelated structures that assists in maintaining community well being. Shared responsibility in maintaining a positive atmosphere in which to live and work by creating norms, networks, and social trust which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit are the essential components of social capital (Putnam, 1995).

Historically speaking, social capital was not always used as a productive framework for society. For example, Hitler relied on networks and norms of reciprocity to widen his influence, and action for the greater good in America has historically left out specific groups of people, such as minorities and immigrants. Therefore, it is important to note that the renewed discourse and study of civic engagement does not seek to embrace the nostalgic past; rather, it tries to
understand the nature of how our society has evolved to its current state and what can be done to instill a renewed ethic of action for the common good (Putnam, 2000).

Civic education is a tool to help increase individual awareness of the importance of community involvement and to learn the skills necessary for civic action. Civic education focuses on preparing students to recognize the interrelationships of issues and identify the implications for the greater good. It seeks to have individuals recognize that their interest in issues can be either public or private, or both simultaneously. One's understanding of the private aspect of issues helps determine where the public agenda might focus. Civic education attempts to teach individuals how to make connections, see causal situations and outcomes, and understand the relationship between the individual and the larger society (Morse, 1989).

Civic education seeks to accomplish the following goals for students: (a) Gain an understanding of the fundamental processes needed to maintain the appropriate interaction between government and its citizens, (b) provide the skills and ability for individuals and groups to talk, listen, judge, and act on issues of common concern, and (c) develop the capacity to analyze situations or problems from all perspectives and to appreciate all aspects of diversity (Morse, 1989).

Specifically, citizenship involves individuals who can be called upon to think critically, act prudently, and judge morally as a member of a democratic polity (Stanley, 1989). Civic education involves the teaching of conflict resolution skills, exposure to diversity, and creating an awareness of social problems that
exist in order to help students recognize the importance of one's responsibility to assist in the development and growth of their community.

Within the American system of higher education, civic education provides the framework for institutions to develop and sustain engaged partnerships within the community, and service learning has been utilized as a tool for civic education. Comparatively speaking, the components necessary to provide education for good citizenship have been intermittent in higher education over the past century. From the time that Harvard was founded in 1636, as the first higher education institution in America, the collegiate experience was based on a close relationship between an individual's learning and his or her sense of civic responsibility and involvement. Harvard's curriculum focused on providing students with religious knowledge as well as preparing students for active citizenry within the economic and political systems of the era (Oliver, 1989). Through this type of classic knowledge, higher education institutions in America educated students to take on active leadership roles in order to guide the development of new communities across America. Students left college with an appreciation and awareness of their responsibility to have an impact on local, regional, and national politics.

Three historical events occurred to cause this type of classical, elite education in American colleges to shift over time (Oliver, 1989). In 1862, the Morrill Act was passed by Congress to establish land grant institutions in many states and provide a new mission for higher education. The land grant institutions greatly expanded access to higher education for all types of people,
not just wealthy, white, men, and they changed the focus of higher education
from an emphasis on classical education, such as the study of Greek and Latin,
to one that included practical work-based skills such as agriculture.

The second event was the rise of the German-style research university.
In 1876, Johns Hopkins University was founded under a model of higher
education that reformulated the structure of universities to emphasize the
independence of specific disciplines and departments, and the standard
measure of academic achievement became technical expertise. This change
emphasized cognitive and intellectual expertise and de-emphasized the goal to
"foster broad intellectual skills and activities beyond the ivy-covered walls"
(Oliver, 1989, p. 17).

Finally, during the first half of the twentieth century, colleges and
universities became increasingly more bureaucratic. With the rapid increase in
the numbers of students attending college, faculty-student relations changed.
What was once a close-knit system in which students studied, worked, and lived
together and knew faculty on an individual basis, turned into a more fragmented
system in which faculty took on a more narrowly defined academic role with
students and the creation of student affairs professionals occurred. These
changes resulted in a disconnect for students between their academic and social
lives. There was no longer a strong connection between real life and academic
life for students; therefore, students' ability to effectively connect their civic
involvement with their education was negatively impacted (Oliver, 1989).
These conditions, as well as an increase in societal values that strongly support individualism and capitalism, worked together with several other factors to create a system of higher education in the twentieth century that no longer supported civic involvement or the ends to attain greater societal good. Researcher Alexander Astin has monitored the values of incoming first-year college students since the early 1970s. He found student values reflecting materialism, consumerism, power, and status were present during the '70s and heightened in the '80s. Students tended to view their degrees in terms of the potential for individual monetary gain and demonstrated little interest in the environment or social well-being (Astin, 1991). Colleges and universities were doing very little in the 1970s and 1980s to change these individualistic values, even though civic responsibility was a stated mission for most institutions.

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a growing sentiment of distrust for government among Americans. As two researchers have stated, the 1980s resulted in "a dispiriting erosion of democratic civic culture with corresponding growth in civic apathy, resentment, even anger" (Barber & Battistoni, 1993; p. 236). In the 1988 presidential election, voter turnout for young people (college-aged) was the lowest rate of any American age group. In 1992, this rate increased but not anywhere near the rates seen prior to the 1970s (Barber & Battistoni, 1993). Apathy and individualism were corroding the fabric of American democracy.

Individualism is cause for concern in light of the problems faced by our communities. A citizenry with broad comprehension of the interrelatedness of
social institutions, communities, and people is necessary to begin to overcome societal challenges. However, we are faced with a citizenry whose members are isolated, civically disconnected, and morally disengaged (Parsons & Lisman, 1996). Without shared visions for the common good, members of a society feel disenchanted and helpless. They may believe social problems are so insurmountable that they make no effort to address them at the community level.

Several recent historical trends have also contributed to the erosion of civic participation. For example, the movement of women into the labor force has decreased the amount of time both men and women have to devote to civic organizations because of increased demands to balance work and family. An increase in residential mobility has resulted in less civic engagement due to unfamiliarity with communities in which people are moving. Additionally, changes in the family structure, economic outlook, and the technological transformation of leisure have all had negative impacts on the level of civic engagement in most communities (Putnam, 1995). The importance of social capital and civic engagement must be conveyed through the higher education system. In order to fulfill the service component of higher education's tripartite mission, it is the responsibility of colleges and universities to impart these civic values to students (Rifkin, 1996).

Service learning has been identified by leaders in higher education as a viable tool to actively engage students in civic life by addressing and helping to solve real life community issues (Astin, 1992; Boyer, 1987; Corrigan, 2000). Research to date underscores the academic merits of service learning for civic
education, but it overlooks an important ingredient of the mixture: community voices that speak to the perceived effects and impacts of the volunteer service that college students provide through service learning.

**The Effects of Service Learning on Students**

Publications within the realm of the first research category, *effects of service learning on students*, make up the majority of studies within the field and are broken down into five sub-categories: (a) personal outcomes, (b) social outcomes, (c) learning outcomes, (d) students' relationship with the institution, and (e) impacts of service learning program characteristics on students.

**Personal Outcomes**

Research in the *personal outcomes* category identifies several areas in which students develop personally as a result of participation in service learning and volunteer activities, including a sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development (Astin & Sax, 1998; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Rhoads, 1997). Researchers Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles (1999) found in a national study of service learning that volunteer experiences can excite and reinvigorate students on a personal level. Due to the sometimes intense interpersonal experiences that students have with those they are serving, students may gain a new sense of themselves and others. One student involved in the Eyler and Giles study wrote the following in response to her volunteer experience.

> I suppose I've learned about real life. That's the only way I can put it. I've encountered people that I never would have met if I hadn't been a volunteer. I've had to deal with situations that I would never have been confronted with if I hadn't been a volunteer. I've been able to forge
friendships with people that I never would have met" (Eyler & Giles, 1999; p. 23).

Studies in this category also point out that service learning has a positive effect on students' ability to work well with others. Community-based service provides experiences for students to develop and expand leadership and communications skills (Astin & Sax, 1998; Gray, et al., 1998; Rhoads, 1997). For example, most students involved in Ball State University's Excellence in Leadership Program agreed that the community service group projects provided practical experiences in which they could test what they were learning about leadership. Students indicated a deeper commitment to service, and a better understanding of the ethical and moral responsibilities of leaders (Kellogg Foundation, 2000).

Social Outcomes

Studies in the social outcomes category point out that service learning has positive effects on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding (Astin & Sax, 1998; Bringle & Kremer, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Gray, et al., 1998; Osborne, Hammerich, & Hensley, 1998; Rhoads, 1997). Service learning is an activity through which students can learn more about diversity and can learn and share with one another to build connections (Rhoads, 1998). For example, researcher Judith Boss (1994) concluded that "community service not only improves sensitivity to moral issues, but helps students overcome negative stereotypes that often act as a barrier to interacting with other people" (p. 194). She goes on to explain that community
service "challenges [students'] egocentrism by demanding that they actively care for the welfare of another person" (p. 194).

In addition, service learning has positive effects on students' sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills (Astin & Sax, 1998; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997; Kendrick, 1996; Rhoads, 1997). Participation in community service increases students' beliefs that they can be personally effective in community problem solving, and it strengthens their convictions that community service is an important activity to engage in for academic and civic reasons (Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997). A national study also linked service learning activity with increased evidence of social, personal, and civic responsibility among student participants (Rand Corporation, 1996). Gray et al. (2000) found that students who had participated in service learning were more likely than their peers who had not participated in service learning to indicate that their service experiences increased the likelihood of their increased involvement in civic affairs. In addition, Kendrick (1996) found that students who had participated in service learning "demonstrated a greater change than did non-service learning students in their likelihood to agree with the statement, 'most misfortunes that occur to people are frequently the result of circumstances beyond their control!'" (p. 79).

Research in this category also indicates that service learning has a positive effect on students' commitment to community service and involvement in community service after graduation (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, In press; Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997; Markus, Howard, King, 1993; Rhoads, 1997). Studies also
confirm that service participation seems to have its strongest effect on students' decisions to pursue a career in the service sector. Service influences the choices students make in careers, employment opportunities, and workplace skills (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee, 2000; Kellogg Foundation, 2000).

Learning Outcomes

Within the learning outcomes related service learning research, findings show students and faculty reported that service learning has a positive impact on students' academic learning (Astin & Sax, 1998; Boss, 1994; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Markus, Howard & King, 1993; Miller, 1994). One such study found that the benefits associated with academic service learning were strongest for academic outcomes, particularly writing skills (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee, 2000). The impact of service learning on student academic learning as measured by GPA or grades is mixed. Two studies indicate that service learning positively impacts grades (Astin & Sax, 1998; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993) while other studies show there is no significant difference between students who participated in service learning and those who did not (Boss, 1994; Kendrick, 1996; Miller, 1994).

Students and faculty report that service learning improves students' ability to apply what they have learned through coursework in a real life setting (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Miller, 1994). In one study, researchers found that service learning "counters the abstractness of much classroom instruction and motivates lasting learning by providing concrete
examples of facts and theories, thereby providing connections between academic content and the problems of real life" (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993, p. 418).

In another study, findings from Eyler and Giles (1999) confirm that service can be a powerful learning experience. They heard the following responses from two students when asked to talk about their service learning experiences.

I can honestly say that I've learned more in this last year in [service learning] than I probably have learned in all four years of college. I have learned so much, maybe because I found something that I'm really passionate about, and it makes you care more to learn about it – and to get involved and do more. You're not just studying to take a test and forget about it. You're learning, and the experiences we have are staying with us. It's not cram for a test the night before. I know when I take a test that I just want to get it over with. That doesn't happen with service; it stays with you (p.1).

We learn these theories in school and ideas, but until we really apply them or see them in action, they're not real. And we come out of school, if we haven't done something like this, not understanding (p. 1).

Studies in this category also point out that service learning participation has an impact on academic outcomes including demonstration of complex understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development (Boss, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne, Hammerich, & Hensley, 1998). In a study performed by Batchelder & Root (1994) researchers found that students who participated in service learning demonstrated greater initiative to "act in the face of acknowledged uncertainty and [displayed] greater awareness of the multiple dimensions and variability involved in dealing with social problems (p. 350)" as compared to non service learning students.
Relationship with the Institution

Research studies in this category point out that students' relationship with the institution is impacted by participation in service learning activities. For example, students engaged in service learning report stronger faculty relationships than those who are not involved (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999). At the University of Northern Iowa, nearly 20 faculty from ten different departments have worked with students to develop an initiative entitled S.E.R.V.E. (Service, Ethical Reflection, Vocal Exploration), in order to study the significance of the nonprofit sector, service learning pedagogy, and related ethical issues. The initiative is in its fourth year and has resulted in the addition of permanent service learning courses (Kellogg Foundation, 2000).

In addition, service learning improves students' satisfaction with college, and students who are involved in service learning are more likely to graduate (Astin & Sax, 1998; Gray, et al., 1998). In one study performed at Oberlin College, researchers found that among students who had graduated, involvement in community service was the strongest factor in determining graduation (Roose, Daphne, Miller, Norris, Peacock, White, & White, 1997).

The Effects of Service Learning Program Characteristics on Students

Within the final category of effects of service learning on students, research about the effects of service learning program characteristics on students focuses on the structure and organization of service learning programs and how these factors contribute to students' experiences. Research in this category examines characteristics of service such as placement quality,
reflection activities, application of service, and the duration and intensity of service that students are engaged in.

The quality of the placement site has a positive impact on personal and interpersonal outcomes for college student service learners (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Mabry, 1998). Mabry (1998) found that students who had regular contact and feedback from their service supervisors, and frequent contact with the individuals who benefited from their service had higher levels of satisfaction with their service experiences.

Consistent and frequent written reflection and oral discussion of service experiences have positive impacts on service learning experiences (Cooper, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gray, et al., 1998; Mabry, 1998). Reflection is a key component for effective service learning. It separates service learning from other types of experiential education, such as internships or practica. Reflection within the field of service learning is rooted in Dewey's notion of the primary function of reflective thought: "to transform a situation in which there is experienced...conflict [or] disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious...Genuine thinking winds up, in short, with an appreciation of new values" (Dewey, 1933, p. 100-101).

Research in this category finds that students gain the most academically, socially, and civically, when they have the opportunity to reflect with others about the challenges and successes they are experiencing in their service site. A student in a study performed by researchers Eyler and Giles (1999) wrote the following about reflection.
To hear the professor talk about a theory and then for her to say, "Now here’s a project; go do it," and then, after the project’s done, to say, "Okay, what theory is applicable to this project?" The light bulb comes on...I understand it more by first having the assignment and then going out and doing it and then coming back and reflecting on it (p. 83).

Research in this category also underscores the importance for the service that students are engaged in to be directly applicable to the material they are learning in class and vice versa (Boss, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gray, et.al., 2000). In order for heightened learning and development to occur through service learning, programs must take proactive measures to ensure that students are placed in appropriate sites that pertain to the coursework involved. When students can see a clear connection between the coursework and their service work, increased academic outcomes ensue. Findings from a study performed by Batchelder and Root (1994) reinforce the notion that effective service learning courses provide “a guiding interpretive framework for [students’] experiences based...on reflection-generated insights” (p. 354).

Publications in this category also offer useful frameworks for examining the relationship between student service learners and those who are the recipients of service (Morton, 1995; Radest, 1993; Rhoads, 1997; Serow, 1991). For example, Morton offers three different paradigms of service — charity, project, and social change. The charity paradigm focuses on the provider and identifies "the deficits of those served" (p.21). The project paradigm emphasizes needs, problems, and solutions through service. The social change paradigm is rooted in processes — "building relationships among or within stakeholder groups and creating a learning environment that continually peels away the layers of the
onion to reveal 'root causes'" (p. 22). The social change model focuses on empowerment and emphasizes "doing with" rather than "doing for". Morton's model emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the perspectives of the recipients of the service provided and using this approach to move students from a "feel good" service frame of mind to viewing service as a means for social change through the application of academic theories and concepts.

Research indicates the duration and intensity of service has an impact on student outcomes (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Sax, & Avalos, In press; Gray, et.al., 2000; Mabry, 1998). Findings from the Rand Corporation (1998) study indicate that students who serve more than 20 hours in a semester have more positive academic outcomes than those who serve considerably less. In addition, students who serve on a consistent basis for a minimum of one semester have higher academic outcomes as well. Therefore, programs should coordinate service learning experiences that meet these conditions in order to attain optimal outcomes.

The Impact of Service Learning on Faculty

Faculty play an instrumental role in the implementation and effectiveness of service learning in higher education. Research in this category focuses on four primary areas: (a) satisfaction with quality of student learning, (b) use of service learning for professional development, (c) barriers to service learning, and (d) increasing integration of service learning by faculty.
Satisfaction with Quality of Student Learning

Research indicates that faculty using service learning report satisfaction with the quality of student learning that occurs (Berson & Younkin, 1998; Fenzel & Leary, 1998; Sellnow & Oster, 1997). Faculty who utilize service learning are perhaps the best purveyors of its effectiveness as a method for teaching and learning. In a national study performed by Hesser (1995), research findings showed that faculty are becoming increasingly aware of the power of experiential education and active modes of learning. Hesser found in his study that faculty who were involved in service learning have become actively engaged in Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. He explained this phenomenon in the following way.

We [faculty] try out new experiences/pedagogies such as introducing community service field study into a course. We observe and reflect on the experience and then make “abstract generalizations”, leading to revisions in our previous understanding of teaching and learning. By continuing to actively experiment with changes of sites, critical reflection tools, and other experiences that enhance the learning outcomes, we, as well as our students, have become practitioners and beneficiaries of experiential education. In addition, we have become more fully engaged with our students and the community in something of a Venn diagram, a collaborating community of learners (p. 40).

Through continued evidence based on student outcomes, faculty are more inclined to continue implementing service learning as a viable means for student learning (Driscoll, 2000).

Studies also point out that community-based research as a form of service learning provides rich, high quality learning opportunities for students to understand and apply important research skills. Community-based research makes research more appealing and accessible to students while meeting the research needs of non-profit organizations. When students are engaged in real
life research projects, they are more likely to have to tackle some of the tougher
issues involved in research such as epistemological controversies related to the
production of knowledge and ethical issues involved in how best to study
individuals and society (Strand, 2000).

**Use of Service Learning for Professional Development**

Research shows that faculty use service learning as a tool for *professional and personal development* (Driscoll, 2000; Driscoll, Holland,
Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Ward, 1996). Service learning provides faculty with a
consistent means to integrate activities involving teaching, research, and service.
Interviews with faculty indicate their satisfaction with service learning because it
allows them to combine professional goals with personal goals to make a
positive difference in communities and to effect social change (Driscoll, 2000).
Service learning is viewed by these faculty as a vehicle for social justice, and to
make real the university’s commitment to public service.

In a research study analyzing faculty vita it was clear that community
service teaching experiences had begun to influence faculty productivity in the
areas of research, conference presentations, and publications (Driscoll, Holland,
Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996). Another study highlighted the importance and value
of the use of faculty development seminars as a means to: (a) introduce faculty
to service learning, (b) assist faculty in developing concrete goals related to
service learning curriculum design and instruction, and (c) enable them to
implement service learning curriculum (Stanton, 1994). The same study found
that the presence of a campus-based service learning office provided extra
Barriers to Service Learning

Service learning, especially as a new endeavor for faculty, can require additional support and resources for faculty. Researchers have pinpointed some of the most common barriers to implementing effective service learning as: (a) additional time in course preparation, (b) lack of funds to cover additional expenses involved, (c) general lack of institutional understanding and/or support, and (d) ineffective community partnerships (Driscoll, 2000; Gray, et.al., 1998; Hammond, 1994; Robinson & Barnett, 1998; Stanton, 1994; Ward, 1996). Lack of support by campus administrators and fellow faculty results in inconsistent and unbalanced support of service learning work done by faculty in the tenure and promotion review process. Stanton (1994) found that some faculty perceived that their institutions' tenure and review system did not support service learning pedagogy, or teaching in general, thus greatly hindering their desire to pursue it.

Similar findings were discovered by Ward (1996) while interviewing service learning administrators about the challenges of getting faculty involved. One staff member of a service learning office said, “the administration needs to lay it down and say that service learning will be a part of promotion and tenure. If faculty want to survive they have to look at P & T guidelines and stick within them and work toward them. Service learning is not in there” (p. 60). This is a significant obstacle that is currently being addressed by some institutions on a case by case basis and by national organizations (Campus Compact, 2001).
Ward (1996) also found that some faculty perceive service learning as a presidential initiative, and are therefore less willing to participate. Campus Compact, the leading national organization for the advancement of service learning in higher education, is a presidential membership organization. As a result, on many campuses service learning began as an administrative endeavor and faculty were left out of the initial conversations. Therefore, some faculty are not willing to view service learning as a viable teaching option.

**Increasing Integration of Service Learning by Faculty**

Despite the obstacles in place for faculty, each year more and more faculty integrate some type of service learning into their courses (Campus Compact, 1998; Gray, et. al., 1998; Stanton, 1994; Ward, 1996). According to an annual survey conducted by the national Campus Compact in 1998, more than 10,800 faculty at 590 institutions participate in service learning. This is an increase of 208 institutions participating in service learning during the previous five years.

**Impact of Service Learning on Higher Education Institutions**

Research pertaining to the impact of service learning on higher education campuses across the country indicates finding in three categories: (a) commitment and availability of service learning, (b) enhanced community relations, and (c) characteristics of the engaged campus.

**Commitment and Availability of Service Learning**

Throughout the past decade, the number of service learning programs and courses being implemented on higher education campuses has steadily
increased (Bringle & Hatcher, 1997; Campus Compact, 1998; Gray, et al., 1998). For example, at the University of Detroit-Mercy, from 1995 to 1999, the number of new and/or modified service learning courses increased nearly 90 percent (from six to about 45). The number of students participating in service learning courses increased more than 90 percent also, from 70 to about 1,000 per year (Kellogg Foundation, 2000).

Campus Compact currently lists 654 campuses as members of the organization, representing an increase of 272 institutions over the past seven years (Campus Compact, 2001). In addition, institutional funding and human resources to support the development and implementation of programs has also heightened.

Institutionalization of service learning is contained in several different levels within the campus. It can be measured using various indicators including the campus mission statement, administrative leadership, budgetary allocations, faculty development activities, student scholarships, and collaborative partnerships with community agencies. One study shows that institutionalization of service learning is strongest on campuses that have established a centralized office, funded the office with university funds, and organizationally located it under the chief academic officer (Bringle & Hatcher, 1997). In a more recent study, the same researchers identify four steps for campus administrators to take in order to more effectively institutionalize service learning and community engagement into the campus culture. These steps include: (a) conducting regular strategic planning, (b) establishing and developing a centralized office,
(c) increasing institutional budget commitments to support the development of service learning, and (d) vesting the commitment to service learning with leadership that establishes and maintains its academic integrity (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

**Enhanced Community Relations**

There is evidence that service learning *enhances community relations* for institutions (Campus Compact, 2000; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Gray, et al., 1998). By developing collaborative partnerships between faculty and community organizations, service learning works to solidify resources for community problem solving and civic involvement. For example, at Western Michigan University, service learning has helped build a stronger relationship between the institution and its surrounding neighborhoods. The Community Training Association Project (C-TAP) has taught many people at the university and in the neighborhoods to identify new resources and work together on long-term projects of mutual benefit. The projects have proven to have lasting positive impacts on the community as well as students and faculty who are involved. Additionally, several neighborhood associations have strengthened and expanded their programs as a result of the collaborative efforts between the campus and community such as foster care advocacy, HIV education, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood cleanups, and tutoring (Kellogg Foundation, 2000).  

**Characteristics of the Engaged Campus**

As service learning programs grow and evolve, more attention is being paid by leaders within the movement to the way in which campuses are
developing and integrating programs that foster civic engagement campus-wide.

Research and articles pertaining to the "engaged campus" are relatively new in the literature on service learning. In 1999, presidents from Campus Compact member institutions across the country gathered to sign the "Presidents' Fourth of July Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education" solidifying their commitment to civic engagement at their institutions (Campus Compact, 2001). The document contains a list of questions related to measures that are in place to increase the civic responsibility of the institution. Questions represent a diverse array of campus constituents including faculty, students, administrators, and the community. Questions measuring the level of civic engagement at a campus include the following.

- How well does our curriculum help students develop civic competencies and civic habits?

- Are our students given multiple opportunities to do the work of citizenship through real projects of impact and relevance, linked to their academic learning?

- How well does our campus's culture support students' participation in genuine, vigorous, open dialogue about the critical issues of their education and the democracy?

- How well does our campus provide opportunity for faculty to create, participate in, and take responsibility for a vibrant public culture on campus, which values faculty and students moral and civic imagination, judgment, and insight?

- Do faculty hiring, development opportunities, promotion and tenure policies encourage and support teaching that includes community-based learning and undergraduate action research? Do these systems support and reward faculty who link their research and service to community needs and concern?

- How well do our administrators create and improve structures that sustain civic engagement and public contributions in many forms?
• How well does our institution create and sustain long-term partnerships with communities and civic bodies? Do we share resources with our partners? Do we allocate resources to support these activities? Can our civic partners point to long-term, positive experiences with our campus?

• How well does our campus promote awareness that civic engagement is an essential part of our mission?

• To what extent have we improved the condition of the communities surrounding our campuses? (Campus Compact, 2001).

In the fall of 2000, presidents and chancellors from 15 colleges and universities in Montana signed the same declaration (Montana Campus Compact, 2000). The Declaration is one of several documents recently produced by national foundations, corporations and clearinghouses that have focused their efforts on funding and researching civic engagement activities in higher education. The Kellogg Commission, Campus Compact, Pew Charitable Trusts, and other corporation-sponsored programs have recently issued studies and reports with suggested criteria, recommendations, benchmarks, and exploratory questions for campuses to guide them through the process of achieving greater civic engagement (Holland, 2000; Holland & Gelman, 1998). These efforts have helped to bring greater attention to the importance and validity of service learning and civic education.

Findings from publications within this category of the literature suggest that there is much that still needs to be done within the service learning movement in order for campuses to become fully engaged institutions. In addition, findings show that campuses that are more advanced on the civic engagement continuum can and should serve as models to other campuses by
providing information and knowledge about how they have achieved their accomplishments (Holland, 2000).

Impacts of Service Learning on Communities and Community Perspectives of Service Learning

Current research pertaining to the impact of service learning in the community and community perceptions of service learning is minimal in comparison to findings related to campus-based research. Findings from such studies indicate that communities are generally satisfied with student service, the service is useful, and communities report enhanced university relations (Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Foreman, 1996; Gray, et al., 2000; Nigro & Wortham, 1998; Western Washington University, 1994). Only five of the seven aforementioned studies actually involved representatives from the community in the research to determine the impacts of service learning on the community. The remaining two studies only included responses from the students themselves about the impacts they perceived to have happened at the community service site.

More recent studies have highlighted the lack of attention paid to the community by service learning researchers (Chesler & Vasques Scalera, 2000; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Literature from this category indicates the need for community voice and a reciprocal relationship between campus and community in service learning experiences. Ferrari and Worrall (2000) point out that very little research exists that focuses on the agency’s views of the student service
provider or the college-partner institution" (p. 35). Cruz and Giles (2000) observe the following.

While the expanding literature about service learning offers very little on the impact of service learning on the community, there is a growing voice for its development...Much of the empirical literature is a mix of research and program evaluation. Very few studies focus solely on community effects; rather, community is often one variable among others. Also, a significant part of the literature is anecdotal and descriptive. And while the research on the value of service to community in the service learning literature is sparse, advocates continue to urge its practice on the basis of its intended value to communities (p.29).

The present state of service learning research reflects a minimalist and mostly one-sided, view of its impacts and effectiveness within the community where the service is provided. Current research places an emphasis on describing service learning from the campus perspective only. This narrow view prohibits campus administrators, faculty, and students from moving beyond a campus-centered approach that utilizes communities as laboratories instead of engaging the values supported by the foundational goals of service learning, which include (a) service that meets identified community needs, and (b) service that provides meaningful learning experiences for students (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

While service learning benefits institutions of higher education, the students, and the faculty members involved, members of the community also stand to benefit from service efforts. The voices of community members, however, are almost completely absent from the discourse on the effects of community service. The call has been made from within the service learning
field itself to have researchers engage in community-based research and examine the impacts of higher education service learning programs.

Summary

Service learning as an educational tool for civic engagement has evolved from foundational theorists and practitioners including Dewey, Gleazer, and Kolb. Historically, higher education institutions in America have included citizenship activity and community involvement as a component of student education. Over time, this emphasis has shifted due to institutional and societal change. With rising levels of apathy and civic disengagement among contemporary college students, service learning is now viewed by many leaders in higher education as a viable means toward reinvigorating the tripartite mission of most institutions.

Research in the field of service learning is abundant. Studies focused on examining the impacts and effectiveness of service learning on students, faculty, and institutions show wide ranging support for service learning as a viable pedagogy. Within this research, however, the presence of community impacts is repeatedly absent. With the exception of a select number of publications within these categories, the importance of community representation is noted, yet the community voice in this literature is overwhelmingly minimal. Even though service learning requires effective collaboration and equal partnerships between campuses and communities for successful service learning to occur, the research tends to ignore the community's perspective on service learning (Egart, 1998; Lisman, 1998).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Questions

Service learning as a methodology to achieve academic outcomes, instill civic values, and engage campuses in community problem solving is a growing movement within the American higher education system. Over the past decade, the movement has gained steadily and now involves more than 654 higher education institutions nationwide. Service learning research documents the pedagogical impacts on students, faculty, institutions, and communities.

The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of college student volunteers on youth they are serving via input from community youth service agencies. This research was directed by the following questions.

1. How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?

2. According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?

3. What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts as perceived by agency personnel?

4. What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?
Method of Study

To address the research questions, a qualitative study was conducted. Information was gathered from personnel at community agencies who work with college student volunteers, and the data regarding the impacts of higher education service learning was analyzed. Qualitative design as defined by Creswell (1994), is “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 2).

Furthermore, qualitative design is an inductive process in which categories and themes emerge from the data during the research process. Through the exploratory research process, the categories and themes develop into grounded theory (Creswell, 1994).

Qualitative research involves generating a theory from data as opposed to testing a theory. The hypotheses and concepts are born through the data collection and analysis process. Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out that “generating a theory involves a process of research” (p. 6). Through qualitative analysis, the researcher is able to investigate a particular phenomenon in which little is known and build a theory to explain it. Qualitative methods are used to “uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 19).

Case study is a form of qualitative analysis that allows the researcher to study a particular phenomenon or issue in depth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Robert Stake (2000) explains that a case study is “both a process of inquiry about the
case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 436). He goes on to point out that case studies are useful in instances where the object of study is a specific, unique, bounded system in which patterned behavior occurs. For the purposes of this research project, a collective case study model was utilized. This model is described by Stake (2000) as follows.

A researcher may jointly study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition...It is instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest some common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases (p. 437).

In the study, the use of the collective case study model as a qualitative approach was most appropriate because its purpose was to discover the perceived impacts of college student volunteers on the communities in which they are serving through the voices and experiences of individuals at community agencies who utilize the student volunteers to help meet the needs of their constituents. Through this methodology, the researcher identified the commonalities and particularities within the cases researched. This allowed for a more in depth understanding of the phenomenon and the ability to identify answers to the research questions put forth.

**Procedures of the Study**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in-person with personnel from community agencies that utilize college student volunteers to help meet the needs of youth. Fontana and Frey (2000) describe interviewing as “one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow
human beings. Interviewing includes a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses" (p. 645). The semi-structured interview protocol in this study allowed for directed questions as well as open-ended questions that elicited information about the perceived impacts and effectiveness of college student volunteers. Data collected in the interview process served as the guide for developing an in-depth understanding and description of whether or not college student volunteer service was making a difference at community service agencies and for the constituents they serve.

The interview questions were designed based on prior results from a pilot study performed by the researcher (Vernon & Ward, 1999). The pilot study was a quantitative analysis measuring community perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks associated with college student volunteers and service learners. Questionnaires were completed by 65 community agency directors who worked with students to meet the needs of various constituencies. The questionnaire included 16 questions that were both open-ended and Likert scaled. Findings from the study revealed several positive and negative factors associated with college student volunteers and the ways in which agency directors perceive the impacts of their service. The study prompted further inquiry to discover the why and how behind the positive and negative perceptions held by community agencies regarding college student volunteers; hence, the present study ensued.

The interview protocol for the present study included pre-formulated, targeted questions designed to obtain baseline data from each informant. Open-
ended questions were included in order to provide informants with the freedom to communicate their own versions and interpretations of the college students’ service.

In May and June of 2001, agency contact information from the service learning offices at the colleges and universities in the communities that were identified for participation in the study was collected. In July 2001, 22 agency directors were contacted either by mail or phone to inform them of the study and inquire about arranging an interview. During August of 2001, interviews were conducted with one or two employees at each youth service agency with knowledge regarding who the college student volunteers at the agency were, the type of service they were performing, and the impacts of their service on youth and on the agency.

Each interview was tape-recorded and hand-written notes were taken. After the completion of an interview, an Interview Coversheet was completed (see Appendix C) upon which main ideas and key points were documented. After conducting the first interview, the interview protocol was modified in order to improve clarity and flow. The first two interviews served as pilots. Once they were completed and transcribed, modifications were made in order to further refine and finalize the organization and clarity of the interview protocol. Interviews lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to one and one half hours. After all of the interviews were conducted and transcribed, the interview text was imported into the ATLAS.ti software program for analysis.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Population

Sampling of populations in qualitative research is guided in a way that "will provide the broadest range of information possible...and [be] expanded until redundancy with respect to information is reached, at which point sampling is terminated" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 233-234). Thus, an appropriate sample size depends on the point at which informants' responses become redundant. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that "it is usual to find that a dozen or so interviews, if properly selected, will exhaust most available information; to include as many as 20 will surely reach well beyond the point of redundancy" (p. 235).

Interviews were conducted of 17 personnel working in 15 community service agencies that address the needs of youth in seven towns in Montana, including Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls, Dillon, Butte, Havre, and Kalispell. Agencies included programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, America Reads/America Counts, after school tutoring/mentoring programs, the YMCA, and youth environmental education programs. The agencies utilized college student volunteers in their program to work with youth as tutors, mentors, coaches, and/or educators in order to meet identified needs of the youth.

The criteria for selection of these communities were based on the presence of a college or university in the community and an established relationship with the community service/service learning/volunteer office on campus. In addition, the chosen communities represented various population sizes. Populations ranged in size from rural (3,700 to 9,600 in Dillon and Havre), to semi-urban (14,200 to 33,900 in Kalispell, Butte, and Bozeman), to urban
(approximately 57,000 in Missoula and Great Falls), thus representing a diverse range of resources available to service agencies in the community (Montana - US Census, 2000). The informants in each case study agreed to be interviewed and shared their thoughts and perceptions based on anonymity. Therefore, the agency names have been changed to maintain confidentiality. Any names that appear in the text are pseudonyms.

**Data Analysis**

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data was analyzed using an inductive content analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as “open coding.”

Open coding... pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data. Without this first basic analytical step, the rest of the analysis and communication that follows could not take place. During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Through this process, one’s own and others’ assumptions about phenomena are questioned or explored, leading to new discoveries (p. 62).

This method, the constant comparative method, involved a continuous cycle of conceptualizing data, categorizing it, and defining the properties and dimensions of each concept. Patterns and themes then emerged through open coding and provided the basis for an in depth understanding and explanation of the phenomenon to unfold.

The utilization of the ATLAS.ti computer software program aided in the analysis phase of the study. ATLAS.ti is a code-based theory building program that allows for the identification of relationships among codes, the establishment
of higher order classifications and categories, and the creation and testing of theoretical propositions (Weitzman, 2000). This software did not develop or build the themes and categories. Rather, it served as a tool to aid in the development of a more thorough and complete understanding of the properties and relationships within the themes and categories that emerged.

Validity

The validity of a study is determined by the extent to which the research is measuring what it is intending to actually measure. There are two types of validity: internal and external. Internal validity refers to the level of accuracy of the information, and the extent to which it mirrors reality (Creswell, 1994). In qualitative research, internal validity is measured through trustworthiness, triangulation, and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1994). For the purposes of this study, internal validity occurred through member checks. Feedback was received from informants about the categories and themes that were identified during the analysis phase of the study. This feedback served as a check and balance system to ensure that the conclusions were accurate and trustworthy.

External validity refers to the level of generalizability of findings from the study. The generalizability of this study is limited due to the case study approach. When researchers who study the particulars of a phenomenon through qualitative methodology attempt to generalize findings to a broader population they diminish the value and legitimacy of their research. Merriam (1988) points out that the purpose of qualitative research is to discover and interpret events.
and phenomena rather than generalize findings. Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) note that "the ability to make pristine generalizations from one research study to another accepts a one-dimensional, cause-effect universe" (p. 288). Therefore, the purpose of this study was not to generalize findings. Rather, the purpose was to gain an in depth understanding and explanation of the phenomenon as it related to the cases involved in the study. This study is valuable because it provides professionals in the field of higher education service learning with information about how community partners view and perceive college student volunteers, their impacts, and effectiveness. In turn, this information can be used to further strengthen and improve the quality of programs and partnerships between higher education and community organizations as a means to uphold the underlying values inherent to service learning.

Reliability

Reliability of a study is typically tested by replication. In qualitative research, reliability is threatened by (a) any careless act in the measurement or assessment process, (b) instrumental decay, (c) assessments that are too long, and (d) ambiguities of various sorts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Objectivity and detailed protocols are used by qualitative researchers to ensure the reliability of a study (Creswell, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reliability in this study was assured through objectivity. The interview protocol was designed to be objective so as not to skew responses unfairly in one direction or another. Questions were structured and asked in a non-bias and value-free manner so as to collect "natural" data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
The interview protocol and data analysis techniques included herein are documented so as to enable future researchers to replicate the study in other areas (Creswell, 1994).
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study analyzed community perceptions of college student volunteers as they pertain to higher education service learning and volunteer activities. Data was gathered via interviews with community youth service agency personnel who work with the volunteers and have first-hand knowledge of the service they are providing. The interview protocol was designed to answer the following research questions.

1. How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?

2. According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?

3. What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts as perceived by agency personnel?

4. What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?

The research process involved interviewing 17 informants from 15 agencies, transcribing the interviews, coding and then analyzing the data in order to answer the research questions. This chapter describes the findings that ensued, and is organized into three sections: (a) a brief background and summative information for each case study, (b) a detailed examination of the
data and themes pertaining to each research question, and (c) a final summary of research findings.

Section One: Case Study Backgrounds and Summative Information

Each of the 15 case studies involved in this study was an agency/organization/program that was either community-based or school-based (K-12), and functioned to help meet the needs of youth. Agencies were selected based on the following criteria: (a) an established partnership between the agency and the college or university in their community to recruit and receive college student volunteers and service learners, (b) at least one college student volunteer or service learner performed volunteer service at the agency helping to meet the needs of youth within the past two years, and (c) located in one of seven towns in Montana chosen to represent rural, semi-urban, and urban demographic characteristics. Respondents from the agencies were either program directors or coordinators who oversee the operation and implementation of youth service programs that utilize volunteers, either college students or community members, to meet the needs of youth.

At the time of this study, more than 1,670 youth representing ages from three year-olds to 19 year-olds were served by these agencies. In turn, the agencies involved more than 950 college student volunteers and/or service learners who served to meet the needs of youth1. The youth served by these

---

1 In order to maintain consistency, the term "college student volunteer" is used predominantly throughout the remaining text. This term refers to college students who are volunteering at the agencies either as part of a service learning class or as an extra-curricular activity. In circumstances where it is important to the note the difference between extra-curricular volunteers and service learners the author made the distinction for readers.
programs came from various backgrounds and had numerous needs related to their personal situations. Some of the children were in need of academic tutoring assistance, some needed an additional adult role model in their lives, others had limited social skills, and many came from low income families that did not have resources available to them to provide children with a sense of security or a bright future. Children served from one organization had a parent who was incarcerated. Respondents from the agencies explained that most of the college student volunteers who worked with these children were in some way attempting to increase the self-esteem levels of the children as a means to help build children's resiliency and coping skills in order to overcome the challenges in their lives. The volunteers helped to build self-esteem through several different activities, including mentoring, tutoring, coaching, teaching, or providing guided supervision for the children.

**Case Study #1: Missoula After School Activity Program**

The Missoula After School Activity Program offered a variety of activities for high school youth to participate in during out of school hours. The program was designed to provide youth with positive alternatives during after school hours in which risky behavior can occur. Program activities included tutoring, outdoor education, sports and recreation, and mentoring. The program served hundreds of high school youth each year, and in the two years prior to the study it depended on the service of more than 80 college student volunteers to carry out activities and directly serve youth. The program's viability depended almost
entirely on the service of college student volunteers. Approximately 90 percent of the program's volunteers came from the college.

Volunteers in the program mentored, tutored, coached, taught, and supervised youth in community-based service activities. The volunteers helped to meet a variety of needs of the kids they served, including academic, social, self-esteem, and helping youth to see themselves as members of the larger community with a responsibility to serve others. College student volunteers typically served between one and four hours per week with the program. Approximately 10 percent of the college student volunteers participated as part of a service learning class requirement. They represented a variety of different major areas on campus including education, health and human performance, recreation management, business management, and social work.

The program relied heavily on the use of college student volunteers to be able to operate effectively and serve the number of youth they were able to reach. With regard to working with the college student volunteers, the respondent said the following.

In general it is the highlight of my job. It is just one of those things where you know a counselor or dean comes to you with a student in need of basically a buddy and who struggles socially, mentally, and physically. To be able to watch this kid walk out of this room with a [college student volunteer] tutor or a mentor and know that he is getting three hours of individual help that week is super, super rewarding.

**Case Study #2: Kalispell Mentoring Program**

This agency focused on establishing long-term mentoring relationships between adult volunteers and youth in need of a supportive adult role model in their lives. The agency operated two types of mentoring programs, one that was
school-based in which volunteers spent about one hour per week with a child during school hours, and a community-based program in which volunteers spent at least one hour per week with the child during after school hours. At the time of this study there were approximately 20 college student volunteers matched with a youth, and they represented nearly half of all volunteers serving with the agency. The college student volunteers served as mentors and role models for the children they were matched with, and helped to build their self-esteem and socialization skills. Approximately 70 percent of the college students volunteered with the agency as part of a service learning class requirement. Students primarily came from a general education service learning course and the economics department.

The two respondents from this agency noted their satisfaction with the quality of service provided by the college students and their overall levels of commitment. One of the informants pointed out that she recognized the time constraints under which college student volunteers operated and was very appreciative of their efforts. She explained it this way.

There is a great admiration for those who are going to school, working a job, sometimes have a family and volunteering in the community, whether its for credit or not. That's a lot to bite off and chew. So I know our staff in general appreciates the fact that these people will take time out of their busy schedules to spend time as a volunteer.

**Case Study #3: Missoula Preschool Program**

The Missoula Preschool organization offered academic enrichment activities to help prepare preschool children for kindergarten. The agency worked with parents and families to bolster literacy levels and activities within the
family unit. Within the two years prior to the study, the agency worked with more than 60 college student volunteers. While the college students made up a large percentage of the volunteers at the agency, parents and other members of the community volunteered their time as well.

The college students typically served as teacher's aides in the classrooms and helped to supervise children in a variety of activities. In some cases, the volunteers taught a specific unit for the children such as health. They helped to increase the social and academic skills of the children and helped them stay on task in the classroom. The college students were usually from academic fields such as education, social work, and nursing.

The respondent pointed out that one of the benefits of having college student volunteers was that they were able to provide a higher caliber of service due to their level of education. He explained that, “There is a level of intelligence there. The college student, just to be in college, has a well educated past, which helps a lot, both in reading [with the kids] and just in understanding directions”.

Case Study #4: Great Falls Kids Camp

The Great Falls Kids Camp was a program that organized and implemented an annual summer camp for children who had a parent incarcerated in prison. The camp provided children, from five year-olds to 15, with the opportunity to get away from their world for a week or so each summer and do the typical things that kids at camp get to do. In the two years prior to the study, the camp served more than 80 children. The camp was free for children, and was operated each year by a group of college students who enrolled in a
sociology class at the University of Great Falls. The program was lead by a law professor who taught the course and oversaw all aspects of organizing, planning, and implementing the camp. The respondent described the reason for the camp as follows.

What I say when I talk to grant agencies is that you [children] can only be what you can imagine and if you cannot imagine a life different than a parent drunk on the sofa and living life like this then you can't be something different. I'm sorry. I believe in free will but I believe in free will for that which you can see and imagine. And, what I say is some kids have lives that are brick walls and you can't get through a brick wall, that's just all there is to it. And what I believe the camp does is create some windows in the bricks. And they are only windows and some kids will choose to crawl through the windows and many kids will choose not to crawl through the windows but we have made windows of behavior.

Each spring semester approximately 22 college students enrolled in the course and planned the camp. The students represented a variety of different majors and were responsible for all aspects of the camp including finding the location, organizing activities, raising funds, and planning food and transportation. During the camp, the college student volunteers served primarily as pod leaders, with a few serving as camp directors. Pod leaders were essentially camp counselors. They were assigned to a group of six to eight children and they spent 24-hours a day with them doing different types of camp activities, eating, and sleeping. Each college student volunteered more than 200 hours to the program.

This organization was unique from the other case studies because it was a campus-based program that operated as a service learning class. According to the respondent, without this structure and the use of the college student volunteers, the program would probably cease to exist, or it would be very
different. The respondent described working with the college student volunteers as very "maddening". Because she had been with the program since its inception nine years ago, she had seen some very positive results of the volunteers, and she has had to tackle many challenges due to the idiosyncrasies and personalities of the college student volunteers. However, she had seen the powerful effects of the bonding that can occur between the volunteers and the children and how, even if for just one week, the volunteers could have a significant impact on the youth. She described one instance of this as follows.

The kids come in tough, you know a lot of them. And he [one of the kids] was really you know, "Well you're just paid to be here". And I looked at him and I said "I don't know if you know this but no one's paid to be here. These students volunteer but what's even more bizarre is they pay us, for credit, to volunteer and so no one is paid to be here". And he went, "Really?". And I said, "Really". And his whole attitude for this kid changed. Because he had been in the system so long and he saw everybody as hired, a hired friend. And so for him it made a difference then.

Case Study #5: Great Falls Mentoring Program

The Great Falls Mentoring Program was very similar to the program in Kalispell. Volunteers were matched with a child and spent approximately two hours per week mentoring him or her one-on-one. The program in Great Falls did not operate a school-based program, they implemented a community-based mentoring program in which mentors and their mentees met during non-school hours to do fun, educational or non-educational activities together. The program goal was to provide children with the opportunity to have an additional positive adult role model in their lives. The program strived to increase social skills and self-esteem among the children being mentored.
This organization, along with two others described later, worked with very few college student volunteers. At the time of the study, approximately five college students served with the organization as mentors, and none were doing so as part of a service learning class. The respondent spoke highly of the college student volunteers in her program and was hoping to find ways to work with the local college more effectively to involve a greater number of college student volunteers. One aspect that she identified as being problematic was the student population at the college in her community. She explained, “We have a lot of non-traditional students here...They have their own jobs, part-time jobs and going to school, so their time is very difficult.” She also noted that, she has met with some resistance from the college in her attempts to partner and actively recruit college students as volunteers.

I have a little frustration, first of all that they went off and did their own mentoring program...basically, I mean, I was just told [by them] “trust me, its very difficult to do, and we [the college] just aren't interested in doing anything else.” Well, it would have been nice if they had said, “its very difficult for us to do, you guys have been doing this for ninety some odd years—why don't you work with us and maybe together we can do this.” And so that's what part of my barrier is.

Case Study #6: Havre After School Tutoring Program

The after school program in Havre focused on literacy tutoring for K-5 children. The college student volunteers spent on average about three hours a week serving after school working one-on-one as reading tutors for youth. They involved the kids in fun, educational reading activities. More than 40 college students have volunteered with the program and served 45 children. The program did not have any other volunteers serving in addition to the college
students. Few, if any, of the college students volunteered as part of a service learning class.

This program worked very closely with the AmeriCorps national service program based at the college to oversee and implement the tutoring program. The presence of the AmeriCorps program played a strong role in the initial development of the program, and it has provided human resources for continuing oversight of its implementation.

The respondent believed the college student volunteers had positive impacts on the reading skills of the youth being tutored. She indicated there was a high percentage of low-income children at the school. As a result she explained the type of impact the volunteers were having.

A lot of kids didn't have a lot opportunities sometimes at home to get in extra reading and so it really provided a wonderful service for our kids to get more help, just getting an opportunity to read with some people. But they also really enjoyed working with the college students and the teachers felt it was very good for the kids, a very positive experience.

**Case Study #7: Havre Community Development Organization**

The Havre Community Development Organization operated several programs that served to meet the needs of low-income families and children in the community. College student volunteers serving with this organization worked either with a preschool program as a teacher aide or as a mentor for 6th and 7th graders. In the two years prior to the study, this organization had approximately 24 college student volunteers who served more than 50 children. The volunteers worked with the children to improve academic potential, increase self-esteem.
and build social skills. About 40 percent of the college student volunteers served as part of a service learning class requirement.

The college in this community offered a community service major for students. Surprisingly, very few of the students who volunteered at the Community Development Organization came from this program. The respondent expressed some serious concerns over this matter. From his point of view he believed part of the reason for this was because of the significant amount of turnover that has occurred with the program director position on the campus. He explained.

One thing is that the community service program has had two different directors in the last two years. They don’t currently have anybody in place yet, although they still have the major they haven’t filled the position. Turnover. Everybody that comes in in the academic world sort of has their [own] idea about stuff.

The respondent also had mixed reactions about the use of college student volunteers. In some cases, he could testify to some very positive impacts in which the dedication of the college student has resulted in a very uplifting experience for the youth being served. However, he also pointed out that college student volunteers may have very devastating impacts on youth when they fall through on their commitment. He described the two possible outcomes as follows.

One would bring tears to your eyes because this is a significant person in that kid’s life and the other is that “they visited me once and once again they never came back. They abandoned me.” So it really hurts a lot when the college student decides they think they want to do it and then they just blow it off.
Case Study #8: Havre Youth Sports Program

The Youth Sports Program in Havre provided elementary-age children with the opportunity to get involved after school with a team sport to learn recreational and social skills. The program's goal was to engage youngsters who typically did not have many friends to be with after school and provided a positive, supportive recreational and social environment. Nearly 50 college student volunteers participated in the program during the two years prior to the study and served 200 children as coaches and referees. Very few community volunteers participated, so the program relied heavily on college student volunteers to maintain and operate the program.

The respondent from this organization explained that she had a negative experience with a service learning class during the last semester of the program that stuck in her mind, and she admitted that it clouded her current perceptions. Approximately half of the college student volunteers who participated in the program last year did so as part of a service learning class requirement. According to the informant, this presented some difficult obstacles for the program. She believed the students were less committed because they had to volunteer in order to pass the class. In addition, the professor did not hold the students accountable for their service. She explained:

Well actually the first time we experimented with that [service learning] was this past year. [Professor Johnson] had a class and he had this grand illusion or idea that it would really work out, but it was difficult because the students felt they were doing it because they were receiving credit and it was something that they had to go through the motions so then they could get credit. There were a lot of problems I think because there was a lack of supervision from their instructor...this was the first
semester and it was drag. It just didn't work well at all. We had nothing but problems with a lot of the students.

**Case Study #9: Missoula Mentoring Program**

This organization's structure was similar to the mentoring programs in Great Falls and Kalispell in that college student volunteers were matched with youth ages six through 17 and spent one-on-one time mentoring him or her. The Missoula organization used college student mentors in both an in-school mentoring program and the traditional community-based program as well. Through these activities, the college student mentors helped to build academic and social skills among youth as well as self-esteem.

The organization also used college student volunteers to help raise funds for their programs and work with children in monthly activity groups. In the two years prior to the study, the organization used more than 200 college student volunteers who served in these capacities, and the respondent readily admitted that her organization depended heavily on the college students. She estimated the total number of hours college student volunteers served on an annual basis at her organization was upwards of 20,000 hours. Some of the volunteers participated as part of a service learning course, but the respondent was unaware of actual percentages.

Even though the respondent acknowledged that because college students are more transient than community volunteers she said they are a "precious resource" for her organization. She said, "I'll tell you it is wonderful for us because not only for the program where they are matched with the kids one-on-one, but all the other programs they participate in. There would be no way we
could do half of the activities that we are doing in this community without the college students."

**Case Study #10: Butte After School Tutoring Program**

This program operated as an after school tutoring program in which college work-study students and volunteers served as tutors for K-12 children. The primary emphasis of the tutoring was literacy but a variety of subject areas were covered. This program is unique from the previous case studies because it relied more heavily on college work-study student employees versus volunteers. In the two years prior to the study, the program employed 25 work-study students and approximately 10 college student volunteers. In addition to the college work-study students and volunteers, the program also involved members of the National Honors Society at the local high school as volunteers for youth as well. With the use of these tutors, the program served more than 130 K-12 students in the two years prior to the study. As with the Havre After School Tutoring Program, the Butte program also relied on their local campus-based AmeriCorps program to aid in organizing and implementing the program.

The respondent pointed out that the college students make ideal volunteers for the program because most of them know how to study. In order to get to college and succeed, the college students had develop strong study skills. Therefore, they were able to teach important study skills to the children they tutored. She described this unique quality of college students as follows.

For one thing it teaches them how to study. [They learn] what’s important, how to get to the answer, start with the tough one first, how to categorize, how to set your priorities, how to do this, how to use Encarta, what plagiarism is, get your math done, do it nicer, use another paper, you
know stuff like that. Some of these kids and parents can’t sit down or don’t sit down and show them the any of that and these guys do. ‘Here’s the way I study, I made a rhyming game, or this is how.’ So they teach them all the study habits, and the little tricks, and these little “getting ready for a test” tricks and how to do their homework.

Case Study #11: Dillon Community Development Project

In Dillon, this project operated three different youth-centered programs. One was a youth activity council in which youth got together and showed initiative in planning extracurricular, recreational types of activities. The other program was a focus group for middle school girls that functioned as a support/chat group. The final program was a youth volunteer corps in which children identified different service projects that needed to be done in the community and then they did them. Among the three programs, approximately 200 youth participated in the two years prior to the study.

Each of the programs was supervised by a college work-study student and college student volunteers assisted with specific aspects of the projects. For example, when the volunteer corps did a service project in the community, a few college student volunteers participated in order to help with logistics and supervision. This organization had a very small college student volunteer component and relied more heavily on work-study students for program implementation, similar to the way in which the Butte program operated.

One notable point made by the respondent related to the transient nature of college students. In his past experience working with college student volunteers and work-study students, he explained that one of the problems was that the students didn’t take into account a community’s history or ideas about
how to go about addressing problems. The college students would just dive right in to an issue the way they thought it should be done without consulting community members regarding what was best for the community in the long-term. An additional point related to this is described as follows.

That's a problem with volunteers, the whole notion of volunteers, they have limited expertise because they're in the middle of learning. And they have youth and enthusiasm, that's good, they have energy, but they don't necessarily have life experience or educational background to support them in what they are called on to do.

**Case Study #12: Bozeman School-based Mentoring**

The Bozeman School-based Mentoring program engaged adult volunteers who provided one-on-one mentoring for K-12 students in the local school district. The goal of the program was to enhance children's academic and/or social skills through an on-going supportive relationship with a caring adult mentor. Mentors spent one hour a week with their mentee in school doing social and academic activities. Each year the program worked with approximately 150 college student volunteers. The program made a concerted effort to maintain a 50:50 balance between college student volunteers and community volunteers who serve with the program to help ensure ongoing program sustainability.

More than 30 percent of the college student volunteers served with the program as part of a service learning requirement. Students came from fields such as health and human development and education. The program had been in existence for 11 years and worked with many college student volunteers.

In comparing the college student volunteers to the community volunteers, the respondent pointed out the following.
I think they are representative of the larger population. We have some college students that wind up being a little immature, they're a little young, they don't realize that there is a responsibility to their child and they wind up not showing up and that's always a disappointment. And then we have those college volunteers that are just outstanding—people that go way above and beyond, stay with their children for years and years on end, develop incredible relationships with them. So I would say they kind of echo the general population. I mean, you have some that are great and some that are not so great, but overall we've felt that they are very successful.

Case Study #13: Bozeman Preschool Program

The Bozeman Preschool Program operated similarly to the Missoula program. Its goals were to provide academic enrichment activities to help prepare preschool children to enter school. The agency also worked with parents and families to increase literacy levels and activities within the family structure. In the two years prior to the study, 35 college students volunteered in a variety of capacities within the agency. Some students served as teacher's aides, some volunteered as literacy tutors in an after school program, and groups of college student volunteered help out with the agency's annual health fair and carnival. Approximately 40 percent of the college student volunteers served at the agency as part of a class requirement. Student volunteers represented fields such as nursing, education, social work, and psychology. The volunteers served to help the preschoolers with their social and academic skills, as well as healthy behaviors.

The respondent from this agency also worked with a non-related program sponsored by the school district to provide special after school classes for gifted and talented children. As the program coordinator, the respondent used several college student volunteers to help teach and offer classes in this program.
Therefore, she included comments about her experience working college student volunteers in that program as well.

The respondent in this case study pointed out that many of the other organizations that her agency partners with do not bother with college student volunteers anymore because of the students' lack of commitment and responsibility. The respondent viewed herself as an advocate for college student volunteers because she had first-hand knowledge of how successful it could be when things worked out.

Here people seem to focus so much on the failures. You might have 10 volunteers, two of them fail, eight of them are wonderful and the next year they'll say, "Well, two of them failed I don't want to do this anymore." As long as you can turn it around and you can focus on the positive aspects and the times it has worked out, which is often more than half the time in my personal experience, then you know it's a good thing. Let's do this again. Let's not focus on the failures. The school district wanted to give up the gifted mentorship program because many of them failed. And again, it is where the college student just stopped showing up, doesn't call, doesn't call the teacher, nothing, just isn't there anymore. But I've seen some kids really come out of their shell who have had mentors.

**Case Study #14: Bozeman Mentoring Organization**

This organization operated a variety of programs for kids of all ages that focused on building self-esteem, career skills, and recreational opportunities. During the two years prior to the study, nearly 50 college students had volunteered with the organization as program activity coordinators, mentors, and teachers. College student volunteers made up the majority of volunteers within the organization. Approximately 40 percent of the volunteers served as part of a service learning class and represented various majors on campus.
The organization had an especially disastrous situation a few years prior in which students in general studies courses were required to perform 10 to 15 hours of service throughout the semester. The organization was never notified by the professors who teach the courses about the requirement, and as a result the organization was uninformed and unprepared to accommodate the large numbers of students who wanted to volunteer there. The organization approached the class professors to suggest that a more formalized procedure be implemented but they were met with rejection. Therefore, the organization has closed its doors to these students.

However, even with such a negative experience, the respondent at this organization realized the value of college student volunteers and praised the work they did with all their programs. In fact, the respondent is attempting to expand a piece of the organization's programming to include special opportunities for freshman at the college to engage in service as a means to facilitate the transition from small-town life to life at college. She explained:

Especially the freshman from Montana, they're having a really difficult time because they're coming in from ranches and homes and formal systems. I wasn't raised in a small town, but my husband was, and what they miss is the interaction with others, familiar faces and so forth. And I believe that's one of the reasons they drop out is because they're just homesick. And so what I wanted to develop with [our organization], and it would be helpful to us as well as the college student, is that they have a place to come to. Before we put the technology center in here, we had a fireplace, I had furniture and we noticed that after the college students would finish working on the carpet, and so forth, they didn't leave. They wanted to sit around a table. I had food for them, they wanted to talk—its because they missed that. So I would like to develop that on a more informal basis, where we would provide for them a place where they feel at home, as well. That the organization is not just for the six to 12 year olds, that it is a place where they can feel successful and they can feel that they belong.
Case Study #15: Missoula Environmental Education Organization

The Missoula Environmental Education Organization was involved in a number of different programs that taught middle school and high school-aged youth about the environment. The programs included a watershed education program in which the K-12 students participated with their teachers in guided field trip experiences learning how to monitor streams and water quality. Another program worked in conjunction with the Wildlife Film Festival to teach kids about the amazing world of animals through art and media. The final program developed environmental education curriculum for classroom use by teachers.

The organization utilized college student volunteers as teachers, supervisors, and curriculum developers in each of the programs. In the two years prior to the study, more than 60 college student volunteers had served with the organization and impacted more than 300 youth. More than 80 percent of the organization's volunteers were college students. The volunteers assisted youth in learning about animals and the environment through hands-on teaching and role modeling. The organization operated under the notion that kids learn best by doing and they used college student volunteers to assist in the "doing."

The respondent from this organization had developed strong partnerships with faculty from several departments on campus, including environmental studies, education and biology, and said she relied on them to help her get the volunteers she needed to operate her programs. An interesting point she offered was that many of the college student volunteers start out with her program because it is a requirement for a service learning class. However, many of the
students continue on beyond their required commitment because they get "hooked" and so service learning, she believed, was a good tool for introducing students to opportunities they would have otherwise not known enough about to get involved and benefit from them.

Out of the class, the watershed education class...students do help in terms of the water festival, in addition and above and beyond all their class requirements, they can help me out. I get to come in a make a plug and say, 'if you have extra time and you want to know a little more about water', and some of those students at the end of it, gave me their names and Email for summer and said, 'keep in touch with me'. And a couple that were seniors said, 'I'll take all your email announcements and see if I can come'. So, it really is something if they fall in love with it and want to stay involved...it's funny that the credit thing may get them in the door but then they find, 'oh that's kind of fun'.

Section Two: Examination of the Data and Themes

The data from these case studies yielded very insightful and prescriptive information about how the agencies and youth are impacted by college student volunteers, the benefits and drawbacks of having the volunteers, and how the community perceives the service they provide. In this study, community perspectives were gathered from each respondent based on his or her experiences working with other community partner organizations, staff within their own organization, parents, teachers, and/or principals. Therefore, the parameters of "community" for this study included agency personnel, other community partner organizations, parents, teachers, principals, and any other adults who worked with the children being served by the program and knew that college student volunteers were utilized.

The case studies in this study represented bounded systems in which specific, unique, and patterned behavior was occurring (Stake, 2000). As a
result, the analysis of the case studies provided an in depth understanding of the phenomenon. In order to classify and conceptualize the data obtained from the case studies in relation to the phenomenon and the research questions posed, inductive content analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as open coding was utilized. The open coding process involved distinct phases of analysis requiring continual comparisons of information segments and combining information segments as they related to the phenomenon under study. A hierarchical explanation of this process begins with the phenomenon as the broadest unit of study. Categories denote specific attributes of the phenomenon, in this study the categories are the research questions. The next unit of study is a concept. Concepts are themes developed from groupings of several different properties that help to explain each specific category. Properties are the specific codes developed to describe sets of common terminology and ideas drawn from within the text of each case study. Finally, dimensions are quotations from the words and phrases of respondents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Diagram 4.1 is an interpretation of this process.
4.1 Open Coding Process of Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, there was one phenomenon and five categories. The phenomenon under study was "college student service learning and volunteerism". The five research categories included (1) ensuring the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteers at the agency; (2) measuring the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteers at the agency; (3) college student volunteer impacts at the agency; (4) college student volunteer impacts on youth served; and, (5) community perceptions of college student volunteers.

Diagram 4.2 represents the phenomenon and each related research category.
4.2 Phenomenon & Categories

ATLAS.ti, a computer software program, was utilized to aid in the open coding process of analysis for the study. This software did not develop or build the categories, concepts, and properties. Instead, it was used to aid in identifying and categorizing data in order to develop and elaborate on the complex descriptions and explanations of college student volunteerism as perceived by community agency personnel.

The remainder of this section describes in detail each category identified through the open coding process of analysis and the concepts, properties, and dimensions of the five categories as they relate to the phenomenon under study. The categories were derived from the initial research questions that guided the study, which were:
1. How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?

2. According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?

3. What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts as perceived by agency personnel?

4. What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?

Category #1: Ensuring the Quality and Effectiveness of College Student Volunteers at the Agencies Where They Serve

Before community agency perspectives about the impacts and effectiveness of college student volunteers could be examined, the ways in which agencies ensured and measured the effectiveness of the service being provided had to be identified. Youth service community agencies represented in this study implemented a variety of measures to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the volunteer service within their programs. All of the agencies engaged in quality management activities, such as screening, training, and supervision of volunteers, as well as program management activities, regardless of whether or not the volunteer was a college student or a community member. However, a unique attribute in this category with regard to working with college student

---

2 The first research question contains two separate components, "ensuring the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteers" and "measuring the quality and effectiveness." Category number two focuses on the latter half of the question.
volunteers involved the partnership activities between the agency and the college. These concepts, each of which includes various properties and numerous dimensions, are identified in Diagram 4.3

4.3 Category #1: Ensuring Quality & Effectiveness of CSV Service

![Diagram](image)

The diagram shows three explanatory concepts related to how agencies ensured the quality and effectiveness of college student service. The first concept, or theme, volunteer program management was broken down by the properties outlined in Diagram 4.4 below.
4.4 Concept: Volunteer Program Management

Volunteer Program Management

This concept refers to the various ways in which volunteer programs were managed by personnel so as to ensure effective, high quality volunteer service. Volunteer program management is how the agencies and organizations go about developing and implementing their programs. This concept encompasses properties that include: (a) gaining input from the community about the services offered by the organization, (b) getting kids involved in programs, (c) recruiting and working with community volunteers, and (d) utilizing national service resources to develop and implement programs.

Community input was a property of volunteer program management.

Each of the case studies discussed a variety of means to gather information from
community partners, funding agencies, and their constituents to help guide and
direct the programs that were offered. Several programs used questionnaires.
For example, at the Havre Youth Sports Program, they asked parents in the
community to fill out a questionnaire to provide input about the program. The
respondent there said, “we received some really nice feedback that we wouldn’t
have otherwise known about.” Another respondent from the Missoula Mentoring
Program said, “With our volunteers and our parents and our kids we do
evaluations. The questionnaire asks, ‘Is there anything else we can do for you?’
Any suggestions are always welcome.” In some cases the questionnaires
provided feedback on negative aspects of the program as well. One program
director noted that with the questionnaires, “That’s where we get a lot of
feedback on what some of the college students who volunteered were doing
which I wasn’t aware of…things that went on that they [the parents] didn’t
approve of.” The coordinator for the Bozeman School-based Mentoring program
explained the expansiveness of their input mechanisms.

We do evaluations from all the people that we work with so we do mentor
evaluations, we do student evaluations of the program, teacher
evaluations, principal evaluations, and parent evaluations. So we get
input from all those people and we try and see where we’re at with
everybody every year and what kind of feedback we’re getting.

Other input came to organizations through funding agencies, boards of
directors, and program partners. For instance, personnel at the Kalispell
Mentoring Program explained, “Each year we have to submit a grant application
and they review that. They’ll come back and give us feedback, and funding us is
an indicator that they like our services.” At the Bozeman Preschool Program, feedback occurred on a less formal basis.

Some of it is through one-on-one conversation. I’ll sit down and have a cup of coffee or something with someone from a [partner] agency. We have a policy council which is an advisory council made up partially of parents and partially of representatives from our community partners, and so it includes them that way...Again, its advisory, where we sit down and we talk about the issues back and forth and make sure we know how we can work it out.

At the Bozeman Mentoring program, the director worked mostly with the board of directors to obtain feedback and input.

I make sure that we have a diverse board that has a handle on what is going on in this town, so to speak...So you really need to depend on your volunteer base which is your board of directors or your board of trustees and then the advisory board that is actually giving us advice all the time.

Through input and feedback from constituents, funding agencies, and boards, the organizations were able to make informed decisions to most effectively manage their volunteer programs. The information provided an important component for the overall levels of effectiveness and quality of service that the organization was able to provide.

There were several ways in which the youth service organizations worked at getting kids involved in their programs. This made up the second property of the volunteer program management concept. At the Missoula After-School Activity Program, the coordinator explained that he typically had to sell the program to the high school youth.

I think basically with the tutoring program I sell the kids on it first and no kid is forced to be a part of the tutoring/mentoring program. And so I go to them first and say 'listen, I've got this cool university student that wants to hang out with you and be kind of like a big brother and help you out academically and just go to the movie and stuff once and awhile.'
In many instances, programs reach youth through a variety of mechanisms. One program coordinator explained, "They are usually referred by teachers, but we do get referrals from parents, counselors in the schools, school staff, and principals. We occasionally have kids self-refer, which is pretty neat." Another director noted that, "All the kids in the grade schools are given an application form and there's a $25 fee and we set up a scholarship fund for the low-income kids that can't afford it, so it's any kid that's interested can be involved." In Kalispell, one program director explained how effective program partners can be in helping to recruit youth, "So this year we went to a principals' meeting...and when [Jim], the principal, talked about how wonderful the program was and how successful it was, we had everybody jump on the bandwagon. We were going to try to sell it, we didn't know we were going to sell it so well."

Another property of volunteer program management was national service resources. Twelve of the 15 case studies illustrated how they used federally-funded, national service programs to gain added personnel and finances to develop and implement their programs. Many of the AmeriCorps and VISTA programs these agencies accessed were based out of their local college or university. While some of the organizations have had more success than others, this pointed out a significant resource related to volunteer program management. As one director explained, "The first year what got this program off the ground was AmeriCorps. [Susan Bell] got an AmeriCorps position to get the program visible and sold it to the public schools." A program coordinator explained how the three AmeriCorps members they have had "were absolutely wonderful,
wonderful young people." Another director expanded on the value of AmeriCorps as follows.

I can say that the AmeriCorps programs...have been a huge contribution to non-profits in this community because we can't afford the staff levels that we'd like everywhere. And, their commitment and dedication to the organization, as a whole, has really been of benefit to all of us here. There are some agencies that have just done wonders because they've had an AmeriCorps or VISTA volunteer...and they play a very important role in the staff.

Among the agencies that had effectively used AmeriCorps and VISTA members, the types of tasks and responsibilities they typically engaged in included recruiting, placing, and supervising volunteers, performing program evaluation, and coordinating youth service programs.

Two organizations had very specific negative responses about the use of AmeriCorps and VISTA members within their programs. One director explained, "Accessing AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers is a nightmare. I find the university system extremely protective of that. We're the agency serving a vast majority of people in need and the university seems to not be responsive to our requests to be able to participate in that." He elaborated on his frustrations as follows.

The other thing is that everyone who is interested in VISTA and AmeriCorps are really focused on capacity building but direct service they're not. We're good at capacity building. We have a grant writer. Because we're a small community, the linkages within the community are exhausted. We can't do much better in that regard. What we could do is linkages to the people in need. We don't have enough staff power to be able to do all the work that needs to be done working with needy families. So one thing is there are national goals in volunteer programs and it has to be community capacity building. Well that doesn't address the local needs as I perceive it, and the VISTA and AmeriCorps volunteers are extremely narrow in what people are doing. So some are holding a basketball program for middle class kids, that is predominantly middle
class kids, addresses the national needs some how but in the meantime we have lots of kids that may not have had something to eat last night and they are not being served...And they're very, from our perspective, expensive. I mean there's lots of training outside of the area and T-shirts and there's a lot of federal dollars that go into that program and the outcomes aren't that great from my perspective.

Another program director pointed out that AmeriCorps and VISTA require a lot of paperwork and evaluations that become too cumbersome for organizations to be able to handle. He explained.

He [the principal] had nothing but complaints and headaches with AmeriCorps because their interest was in the paperwork and reports, and not as much in what we are doing. Just get the paperwork in on time. They had meetings that they required him to go to, and he's a principal and he has very little time for this kind of thing, so he thought their whole approach was pretty onerous.

There were very distinct differences of opinions with regard to how helpful or hurtful the use of national service resources were for local programs. In most instances, the programs with more positive views were ones that had a stronger connection, or partnership, with the college or university-based national service program. The organizations that expressed negative viewpoints had less of a connection with the campus. This issue is further addressed within the agency/university partnerships concept.

The final property of volunteer program management was community volunteers. All of the agencies in the study used community volunteers in addition to the college student volunteers to help develop and implement programs for youth. Community volunteers provided added resources for agencies to ensure the effectiveness of the service they are providing and was an important aspect of volunteer program management. The extent to which
agencies relied on community volunteers versus college student volunteers varied extensively. In some cases, college student volunteers made up nearly 100 percent of the volunteer base for the organization, and in others they rarely used any and relied more heavily on community participants. Some respondents pointed out there are differences between college and community volunteers. One indicated, "We do get some parent volunteers and they are just not quite as enthusiastic, and they are not quite as comfortable in trying new things." A different director explained a difference in ability to follow through.

Usually a community-based volunteer, though not always, is more reliable [than college student volunteers]. Or, if they are going to stop coming they're going to come by and explain why, and they're going to have a final meeting with the child. They're not just going to stop showing up one day. I've had very few community volunteers that have failed to follow up one way or the other. If they had to change things they'd let us know.

Another agency director pointed out that in her perception, community volunteers are busier than students so they needed more structure in their volunteer setting. One noted that, "A lot of the community volunteers I work with say, 'If you can give me this much notice, I will rearrange my calendar and my schedule to plan on it'.'"

The second important concept involved in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of service was the partnership between agencies and their local college or university. This is illustrated in Diagram 4.5.
4.5 Concept: Agency/University Partnerships

This concept depicts how agencies worked with their local college or university and formed partnerships for more effective community service programs. There were four properties associated with this theme that included (a) campus/community collaboration, (b) service learning partnerships, (c) service learning support systems, and (d) agency accommodations for college student volunteers.

Campus/community collaboration is an issue of increasing importance in the service learning movement nationwide. The examination of how colleges collaborate as community partners with organizations to help identify and meet critical needs is a foundational virtue of effective higher education service...
learning programs. The dimensions of this property revealed several ways in which this is or is not occurring.

Seven of the agencies worked with college interns, practicum students, and/or federal work-study students, in addition to student volunteers in order to increase their capacity to provide services. In most cases, respondents had very positive perceptions about the types of impacts these students can have. Students from these sources typically commit to many more hours of service at the agency, and in some cases they are compensated for their hours through federal work-study funds or as paid interns. Because the students were able to provide more hours of service, the agencies were able to give them greater responsibilities and engage them in more meaningful and educational experiences. The respondent from the Missoula Mentoring Program described how she used students from all of these sources.

I have college students that are case aides, they’re work-study students, and they work with the case managers. And then we also have [work-study] students that are clerical assistants with the program. We have college students that are social work practicum students and they do their practicum here...And, then we also have interns, we’ve had different interns come and do a placement here for college credit.

The data showed that campuses with an active and well-staffed office for service learning were perceived by the informants as being better equipped to collaborate with the community. One director in Missoula explained, "I think the university, it seems to me, in the last four or five years has put more emphasis on getting the students out to volunteer and help in the community. I think through the office of community service they seem to be more organized campus-wide,
which I think is beneficial for groups like ours." Another director in Bozeman added her view.

I'm impressed with how much they [the campus] already do. The teachers let us come and speak to their classes, and the Office of Community Involvement has been very active in helping us. They do a newspaper and help wanted volunteer classifieds so they usually put us in there, and they featured us as their volunteer agency of the month and did a story on us in the campus paper, and they check in with us quite a bit. So I've been impressed with how much they've already done.

Another agency worked with the campus-based service learning office to establish a volunteer contract for students so that they are more aware of the commitment they are making and what the agency expects from them as a volunteer to ensure the quality of service being provided.

I've talked to [Betsy from the service learning office] about setting up some kind of a contract for anyone who's working, particularly with children or anything where they're making a commitment to be there at a particular time and date, and that if not they'll call the day ahead of time. Of if they're going to have to stop volunteering that they arrange a final visit because for the children they are just devastated when whoever it was that they thought really like them doesn't show up anymore. So we're talking about putting together some type of a contract just to understand that you are so important in this child's life and when you stop coming they're crushed so you need to do some kind of ending.

The case studies also pointed out the difficulties and frustrations agencies face when there are real and/or perceived barriers between them and the campus. Several coordinators illustrated the problems that arise when there is staff turnover on campus. At one agency, the coordinator explained, "If we needed a volunteer we [used] to call Heather and say, 'see what you can do for us'. And I don't know exactly what happened to it, I mean slowly but surely, things just started to dwindle away." Another director pointed out the frustrations of trying to have a campus representative on the board of directors.
You know we used to have a slot for the college on the board and an assistant dean was on it, but we had such turnover of personnel at the college that three different people were on it and eventually they couldn’t fill it any longer... The community service director [at the campus] was a board member and he’s no longer in town and prior to that it was [Dr. Susan Jones] and she’s no longer in town and you know, so the turn over is disruptive. You can’t really be part of a governing group if you’re only going to be there six months. You just figure out what’s going on and you’re gone.

The same director went on to explain that there seemed to be an overall willingness on the part of the college to collaborate but without a centralized office or consistent contact person it was difficult to make progress.

I think from institution to institution we’re able to get volunteers generally because somebody knows somebody. Organizational structure-wise, I think there’s a lack of linkage and we have the willingness to work with ‘whatever’ but there isn’t a ‘whatever’ there at the college to work with. So I mean, everyone thinks it’s a good idea but then I can’t find the right person to be able to set up some formal recruiting, or how students can benefit academically by having this be a part of their education.

In a different community, an agency director described the variety of successful community outreach programs that the campus provided.

They have chocolate chip cookie mining, they have a planetarium thing where you go in and they bring you in and show you all the stars and the star lab... They have science projects like foil boats and then the kids put in pennies and try to float these foil boats. They have about...20 different [programs] that if you call ahead, yes, they’ll have a student, yes, they’ll provide the place and the materials... I don’t know what more they could do. Especially considering there’s no money. They’re cutting back totally there and we’re lucky to have any faculty that are paying attention to the public at large. Of course a lot of it [the programs] are geared toward science and math, but kids love it when they find out that science is fun, that math is fun.

This person went on to describe why she thinks this type of collaborative outreach occurred on campus.

Well, I think that the faculty or who ever the powers that be are up at the school really know the community that they are in. A lot of them are
[natives to the community] and have come back to work here, and so I think they really have their finger on the pulse. And, I think they really feel privileged and want to share.

**Service learning partnerships** referred to the ways in which community agencies partnered with specific academic units or faculty on campus to develop and implement mutually beneficial service opportunities for students. Ten of the respondents indicated that they did a fairly significant amount of personal contact with faculty on campus. They targeted departments that they believed had an inherent connection to the services and programs offered by their agency and then forged relationships with faculty who were receptive to the idea of having their students involved. In very few cases, the faculty were the ones that initiated contact with the agency.

Once contact was made and both the agency and faculty member believed it was a suitable fit, arrangements were made to accommodate the service learning experience. In some instances, agency personnel initially did in-class presentations, provided announcement materials, or Emailed information to the faculty member to distribute to class participants for recruitment. Depending on the nature of the project, such as if it was a one-time occurrence or if it was ongoing, the program coordinator from the agency sometimes had the opportunity to do training and/or orientation for the students during class time. One program director explained how the process worked for her and the outcome for the students as well as the project.

At this time I'm working on a forestry curriculum and I went into an advanced, I think it was curriculum assessment, environmental education curriculum assessment, so it's an upper level education course. It's a small group of students and their whole purpose is to evaluate good
environmental ed. So I ask, and they had projects to do, and I asked if anyone wants to assist with some of this curriculum making. I can show you what we're doing and involve you. Well it turned out four young women wanted to go all the way up the Swan, to the Swan Ecosystem Center who sponsored this forestry education curriculum, attend our meetings with the whole community up there that is the education committee, get a feel for all the uses of resources, all the different viewpoints of what is forestry to different people, and they just got their fill and really got involved. And they even said they would volunteer to do other things down the road...the feedback I got was that it was a great opportunity for those students.

Generally, in the instances where the agency person had approached a faculty member and had been positively received, the projects and service that ensue were perceived as effective and high quality. One respondent stated, "I appreciate the fact that the college gives them credit...I appreciate that the professors feel like [the service] is worth giving extra credit for, that they'll support us." However, when communication between the agency and professor was inconsistent, or the partnership did not have a firm foundation, the situation could be disastrous. One agency director described a very negative experience with a section of general studies classes. The professors required students to perform 10 hours of community service as part of the course and referred students to a particular organization in town. However, the professors did not notify the organization or arrange for the service to take place, so when 45 students descended on the agency they were not prepared and it caused a lot of disruption for the agency. When the agency attempted to contact the professors to ask about creating a more organized referral structure, they did not want to cooperate. As a result, the agency no longer accepted student volunteers from those courses. On the other hand, the agency had a close partnership with
another department on campus that resulted in a very positive service learning experience for the students and the agency.

Another program coordinator described how she attempted to re-build a partnership that had failed in the past.

I've talked with the college, the new coach here, and I've talked with him about kind of the black eye the college received from the involvement [of student volunteers in the program last year] to see if he can do some damage control on his end and talk with the dean of arts and sciences to see if maybe we can prove to the community that that was a one-time deal, because this is a good [service] opportunity for college students. I think what I learned was my responsibility [in the future] would be to say 'Hey, this is my expectation from you [the college partner], you need to do some supervision. If these guys [student volunteers] can't meet my expectations then it's on you'.

Each of the case studies dealt with the issue of developing campus partners in different ways. Some were clearly more effective than others.

Information in the proceeding property explains how agencies have internal mechanism within their programs to support effective, quality-level college student volunteer service.

The service learning support property of the agency/university partnerships concept encompassed activities that the organizations did internally to support higher education service learning and volunteer activities within their programs. The levels of support for service learning within the agencies varied among the case studies. In some cases, the agencies were very aware of the meaning and role of service learning within their organization and in others it was more abstract and the connection was less apparent.

For example, one program coordinator had strong support from his supervisor so it made his job working with college student volunteers a little
easier. He explained, “The principal here is a big proponent of service learning, and so I get a lot of support with service learning ideas that I have and tying classroom exercises into the community.” Another agency director was enthusiastic about the future prospects of service learning at her organization. She stated, “I want to see the whole service learning think really click and work. Hopefully in the future we will get instructors that are on board and say, you know, this is part of the class and if they [the students] are there then they get the credit”.

At some agencies, the informants had a very minimal understanding of what service learning is. Three informants had no understanding of the term whatsoever. These were agencies where college students were volunteering, and sometimes even gaining credit, but the agency was completely unaware that it was a credit-based experience for students. This called into question the extent to which the campus is a true, collaborative partner with the agency. The service these students provide to the agency is, nonetheless, perceived by the agency as valuable and typically was contributing to the goals and mission of the organization.

At the agencies where service learning was a visible attribute, there were specific areas in which the organization tried to support the college student volunteers. The program coordinator at the Missoula Preschool Program explained how they place students according to the student’s expectations as well as the agency’s needs.

Predominantly, [the college students are] going to be placed in the classroom as basically a teacher aid. And, the reason behind that is that
is what most of the college students want. They are coming from the education department and social work and the psychology department and they want to be in there to see how the kids are acting so it helps them understand more concretely what they are doing overall in school.

Another director from the preschool program in Bozeman echoed this sentiment.

[We want to] make sure that we're going to be a good match for them too...So we're not going to make them do something that isn't going to enhance both of us...That's why I try and make it, you know its not really something where you're going to come and get done and go, 'blah, what did I do?'...If they can tell me a little bit about what it is they want to do then we can make sure that their needs are met as well as our. I think that is when it's most productive.

In addition to arranging for the best possible service learning experience for students as a means to ensure quality service, community agencies also made considerable changes to the structure of their programs to accommodate students' schedules and lives as illustrated in the final property of this concept.

_Agency accommodations for college student volunteers_ was a property describing the various ways in which agencies changed or tweaked their programs in order to appease college students' schedules and lives. The majority of the agencies involved in this study realized that college students are a unique category of volunteer within their organization. They realize the demands of school and that the academic year contains pockets of time when students are simply not available. Several of the agencies have adapted to these quirks in order to make the most effective use of college student volunteers.

One informant admitted, “Yeah, one of our first questions is when is spring break and when is finals week?” She realized, “if it is finals week or anything I'm doing that falls right into some really big time for them they are unavailable and they are unavailable unilaterally, like don't even go there.” With several of the
mentoring programs the agencies forewarned parents about the times when the
volunteers would not be available. One informant said that when students "leave
for the summer, we put those matches on hold and then just reopen them when
they come back in the fall."

Another agency director explained how they deal with the academic year
differences. She stated, "They [the college student tutors] meet with their student
from October through May, which is usually the end of the college year and the
community volunteers usually go through June. But, we try to accommodate
their schedule as best we can since we know they are going to be on a different
timetable."

Other programs were less restrictive about college student volunteer
absences as well. A program director in Butte explained.

The tutors always call if they can't make it. I'm really liberal about all of it,
you know I'm really easy-going and all of that. 'Just let me know, you can
call me at home', they have my home number because we're only open
from three to six. You know, I'll work with them and then when they're on
breaks I just, because the tutoring is free, I'm able to tell parents 'your
tutor cannot make it because she's going to be on spring break for two
weeks. If there's a special problem please call'. And sometimes they do
and then I have kids come in from the high school that are called floaters
and they just kind of pick up the kids that are left behind.

At one organization the director tried to make sure that she was able to
help out the students when they needed it.

Another thing I'll do is to let them know, let's say they miss something, the
students for credit, 'Oh shoot, I need four more hours and I was sick to the
two days you sampled'. I'll offer them some other opportunities...so there
are other ways they can be involved. So I look at it as, um, definitely want
to make sure I'm helping them too.
The extent to which agencies developed collaborative partnerships with the campus, formed support systems for service learning activities, and accommodated college students' quirky schedules, were factors that helped to determine the levels of quality and effectiveness of the college student volunteer service. The final theme encompassed within this category was quality management. The properties of quality management concept are outlined in Diagram 4.6 below.

4.6 Concept: Quality Management

![Diagram 4.6: Quality Management]

Quality Management

Agencies performed a variety of tasks to manage the quality of the service that was provided by college student volunteers and ensure that it was effective. All of these tasks were usually performed regardless of whether or not the volunteer at the agency was a college student or a member of the community.
These activities included volunteer recruitment, screening, orientation, training, matching, supervision, recognition, and termination.

Recruitment techniques varied among the agencies. The most common forms of volunteer recruitment included doing class presentations, sending Email or flyer announcements to faculty, and word-of-mouth, such as students telling other students. Some of the organizations participated in volunteer recruitment fairs sponsored by the campus. One respondent explained that she has tried to arrange an opportunity for her to set up a recruitment table on campus during registration but has been met with resistance from the campus.

It would be so easy for us to go over there a couple times a year, during their registration where they’ve got all this going, set up a table, give them [students] the information. ‘I know you’re overwhelmed now, you just got your course schedule, you think you’re never going to sleep again, but think about it [volunteering]. You know, we always recruit people. Its not like this is your only time to sign up. When you settle down, or maybe when your class schedule lightens up a little bit, you think about us’. It’s just getting in there. And, rather than having a volunteer fair and them coming to us, we’re willing to go to those sources, but they have to let us in the door.

After the college students were recruited all of the organizations screen the volunteer applicants. The screening procedure typically involved having volunteers complete written applications, undergo an interview, provide references, and sometimes agree to have a criminal background check performed. Because the volunteers were working with youth, the organizations took these precautions to ensure that they were “finding those healthy folks” to match youth up with.

The next step in the quality management process was volunteer orientation. The majority of organizations represented in the case studies
provided some type of initial orientation for the college student volunteers to provide background information about the program, orient them to the site where they were serving, and discuss rules and regulations such as confidentiality.

After orienting the volunteers, all of the organizations provided training for their volunteers. It varied from a one-time occurrence to ongoing, formalized training depending on the type of service the volunteer was performing. One program director from Bozeman described their training process as follows.

We require them to go to three different trainings. The first one is the three-hour fall training which is sort of the job orientation training...The second one is kind of the on-site training which is the mentor teacher meeting at the school and getting oriented to the school. And the third one is through the winter workshop where we process kind of on-going issues and they are required to go to all this training.

The directors and coordinators from the mentoring and tutoring programs paid close attention to the way in which they matched college student volunteers one-on-one with youth. A director from Missoula explained, "When we do a match, we look at the needs of the child, their personality, we look at the interests. We look at, O.K. who is the volunteer? What experiences have they had, what do they like to do, and kind of bring those two together with some common factors so they can build on that foundation." Another coordinator from Bozeman expanded her matching process to include "trying to find out what else, not just what their degree is in, because many of these students who are bright and get involved tend to be multifaceted. If we can match interests as well as just what their degree area is then that's really helpful."

After volunteers were trained and matched, most of the agencies in the study placed a major emphasis on supervising volunteers. There were specific
staff members at the agency that were responsible for supervising the volunteers and making sure that things were running smoothly. Several of the mentoring programs utilized case managers as volunteer supervisors. One director from Missoula explained how it worked at her agency.

If we have a volunteer who is not seeing their child, then a month goes by and there hasn't been any contact, the case manager is usually right on and will say, 'O.K. what's going on?' And, you might find out, 'Well, I have all these tests' and those kinds of things. The case manager is right on top of that and works through that.

Other agencies relied on teachers, parents, and the students in order to maintain ongoing supervision of the volunteers' service.

We try to keep ongoing contacts with the teachers, the students, the parents, and the mentors in a more informal way. You know, since we're all volunteer coordinators, we try and check in with everybody. We have contact at least twice a month with every match and encourage parents to use our parent liaison program to get in touch with us or to call us directly if they have any questions or concerns.

Agencies in the study reported a variety of ways in which they recognized the service that college student volunteers provided. All but a few agencies provided recognition through things such as certificates, ceremonies, thank-you adds in the local newspaper, luncheons, and thank-you notes. One program director explained a particularly unique way in which a parent of a child being tutored recognized the college student tutor.

One tutor, he got a meal. Every night the mother came to get her child she brought him [the tutor] whatever they were eating that night. So if they had homemade chili he had homemade chili and a role of crackers and a pineapple upside down cake. And the next week he would get tuna casserole and chocolate cake and a peach and he's going 'Oh my God!' You know because he did get back late. I mean he tutored when they were already eating at the college and she just appreciated him every week. And she'd just say that 'all I care is that you bring me back that
tupperware'. And, man, I'll tell you I think it was Wednesdays and they'd make the exchange and he'd look in there and say 'mmm, tamale pie!'

In order to keep the programs running effectively agencies sometimes had to deal with terminating a volunteer and/or the aftermath when a volunteer just stopped showing up. An informant in Great Falls explained, "I've seldom had to send people [volunteers] home. Last year, or was it the year before, I just told a person they had to leave and they had to leave right now. They just couldn't control themselves. They were using foul language, they were at their wits end. They had such bad coping mechanisms." In Bozeman, one respondent stated, "If we don't have a match that's going well, we typically don't want to go until the end of the year. You know, if there's clearly someone who's not happy or if there's a mentor who's not happy, or if they are just not getting along, we don't let it fester, we nip it in the bud and start over." Another director described what happens in the ideal sense when a match ends as, "they maybe have a final couple of meetings, maybe even arrange to take the child to McDonalds or something, some way to make the child understand that it wasn't their fault."

Category #2: Measuring the Quality and Effectiveness of College Student Volunteers at the Agencies Where they Serve

This category examined the various means by which agencies measured how well the college student volunteers were doing. The extent and types of measurement varied greatly among the agencies. Some programs did very little evaluation, while others had extensive questionnaires and procedures to gather input and feedback from program participants. Diagram 4.7 illustrates this category and its related concepts and properties.
4.7 Category #2 - Measuring Quality and Effectiveness of CSV Service

There were four concepts linked to this category that included: (1) publicity, (2) formal evaluation tools, (3) informal feedback, and (4) barriers to measuring effectiveness. Each of the concepts explained a particular component related to how agencies measured the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service. The first concept was publicity and its properties are outlined in Diagram 4.8 below.
4.8 Concept: Publicity

Program publicity and public recognition reflected the quality and effectiveness of the service provided by the agency. Several of the programs included in the study had received positive publicity about what they do and how they do it. For example, respondents explained that certain programs were covered by the local television news organizations and one program had received the Governor's Safe Place Award. Another program director explained that "a letter to the editor from a parent thanking the volunteers" in the program was published locally. At a program in Bozeman, the director stated that "We've actually had national recognition...we are featured in our national magazine 'Clubs go to College'."

One program coordinator was very excited about the publicity his program received from the local news organizations as well as the college. He explained, "The praise [for our program] has been massive. Just by the [newspaper], the
[college president's] volunteer appreciation banquet that he does, yeah just basic write-ups in the paper and also in the school district newsletters."

Only one program had encountered any type of critical publicity about the service they provide. The director explained, "We got a little bit of criticism back but we were able to follow through on that and that was actually criticism through university students complaining about the program. But, upon further examination it was not that bad."

Through both positive and negative publicity, the programs were able to measure and gauge the quality and effectiveness of the services they provide. This information was also used as a management tool to change and improve the way in which programs were developed and implemented. On a more formalized level, several of the organizations in the study used questionnaires and survey data to measure quality and effectiveness. This concept is outlined in Diagram 4.9 below.
4.9 Concept: Formal Evaluation Tools

Five of the programs in this study utilized a pre/post test analysis to determine the quality and effectiveness of their services. These tests typically measured specific attributes of the child before they entered the program and received services and then in increments or at the end of the time period in which they received services. The difference between the pre-test score and the post-test score was used as an indicator of the quality of service being provided.

Three organizations in the study used the same type of pre/post-test evaluation tool as explained by one director below.

We have a very extensive evaluation plan, it basically is an evaluation tool called the P.O.E. or Program Outcome Evaluation. It is a form that looks at three different categories...it has 18 different indicators under each one of the three categories. We do that within six months after the match in a brand new match. The evaluation is done by the adult mentor and the parent...and then we do it on the anniversary every year after. And then that data is collected into a data base system that we have so we can begin to track issues within the child or within certain groups. So if we
want to see how Native Americans respond or we want to see how boys respond...we can pull that information out.

Another informant from a tutoring program explained the results from their “pre and post evaluations forms [showed] every child except for maybe a couple, had some sort of increase. If not academically then [in] being excited about reading which is key as well.” A program director in Missoula described his use of pre and post evaluation information as follows.

The first thing we do with every student is a pre-test, and that covers the basic questions about gender and ethnic background and income level and reduced or free lunches. So we’ve got the pre and then the post is the stuff...where we can look at that in comparison to general information we pull off the school system about attendance and GPA.

Programs also used a variety of questionnaires and survey instruments to measure the quality and effectiveness of service. They used these tools on a quarterly and/or annual basis to gather information about how the service is impacting and effecting the children being served. Questionnaires and surveys were given to program constituents, such as the children, volunteers and parents, as well as other partner agencies. One director explained that they have just expanded their program evaluation measures. She stated, “We are just [now] implementing kind of a larger scale evaluation of the program that we’ll be doing this year...we’re going to try and look at all the other objective criteria like behavioral statistics and juvenile court statistics and that kind of stuff” to help determine impacts and effectiveness.

A program coordinator in Great Falls explained their evaluation tool as follows.
There is an agency called Public & Private Ventures that comes in and does the national evaluation. And, it's a tool that's been used for many years. With a little tweaking here and there, it's probably one of the best evaluations I've ever seen. It's simple, realizing that many of the families that we work with don't have, necessarily, the college degree levels to get real analytical about it, they just want to know, 'Is my kid doing better or not?'

These formal evaluation tools aided programs in determining whether or not the volunteers they used actually made a difference for the children they served. The tools measured the quality and effectiveness of the service based mostly on quantitative, evaluative information. Many programs also utilized more informal means to measure the quality and effectiveness of the service. These are outlined in Diagram 4.10 below.

4.10 Concept: Informal Feedback
Informal Feedback

One of the ways that programs gathered informal feedback about the quality and effectiveness of volunteer service was through meetings, conversations, and verbal feedback from teachers of the youth being served by college student volunteers. One of the directors explained that teachers of the children being served are the “best source of information because they are seeing the kids on a daily basis...and some of the positive comments from the teachers have been wonderful.” Another echoed this sentiment by adding, “I've got some good feedback and it is great because the teachers are the ones that are seeing them [the children] on a daily basis and watching their attitudes and their grade adjustments.” Other informants said, “teacher feedback tells me we are effective”, and “the biggest [measure] is the teacher who usually comes to me and says 'I'm so glad she's here, she's [the volunteer] doing great'.”

A program coordinator from Bozeman explained that teacher feedback also alerts staff to impending problems. She stated, “a teacher will call me directly and say, ‘My America Reads volunteer never showed up when they’re supposed to show up.’ And then they let me know usually how things are going.”

Agencies also solicited and received informal feedback from parents of the youth being served. One agency described a report card that they send home to parents allowing them the opportunity to rate the program. She explained, “We have a report card that we send home to the parents asking them to [give us feedback]. Everyone who has responded, except for one or two B’s, has given us A’s.” A different program director explained the success of a specific project

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
in which college student volunteers were used and the parent feedback they received.

With the carnival [event] the big impact, and the parents all remarked on this, was the fact that in the past we probably have had 20 parents who had to run food booths, run game booths, help coordinate volunteers, and do other things like that. That meant they couldn't be with their child as the child went around on all of these things. And this allowed them to actually spend time with their child and interact with their children a lot more. It was very positive. I mean I got feedback the next day [from parents] about how wonderful it was to have the college students there and that the parents actually got to spend time with their children. So that was immediate feedback.

A few programs also obtained feedback from the volunteers regarding their own views about the quality and effectiveness of their service. For example, the service learning program in Great Falls had the volunteers write reflection papers and keep a journal documenting their service activities and how they think they've impacted the children they are serving. Other programs in Missoula and Bozeman believed that if the child and the volunteer were having a good time then it reflected high quality service. One program director explained, "My measure of success was, 'did the kids have fun and did the instructor [volunteer] have fun?'"

Most of the programs had a procedure in place for obtaining feedback directly from the youth who were being served. In some cases, they just "ask the kids if they are doing any better." At a program in Bozeman, the director said "we do ask the kids if they enjoy spending time with their mentor and...every single one of them said yes, except for maybe one, and that kid, I think, was just kind of messing with us." Another program director from Bozeman added, "It's constant communication. People need to give us their feedback...we actively
seek it with the children and youth themselves...we have a provision that they will let us know if something is just not right."

In most of the agencies involved in the study, the observations of staff contributed to measuring quality and effectiveness as well. Staff observations were not written evaluations, rather they were just reflections of what the staff saw when they observed the volunteers working with the children. One program director from Havre explained, "We don't have quantitative measures. So it's observation with the staff because all of those have to do with relationships and stuff it's difficult to have quantitative measures." Another director from Bozeman explained that after she and her staff members finish a particular program session, she took her staff to lunch so that they can reflect on what went well with the session and what needs to be changed. She combined the observation/reflection information from her staff with the formal evaluations results in order to have a complete picture of the session and was able to "fine tune the process and identify areas that we can improve."

When asked how she evaluated her program, a director in Missoula explained, "My notion is just that when I'm at the event and I see pods of four and five students with a university student...all with their heads around whatever they're doing and everyone interacting, I know its working. The kids are there, they are engaged."

Even with all of these tools in place, both formal and informal, to measure the quality and effectiveness of the service being provided, several agency
directors indicated there are a lot of barriers in place that make it difficult to do.

This concept is outlined in Diagram 4.11 below.

4.11 Concept: Barriers to Measuring Effectiveness

Barriers to Measuring Effectiveness

Measuring the quality and effectiveness of the college student volunteer service presented some challenges for the agencies. Data can be manipulated, difficult to interpret, and it is nearly impossible to attribute behavioral and attitudinal changes among youth to the volunteers' service only. One informant explained that, "Data can be misleading. It is kind of like you know, 98 percent of statistics are wrong. You can look at that and read it a lot of different ways...so it is all that statistical crap where you try to figure out how skewed [the data] really are." He went on to further explain this barrier as follows.

They want to hear statistics, they want to hear if there's been a 20 percent reduction in alcohol at [the school] and I'm not able to report that. One, because I've got a school with 1400 and I'm reaching say 100 to 200 kids with university students, that's making an impact but yeah, I think they...
believe there's an impact but the data is an issue. It is the least favorite part of my job.

Other directors explained reasons for not obtaining quantitative information in the following statements.

- There used to be much more formal paperwork that was handed out to the teachers to evaluate all of the volunteers. I eliminated that last year because of the sheer quantity of paperwork the teachers have to deal with.
- I've never been required by our granting sources and I think the kids get tested to death. I mean I would do it if I had to but I don't.
- It's hard to assess how the volunteers are doing when you only have one perspective. You know you're there or you're not there for practices and you don't see what the parents see.
- It's hard to separate out the college students from the overall [community volunteers].

In addition to the general barriers to measure quality and effectiveness, directors pointed out that much of the time what they are trying to measure is intangible. One articulated this in the following statement.

Even to this day if I see kids in the community [from the program] they'll ask about their volunteers. In fact, I saw a kid two days ago in the alley behind my house who wanted to know where Eric was and when he was coming back. You know, so it's hard to measure. I don't think I could use a word that would describe how those kids felt about their volunteers.

Another stated that there are "poignant stories...you can't really report or get specific about each story but there are a hundred that are pretty amazing." A director from Missoula described this problem as well.
It's just the intangible almost. That's why I think this story sticks out because it's not something that you like say, she [the high school student] didn't have poor attendance, she didn't have terrible grades, she just was someone the dean thought that needed some help, you know, interpersonally [from a mentor]. I just watched it happen. That's not something you can report with data because its kind of variable.

Category #3: Impacts that College Student Volunteers have at the Youth Service Agencies Where they Serve

After establishing how agencies ensured and measured the effectiveness of college student volunteer service, the next step involved the examination of the impacts of the service at the agencies where students served. This category and its related themes and properties are outlined in Diagram 4.12 below.

4.12 Category #3: College Student Volunteers' Impacts at Agencies

Three themes, or concepts, were contained within the CSV Impacts at the Agency category. The concepts include: (1) programmatic impacts, (2) positive

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
attributes of CSV, and (3) negative attributes of CSV. Each concept contains properties and together they describe the ways in which college student volunteers impact the agencies where they serve. The first concept and its properties are displayed in Diagram 4.13 below.

4.13 Concept: Programmatic Impacts

![Diagram 4.13: Programmatic Impacts]

Programmatic Impacts

College student volunteers contributed in many ways to the program operations within each of the case studies. The majority of informants were overwhelmingly positive about the types of impacts college student volunteers had at the agency where they served. The data within each of the properties identified in this concept support the notion that college student volunteers assist agencies in providing more services, and in some cases better services, to help meet the needs of youth they serve.
In order to get an overall idea of the informants' opinions about the types of impacts the volunteers had, one of the interview questions asked respondents to describe what it was like to work with the college student volunteers. An agency director in Missoula explained, "I like it because sometimes people get a little too stuck in the politics of this place, so that's really nice to have good conversations about other things besides grants, it's a great thing." He went on to explain that "The college students have definitely been a great part of my job. I have enjoyed working with them, they are fun to recruit...and it is just an enjoyable thing." Several responses were very positive, such as "In general it is the highlight of my job," they "keep us all thinking young," and "the freshness that they can bring to an organization...I've enjoyed that." A director in Great Falls expanded on the concept of freshness by adding, "They bring a whole new perspective. You know, I've been in this field for 18 years and you begin to get very narrow minded in it. And, I'm the person who would admit that, you get very myopic, and they bring in a twist of perspective that is a newness and freshness."

Another informant said, "I'll tell you it's wonderful for us because not only for the program where they are matched with kids one-on-one, but all the other programs they participate in. There would be no way we could do half the stuff that we are doing in this community without the college students."

Two informants responded negatively about what it was like to work with college student volunteers. An informant from Great Falls explained it is "maddening. People say, 'isn't the [program] hard?' It's not hard for these kids, the kids who come. The hardest part about running the program is managing the
college students. There’s no doubt in my mind.” Her frustrations stemmed from
dealing with the personalities and whims of the college students who served as
organizers and leaders for the kids camp program. A program coordinator in
Havre explained her frustrations as follows.

This past year I was frustrated just because of the lack of commitment,
and that whole giving credit for volunteering. I don’t know how I truly feel
about that because I really did see the high school volunteers put more
into it and gain more because they wanted to. Whereas, the college kids,
not all of them, you know there was probably fewer that had that attitude
than didn’t, but for some reason that sticks in my mind.

Her experience relates back to the lack of accountability on the part of the
professor who required his students to volunteer as part of a class requirement.
This presents a larger issue for service learning that is discussed in the next
chapter.

The sheer quantity of volunteers and the hours of service they provided
had broad impacts at the agencies where college students volunteered. Among
all of the case studies included in this research study, more than 973 college
students had volunteered and served more than an estimated 70,000 hours
during the past two years. The college student volunteers were valuable human
resources for the organizations to broaden and expand the services they offer
and reach more youth.

The college student volunteers were identified by several informants as
helpful human resources for the agencies. One program director explained it as
follows.

It was nice for me because I was...basically trying to do it all myself. And,
I was able to give some programs to a college student and let them make
the schedule and make the calls and recruit in the school so it freed me up
time wise just cause its an after school program and I was running around with my head cut off there for awhile trying to do it all.

A different director described it from his viewpoint.

When you’re on the playground and you’re a teacher and you have your teacher aide with you, you’ve got two people to watch nineteen kids over whatever square footage. It’s big and that’s a lot of space to cover... There’s always crying, there is always somebody falling down, so your ability to actually just play and have fun with them, sit next to them, or swing next to them is limited. So [the volunteers] help out a lot.

Another director pointed out that the diversity of college students was a positive human resource as well. She explained, “I would say that we do serve kids better because we have a wider range of people that we can choose from when we’re matching them, which is nice, but also just having them as a resource. That’s a large number of people that we get every year, 150 students, so it helps.” A director in Bozeman explained, “We take a look at the natural resources that we have available to us and certainly the college student or the hands themselves, those are the resources we want to look for because they are long range. It doesn’t disappear after a three-year grant, they stay with you.”

The use of college student volunteers as human resources allowed programs to be able to expand programs and garner additional funding as well. For example, the camp program in Great Falls developed a long-term mentoring program for youth who attended the camp and wanted to continue in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a college student volunteer. The director explained that each year four or five of the college student volunteers from the camp decide afterwards that they want to continue working with the kids so she
developed the mentoring program for them to transition into. A different informant explained her expansion in the following statement.

We're one of the fastest growing programs in Montana and that's because of the college students, because we have that source of volunteers. We're ranked in the top 10 percent of programs across the United States in terms of the number of children served per capita. Our grants that come in from the state, the United Way, the school program, you know it all ties in one way or another to the fact that we have excellent volunteers which come from the university.

The program director for the environmental program in Missoula continually looked for ways in which she could expand and provide stipends to student volunteers who participate in more intense training and field experiences.

My heart's desire would be to offer stipends...if I could get a core group of [volunteers] that would commit to the training, almost like a first aid training that you get certified in, we would make a more rigorous stream monitoring certification program. Like a level one is basic, level two you've gotten a lot more detail about aquatic insect life cycles, you're a lot more in depth about your water chemistry, maybe a little more hydrogeology, that kind of thing...We could offer levels [of certification] and then have those students be truly committed.

When asked how their programs would be different without college student volunteers, most informants stated that their programs would be greatly reduced and the number of children served would decrease. Some of the responses included, "It's the mainframe of my volunteer base so I don't think that I would have much of a program"; "It wouldn't be as full a program in the sense of being an educational program"; and "There would be no way we could do half of the stuff that we are doing in this community without the college students."

A director from Butte explained, "without the college students I don't think we'd have nearly the stability or the format or the strength, or the foundation" for the program. In Missoula a program coordinator stated, "I think if we didn't have
the college population, we wouldn't have as many children matched in the community because it is the age group that we look at for volunteers, and those people that tend to volunteer are that age group and make up a big part of our program.” In Bozeman, an informant added the following.

The benefits of the college students interacting with the kids are absolutely tremendous. The whole university system is a positive impact on our community. And, certainly the volunteers, and I've said this before...and I've been quoted on a national level as saying that we couldn't operate without them.

The programs that had minimal amounts of college student volunteers serving stated that there would be few, if any, changes in their programs without the use of college students. One program director believed her program could be taken over by a different community agency if there were no college students but that funding for the program would have to be increased in order to maintain its operation.

In addition to the overall benefits that college student volunteers provided for program operations, the informants in the study pointed out specific attributes of the college students that they viewed as beneficial as well for the agency.

These are described in the concept described in Diagram 4.14.
Positive Attributes of College Student Volunteers

Several of the respondents from the case studies identified specific beneficial attributes that college student volunteers in particular possess and positively impact agencies. One of which is energy. One respondent explained that college students are "energetic, they are willing to try just about anything. They haven't got preconceived notions as to what is going to be in the program and they come with some different ideas." Other directors also pointed out that the volunteers' energy level helps provide a boost for staff at the agency who were suffering from burn-out.

Another director explained that because most college students are under the age of 25 they have energy. She stated, "they think nothing of hanging out with a little kid, it doesn't bother them at all. They're not like, 'gosh, I've already had my family, I don't want to do this again'." One informant related a story about one of her long-term volunteers who began as a college student.
He was a [mentor] for about six years, he now has a family of his own and he's a stay-at-home dad and his wife works. So he wrote an article for the newspaper about what it is to be a stay-at-home dad and made some comments about how being a [mentor] helped him for fatherhood, so it was starting off young, while he still had the energy and nerve to do it and continue to work with the child.

Among the respondents there was a lot of discussion about how college students are the right age for working with kids. Traditional-aged college students were viewed by the informants (as well as the kids and the community which is elaborated in further sections) as "cool." Because of this, the informants explained that kids are more willing and able to make a connection with them. Associated responses include the following.

- I do think the strength of the college students is that they have that relation ability. They still know what are kind of the cool bands, they can get in there a little quicker so it's a pretty amazing tool... The age is a benefit, and yeah, it's a typical 23 year-old scatter brain but it's also a pretty amazing tool at the same time.

- In the school-based program, especially in the middle schools, those kids want to be cool, and its cool to have a college mentor, it's not cool to have someone who is 40 years-old.

- I think some of the college students especially have been effective at really connecting with some of the students because some of the college students are a little bit younger and so they have a certain style that the students tend to trust, especially like with the teenage students.

- Kids love to have a young, cool volunteer and we've got them everywhere.
They think of them as young, and cool...the cool factor counts. I think you can have a grandmotherly/grandfatherly [person] who provide wonderful role modeling and life experiences and skill building and all of those qualities, but there is something about a kid and a bigger kid that is just cool!

Other age-related comments pointed out that youth look up to college-aged volunteers and like to interact with people who are adults but not their parents.

They [the kids] like the younger age ones [volunteers], I think a lot of times they do. I think too many times the older volunteers can be looked on as parental replacements and that is not our role here. So just by nature of their age, they're not going to be viewed as that. They are thought of more as a bigger brother or a bigger sister.

Another respondent said, "We have kids that specifically want college-aged volunteers because we ask the kids what kind of volunteer they want, and they will respond and say 'I want someone that is in college, I want someone who does this and this'. If you're 30, you're too old for some kids." A coordinator in Bozeman summed it up by adding, "Parents just don't count. They're adults. But college students are kind of in-between and the kids look on them almost like Gods."

Another property identified by respondents as a positive attribute was the level of knowledge and experience that college student volunteers brought to their service. At some agencies, staff members were able to make specific requests to the volunteer coordinator within the agency for students that had particular levels of training and education. The informant for one program explained that he got a lot of requests from his staff for nursing students from a
particular class to assist with health fairs. He was able to recruit directly from that class and fill the agency's need for an educated, experienced volunteer. He also explained that "[volunteers] who have been trained in education have a higher level of effectiveness in the classroom."

At one of the after school tutoring programs the director pointed out that college students "know what studying is, they know how they got there, they know how to get from A to B and they start to teach these kids how to get from A to B. Sometimes kids are so overwhelmed they don't know where to start". She added that she purposely appoints college student volunteers to work with kids who need help in physics and chemistry because she knows the college tutors can handle it. The college students' level of knowledge and experience "makes the whole tutor center better because we can tutor everybody" she exclaimed.

A director in Bozeman explained how volunteers' knowledge and experience ease the burden of training for the agency. She said, "That helps us because part of the problem that we have with volunteers is the amount of time required to train them. And so, if we have someone that already has some early childhood or some health background, the learning curve if going to be a lot less steep."

Some informants perceived the college students as committed volunteers, while others identified commitment as a negative factor. Positive comments regarding the students' level of commitment included, "A lot of the college volunteers take it very seriously, this volunteer business, and they are busy but boy when they come into it we can't get better volunteers"; "We have [some]
college volunteers that are just outstanding people that go way above and beyond, stay with their children for years and years on end, and develop incredible relationships with them"; and, "I think we have a better rate of retention with college students as far, I think, if I did the percentages, I think there are more college students [than community volunteers] returning next year."

An informant in Missoula pointed out that some of the college volunteers she used were so committed that they were willing to miss class in order to volunteer. She said, "Some of the students will leave a class to come work with us...'I was able to miss this class but I've got to get out of here at 10'. And a lot of times my feedback is they'd do it again." Another director in Missoula described one mentoring relationship in her organization by stating, "Another couple, they were volunteers like for three years. Actually it was longer because he continued on through law school, so probably about five or six years. His [mentee] has done so well because that volunteer has been with him. They moved to Billings now, but that [mentee] still has contact with him."

At the camp in Great Falls, the director of the program explained, "There are some [volunteers], for whatever reason, that the camp is almost like an addiction and they'll do it three, four years in a row. And, they will come back even after they've graduated [from college] just because it has meant so much to them." Not all agencies had such positive perceptions about the commitment level that college student volunteers were willing to adhere to. This is one of the areas outlined in Diagram 4.15, the last concept for this category.
4.15 Concept: Negative Attributes of College Student Volunteers

In addition to the many positive impacts and attributes identified by the respondents, they identified several negative aspects related to working with this group of volunteers. The academic year and annual school breaks presented scheduling challenges for the agencies. One informant explained that "May sneaks up so fast and the [K-12] students are still in dire need of the attention and the help either emotionally or academically and, you know, a lot of these well intended college students are out of here." From a program planning standpoint he also explained that with the semester breaks "when we finally get things going there is only like a month and a half where the program is actually in cruise mode and then its opening or closing time again." Another program director from the same community explained, "we've closed so many [mentoring] matches this
spring with graduations we've got a lot of kids again waiting so we've got our job cut out for us this fall to recruit."

A different program coordinator said, "you know its sort of a general issue with college volunteers, they are very much in their own college world which has a different pace and a different set of deadlines than the other world that the community has." He went on to add, "all of the sudden they [college students] would drop out of view. Where are they? Oh, they're studying for finals. Oh, whoops, what about that work? What do we do now?"

In Bozeman, one of the respondents described the toll that scheduling inconsistencies take on the youth being served.

The schedule is hard just because they have a month off and so sometimes its kind of wearing on the kids. When they can't...some of the younger kids especially can't conceptualize vacation or break or when they're [the volunteers] coming back and whey they are going...So I think its hard on the kids sometimes when there's a long break or when they wind up ending the school year earlier than the kids do. That's a little bit of a struggle and so there is kind of an unknown and every college student has a different kind of class schedule at the end of the year. So, some college students leave earlier and some leave later and the kids see other [college student] mentors coming all the way through June and they are like, 'What happened to my person?' So that's a stress, I think. The scheduling can be hard.

At a different organization in Bozeman, a respondent explained her frustration in trying to deal with the college students' test schedules.

Every student has a test. If they call ahead of time and change the schedule of the time that is fine. But, I've had people, even with the after school program when they know they have twenty middle school students waiting for them to teach, they show up half an hour late because they had a test. That's fine. But, if you called me I could have arranged an activity, I could have arranged another speaker to come and talk to them for a few minutes. Instead, when you have kids standing there for 20 to 30 minutes and there's no [volunteer] there, [we're wondering] is the teacher going to
show up? Do you call the parents and send the kids home or do you keep them there? That can be really frustrating.

Many of the informants also stated that college student volunteers require additional supervision in comparison to community volunteers because they lack experience and immaturity. This property directly opposes the property described previously regarding college students' level of experience and knowledge as being a positive attribute. For example, a program director in Kalispell explained, "They tend to require a little more supervision. I'm thinking of several young people that did...they just don't have the life experience to be able to figure things out as well as somebody whose been around the block a little bit."

In Great Falls, one of the directors stated, "Some of them don't have a lot of work experience so they don't know about team work. It [can be] an extremely stressful period of time and some have not been under those kids of stress situations." In Dillon, the respondent explained his frustrations.

That's the problem with volunteers, the whole notion of volunteers, they have a limited expertise because they are in the middle of learning. And they have youth and enthusiasm, that's good, they have energy, but they don't necessarily have life experience or educational background to support them in what they are called on to do.

And, in Bozeman a respondent explained that "if we spend eight hours training somebody and then they come once a week for six weeks, we haven't gained anything."

Lack of commitment is another property within the negative attributes that agencies had to deal with. A director from Havre explained, "I think with college students we experience that there is a higher degree of initial interest with waning commitment. And, that may have to do with age or the fact that they are
busy and have academic commitments." He went on to explain that the agency
tries to circumvent the problem by "helping people decide to bail prior to contact" with the youth.

A different program director said, "I think the biggest problem is not always being able to get a commitment. Someone will sign up to do something but when you try to call them to get the actual commitment you can't get anybody to answer." She also described a particularly frustrating experience as follows.

I've had college student say they were going to teach classes [in the after school program] and about a week before the class you can't get a hold of them anymore. I don't know what happened. And they you have to real quick try and find somebody who will teach that class, the same subject, because you've already sent out the catalogue. So I think the reputation for college students is that a higher percentage of them drop out without ever saying anything and that is a problem".

In Missoula, a program coordinator explained that many college students will respond and come to the volunteer orientation but then drop out after that.

We usually get almost all of those [volunteers]...to come to the orientation. But from that we'll get a few that actually show up [to serve] and they'll come once and then drop out. And that's difficult for teachers because they get excited, 'Wow, we've got help'. And then all of the sudden they're gone. We found that the second semester was a far greater drop out rate than the first semester, which makes sense. They're tired, they drop out, first semester they're all excited.

A couple of the informants said they believed the drop out problem was not only representative of college student volunteers. One director acknowledged that with volunteer programs "it's just the name of the game.

That's the way people are today. Everybody has a lot of changes in their lives, we used to go somewhere and stay for 50 years, and that isn't the way it is
today, so you’re always going to have [to deal with drop outs].” Another informant expanded on this issue by adding the following.

You know, you take a look at where the problem is and you then you realize it’s a bigger picture than just the university students. It’s over-commitment. And that’s the other thing about living in Missoula, is yeah, it’s a great place but it’s a little soft on the bail factor. You can bail without any consequences. So, you can say yes to 1000 volunteer jobs and only show up to one but 999 got left in the dust.

In light of all the drawbacks associated with working with college student volunteers, informants in the latter half of the study were asked if it was worth it. All of the directors who were asked the question said it was worth the effort. For example, one explained, “even if 80 percent of them [the volunteers] failed, the fact that these 20 percent have these successes that completely change [children’s] lives to me it’s worth it. If you keep trying, eventually they’ll get it to work out.” Another informant said, “It means going out and recruiting, it means training them, it means spending time with them. To me it’s worth the effort.”

Another added, “Oh yeah, definitely. The teachers love it, I mean because if you get a volunteer in there that is good, it is great. And the teachers understand that and they know that it’s hard to get volunteers.” A different program director summed it up by adding, “yeah, the benefits definitely outweigh the minuses for sure.”
4.16 Category #4: College Student Volunteers' Impacts on Youth

This category encompassed information about the ways in which college student volunteers impact youth they are serving, and included four concepts (a) demographics, (b) kids' perceptions, (c) general benefits to youth, and (d) impressions on youth. The first and fourth concepts contained properties, whereas the information within the second and third concepts was too broad to condense into properties. The first concept and its properties are outlined in Diagram 4.17 below.
The children served by the various programs included in the case studies represented a wide range of ages. The youth ranged in age from three years old to 19 years old, with the majority being in the K-8 grade range. Within all of the organizations and programs included in the study, the number of youth served by college student volunteers in the two years prior to the study totaled more than 1,670.

The issues and needs that programs were trying to address and resolve for these children varied greatly. According to respondents, the majority of the programs were generally targeted toward meeting youth's social, academic, and self-esteem related needs. For example, some of the children needed extra academic assistance in order to bring them up to grade-level performance. Respondents described academic needs including, "children who are having a lot
of problems at school", "ADHD and ADD kids", and "enrichment kids". In some cases, children who were served came from low income and/or single parent families in which they were unable to get extra academic assistance at home. One respondent explained, "This is a low income area school...and so a lot of kids don't have a lot of opportunities at home to get in extra reading."

Another identified need revolved around building social skills for children. Many programs focused on providing socialization and self-esteem building experiences for children in order to help them deal with difficult family life or school situations. One director explained, "We have children who are primarily from single-parent families or from families where they have very little contact with one of their adult parents. They could be incarcerated, the kids may be in foster care or just have totally absent parents, whatever it may be." Children from the camp program were often victims of crimes that a parent committed against them. The program director explained, "we had a little girl who's father killed her mother so she, to me, is a direct victim", and another child had serious permanent physical damage as a result of his abusive father.

In the pre-school programs many of the children's needs revolved around knowing what they were supposed to be doing. One director stated, "the kids during transition time tend to have a lot of difficulty staying focused on what they are doing and to have somebody in there to tell them or help them remember what they should be doing helps out a lot."
Youth Perceptions of College Student Volunteers

The scope of this study did not include any youth as informants. Therefore, each agency respondent was asked what, in their opinion, the children thought of the college student volunteers. Informants were directly asked, "If there was a group of children from your program here and they were asked to give their thoughts and opinions about the college student volunteers they work with, what would they say?" The informants' responses had one consistent answer – the youth would say that they are cool. The cool factor played heavily in the minds of the youth being served according to the informants as indicated by the responses below.

- I think they [the kids] would think they [college students] were cool because they're younger and they are cool. You know what I mean, they are cool, they are interested, they're entirely focused. They basically think they're cool and they think they're funny and they get real attached.
- I think they look at them as kind of a cooler, older peer, someone they can relate to that's not an adult figure yet.
- It was neat to see the kids wait for the college students...to show up. They just thought that they were cool.
- Cool guys can be smart, cool guys do their homework. A lot of these kids their attitude is that you’re very un-cool if you’re doing your school work and then they bond with these [college students] and find out they want to be more like them.
- I think those kids are just in awe of those college students.
• I think they would think they were cool. They were awesome.

• I'm sure a lot of them would say, 'They are really cool'. That they are funny, that they make a special effort to come and see them. Most of the kids really appreciate that. Just that they are good friends.

• I've heard them say, 'I think they are fun'.

• They would say, 'They're really cool. They know a lot. They let me use the tools. They didn't boss me around. They asked me, I had a choice if I wanted to be in the water or not. We got to take turns, you know'. And probably a lot of, 'They let us. They let us do this and that, they showed me that'. And they'd also say things like, 'He had a cool earring. I really liked his t-shirt. He was rad. He had a rad bike'. Because they pay attention to all that.

Other descriptions that informants used to explain what the children think about the college students included, "On her post-test at the end of the year she [the mentee] was like, 'I have myself a new best friend' which says a thousand things", and “When the kids see that the college students value their program, the kids place more value on it themselves, it's the key." One director from Bozeman explained the kids' reactions this way.

They would say all sorts of funny things. As I said, [the college students] are "Gods" to them. They are adults but they are not parents and it's what they want to grow up to be. Everyone I've worked with that's worked well, the children when they see them their faces just light up. The elementary and the middle school kids start jumping up and down. The older middle school kids of course don't care about anything because they are too cool. But you see the faces light up, they are jumping up and down and its like, it's not even time to go to class and they want to come in off the playground and go into class. And that to me is, if they want to give up playground time to go and be with this person, that is pretty impressive.
The overwhelmingly positive comments from agency personnel about children's perceptions of the college student volunteers alluded to the types of benefits youth receive from their service.

**General Benefits to Youth**

Respondents identified several areas in which youth benefited from having a college student volunteer in their life. Self-esteem is an area in which some college students were able to make a significant difference for youth. One director explained that the teacher of a student being mentored noticed that “she’s a lot more confident, a lot more social, a lot less introverted. So, its gone beyond the academic thing which most of the tutor/mentor matches did.” Another director pointed out that, “Its just very good for the kids, positive experience, a lot of one-on-one attention, which some of them so desperately need.” A coordinator from Havre noted, “You could see that self-esteem in the kids. How they thought they were pretty cool because these pretty cool college kids thought they were cool.” One of the program directors in Bozeman described the impacts as follows.

The outbursts define behavior, you know, aggressive behavior toward other students, that all generally decreased after having a [mentor]...Most people involved in evaluating the program feel really good about the social confidence that increases in the kids and just a better sense of self esteem, a better sense of well being after having a [mentor].

Another benefit identified by respondents involved improved academic performance. One director explained that results from their program evaluation are “just staggering. We just presented to our board that 79 percent [of youth served] are getting along better in school, 50 percent have improved grades.”
coordinator from a tutoring program pointed out that the kids' "report cards will go from a C minus to a B. Most kids on average improve at least one grade level."

Other respondents described how the structure of the program benefited the children. One pointed out, "Here is another adult sitting down with the kids reading stories, talking to them about stories, spending time with them, and that has a definite positive impact. It makes reading a really good thing." A different respondent explained it as follows.

The kids that the teachers referred to us really benefited from that one-on-one instead of a group setting. So for an hour and a half, two days a week, they would come to the library and they were matched with a volunteer and they would work on whatever area the teacher thought they needed to work on.

The ability to bond and connect with another caring, adult figure in their lives was another benefit identified by informants. The camp director explained it as follows.

You can spend 24 hours a day, sleep with them, and you're bonded. I mean, these kids are on your lap and saying 'Can I call you Mom?'...It's always interesting to me because it is a camp with kids who don't want to go home. It's a camp of kids that beg to stay another week. It's a camp of kids who are not homesick... These are kids that cry when their parents come to get them because they want to stay with the counselors. And the counselors are sitting out there crying because the kids are leaving.

Another director explained it this way.

I think just the opportunities that a child is having with a volunteer, maybe to go out to the river and fish might be something that the little boy has never done but now that he has a [mentor] he has someone that can take him out to do that activity. Or the girl who is having a hard time adjusting to her parents' divorce and has a [mentor] there just to spend time with her and talk with her about how things are going and can relate to the issues and feelings the child is experiencing.
Respondents also added that sometimes the college student volunteers were able to provide a sense of future or a new perspective for some children through their service. One program director said, “I think the best impact on the kids is seeing that there are adults who can run and order their lives without drugs and alcohol, and in a manner that is ethical.” Another informant explained his point of view.

The kids get to see the possibilities of life that they may not see otherwise. So you know college students have dreams, they have plans, they have visions, they’re on a track that we would say is pretty positive. They utilize resources in the community, hopefully they don’t just stay home and watch TV...They are envisioning possibilities they might not be able to see otherwise.

A program director from Bozeman added her perspective.

I feel it’s an enrichment, you know, the fact that they have the interaction with people coming from different cultures, different backgrounds, different perceptions. I think that that’s what we want in education, we want them to at least have a glimpse as to what’s going on in their world on the outside of Bozeman, Montana. And, I think that what the students and the volunteers bring to us. They bring with them everything that’s happened to them and makes them an individual, and then they share those experiences, not specific experiences, but who they are.

Directors also explained how the volunteers role model appropriate behavior for youth. One described a particular incident that she recalled.

We have girls that are a little squeamish about aquatic insects, well, eighth grade girls who are just starting to wear makeup. And then you have a couple of college gals just walk right up, pull on the waders and say, ‘Let’s go, whose going to run the tape across [the stream]?’ And the girls are looking at them like, this is a different way to be female. And so, there’s different levels of learning that happens. It is interesting role modeling happening there. And that’s what I tell the college students, ‘Wear whatever you’re comfortable with at the stream, watch your language, you are a role model, they are watching you every minute’. The kids just don’t take their eyes off of them. They just want to know what they’re all about.
Another director offered a similar situation from her program. She said, "Usually the volunteers are basketball players up at the college, and it's neat because the college kids can say, 'You know I can't play basketball up at the college if I don't do well in school, if I don't read'. And they kind of promote the academic part too which is a neat component." The various ways in which youth benefited from the volunteers is further illustrated by specific stories contained in the concept outlined in Diagram 4.18 below.

4.18 Concept: Impressions on Youth

The stories contained in this concept reflected the types of positive and negative impacts that college student volunteers had on youth they serve. The instances in which volunteers negatively impacted youth primarily involved the college student dropping out of the program with little or no notice. Several of the informants expressed concern over the fact that the college students needed to
be fully aware of the consequences their actions have on the children when they don’t show up at their scheduled time or drop out unexpectedly. One director explained when kids have “somebody who they’re expecting to come and see them after school, it’s very important for the volunteers to be there.” Because many of the kids served by these programs came from low-income or unstable home environments it placed an even greater importance on the role of the volunteer in their life, whether it was a tutor or a mentor or a coach. One director explained that it would not be uncommon to hear kids in his program say, “They [the volunteer] visited me once and one again they never came back, they abandoned me.” He said, “It really hurts a lot when the college student decides they think they want to do it and then they just blow it off.” Another director expanded on this issue in the following statement.

Slightly more than half [of the college student volunteers] have had schedule changes and they just never show up. And when you’re working with a child that is devastating because the child takes it on themselves and says, ‘I’m the reason they don’t come anymore’...If someone is going to stop working with a child who has been working with the child directly for awhile, then even if they can’t make it for one last visit they [need] to write a letter or something so the child realizes its not their responsibility...the child has to know, I mean they’re four years old.

When the student volunteers are committed and follow through on their responsibilities the impacts on youth can be very positive as noted in the following stories from the informants.

- There’s one that stands out just the fact that this female from the college volunteered for the tutoring/mentoring program and basically established a family relationship with the match and it went to that next level. It was a university student and the high school student was kind of in need of a sister, and a role model, had come from rural Montana and was kind of struggling with the big city life, Missoula being the big city, but this girl just kind of went beyond the call of duty and became
this awesome mentor and tutor and then also just became her friend and they're doing stuff this summer. Like they're going on trips and vacations together and this college student is taking her back to Wisconsin and its just like it went to this next level and they became sisters in the true sense of sisters...You know there was permission from the parents and the parents were super open to having this university student at their house and it was all kind of checked out by phone calls and good communication and it was just neat to watch that develop. And the university student made such an impact in this girl's life, confidence-wise, socially, but also academically.

• You know, I remember this one that it was one of the first years that we did the camp and he had, there was three kids together, and one of the boy's hair was in his face and he had chains on, and he gets off the bus with you know 'Fuck you bitch, I don't want to be here'. Oh just charming. OK. So anyway, we worked with this group of kids and they had matching broken arms from their stepfather. Their fantasy was they were waiting for their dad to get out of prison so he could come home and beat up their step father who they believed was molesting their sister and obviously beating them up. You know, his hair is all in the face. And a couple weeks into the camp you know his hair was out of his face. That was the first think that I noticed. You know what I mean up underneath his cap. I mean you could see his face and his eyes. And he won that BB rifle program, it was the first award he ever got, and he was just beaming that he got this plaque and he was moving into a leadership role. He always had great leadership potential but not generally for good. He was moving into this leadership role and the kids had snuck back to smoke a cigarette, these were the older boys, and one of the kids had terrible stomach pains. And they thought he had stomach pains from smoking the cigarette and so they didn't report it at first to anybody and then they got scared. And then the kid's hyperventilating. And I thought it was colitis but we got an EMT person down from the valley and she thought it was appendicitis so we had Mercy Flight come in and it was quite exciting, it was colitis. Anyway, we had Mercy Flight take this kid out and we're up in the woods and the other boys are on their knees praying in the bathroom on their own which is kind of interesting. I brought them into the lodge and we were drinking hot chocolate and we started talking about friendships and what it would mean if they lost their friend. Did they tell him how much they liked him and what was it, did they think about the outcomes of their behavior as they still kind of thought that it was the smoking that triggered all of this. It was just very moving and you could just see, at least for him, this little bit of movement from child, arrogant child, to maybe a foot into adult male in terms of decision making and it was an interesting thing to watch for him. We brought them back and the step father was here and the first words out of his
mouth were 'Get your fucking ass and get it over here and load these things up you little fucking assholes'. I mean it was like that. And I walked over to the car and I said, 'I just wanted to let you know that these kids were really good at camp'. And he said, 'These little fucking jerks were good?' And I said, 'They really were and I just want you to know how good they were.' The kid lifted his hat up and the hair fell down back in front of his face, his shoulders hunched over and he got into the car. So, I don't have a lot of belief that sometimes the impact is long lasting. But, do what you can do.

- I know that there is one college student that has mentored a child for a year and half now and plays a really important role in that kid's life and is very committed to it...the child has a male, adult role model that they are able to spend one-on-one time with that, you know, somebody to go fishing with, somebody to go to ball games with and all that kind of stuff. The kid wasn't as active socially so it is an increase in socialization of the child.

- I think the first that comes to mind is there was a basketball player who was African American, and this is Havre, it's not a very diverse population here. But he, they were just like wow, can I touch you, can you slam the ball and they really looked up to this guy and he took that opportunity to talk about academics saying "I couldn't be here with you and play on Northern's basketball team if I didn't get good grades." And he talked about reading, how important reading was and that was really neat to see, and I couldn't have asked for that and so the kids were, 'oh wow, academics, that's important for us'.

- These kids will remember them [the volunteers] forever. How somebody finally believed in them and how somebody finally helped them with a test or how somebody finally showed them how to, 'Oh that's all it was!'. Lots of times that's it. 'You mean that's all I had to do was put the negative sign on the other side of the equation? Oh my God!'.

- I can think of one college student who had some really tough kids, one girl in seventh grade last year who was just verbally challenged, she had a very hard time communicating and they would both get frustrated at that, but she didn't quit and stop coming, she would always just keep going no matter how hard it was and she would break through that and eventually her being there every week was a huge connection for this girl. So they were very tight at the end of the year and the child moved away and then came back this year and asked first thing when she got to school, 'Can I see my mentor?' and was very vocal about it to her parents, the principal, and all her teachers, which was kind of funny. So the mentor had already matched with
another student who she also made a tremendous impact upon, like taking her to the humane society in her off time to help her walk dogs and cats so that she could, you know, they wound up volunteering together to help earn money, you know, earn money toward getting some of their pets spayed, and wound up doing a lot together. So the mentor wound up having both students at once for one of her busiest semesters at school. Even though I'm sure it was incredibly difficult to keep that schedule going, she did it, and really dedicated herself to those two kids. I'm sure that they will always treasure that. They keep in touch, the one moved away again but I'm sure she's going to keep writing and then the other one is still here in Bozeman and is already asking her last April, 'Are you coming back next year? When are you going to be back and ready to start?' And yeah, so they've definitely made some pretty big impacts with the kids here.

• I can think of last year, there was a student who kind of a disrupted home life. He was not doing well in school, he wasn't doing any of his work at all and he would just never turn in any homework and his teachers were so frustrated they did not know what to do with him and his mentor was a college student and she is in engineering and she came in and just told him that he was smart and they worked on the work together, and you know, just her being there and showing attention and interest in him, umm, he started doing his work and turning it in and it turned out that he was really good at math even though he'd been flunking previously. He never wanted to do the work, but she kind of gave him incentive to do the work and he wound up getting pretty good grades, after getting all F's so that was big turn-around.

• I've seen some kids really come out of their shell who have had mentors. Gifted kids who were the only one, some of them the only one in the school district, they're very advanced children, cannot relate with kids their age and have this college student who is someone they can talk to about math or science or the things that interest them has been a life changing experience for these children.

• We have one of the little girls at Clearwater who is matched with a college student, so when I met her the first several times, and the teachers said in her initial assessment, wouldn't talk, and then after they met for awhile she opened up to everybody, not just the volunteer. In that case there is definitely a obvious impact—she is talking at the lunch table which is something she never ever did.

• One of the most rewarding moments is that some kids who are, well you think about the tactile learners in their classroom, they just sit there, they probably don't participate in their science class. And, I
have to say, my experience is the kids who are "trouble" in a classroom setting because they have to sit in a desk and they have to be quiet and they're not supposed to move their feet and if they drum their pencil they have to be in detention—those kids are the ones who shine outside. So there is this amazing transformation when the kid and kids who they are not heard or are not appreciated in that classroom setting, become the leaders who have fished there, they've been there last summer, they know and are comfortable trying the tools. And then the most wonderful thing is when you watch a warm, caring and enthusiastic university student working with the group of kids and you can tell by watching the whole scene that that is an unforgettable moment for those kids, that they have learned and they've liked it. ‘Can you come tomorrow?’ is what they're asking these university students when they are walking back up the trail. ‘Can you come to my school tomorrow?’

4.19 Category #5: Community Views of College Student Volunteers

Community perceptions of college student volunteers were measured based on the perceptions of informants in the study. Community was defined for informants to include other agency staff, partner organizations, parents, teachers and other people who were involved with the children and knew that the children

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
were being served in some manner by a college student volunteer in the program. The respondents' perspectives validly reflect community perceptions because the respondents based their perceptions on the evaluative measures their programs have in place to receive feedback and information from community members about the services they provide. Responses to the questions related to this category were grouped into three themes: (a) community perceptions of volunteer motives, (b) community characterizations of the college student volunteers, and (c) community perceptions of the service provided by the students. Due to the vast nature of responses within these themes, there were no specific properties contained in any of them.

Community Perceptions of Volunteer Motives

Approximately half of the respondents believed that community members think the reason college students volunteer was because they are required to for course credit. One director stated, "I imagine a lot of them feel that the volunteers volunteer because they have to...because they need credits." Another director explained the community believes "either they are being told they have to because I know in college athletics it's real important to have had relationships with the community, or they are getting credit through coursework." Another added, "people would think it's part of the whole college experience, they need to volunteer to know about the world out there and to volunteer as part of a class." One informant explained that she and her colleagues are supportive of the credit motive because, "the extra credit is a nice little addition and maybe we
wouldn't get some of those students if we didn't have some of that extra credit enticing them.”

Several informants stated that another reason the community thinks that college students volunteer is because they have either a moral or religious ethic to give of themselves for others as illustrated by the following statements.

- They want to do something, they want to be able to help somebody and to give something back and they're not in a financial position to do so, this is their way of doing it.
- The whole ethic of volunteerism is something...it's just a part of their lives.
- I think they know that they owe the community something.
- Most people come in with their hearts in the right place. They think they are really going to do something for a kid.
- Some people might think it is because of religious reasons, some people might think it is because they were abused as a kid so they have a passion.
- I think they are still young enough, they haven't gotten themselves so absorbed into a position of family and everything else for the most part, that they have a lot to give...they feel they do have a lot to give and I don't think that just necessarily a job is enough for them.

Another perception included the notion that college students volunteer in order to feel like a part of a community. One director explained, “I think the people would say that many of them are away from home, away from families and this is a good opportunity for them to get involved in the community, a good
way for them to meet people...It's a way for them to make Missoula their home if they are away from their families."

Two other directors pointed out that people believe college students volunteer in order to gain experience in a particular career field. One explained, "We do get a lot of college volunteers from family sciences, health and human development, and psychology. People that are already interested in people and with kids and what goes on with kids." Another stated that "It's because they have an interest in that area and what they talk about is that they will be studying youth development or early childhood development and they wanted [experience]."

Informants from two agencies expressed their concern, and they believed other community members shared this concern, regarding the lack of motivation that is present for some students who are only volunteering because they are required to by a professor in order to pass a class. These directors pointed out that when the only motive or reason that students are volunteering is because they have to it reflects in the type of service they provide. One director stated, "The handful of college students that were gaining credit for doing it were doing it because that's what motivated them. 'O.K. at the end of the semester I'm getting credit for this, that's why I'm showing up'. Well, kids can tell, parents can tell, program coordinators can tell and that's frustrating." A different director explained her concern as follows.

It was challenging in the beginning when someone would come in and say 'Well, I'm doing this for extra credit'. That was hard for me, because, you know, I wanted someone who was capable of forming a relationship and having a good positive effect with the child—it wasn't for me, about giving
extra credit...so I think, for me, it was somewhat negative when they told me they were doing it for extra credit.

This director went on to explain that the majority of students who begin the program in order to get extra credit end up staying longer and being good mentors, therefore turning it into a more positive experience. These comments are important for higher education service learning programs to be aware of so they can work through the agencies' concerns and maintain supportive, collaborative service relationships.

Community Characterizations of College Student Volunteers

Agency directors pointed out a variety of ways in which the community characterizes the students who perform volunteer service. The descriptors they identified were overwhelmingly positive and reflect a very supportive and satisfied view of the students as service providers. Comments related to this concept included the following.

- They are fun, energetic, and intelligent.
- Self-motivated, driven, caring, nurturing, and interested.
- They are extremely effective because they have a good sense of humor and they are physically fit.
- They were reliable and able to manage the students and follow all the rules.
- Enthusiastic.
- They are very committed and understand that once you say 'Yes, I'm going to do it', they follow through.
- They've been excellent, we've been very fortunate, we've had some outstanding volunteers.
• They are quality kids [college students] with quality futures and quality ideas.
• They're sure really flexible.
• They are pretty sincere and worth having.
• Students have energy, they stay up late, you can call them late at night, they read their Emails too.
• University students are kind of into championing a cause...[volunteering] is for those who aren't into way out there advocacy or kind of far out stuff but they just want to help a little bit.
• There's a lot of energy, a lot of wonderful resources available in college students.

A couple of informants noted that the community does not characterize college student volunteers differently than any other volunteer because the community people they work with don’t perceive them as college students, just as volunteers. One explained, “I don’t think they would zero in on the college student thing. I think they would just zero in on the fact that there is this adult working with children.” This notion was mentioned in different contexts by two other directors as well. The link between the agencies is that they are in communities in which there are larger proportions of non-traditional aged college students, therefore the community may not immediately associate the volunteers as college students. Instead they would view them more as they would any community member and not have specific characterizations based on their college student status.
Community Perceptions of Service Provided by College Student Volunteers

The informants believed general community perceptions are typically very supportive and positive regarding the service provided by college students. All of the agencies in the study pointed out positive benefits the community receives as a result of college students volunteering with youth. And, based on these benefits the community is supportive of the service they provide and believe that it generally makes a positive difference for youth. Responses included, “I know that the organizations that we are dealing with are seeing that it is great, they are excited”; “I think the community sees it as a pretty positive asset”; and, “They know that a lot of things that go on here would not happen without the [volunteers].”

Other directors explained that their programs would not be able to operate if the community was not supportive of the use of college student volunteers because funding and participation would decrease. One director noted, “It shows you the value of community support because if you can’t get the community support then you can’t do it.” A different director said, “The referrals that we get to the program, that in itself says a lot about the service that the volunteers are doing because more and more people are referring their kids to our program.”

One of the tutoring program directors described the perceptions that the school and parents have of the volunteers and program as follows.

I think especially the school and the parents, everybody I think is happy with the one-to-one time because there is that feeling, especially in this day and age, when maybe classroom sizes are getting a little bigger and as kids get through the system if there is one area that maybe the child is weak in...the one-on-one can really make an impact...so it is something everybody really appreciates.
Negative community perceptions were identified by two informants and relate to two separate issues. The first pointed out that he and others in the community perceive college student volunteers as not being entirely effective because they are not serving to meet the most critical needs of youth. He explained this in the following statements.

It's just that we think that there are other valuable volunteer activities that could really impact people's lives and that discussion [between the campus and community] is not happening. That community needs assessment is not happening. I don't know at what level that happens but we're not participating in it and I think we and others should be.

The other director pointed out that community partners she works with tend to be focused on the failures they've had with college student volunteers and, as a result, tend to view their service as ineffective. She explained, "People seem to focus so much on the failures. You might have ten volunteers, two of them fail, eight of them are wonderful and the next year they'll say, 'Well, two of them failed I don't want to do this anymore'."

Section Three: Summary of Research Findings

This study involved the use of 15 case studies for qualitative analysis to determine the impacts and effectiveness of college student volunteers serving to meet the needs of youth as perceived by community agency personnel who work with them. The study revolved around four research questions and the data revealed several themes and properties within each of the research categories. The first research category, ensuring quality and effectiveness of the college student volunteer service at the agency, included three primary themes — quality management activities, volunteer program management activities, and
agency/university partnership activities. The second research category, measuring the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service, contained four supporting concepts – publicity, formal evaluation tools, informal feedback, and barriers to measuring effectiveness. The third category examined the impacts of college student volunteers at the agencies where they serve. This category contained three concepts – programmatic impacts, positive attributes of college student volunteers, and negative attributes of college student volunteers. Category number four focused on the impacts that college student volunteers have on the youth they serve. This category included four related concepts – demographics of youth served, youth perceptions of the volunteers, general benefits to youth, and impressions on youth. The final category, community perceptions of college student volunteers, included three themes – perceptions of volunteer motives, community characterizations of college student volunteers, and community perceptions of the service provided. Most of the themes, or concepts, within each category contained supporting properties as well.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Due to the swift expansion of the service learning movement in higher education during the past decade, a plethora of research studies pertaining to the impacts and effectiveness of service learning as a tool for civic education have emerged. Findings from this body of literature point out the positive impacts that service learning has on students, faculty, and institutions. What is less obvious in the research is how higher education service learning and volunteer activities effect the community. Very few research studies have identified the community's perspective on higher education service learning and volunteer activities, and the perceived impacts that college students have on the needs they are trying to address in the community through their service. Recent studies in the field have highlighted the lack of attention that is paid to the community, and several articles cite the need for researchers to engage in community-based research in order to identify the community voice in service learning.

The purpose of this study was to examine college student service learning and volunteer activities via data gathered from community agency personnel who work with college student volunteers. Research in the field of higher education service learning and civic involvement needs to reflect the premises and goals of service learning to (a) meet community needs, and (b) provide meaningful learning experiences for students. Successful service learning programs require collaborative partnerships between campuses and community agencies to meet
these goals (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Without direct input from community agencies about the perceived impacts and effectiveness of college student volunteers, it is difficult for higher education service learning programs to have a complete understanding of how programs should be designed and implemented for maximum effectiveness at both the campus and community levels.

This study provides an in-depth examination of how personnel at community agencies perceive college student volunteers, ensure and measure effective volunteer service, and the identified impacts they have on agencies and youth served. This chapter summarizes the study, identifies conclusions based on key findings, and offers recommendations for further action.

Summary

This study utilized a qualitative case study approach to analyze higher education service learning and volunteer activities from the community agency perspective. Personnel from 15 community agencies in seven Montana communities that utilize college student volunteers were interviewed, and data were analyzed using an inductive content analysis procedure. Findings emerged related to each of the following research questions.

1. How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?

2. According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?
3. What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts as perceived by agency personnel?

4. What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?

The first research question was separated into two research categories:

(a) ways in which agencies ensure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service, and (b) ways in which agencies measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service.

Ensuring Quality & Effectiveness of College Student Volunteer Service

Data in this category identified several ways in which community youth service organizations ensure the quality and effectiveness of the service provided by college student volunteers. Most of the organizations included in the study engage in quality management, volunteer program management, and agency/university partnership activities in order to maintain an acceptable caliber of volunteer service provided by the agency. Activities associated with quality management include such things as screening, training, and supervising volunteers. By providing volunteers with a firm understanding of their roles and responsibilities from the outset and offering ongoing support throughout their volunteer service, agencies add to the quality and effectiveness of the volunteer service provided for youth.

Volunteer program management activities require agencies to gain input from other community partner organizations and the constituents they serve. This input helps agencies to develop and implement programs that are meeting
identified needs and utilizing available resources most effectively. Several
gencies utilize national service programs such as AmeriCorps and VISTA for
human resources in order to increase personnel capacity within the agency to aid
in expanding and adding program offerings for youth.

Several respondents described the ways in which their agencies work with
local colleges and universities to form collaborative partnerships in support of
effective service learning and volunteer activities. In many cases, personnel from
the agencies worked with specific departments and faculty on campus to form
partnerships in which students from specific classes are recruited by agencies to
fill volunteer needs of the agency that relate to the course and students' major
areas of study. One respondent explained how the youth environmental
education program she coordinated was started by a professor at the college.

The [program] was inspired by [Carla Berger] who taught a class at the
college in sustainability of your watershed. And from there, we just
decided that it was really imperative that we got K-12 kids out monitoring
their streams. And then we found out there was a big interest in the
college students to help out with that as well. There's nothing like
teaching someone how to do it to learn really well.

Three respondents representing three different communities spoke about
their frustrations due to the challenges and barriers they confronted in trying to
develop collaborative partnerships with campuses. For example, respondents
explained they often do not get phone calls returned from people on campus;
they believe they are not included in community needs assessments to
determine where volunteer efforts could best be utilized; and they are rarely, if
ever, invited or allowed on campus to recruit volunteers. These respondents
viewed the campus and/or specific departments as a closed, bureaucratic system
that was unwelcoming to the agencies and unwilling to participate in a collaborative partnership.

**Measuring Quality & Effectiveness of College Student Volunteer Service**

The second research category examined the various ways in which organizations measure the quality of service provided by college student volunteers, including publicity, formal evaluation tools, and informal feedback. Within this category, respondents also discussed the barriers they face in trying to measure effectiveness. The degree to which programs develop and implement measures of effectiveness varied among the agencies. More than half of the agencies in the study engage in rather rigorous program evaluation procedures to find out how the services impact youth in the programs. Pre and post-test analysis and formal questionnaires are used to determine program impacts on youths' academic, social, and self-esteem levels. The nationally affiliated programs and federally funded programs had the most stringent mechanisms in place to measure quality and effectiveness, while the less structured and loosely coupled organizations had more informal measures in place.

Informal measures used by agencies to determine impacts on youth included verbal and written feedback from parents, teachers, volunteers, and the youth themselves. In addition, many agencies rely on informal observations of staff to help gauge how effective volunteers are in working with youth. Regardless of how the programs measure and gather this data, the majority of agencies place an emphasis on measuring the quality and effectiveness of
service at their organization as illustrated by one director’s response, “People need to give us their feedback and we actively seek it through evaluation”.

Several respondents identified difficulties they face when trying to quantitatively measure the impacts that volunteers and programs have on youth who are served. For example, many respondents believe that the nature of the impacts that volunteers and programs have on youth are intangible, and therefore immeasurable. It is difficult for them to rate the quality of a mentoring relationship between a college student volunteer, or any type of volunteer, and a child because sometimes the differences in the way the child acts, responds, or feels about him or herself is not quantifiable; it is just visible. Another point respondents made is that they have a hard time attributing all of the changes that a child may undergo during the time period they are being served by a volunteer in the program solely to the volunteer and the program. There are so many other factors in that child’s life that may be impacting and influencing her or him, therefore programs cannot take all of the credit or all of the blame.

College Student Volunteer Impacts at the Agency

The third research category focused on the impacts that college student volunteers have at the agencies where they serve. Impacts identified by respondents ranged from specific impacts on programming to the general positive and negative impacts of having college student volunteers serving at the agency. Programmatic impacts included the number of volunteers and hours of service they provide, the benefit of additional human resources for program expansion and funding, and generally what it is like to have college students
serving and how programs would be different without them. College students, because of the quantity of volunteers and hours they provide, contribute greatly to the agencies' abilities to offer bigger and better programs for youth. Most of the agencies indicated that they are able to get more funding and more youth referrals to their programs because they have a solid, effective college student volunteer base.

The college students are viewed as human resources by the organizations because they ease some of the responsibilities of staff and free their time up for other duties within the organization. The majority of respondents indicated that their programs would be greatly reduced if they didn't have college student volunteers and, as a result, fewer children would be served. One program coordinator explained that her program exists because "there is an instant pool of volunteers to choose from and without the college we wouldn't have it." All but two of the respondents described working with college student volunteers as enjoyable and beneficial. The two dissenting opinions related to frustrations in having to sometimes deal with difficult personalities of college students, and a perceived lack of enthusiasm from students who are serving because they are being required to as part of a service learning course.

College students' age, energy level, knowledge/experience, and commitment levels were viewed by respondents as positively impacting the agencies. Some agency directors explained that the students brought in new perspectives for the agency and helped agencies to think "out of the box" sometimes. Students were generally viewed as being committed to their service
and valuable to the agency because of their background, experience, and education in the field. The primary asset of the college student volunteers for agencies seemed to be their age. Respondents believe that because traditional-age college students are young they are accepted more readily by youth who view them as "cool". Respondents explained that kids are much more willing to participate in programs when they know the volunteers are young, not typically parents, and cool.

Respondents also identified attributes of the college student volunteers that negatively impacted the agencies. For example, some agency personnel worked with students who had very limited levels of commitment and dropped out of the programs early, or never showed up in the first place. Agency directors also pointed out that in some cases college students require more supervision than older, more experienced volunteers because they lack professional skills. The academic schedules of the students also negatively impacted agencies because agency personnel had to come up with "filler" activities for youth when college students were gone for long winter breaks, ended their service early in the summer, or could not serve because the college students needed to use their spare time studying for midterms and final exams. Even with all of the negative factors associated with college student volunteers, respondents clearly perceived that it is worth it for agencies to make the extra effort and get them involved. The majority of respondents explained that the benefits associated with working with college student volunteers far outweighed the drawbacks because when the volunteers work out, it typically works very well for both the agency and child.
College Student Volunteer Impacts on Youth Served

The fourth research category examined college student volunteer impacts on youth. Data in this category focused on the demographics of kids who are served, their perceptions of the college students, the general benefits to youth, and specific impressions that college student volunteers have had on youth served by the agencies. Youth served by the agencies in this study represent three to 19 year olds, and generally have needs that revolve around academics, socialization, and self-esteem as perceived by respondents. Overwhelmingly, the respondents believe that the children served have very positive perceptions of the college student volunteers. All of the respondents in the study said that the kids in their programs would describe these volunteers as “cool”. They think the volunteers are fun, energetic, and like hanging out with them. Two respondents pointed out that some kids in their programs have been negatively impacted by college student volunteers. In situations where college student volunteers drop out of the program early, or are inconsistent following through on commitments they have made to the children, the kids end up feeling abandoned by the volunteers and internalize the blame.

In general, respondents believe that college student volunteers benefit youth in several ways such as increasing their self-esteem, helping them to improve academically and socially, and providing them with alternative perceptions about life options. One director explained, “There are so many matches where the volunteers have helped the kids. Some of the things that we see are improvement in school, self-esteem, ability to get along better with other
individuals, grades, attendance, and a reduction in drug and alcohol abuse.” Specific stories that respondents told regarding impacts on youth pointed out that youth benefit tremendously by having a caring, positive adult role-model in their life to help them with specific life and academic skills, and to also just be their friend.

Community Perceptions of College Student Volunteers

The final research category looked at community perceptions of college student volunteerism. Community perceptions of college student volunteers were measured based on the informed perceptions of respondents in the study. Community was defined for respondents to include other agency staff, partner organizations, parents, teachers and other people who were involved with the children and knew that they were being served in some manner by a college student volunteer in the program. Data in this category were grouped into three themes including, community perceptions of volunteer motives, how the community characterizes college student volunteers, and how the community perceives the service provided by college student volunteers.

With regard to motives, respondents indicated that most people in the community primarily believe that college students are motivated to volunteer because they are getting academic credit for it. Other motives they identified were related to students’ moral and religious beliefs of the importance for giving back, volunteering to gain experience in a particular field, and volunteering to feel like a member of the community. Two respondents noted their concern about students who are only motivated to volunteer because they are required to for a
course. They pointed out that sometimes these are the volunteers that display a lack of commitment and/or do not put in a very strong effort that is noticeable to the staff, parents, and kids in the program.

Respondents' descriptions of how the broader community characterizes the college student volunteers were very positive. Respondents explained that based on their informed perspective, they believe that most people in the community characterize the college students as energetic, intelligent, driven, nurturing, and enthusiastic individuals. Not surprisingly, respondents also indicated that the community believes the service provided by college students is high quality and effective. Based on their perceptions, they believe the community understands the positive impacts of the college students' service and are therefore supportive of their efforts to serve youth. One informant explained, "I would say that most [people in the community] would say that we love to have the college student volunteers here...it's been very positive. The college student volunteers are a lot of help and it's a good experience for the kids and the college students."

Conclusions

Research data from this study revealed several key findings associated with each of the research questions that comprised the study. These findings play an important role in the field of higher education service learning because they represent the voices of community agencies where college student volunteers are utilized. The respondents in the study provided information based on their experiences, feedback from community partners and other constituents,
and their own opinions regarding college student volunteerism and service learning. Without identifying and addressing the successes and challenges that community agencies experience as a result of having college student volunteers, higher education service learning programs are overlooking some of the most important ingredients for collaborative and effective program operations. The following conclusions are warranted based on the findings from this study.

1. **Community youth service agencies overwhelmingly appreciate and support the service provided by college student volunteers.** The respondents in this study had very positive perceptions of the college students and the service they provide for youth. College student volunteers are perceived as valuable resources for agencies and they provide opportunities for expanded and improved services for youth in many cases. Respondents pointed out that when college students connect with youth they are very effective and positively impact their lives. However, the results can be disastrous when a college student volunteer fails to maintain responsibility for his/her commitment to a child by dropping out of the program unexpectedly.

2. **Agencies believe that traditional-aged college students make easier and stronger connections with youth because they are viewed by youth as cool.** Over and over again, respondents emphasized the age of college students as an important factor in their effectiveness in working with youth. Because traditional-aged college students are young adults, youth perceive them as being more cool and have more in common, such as similar tastes in music, clothing, and recreational activities, than with older adults who are perceived
by youth as parental figures. Traditional-aged college students are perceived by the respondents as being more willing and more flexible to try new things with youth and let youth have more control and/or power in the relationship.

3. **In rural communities, the amount of staff and faculty turnover at the college is perceived as a barrier to effective collaboration with community agencies.** Respondents in communities that have higher than average turnover rates among faculty and staff who help to develop and implement service learning and volunteer programs on campus describe this as a frustrating element in trying to establish firm partnerships that ease recruitment and training of college student volunteers at the agencies. Agency staff have a difficult time navigating the bureaucratic structure of the college when they do not have a consistent contact person with whom they can relay information and needs.

4. **Agencies want and need college students with specialized skills, in traditional youth oriented fields and non-traditional fields, to aid programs in offering higher caliber services for youth.** In general, college students are perceived by personnel at community youth service agencies as having special sets of skills and educational abilities that can be of extra help for agencies when they are developing and implementing programs for youth. For example, students from fields such as nursing, education, social work, and psychology have specific training and knowledge pertaining to youth that are valuable for agencies and increase the quality of services they are able to provide for youth. Other fields, such as business, accounting, and the hard sciences, are areas that agencies want to recruit more students from in order to receive
assistance with other agency-related needs such as budget management and business plans.

5. **Agencies are not always supportive of service-learning requirements.** In some cases, respondents explained their wariness when college students approach the agency and explain that they have to volunteer as part of a class requirement. Some involved in the non-profit sector generally are more willing and eager to work with volunteers who express a heart-felt desire to serve rather than being required to serve.

6. **Due to the vulnerability of the youth being served, agencies want a stronger commitment from college students and protocols for campuses to follow to increase retention and responsibility levels among volunteers.** Many respondents described situations in which the child being served by a college student volunteer was left feeling devastated and deserted when the volunteer dropped out of the program early or unexpectedly. Agencies describe the children they are serving as quite vulnerable in most cases because of their background circumstances. As a result, agencies want campuses to hold students more accountable for their service commitments when the students are volunteering as part of a service learning class.

**Efficacy of the Findings for Agencies**

The conclusions offer insight and direction for agencies to take in order to increase effectiveness in working with higher education service learning and volunteer programs. Findings within the first research question offer the most pertinent information for agencies. For example, data point out that the majority
of agencies had internal mechanisms and procedures in place to help ensure the quality and effectiveness of college student service. However, there was a clear distinction in the levels of satisfaction that agencies had with volunteer service when the agencies' actions related to quality and effectiveness of the service were less consistent or non-existent. For example, agencies that had fewer resources available to provide ongoing supervision and/or supplemental training of volunteers had more negative experiences with college student volunteer service as compared to agencies in which there was a strong infrastructure to support high quality, effective volunteer service. Therefore, it is important for agencies to develop and implement programs with a sufficient infrastructure of resources to support and sustain a strong volunteer base.

Findings within this research question also show there is a disparity in the types of program evaluation that each of the agencies implemented. Some programs had quantitative and qualitative mechanisms in place to measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service, while others relied solely on anecdotal feedback from program participants. With the overwhelming number of hours that college student volunteers serve with some of these programs, it becomes apparent that more stringent program evaluation would benefit both the agencies and the higher education service learning and volunteer programs by offering valid evidence of the impacts the service is having. This evidence could be used to create stronger levels of support, both human and financial resources, for service-based partnerships between campuses and community agencies.
Results of findings from the second and third research questions imply that agencies with a stronger understanding of service learning tend to have better partnerships with the higher education institution in their community and see more positive results of college student volunteer service. This finding points out that in the long run it is more beneficial for agencies to invest time and energy early in service-based partnerships with campuses in order to develop a clear understanding and consistent expectations of the relationship and services that will ensue. Without a firm foundation, partnerships between the campuses and community agencies are more likely to falter and dissatisfaction among both partners may result.

**Recommendations for Higher Education Service Learning and Volunteer Programs**

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered for campus-based service learning and volunteer programs in order to increase effectiveness and strengthen programs.

1. **Campuses must designate a specific unit and/or faculty and staff who are responsible for operating and supporting the service-learning and volunteer activities for students.** Agencies residing in communities in which the campus had no consistent office or person to contact as a means to facilitate service learning and volunteer activities were consistently more frustrated and unsatisfied with the impacts and effects of college student volunteers. Campuses that are committed to the values and actions of the “engaged campus” need to designate the appropriate resources, both financial and
human, in order to work collaboratively with the community to make it happen. Without consistency, agencies are left confused and frustrated. In addition, they do not have the ability to navigate the bureaucratic structure of the institution in order to access potential resources.

2. **Professors who teach service learning courses need to hold students accountable for the service they are providing.** Several respondents expressed their concern about the low levels of accountability that students are held to by their professors. In some cases, respondents were very frustrated by the fact that students could drop out of programs and fall short of their service responsibilities and have little, if any, consequences imposed by professors. In order to properly address the very real issue of the vulnerability of the youth served in these programs, professors should have clear-cut guidelines for students to follow that outline the responsibilities and expectations of them as volunteers. Consequences, such as loss of points or a lower grade, should be known by students and imposed by professors when a student does not follow through on their commitment appropriately. In addition, professors need to communicate these consequences to the agency and keep lines of communication open between themselves and the agency in order to be able to impose the consequences when necessary.

3. **Campus service learning professionals need to work with community agencies to overcome the negative connotation that required volunteerism sometimes holds.** Campuses need to communicate better with agencies and students to educate them about the academic goals of service learning. For
example, a handbook for agencies and/or students that describes and explains service learning may be helpful. Brochures and Internet web pages may also be useful educational tools for students and agencies alike. Some of the respondents in the study pointed out that they had negative gut-reactions toward students who admitted they were only volunteering because they had to for a class. If students and agencies were better informed and educated about the fundamental learning goals that service learning experiences should be focused on there might be a more positive reception both from students and agencies.

4. Campuses need to do better outreach to community agencies to explain service learning. Three of the respondents in the study had very little understanding of what service learning is. Their lack of understanding did not seem to have detrimental effects on their perceptions of the college student volunteers, but these instances point out that collaboration is not occurring between agencies and campuses. Under these circumstances one must question whether or not it should even be called service learning even if the students are serving as part of a class. Campus service learning staff and/or professors need to spend time at the outset to meet with agency personnel and educate them about service learning.

5. Campus service learning centers need to assist organizations to identify potential departments or specific faculty who may be interested in forming collaborative service learning partnerships with them. Three respondents from three different communities discussed the frustration they encounter
when no one on campus seems receptive to developing collaborative, service learning partnerships. The campus-based service learning center needs to work more individually with organizations to identify needs and match potential campus partners. By serving as a more pro-active liaison between the organization and departments or faculty, the service learning center will serve as a catalyst for developing more collaborative partnerships.

6. **Increased collaboration between agencies and campuses needs to occur in order to identify the most effective way of utilizing college student volunteers.** Some community agencies believe college student volunteers are not serving to meet the most critical needs of youth in the community. Therefore, the effectiveness of their service is perceived by the community as diminished and insignificant. This was most apparent in rural communities where there was not an abundance of resources for the community to draw from. Therefore, campuses need to work more collaboratively with community agencies to perform needs assessments and ensure that college student volunteers are placed where they can have the most impact in the community and still achieve their academic goals as well.

7. **Colleges need to be more aware of college students' motivations for volunteering.** Several respondents pointed out that they believe one of the motivations for college students to volunteer with youth is because the students miss their families and through volunteerism they are seeking familial settings. This is an aspect of service learning and volunteerism that is rarely discussed in the research. If campus programs are better able to
identify student motives for volunteering there may be other avenues to tie in students' community volunteer experience with personal development and growth experiences on campus, such as residential life programs or leadership development programs.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

While much has been accomplished in the field of higher education service learning and volunteerism in the past decade, there are still many areas that need to be expanded and explored in order to further refine and strengthen the way in which programs are operated and implemented. Findings and recommendations from this study open doors for future research in the field. The following questions are offered as a guide for further study.

1. **Will the influx of non-traditional aged college students change community perceptions of the effectiveness of their service with youth?** A study that focuses on non-traditional aged college students and the service they provide at their volunteer placement sites within the community may offer valuable information about any differences with regard to the impacts and effectiveness that are perceived by agencies. A study comparing and contrasting community agency personnel perspectives about traditional versus non-traditional aged college student volunteers, and their effectiveness working with youth would offer insightful program information for campuses.

2. **How do the youth who are being served and their parents or guardians perceive college student volunteers and the service they provide?** A study
involving youth that are served by college student volunteers and/or the youths' parents/guardians may offer very different insights about the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteers. By including youth in the population of the study, a more accurate representation of college student volunteers' impacts may be identified.

3. What motivates college students to volunteer? There are many reasons why college students perform volunteer service. This study identified motives, from community agency personnel perspectives, about why college students volunteer. A study focused on asking the students themselves why they volunteer would offer helpful information for campus-based service learning programs and aid in targeting agency recruitment efforts that are more closely aligned with students' motives.

4. How can campuses better integrate volunteerism and student development? Campus-based research focused on determining what college students want to gain from their volunteer and service learning experiences would help to refine and strengthen programs. If campuses were better informed about students' service goals, there may be opportunities to link service with other personal and professional development programs currently in existence on campuses.

The findings from this study help to shed light on the valuable perspectives that community agencies have related to college student volunteerism and service learning. With this information, higher education service learning programs may be better prepared to operate more effective,
collaborative programs that are based on community input and perspectives. Higher education service learning must continue to examine and assess the community side of the service equation if those in the field wish to accurately represent the true nature of collaborative service-based partnerships between campuses and communities.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Agency Inquiry Letter

Community Youth Service Agency
Address

Dear Agency Director:

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at The University of Montana, and I am writing in regard to my research study on the impact of college student volunteers at community agencies. I am searching for answers to basic questions about the impacts and effectiveness of college students who serve as volunteers to help meet the needs of youth in your community. This study is part of my dissertation.

Would you consider meeting with me for a one-hour interview? I have formulated concise questions to ensure the interview will take no longer than one hour to complete. I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and reported anonymously. As I compile the results of my interviews, neither the names nor identities will be associated with any statements. When this study is completed, I will be happy to provide you with a summary of the results.

Thank you very much for considering this request. I will be calling you in the next few days to discuss any questions you may have and to see if you are interested in participating in my study.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vernon
Graduate Student
Appendix B

**Interview Protocol**

I am involved in a study at The University of Montana that is examining the impacts and effectiveness of college students who serve as volunteers to help meet the needs of youth in the community. I am interested in finding out how your organization uses college student volunteers and what you think about their service efforts. I will begin with some background questions about college student volunteerism at your agency. Then, I will ask more broad questions about the community perceptions of college student volunteers here. For the purposes of my study, community is defined as the population being impacted by the college student volunteers' service. This population includes agency personnel, youth, and parents, guardians, teachers, mentors, etc. who are involved with the youth being served and have some knowledge of the college student volunteer service efforts toward meeting the needs of the youth(s). All of my data will be reported anonymously and no identifying information will be used.

**Background Questions**

1. Approximately how many college students have volunteered at your agency in the past two years? What percentage of all of your volunteers are college students?

2. In general, describe the activities that college student volunteers engage in during their volunteer service here.

3. Approximately how many hours of service do you think all the college students combined serve each week here?

4. What are the age ranges of youth that your agency serves?

5. Are you familiar with the term "service learning"? If yes, ask them to define it. ALSO, clarify (and if they respond "no") that for the purposes of my study, service learning refers to the integration of community service into higher education course curriculum so that students are performing service in the community as a component of a class they are enrolled in.

6. Do you know approximately how many of the college students who volunteer here do so as part of a service learning class?

7. Do you ever have contact with any of the professors who teach the classes that some of these students come from, or with anyone at the campus service learning office? If so, what does it consist of?
8. Do you work any differently with the college students if they are serving as part of a class versus extra-curricular volunteer work? If yes, why and how so?

RQ#1: How do personnel at community youth service agencies ensure and measure the quality and effectiveness of college student volunteer service at their agency?

1. What type of criteria do you follow for selecting college student volunteers?

2. How do you get input from people in the community (as defined above) about the youth services that your agency provides?

3. How do you use community input to prepare and support college student volunteers who serve here?

4. How do you determine the effectiveness of whether or not the college student volunteers' service positively addresses and/or meets the needs of youth that your agency serves? (I can further specify this question based on the type of service the students are doing, such as tutoring, mentoring, coaching, etc.).

5. Do you think there is any difference between college student volunteers versus other volunteers in the effectiveness of their service? If yes, why?

RQ#2: According to agency personnel, what impacts do college student volunteers have at the youth service agencies where they serve?

1. Tell me what it is like to have college students volunteering here.

2. Is your agency able to serve more youth, or serve youth better, as a result of having college student volunteers here? Why or why not? How is this documented? OR...How would your program be different without the college student volunteers?

3. What are some of the drawbacks for your agency related to having college student volunteers here? Why? Can you give me any specific instances or a story related to this?

4. What are some of the benefits that your agency gains as a result of having college student volunteers here? Why? Can you give me any specific instances or a story related to this?

RQ#3: What impacts do college student volunteers have on youth through their volunteer service efforts?

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
1. Can you give me any specific examples of how college student volunteerism has impacted youth who are served here?

2. What do the kids who are being served think of the college student volunteers here? How have you determined this?

3. What type of feedback have you received from the community about the impacts that college student volunteers have on the youth they serve? How is this documented?

4. Has your agency received public praise or criticism for the service that college students provide for youth here? If yes, what did it consist of?

RQ#4: What views does the community have about college student volunteers as perceived by community agencies?

1. Why do people in this community think that college students volunteer here?

2. How has the community characterized college student volunteers here? Is this documented at your agency? How so?

3. Overall, do people in the community believe that college student volunteers are helping to address and/or meet the needs of the youth this agency serves? Why? How does your agency determine this? From the outside looking in...

4. Do you think the community's perception of the college student volunteers differs from your own? If yes, why?

Wrap-up Questions....

1. Given the subject we have been discussing, is there anything else you think I should have asked or that I have neglected?

2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

3. Is it ok if I contact you in the future as I am analyzing and writing up my findings to clarify areas that I may need more information about?
Appendix C

INTERVIEW COVERSHEET

AGENCY: ____________________________________________
RESPONDENT: _______________________________________
COMMUNITY: _______________________________________

General Services Provided by Agency:

Key Points:

Quotable Quotes:

Issues to Follow Up:
REFERENCES

http:\www.aacc.nche.edu\spcproj\service\service.htm


185


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Western Washington University. (1994). *Community service activity by Western Washing Students: Its extent, nature, and impact on the surrounding community*. Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA.