



ation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent federal agency, which has as a primary mission to foster civic engagement in college students. AmeriCorps serves the community to address public safety, education, community and economic development, human needs, health, and family self-sufficiency and stability. Since 1994 over \$1 billion of AmeriCorps Education Awards have been earned, and one in four institutions of higher education has received funding for programs (CNCS, n.d.). Moreover, the CNCS hopes to engage five million college students in service by 2010 and to ensure that there is at least one full time staff person dedicated to coordinating and supporting service on at least one half of college campuses nationwide (CNCS). Because of the strong presence of AmeriCorps on college and university campuses and the goal to increase that presence, it is important to examine the experiences of AmeriCorps members.

addressing problems,

Charity Versus Social Change Paradigms

Scholars have varying beliefs regarding even the most fundamental nature and purpose of service-learning. Kendall (1990) posited that service-learning experiences should have a specific goal of moving students along a continuum from a mindset of providing charity toward promoting social justice. A social justice paradigm posits that service-learning experiences should equip students with the knowledge and skill to move beyond acts of charity and to address the root causes of systemic social inequality (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

In contrast to Kendall's (1990) continuum model of service-learning, Morton (1995) argued that we should describe the various approaches to service-learning in terms of paradigms. These paradigms have unique worldviews, or "ways of identifying and

reflective service-learning classes predicts increased “complexity in analysis of both causes and solutions to social problems” (Eyler & Giles, p. 75). This study examines how participation in long-term service-learning relates to attitudes about and commitment to social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement.

Social Justice. Research has shown that “students [can make] positive changes in their attitudes toward social justice [and] equality of opportunity” (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000, p. 15) as a result of service-learning experiences. Everett (1998) found that 87% of students in a

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non-profit agency—were eligible for participation for this study.

The study was conducted at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest. The AmeriCorps program has been active on this campus since 2005, with a total of 105 AmeriCorps members since its inception.

Ten AmeriCorps members were selected from 40 eligible participants. Purposive sampling methods were used to collect data from a diverse range of participants at multiple service sites so that comparison and analysis of multiple

and interviews for this study might have affected or biased certain perceptions and recollections. In addition, the interviews asked for participants' perceptions of the effects of their

~~enormous amount of time and effort that they had put into the research and the data collection process.~~

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described how his service transformed him by challenging his stereotypes.

But now, [I] love the kids. Once I'm here I can't shut up talking to people. My whole view of the African American community has changed because there's some kids [at the community center] that act better than kids that go to my church back home. And that has been like the biggest thing, you know, changing my mind and my view of it, like all of them.

James also gained knowledge of the history of "White flight," and how it impacted the racial makeup of the neighborhood where he served.

Skill. Multicultural skill manifested itself in interpersonal and relationship skills. Many facets of multicultural skill, such as increased capacities for empathy, patience, attachment, trust, and respect, emerged from the interviews.

One of the most consistent findings from this study was the ability of the participants to empathize with those whom they served.

Every participant described gaining a better understanding of the stories and life experiences of her or his clients. In addition to being more able to empathize with other people, the participants frequently reported they had become much more patient as a result of their service.

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A high frequency of volunteering did not necessarily imply a deep desire for social change. Much of the participants' previous volunteering had a charity paradigm rather than a social justice paradigm (Morton, 1995) and probably shaped the initial experience of participants when placed at their

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and multicultural competence. Research has consistently found that service-learning experiences reduce negative stereotypes and increase tolerance for diversity (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The findings in this study also provide insight into how multicultural competence can develop. Rhoads (1997) pointed out that service-learning, at its core, is a reciprocal and relational phenomenon. This relational phenomenon sparked the development of multicultural competence in the participants of this study. Participants became more aware of their background and identity as they compared themselves to the clients whom they served. Participants also widened their worldviews as they gained content knowledge by listening to the stories and history of their clients while observing how their clients experience and interact with the world.

Most importantly, the considerable length of service required by this program gave participants the time and opportunity to establish and maintain reciprocal relationships with clients who were

different from themselves.

Moreover, the findings from this study reveal the tremendous value of developing relationships across cultural lines. Relationships have the power to prove stereotypes and prejudice wrong and to enable reconciliation. Educators should put students in situations where the students are able to develop positive relationships cross culturally through sustained contact with people of other cultures.

Further research could compare the outcomes of service-learning programs with guided reflection that focuses on personal development versus reflection that emphasizes an analysis of systemic social inequalities. Because the predominant reflection methods

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multicultural learning and development. Therefore educators should provide students with the opportunity to develop long term cross cultural relationships through service programs.

A primary goal of higher education is to create responsible, moral, and productive citizens. Service-learning programs provide the opportunity for students to explore their understanding of citizenship and responsibility to society. There are many definitions of citizenship, however most of these definitions do not address how to be a citizen in a multicultural or pluralistic society (Hurtado, 2007). We propose that a responsible, moral, and productive citizen is committed to fostering social justice through civic engagement. This engagement must be informed by multicultural competence. In this way, social

justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement are interrelated and should not be seen as separate entities. Education for citizenship should not simply encourage civic

