The Relationship between Participation in Service-learning Projects and Youth

Leadership Life Skills Development among Middle Grade Students in Selected Private

Schools

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William A. Kamm

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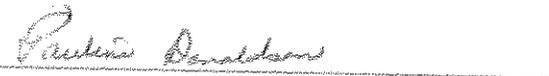
by William A. Kamm

APPROVED:

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pauline Donaldson, Ed.D.

Leonard Parker, Ed.D.

ASSOCIATE DEAN, GRADUATE STUDIES

Scott B. Watson, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Middle grades are a time of transition and development. It is during this time, as students move through grades 6, 7, and 8, that the development of life skills, especially for those who have leadership potential become increasingly important. Within these few years engaged learning and the pedagogical tool of service-learning enhances the meaning and impact of traditional course content and offers potential in helping to develop leadership skills in middle grade students. The purpose of this study was to provide evidence of the effectiveness of a community service-learning project as related to the specific development of leadership skills. The sample consisted of fifty-five eighth grade students divided into one test group and two control groups, based upon the Solomon Three Group Design. The pretest and posttest assessments made use of the four sub scales of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship from the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory developed by Carter (1989). Through a one-way ANOVA , no significant difference among the posttest scores of the three groups was shown at the .05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade students who participated in a community service-learning project from those who did not participate, was accepted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: THE INTRODUCTION

Middle grades are a time of change and exploration. The progression through grades 6-8 is a time when leadership skills begin to emerge as students move past their own self-centeredness to determine their place within the community. The transition itself to the middle grades is often challenging due to an increase in academic load, additional choices in academic curricula, an expectation of increased autonomy, and instruction by subject area teachers (Hart, 2003). Because students change classes and teachers several times a day, maintaining personal relationships is often difficult (LeCroy & Daley, 2001). Middle grade students must also contend with intense and rapid changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive development, social approval, a larger student body, and extracurricular activities. It is within the context of these changes that the opportunity to develop life leadership skills among middle grade students becomes a considered priority. Today's young people are ultimately tomorrow's leaders. They will lead in their workplaces, their communities, and their families (Phelps, 2005). Prioritizing opportunities for such leadership development necessitates an understanding of how adolescents learn as well as how they develop a healthy self-concept. Through meaningful service to others within the context of their academic program, the discovery of their leadership potential can better equip middle grade students to be those leaders of tomorrow.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed in an effort to provide evidence of the effectiveness of a community service-learning project as related to the specific development of leadership

skills in middle grade students in selected private schools in North Carolina. Does

participation in a service-learning project have an impact on the self-reported perception

of leadership potential of middle grade students?

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study states there is no significant statistical

difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade students

who participate in a community service-learning project from those who do not

participate.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis of this study was to include the general description of middle

grade students as well as those characteristics that define service-learning and the

leadership qualities that demonstrate leadership potential. The evaluation of this

hypothesis was conducted through a demographic study of the fifty-five participants.

Their average age was 13 years 8 months. The gender of the participants was 58%

female and 42% female. Grade equivalencies for each of the participants were based

upon the previous year's standardized test scores.

The second hypothesis was to compare self-assessed leadership life skills as

measured by the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory (Carter, 1989) for both

groups that participated in the service-learning project. The inventory should determine

if, in fact, a change in self-reported perception of leadership life skills had occurred. Four

of the sub scales of Carter's 10 scales were used in this study. They were the sub scales

of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship. Reliability for each of the

sub scales was established according to Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of reliability.

The third hypothesis was to determine if a relationship existed between participating in a service-learning project and the development of leadership life skills by comparing all posttest scores for leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship between the two control groups and the test group.

Definition of Terms

Service-learning. A teaching paradigm that connects the experiences of community service to instruction in the classroom (Billig, 2000). It joins two aggregate concepts: action within the community, which is the "service" component, with efforts to learn from that action and connect what is learned to prior knowledge, which is the "learning" component (Stanton, 1999).

Engaged learning. This broad term, used in the context of this paper, includes collaboration around authentic tasks, involving peers and mentors within the school as well as family members and others in the world outside of school.

Middle grade students. This term refers to students who are currently in grades 6-8, although only eighth graders were assessed in this study.

Leadership life skills. Unfortunately, even after years of debate, researchers still do not agree on a universal definition of leadership (Lashway, 1997). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, leadership is defined as the capability to guide others in the realization of a common goal (Dubosz and Beaty, 1999). Characteristics include healthy self-esteem, determination, self-confidence, cooperation, citizenship, organizational

aptitude, focus, tolerance, decisiveness, self-discipline, charisma, time management, self-confidence, social competence, the ability to communicate a "vision" and sensitivity to the needs of others.

Self-efficacy. An individual has reasoned judgments about his or her capacity to learn at specific levels. This term refers to what the individual perceives as his or her personal ability to be, the comparisons he or she makes with others in his or her group, and the importance the individual attaches to what he or she is to learn (Bandura, 1995).

Self-esteem. Refers to a person's subjective appraisal of himself or herself as intrinsically positive or negative to some degree. It is one of the oldest concepts in psychology, first coined by American psychologist and philosopher William James in 1890. Self-esteem is a basic human need that is an automatic and inevitable consequence of the sum of an individual's choices in using their consciousness. Self-esteem is experienced as part of, or background to, all of the individual's thoughts, feelings and actions (Branden, 1969).

Self-concept. Self-concept is the awareness, both mental and conceptual, as well as the persistent consideration that human beings hold with regard to themselves. Components include psychological and social attributes influenced by attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and habits. Self-concept is a generally stable quality characterized by orderliness and harmony. This quality gives consistency to one's personality (Rogers, 1947).

Empathy. Empathy is one's ability to recognize, perceive and experientially feel the emotion of another. The characteristic of empathy is the ability to "put oneself into

another's shoes." It is the capacity to know emotionally what another is experiencing

from within the frame of reference of that other person (Berger, 1987).

The National Middle School Association (NMSA, 1995) suggested in a position

paper entitled, "This We Believe: Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Schools,"

that young people undergo more personal changes during the years between 10 and 15

than at any other period of their lives. However, it is not the extent of change as much as

its variability that appears to create problems for both students and teachers. Dissimilar

rates of physical, emotional, and social growth are common so that youngsters of the

same chronological age look and act markedly different. According to this report, one of

the first calls for change encourages a curriculum that acknowledges these differences

and is challenging, integrative, and exploratory for all students.

Curriculum encompasses much more than the collective courses of study, and,

thus, must reflect the needs and nature of young adolescents. The NMSA position paper

(1995) recommended that the entire curriculum be exploratory, not just certain designated

courses. In addition, among other conditions that developmentally responsive middle

grade schools should exhibit is a re-emphasis on the development of family and

community partnerships. This echoes the widespread call from government, parent and

teacher organizations, foundations, and businesses for increased family and community

participation in the education of youth. (Lounsbury, 1996). According to the National

Middle School Association (Miles & Valentine, 2001) in 2000, there were 8,371 middle

grade schools in the United States with the most common grade configuration of grades

6-8. Almost 7 million children in public schools were in middle grades in 2000 (Alt &

Choy, 2000). Subsequently, the need for developmentally responsive middle grade

schools requires a heightened priority within educational circles.

Characteristics of Middle Grade Students

Because they are experiencing an intense period of physical, emotional,

psychological, and sexual development, students in the middle grades often demonstrate

unpredictable behaviors that can be confounding to adults. While this development is

normal, the behaviors associated with young adolescence often cause adults to react

negatively. The symptoms of this developmental period can be so compelling according

to Mizell (1995) that adults may find it hard to see past the external behaviors to the

internal feelings, needs, and potential of the young person in formation. While this stage

of growth can be difficult, it is also a time for opportunity. Young adolescents want to

understand who they are as well as how to relate to the world around them. They are

curious and seek those opportunities that they can test to prove themselves in real life

situations. They are ready to discover the achievement and leadership potential that lies

within their grasp.

Because of the high variability of development within this age range, it is

important to focus on a positive attitude through the testing and discovery of new skills

rather than on previous achievements. According to the 1992 data of the National

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), students who came from high performing

schools had positive attitudes toward achievement that were consistent from the fourth to

the eighth to the 12th grades. However, students in schools that scored in the bottom

one-third on the NAEP tests showed a dramatic decline in their attitudes toward

achievement between the fourth and eighth grades. Whereas approximately 27% of these

students had "very positive" attitudes toward achievement while they were in the fourth

grade, only about 7% retained these attitudes by the grade (Mizell, 1995).

Not only is there a need for the development of positive attitudes toward

achievement in the middle grades, but there is also the need for students to test and

discover new skills. Middle grade youth go through immense emotional changes. In his

study, Schine (1981) recommends that schools develop educational programs that enable

students to discover and then test new skills. His report also details the need for students

to (a) develop a sense of competence and self-confidence, (b) be exposed to a variety of

adult role models who demonstrate a variety of different backgrounds and occupations,

(c) speak and be heard, so they can make a difference, (d) test adolescents' developing

morality and value systems in authentic situations, (e) have tangible outcomes that are

short term in nature or divided into clearly defined stages, and, finally, (f) share in

decision-making within age-appropriate parameters. Such program development

provides the framework for the development of a healthy concept of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy, according to Albert Bandura (1995), refers to an individual's

reasoned judgments about his or her capacity to learn at specific levels. It is based on

what the individual perceives as his or her personal ability to be, the comparisons he or

she makes with others in his or her group, and the importance the individual attaches to

what he or she is to learn.

As adolescents progress through the grades, their sense of self-efficacy tends to

decline (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Various school practices seem to contribute to this

fact, including an emphasis on ability goals rather than on task goals in middle grades.

According to Urban and Klein (1998), research shows that a task-goal orientation is

correlated with more positive motivation and performance outcomes, including greater

self-confidence, persistence, and cognitive processing. Students who are task goal-

oriented see the purpose of learning as something they are doing for themselves, to

increase their own understanding and sense of mastery. Such learning can promote

positive student self-efficacy when activities and assessments encourage problem solving,

provide opportunities to improve performance through practice and feedback, and

involve collaborative rather than competitive work.

     Collaborative work is a keystone in the pedagogical tool of service-learning. This

tool links community service experiences to classroom instruction (Billig, 2000) and

joins two aggregate concepts: action within the community, which is the "service"

component, with efforts to cooperatively learn from that action and to connect what is

learned to prior knowledge, the "learning" component (Stanton, 1999). Effective

learning environments find ways to intentionally connect all of the systems that affect

young people's lives – home, school, and community (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).

When these systems encourage cooperative problem solving as well as provide those

opportunities for performance improvement through practice and feedback in a context of

safety, they advance adolescents' concept of self-efficacy.

     Cooperative problem solving and a sense of belonging are also key components in

service-learning. Reed and Rossi (2000) conducted research with 321 rural, urban, and

suburban sixth, seventh, and eighth graders using surveys in an attempt to identify their

developmental needs. These researchers organized their results into three categories. The first category was the "search for personal identity." The second category was "life in school," with high academic achievement being the most common aspiration. The final category was related to "life and health." Reed et al. (2000) suggested in their findings that service-learning was one way to integrate some of these early adolescent needs into the curriculum.

Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) conducted research with 1,480 students. They were evaluated at the beginning of seventh grade and at the end of eighth grade. Roeser, et al. (2000) concluded that whether adolescents engage or do not engage in classroom learning depended in some measure on whether they felt safe and cared for by others in the setting, felt they could meet the academic challenges, and saw value and purpose in the activities. Their research indicated that including the voices of students in the learning process and giving them more choices and control over their learning engaged the students and allowed them to better relate to meaningful life experiences and questions that are of concern to middle grade students.

<div align="center">The Learning Process for Adolescents</div>

But what is the process of learning? What will cause adolescents to invest their best efforts into learning to become engaged in the learning process? According to the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1929), the adolescent constructs learning through a combination of biological development and experience. The adolescent's ability to process information is dependent on his or her level of biological maturity. It qualitatively changes as the adolescent moves through distinct developmental stages. In

early childhood, the adolescent responds to the world in concrete, literal terms; during the

middle grade years, the adolescent becomes capable of understanding and manipulating

information that is more abstract (Brainerd, 1978).

      As boys and girls enter adolescence, their cognitive abilities lie between Piaget's

third stage of cognitive development – the period of concrete operational – and the fourth

stage – formal operational. Adolescents become less egocentric. They understand that

not everyone sees the world the same way they do. Adolescents also become capable of

deductive reasoning, performing simpler operations with physical objects, and applying

strategies to arrive at logical conclusions. Even through adolescents at the latter part of

this stage display some cognitive maturity, they still are not able to think abstractly.

During this stage, things are understood as literal. Once adolescents enter the last stage –

formal operational – they develop the ability to test hypotheses in a mature and scientific

manner. They can communicate their position on complex ethical issues and are capable

of abstract thinking. They can discuss abstract terms such as freedom or leadership

without difficulty (Lewis, 2006). Within each stage, and without conscious thought,

developing adolescents create increasingly sophisticated conceptual schemas or "mental

maps" in order to understand and respond to sensory information. When new

information does not fit easily into existing structures, the mental landscape is altered as

they create a new structure or make existing structures more complex. Learning is

facilitated by situations that require adolescents to both assimilate and accommodate new

information (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).

Psychoanalytic theorists such as Erik Erikson (1959), base the development of adolescent learning and identity on the epigenetic principle that one develops through a predetermined unfolding of one's personality through progressive stages. One's progress through each stage is, in part, determined by one's success, or lack of success, throughout the previous stages. According to Erikson's theory, individuals advance through eight stages of development beginning at birth and ending at death. If the particular stage or task is handled appropriately, the outcome will be positive. Each stage has a certain optimal timeframe. Subsequently, it is no use trying to rush children into adulthood, as is sometimes the case when people are obsessed with success. Neither is it possible to retard the pace in an effort to try to protect children from the demands of life. Each stage has its own time. The two stages that significantly affect early and late adolescent development are the industry versus inferiority stage (approximate ages 6-11) and the ego-identity versus role-confusion stage (approximate ages 12-18). The industry versus inferiority stage occurs during the middle grade years when adolescents must master the academic skills of writing, math, and reading. At this stage, the adolescent is faced with the conflict that arises from one's perception of a sense of industry versus one's perception of an inability to succeed academically, or inferiority. If the adolescent masters the skills, one develops a sense of industry and has a positive view of the achievement. However, if the adolescent does not meet the expectations of mastering these skills and is criticized for the lack of success, then a feeling of inferiority may develop. During the ego-identity versus role-confusion stage, an adolescent begins to consider a societal future and contemplates decisions concerning a career. In this stage,

one faces the conflict that exists between a confidence in one's identity versus confusion

about one's role, or place, in societal life. If the adolescent develops a satisfactory plan

of action for the future, then the outcome is positive and identity is established. An

adolescent who does not develop this sense of identity may develop "role confusion" and

aimlessly move through life without any formulated plan of action or sense of security

about the future (Boeree, 2006; Lewis, 2006).

Middle grade students learn leadership skills through these various stages of

development. An intentional plan of action should include the development of leadership

life skills (Linden & Fertman, 1998) throughout the stages of adolescence. The first stage

is becoming aware of themselves — their strengths, weaknesses, and skill level (Linden

et al., 1998). Initially, most adolescents do not realize that they possess certain leadership

skills nor do they feel they have the potential to become leaders. At this point, it is

important to provide the type of engaged educational framework in which adolescents

develop a level of confidence to advance to the next stage. Generally, the next stage is

the interaction or challenge stage (McCauley, Moxley & Vesor, 1998). Adolescents

progress during this stage to the level where they try out their leadership skills, reflect,

and try again. The greater the personal challenge, the more adolescents progress to

become good leaders. They learn to handle stress and disappointing failures. In Avolio's

research (1998), he explored the leadership qualities of adolescents who did not have a

formal position of authority, but who challenged themselves by taking on a broad range

of responsibilities for which they had to influence others. Those who rose to this level

developed a more mature model of leadership mentally, and this helped them develop and

influence others as adults. Linden and Fertman (1998) call the final stage of leadership

development the mastery level. McCauley, et al. (1998) call it the support stage. In this

stage adolescents realize their potential. They have a healthy support group and are able

to channel their energies toward actually directing their own lives. In this stage, they

have determined their own leadership potential (Kudo, 2003).

　　　　Knowing the progression of leadership potential, it becomes increasingly

important that leadership skills be integrated with the development of a middle grade

student's personality, behavior, intuitive ability, and interpersonal skills (Kudo, 2003).

Leadership development requires expanding one's capacity in order to be effective in

leadership roles and processes. A person's development process includes increasing

one's capacity of self-awareness, systemic thinking, and creativity (McCauley, Moxley &

Velsor, 1998). These researchers' model of leadership development focuses on three

main elements: assessment, challenge, and support (see Table 1). These three elements

provide the motivation for one to focus one's attention and effort toward learning and

changing while providing the raw material and resources for leadership development. In

actuality, leadership development is a continual self-development experience that goes on

throughout one's life (McCauley, et al., 1998). This model begins with assessment, often

self-assessment. Whether through written or observational testing, these assessments are

used to gather empirical information of a person's traits, needs, strengths and

weaknesses, and to provide an understanding of one's approach to life. Developmental

plans can then be formulated to build the necessary competencies for successful

leadership.

Table 1

Elements of a Developmental Experience

Element	Role in motivation	Role as a resource
Assessment	Desire to close the gap between current self and ideal self	Clarity about needed changes; clues about how the gap can be closed
Challenge	Need to master the challenge	Opportunity for experimentation and practice; exposure to different perspectives
Support	Confidence in ability to learn and grow; positive value placed on change	Confirmation and clarification of lessons learned

[1]From McCauley, C.D., Moxley, R.S., & Van Velsor, E. (1998). *The Center for Creative Leadership: Handbook of Leadership Development*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Using this model of leadership development, after the self-assessment is given,

the potential leader is exposed to an experiential challenge, one that pushes his limits

(McCall, 1998), with the emphasis on mastering the experience to build confidence and

knowledge. This model of leadership development must have a support system that

creates a safe and supportive environment for a person to try out new skills and fail

without the fear of punishment.

While the McCauley, Moxley and Velsor (1998) model of leadership is designed

for adults, Linden and Ferman (1998) advocate this type of model for adolescents as well.

This model creates an individual who thinks for himself, communicates his feelings and thoughts to others and helps others to understand and act on their own beliefs. This model encourages influencing others in socially and ethically responsible ways. As advocated by Linden and Ferman (1998), the three stages of development of adolescents, which would coincide with McCauley, Moxley and Velso's research (1998), include awareness (assessment), interaction (challenge) and mastery (support).

In the development of adolescents, Erikson (1980) found that middle grade students between the ages of 10 and 12 years define themselves by what they can accomplish and by the skills in which they have competency. He suggests that adolescence is a period of change and movement from one state of mind to another. This period of change includes middle grade students as well as those adolescents through the age of 19. Young people in this age group exhibit not only change in their physical development but also in their maturity and behavior levels. They begin to understand the world around them and their own actions. Often researchers break this approximate 10-year period into two sections - young adolescents between the ages of 10-15, and older adolescents ages 15-19 (Kudo, 2003).

During the young adolescent stage of life, which encompasses the middle grade years, a young person is on a quest for independence and autonomy (Linden & Fertman, 1998). Adolescents begin to differentiate themselves from their parents and teachers, and instead start to compare themselves with their peers. Adolescents during this stage, Juhasz (1982) observed, began to seek identities separate from their parents while trying to make a difference in a broader social perspective. Additionally, young adolescents

move to obtain greater control over their lives and freedom from authority, while at the same time holding on to the benefits and security of being a child (Thornburg, 1983). This is a time for young adolescents to find their identity and how that identity fits into the world. These are the defining issues for 10 to 14 year olds (Linden & Fertman, 1998). There is also the establishment of a social conscience as young adolescents learn and try out socially acceptable behaviors. They begin to more closely define their role in the world as well as establish their individuality (Kudo, 2003). By the mid-teens, adolescents have a sense of who they have been and who they hope to become. Their definition of themselves becomes future oriented (Lindern & Fertman, 1998).

<div align="center">Role of Parents and Community Leaders</div>

The role of parents in the development of adolescents is a critical part of creating an independent and emotionally well-balanced child, one that demonstrates high self-esteem and an identity of self. A child that has high self-esteem and an independent self-identity, especially by age 10, is one who will be ready to be developed into a successful leader (Kudo, 2003). Developing a sense of independence and having a healthy parental upbringing provides the young adolescent with a belief of being in control of one's own life. According to Kudo (2003), adolescents who operate with this belief are more apt to become successful leaders and adults.

In a recent study done by Elias (2006), parents and community leaders indicated that there is a consensus of what adolescents should know and be able to do. These indicators suggested that adolescents should be fully literate and able to make beneficial use of written and spoken language in various forms and media. Adolescents should

understand science and mathematics at levels that will prepare them for the future

economy while strengthening their ability to think carefully, critically, and creatively —

in effect, becoming good problem solvers.

        In addition, the Elias study (2006) suggested that parents and community leaders

want adolescents to value those aspects of education that touch the social-emotional side

of learning. Although non-academic, values recognized as necessary include (a) taking

responsibility for their personal health and well-being; (b) developing effective

collaborative social relationships; (c) expressing care, concern, and respect for others; (d)

understanding how society works with an eye to preparing to take on these roles as

necessary for future progress; and (e) the development of good character in connection

with making sound moral decisions. These social-emotional aspects of learning, when

added to academic learning, provide the balance that encourages all adolescents to learn,

work, and contribute to their fullest potential. Learning must be interactive and engaging

for this to happen. According to Pittman, O'Brien, and Kimball (1992), such youth

development is ongoing. It is a growth process where adolescents are engaged in

attempting to meet the basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, and be

valued. In addition, adolescents desire to be useful, to be spiritually grounded, and to

build skills and competencies that allow them to meaningfully contribute in their daily

lives. Richard W. Riley, the former U.S. Secretary of Education, suggested that there is a

growing need to make the reconnection of families with their schools and schools with

their communities. A sense of community must be reinvented in order for schools to

achieve their full collective potential and adolescents their full individual potential. This

reconnection brings together all of the publics of a community — adults and children —

in an effort to improve student learning, responsibility, and citizenship (Kinsley &

McPherson, 1995).

Perceptions of middle grade students are strongly influenced by parental

involvement and participation. Regrettably, however, involvement by parents decreases

in the middle grades as compared to elementary school (K-5) (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

In their research, Brough and Irvin (2001) suggest some barriers to parental involvement

in middle grade settings. Those barriers include the complexity of material compared to

elementary school, the difficulty some parents have in relating to teachers, and the

perception that there is a less active role for parents to play in middle grade settings than

in elementary schools. Other barriers include a lack of effort to involve parents by

middle grade staff, the erroneous perception of parents that it is natural and desirable for

children to want to distance themselves, and that the student should be able to handle

their own schoolwork.

Nevertheless, adults — both teachers and parents — continue to play a significant

role in cultivating leadership in adolescents despite these recognized barriers. They not

only provide the support system for this learning process, but are also capable of building

behavioral and emotional competencies to serve as a foundation for growth. Williams

(2004) suggests that leadership training begins at home. Though every youngster needs

many leadership trainers, including teachers, mentors, coaches, Sunday School teachers,

and youth group advisers, the earliest and most influential leadership training still rests

with the parents.

Parents and teachers enrich and cultivate the adolescent's self-esteem. They provide challenges and build the confidence of the independent self, acting as a safety net while providing love, guidance, and reflection (Kudo, 2003). Henderson and Berla (1994) found that involvement by the various community publics, including parents and other significant adults, has a profound impact on student success. Regardless of race, socioeconomic, or other factors, students who have such adults actively involved in their education are more successful than those whose significant adults are not involved.

In November of 2000, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation produced the *Roper Report* that outlined some of America's parents' and community leaders' beliefs about schools. Most parents and community leaders (89%) agreed that improving the public education system should be a very high priority. Eighty-three percent strongly agreed that a good education was much more than just reading, writing, and learning to do math. More than two-thirds of American parents and community leaders surveyed reported that schools have a definite responsibility to teach students skills that will help them succeed in the workplace and to teach students how to use what they learn in the classroom for real world problems. The public envisions education, according to this report, as developing students' social skills and sense of civic engagement. Fifty-six percent reported that they felt the schools have an obligation to develop students' leadership skills (Roper, 2000).

Service-learning advocates suggest that an engaged learning methodology such as service-learning might be one solution in the development of such skills. Claus and Ogden (Claus, 1999) posit that service-learning can make learning more relevant; close the gaps between schools and their communities; help youth address significant, real-

world issues; empower and motivate adolescents to think critically; and contribute to a clearer sense of identity, efficacy, self-worth, and belonging.

<div align="center">Understanding Engaged Learning in Relationship to Service-Learning</div>

Adolescents are required to learn about many subjects, but often without a sense of connection between those subjects and their lives. Adolescents are not likely to retain what they learn and use it productively with this kind of disconnect. When their learning, however, is presented in terms of understandable segmented goals, adolescents become more engaged and focused. Learning experiences that connect to their lives outside of school in the present as well as the future thus have greater value (Elias, 2006). Such learning is often called engaged learning.

What does engaged learning look like? According to Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski , and Rasmussen (1994), engaged learners are successfully responsible for their own learning. These students are able to define their own learning goals and evaluate their own achievement. Engaged learning includes collaboration around authentic connected tasks that take place with mentors and peers within school as well as with family members and others in the world outside of school. The classroom becomes a knowledge-building learning community and the role of the teacher shifts from the traditional role of information giver to that of guide, facilitator, and fellow learner. Students in engaged learning are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences and their discoveries, which is essential for the student in the role of a cognitive apprentice.

Middle grade students want and need work that awakens their desire for deeper understanding and stimulates their curiosity (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995). When

students engage in learning, they are more likely to care deeply, work harder, and achieve

their goals. Drawing on the assets of a community – its history, culture, resources, and

challenges – can help schools build citizens while infusing academic course work with

meaning and relevance. Community-based learning strategies increase the intensity of

learning and the likelihood that young people will transfer their knowledge and skills to

new situations. By fostering student interest in their own communities, these strategies

sow the seeds for lifelong learning, leadership life skills and a commitment to service that

lasts a lifetime. (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).

The connectivity of engaged learning has the potential to impact the curriculum.

According to the National Middle School Association (1995), effective middle grades'

curricula should be integrative, exploratory, and challenging. Belair and Freeman (2000)

suggest that early adolescents learn best and succeed more when they are required to put

knowledge into practice rather than just receive knowledge. This means viewing

classroom learning and the curriculum from a broader perspective.

Curriculum that can arouse intense curiosity features two defining characteristics:

the information about a topic is fragmentary or contradictory and the topic connects to

students' personal lives. The actual lack of organization of a body of information is what

compels one to understand it more fully. Subsequently, textbooks, which are highly

organized, rarely arouse the interest of middle grade students. Topics that relate to

students' lives cannot have a superficial connection. These topics must involve an issue

or idea that is able to be segmented and thus manageable as well as unresolved. Students

are responsive to work that permits them to express their originality and autonomy,

enabling them to discover who they are and who they want to be. This, in turn, develops a positive self-concept that is important in the development of leadership qualities. Classroom learning and curriculum should connect to students' personal concerns and ideas. Learning that connects with the community and has an element of meaningful service is engaging. Students' drive toward creativity and self-expression is ultimately a desire to produce work that others can value (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995).

This drive, or momentum, requires meaningful relationships between academic subjects. Anfara and Waks (2001) affirm that middle grade students need experiences that allow them to apply knowledge. They suggest that information presented in a way that integrates or stresses the relationships between subjects enables middle grade students to see the applicability of knowledge to their own lives. Simply presenting knowledge for its own sake, as a short-term goal, is not as effective with middle grade students, as this approach offers little referential context. Isolated material has little motivational power and connectivity, thus, difficult curricular content must be watered down to be comprehensible. This watering down further robs it of its usefulness.

However, students who are engaged in their work are attracted to it, persist in it in spite of obstacles and challenges, and take visible delight in accomplishing their work (Strong, Silver & Robinson, 1995). This requires student movement outside the traditional "four [walls] and a door" learning that takes place in many middle grade classrooms.

Students who are engaged in their work are energized by measurable goals including the need for mastery, the need for involvement with others, and the need for

understanding. Engaging work permits students to express their creativity, to stimulate their curiosity, and to foster positive relationships with others (Strong, Silver & Robinson, 1995). By pairing the real world relevance of engaged learning with intellectual rigor, learning has the power to motivate students academically, while promoting genuine citizenship and the ability to live well (Melaville, Berg & Blank, 2006).

Engaged learning is foundational for the development of leadership skills. It is also a component that is integral to effective service-learning. Engagement is a psychological process, specifically the attention, interest, effort, and investment students expend in the work of learning. Examples of engagement include time on task and intensity of concentration. Engaged learners show enthusiasm, curiosity, and optimism about their potential performance. In addition, they understand the importance of what they are learning. Engaged students are more likely to achieve higher grades and test scores as well as be less disruptive or absent (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006). Engaged learners in the middle grades are demonstrating leadership potential.

Relationships also play an important role in demonstrating leadership potential and, to varying degrees, are essential in the development of leadership life skills. While there are many types of leadership styles and methods, three of the most popular current styles are transactional, principled, and transformational (Kudo, 2003). Each style presents a different perspective as it relates to the role of relationships and leadership.

Transactional leadership is a pragmatic and results-oriented leadership style. This type of leader identifies and addresses the self-interests of those being influenced by

them. Transactional leaders offer incentives or inducements to move in the direction

desired by the leader, which often is the direction that would also satisfy the self-interests

of the followers (Avolio, 1999). An exchange of rewards is used to negotiate with the

followers, who, in turn, produce the desired behavior or compliance. Relationships are

regarded minimally with this style of leadership (Kudo, 2003).

It is important to understand the value of relationships in each style and to match

the right style to a particular situation. For example, relationships also play a secondary

role in the principled leadership style. A principled leader integrates ethical business

values, including fairness, honesty, kindness, mutual respect, and doing what is right, into

the practice of leading (London, 1999). Principled leaders use business diplomacy to

negotiate deals, tackle tough realities, make uncomfortable decisions, and resolve conflict

while maintaining high moral and ethical standards (Kudo, 2003)

Of the three most popular current leadership styles, transformational leadership

puts the most emphasis on relationships. Unlike transactional leadership where one

person negotiates with another to obtain a desired behavior or compliance for a reward,

transformational leadership causes a developmental shift in the follower's beliefs, values,

needs, and capabilities (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders make use of

relationships by developing followers into leaders. They become moral agents who focus

on developing themselves and their followers to a higher level of mission and purpose

(Kudo, 2003).

Understanding the value of relationships is important. Most people work hardest

on those relationships that have the potential of reciprocity. In a reciprocal relationship,

what each has to offer has value to each recipient. In general, nonreciprocal relationships

prove transient and fail to generate much interest or energy. An example of this type of

unbalanced relationship is homework. Students do not believe that the teacher needs

their knowledge, and the teacher isn't pursuing a reciprocal relationship either. When a

student's work, however, is complementary of another's and both need one another's

knowledge, then value is added and motivation is increased (Strong, Silver, & Robinson,

1995).

> Berman (1998) wrote,
>
> Without a sense of community and family, many young people lose the
>
> connectedness that fosters these sensitivities, motivations and skills. The
>
> result for these youth is incivility and apathy as well as a lack of
>
> confidence that they can make a difference to others and to the world as a
>
> whole. (p. 27)

Participation in a community project that involves service-learning relies on many

varied relationships as well as many styles of working, acting, and thinking. Students are

not limited in service-learning projects to expressing their creativity through pen and

pencil tasks. Whether it is brainstorming new ideas, designing advertising materials,

developing a school or community presentation, generating multiple approaches to

overcome an unexpected challenge, or reflecting on the desired outcome, students

practice open-mindedness and creative risk-taking (Bohnenberger & Terry, 2002).

Service-learning and Leadership Potential

One of the pedagogical tools that places an emphasis on the value of relationships as well as an engaged learning environment is service-learning. Service-learning can be a means of providing an innovative and creative opportunity to make valid connections between academic learning and the values emphasized in character education, with applications for real-world living. In so doing, service-learning helps students meet challenging academic standards while integrating core ethical values into their lives (RMC Research Corporation, 2002).

Arrington and Moore (2001) suggest service-learning as a middle grades curricular approach because it combines the power of serving others with meaningful and connected learning tied to the school curriculum. According to these researchers, working on authentic community issues helps students stay connected with their communities while making a difference in them. This strategy may also serve to combat the sense of isolation and alienation that some adolescents experience. Service-learning can create meaningful connections for students between ideas, content, and information through the overall goals of promoting student participation in the community, increasing students' problem solving abilities and promoting a sense of civic responsibility and caring.

Benjamin Barber suggested that service to the community and to the nation is not simply the gift of altruists, but rather is a duty of all men and women whose very freedom is dependent on the assumption of political and social responsibilities (Allen, 1997). Billig (2000) posits service-learning as a teaching strategy that connects community

service experiences to classroom instruction. It joins two aggregate concepts: action within the community, which is the "service" component, with efforts to learn from that action and connect what is learned to existing or prior knowledge, which is the "learning" component (Stanton, 1999).

Service-learning takes place when both learning and service are emphasized. To be effective, service is linked and integrated into the academic curriculum. Structured reflection that focuses upon the interrelatedness of the service, the social relevance, and the academic connections is also a necessary element for assessing the effectiveness of service-learning. According to Clark and Clark (2000), assessment accomplishes its major purpose only when middle grade students actually know what they are supposed to be learning. Subsequently, receiving regular feedback on their accomplishments, and having the opportunity to reflect on their work, makes assessment meaningful.

In a longitudinal study of 1,046 adolescents in 23 middle grade schools, Roeser and Eccles (1998) examined the relations between adolescents' perception of their middle grades' learning environment during eighth grade and changes in their academic motivation, achievement, and psychological adjustment from seventh to eighth grades. Hierarchical regression analyses showed that adolescents' school perceptions were significant predictors of their academic and psychological adjustment at the end of eighth grade after accounting for their demographic characteristics, prior academic ability, and prior adjustment assessed at the beginning of seventh grade. An emphasis on individual effort and improvement in structured school task goals were associated with increases in academic values, academic achievement, and feelings of academic competence.

Developing Leadership Potential in Middle Grade Students

The involvement of middle grade students in the process of engaged learning through service-learning has the potential of exposing these students to the value of leadership life skills. This type of intentional educational environment provides the safe, yet challenging, forum in which students can experiment with their own leadership potential, developing those skills that enhance collaborative group achievement and involvement, as well as developing personal self confidence, decision-making, cooperation, and citizenship. Adults require these characteristics for successful living; hence, they are called leadership life skills. The intentional development of these leadership life skills allows adolescents opportunities to develop the ability to succeed in their environment by having a better understanding of their values, by making responsible decisions, and by being better able to communicate with others (Boyd, Hering, & Briers, 1992).

Encouraging positive care for others is foundational for the development of leadership potential. Middle grade students' involvement in service-learning can be effective, in part, because it facilitates an increased awareness of the value of citizenship as well as an increased sense of personal efficacy (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). As middle grade students begin to discover their own potential leadership life skills, their understanding of their own role in society broadens.

Learning such leadership life skills through service-learning was the thrust of this study. However, several limitations to this study restrict its adaptability to a more general interpretation. They include (a) the length of the short-term study, (b) the lack of student

buy-in, (c) the small sampling number, (d) the self-reporting aspect of the measurement instrument, (e) the instrument's previous use as limited to high school students, and (f) the potential for the instrument's validity and reliability to vary as it is administered to middle grade students.

The overall goal in developing personal and leadership life skills does not waiver, however. Helping adolescents to experience and reflect on both their personal qualities, as well as their learned skills, lays the foundation for the development of competent and caring leaders (Fretman and Van Linden, 1999). Dubosz and Bearty (1999) argue that leadership is the capability to guide others in the collaborative achievement of a common goal. Properly conducted service-learning experiences provide those guidance opportunities for adolescents as they learn leadership life skills and integrate them, thus solidifying their learning while providing a climate in which others can follow their example and engage in similar service. By its very nature, the development of leadership potential through service-learning ripples outward as the participants engage their peers and others in service.

Leadership skills that are instilled during early adolescence evolve throughout these formative years and into adulthood, making it important to provide systematic and proactive opportunities for these skills to be modeled and then practiced by middle grade students. Positive indicators of leadership potential and development that are especially appealing to middle grade students include the sense of being needed; belonging to a group; self growth and understanding; the feeling of accomplishment upon achievement

of a goal, as well as gaining the respect of others (Dorrance, 1996; Simon & Martens,

1979; Shields & Bredemeir, 1995).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Concerns about middle grade education have existed as long as there has been the designation of middle grade schools. In the 1920s, the junior high school, the forerunner of the middle grade concept, was gaining acceptance. Thomas Briggs (1920), one of the founders of the junior high concept, suggested that the junior high school was a modified democracy where nurture and nature could cooperate to produce the best results possible for each adolescent as well as for society in general. In the 1940s and 1950s, in an effort to renew interest in the junior high school, Gruhn and Douglass (1947) proposed several major functions of an effective junior high program including, among others, integration, exploration, and socialization.

Although the first middle grade school was actually created in Bay City, MI, in 1950 according to Manning (2000), it was in the 1960s under the leadership of Mr. William Alexander, that middle grade schools of grades 5-8 or grades 6-8 were proposed as an alternative to the 7-9 junior highs. Junior highs had gradually become dominated by senior high schools. The intent behind the creation of middle grade schools was to more effectively meet the developmental needs of young adolescents separate from elementary and high schools. Attracting mounting interest, the middle grade idea became a reform movement focus (Lounsbury, 1996). In the early years of the middle grade movement, most middle grade schools, unlike junior high schools, did not participate in extracurricular sports as practiced by high schools, nor did they isolate subject matter but rather practiced smaller learning teams. Advisory classes, which helped create a bond

between each student and at least one teacher, were also an important component of the middle grade concept as was interdisciplinary teaching and learning (Manning, 2000).

In 1989, the Council on Adolescent Development of the Carnegie Corporation of New York released *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. This much-heralded report put middle grades education directly in front of the public. With this increased awareness, the recommendations to improve the education of students in the middle grades called for the creation of small communities for learning and the re-engaging of families in the education of their adolescents through the reconnection of schools with their surroundings. The recommendations also included (a) the teaching of a core academic program, (b) the assurance of success for all students, (c) the empowerment of teachers and administrators to make decisions about middle grade experiences, (d) the staffing with teachers who were experts at teaching this age group, and (e) the improvement of academic performance by encouraging the health and fitness of students.

Evaluating methods of reconnecting schools with their surroundings has led to a re-emphasis on service integrated with learning. Service-learning is not a new idea. The modern public's cries concerning students' lack of community involvement are not new. Americans have always worried about the next generation. Even the American Puritans voiced more worry about their less devout "unsatisfactory children" than about crop failures and bitter winters. In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that in traditional European societies one's status and role was derived from one's relationships to others; whereas, in the United States, Americans were more focused on individualism. Abraham

Lincoln commented that democracy is always one generation removed from extinction. Americans have a tendency to see the next generation as less active, less involved, and less informed than they (White, 2001).

In contrast, John Dewey (1938) wrote that actions directed outward, aimed at the welfare of others, stimulate both social and academic development. William James, a psychologist addressing Stanford University in 1906, proposed that national service was a way for a democratic nation to become, and stay, cohesive, especially under threat of war (Sherraden, 1981). He thought that American youth should be required to serve the nation in order to "toughen" their spirit and help them recognize the poverty that existed within the country (Gorham, 1992). William Kirkpatrick in the 1930's *Project Method* argued that learning should take place outside the four walls of the classroom and involve efforts to meet real community needs.

During the 1980s "me decade" community service did not seem to be emphasized as much in the schools as in the past. However, it was during that decade that a grassroots level movement was launched addressing national efforts, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League and Campus Compact, which helped mobilize service-learning programs in higher education. In addition, during this time, Youth Service America was founded to give young people an opportunity to serve. Educators such as John Goodlad echoed this call. He brought service back to the attention of Americans after the 1983 "back to basics" movement sparked by the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983). In *A Place Called School* (Goodlad, 1984), Goodlad included community service among his educational recommendations. The Carnegie

foundation issued two reports (Carnegie, 1989; Harrison, 1987) that called for service

opportunities, particularly in the middle grades. During the 1990s, the nation saw the

National and Community Service Act passed by Congress authorizing grants to schools

in support of service-learning.   This act created the Commission on National and

Community Service. In their research, Conrad and Hedin (Conrad, 1991) marked this as

the most significant community service legislation in decades. They pointed out that the

funding of this measure passed the rigors of Congressional oversight during a time of

severe federal budget austerity. This legislation provided funding for community service

programs in both schools and colleges. With this national legislation passed, a noticeable

resurgence of community service tied to the existing school curricula grew.

Through the ensuing years, effective community service-learning projects have

offered students opportunities to practice skills and reflect on their experiences in an

effort to learn more about themselves (Boyd, 2001). President Clinton introduced his

national service initiative, entitled The National and Community Service Trust Act, on

March 1, 1993. He felt that national service would demonstrate America at its best,

offering opportunities, building community, and rewarding responsibility. Clinton

declared that national service was the American way to change America (Kunin, 1997).

Throughout recent history, service-learning has been a pedagogical tool that has

been used to enhance the meaning and impact of traditional course and project content.

Connecting service directly with projects has helped to develop a more well informed,

critically thinking, and civically engaged citizenry, according to Sax and Astin (1997).

Service-learning provides an educational experience that is connected to the adolescent's

"real world." It creates a learning environment in which youth shift from being passive

recipients to being active members of a collaborative team who decide on and carry out

the programs (Israel & Ilvento, 1995).

In service-learning, learning is situated in places where young people spend time

in the relationships that already exist with those around them: their community

(Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).   Service-learning, then, is an educational reform that

attempts to bring the school and community back together, to build or rebuild an ethic of

citizenship in young people and to bring more integrated and active forms of learning to

schools (Kraft, 1996). As a reform movement, it seeks to establish authentic

relationships that promote cooperatively active engaged learning. It is within this context

that service-learning affords a strong connection between learning and student

engagement. Learning is most likely to be facilitated by activities that have meaning,

emotional content, and offer opportunities for students to think, talk about, and actively

practice what they are learning (Wolfe, 2001). Service-learning is not simply the activity

of performing some task with benefit to the community, rather it is a model of teaching

(Brude, Weil, & Showers, 1992). One such model, developed by David Kolb, is called

the Experiential Learning Cycle (see Figure 1).
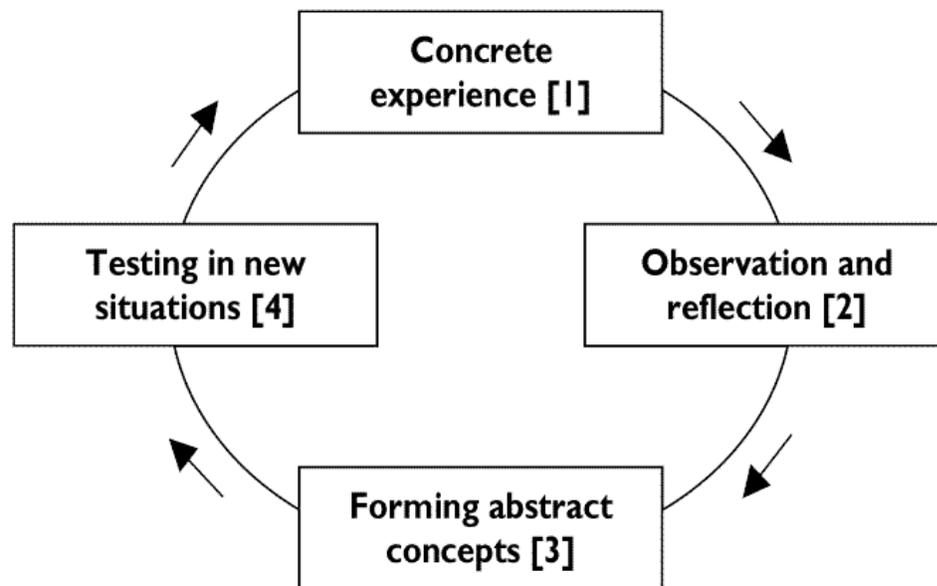
Figure 1. Experiential learning cycle.[2]

[2]From Kolb, D.A., & Fry, R. (1975). Toward an applied theory of experiential

learning. In C. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of Group Process*. London: John Wiley.

Kolb and Fry (1975) suggest that the learning cycle can begin at any of the points,

and it should really be considered a continuous spiral. Often, the learning process begins

with one carrying out a particular action (a) and then seeing the effect of that action. The

second step (b) is to understand the effects from the concrete experience, so if the same

action takes place in similar or the same circumstances it is reasonable to anticipate the

outcome. The third step (c) develops an understanding of the general principle under

which the particular instance falls. The last step (d), according to Kolb et al., is the

application through action toward a new circumstance within the range of the experiential

generalization. This cycle can also be viewed as a spiral where the action takes place

within a different set of circumstances in which the learner is now able to anticipate the

possible effects of the action based upon the previous learning cycle.

More recently, a growing body of evidence according to Billig, Root, and Jesse

(2004) suggests that service-learning can help students develop knowledge of community

needs and gain a greater understanding of their feelings of efficacy as well as a greater

sense of civic responsibility. They found that students who commit to an ethic of service

develop a more sophisticated understanding of morality and politics and increase in their

desire to become active contributors to society (Billing, 2000; Westheimer & Kahne,

2000; Youniss & Yates, 1997; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Service-learning can

also positively influence students' academic achievement, attitudes toward school, and

engagement in school learning (Ammon, Furco, Chi, & Middaugh, 2001; Billig & Klute,

2003; Melchior, 1999; Meyer, Billig, & Hofschire, 2004). Common outcomes for

service-learning methodology, according to Jeff Claus and Curtis Ogden (Clause, 1999)

make learning more relevant; close the gaps between schools and their communities; and

help youth address significant, real-world issues, empowering and motivating young

people to think critically in order to contribute to a clearer sense of belonging, identity,

efficacy, and self-worth.

Supporters of service-learning believe students involved in community service-

learning experiences are more tolerant of others different from themselves, have a greater

appreciation for other cultures, find rewards in helping others, and feel more connected

with their communities (Hinck & Brandell, 1999). Swick (1999) suggests that service-

learning provides an educational paradigm for the realization that one can be a caring

person who contributes, learns, and is responsive to others in reciprocal and meaningful

ways. Caring and community improvement, components of service-learning and the

subsequent development of leadership potential, are interactive processes that depend on

personal empowerment (Wuthnow, 1995).

Action is meaningful to middle grade students. Students serve because they want

to help others. Service-learning seeks to foster a lifelong commitment to volunteering,

connecting real world relevance with the understanding of one's own role in the larger

community (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse/Cooperative, 1995). In essence,

then, service-learning becomes a teaching strategy that clearly links community service

experiences to classroom instruction (Billig, 2000), and, thus, increases personal and

leadership life skills development opportunities for middle grade students.

There are essential elements of service-learning that are necessary to develop

leadership potential in middle grade students. These elements include clear educational

goals that require the integrated application of not only concepts, but also content and

skills from each of the academic disciplines. Involving students in the conceptual

construction of their own knowledge is also an essential element. When the elements of

service, leadership, community building, and diversity are combined into a structured and

comprehensive program, it makes for a more meaningful and transformational experience

(Sarvey, 2005).

While the term "service-learning" may not be known widely or understood by the

public, where it is known, it is supported. A recent media scan conducted by the W. K.

Kellogg Foundation revealed that more than half of the articles written about service-learning in the print media were favorable (Billig, 2000). Service-learning programs appear to have staying power as well. Advocates of service-learning claim it cures many educational ills, including lack of responsibility, disengagement from the community, and lack of self-esteem (White, 2001).

In the 1990s, practitioners and researchers from the National Service-Learning Cooperative (1998) identified those elements they believed described the essential elements of this pedagogical tool. They included setting clear educational goals; involving students in cognitively challenging tasks, and proper assessment of how well students have met skill and content standards. Additional elements were (a) engaging in service tasks with clear goals that meet authentic needs of the community and have meaningful consequences, (b) youth participating in selection, design, implementation, and evaluation, (c) valuing diversity, (d) communicating, interacting, and collaborating within the community, (e) preparing for all aspects of the service work, (f) using reflection effectively, and (g) celebrating the service work.

Many concepts concerning service-learning coalesced when, according to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, service-learning was more succinctly defined. The act's definition suggested that service-learning is a method whereby students (a) learn and develop through collaborative participation in service that is thoughtfully organized and meets the needs of the community involved, (b) helps promote civic responsibility, (c) is integrated into and enhances the student's academic

curriculum, and (d) provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on their service experience.

In essence, then, service-learning is a curriculum-based teaching method that engages students by linking academic studies with authentic community service. By so doing, service-learning makes learning relevant and engages students in education, heightening the potential for intentional development of leadership life skills. Service-learning experiences that are of a high quality prepare students for college, career, community stewardship, and civic responsibility, thus increasing the development of leaders in society (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).

Further, legislative reform during the past 10 years has encouraged a growing national emphasis on increasing youth involvement within their local communities and effectively connecting this service to academic and project study through community service-learning. The National Student Service-learning and Community Service Survey in 1999 was considered the first survey to provide reliable estimates, on a national level, of the percentage of elementary, middle, and high schools incorporating community service-learning into their course curriculum. Part of this project emphasized the connection between service and academic projects. Nineteen percent of schools with community service-learning had administrators who said that one of their top reasons for encouraging youth involvement in community service-learning was to teach problem-solving skills and critical-thinking skills. In addition, 12% of schools with community service-learning said that improving youth achievement in core academic courses was an important reason for encouraging youth involvement in community service-learning

(Westat & Chapman, 1999). These qualities synchronize with the desirable qualities of

leadership that include responsibility, communication skills, intelligence, self-confidence,

and decision-making skills. Including service-learning in curriculum helps students to

become active involved members of the community, while increasing student knowledge

and understanding of the community, encouraging students' altruism and care for others,

and meeting authentic community needs (Billig, 2000).

       Developing positive altruism and care for others is foundational for the

development of character and leadership potential in the form of leadership life skills.

The March 2000 report from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Development (ASCD) suggested that one of the critical elements necessary to support

effective character education in a school-based environment is service-learning coupled

with authentic student involvement. Those critical elements took on national importance

when, in 2002, President George W. Bush established the creation of the USA Freedom

Corps, which helped to expand service-learning opportunities for Americans of all ages

(Campus Compact, 2002).

       Eyler and Giles (1999), in their pivotal work *Where's the Learning in Service-*

Learning?, showed that service-learning impacted such positive outcomes as social

responsibility, personal development, tolerance, interpersonal skills, and application of

learning in the college students involved in their study. However, if service-learning is to

aid middle grade students in achieving similar gains, more quantifiable research must be

conducted in the middle grade schools. The service-learning model that is now widely

accepted in higher education carries great value for middle grade students, as well,

because it can reach beyond strict dichotomies of right and wrong, pass or fail. This model can even bypass the controversy surrounding extrinsic motivation, external to the student or task, and intrinsic motivation that comes from within. Kohn (1993) maintains that reliance on factors that are external to the task and to the individual consistently fail to produce deep or long-lasting commitment to learning. This has become routine in middle grade classrooms across the United States. Intrinsic motivation also has its weaknesses, however. This type of motivation, which comes from within, is a concept that exists solely within the context of the individual. This is often too abstract or individualized to be applicable. Sternberg and Lubart (1995) assert that a blend of both motivational types is actually most effective for highly creative people. Service-learning can be the pedagogical tool that brings about this blend.

Furthermore, service-learning can be facilitative. Service-learning is often effective because it promotes several types of outcomes: an increased awareness of the world, an increased sense of personal efficacy, an increased awareness of one's personal values, and increased engagement in the classroom experience (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). According to Howard (1993), service experiences may also impart or reinforce commonly accepted values such as compassion for others, a sense of justice, or an understanding and acceptance of the obligations of citizens. These outcomes and values add to the foundation that determines potential leadership qualities.

Such service experiences also play an essential role in building empathy (Elias, 2006), which is one's ability to recognize, perceive, and experientially feel the emotion of another. The characteristic of empathy is the ability to "put oneself into another's shoes."

It is the capacity to know emotionally what another is experiencing from within the frame

of reference of that other person (Berger, 1987). Properly conducted service experiences

provide an opportunity for adolescents to learn such life skills, integrate them, apply them

in authentic situations, reflect on them, and then put them into practice in other situations.

This process solidifies adolescents' learning and provides a climate in which others can

follow their example and are more likely to engage in similar service. Service-learning

experiences often help students encounter other circumstances, people, and ideas in ways

that broaden their sense of perspective while building empathic understanding and caring

connections to the world around them. This is especially appealing to middle grade

students. For many, service experiences provide an opportunity to nourish a human need

to be a contributing and generous member of an important group to which one belongs,

thus helping prepare adolescents for their eventual roles in the society at large, as well as

family and work groups of which they will be a part. It also helps nurture the spirit of

students to see themselves as part of a larger world (Elias, 2006). With these sets of

ideals and beliefs, adolescents engaged in service-learning are more apt to exhibit

leadership potential and values that are important to living a connected and authentic life

(Elias, 2006). Earlier, Eyler and Braxton (1997) had reached a similar conclusion when

they found that the service-learning experience positively affected students' tolerance of

others, leadership skills, personal efficacy, communication skills, connectedness to the

community, and valuation of a career in helping others.

       As stated earlier, true community service-learning helps adolescents make the

connections between what they are studying academically and real-world issues that

surround them. It engages adolescents in action and reflection on important community,

social, environmental, and political issues. It also requires educators to think of middle

grade students as active members of their community, not just as future citizens (Berman,

1998).

Because the goal in developing personal and leadership life skills is to help youth

experience and reflect on both their personal qualities and learned skills that lay the

foundation for the development of competent and caring leaders (Fretman & Van Linden,

1999), service-learning for middle grade students demonstrates great potential. In one

study conducted by the Search Institute (1995), the results indicated that youth involved

in community service-learning projects saw the benefits of service and planned to

continue to serve. Fifty-five percent said the service activities showed them how good it

feels to help other people. Fifty-five percent suggested that the experience revealed how

much more can be done when people work together as a team, and 38% discovered that

what they learned through their service experience relates more to life outside of school

than regular classes (Griffen-Wiesner, 1995).

Effective opportunities in service and the development of leadership potential

begin with thoughtful preparation so that students understand the circumstances in which

they will be involved. This is followed by the action of carrying out the service

experience, in which students are directly involved as is age-appropriate. Reflection then

follows this action so that students have a chance to talk or write about what they

experienced. Demonstrating what they learned in creative ways to their peers, parents,

younger students, and other groups in the community adds to the effectiveness of the

service experience (Elias, 2006).

Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives focused on

the intent that the activity changes both the provider of the service as well as the

recipient, strengthens the adolescent's self confidence, and encourages the leadership

potential that lies within. Service tasks should link the task to self-reflection, self-

discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of knowledge, values, and skills

(National Service-learning Clearinghouse, 2002).

When President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of

1993, the act provided a number of resources available to communities and organizations

for improving education. Service-learning was one of the pedagogical tools expanded to

help improve educational experiences for adolescents, giving them the opportunity to

learn experientially while performing a service in the community. Thus, the service

aspect of the experience is used to complete the learning aspect of the experience. In this

pedagogy, the learning is both a process and a teaching method. Participants experience

engaged learning in a service activity in the community that requires them to do

something and then to reflect on that experience. As a process, it includes the active

involvement in the service, reflection, and application of new information and attitudes or

skills (Phelps, 2005). This is the "learn by doing" concept on a community level

(Caldwell, 1994).

Reflection plays an important role in any type of engaged learning. Throughout

service-learning, reflection is the critical component that ties the service to the learning.

It is the link that examines events and distills important lessons. These activities ensure

that students maximize the learning potential of the experiences. Reflection allows the

students to thoughtfully focus on their accomplishment. Students think about the impact

they have had on those being served and how their own attitudes and behaviors might

have changed through the process. Reflection also gives the students an opportunity to

internally investigate how they feel about what they have accomplished. Current

research indicates that opportunities for self-reflection are an essential element of high-

quality service-learning practices (Billig, 2000). Ikeda (2000) concludes in her research

that reflection is critical to the service-learning process as it contributes to the effort to

reconceptualize learning outcomes and processes by showing students how to make sense

of the new ideas, attitudes, people, and experiences that they encounter through the

service experience. Schaps and Lewis (Schaps, 1998) posit that regular, structured class

meetings must occur to allow students to engage in problem solving and reflection. The

environment should encourage a collaborative learning environment that emphasizes

challenging academics as well as a respectful treatment of fellow students.

In the development of leadership life skills, do service-learning experiences

provide middle grade students with the necessary skills to explore their potential? What

does it mean to be a leader? What are those positive aspects of leadership that should be

developed in middle grade students? As recently as 2002, Prichard estimated that private

school participation in service-learning was close to 80%, but was the development of

leadership potential intentional and developmentally designed or only anecdotal to this

statistic?

Leadership skills that are instilled during early adolescence evolve throughout

adolescence and into adulthood (Dorrance, 1996; Simon & Martens, 1979; Shields &

Bredemeir, 1995). Thus, it is important to provide systematic and proactive opportunities

for such skills to be modeled for middle grade students. Some of the most frequently

cited positive aspects of being a leader include (a) helping others, (b) belonging to a

group, (c) gaining the respect of others, (d) the sense of being needed, (e) the feeling of

accomplishment upon achievement of a goal, and (f) self growth and understanding.

There are measurable advantages to intentional leadership development that builds on a

sense of community. A study by researchers at the University of Chicago found that

where there exists a "sense of community" – shared values, common purpose, and an

understanding of rights and obligations – schools demonstrate more effectiveness than

their counterparts (Ladestro, 1990). In post-secondary school literature there is support

that service-learning has a positive effect on the ability to work well with others including

interpersonal development, leadership, and communication skills (Eyler & Giles, 1999;

Mabry, 1998; Peterson, 1998). However, will this translate to leadership potential for

middle grade adolescents? There is evidence, according to White (2001) that service-

learning positively, and quantifiably impacts academics, self-concept and personal

growth in students in fifth through twelfth grades. Among the most mentioned outcomes

were increased self-concept, improved academic achievement, improved social skills, and

students planning to serve outside the school setting. There was some indication that the

engagement of these students in some form of service provided them with positive

academic, career, ethical, social, personal, and civic outcomes (White, 2001).

Adolescents learn the value of volunteering through service-learning in the community, thus developing personal and leadership life skills that are considered vital to their success in the new millennium (Phelps, 2005).

One of the advantages of programs that have an intentional emphasis on such service leadership development is that the impact and the service do not just end with the participants. By its very nature, the program involves more and more people in a ripple effect as the participants engage others. Focusing on these specific aspects of leadership means that strategies for effective teaching should be set in place. Guiding others to achieve a common goal is a teaching strategy to help create such leadership qualities in middle grade students.

Dubosz and Beaty (1999) agree that leadership is the capability to guide others in the achievement of a common goal and add that leadership characteristics consist of many personal qualities. These characteristics include (a) self-esteem, (b) determination, (c) organizational aptitude, (d) focus, (e) tolerance, (f) decisiveness, (g) self-discipline, (h) charisma, (i) time management, (j) self-confidence, (k) social competence, (l) communicating a "vision," and (m) sensitivity to the needs of others. Self-esteem and self-confidence stand out as important aspects of one's self-concept in the development of those life skills needed for leadership. One has reasoned judgments about his or her capacity to learn at specific levels that are affected by interactions with family, peers, and school. Stimulating home environments, headed by adults who encourage persistence and effort, allow adolescents to develop strong self-efficacy beliefs. Peer group interaction can provide models of reasonable standards and measures against which

young people can evaluate their own abilities – comparisons that either increase or

decrease positive self-efficacy (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006).

In 1992, William Brock, Chairman of the Labor Secretary's Commission on

Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), spoke of the urgency for all educational programs

to not only address academics but to pursue the responsibility and leadership needs of

students and society, as well. He encouraged that there was much more to life than

earning a living, and that society wanted more from education than simply productive

workers. Educational programs needed to address this concern by encouraging the

development of citizens who would act and lead responsibly in today's democratic

society (Whetzel, 1992). In a recent study conducted for the North Carolina Middle

grade Association, McEwin, Green, and Jenkins (2001) suggest that greater emphasis be

made to ensure that middle grade students become more actively involved in their own

learning. Socratic dialogue, cooperative learning, and independent research support this

learning process of conceptual development. This research also suggests that

relationships do matter and form a critical connection between the student and the

teacher. Students achieve more by trying harder if they believe that their teacher is

interested in their success and if they feel they are part of a supportive group of peers and

adults.

Students are important to their schools and their families, as well as to their

communities, to their future workplaces, and to the world around them. Each student has

leadership potential. Although that potential is not identical for all, every student

deserves many opportunities to have that leadership potential developed (Elias, 2006).

Research has shown that leadership development begins early. Skills critical for effective

leadership, including the capacity to understand and interact with others, develops

strikingly in adolescence (Gardner, 1987). Youth need to learn the appropriate leadership

skills in adolescence. They need to be able to test them and to be provided with the

necessary support system should they stumble (Kudo, 2003).

Pat Williams (2004) quotes Jay Strack, president of Student Leadership

University, and noted speaker on adolescent leadership development:

> We have been hit between the eyes as parents, educators, and coaches with
>
> the fact that our kids are woefully unprepared to deal with real life.
>
> Corporations are spending millions of dollars training young people how
>
> to lead. It is a huge industry. Our universities and the military are
>
> realizing that the young people who stream into their halls and barracks
>
> are not well prepared to lead. We have produced a generation that is
>
> neither deep nor wide in leadership ability. Many parents are beginning to
>
> realize just how ill-prepared their kids are to face life's challenges and
>
> make good decisions (p. 9).

According to Williams (2004), the essential elements of a leader are embodied in

seven fundamental keys. Proper development of these key behaviors is needed to unlock

leadership potential. They include (a) vision, (b) character, (c) people skills, (d)

communication, (e) competence, (f) boldness, and (g) servanthood.

In relationship to the development of these leadership skills, Elias's (2006) work

identifies, among other qualities, those that directly address life leadership skills. These

include (a) the recognition and labeling of one's feelings; (b) the understanding of one's obligation to engage in safe, ethical, and legal behaviors; and (c) the engagement in a creative, yet disciplined, process of exploring alternative possibilities that leads to responsible, goal-directed action, including overcoming unforeseen obstacles. Elias (2006) also found that communicating effectively; establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding peer connections; and guiding decisions and actions by a set of principles or standards derived from recognized legal, moral or faith-based systems of conduct were important.

Williams (2004) explains in his research that vision, derived from a faith-based system of conduct, defines what success in leadership looks like. The leader and the entire team collaboratively compete for, struggle for, and sacrifice for a vision. Adolescents must be challenged and inspired to develop such a vision concerning leadership. He suggests that a leader must be able to communicate that vision to the entire team — and must do so persuasively and effectively so that all the team members will engage. In so doing, adolescents make opportunities to build their communication skills and their confidence. Maxwell (2005) observed that people "buy into" the leader before they "buy into" the leader's vision. Adolescent leaders must learn how to motivate people, listen, resolve conflicts, affirm, acknowledge, praise, and build community. In other words, leaders need people-oriented skills, the ability to work effectively and genuinely with people in order to inspire them to achieve a goal. People admire and follow leaders who exhibit genuine character.

Adolescent leaders need good character traits in their own lives, including a strong work ethic, honesty, humility, personal responsibility, integrity, social responsibility, self-discipline, courage, fairness, kindness, tolerance, and respect for others. While competence for an adolescent demonstrating leadership potential is in the formation stage, the competitive aspect of competence is especially appealing to an adolescent. Competence comes as one gains experience, learns how to delegate, and approaches every task with a commitment to excellence (Williams, 2005). According to Rod Smith (2006), leadership is not about power or getting people to do or be anything. It is not about being obeyed or honored. It is an acknowledgment of the potential in others. Leadership is about respecting their freedom and believing in their ability to prevail over any difficulties that they may face. He explains this type of leader as an authentic leader. Authentic leaders know that leadership and relationship are inseparable. Authentic leaders have a well-developed self-knowledge or self-concept and know that empowering others benefits everyone. These leaders understand the importance of their own character development.

To become leaders requires adolescents to learn how to overcome timidity, shyness, and a tendency to play it safe. Without risk, there is no adventure. Boldness is required in a leader. Without a measure of risk-taking, one cannot lead. True leadership, however, is about more than being bold or competent or an effective communicator; it requires the proper attitude according to Williams (2005). Leadership is not about being "the boss" but about being a servant. Adolescents need to be inspired, challenged, and then mentored to see their leadership roles not as opportunities to expand their egos, but

as opportunities to serve others. Watching, imitating, and practicing with people is the

way to learn leadership. There is risk involved. It involves trial and error and learning

from mistakes and successes alike (Linden & Fertman, 1998). Leadership also involves

the development of life skills that are learned psycho-social skills including some non-

academic abilities, attitudes, and behaviors such as anxiety management, effective

interpersonal relationship behaviors, and development of the skill of decision making and

problem solving. These skills involve the use of knowledge, abilities, and experience to

meet everyday needs in a variety of situations and to help people function as adults in

society (Phelps, 2005).

Leadership skills that carry an adolescent into adulthood involve working with

others, communicating, understanding self, and making decisions. Adults require these

skills for successful everyday living. Because they are characteristics of successful

adults, these skills are often called leadership life skills. The development of leadership

life skills allows adolescents the ability to succeed within their environment by making

responsible decisions, having a better understanding of their values, and being better able

to communicate and get along with others (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992).

Further, Wingenbach, and Kahler (1997) define leadership and life skill

development as skills in decision making, communication, learning, interpersonal

relationships, resource management, understanding self, and working with groups.

Supporters of community service-learning believe that such leadership qualities may be

able to be addressed through the pedagogy of service-learning. These supporters believe

students involved in community service-learning experiences are (a) more tolerant of

others different from themselves, (b) have a greater appreciation for other cultures, (c)

find rewards in helping others, and (d) feel more connected with their communities.

Students are thus able to make better decisions, have more self-confidence and self-

esteem, and further develop those leadership qualities that enhance adult living (Phelps,

2005).

Courage also becomes an important component in the development of leadership

life skills. Fundamentally, leadership qualities are defined by courage (Waltson, 2005).

Developing leadership potential, then, must also examine the role of courage. Generally,

courage is associated with being a hero or doing something amazing according to Watson

(2005), but the human spirit has fallen asleep to everyday courage. The present culture

misses opportunities at home and in the school′s curriculum to teach courage

applications. Educational training in courage skills for high school and college students

transfer easily to work competences, but the wherewithal remains scant. The evidence

for developing courage in middle grade students is even scarcer. Unfortunately, courage

is not something that is mandated in individuals′ lives. Without its acquisition, living is

much more difficult. Middle grade students should be encouraged to think about how

they can most exponentially triumph over their past challenges, such as moving out of

those areas in which they find themselves comfortable, to excel in their present growth

opportunities (Walston, 2005).

Because of the many changes a middle grade student faces, attention must be

given to another aspect in the development of leadership life skills: one's self-concept.

Self-esteem, a part of one's self-concept, was studied by Harter (1986), who found that

change in self-esteem is most likely to occur during times of transition, such as changing

schools, which is often the case for middle grade students. According to Harter (1986)

changes in one's environment can often be the catalyst for changes in one's self-

assessment, or self-concept, resulting in an increase or decrease in self-esteem. The re-

evaluation occurs due to changes in self-perceptions of competence or incompetence

based upon the degree of mastery of new developmental tasks, a comparison of oneself to

a different group of students, as well as the creation of new social networks (Harter,

1986). While high self-esteem is no guarantee that middle grade students will make the

right decisions, or develop their leadership potential, it does provide a strong foundation

for resisting many negative pressures (Hart, 2003). According to Canfield (1976),

student self-esteem is more highly correlated with student success than is intelligence

quotient (IQ).

     The development of leadership potential through the engaged learning process

associated with service-learning may actually enhance self-esteem, according to Nave

(1990). He views self-esteem as the development of a sense of self-confidence that

results from the successful completion of attempted tasks. From his research, people who

esteem themselves are less likely to engage in destructive behavior.

     Because the school environment plays a major role in the development of self-

esteem, schools that emphasize engaged learning and service have the clear advantage

according to Nave (1990). In his study, programs that have the development of self-

esteem as a clearly suggested component of their policies, goals, and practices are more

successful academically.

Every single interaction affects student self-esteem, which is a part of one's self-

concept. There are no neutral human interactions. Every individual interaction affects

one's self-esteem either positively or negatively (Nave, 1990). Teaching methods and

classroom techniques that raise student self-esteem do so because they raise student

achievement simultaneously (Schmid, 1988). Heterogeneous grouping, common in

service-learning projects, is correlated with improved self-esteem for all students,

especially when combined with students cooperatively and collaboratively working on

class projects (Nave, 1990).

Because of the variety of problems students face at home and in their

communities, Nave (1990) suggests that instruction should help underscore self-esteem,

not undermine it. In this type of engaged learning environment, mistakes are more often

viewed as positive because they inform both the student and the teacher what needs to be

taught or re-taught. Then gradual success, instead of continual success, becomes the

yardstick by which learning is judged (Clifford, 1990). Mistakes become positive when

they are used to show the student where additional study is needed. Furthermore,

mistakes are used to teach acceptance as an important life skill.

In addition, the teacher plays an important role in the development of a positive

self-concept by demonstrating acceptance in helping students to accept himself or herself

despite imperfections. Subsequently, student learning strongly correlates with a positive

personal relationship between student and teacher. Student success depends upon a

caring and connected teacher as well as the use of proven methods. According to the research done by Beane and Lipka (1984) as well as Patterson (1973), middle grade students come to esteem themselves as others esteem them. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers who accept students as individuals, as persons of infinite worth and value, and as persons with absolute dignity, as human beings and therefore worthy of the utmost respect, are those teachers who place an emphasis on a healthy and positive self-esteem. These teachers do not make judgments based on the student's race, family origin, socioeconomic status, dress, or hairstyle. Every student is cared for, accepted, and respected. Teachers with this emphasis demonstrate their care in several ways. They make the time to reinforce the importance of an individual student's needs and they actively listen to each student, acknowledging his or her problems, needs, and dreams. Through engaged learning that uses service-learning as the pedagogical tool, teachers may place high expectations on each student. They may believe that every student can and will learn. They may believe in their own ability to find those keys to unlock each student's intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, teachers who act accordingly assume an extended role (Lockwood, 1989). This means that the teacher is alert to any of the developmental needs of the student, becoming, as the student's needs might dictate: adviser, advocate, friend, counselor, mentor, or social worker (Weber, 1988).

Additionally, learning effective time management, priorities, and punctuality are major steps towards leadership development. The mastery of time management, setting priorities, and multitasking are early stepping stones to leadership (Hart, 2003). Time is finite and setting priorities underscores the development of a leader. Students want and

need work that allows them to demonstrate and improve their sense of competence and success. Prioritizing such work is a challenge for most middle grade students, but this is the drive for mastery. In order to be successful, the criteria must be clearly articulated and provide immediate, clear, and constructive feedback. In addition, it must be demonstrated that the skills needed to be successful are attainable, that they are systematically modeled, and that success can be a valued aspect of an adolescent's personality (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995).

According to Osterman (2000) and Zins (2004), students appear to be most responsive academically to non-threatening classrooms and schools where the challenge is to learn more but to do so in ways that do not discourage them. In this type of safe and conducive environment the balance that will help lead students to success in school and in the development of leadership potential in life includes promoting community service to build empathy, courage, a stronger self-concept, an understanding of time management and priority as well as engagement learning.

To summarize, the benefits of service-learning for post-secondary students are well researched and documented. The desire for a more fully engaged student body on the middle grade level seeks the very benefits to students that service-learning is known to provide for post-secondary students. Yale University child psychiatrist James Comer (1997) suggests that every interaction is either building community or destroying it. Schools have no choice about whether to shape courage, priorities, citizenship, and character for leadership. Every aspect of schools – from discipline policies to fund-raising strategies – has a part in shaping future leaders. The real choice schools have is

how intentional that shaping will be, and in what direction (White, 2001). The process

must begin with schools knowing concretely what service-learning can do for the

development of leadership life skills for students at the middle grade level.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted of the study of three groups of eight grade students. The Solomon three-group design (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavich, 2002) was used throughout the study. In this design, one group is designated as the experimental, or test, group and the other two groups serve as control groups, control group 1 and control group 2. This design employs two control groups in an effort to overcome any interactive effect of pre-testing and the experimental treatment. Posttest measures were then used to assess the interaction effect.

The Instrument

The Leadership and Personal Development Inventory (LPDI) developed by Carter (1989) was originally utilized to measure the self-reported perceptions of personal and leadership life skills development of Louisiana high school students.

The LPDI was part of a research project that started in 1989 and culminated in 1991. The project included a 5-year grant in the mid 1980s from the United States Department of Agriculture named Project Gold. Carter started out with hundreds of items and, through multiple field tests and factor analyses, reduced the instrument to the current 10-scale, 76-item instrument. Appropriate scale development procedures were utilized in the development of this instrument by Dr. Carter, who is presently a professor emeritus at Iowa State University in Ames, IA. He also is the director of the Brenton Center for Agricultural Instruction and Technology Transfer ® (Carter, 1994).

The instrument was divided into three major sections. The first section (group achievement) contained 27 items that were used to identify student perceptions on group drive, cohesiveness, productivity, and group achievement. The second section (attitude toward group work) consisted of 25 items that were used to indicate the student's attitude toward group work. The third section (personal development inventory) consisted of 24 items that related to leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship.

The original study conducted by Carter and Spotanski (1989) looked at self-reported perceptions of personal and leadership life skills in selected Iowa high school students. A descriptive case study was used in the research design. The population for the study consisted of 3,437 high school students (grades 9-12) in three secondary schools in Iowa during a three-year period. An instrument was developed to measure student perceptions of their personal and leadership skills. The instrument was comprised of 10 measurement scales, with three of the scales being overall scales and the other seven scales being sub scales within the overall three scales. The 10 measurement scales were (a) group drive, (b) cohesiveness, (c) productivity, (d) achievement, (e) attitude toward group work, (f) degree of attainment of leadership, (g) self-confidence, (h) cooperation, (i) citizenship, and (j) personal development. The three overall scales were group achievement (questions 1-27), attitude toward group work (questions 28-51) and personal development (questions 52-76). The seven sub scales were group drive, cohesiveness, and productivity (group drive); attitude toward group work; and the degree of attainment of leadership, self-confidence, and cooperation (personal development).

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability by Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman

(1991) was calculated for each of the 10 measurement scales. Each scale's reliability

score is listed next to the scale in Table 2. All scales had a reliability coefficient of .70 or

above indicating acceptable reliability for the overall instrument (Phelps, 2005).

Table 2.

*Reliability Coefficients Reported by Carter (1989) for the Leadership and Personal
Development Inventory's 10 Scales*

Leadership and Personal Development Inventory Scales (Item #'s)

Group Drive (2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 20)	.70[a]
Cohesiveness (1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, 27)	.85[a]
Productivity (6, 7, 9, 11, 18, 19, 22, 25, 26)	.77[a]
Group Achievement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27)	.91[a]
Attitude toward group work (28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52)	.81[a]
Leadership (55, 62, 64, 66, 70, 72)	.73[a]
Self-Confidence (54, 59, 63, 67, 75, 76)	.77[a]
Cooperation (53, 57, 60, 65, 72, 74)	.78[a]
Citizenship (56, 58, 61, 68, 69, 71, 73)	.74[a]
Personal Development (53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76)	.90[a]

[a] Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient

Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering the data, the researcher coordinated three private schools that cooperated with the experimental portion of this dissertation study, using the Everyday Heroes lesson plans (Appendix H) as a framework for the service-learning component. The three schools represented three populations that shared many similarities. Each was accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Two were accredited Kindergarten through eighth grades and one was a Kindergarten through twelfth grade program that was accredited ninth through twelfth grades. Each school abides by the organizational standards of SACS (2006). Each school:

1. Implements and monitors a continuous process of educational improvement, clearly focused on student performance, organizational effectiveness, and capacity to support the learning process.

2. Has collaboratively developed and communicated a vision, beliefs, and a mission statement that provides focus for the quality of the work of the students and the quality of the work of the school.

3. Promotes stability in leadership that includes a focus on developing and maintaining a vision and an emphasis on improving student performance and support for innovative efforts that produce desired results.

4. Provides financial resources for the educational opportunities defined in the school's mission and beliefs.

5.   Provides competent and qualified staff to support student performance,
     implement the administrative functions of the school, and is aligned with the
     beliefs, mission, and goals of the school.

6.   Identifies and provides a network of services that promotes the health, safety,
     development, and well-being of each student.

7.   Provides a comprehensive program of library/media services that is aligned
     with its beliefs, mission, and goals.

8.   Makes certain that the site's facility and equipment is functional, safe, and fully
     support the school's mission.

9.   Has developed, implemented, and communicated an effective school-
     community interaction plan that fully supports the school's mission and beliefs.

10. Offers a curriculum based on research and employs instructional strategies and
     activities based on clearly defined expectations for student performance that is
     subject to review and revision at regular intervals.

11. Promotes the development of decision-making skills, ethical and lawful
     conduct, and responsible citizenship.

12. Uses effective and continuous performance management systems for assessing,
     aligning, and improving student performance and school operation, including
     organizational and instructional effectiveness.

Students from the eighth grade classes were selected to participate in this study based
upon their general OLSAT or ABT scores from the previous spring. A predetermined
general acceptable range of ability scores determined selection. That range was

established as within two standard deviations above and below the mean. Students were

then selected randomly from within that range. The Solomon three-group design (Ary,

Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002) was used throughout the study. One group was assigned as

the Experimental Group, one group was designated the control group 1, and the third

group served as control group 2.

The Solomon three-group design is organized to use these three groups (see Figure 2).

This design employs two control groups and thereby overcomes the interactive effect of

pre-testing and the experimental treatment. The second control group, labeled C2 is not

pre-tested but is exposed to the independent variable treatment. Their posttest measures

are then used to assess the interaction effect. Comparing the Y2 scores for the three

groups assesses the interaction effect. Only the posttest scores enter into the analysis.

Even through the experimental group may have a significantly higher mean on Y2 than

does the first control group (C1), the researcher cannot be confident that this difference is

caused by X. However, if the Y2 mean of the second control group (C2) is also

significantly higher than that of the first control group, then it may be assumed that the

experimental treatment, rather than any pre-test X interaction effect, has produced the

difference because the second control group is not pre-tested. This group, although

receiving the treatment, is functioning as a control and is thus labeled C2 (Ary, Jacobs, &

Razavieh, 2002).

Figure 2: Solomon Three-Group Design

Group	Pre-test	Independent Variable	Posttest
Experimental (E)	Y1	X	Y2
Control Group 1 (C1)	Y1	-	Y2
Control Group 2 (C2)	-	X	Y2

Homogeneous selection, the method of randomization chosen for this study, controlled the variables affecting the dependent variable. Only students in the eighth grade were chosen. This procedure controlled the effects of age. Beginning with a group that is homogeneous on the relevant variable eliminated the difficulty of matching subjects on that variable. This is an effective way of controlling extraneous variables but does decrease the extent to which these findings can be generalized (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002).

The service-learning project served as the independent variable for two of the three groups and is entitled Everyday Heroes (Appendix H). It is designed as a four-week program where students learn to write essays about heroic traits, interview people who have made a difference in their community, practice active listening skills, interact successfully with different age groups, and recognize and identify positive community forces. Today's society tends primarily to promote only famous people as heroes, overlooking the ordinary citizens who make extraordinary contributions in their

community. As a result, students often leave their communities unaware of who these

people are and how their generous and unselfish acts enrich the quality of life for others.

     Throughout the project, students gained an understanding of the complexities

involved in managing a community and an association of the tremendous amount of

volunteer work performed by citizens in order to keep programs within the community

running smoothly. In the process of learning how ordinary citizens make a difference

and celebrating their contributions, the students' sense of pride in their community and

belief that they too can contribute was heightened.

     The chief goal was to provide a framework for cooperative learning that inspired

critical thinking skills and that reinforced certain concepts about literature studied in the

regular classroom. In order to achieve these goals, students learned the rudiments of

interviewing for the purpose of research, became active listeners, and presented accurate

written and oral reports based on their interviews.

     Throughout their interviews and stories, community members revealed the traits

and qualities that reflected the true meaning of heroism and leadership. Community

members also became partners with the students in helping to identify ordinary heroes

within the community.

     Control group C1 and the experimental group (Figure 2) were administered the

LPDI assessment (Carter, 1989) at the beginning of the study. Control group C2 was not

administered the assessment.

     The two groups that participated in the independent variable, the experimental

group and control group C2, initially agreed upon rules for informal and formal

discussions in small and large groups. Then they brainstormed in small groups to create a

list of heroic qualities. Next, the students selected one person to present their list to the

entire group. The characteristics of all the groups were written on the board with

redundancies being eliminated and the list prioritized by consensus. Ways to improve

group activities were then discussed, catalogued, and implemented in future sessions.

In subsequent lessons, students posed questions, listened to the ideas of others and

contributed their own information or ideas in group discussions and interviews in order to

acquire new knowledge. They wrote essays about people they knew personally, whom

they considered to be heroes and read their essays to the class. The students then

compared the heroic characteristics of these people and added any new insights to the

master list. The essays were evaluated according to the standards set by the classroom

teacher. In addition, the students assessed each presentation for the depth and quality of

the information. Students then reviewed their interviewing techniques as well as the

quality of the information gathered.

Next students interviewed local citizens to discover additional insights into what

qualities were necessary to make a hero. They then made oral presentations that

demonstrated appropriate consideration of the audience, purpose, and the conveyed

information. The interviewee checked the accuracy of the information. The classroom

teacher assessed the oral presentations and the students verbally critiqued each other's

presentations, specifically looking for incomplete or unclear information.

Final essays were written that identified the heroic qualities students had

determined as essential, based upon their research, interviews and group discussions.

These essays were intended to show the evolution of the students' attitudes toward the nature of heroism. All of the essays were peer edited and evaluated by the teacher based on coherence, a clearly focused main idea, and specific supporting details. The students then compared and contrasted their first essays and their last essays to determine how their concept of a hero had evolved.

Students involved in the control group that did not participate in the independent study (group C1) also brainstormed initially to create a list of heroic qualities. These qualities were then written down for future reference. The students in this group wrote essays about people they knew personally who might be heroes and then read their essays to the class. Their fellow students assessed each presentation for the depth and quality of the information. New findings were added to the master list of heroic qualities.

In later lessons, this control group read a biography or autobiography on a recognized hero. They made notes on those qualities they deemed heroic and made a short oral presentation or wrote a paper on their findings. The oral or written presentations were checked for accuracy and the students verbally analyzed each other's presentations, specifically looking for incomplete or unclear information. In addition, group discussion and teacher lecture explored additional qualities considered heroic. Students then discussed their initial views of heroic qualities, comparing those views with their views at the end of the series of assignments. At the conclusion of the study, all three groups were administered the LPDI assessment (Carter, 1989) and the results were reviewed to determine if there were differences in self-perceived leadership abilities from the beginning of the study compared to its conclusion.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The sample consisted of 55 adolescents (N=55). Their ages ranged from 12 years 9 months to 14 years 7 months. All subjects of the sample were in the eighth grade. All of the responses were used for the analyses required by the null hypothesis and the additional hypotheses of this study.

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study states there is no significant statistical difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade students who participate in a community service-learning project from those who do not participate.

The results of this study indicated through a one-way ANOVA that there was no significant difference among the three groups at the .05 significance level. Thus the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis of this study was the general description and characteristics of middle grade students, as well as those characteristics and qualities that define service-learning, and the leadership qualities that demonstrate leadership potential. The variables of interest in the description and characteristics of middle grade students included (a) gender, (b) grade point average, (c) grade equivalencies based upon the previous year's standardized test scores, and (d) participation in a service-learning project. The standardized test scores administered the previous spring to determine grade equivalency scores were the American College Testing (ACT) for the school that served as the first

control group. The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), 10th Edition was administered for

the school that served as the second control group.   The Educational Records Bureau

(ERB) test was administered for the third school that served as the test group. All three

tests provide a correlating grade equivalency. This correlation was used in determining if

students fell within the appropriate quartiles for inclusion within this study.

       Slightly over half of the participants were female (58.2%). Most of the

participants (85.4%) were White. Because of the limited diversity of the students,

ethnicity was not considered in determining results. Table 3 shows the descriptive

personal characteristics of the participants.

       The average age of the participants was 13 years 8 months. All were eighth

graders from three different schools. The gender of the participants were 58% female

and 42% male. Most of the participants described themselves as White (85.4%), with the

remainder identified as Black (5.5%), Asian (5.5%) or Hispanic (3.6%). All 55 students

attended Christian schools accredited through the Association of Christian Schools

International.

       Grade point average was calculated using each subject's final yearly cumulative

scores from seventh grade. All participants' end of the grade averages fell within the two

central quartiles. The assessments and service-learning projects for this study started in

early September and concluded in late October with the service-learning portion of the

study taking four to five weeks to complete. Participants' grade equivalencies (GE) were

based upon the previous year's standardized test scores.

Following the model of the Solomon Three Group design, two of the three groups participated in the service-learning portion of the study that was the independent variable. While all three groups were administered the posttest self-assessment (the dependent variable), only two groups participated in the pre-test self-assessment. Two groups served as control groups and the one group that completed both the pre-test, the posttest, and the service-learning project served as the test group.

Table 3
Personal Characteristics of Participants

Personal Characteristics	N	%
Male	23	41.8%
Female	32	58.2%
Total	55	100%
White	47	85.4%
Black	3	5.5%
Asian	3	5.5%
Hispanic	2	3.6%
Total	55	100%
Grade equivalency (GE) average for school 1	22	(GE) 9.05
Grade equivalency (GE) average for school 2	14	(GE) 9.20
Grade equivalency (GE) average for school 3	19	(GE) 10.36
Total	55	100%
Participants from school 1	22	40%
Participants from school 2	14	25.5%
Participants from school 3	19	34.5%
Total	55	100%
Participants in a service-learning project from school 1	22	54%
Participants in a service-learning project from school 2	0	0%
Participants in a service-learning project from school 3	19	46%
Total	41	100%

Note: N=55

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis was to compare self-assessed leadership life skills as measured by the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory (Carter, 1989) for both groups that participated in the service-learning project to determine if a change in self-reported perception of leadership life skills had occurred.

For the purposes of this study, Part Three of the Leadership and Personal Development Instrument Scales (Carter 1989) was used. It consisted of the sub-categories of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship. The sub categories of Part Three of the Scales contained questions that addressed one's self-assessment of leadership (six questions), self-confidence (six questions), cooperation (six questions) and citizenship (seven questions). Table 4 shows the overall mean scores and standard deviations for these scales.

The scale used for measurement was a standard Likert scale, a widely used psychometric response scale. A Likert scale collects ordinal data. While there is an inherent order or sequence, one's response between agreeing and strongly agreeing may not be the same measurable difference as one's response between agreeing and being undecided (Barnett, 1991). The scale (1-7) was interpreted by Carter to measure one's self-assessed responses ranging from strongly disagree (1.00-1.49) to strongly agree (6.50-7.00) The total range was as follows: 1.00-1.49 (strongly disagree), 1.50-2.49 (disagree), 2.50-3.49 (slightly disagree), 3.50-4.49 (neither agree nor disagree), 4.50-5.49 (slightly agree), 5.50-6.49 (agree), and 6.50-7.00 (strongly agree) for each of the four sub-category sections.

Table 4

Mean scores for Carter's (1989) Leadership and Personal Development Inventory

School and Sub Test	Pre-test Mean	Standard Deviation Pre-test Mean	Posttest Mean	Standard Deviation Posttest Mean
School 1 Leadership	TNA[a]	-	5.13	.735
School 2 Leadership	5.50	.859	5.37	.908
School 3 Leadership	5.25	.858	5.39	.963
School 1 Self-Confidence	TNA[a]	-	5.53	.899
School 2 Self-Confidence	5.88	.825	5.12	.735
School 3 Self-Confidence	5.27	.907	5.50	1.11
School 1 Cooperation	TNA[a]	-	5.56	.826
School 2 Cooperation	5.94	.825	5.90	.727
School 3 Cooperation	5.34	.735	5.72	.767
School 1 Citizenship	TNA[a]	-	5.56	.826
School 2 Citizenship	5.97	.964	5.71	.908
School 3 Citizenship	5.38	.761	5.47	.767

[a] Test Not Administered (Control Group)

The range of responses was 1 to 7. The response categories were from 1.00-1.49 (strongly disagree), 1.50-2.49 (disagree), 2.50-3.49 (slightly disagree), 3.50-4.49 (neither agree nor disagree), 4.50-5.49 (slightly agree), 5.50-6.49 (agree), and 6.50-7.00 (strongly agree) for the Personal Development Inventory.

Four independent samples *t*-tests that addressed each of the four subcategories of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship were administered to the two groups of students who received the independent variable of service-learning (Table 5). An independent samples *t*-test compares the means of two different samples. While these samples shared some variables, there was no overlap between memberships of the two groups (George & Mallery, 2005). For the purpose of this study, a .05 significance level was determined as necessary to establish statistical significance. The *t*-test results revealed no significance at the .05 level on any of the four subcategories.

While there was some difference in posttest results in all four subscores of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship using the independent samples *t*-test, it did not result in a statistically significant difference at the .05 significance level.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis was to determine if a difference existed between participation in a service-learning project and non-participation in addressing development of self-assessed leadership life skills. This type of experimental design involves treatment, outcome, units of assignment, and comparison from which change can be attributed to or inferred from the treatment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Characteristics of this type of experiment typically include some type of manipulation in which the researcher introduces the experimental intervention to some of the subjects. In this study the intervention of service-learning was introduced. This experimental intervention, known here as the independent variable, in this research was the service-learning component. It was administered to two groups of subjects and withheld from

one group. The effect was then measured by administering the posttest to all three groups

and evaluating the results.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Leadership posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.047	.313	-.998	39	.324	-.26512	.26564		-.8024	.27219
	Equal variances not assumed			-.978	33.4	.335	-.26512	.27096		-.8161	.28589
Self-confidence posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.172	.286	.102	39	.919	.03203	.31317		-.6014	.66549
	Equal variances not assumed			.101	34.7	.920	.03203	.31803		-.6138	.67786
Citizenship posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.148	.291	.689	39	.495	.18316	.26588		-.3546	.72095
	Equal variances not assumed			.678	34.6	.502	.18316	.27008		-.3653	.73166
Cooperation posttest	Equal variances assumed	.299	.588	-.627	39	.534	-.15706	.25036		-.6634	.34934
	Equal variances not assumed			-.631	38.7	.532	-.15706	.24899		-.6607	.34666

Campbell et al. (1963) observed that at least one comparison must be evidenced in a scientific experiment. This was the rationale for two control groups. Both of the control groups did not receive a portion of the experimental treatment. Their performance was evaluated on the dependent variable, the posttest. The Solomon Three Group design, used in this study, posits two control groups inherently strengthens the design eliminating the assumption that the experimental treatment, rather than any pre-test interaction effect has produced the difference because one of the control groups was not pre-tested. The two control groups consisted of students from one school that participated in the pre-test but did not participate in the independent variable of service-learning and students from one school that did not participate in the pre-test but did participate in the independent variable of service-learning (Figure 3).

The Solomon Three Group design is a version of a pre-test/posttest design that adds an additional control group. The purpose of the additional group is to separate the effects of the pre-test and to segregate it from the intervention. This addresses the concern that the pre-test might be a sensitizing treatment that may affect the results of the treatment itself.

The use of this type of design strengthens the internal and external validity of the study. Internal validity refers to the extent to which the experiment manipulation resulted in the observed differences. According to Cook and Campbell (1979) there are 13 threats to internal validity. Two of these, selection and testing, have impact upon this experiment.

Selection validity refers to the difference between kinds of people in one experimental group as opposed to another. This internal validity concern was addressed through an independent samples *t*-test that demonstrated there was no significant difference at the .05 level among the posttest scores of the students from the three schools studied.

Testing validity refers to the familiarity with a pre-test where items and responses could be remembered for a later posttest. This concern was addressed by presenting the entire 76-item assessment as a pre-test to only two of the three groups and the same assessment as a posttest to all three groups. Not all sections of the pre-test were used in the posttest self-evaluation. Only selected sections of the assessment, a total of 25 questions that addressed the four subcategories of leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship, were used in the evaluation. These questions were imbedded in an evaluation that consisted of 76 questions.

One threat to external validity, that is, the ability to generalize to particular target populations, rests on the interaction of setting and treatment and how limited or diverse the settings or organizations that participate might be. This threat to validity was partially addressed in narrowing the focus of the study to only include eighth graders in private schools. More research will need to be done to determine if similar results would occur should the grade range be increased or the school selection diversified.

The conclusions drawn about whether the differences in the study actually reflect the real world refer to statistical conclusion validity. Low statistical power is one threat to this type of validity. This research addressed 55 eighth grade students. This is a small

sampling of all of the private school students. Further assessment of the differences

between participating in a service-learning project on youth leadership skills among

middle grade students would do well to use a larger sample size.

Construct validity, the fit between the conceptual definition and the operational

definition of the variables, can be threatened by using only one instrument. This is called

mono-operation bias. In this study, the length of the instrument, its established reliability

and validity ratings, its content analysis, correlation coefficients, and the usage of

selected portions of the assessment minimize this threat to construct validity.

Table 6 demonstrates posttest mean scores for each of the four sub scales. The

leadership scale assessed that two groups participating in service-learning had posttest

mean scores of 5.13 (control group 2) and 5.39 respectively. This indicates that both

groups slightly agree with the self-assessed leadership questions. The control group that

did not participate in service-learning (control group 1) had a posttest mean score of 5.37

that indicates slight agreement with the self-assessed leadership questions as well.

The self-confidence scale assessed for the two groups that participated in service-

learning had posttest mean scores of 5.53 (control group 2) and 5.50 respectively. These

scores indicate that both groups agree with the self-confidence questions. The group that

did not participate in service-learning (control group 1) had a posttest score of 5.12 that

indicates only slight agreement with the self-confidence questions.

The cooperation scale assessed for the two groups that participated in service-

learning had posttest mean scores of 5.56 (control group 2) and 5.72 respectively. These

scores indicate that both groups agree with the self-assessed cooperation questions. The

group that did not participate in service-learning (control group 1) had a posttest mean

score of 5.90, slightly higher than both control group 2 and the test group. This mean

score indicates agreement with the self-assessed cooperation questions.

Table 6

Posttest Mean Scores for Four Sub Categories

	Control Group 1	Control Group 2	Test Group
Leadership	5.37	5.13	5.39
Self-Confidence	5.12	5.53	5.50
Cooperation	5.90	5.56	5.72
Citizenship	5.71	5.56	5.47

The citizenship scale assessed for the two groups that participated in service-learning had posttest mean scores of 5.56 (control group 1) and 5.47 respectively. These scores indicate that both groups agree with the self-assessed citizenship questions. The group that did not participate in service-learning (control group 1) had a posttest mean score of 5.71, slightly higher than both the control group 2 and the test group. This mean score indicates agreement with the self-assessed citizenship questions.

Through the use of analysis of variance, there was no significant difference found in the posttest scale scores among the three groups at the .05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis, that states there is no significant statistical difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade students who participate in a community service-learning project from those who do not participate, is accepted.

It is interesting to note the control group's scores (control group 1, which

participated in the pre-test and the posttest, but did not participate in the service-learning

project) went from a higher value during their pre-test self-evaluation to a lower value

during their posttest self-evaluation in each of the four sub scales of leadership, self-

confidence, cooperation, and citizenship (Figure 3). Their leadership pre-test mean score

was 5.50 while their posttest mean score was 5.37. Their self-confidence pre-test mean

score was 5.88 while their posttest mean score was 5.12. Their cooperation pre-test mean

score was 5.94 and their posttest mean score was 5.90. Finally their citizenship pre-test

mean score was 5.97 and their posttest mean score was 5.71. This is in contrast to the

other control group (control group 2), as well as the test group.

While this observation is beyond the scope of the present study, it appears to

underscore the importance of such research that of McEwin et al.(2001) that suggests

greater emphasis be made to ensure that middle grade students become more actively

involved in their own learning. Active student engagement in the learning process as well

as activities that underscore service-learning such as Socratic dialogue, cooperative

learning, and independent research, are more appealing to middle grade students than

simply class lecture or worksheets. The results demonstrated by Figure 3 indicate

agreement with McEwin, et al. (2001) that students who are actively engaged in the

learning process appear to achieve more by trying harder in a supportive group of peers

and adults.

There was also a slight difference between the girls' subscale score and the boys'

subscale score on the leadership subscale test (Figure 4). Although it was not significant

at the .05 level, responses to the sub scales based upon gender among middle grade

students warrants further study.
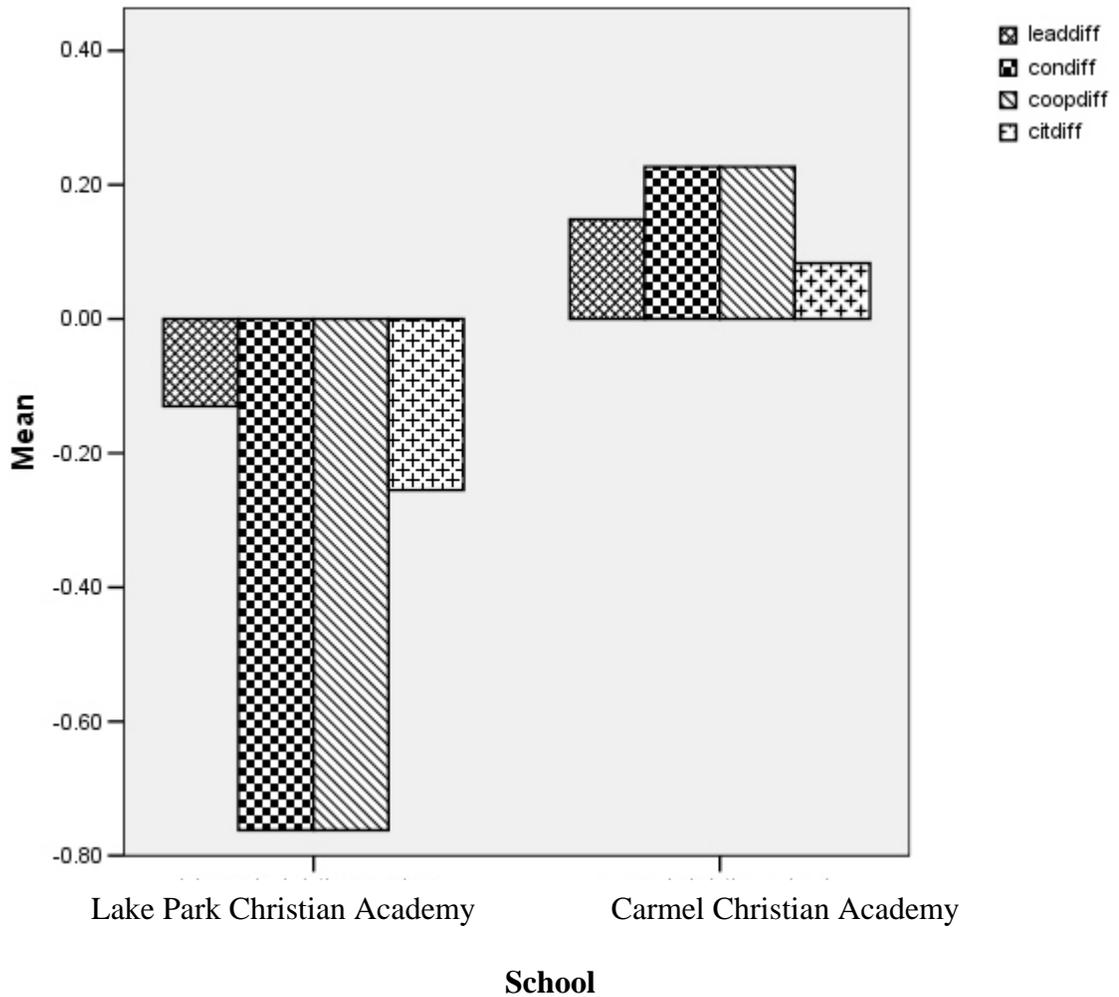
Figure 3. Comparison between posttest results of two schools. Lake Park Christian School did not participate in the service-learning project; Carmel Christian School did participate in the service-learning project.
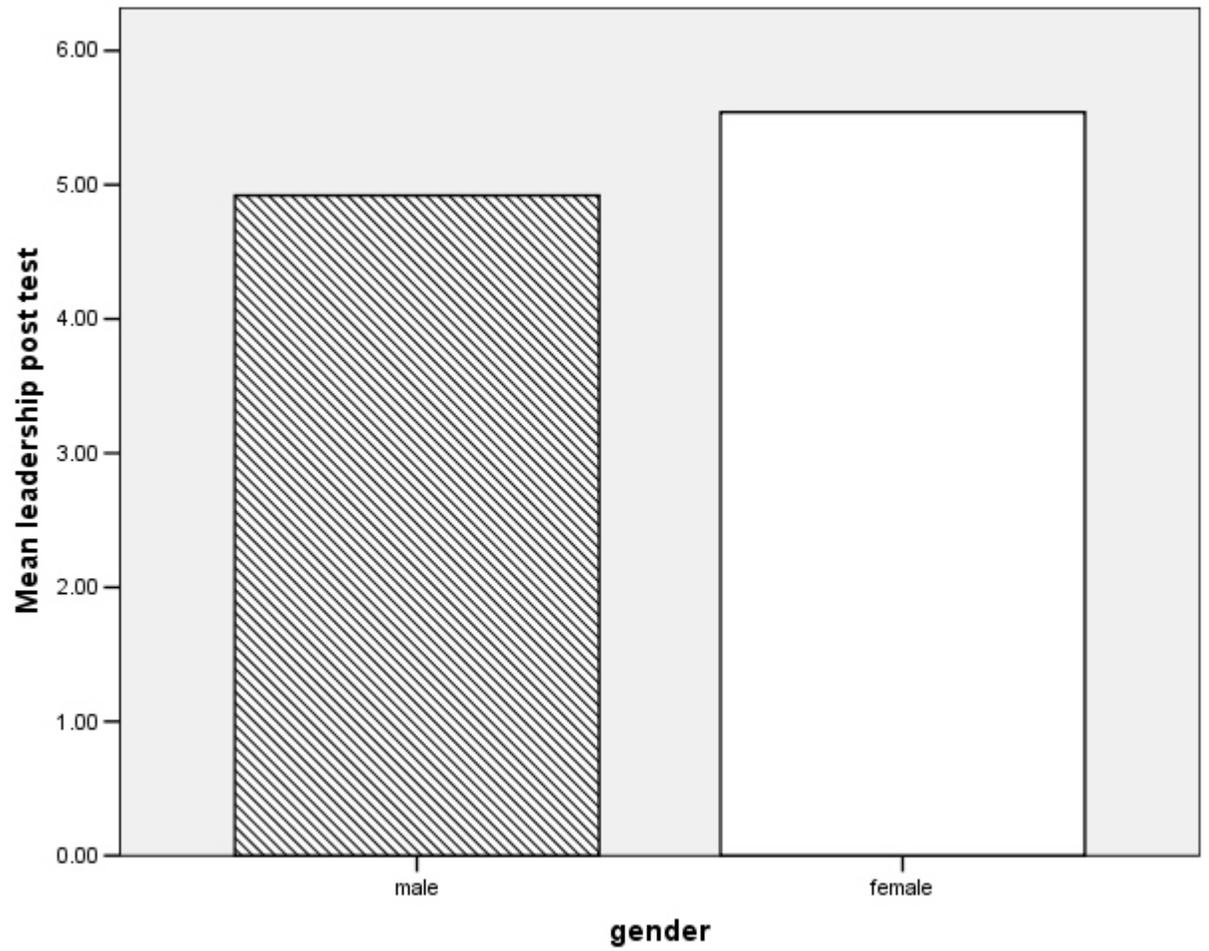
Figure 4. Difference between male and female participants in the leadership posttest subscale.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide evidence of the effectiveness of a community service-learning project as related to the specific development of leadership skills in middle grade students in selected private schools within North Carolina. For the purpose of this study, leadership life skills were defined as the capability to guide others in the achievement of a common goal (Dubosz & Beaty, 1999). Characteristics of leadership life skills that were assessed in this study were leadership ability, cooperation, self-confidence, and citizenship. Community service-learning was defined as a teaching strategy that links community service experiences to classroom instruction (Billig, 2000). The assessment tool used for this study was portions of the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory developed by Carter (1989).

The null hypothesis for this study stated there was no significant statistical difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade students who participate in a community service-learning project from those who do not participate. The first hypothesis of this study was to include the general description and characteristics of middle grade students, service-learning, and qualities that demonstrate leadership potential. The second hypothesis was to compare leadership life skills for both groups that participated in the independent variable to determine if a change in self-reported perception of leadership life skills had occurred. The third hypothesis was to determine if a difference existed between participating in a service-learning project and non-participation in the development of self-assessed leadership life skills.

The service-learning portion of this study attempts to have students explore the nature of a heroic act and leadership skills. During their investigation, the expectation is that students will learn to distinguish between real and false leaders and heroes and will come to understand that many people who they meet daily perform heroic acts. This service-learning project also attempted to have students gain insights about themselves and the people around them as well as to develop an awareness and appreciation of people in the community and the services these people provide that enhance the quality of life.

<div align="center">Summary of Review of Literature</div>

Much research has been conducted on the high school and college levels concerning developing leadership qualities. There is less research available for middle grade students. A study of the literature suggests that leadership ability awareness begins in the middle grades (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000) and that service-learning in the middle grades combines the power of serving others with meaningful learning tied to the school curriculum, thus enhancing leadership life skills potential (Arrington & Moore, 2001). Leadership skills that are instilled during early adolescence evolve throughout adolescence and into adulthood (Dorrance, 1996; Simon & Martens, 1979; Shields & Bredemeir, 1995).

The development of leadership life skills allows middle grade students to succeed within their environment by having a better understanding of their values and, thus, making better decisions as well as communicating and getting along better with others (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992).

Summary of Methodology

The target population for this study was middle grade students. In this study only eighth grade students participated in the project and the assessment. This study was limited to three private schools in North Carolina. Fifty-five students participated. Twenty-one eighth graders from the school that served as one of the control schools did not take the pre-assessment but participated in the service-learning project and took the posttest. Fourteen eighth graders from the school that served as the second of the control groups participated in the pre-assessment but did not participate in the service-learning portion of the study. They covered the same material through assigned readings, lecture, and group discussion (Appendix H). This school participated in the posttest as well. Nineteen eighth graders from the third school participated in the pre-assessment, the service-learning project, and the post-assessment. The students in this school served as the test school.

Summary of Findings

The sample consisted of fifty-five eighth grade students. The demographics of the participants revealed that the average age was 13 years 8 months. The gender of the participants was 58% female and 42% male. Grade equivalencies for each of the participants were based upon the previous year's standardized test scores.

Four of the sub scales of Carter's 10 scales were used in this study. They included the sub scales for leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, and citizenship. Reliability for each of the sub scales were established according to Cronbach's alpha

internal consistency coefficient of reliability. All four scales assessed had a reliability

coefficient of .70 or above, indicating extensive reliability (Phelps, 2005).

Does a difference exist in the perceived leadership life skills of those participating

in a service-learning project compared to those who did not participate? Through a one-

way ANOVA, no significant difference among the three groups was shown at the .05

significance level. Thus the null hypothesis, which stated there was no significant

statistical difference in perceived self-assessed leadership potential among middle grade

students who participate in a community service-learning project from those who do not

participate, is accepted.

Determining if differences exist between leadership life skills development and

gender was examined as well. Only in the subscale of leadership was there a small

difference between the female participants and the male participants (Figure 4).

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

Caution should be exercised in generalizing these findings beyond the

participants.

Hypothesis 1 was met by including the general description and characteristics of

middle grade students, as well as those characteristics that define service-learning and the

qualities that demonstrate leadership potential. Hypothesis 2 was met by comparing the

leadership life skills development as measured by Carter (1989) of the two groups that

participated in the independent variable of service-learning to determine if, in fact, a

change in self-reported perception of leadership life skills had occurred. Hypothesis 3

was met by determining that no relationship at the .05 level of significance existed

between participation in a service-learning project and the development of self-assessed

leadership life skills. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

<div align="center">Limitations of the study</div>

Several limitations to this study restrict its adaptability to a more general

interpretation. They include (a) the length of the short-term study, (b) the lack of student-

buy in, (c) the small sampling number, (d) the self-reporting aspect of the measurement

instrument, (e) the instrument's previous use being limited to high school students and,

(f) the potential for the instrument's validity and reliability to vary as it is administered to

middle grade students.

The project was a short-term, one-time project. Recent literature indicates that

students benefit much more from sustained service projects than a one-time service

project (Youth Service America, 1999). In addition, students were not involved in the

initial selection of the project or the initial assessing of the project, which may decrease

student buy-in. Thus, the results of this study call for additional investigation in order to

yield a greater understanding. The numbers of participants was small. Fifty-five eighth

graders were selected from three different schools with an average of 18 students from

each school.

This study relied heavily on self-report. The self-assessment tool chosen for both

the pre-assessment of two of the three study groups as well as the posttest for all three of

the study groups was The Leadership and Personal Development Inventory (LPDI)

developed by Carter (1989). Finally, this instrument was administered to high school

students. The validity and reliability of this instrument was calculated using that

population. Validity and reliability for middle grade students might vary from that

established for high school students.

        To be useful, any test requires a clear conception of what is actually being

measured. Unfortunately, after years of debate, researchers are no closer to an agreed

upon definition of leadership (Lashway, 1997). According to Lashway's research,

leadership has been correlated over the years to intelligence, social dominance, vision,

energy, interpersonal competence, technical skills, charisma, and many other qualities.

The LPDI assessment limited the potentially endless characteristics of leadership to 76

items.

        Formal tests often do not provide a direct measure of leadership performance, but

they do probe a person's perceptions of his or her performance. Because self-perceptions

are highly subjective, however, test-makers must validate results by correlating scores

with actual performance. If those scoring high on the test are shown to perform well, the

test has value in predicting success (Lashway, 1997). While written instruments are

relatively simple and understandable, their major disadvantage is that a written answer on

a test is at least one step removed from real behavior. The world is filled with people

who test well with paper and pencil but fail life. Yet, there is value in a written self-

assessment. Wendel (1992) posits that paper-and-pencil tests provide indicative signs

rather than samples of leadership capability.   Just as passing a written driver's test does

not guarantee the ability to handle a car effectively, passing that test, however, does

demonstrate an indicative sign of success.

Implications

While the limited scope of this study cautions against generalizing the findings beyond the participants, several implications emerge from the conclusions that were reached. The value of long term integrated and engaging collaborative service-learning projects should not be overlooked. As middle grade students emerge as leaders, the development of their leadership life skills is potentially tied to a fully integrated curriculum that weds academics with service.

This study implies that the component of adequate planning involving a lengthier implementation period as well as stronger student buy-in and reflection needs to be an integral part of every service-learning experience. Student understanding of the context of their service oriented projects as well as the reflective discussions of their concerns, impressions, and feelings will ensure greater success in any integrated endeavor.

Multiple assessment tools including those in addition to self-reporting ones may shed new light on the emerging leadership skills among middle grade students as well. The implication is that multiple assessment tools will highlight different aspects of leadership, both self-perceived as well as observed.

Recommendations

The value of this study rests in the conclusion that more study integrating service-learning projects into the middle grade curriculum with a focus on leadership training needs to take place. Based on this study, the following recommendations are made: (a) Consideration should be given to include more integrated and engaging collaborative service-oriented activities that can impact the development of leadership life skills in

middle grade students; (b) As an important component of planning and implementing,

student buy-in and reflection should be a part of every activity. This gives students the

opportunities to better understand the context of their service-oriented projects, discuss

their concerns, impressions and feelings, and suggest ways to ensure greater success; (c)

Further research should consider using the Carter (1989) Leadership and Personal

Development Inventory to study students' self-assessment using longer-term service-

learning projects. Recent literature indicates that students benefit much more from

sustained service projects than a one-time service project (Youth Service America, 1999).

(d) Research that uses other measurement instruments other than a self-reporting one

designed for high school students should be considered for middle grade students. (e)

More research might determine if similar results would occur should the grade range be

increased or the school selection diversified. (f) Other research designs than the Solomon

Three-Group Design should be used to see if results might differ. (g) Consideration

should be given to researching self-assessed leadership skills in regard to gender. (h)

Further research should be conducted using a random selection that is configured

differently than what was done in this study. (i) Further assessment of the differences

between participating in a service-learning project on youth leadership skills among

middle grade students would do well to use a larger sampling size. The results of this

study should not be generalized to other populations.

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APPENDIX A

Authorization to Use Leadership and Personal Development Inventory

Attached are PDF versions of the PDI Instrument and the key to the scales. We used several versions adapting the terminology for specific groups. The basic items and intent remained constant. You can use the instrument, as is or adapted, but ask that you provide credit by documenting the instrument as follows:

Personal Development Inventory developed by Richard I. Carter as part of an

Iowa Experiment Station Project 2385 entitled, "The Role of Youth

Organizations for Students Interested in Agricultural Careers", 1992.

--

203 NE Eaglewood Dr.

Ankeny, IA 50021

APPENDIX B:

The Leadership and Personal Development Instrument Scales

The Leadership and Personal Development Instrument was developed over a series of years. The instrument is described in the *Journal of Agricultural Education, 30* (No. 4), winter 1989. The instrument is the result of testing and refining of original instruments containing over 200 items. Please use the instrument in any way you can; credit would be appreciated.

The instrument is divided into three parts with scales within two of the three.

Part 1. Group Achievement

Group Drive: Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, & 20

Group Cohesiveness: Questions 1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, & 27

Group Productivity: Questions 6, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 22, 25, & 26

Total Group Achievement: Questions 1 - 27

Part 2. Attitude toward Group Work

Questions 28 - 52

Part 3. Personal Development Inventory

Leadership: Questions 55, 62, 64, 66, 70 & 72

Self Confidence: Questions 54, 59, 63, 67, 75, & 76

Cooperation: Questions 53, 57, 60, 65, 72, & 74

Citizenship: Questions 56, 58, 61, 68, 69, 71, & 73

Total PDI (Personal Development Inventory): Questions 53 - 76

If you have questions regarding the instrument, please contact me.

In regard to operational definitions, the following is a brief definition for each:

Drive = motivation and commitment of members within the group

Cohesiveness = the attraction between the group and its members

Follower Satisfaction = the members' positive feelings toward the group's activities and

accomplishments, and their roles in the group

Productivity = degree of goal achievement

Leadership = level of ability to influence others in identifying and working toward the

goals of the group

Self confidence = members' confidence in their ability to meet the challenges of life

Cooperation = the willingness (attitude) and ability (understanding and skills) to work

with others for a common benefit

Citizenship = degree of character, citizenship and patriotism in accepting responsibility to

participate and contribute to society

Personal Development Inventory developed by Richard I. Carter as part of an Iowa

Experiment Station Project 2385 entitled, "The Role of Youth Organizations for Students

Interested in Agricultural Careers," 1982.

Richard I. Carter, Director Brenton Center & Distance Education, College of Agriculture,
Iowa State University

APPENDIX C

Leadership and Personal Development Inventory

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY

Part I. GROUP ACHIEVEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements carefully. After reading each statement, use the scale provided to rate your feelings toward the statement. If you circle a "1" it would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, a "4" would mean that you neither agree nor disagree and "7" would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement. You may use any number on the scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Occasionally	Usually	Almost Always	Always

1. Our group is really close.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. A few members of our group initiate most of the actions

   and decisions.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Group members want to do a good job.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Members allow other activities to interfere with their

   participation in the group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Our group is enthusiastic about its activities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Our group achieves its goals.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Group meetings are conducted efficiently.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Members like working on group activities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. Members follow through with assigned responsibilities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Members are pressured to participate in group activities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Our group does a good job.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Members take an active part in the group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Members readily volunteer for activities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Our group is the best group in the school.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. Members of the group are best friends with each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Our group works well together.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. Group members are friendly.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. Group discussions are too long.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. Our group continually evaluated its progress.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. Members assume responsibility in the group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. Members feel comfortable with the leadership of

    our group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. Members understand what they are to do.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. Members enjoy working with each other.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. Members can depend upon each other for help.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. Our group needs more time to work on its tasks.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. Group activities are well planned and conducted.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Members support group decisions.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART 2. YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GROUP WORK

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements carefully. After reading each statement, use the scale provided to rate your feelings toward the statement. If you circle a "1" it would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, a "4" would mean that you neither agree nor disagree and "7" would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement. You may use any number on the scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Occasionally	Usually	Almost Always	Always

28. I prefer to do things myself to ensure they get done.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. I am confident of my own abilities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. If it needs to be done right, only I can do it.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. It is important that group members understand the goals

    and objectives of the group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. I spend time doing work for other group members which

    they could do for themselves.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. I listen carefully to opinions of group members.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. I have problems in leading a group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. I am willing to accept different ways of doing things.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

36. The important thing is not who gets credit, but that the job

    gets done.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. I believe that group members are responsible persons. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. Committees are an effective way of carrying out group activities.

                                                                  1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. I trust others.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. I am able to communicate goals and objectives to group

    members.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. The planning of activities should be a group effort.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. It is easier to do things myself.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. I feel comfortable being a group leader.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. I am willing to share power and prestige with other group

    members.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. I feel compelled to constantly check on the progress of

    the group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. I know which group members have the interest and ability

    to do a certain task.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. I am confident in the ability of group members.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. I believe in dividing the work among group members.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. I believe group members are capable.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. I am able to check on the progress of group activities

    without interfering.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. The leader needs to know the group members well enough to

    have an idea of their interests and abilities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. I am a good listener.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART 3. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements carefully. After reading each statement, use the scale provided to rate your feelings toward the statement. If you circle a "1" it would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, a "4" would mean that you neither agree nor disagree and "7" would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement. You may use any number on the scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Hardly Ever	Seldom	Occasionally	Usually	Almost Always	Always

53. I get along with people around me.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. I have a realistic opinion of myself.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. I am recognized as a leader by those of my own age.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

56. I enjoy learning about people with different backgrounds

    and experiences.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

57. I feel change is a part of life.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

58. I live by the beliefs I have learned.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

59. I feel responsible for my actions.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

60. I realize there is often more than one answer to any problem.1 2 3 4 5 6 7

61. I believe that every citizen should vote when they are of age.1 2 3 4 5 6 7

62. I set goals that I want to reach.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

63. I am respected by others my age.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

64. I can explain difficult ideas to others to help them understand.1 2 3 4 5 6 7

65. I am willing to listen to the ideas of others.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

66. I can express my opinions when I feel they are important.1 2 3 4 5 6 7

67. I understand myself.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

68. I respect the property of others.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

69. I try to understand how I fit into today's society.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

70. I can lead a discussion.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

71. I understand the importance of developing values.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

72. I can cooperate and work in a group.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

73. I understand the difference between right and wrong.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

74. I respect the opinions, feelings, and emotions of people of

    different ages.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

75. I am sure of my abilities.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

76. I can accept who I am.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

Sent: Thu 7/13/2006 1:54 PM

From: Watson, Scott

To: Kamm, William, A.

Cc: Pantana, John J.

Subject: RE: IRB approval

Attachments:

Yes, Bill, go ahead and begin.

Scott B. Watson, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies

School of Education

Liberty University

1971 University Blvd.

Lynchburg, VA 24502

434-582-2445

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: *The relationship between participation in service-learning projects and youth leadership life skills development among middle grade students in selected private schools.*

Mr. William A. Kamm, Principal Investigator

Dr. John Pantana, Faculty Advisor

Liberty University

I, …………………………………., agree to participate in youth leadership life skills development project as a participant in a research project entitled: "*The relationship between participation in service-learning projects and youth leadership life skills development among middle grade students in selected private schools*" being conducted by William Kamm as an authorized part of the education and research program at Liberty University.

Purpose: I understand that the purpose of this study is to study youth leadership life skills development through service-learning projects.

Procedure: I understand that the teacher(s) will conduct this project within the context of the social studies curriculum. Selected students will be pre-tested using the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory (LPDI) and then participate in either a service-learning project entitled "Everyday Heroes" or will participate in classroom discussion concerning this topic. The lessons will begin in early September, 2006, and continue for four weeks. This project will include 45 students from three schools associated with the North Carolina Association of Independent Schools. At the conclusion of the four week project, all students will be tested using

the Leadership and Personal Development Inventory. Students choosing not to participate in the youth leadership skills development will receive typically planned curriculum.

Consent: I understand that neither my name or any other personally identifying marks will be attached to any of my data (the LPDI forms) and that the code sheet linking my personal identity information with my data will be kept in a locked and protected location in the investigator's office.

Further, I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, involves no risk to my physical or mental health beyond those encountered in everyday life, and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without consequence. I also understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that only the researcher listed above will have access to my identity and the information associated with my identity. I further understand that for any correspondence conducted by email, confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, I understand that no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Questions: I understand that the information given to me along with any questions I might have had related to this study have been satisfactorily answered. I also know that if I have any additional questions about this research project, I may contact William Kamm by phone at (704)882-9661, or by email at <u>wkamm@liberty.edu</u>.

I also understand that should I have any questions regarding my rights as a participant in this research, I may contact the Dr. John Pantana at jjpantan@liberty.edu.

APPENDIX F

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked any questions necessary and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for y our records.

………… I give my permission to participate.

………… I do not give my permission to participate.

…………………………………..   ……………….

Participant Signature   Date

…………………………………..   ……………….

Signature of parent or guardian   Date

Researcher: I certify that the informed consent procedure has been followed and that I have answered any questions from the participant as completely as possible.

………………………………….   ……………….

Researcher Signature   Date

APPENDIX G

Conceptual Framework

The value of service-learning in the development of life leadership skills

Influenced by
Parents
Teachers
Peers
Learning environment

Middle grade Students

Expectations
Meaningful relationships
Positive altruism

Responds to
Engaged learning
Self-concept
Relationships

Leadership life skills potential through service-learning

Increased personal efficacy
Increased community awareness
Increased awareness of one's personal values
Focused character development
Increased engagement in learning
Increased empathy

APPENDIX H
Everyday Heroes Lesson Plans

Learner Outcomes
Students learn to:
Write essays about heroic traits
Use encouragement, persuasion, and motivation to complete an
assignment as a team.
Develop an effective team using good communication skills and
decision-making practices
Conduct oral interviews
Identify barriers to listening and generate methods to overcome
them
Practice active listening
Interact successfully with different age groups
Compare and contrast shared personal cultural experiences
Compare and contrast the multiple meanings of words in the
context of oral and written communication
Recognize and identify positive community forces

This project partially fulfills the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Social
Studies and for Language Arts for Eighth graders.

Social Studies

8th Grade North Carolina: Creation and Development of the State
Competency Goal 8: The learner will evaluate the impact of demographic,
economic, technological, social, and political developments in North Carolina
since the 1970s.
Objective 8:04 Assess the importance of regional diversity on the
development of economic, social, and political institutions in North
Carolina
Competency Goal 9: The learner will explore examples of and opportunities for
active citizenship, past and present, at the local and state levels
Objective 9:01 Describe contemporary political economic and social
issues at the state and local levels and evaluate their impact on the
community
Objective 9:02 Identify past and present state and local leaders from
diverse cultural backgrounds and assess their influence in affecting change
Objective 9:03 Describe opportunities for and benefits of civic
participation

Language Arts

8th Grade

Competency Goal 1: The learner will use language to express individual perspectives through analysis of personal, social, cultural, and historical issues

       Objective 1:01 Narrate a personal account

       Objective 1:02 Analyze expressive materials that are read, heard and/or viewed

       Objective 1:03 Interact in group activities

       Objective 1:04 Reflect on learning experiences

Competency Goal 2: The learner will use and evaluate information from a variety of resources

       Objective 2:01 Analyze and evaluate informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed

Competency Goal 6: The learner will apply conventions of grammar and language usage

       Objective 6:01 Model an understanding of conventional written and spoken expression

       Objective 6:02 Continue to identify and edit errors in spoken and written English

Rationale

The Need

Today's society tends to primarily promote only famous people as heroes, overlooking – or paying only lip service to – the many ordinary citizens who make extraordinary contributions in their community. Most students leave their communities unaware of who these people are and how their generous and unselfish acts enrich the quality of life for others.

Service Component

Throughout the project, students gain an understanding of the complexities involved in managing a community and an awareness of the tremendous amount of volunteer work performed by citizens in order to keep community programs running smoothly. In the process of learning how ordinary citizens make a difference and celebrating their contributions, the students' sense of pride in their community and belief that they too can contribute is heightened.

Academic Gains

The chief goal is to provide a framework for cooperative engaged learning that inspires critical thinking skills and that reinforces certain concepts about literature studied in the regular classroom. In order to achieve these goals, students learn the rudiments of interviewing for the purpose of research; become active listeners; and present accurate written and oral reports based on their interviews.

Societal Gains
This program aims to have students explore the nature of a heroic act. During their investigation, the expectation is that students will learn to distinguish between real and false heroes and will come to understand that many people whom they meet daily perform heroic acts. The program aims also to have students gain insights about themselves and the people around them. A final aim is to have students develop an awareness and appreciation of people in the community and the services these people provide that enhance the quality of life.

Throughout their interviews and stories, community members reveal the traits and qualities that reflect the true meaning of heroism. Community members also become partners with the students in helping to identify ordinary heroes within the community.

Learning Standards/Outcomes	Activity	Assessment
Students will use agreed upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups	Students brainstorm in small (3 students) groups to create a list of heroic qualities. Students select one person to present their list to the entire group. The characteristics of all groups are written on the board, redundancies are eliminated and the list is prioritized by consensus	Evaluations of the prioritized list are made through journal entries and class discussion. Ways of improving group activities are catalogued and implemented in future sessions
Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions and interviews in order to acquire new knowledge	Students will write essays about people they know personally who might be heroes and read their essays to the class. Students will compare heroic characteristics of these people and these characteristics are added to the master list	Rubric used to evaluate student essays and presentations Interviewees assess accuracy of the summary before it is presented to the class. Students assess each presentation for depth and quality of information. Findings are added to master list of heroic qualities. Students review questioning techniques and the quality of information gathered.
Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the	Service-learning participants: Students interview local citizens to discover information	Accuracy of information in the written interview is checked for accuracy by the interviewee. The oral or written

information to be conveyed	pertaining to heroes. They select one of their group members to present their findings to the class. Control participants: Students read a biography or autobiography from the recommended reading list, making notes of those qualities they deem heroic. Students then either make a short oral presentation with their findings or write a paper (1-2 pages) about their findings.	presentations of the control group are checked for accuracy. Teacher checks for assigned specific details included in interview and summaries. Students verbally critique other groups' presentations, specifically looking for incomplete or unclear information.
Students will identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed	Students will identify the heroic qualities in the books read or in the interviews conducted. During the interviews of the service-learning participants, those being interviewed are assessed of their opinions of what makes a hero	Accuracy of student information is identified through oral presentations as well as class discussions
Students will write compositions of their findings with a clear focus, developing the composition with logically related ideas and adequate supporting details.	These essays are intended to show the evolution of the students' attitudes toward the nature of heroism	All essays are peer edited and evaluated by the teacher on the basis of coherence, a clearly focused main idea, and specific supporting details. Students compare and contrast their first and last essays to determine how their concept of a hero has evolved

Lesson Plans for Service-learning Groups

1. Lesson Plan – Defining Heroism

Objective
To determine those heroic characteristics that are held in common. To establish a working definition of heroic traits through group consensus.

NC Learning Standards
Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:03

Materials
Chalkboard
Newsprint

Procedures
General discussion will focus on heroes who are admired today. Students will suggest heroes with whom they are familiar. A list is drawn up on the chalkboard of heroes. Traits that are specific to each hero are then listed. Commonalities are determined among the heroic traits listed. Students will work in groups to develop lists of characteristics which, in their estimation, qualify one as a hero. Group discussion follows where students make cases for their lists. Through any process determined as fair by instructor and students, a master list of qualities (8-10) is mutually agreed upon as qualifying one as a hero.

Assessment
Students orally assess the values of suggested heroic characteristics. Consensus on mutually agreed upon characteristics will indicate teamwork and collaboration. A list of heroic qualities is created. Evaluations of the prioritized list are made through journal entries and class discussion. Ways of improving group activities are catalogued and implemented in future sessions

2. Lesson Plan – Group Interview I

Objective
To refine the working definition of an ordinary hero. To heighten students' awareness of civic responsibilities. To hone students' interviewing, summarizing, and speaking skills.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:03
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
      Podium
      Student notebooks

Procedures
Students are divided into groups. Each group interviews one of the local citizens who either has made contributions to the community or is likely to know of others who have made such contributions. Students discover the nature and scope of the contributions of local citizens. Each group prepares a summary of its interview and selects a spokesperson to present the information to the entire class, summarizing the content of the group interview. Students may ask questions based upon the information given.

Assessment
Interviewees assess accuracy of the summary before it is presented to the class. Students assess each presentation for depth and quality of information. Findings are added to master list of heroic qualities. Students review questioning techniques and the quality of information gathered.

Checklist for Assessing the Interview
1.   Did you consider the guest an easy or difficult interview? Explain.
2.   What percentage of our goal of obtaining information was realized?
3.   What question sparked the most interesting answer from the guest? Why?
4.   What three things did you learn from the guest that you didn't know before?
5.   What question or questions would you ask the guest now that you didn't think of at the time?
6.   What new characteristics of the hero were mentioned by the guest?
7.   Which characteristics of the hero already on our list were mentioned by the guest?

3. Lesson Plan – Group Interview II

Objective
To continue the project, interviewing another person who has demonstrated heroic characteristics, preferably with a personality and story that differs from the first interviewee.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:03
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
        Podium
        Student notebook

Procedures
Students are divided into groups. Each group interviews one of the local citizens who either has made contributions to the community or is likely to know of others who have made such contributions. Students discover the nature and scope of the contributions of local citizens. Each group prepares a summary of its interview and selects a spokesperson to present the information to the entire class, summarizing the content of the group interview. Students may ask questions based upon the information given

Assessment
Interviewees assess accuracy of the summary before it is presented to the class. Students assess each presentation for depth and quality of information. Findings are added to master list of heroic qualities. Students review questioning techniques and the quality of information gathered.

Checklist for Assessing the Interview
1. Did you consider the guest an easy or difficult interview? Explain.
2. What percentage of our goal of obtaining information was realized?
3. What question sparked the most interesting answer from the guest? Why?
4. What three things did you learn from the guest that you didn't know before?
5. What question or questions would you ask the guest now that you didn't think of at the time?
6. What new characteristics of the hero were mentioned by the guest?
7. Which characteristics of the hero already on our list were mentioned by the guest?

4. Lesson Plan – Reevaluating a Hero

Objective
To review the agreed upon characteristics of a hero and determine the validity of each characteristic as it applies to those interviewed.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:02
		Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:04

Materials
      Student notebooks
      Original list of heroic qualities from lesson plan – Defining Heroism
Newsprint

Procedures
Students review notes they have taken from others' interviews. Commonalities are discussed. Original list of heroic qualities is reviewed and revised as necessary. Priorities are grouped and evaluated. Qualities not originally considered are evaluated and included as necessary. Qualities already listed are defined in more detail and re-prioritized.

Assessment
Students assess the depth of the heroic list orally. Teacher assessment based upon student involvement and interaction

5. Lesson Plan – How Would the Community be Different?

Objective
To determine the value of heroism in everyday life, and how its absence would affect the surrounding local culture.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:01
		Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
        Student notebooks

Procedures
Open discussion about how life would be affected without these qualities. Discussion about the impact these particular people have made in their communities and what would be the possible outcomes if they had not demonstrated their heroic or leadership gifts.
If time allows, the film *It's a Wonderful Life* can be viewed. A short synopsis follows:

It's A Wonderful Life *(1946), was originally made for Liberty Film. It is a popular and heartwarming film made by director Frank Capra. Originally, it was a box-office flop at the time of its release, but became a Christmas movie classic in the 1970s due to repeated television showings at Christmas-time when its copyright protection ended and it became public property. TV stations could then air it for free.*

The film's screenplay (credited as being written by Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, and Capra himself, with additional scenes by Jo Swerling) was based on "The Greatest Gift," an original short story first written on a Christmas card by Philip Van Doren Stern.

It is a dark, bittersweet post-war tale of a savings-and-loan manager who struggles against a greedy banker and his own self-doubting nature in a small town. Do-gooder George Bailey recognizes his life as wonderful and truly rich, even in its humdrum and bleak nature, only after suffering many hardships, mishaps and fateful trials. He is given encouragement by a whimsical, endearing, angel in training named Clarence.

The story is similar to A Christmas Carol*, although told from Bob Cratchit's point-of-view rather than from Scrooge's. The despairing, and melancholy family man is shown what the small town of Bedford Falls, now renamed Pottersville, would be like without him. It's the frightening and nightmarish view of this world*

at Christmas-time that brings him back from self-destruction. He returns to the idyllic, small-town world that he left, with renewed faith and confidence in life itself. Hence, the film's title: It's a Wonderful Life.

Assessment
Essay is evaluated on a grade level essay rubric

6. Lesson Plan – Bridge Essay

Objective
To have students consider the idea that many people in their daily lives perform acts of heroism.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:04
	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Procedure
Previously, students have written an essay about someone real or fictitious who they consider to be a hero. Now they are asked to write an essay about someone who they know personally and consider to be a hero. (This is called a "bridge" essay because it links the idea of heroic qualities to the students' personal experiences). Students read essays to the class and the findings are added to the master list of heroic qualities. Critical analysis by peers further defines those essential qualities of a hero, how they might differ in different situations, and the underlying characteristics that are found in all heroes that have been interviewed.

Materials
        Notebooks, previous "hero essay"

Assessment
Students contrast the two essays to determine how their ideas of a hero have evolved or changed. Group discussion or written essay addresses those changes, if any have taken place.

7. Lesson Plan – Application to Everyday Life

Objective
Reflective component of this service-learning project. Students will reflect on application of what they have read and heard concerning the characteristics of a hero and make life applications through an essay, oral presentation, or multi-media presentation.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:04
	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
Notebooks, previous essays, journal and interview notes

Procedures
Students will reflect on all written materials as well as their own notes, journals, etc. They will discuss their interviews, what made them comfortable, and what made them uncomfortable. They will discuss the value of their findings, as well as the transformation of their heroic qualities from the original list to the final list. They will reflect upon their personal transformation, if any, about their own understanding of a hero through an essay, oral presentation, or multi-media presentation.

Assessment
Assessment will include a grade level rubric for oral or written presentation as well as subjective evaluation of the student's involvement and progression

Lesson Plans for Control Group

1. Lesson Plan – Defining Heroism

Objective
To determine those heroic characteristics that are held in common. To establish a working definition of heroic traits through group consensus.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:03

Materials
Chalkboard
Newsprint

Procedures
General discussion will focus on heroes that are admired today. Students will suggest heroes with whom they are familiar. A list is drawn up on the chalkboard of heroes. Traits that are specific to each hero are then listed. Commonalities are determined among the heroic traits listed. Students will work in groups to develop lists of characteristics that, in their estimation, qualify one as a hero.

Group discussion follows where students make cases for their lists. Through any process determined as fair by instructor and students, a master list of qualities (8-10) are mutually agreed upon as qualifying one as a hero.

Assessment
Students orally assess the values of suggested heroic characteristics. Consensus on mutually agreed upon characteristics will indicate teamwork and collaboration. A list of heroic qualities is created. Evaluations of the prioritized list are made through journal entries and class discussion. Ways of improving group activities are catalogued and implemented in future sessions

2. Lesson Plan – Understanding Literature I

Objective
To refine student understanding of the heroic act through the study of literature.
To evaluate the character of people in literature.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:03
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
Students select a book from the reading list or another book that the teacher
recommends dealing with heroic acts

Procedure
Students read their selected book, taking notes on heroic acts of the character(s)
involved. Students evaluate the character of the people in the book, looking
especially for elements of heroism contained in the ongoing master list of
characteristics. Students read for new characteristics that can be added to the list.
Students write essays detailing heroic characteristics and present them to the class
in open discussion.

Assessment
Student essays are graded primarily on the basis of the depth of the identification
of the heroic characteristics and the clarity of the examples used as supporting
evidence

3. Lesson Plan – Literature Review II

Objective
To continue the project, reading an additional book on a historical hero or finishing the book already selected. To refine student understanding of the heroic act through the study of literature. To evaluate the character of people in literature.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:03
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
Students select an additional book from the reading list or another book that the teacher recommends dealing with heroic acts

Procedure
Students read their selected book, taking notes on heroic acts of the character(s) involved. Students evaluate the character of the people in the book, looking especially for elements of heroism contained in the ongoing master list of characteristics. Students read for new characteristics that can be added to the list. Students write essays detailing heroic characteristics and present them to the class in open discussion.

Assessment
Student essays are graded primarily on the basis of the depth of the identification of the heroic characteristics and the clarity of the examples used as supporting evidence

4. Lesson Plan – Reevaluating a Hero

Objective

To review the agreed upon characteristics of a hero and determine the validity of each characteristic as it applies to those interviewed.

NC Learning Standards
        Social Studies   Competency Goal 9   Objective 9:02
                                                          Objective 9:03
        Language Arts   Competency Goal 1   Objective 1:04

Materials
        Student notebooks
        Original list of heroic qualities from lesson plan – Defining Heroism
Newsprint

Procedures
Students review notes they have taken from the literature studies. Commonalities are discussed. Original list of heroic qualities is reviewed and revised as necessary. Priorities are grouped and evaluated. Qualities not originally considered are evaluated and included as necessary. Qualities already listed are defined in more detail and re-prioritized.

Assessment
Students assess the depth of the heroic list orally. Teacher assessment based upon student involvement and interaction

5. Lesson Plan – How Would the Community be Different?

Objective
To determine the value of heroism in everyday life, and how its absence would affect the surrounding local culture.

NC Learning Standards
Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:01
		Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
    Student notebooks

Procedures
Open discussion about how life would be affected without these qualities. Discussion about the impact these particular people have made in their communities and what would be the possible outcomes if they had not demonstrated their heroic or leadership gifts.
If time allows, the film *It's a Wonderful Life* can be viewed. A short synopsis follows:

It's A Wonderful Life *(1946), was originally made for Liberty Film. It is a popular and heartwarming film made by director Frank Capra. Originally, it was a box-office flop at the time of its release, but became a Christmas movie classic in the 1970s due to repeated television showings at Christmas-time when its copyright protection ended and it became public property. TV stations could then air it for free.*

The film's screenplay (credited as being written by Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, and Capra himself, with additional scenes by Jo Swerling) was based on "The Greatest Gift," an original short story first written on a Christmas card by Philip Van Doren Stern.

It is a dark, bittersweet post-war tale of a savings-and-loan manager who struggles against a greedy banker and his own self-doubting nature in a small town. Do-gooder George Bailey recognizes his life as wonderful and truly rich, even in its humdrum and bleak nature, only after suffering many hardships, mishaps and fateful trials. He is given encouragement by a whimsical, endearing, angel in training named Clarence.

The story is similar to A Christmas Carol*, although told from Bob Cratchit's point-of-view rather than from Scrooge's. The despairing, and melancholy family man is shown what the small town of Bedford Falls, now renamed Pottersville, would be like without him. It's the frightening and nightmarish view of this world*

at Christmas-time that brings him back from self-destruction. He returns to the idyllic, small-town world that he left, with renewed faith and confidence in life itself. Hence, the film's title: It's a Wonderful Life.

Assessment
Essay is evaluated on a grade level essay rubric

6. Lesson Plan – Bridge Essay

Objective
To have students consider the idea that many people in their daily lives perform acts of heroism.

NC Learning Standards

Social Studies	Competency Goal 8	Objective 8:04
	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:02
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:04
	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Procedure
Previously, students have written an essay about someone real or fictitious whom they consider to be a hero. Now they are asked to write an essay about someone whom they know personally and consider being a hero. (This is called a "bridge" essay because it links the idea of heroic qualities to the students' personal experiences.) Students read essays to the class and the findings are added to the master list of heroic qualities. Critical analysis by peers further defines those essential qualities of a hero, how they might differ in different situations and the underlying characteristics that are found in all heroes that have been reviewed. Individuals list their personal criteria for what makes a hero.

Materials
Notebooks, previous "hero essay"

Assessment
Students contrast the two essays to determine how their ideas of a hero have evolved or changed. Group discussion or written essay addresses those changes, if any have taken place.

7. Lesson Plan – Application to Everyday Life

Objective
Reflective component of this service-learning project. Students will reflect on application of what they have read and heard concerning the characteristics of a hero and make life applications through an essay, oral presentation, or multi-media presentation.

NC Learning Standards
Social Studies	Competency Goal 9	Objective 9:03
Language Arts	Competency Goal 1	Objective 1:01
		Objective 1:02
		Objective 1:04
	Competency Goal 2	Objective 2:01
	Competency Goal 6	Objective 6:01
		Objective 6:02

Materials
        Notebooks, previous essays, journal and literature notes

Procedures
Students will reflect on all written materials as well as their own notes, journals, etc. They will discuss the books they chose, what was interesting, and what was not. They will discuss the value of their findings, as well as the transformation of their heroic qualities from the original list to the final list. They will reflect upon their personal transformation, if any, about their own understanding of a hero through an essay, oral presentation, or multi-media presentation.

Assessment
Assessment will include a grade level rubric for oral or written presentation as well as subjective evaluation of the student's involvement and progression.

VITAE

William (Bill) A. Kamm is the son of the late Albert and Mary Kamm. Born in Sioux City, IA, in 1951, he grew up on a small farm east of Lawton, IA. He graduated from Lawton-Bronson High School in May 1969. Bill received his undergraduate degree from Concordia College (now Concordia University), Seward, NE, in 1973, earned his Master's Degree from Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, in 1982, his Principal's Certification from The University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, in 1984, and completed his Ed.D. program through Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, graduating in spring 2007.

Bill has served in schools in Ohio, Kentucky and North Carolina both as a teacher and as an administrator. As a teacher, he has enjoyed instructing in subjects including math, language arts, art, and social studies from third grade through early high school. As an administrator of three different schools, he has placed emphasis on research-based teaching methodologies, all aspects of effective teacher training, the thorough integration of subject matter, and the involvement of students in the application of their studies in meaningful service to the community.

Bill was instrumental in the establishment of two schools, Resurrection Christian School in Charlotte, NC, where he served as administrator for 15 years, and Lake Park Academy in Indian Trail, NC, where he served as administrator for 10 years. Bill has served as the president-elect and as the president for both the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod's Southeastern District Principals' Conference and Teachers' Conference. In addition, he has served on the Southeastern District's evangelism team and has been involved in adult literacy programs associated with a local community college. Recently, he was recognized with The Home Town Hero award for his civic contributions to his present hometown of Lake Park, NC. Bill and his bride, Carol, have been married for 33 years and have three grown sons, three daughter-in-laws, and three grandchildren.