

School-Based Service-Learning for Promoting Citizenship in Young People: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

An engaged citizenry is essential for a strong democracy. In many democratic nations, however, various forms of civic and political participation are declining. Whether reflected in reduced union membership, church attendance, voter turnout, or other means of participation, the trends are apparent and have caused many to invest efforts in promoting citizenship attitudes and behaviors in the younger generations.

School-based service-learning is a teaching strategy that links community service with academic instruction and has been suggested as one possible approach to promoting citizenship in youth. Previous reviews have lacked specificity in determining whether the available evidence shows these programs are actually effective.

The objective of this review is to evaluate the efficacy of school-based service-learning programs in their ability to promote positive citizenship qualities in adolescent youth. After searching electronic databases and websites, only two randomized controlled trials were found to meet inclusion criteria. A critical analysis of the studies revealed various weaknesses in methodology and common limitations and challenges to studying service-learning programs. Although the available evidence shows service-learning programs are helpful for youth development, more quality research is needed to confirm that these programs are effective in promoting positive citizenship qualities in young people.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An engaged citizenry is essential for a democracy to survive and thrive (Reinke, 2005, Ichilov, 1998). Without civic and political participation from the people, democracy is weakened and a nation becomes vulnerable to increasing social problems. In recent decades, democracy has been threatened by a growing problem of civic disengagement in many countries.

This chapter will discuss the evidence for declining civic and political participation, address efforts made to promote citizenship in the younger generations, and suggest the potential for school-based service-learning programs as an approach to promoting citizenship in adolescents. Issues about defining and utilizing citizenship as an outcome will also be discussed, in addition to the limitations of recent reviews which present a need for this systematic review.

Prevalence and Severity of Civic Disengagement

It is important to note that the concept of citizenship—and thus the notion of what constitutes civic engagement—is complex and varies across culture and context. Post-communist countries, for example, struggle with different aspects of civic engagement than more advanced democracies in the Western world. Further still, within each advanced democracy, the specific areas of civic disengagement that are considered problematic will vary greatly based on political agendas, the state of societies (i.e., stable or transitional), values systems, and historical context, to name a few. However, virtually all conceptions of an “engaged citizenry” involve components of civic and political participation (Haste, 2004).

Civic Participation

Engaged citizens participate socially in ways that bind them to other citizens, the community, or society to which they belong (Storrie, 1992). Social capital is often used to describe this interdependence and is one key indicator of the level of civic participation in a country. It is defined as “the features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks, that can

improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action” (Putnam, 1993).

Communities with higher levels of social capital are thought to be able to cooperate better and more frequently to overcome social problems, keep the government more honest and responsive, and improve democratic institutional performance (Dowley and Silver, 2003).¹

In many advanced democracies, various forms of social capital are waning. More specifically, there is a common trend of declining participation in unions, churches, political parties, and volunteering (Putnam, 2002).² In the United States (U.S.), for example, involvement with many large civic organizations has declined steadily since 1969, with approximately 50% less membership today (Putnam, 2000). In Australia, the number of volunteers in formal organized settings has fallen by almost a third over thirteen years (Cox, 2002). Recent research on the advanced industrial democracies that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows that unions in more than three-fourths of the 18 largest, politically stable capitalist democracies experienced sustained declines from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, which accelerated throughout the OECD after 1990 (Griffin et al., 1990, Putnam, 2002) (see Figure 1). Additionally, church attendance has been steadily declining over the past three decades, a trend most notably seen in European countries (Putnam, 2002) (see Figure 2).

¹ It should be acknowledged that social capital can not only produce social “goods” but also social “bads”; some forms of collective action are harmful to democracies. This review focuses on promoting positive social outcomes.

² The specific forms of social capital that are diminishing depend on the country and its culture, political, and historical context. Some countries have a generally high level of social capital and may consequently be only struggling with a few components of social capital.

Figure 1
Union Membership Rates Decline after 1980 (except in Scandinavia)³

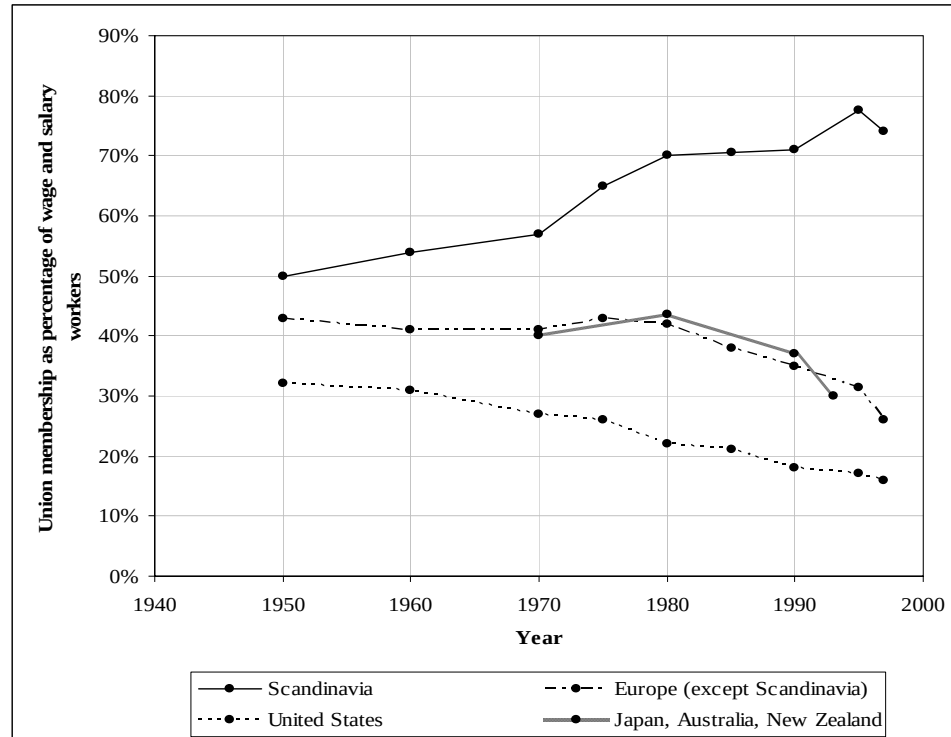
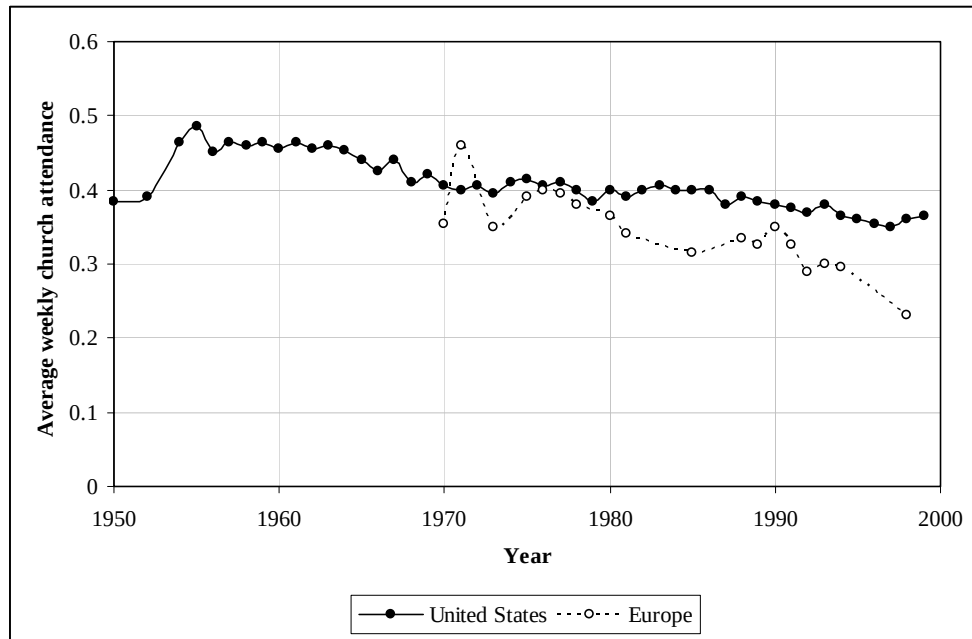


Figure 2
Church Attendance Declines in Europe and the United States

³ All graphs were taken from Putnam (2002): *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*—see Works Cited for details



Younger democracies more readily and understandably struggle with promoting social capital. In the Czech Republic, only about 20% of Czechs volunteer occasionally to help a non-profit organization (USAID, 2000) despite the approximately 44,000 non-governmental organizations in the country and the 88% of Czechs who say they are freer now to join an organization than during communism (Padolsky, 2003).

Due to difference in perspective, many people may not consider civic disengagement to be a problem in their country, whether measured by social capital or other means. Regardless of opinion, even the strongest of democratic nations should seek the promotion of civic engagement in order to sustain that strength and be in a position to reform and transform civil society as new challenges or threats arise.

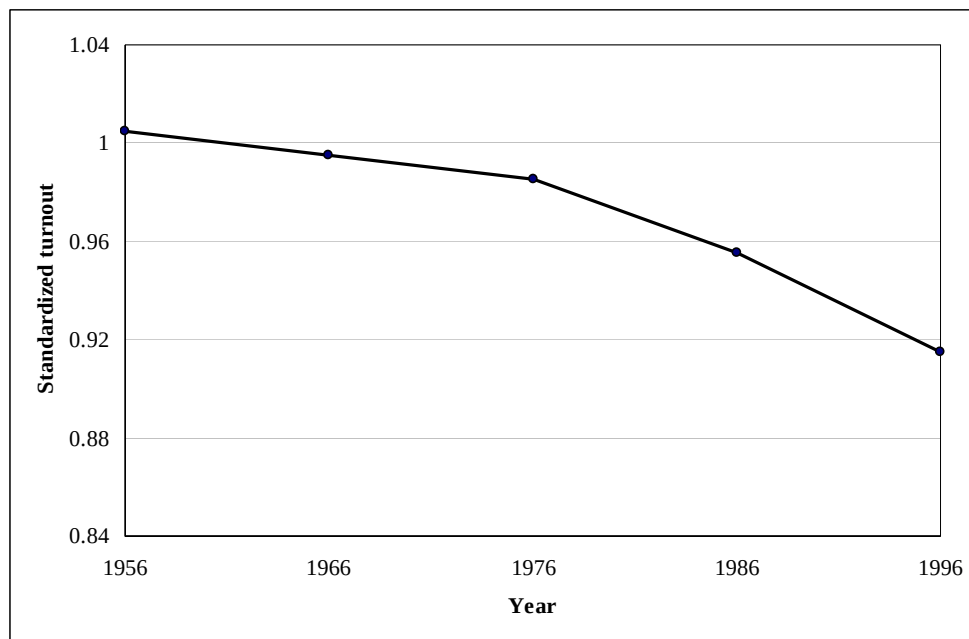
Although levels of social capital have generally remained high in many countries (e.g., Great Britain, Sweden), concern over civic disengagement often arises over lower levels of positive political participation, particularly amongst youth.

Political Participation

A primary form of political participation is that of voting. A clear scholarly consensus has shown that electoral participation in virtually every advanced industrial democracy has

experienced a decline: in 17 out of the 19 OECD countries, recent turnout figures have been lower than those of the early 1950s, from approximately 80% turnout in the 1950s to approximately 70% in the 1990s (Putnam, 2002, Wuthnow, 2002) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Voter Turnout Decline in the OECD Nations⁴



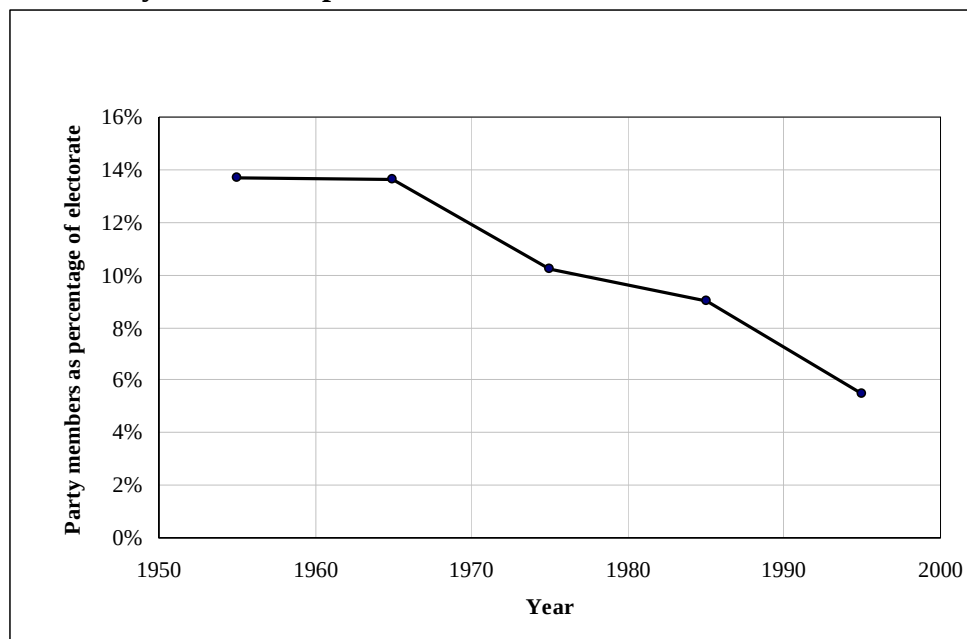
This trend is of greater concern with the younger generations. In the U.S., the percentage of 18 to 29 year olds who voted in the Presidential elections dropped from about half in the early 1970s to less than one-third in the 2000 election (Reinke, 2005). In Britain, voting amongst

⁴ Note: Entries represent a three-year moving average of standardized turnout numbers, with the average turnout in the first two elections of the 1950s serving as a baseline for each country (Putnam 2002).

youth in general elections decreased from 43% in 1972 to 30% in 1999 (Pirie and Worcester, 2000).

The same trend is seen in declining public engagement in political parties—by the 1990s weakening partisan identification had become virtually universal throughout the OECD, including Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (see Figure 4); additionally, the decline appears to be most concentrated in youth (Putnam, 2002). In the U.S. and Britain, for example, young people have displayed a lack of knowledge and interest in the government and political system (Levine and Lopez, 2002, Molloy et al., 2002, National Commission on Service-Learning, 2002, Torney-Purta, 2002). Furthermore, many young people feel helpless when it comes to participating in democracy: they do not feel they can make a difference, solve problems in communities, or have a meaningful impact on politics or government (Lake Snell Perry & Associates & the Tarrance Group, 2002).

Figure 4
Party Membership Declines in OECD Nations, 1970s—1990s



Implications

Research in the U.S. suggests that if young people do not engage with the community in their youth, they are more likely to remain detached as a citizen when they are adults (Morgan and

Streb, 2003, Beane et al., 1981, Hanks and Eckland, 1978, Otto, 1976, Verba et al., 1995, Beck and Jennings, 1991, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Understandably, policy makers and educational leaders have expressed deep concern for the future of democracy (Billig, 2003a).

Approaches to Promoting Citizenship in Young People

As a result of this common concern over civic disengagement, many democratic nations have engaged in various initiatives to promote good citizenship among youth.

Citizenship Education

Incorporating citizenship education into the school curriculums has been a common approach to promoting citizenship in many advanced democracies, often involving national policy initiatives. In the U.S., studies have shown that various forms of citizenship education resulted in youth displaying more political tolerance and feelings of political efficacy (ETS, 1991a, ETS, 1991b, Brody, 1994). In a study of 28 nations done by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement), data was gathered from 90,000 youth and teachers on a range of citizenship issues, exploring values, expectations, and practice (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, Torney-Purta and Amadeo, 2003, Torney-Purta and Richardson, n.d.). The study showed striking cultural differences within the context of citizenship education, but in general, more than 72% of students believed that they had learned the positive attributes of citizenship. However, there was a common disconnect between knowledge and intentions to participate in future civic and political action. In Britain, for example, although 44% of youth agreed voting is important and 63% acknowledged that voting had an effect on how the country was run, only 12% were “absolutely certain” to vote (Nestle Family Monitor, 2003). Some countries—including highly industrialized Western nations where students had a high level of political knowledge—were notable for a low level of engagement and participation (e.g., Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden) (Haste, 2004). The overall body of evidence suggests that level of civic knowledge is only a partial predictor of participation, and that cultural factors are important to consider (Haste, 2004).

This knowledge model assumes that information alone will naturally lead to understanding, motivation, and involvement; that is, civic knowledge will motivate civic participation (Haste, 2004). Although knowledge is fundamentally important to development, it may not be

enough—many advocate that it is through experience of participation in relevant action that a young person gains an identity as an active citizen, as well as the skills and efficacy to become one (Haste, 2004, Hedin and Eisikovits, 1982). Additionally, many participants of this approach feel that citizenship education is too formal, rendering learning artificial and cut off from life (Fogelman, 1997).

Socialization

Another approach to promoting citizenship that has been largely accepted as inadequate is that of socialization. Under the model of socialization, there was a knowledge base thought necessary for citizens, which included a single set of facts, beliefs, and behaviors reflecting a unified political system. The agencies responsible for socialization—first the family, then the schools, and later those institutions most influential in youth's lives—would communicate to the youth what mature citizens knew and practiced (McLeod, 2000). With this system in place, youth were presumed to internalize what they learned, which would lead to a society assured of being perpetuated from one generation to the next (Yates and Youniss, 1999a).

This approach is viewed by many to be insufficient, if not ineffective, for many reasons. Alongside problems such as different world views of citizenship that are incompatible with the taught standard, the main problem was that developing youth were seen as passive recipients non-reactive to the learning process (McLeod, 2000). Whereas society is often defined in formal and abstract terms, democracy as a set of rights and obligations must ultimately be put into practice if it is to have meaning for people's lives (Giddens, 1993). Although factors such as family, school involvement, and type of community influence a youth's development in interconnected ways, the socialization process itself lacks a consolidated or focused means of communicating the responsibilities of a citizen and a specific method to help youth internalize a civic identity.

Potential Components for an Effective Approach

Civic knowledge rooted in *doing*, often referred to as experiential education, may be a more promising approach. Many studies show that active participation during adolescence (e.g., student government, extracurricular activities) is linked with civic engagement by these same persons later in adulthood (Beane et al., 1981, Hanks and Eckland, 1978, Otto, 1976, Verba et

al., 1995, Beck and Jennings, 1991, Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). More specifically, other studies show that activism and service in youth are associated with life-long civic engagement in the forms of voting, trust in government, and involvement in voluntary organizations (Youniss et al., 1997, Stewart et al., 1998, Jennings, 2002).

Many researchers have taken the theoretical perspective that the most effective way to promote civic identity formation and thus continued civic engagement in adulthood is by engaging youth in civic activities (Yates and Youniss, 1999b). This viewpoint is consistent with Erikson's theory of development in which he suggests that an identity search begins in early adolescence and that the accumulation of these experiences during adolescence leads to a commitment to particular values and beliefs (Erikson, 1966). The findings in this area, however, are subject to self-selection bias, and experimental research has not consistently produced positive results (Zaff and Michelsen, 2001).

In recent years, theorists have focused more specifically on *community service* as a potential facilitator of civic engagement, saying that service enhances fundamental aspects of citizenship by connecting adolescents to society, stimulating their sense of social responsibility, and enhancing their awareness of social and political issues (Metz et al., 2003, Eyler and Giles, 1999, Youniss et al., 1997). However, other commentators question whether service—voluntary or mandatory—has the capacity to turn youth into active and engaged citizens who have the skills and abilities to assess and solve problems (Metz and Youniss, 2003). For example, a recent report asserted that even though rates of service are increasing in the U.S., youth involvement in formal political activities has remained distinctly individualistic (National Association of Secretaries of State, 1999). One must also consider that service in certain cultures, based on history and political conditions, may not promote positive civic engagement. For example, whereas service in the U.S. is often oriented toward charity, volunteerism in Eastern and central Europe has been historically viewed as a “free” and uncensored space in which to organize political opposition (Flanagan et al., 1999).

Among community service programs, many educators and researchers have advocated that *reflection* is an important factor in promoting youth's personal and sociomoral development (Leming, 2001, Billig, 2000, Waterman, 1997, Blyth et al., 1997), particularly in the process of

identity formation (Yates and Youniss, 1997). Despite strong belief in this component, there is little research to validate its importance.

School-Based Service-Learning

Service-learning may be one way to rebuild the sense of civic engagement in democratic societies. Service-learning programs take advantage of the increasing levels of volunteerism among youth—most markedly seen in the U.S. and Britain (Fogelman, 1990, Skinner and Chapman, 1999, Putnam, 2000)—as well as provide experiential learning opportunities.

Defining Service-Learning

School-based service-learning is a teaching strategy that explicitly links community service to academic instruction (Billig, 2000). In the U.S., “service-learning” is an official term used by policy makers and educational leaders, and its many proponents tend to have varying definitions. The Corporation for National Service Learning more specifically defines service-learning as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that:

- is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community-service program in which the participants are enrolled;
- helps foster civic responsibility;
- is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- is coordinated with a school (primary, secondary, or institution of higher education) and with the community; and
- provides structured time for the students to reflect on the service experience (Bhaerman et al., 1998, Stanton et al., 1999, Billig, 2000).

Service-learning is distinctive from traditional voluntarism or community service in that it intentionally connects service activities with curriculum concepts and includes structured time for reflection. These programs can take many forms and are endlessly diverse in content.

Example

Project: Controlling Buckthorn (National Youth Leadership Council, 2004)

Academic link: Science and Social Studies

Description: With a growing threat of buckthorn (a non-native shrub that spreads aggressively, forcing out local flora and tree saplings), seventh and eighth grade students⁵ did an issue analysis, community education program, and cleanup projects. The students divided themselves into action groups to research and respond to the problem. The groups had different roles, to include educating elementary students, conducting public surveys, contacting media outlets, and designing a brochure for a river bluff specialist. The students also helped the county Parks Department with a buckthorn removal project.

Reflection component: Students discussed and wrote about issues relating to buckthorn. In the final reflection activity, they worked in groups to create and share reports about their group experiences.

School-based

Service-learning is often viewed as a way to revive the central role that schools can play in developing caring, responsible citizens who deeply understand democracy and the meaning of civic responsibility (Billig, 2000). The school is the only social institution that can virtually reach every young person, and it provides a structured environment in which reflection can be incorporated into youth's experiences. The school environment also addresses the cognitive and social foundations for activities that research shows are related to reaching the goals of promoting citizenship (Billig, 2003a).

The school setting can be especially advantageous within more newly formed democratic states, such as East Germany—youth in these countries must learn how to become politically active citizens within a democratic system, but this task might be better accomplished without parents and neighbors serving as role models, since they, themselves, need to acquire the same new political habits (Oswald, 1999).

Secondary schools, which contain youth aged 11 to 18, may be particularly appropriate for youth development when it comes to promoting citizenship.

⁵ Youth aged approximately 12 to 14

Adolescents

Many view service-learning as an attractive pedagogy for use with adolescents (Scales et al., 2000). It is during this time of adolescence that youth are forming their identity and are developmentally shifting from a phase of self-oriented concerns with concrete consequences to themselves, to more socially oriented concerns with the impact of their behaviors on others, their relationships with others, and the social organizations of which they are members (Berkowitz, 2002). Service-learning is considered to meet the developmental needs of adolescents—who are often prone to decreasing self-esteem—by assuming meaningful roles that help build in them a sense of being competent, valuable, and connected to others (Scales et al., 2000, Wigfield and Eccles, 1994).

As mentioned above, Erikson's theory of development posits that an identity search begins in adolescence. Although service-learning has the potential to form a positive civic identity in adolescents, the outcome may vary depending on the culture and context of the country in which the youth resides. Youth cognitively construct the moral and political understandings that form their identity, but different societal contexts offer varied opportunities and options that affect the socialization process as well as its outcome on a young person (Yates and Youniss, 1999a).

The social and political context in any country is complex and often filled with ambiguous messages (Yates and Youniss, 1999c). School-based service-learning programs may be an effective method for helping youth make sense of the world as it relates to their own lives and for helping them understand their role as a positive citizen. In the same vein, however, any well-intentioned effort such as service-learning may appear to develop "good" citizens who understand their role in contexts such as community service, but it cannot ensure that even the most "kind-hearted" and "service-oriented" people will apply the same moral concepts to other areas of their lives—consider the lapse of integrity and morality in well-respected leaders in the business world (e.g., Enron scandal) and the church (e.g., Catholic priests sexually abusing young boys).

Prevalence and Potential

Service-learning programs are predominantly found in the U.S. According to a 1999 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 32% of all public schools organized service-

learning programs, including nearly half of all high schools (Skinner and Chapman, 1999). Research in the U.S. has claimed that service-learning programs can help develop a vast majority of the skills and competencies associated with citizenship, as well as many other positive outcomes (e.g., social development, academic performance) (Education Commission of the States, 1999, Billig, 2000). Despite differences in culture and context, service-learning programs may help other advanced democracies promote or maintain high levels of civic engagement, if found to be effective.

Citizenship as an Outcome

Civic identity is not only dependent on the society in which a person lives but also on the general perceptions of democracy and citizenship within that society. The concept of “good citizenship” is not simply defined. In both theory and practice, there are many meanings and conceptions of citizenship, particularly regarding what notions of citizenship best promote a strong democracy.

Defining Democracy

Citizenship is rooted in theories of democracy, and with each form of democracy comes different roles and responsibilities for citizens. See Appendix 1 for one classification scheme of the different types of democracy.

With each concept of democracy, different roles of citizens result and are defined by varying levels of skills and knowledge. If seen from a liberal standpoint, citizens are individuals who participate at the level they determine (e.g., volunteer, vote, or do nothing). Alternatively, the republican model expects that citizens participate in the community; simple knowledge of one’s role is not enough and skills of participation—talking, listening, willingness to act—are necessary (Chi, 2000).

Defining Good Citizenship

For decades, there has been an on-going debate between philosophers, historians, and political scientists about which ideas of citizenship would best advance democracy (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). The reality is that no single formulation on these concepts will emerge—debates will continue because the stakes are so high (Connolly, 1983). Good citizenship implies a good

society, and these different perspectives will continue to shape the variety of approaches toward developing good citizens (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004).

Taking into consideration the wide spectrum of perspectives and the important differences in the ways educators seek to achieve democratic educational aims, there are potentially three kinds of citizens that are needed to support an effective democratic society: the *personally responsible citizen*, the *participatory citizen*, and the *justice-oriented citizen* (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Programs aiming to develop citizenship in youth generally promote one or more of these three types of citizens⁶.

To develop strong democratic communities, it is important to acknowledge all concepts of democracy and citizenship. Developing commitments for each type of citizen will support the growth of a more democratic society (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004).

Previous Reviews

Findings

There are no reviews done exclusively on the effects of service-learning in relation to citizenship outcomes; however, a few recent reviews have been published on service-learning in general.

One summary (Billig, 2000) discusses the effects of service-learning on a variety of outcomes, to include citizenship. Billig (2000) suggests that service-learning helps develop students' sense of civic and social responsibility and their citizenship skills, as well as provides an avenue for students to become active, positive contributors to society.

One meta-analysis looks at the connection between citizenship and many forms of service, to include service-learning (Perry and Katula, 2001). From their findings, these researchers conclude that the type of service that produces the most consistent positive results for citizenship is service-learning.

⁶ See Appendix 2 for a description of each type of citizen.

Limitations of Previous Reviews

These literature reviews are unclear in their methods and make no mention of any systematic effort in search strategy and study selection. Billig (2000) (though not the meta-analysis) did not appear to account for studies outside the U.S. There are potentially many programs that meet the definition of “school-based service-learning” but may not have explicitly used the term “service-learning” to describe the program.

Billig (2000) does not report a search strategy or any other methodology. She notes the limitations of the research chosen for the review (i.e., most studies lack a control group, do not track effects over time, vary in implementation and quality of program, use self-reports, etc.) but does not specifically exclude any studies based on a set of criteria. Findings from all studies—regardless of quality—are discussed as a whole, making it difficult to see specifically what research, if any, is rigorous enough to support a conclusion that service-learning effectively promotes citizenship in young people.

The meta-analysis done by Perry and Katula (2001) discusses all forms of service and thus lacks significant detail on service-learning and its effect on citizenship. Although comprehensive in their search of databases, the broad scope of the research left little room for a specific analysis and discussion of the studies dealing with service-learning programs. Quality of research was also not discussed in detail, again due to the large scope of the search strategy.

In both the review and the meta-analysis, the authors included their own studies, creating a case for bias. Additionally, they do not discuss blinding or researcher bias.⁷

No reviews or summaries have been done specifically on the efficacy of service-learning as it relates to citizenship, and more effort is needed to systematically bring together the international evidence, if any does exist outside the U.S.

Objective

⁷ A systematic review should include all available evidence that meets its inclusion criteria, regardless of authorship. Researchers conducting reviews of areas in which they have done considerable research should note their interests in the outcomes of reviews.

Although these previous reviews provide a good overview of service-learning programs and their potential for positive impact, a more focused review is needed to critically examine the quality of methodology and fidelity of program implementation.

As such, this review aims to assess the effectiveness of school-based service-learning programs in promoting citizenship in young people.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

This chapter will present the criteria for including studies in this review as well as describe the search strategy used to obtain relevant studies.

Criteria for Including Studies in this Review⁸

Types of Studies

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of school-based service learning programs were included.

An RCT is an experiment in which participants are randomly allocated to intervention and control groups. While other types of studies can provide some information about the effectiveness of an intervention, RCTs provide stronger evidence of causal relationships than do lower levels of research. The process of randomization minimizes the likelihood that the effects

⁸ See Appendix 3 for data collection form

of an intervention are due to chance or biases. With complex social interventions, many extraneous variables exist, and rigorous research is needed to prevent false associations that would obscure the true effects of an intervention. RCTs are certainly not without limitations, however, they allow logical conclusions that cannot be reached through non-experimental research. Although other research designs can provide valuable information, RCTs are best suited for determining the effectiveness of an intervention.

Studies that were not randomized but had comparison groups were classified as excluded studies and briefly discussed. All other designs were not considered for this review.

Types of Participants

Young people aged 11 to 18 who participated in the school-based service-learning program were included. It is this age range that is generally found in secondary schools, and according to the World Health Organization (1980), these ages also encompass most of what is defined as adolescence (ages 10-19). Although service-learning programs can take place at the primary and post-secondary levels of school, this review focuses on the secondary level due to the theories that identity formation largely begins in these adolescent years. It is thus reasonable to assume that youth are also likely to start formulating who they are and would like to be as citizens in the wider community.

Types of Interventions

The interventions of interest were “school-based service-learning” programs, which at the minimum, had to involve a teaching strategy that explicitly linked community service experiences to classroom instruction (Billig, 2000). Studies with programs not meeting this baseline definition were excluded from discussion in this review.

The intervention was required to be school-based—that is, the community service experienced by the students must have been intentionally incorporated into the school’s academic curriculum⁹ (e.g., structured time for reflection).

⁹ The community service could have been performed during or outside of school hours.

The intervention must have involved youth at the secondary-level of education who were officially enrolled as a student of the respective school.

Comparison Groups

Studies were required to have one or more comparison group. The comparison group(s) could have included any of the following:

- 1) Students not involved in the service-learning program (i.e., no intervention)
- 2) Students involved in another form or different type of service-learning program
- 3) Students participating in community service not explicitly linked to classroom instruction

Types of Outcome Measures

As previously discussed, defining citizenship is not simple; likewise, measuring citizenship is complicated, and there is no one method that captures every dimension of citizenship, if any, depending on how one defines good citizenship.

Understandably, most studies examine only a few components of citizenship. Studies included in this review must have analyzed one or more of the following citizenship outcome components:

- 1) **Attitudes about citizenship** (could be with respect to government, societal institutions, personal responsibilities as a citizen, etc.)
- 2) **Awareness of school and community** issues, needs, problems, and resources
- 3) **Civic responsibility** in terms of the attitude of one's role in contributing to school and community and actual contributions through volunteering, service, leadership, planning, and other roles
- 4) **Feelings of community efficacy**—the belief in oneself to participate in community issues and settings and having the skills and/or ability to do so, acting as a resource for community change now and later in life
- 5) **Feelings of political efficacy**—the belief in oneself to participate in the political arena and having the skills and/or ability to do so (e.g., voting, voicing opinion to government representatives, etc.)

- 6) ***Political knowledge/attentiveness***—the awareness and understanding of current and past political and social events
- 7) ***Social conscience/justice***—the sense of right and wrong relative to social inequities and the potential need to advocate for fairness (RMC Research Corporation, 2005)
- 8) ***Voting behavior*** at short-, medium-, and long-term follow-up
- 9) ***Self-esteem***

Studies were not required to use the same terminology for outcome measures, especially considering the variation across culture and context. At a minimum, they must have met the definitions of the above components.

Studies that did not utilize a psychometrically sound, well-validated instrument to measure outcomes were also excluded. Where scales have been adapted, Cronbach alphas will be shown to demonstrate their reliability.

Search Strategy for Identification of Studies

To minimize publication bias, the search strategy was designed to identify published and unpublished studies.

Electronic Searches of Databases

The following databases were searched electronically:¹⁰

- The Cochrane Collaboration Library
- Medline
- Excerpta Medica (EMBASE) database
- Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)
- Psychological Abstracts (PsycINFO)
- Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC)
- Sociological Abstracts

¹⁰ See Appendix 4 for electronic search terms

- The Social, Psychological, Educational and Criminological Trials Register of the Campbell Collaboration (C2-SPECTR)
- Social Science Citation Index
- Dissertation Abstracts International

Website Searches

The following websites were searched to uncover unpublished evaluations and any studies not identified through the database searches:

- Learn and Serve America: <http://www.learnandserve.org>
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: <http://www.servicelearning.org>
- National Service-Learning Partnership: <http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>
- Corporation for National and Community Service: <http://www.cns.gov>
- Learning In Deed: <http://www.learningindeed.org>
- Child Maltreatment Research Listserv, Cornell

For each website, every link was hit, to include those leading to other relevant websites, which were consequently searched in the same manner. The library catalog on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website was searched using the terms “citizenship” and “civic engagement.”

For database and website searches, references from relevant bibliographies, books, articles, and other documents were searched for additional publications.

Authors familiar with the field of service-learning were contacted and asked if they, their students, or their colleagues have written articles not retrieved during the search.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Search Results

Of the 378 studies retrieved through the electronic database search, 10 abstracts appeared to meet the review criteria. Upon further evaluation, two studies were included for review (Williams, 1993, Scales et al., 2000). Searches of the websites yielded 28 articles, none of which met inclusion criteria. Contacts with authors yielded one new study that also did not meet inclusion criteria.

Meta-Analysis

A meta-analysis could not be completed because sufficient information was only available on one study (Williams, 1993) for an analysis of outcome data.¹¹

This chapter will describe the structure and results of the two included studies followed by brief descriptions of 17 excluded studies (non-randomized trials meeting all other criteria).

Included Studies

Studies done by Scales et al. (2000) and Williams (1993) met the criteria for this review and are summarized in the table below:

Table 1: **Included Studies**

Scales, Peter C., Blyth, Dale A., Berkas, Thomas H., and Kielsmeier, James C. “The Effects of Service-Learning on Middle School Students’ Social Responsibility and Academic Success” Journal of Early Adolescence, Vol. 20, No. 3, August 2000				
Methods	Type of Service-Learning	Participants	Outcome Variable(s)	Major Findings
Random assignment to experimental and control groups Pre- and post- test design Surveys	“Service-learning” ¹² <i>Intervention groups:</i> Service-learning programs in the studied schools varied in length and content; all included performing service for the school or broader community Link to curriculum: As defined by the authors, ¹³ all service-learning	Sixth- through eighth-grade students ¹⁴ N = 1,153	Relative to this review: Social responsibility Instrument: Conrad & Hedin’s Social and Personal Responsibility Scale	Service-learning students were more concerned than were control students with the welfare of others Students with more than 30 hours of service-learning improved their sense of self-efficacy in helping others

¹¹ Dr. Scales kindly provided the raw data not found in the published version of the study, Scales et al. (2000) (Peter Scales, email, 18 August 2005). However, with the unit of randomization being “classrooms”, a number of total classrooms from this study was needed instead of the number of total students. Unfortunately, Dr. Scales could not confirm with confidence what the number of classrooms was for the experimental and control groups, since there was no record of this breakdown in his available files (Peter Scales, email, 22 August 2005).

¹² The authors defined service-learning as “an educational activity, program or curriculum that seeks to promote students’ learning through experiences associated with volunteerism and community service” (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997)

	programs met this criteria			
Williams, Robert M. “The Effects of Required Community Service on the Process of Developing Responsibility in Suburban Youth” Dissertation prepared for the University of Nebraska, 1993				
Methods	Type of Service-Learning	Participants	Outcome Variable(s)	Major Findings
Random assignment to experimental and control groups Pre- and post- test design Surveys	“Community experiential education program” <i>Intervention group:</i> Took a class on civics and consumerism¹⁵, which included a minimum of 10 hours community experiential service Teaching strategy: Reflective seminars focusing directly on the issues of social responsibility; facilitated by teachers upon completion of the 10 hours of community service	High school seniors¹⁶ between the ages of 16 and 18 N = 543	Student attitudes toward social and personal responsibility Instruments: Conrad & Hedin’s 1) Experiential Education Questionnaire and 2) Characteristics of a Community Experience Checklist	No differences between attitudes of students participating in required 10 hours community service and those students not participating Students involved in required community service for <i>more than 10 hours</i> demonstrated positive change in attitudes toward personal and social responsibility

Scales et al. (2000)

The effects of service-learning on social responsibility and academic success were evaluated using a pre- and post-test design. Thorough efforts were made to find schools across the U.S. with quality service-learning programs. A total of 1,153 sixth- through eighth-grade students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups or “teams”. The schools determined which of their groups would be service-learning teams and which would be control teams. The control groups had to agree not to use service-learning. The service-learning interventions varied in duration and activities, with direct human service and school service most common, followed by environmental activities and career exploration.¹⁷

¹³ Authors specified that “service-learning is distinguished from simple community service by the intentional connecting of helping activities with curriculum concepts”

¹⁴ The average age of the sample was a little more than 12 years of age; 6% of the sample was 14 years of age or older

¹⁵ Civics/Consumerism course description: “...designed to help seniors acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to function as an informed, concerned, and active citizen/consumer in our democratic society and complex world.” This 18-week class was a requirement for graduation from the high school.

¹⁶ High school senior: a student in their final year of secondary education

¹⁷ Students were involved in choosing the service activities in more than 80% of the service-learning classes. Projects ranged from students building a nature trail that all community residents could use to students developing a puppet show and songs about war-torn countries and presenting the show to younger children as part of a charity drive.

For the section of the survey measuring social responsibility, three subscales from the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale were used, with the original reliability for the total scale being .83 at the seventh-grade reading level (Conrad and Hedin, 1981). In terms of social responsibility outcomes, service-learning students maintained their sense of concern for others' welfare as compared to control group students. Those students who had done more than 30 hours of service-learning additionally improved their sense of efficacy in helping others. Girls scored slightly higher than boys on their sense of duty to help others and concern for others' welfare.

Williams (1993)

The impact of a community experiential program on students' development of attitudes toward personal and social responsibility was evaluated using a pre- and post-test design. Of the 543 high school students computer assigned to the program, 278 took the course in the first semester and 265 in the second semester. From these two groups, students were randomly assigned to the experimental (n = 120) and control groups (n = 120). The experimental group took a civics and consumerism course during the first semester,¹⁸ which required 10 hours of community service followed by reflective seminars facilitated by the teachers of the course and focused directly on the issues of social responsibility. To fulfill the community service requirement, students could choose from three major types:

- 1) *Community projects*: students helped with various fund-raisers for community groups or worked for agencies involved in community enhancement
- 2) *Personal service*: students who worked one-on-one with people in the community who were in need; most served through local human service organizations such as nursing homes or day care centers
- 3) *Political service*: students participated in political work that involved first-hand information about the political process by which local and national politicians are elected to office.

¹⁸ One semester is approximately 4 months in length

The control group consisted of students enrolled in the second semester course (i.e., they received no intervention). The two instruments used to collect data included two sections of the Experiential Education Questionnaire constructed and previously validated by Conrad and Hedin (1981). No difference in attitudes toward social and personal responsibility between those students who participated in the required community experiential program and control students were found. Those students who spent more than 10 hours on the required community experiential service scored significantly higher on measures of social and personal responsibility.

Excluded Studies

Several studies were excluded after confirming there was no randomization to comparison groups. Only non-randomized trials (i.e., must have at least one comparison group) meeting all other criteria for this review will be discussed in this section. One randomized study (Ridgell, 1994) met all criteria but was excluded for the absence of any comparison groups.

Although these studies lack randomization, they contain valuable information concerning the positive impacts of service-learning programs on youth. In view of their reduced methodological rigor, however, caution should be used to interpret findings.

Billig et al. (2005)

This study evaluated the impact of participation in service-learning on high school students' civic engagement using pre- and post-surveys. Focus groups, classroom observations, and administrator interviews were also used in data collection. A national sample of classrooms of students that participated in service-learning (n = 645 students) was well matched with classrooms of students that did not participate in service-learning (n = 407 students), although none of the groups were randomized. The outcomes for civic engagement included civic knowledge, skills, dispositions, and activities. Scales used to measure these outcomes were moderately high in reliability. Service-learning students scored higher than comparison students on several outcomes, however, most differences were not statistically significant.

Billig et al. (2003)

The Hawaiian Studies Program (HSP) at Waianae High School was evaluated with pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, and interviews. A small non-randomized sample of 26 HSP students and 46 comparison students was used. Outcomes assessed included efficacy, motivation, and aspirations toward helping the community. There was no mention of the survey being validated in any way. Results showed that service-learning students had statistically significant positive outcomes on their feelings of contribution to the school and community, felt valued by the community, understood issues that affect the well-being of the community, and took actions to change the community. Students were significantly more likely to want to help others.

Kim and Billig (2003)

The impact of the Colorado Learn and Serve program was evaluated on students' engagement in civic and community life. A majority of participants were elementary (or primary) level students, but middle and high school students were also included. About half participated in service-learning and half served as control groups and did not participate in service-learning; groups were not randomized. Of the middle and high school students, there were 18 service-learning classrooms and 17 comparison classrooms, totaling 761 students. Qualitative data was gathered through focus groups and quantitative data through pre- and post-test surveys. Results showed a statistical significant difference in connection to community, connection to school, and civic responsibility for those students participating in service-learning as compared to non-participating students.

Meyer (2003)

The Denver Zoo Community Leadership Project (CLP) was evaluated using pre- and post-surveys on 12 CLP classrooms and in six comparison classrooms that did not receive the CLP. The non-randomized sample of 1,777 students largely included primary school-aged students but also included sixth- and seventh-grade students (aged approximately 11 to 13). The surveys measured items of interest to this review such as connectedness to community and responsibility, however, students in the comparison classes were given a shorter version of the survey, which included no responsibility items and prompted further reason for exclusion. Additionally, no information was provided on the validation of the data collection instruments. Those students partaking in the CLP significantly increased on ratings relating to young

people's abilities to make a difference in the community. Results also showed differences on measures of the need to take responsibility for the environment.

The Denver Zoo CLP was also evaluated in 2004 with pre- and post-surveys on the same outcomes as the 2003 evaluation. The sample again included a large proportion of primary school students but also those in the sixth- through eighth-grades. There was a disproportionate amount of students in the experimental group—498 students—as opposed to the comparison groups, which only had 112 students. Results were similar to the 2003 evaluation.

Billig (2002)

In an evaluation of the Freedom Schools Junior Leader program in Philadelphia, high school students participated in a year-long service-learning project and were measured on a variety of measures relating to connectedness with the community. A copy of the full report was unable to be obtained, despite efforts to retrieve it from multiple sources,¹⁹ however Dr. Billig confirmed in an email that it met our criteria for exclusion and was thus taken to have non-randomized comparison groups (Shelley Billig, email, 12 July 2005). A summary of the study found in Billig (2003a) indicated that students had statistically significant increases in measures of connectedness with community and American society, making changes in their communities, and acquisition of a variety of leadership skills.

Covitt (2002)

Middle school students (n = 2,365) participating in service-learning on environmental projects were compared to non-participating peers to determine the impact of service-learning participation on several outcomes, to include civic outcomes related to environmental responsibility. The study also focused on whether service-learning participation was related to motive fulfillment. This study was a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test design and thus lacked randomization. The instrument used to measure outcomes of interest to this review was

¹⁹ Dr. Kenneth Holdsman suggested it may be found on the National Service-Learning Partnership website (Kenneth Holdsman, email, 20 July 2005), however, a representative from the site was unable to find the correct study (Stephanie Pierce, email, 21 July 2005). Dr. Shelley Billig said the study could be found on the W.K. Kellogg Foundation website (Shelley Billig, email to the author, 20 July 2005), but a reference was given back to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Library. Alex Lumb, a librarian for the NSLC, said he could not find it on their shelves (Alex Lumb, email, 19 July 2005).

reliable ($\alpha = .82$). No positive differences were found on any measures for the two different types of service-learning projects that were implemented.

Furco (2002)

A quasi-experimental design was used to measure 529 high school students' development across several educational domains, to include civic participation. The one-year study compared the outcomes of students in three service program categories (community service programs, service-learning programs, service-based internship programs) and a comparison group (students not engaged in any of the school-sponsored service programs). Qualitative and quantitative methods were used, and most of the pre- and post-test survey items were taken directly from relevant, previously tested survey instruments; however, only fair to moderate Cronbach alpha levels were achieved (from .43 to .72). Significant positive differences were found on all outcomes between the service groups and the no-service group. There was no evidence that one type of service program is more beneficial than another for any of the outcomes.

Kahne et al. (2002)

The Constitutional Rights Foundation's City Works program was evaluated using pre- and post-surveys on 204 high school students who participated in the program and those in control groups. Focus groups and classroom observations were also utilized. Various outcomes were assessed in relation to civic engagement. The program was predominantly assessed as a civic education program (government curriculum classes) but deconstructed the components of the program to analyze which type of intervention (e.g., service-learning, simulations and exposure to role models) had the greatest impacts. In addition to no randomization of participants, there was no report of whether the surveys used were validated instruments. The results showed statistically significant greater commitments to become a participatory citizen, to an interest in service, and to justice-oriented values. In terms of type of program, service-learning had a positive impact but was linked to fewer civic outcomes than were experiences with role models and simulations.

Leming (2001)

The purpose of this study was to determine if a particular form of reflection—decision making with an emphasis on the ethical nature of community service—has any value in achieving

service-learning goals. Outcomes were dimensions of adolescent identity: agency, social relatedness, and moral-political awareness. A nonequivalent pre- and post-test design with control group was utilized but participants were not randomized to groups. The sample consisted of 476 high school students—disproportionately female and Caucasian—split into three conditions: community service with an ethical reasoning component; community service with reflection, but without an ethical reasoning component; and no community service. Previously validated instruments were used but no information was provided as to their reliability with respect to this study. Results suggested that the integration of a structured approach to ethical decision making into students' community service experiences is beneficial for their identity formation. Significant increases were found in students' sense of social responsibility within school and in their anticipated future participation in community affairs.

Westheimer and Kahne (2000a)

In the Report to the Surdna Board—D.V.I. (Democratic Values Initiative), ten service-learning programs were studied through observations, interviews, and pre- and post-surveys. Not all sites contained control groups (Joel Westheimer, email, 2 August 2005), and the surveys differed across sites. From the limited information provided in the report, there was no mention of instruments used and their reliability. Results showed the programs successfully supported the development of democratic skills, commitments, and related knowledge.

Bailis and Melchior (1998)

The Active Citizenship Today (ACT) program evaluated 588 middle and high school participants and comparison students not randomized to groups. Pre- and post-program surveys, in addition to onsite interviews and observations were used to measure outcomes on civic attitudes and behaviors. Most scales used were well-validated. The only statistically significant results among the measures were impacts on communication skills and on service leadership.

Melchior (1998)

The Learn and Serve America program was analyzed across 17 school-based sites and nine states using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, to include survey data. The evaluation involved 435 middle and high school youth in the experimental group and 444 in the comparison group, none of which were randomized. Relevant to this review, outcomes that

were measured included civic and social development. Measurements were taken at the end of the year-long program and also one year later. There was no mention of validation of the survey used. Results showed positive, statistically significant impacts on three of four measures of civic attitudes: acceptance of cultural diversity, service leadership,²⁰ and “civic attitudes”.²¹

Berkas (1997)

A copy of this evaluation (*Strategic Review of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Service-Learning Projects, 1990-1996*) was unable to be obtained. Dr. Kenneth Holdsman, Director of the W.K. Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund National Service-Learning Partnership, was emailed and suggested it may be found on the National Service-Learning Partnership (NSLP) website (Kenneth Holdsman, email, 20 July 2005). The study was determined by the website coordinator to not be on the NSLP website (Susan Wong, email, 21 July 2005), and the W.K. Kellogg website coordinator was contacted for help. This site also did not have the study (Stephanie Pierce, email, 21 July 2005) and efforts to obtain the study concluded.

Orr and Melchior (1995)

The Serve-America program was evaluated using a series of pre- and post-program surveys on a non-randomized sample of 497 middle and high school students and matched comparison groups of non-participating youth in each of the 13 intensive study sites. These sites were not all school-based service learning programs and included some community-based (i.e., community service only) programs. Measures of civic and social development were used, however, there was also no information indicating that the surveys were well-validated. Results showed Serve-America had a positive impact on participants in terms of civic and social attitudes and involvement in service.

Ridgell (1994)

²⁰ “service leadership”: defined as the degree to which students feel they are aware of needs in a community, are able to develop and implement a service project, and are committed to service now and later in life

²¹ “civic attitudes”: a measure that combines measures of service leadership, acceptance of diversity, and personal and social responsibility

A service-learning program was evaluated for changes in students' perception on social and civic responsibility and political efficacy. The population included a stratified random sample of 17 civics classes, proportional to course level (college preparatory and standard levels), and consisted of 304 ninth-grade students from three public high schools (approximately 14 to 15 years of age). Outcomes were measured by three scales on the slightly modified²² National Learning Through Service Survey developed by the Search Institute: (1) attitudes toward personal and social responsibility ($\alpha = .75$); (2) intent to serve ($\alpha = .91$); (3) locus of control ($\alpha = .62$). The study met all criteria for this review with the exception of having no comparison groups. It was thus excluded for being a *one-group* pretest-posttest design. Within the one group, the author examined the differences in perception based on course level, gender, and participation in school and community activities other than service-learning. Results showed no significant differences on the three outcomes. There was a modest to strong correlation between the pre-surveys and post-surveys on the three scales. The author concluded that the school system should address curricular design issues, to include program duration, amount of reflection time, and developmental appropriateness of activities for students.

Newmann and Rutter (1983)

Voluntary community service programs were tested using pre- and post-tests as well as interviews to measure the programs' impact on students' social development (e.g., sense of responsibility, concern for others' welfare). Approximately 160 high school students comprised the experimental group and 160 students made up the control group, none of which were randomized. Significant differences were found between the two groups, showing a link between service-learning and social/civic responsibility and moral reasoning skills. However, service-learning was determined not to enhance students' sense of civic responsibility.

²² One question from each of two scales (#1 and #3) was deleted in order to obtain a higher reliability

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Overall, there is insufficient evidence to support any conclusion that school-based service-learning programs are effective in promoting citizenship in young people. The two studies included in this review lacked methodological quality and revealed many challenges to studying service-learning programs.

This chapter will critically review each of the two included studies, address the limitations and challenges of service-learning, discuss the possibility of service-learning as an approach to promoting citizenship, and acknowledge the limitations of this review.

A Critical Review of the Evidence

Scales et al. (2000)

The authors of this study presented a clearly focused question specifying the population studied, the intervention given, and the outcomes considered. The participants, young adolescents or sixth- through eighth-grade students, were described in terms of mean age and numerous background characteristics. Chi-square tests showed no significant differences on these group variables. Although confounding by these differences was consequently minimized, this population was not generalizable to other populations in that a large percentage of students had previously participated in service-learning and had parents with higher-than-average levels of education. The study had a large sample that was likely to minimize the play of chance, however, no power calculation was provided for support.

The intervention group consisted of multiple schools across the U.S. that underwent an ample screening process to ensure minimum standards of quality were met for their service-learning program. However, as noted by the authors, these programs were found to fall short of several standards, such as being academically rigorous and containing sufficient amounts of reflection,²³ and the chances for significant effects was diminished. Additionally, the service-learning interventions varied in content and duration, which naturally led to different experiences by participants and resulted in a lack of consistency within the intervention group.

Random assignment was questionably used in an attempt to show effectiveness of the service-learning programs. Participants were said to be randomized to experimental and control groups, however the authors failed to describe this initial method of allocation (e.g., computer generated? Any stratification involved?). The researchers had the principals of each school

²³ Teacher and student survey responses indicated that preparation for and/or reflection within the service experience was uncommon with 43% of the teachers saying that service-learning lasted for a few hours a month for only two months. One-third of the students had only a little or no preparation time; 47% had only a little or no reflection time.

determine which of their groups would be control groups (Peter Scales, email, 22 August 2005). Although the most realistic and feasible option in a real-world setting where schools were distributed across the U.S., this process could have been better monitored—and thus implementation fidelity increased—if the researchers themselves had taken responsibility for this task. Since there was no specified procedure by which the school principals could carry out random assignment without any kind of manipulation (e.g., sealed envelopes), it is highly questionable whether this study was truly randomized.

The researchers appropriately notified parents of the study and clarified that the study was entirely voluntary and that either students or parents could refuse participation. Double-blinding in this study was not completely possible, since the teachers, who administered the surveys, took part in determining which of their classes would be service-learning or controls. However, blinding was achieved during assessment whereby classroom teachers, who had been trained by the service-learning coordinators, distributed the surveys in envelopes with the students' name on the outside. Inside were the survey with only a student identification number on it and a blank envelope for recollection.

No information was given on whether all participants were accounted for at the study's conclusion (e.g., if any intervention group participants received a control-group option or vice versa; if there was any loss-to-follow-up; if there was intention-to-treat analysis). The authors did identify and account for a problem with contamination (some service-learning students had not experienced service; some control students had experienced service) and ensured that analysis involved the uncontaminated groups.

For the citizenship outcome relevant to this review (social responsibility), subscales from the reliable and psychometrically sound Social and Personal Responsibility Scale ($\alpha = .84$) were used (Conrad and Hedin, 1981). Significant differences at $p < .05$ were reported, providing fairly precise results, however, effect sizes were not reported. Just because test statistics are significant does not mean that the effect it measured is meaningful (Field and Hole, 2003). The appropriateness of the outcome measured should also be considered. The concept of social responsibility is highly subjective. For this study, the scales measured concern for other's welfare, the feeling of responsibility to help others, and the perceived ability to be effective in

helping others. The outcome of social responsibility is not easily defined, and it is up to the individual opinion whether these specific items are most appropriate in encompassing what social responsibility means. Many would agree this outcome, as defined, is reflective of citizenship qualities.

Considering these issues, the study showed service-learning students maintained their sense of concern for others' welfare as compared to control group students. Those students who had done more than 30 hours of service-learning additionally improved their sense of efficacy in helping others. Girls scored slightly higher than boys on their sense of duty to help others and concern for others' welfare.

Although such positive results were obtained, the limitations of this study give cause to caution drawing any firm conclusions that service-learning is effective in promoting social responsibility in youth. Despite a comprehensive screening process of the service-learning programs, considerable variation across programs remained. That being said, there is hope to be found in how even these service-learning programs with limited quality produced positive results—although not confirmed to be meaningful effects—on students' concern for others' welfare. As the authors also suggest, better program selection strategies are needed that produce more consistency across service-learning programs with regard to their content, experiences, and other variables. Indeed, an exceptional feature of service-learning programs is the freedom of choice in types of service, the creative means with which community service experiences can be incorporated into the academic curriculum, and the ability to accommodate the unique needs of a community and the students of that area, to include accounting for cultural differences. This defining characteristic does not have to be diminished by research. The selection strategy simply needs to include important baseline standards (which other research, if available, shows is reflective of high-quality programs) and a stringent, systematic process involving thorough accountability. Researchers could also simplify the intervention groups to one type of service-learning program to further minimize the variables involved. In addition, research designs need to account for the effects of previous exposure to service-learning, and researchers should seek to obtain more representative samples.

Williams (1993)

This study evaluated the effects of required community experiential service on suburban youth's sense of responsibility and also began with a clear and focused question. The population consisted of 543 senior students from a metropolitan high school located in the Midwestern part of the U.S. Although at face-value, the sample appears to be large enough to yield meaningful results, no power calculation was provided to confirm the appropriateness of the sample size. Because the students came from a very homogeneous metropolitan school where 99% of the population consisted of middle class, Caucasian youth, the population is not likely to generalize to many other populations except those similar to it. The intervention was sufficiently described in such a way that it met this review's baseline definition for "service-learning." It consisted of a class on civics and consumerism²⁴, which required a minimum of 10 hours community service²⁵ that was followed up with reflective seminars explicitly discussing social responsibility.

Participants were randomly allocated to experimental and control groups. The method of allocation involved computer assignment, and the groups were well-balanced across a variety of background variables. Prior experience in service was not accounted for, however, the homogeneous population strengthened the design in terms of internal validity. Blinding was not wholly possible, since students were easily able to tell what group they were in (they were either enrolled in the class at the time or had the expectation of taking it the second semester). There was no mention of any efforts to achieve blinding during assessment of the surveys. Teachers were subjected to training sessions to ensure consistency with the administration of the program, which helped enhance implementation fidelity. The author provided information on the small loss-to-follow-up, but explicit mention of intention-to-treat-analysis was not reported.

The outcomes of personal and social responsibility were measured using components of a previously validated instrument by Conrad and Hedin (1981)²⁶. The author noted that "a major problem in measuring responsibility is the susceptibility to a socially desirable response set, i.e., individuals may tend to present themselves in a positive light, giving their idealized sense of responsibility, rather than their actual level" (Williams, 1993). As such, the questions for the instrument used in this study were modified slightly, using a certain "question format" which

²⁴ See results chapter for further description of the course

²⁵ See results chapter for further description of community service opportunities

²⁶ See results chapter for specifics

has been shown to reflect more accurate self-perceptions rather than socially desirable responses (Harter, 1978). Although relatively weak Cronbach alphas reflected a lack of internal consistency within the dimensions of the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale used in this study, the overall, strong alpha level of .8408 made the instrument psychometrically sound. The alpha level for the Community Experience Checklist was strong at a level of .8488. Most results were found to be significant at the $p < .01$ level and further validated that the instrument was highly internally consistent. A two-way split plot analysis of variance procedure was used to test for results.

No significant difference in attitudes toward social and personal responsibility between those students who participated in the required community experiential program and control students were found. Those students who spent more than 10 hours on the required community experiential service scored significantly higher on measures of social and personal responsibility. Effect sizes were not reported, and the actual meaning of this result should be analyzed with consideration.

The methodological weaknesses in this study build hesitation in accepting any conclusion that this form of service-learning is effective in promoting social and personal responsibility. The results show that the amount of service involved in a program is likely to be an important factor for effectively promoting aspects of social responsibility, however, there is not enough analysis done within this study to confirm this issue, and further research is required to gain more insight. The results of this study suggest there may need to be more than 10 hours of service for a program to be effective in promoting these specific attributes of citizenship. This study focused on aspects of social responsibility as felt to be representative of responsible citizenship. These particular attitudes, reflecting concepts such as welfare and duty, are again very subjective, and there are many difficulties in trying to measure changes in attitudes and behavior. This study was not only unlikely to generalize to other populations, but the specific nature of the program (i.e., a specific course taught at this particular school) may not be easily replicable in other schools.

Limitations and Challenges of School-Based Service-Learning

Despite the widespread excitement and support for service-learning programs, most notably in the U.S., there is very little well-supported evidence to show that these programs are effective in promoting citizenship attitudes and behaviors in youth. Achieving internal validity and rigorous methodology is challenging in these real-world settings, but it is not impossible. Although the above studies had multiple weaknesses in design, they showed that randomization is possible, even in a public school setting.

Outcomes

Finding objective and measurable outcomes is a challenging task when evaluating service-learning programs, especially with regards to citizenship. Notions of what citizenship is, what dimensions of citizenship best promote a stable democracy, and what aspects of citizenship can actually be fostered in youth vary widely with opinion, especially across countries, cultures, and contexts. Additionally, there are likely to be many positive outcomes that result from service-learning programs which enhance one's sense of civic identity but that are not explicitly considered to be "citizenship" outcomes. There are also likely to be multiple positive effects on youth that cannot be measured or quantified into a scale—thus, the underlying challenge of measuring human experiences. One major challenge to the field of service-learning has been a lack of consistently used, well-tested instruments and protocols that are able to capture the multiple outcomes of service-learning programs across a variety of schools (Furco, 2003). There are also challenges associated with data interpretation. Researchers must be cautious in tendencies to over- or under-analyze results, over-generalize, or ignore alternative explanations for outcomes (Billig, 2003b).

Service

Service has been suggested as an approach to promoting citizenship in people, however, what kinds of service and how much service may best help an individual internalize their role as a citizen will remain undetermined, in the most critical sense of the word. Every person whether similar in upbringing, socioeconomic status, or any other factor is still uniquely different and will experience service in different ways. This is not to say that any efforts such as service-learning cannot enhance youth development, but it should be noted that the final outcome—that is, what type of person that youth becomes whether it is "good" or "bad"—can only be controlled by the person themselves and the choices he or she makes. Likewise, there are many

other factors that contribute to a person's growth and development—peers, family, neighborhood—that often have significant impacts on mental constructs (i.e., how they view themselves, their role in the world around them, etc.). In evaluating the effects of service-learning, researchers must consider the fact that individuals may perceive these experiences differently.

Longitudinal Studies

Ideally, if one wants to know the effects of service-learning programs on a person's identity or how well it promoted concepts of citizenship in the developing youth, more longitudinal studies should be pursued. Measuring similar outcomes on participants years later, after they have entered adulthood and have likely taken individual responsibility for their lives, would give better insight into whether service-learning programs play a role in engendering this identity of active citizenship. For example, do service-learning programs foster a commitment to volunteer service later on in life? Do service-learning participants have higher rates of voting than other adults? Additionally, what other effects (any harmful?) result in the long run?

Intervention

As mentioned above, service-learning programs vary greatly in their content, duration, and quality. One part of this problem is the lack of consensus on the definition of service-learning. Although most researchers agree service-learning programs have the components included in the definition for this review, the "...research is often confounded by the inherently diverse and situational nature of service-learning experiences" (Furco, 2003). Ensuring consistency of components within programs is needed to make effective comparisons and minimize extraneous variables. In doing so, researchers could determine more confidently what aspects of service-learning (e.g., types of reflection) have greater impacts on student outcomes. Additionally, dimensions of citizenship relating to political participation are often neglected in service-learning programs and should be considered as an important component for investigation.

Funding

Funding has been a challenge to service-learning research in the U.S., and achieving the necessary rigorous research, especially longitudinal RCTs, is unlikely without sufficient funding

(Billig, 2003b). Researchers should also be cautious of sponsor bias, in the cases where studies are funded by organizations that created and run the programs being studied.

Service-Learning as a Means to Promoting Citizenship in Youth

In summary, more rigorous research is needed to determine the effectiveness of service-learning in promoting citizenship in youth. This review found only two trials that sufficiently utilized randomization.

RCTs Needed

Questions testing the efficacy of an intervention should be addressed by RCTs (Greenhalgh, 1997). Service-learning programs are complex, involving many variables which must be controlled for through randomization. Those drawing conclusions from studies lacking random assignment cannot be certain that the “positive results” were actually caused by the intervention. Only RCTs can determine causation and best prevent false associations that lead to false hope. Many social interventions are well-intended but actually do more harm than good. Rigorous research is needed to confirm positive findings or reveal harmful effects. Through the various other types of studies done on service-learning, particularly those with insightful qualitative research, findings show that these programs are promising and likely to only be helpful for developing youth when it comes to promoting attitudes, skills, and behaviors associated with citizenship. However, more RCTs are needed to confirm the effectiveness of service-learning programs and should be used for quantitative data analysis.

Some may argue that it is unethical to withhold service-learning from control groups, but as the Williams (1993) study shows, it is possible to ensure the control group receives the intervention. Furthermore, many control groups end up being schools that have simply not yet implemented service-learning. Service-learning programs could easily be introduced to the school after the study.

To help synthesize emerging themes among the research and capture the idiosyncrasies of these diverse programs, qualitative analyses should supplement RCTs and thereby provide a more complete picture of what works in service-learning. Triangulation of data collected from various sources and across various sites would strengthen results. Research designs also need to

be comprehensive, aiming to account for variation in the intensity and type of program, the participants, the school environment, and the community involved.

Effective in Terms of What?

Even if high quality research is achieved, the key question still remains: what is a good citizen? With rigorous methodology, service-learning programs can be deemed “effective,” but in terms of what concepts of citizenship? Opinions vary, as already discussed, but there is much consensus that social responsibility through volunteering is fundamental to citizenship.

Virtually all service-learning programs, however, focus on personal responsibility detached from critical social analysis. There is a severe lack of emphasis on politics and the skills needed to help shape social policy on behalf of those in need. Too few programs raise awareness of the challenges involved in changing the circumstances that lead to poverty, unclear neighborhoods, and other social problems. If service is taught as simply a “good” thing to do, it risks being understood as an act of kindness performed by the privileged that simply reinforces the status quo (Westheimer & Kahne, 2000b). Civic participation in the form of service is important, but citizenship in a democratic society requires more than kindness. Westheimer and Kahne (2000b) suggest that “to become truly effective citizens, students (especially those in high school) have to learn how to create, evaluate, criticize, and change public norms, institutions, and programs.” These authors go on to propose the following point:

If the focus on service downplays or distracts attention from systemic causes and solutions, far from helping, the current emphasis that service-learning requirements place on volunteerism may lead students to embrace an impoverished conception of their civic potential. When the emphasis is on helping but not on the factors that create the need for help, we risk teaching students that need is inevitable, that alleviating momentary suffering but not its origins is the only expression of responsible citizenship.

Social problems are complex and often characterized by a vicious cycle that perpetuates through generations. Service alone may alleviate problems temporarily, but efforts must be made to extract the root causes of problems if a democracy is to experience positive growth.

As school-based service-learning programs are rapidly increasing in popularity and spurred on by national legislation and millions of dollars, these issues about “effectiveness” and “citizenship” must be considered seriously if service-learning programs are to be used as a part of developing good citizens for a strong democracy.

Limitations of this Review

This review was limited to studies of interventions that met a certain definition of service-learning²⁷. Because there is no universally accepted definition of service-learning, there may be studies not considered for review which otherwise met someone else’s definition. Yet, a widely accepted definition was chosen for this review.

This review did not specify standards regarding the level of quality in service-learning programs studied, largely because there is insufficient evidence to show what these standards might be. Future reviews could narrow down the criteria and focus on programs that had certain characteristics thought to distinguish them as “high quality.” More research is needed, though, to determine what components of service-learning programs make them effective and consequently distinguish them as high quality.

This review was also broadly focused in terms of the outcome in an attempt to account for the variations in definition of citizenship. Refining the criteria to certain aspects of citizenship and including more objective measures in future reviews would be beneficial. Additionally, questions about participant satisfaction should be taken into consideration.

This review was also limited by human error. Every effort was made to find all unpublished studies and reports, but the process of hand-searching the websites presents a risk that studies meeting criteria were either completely missed or overlooked because they did not appear to meet criteria. Additionally, only one reviewer (the author of this review) completed the website searches. Not all studies and reports may have been linked to the main websites searched, especially considering that many reports are held by independent organizations that fund the

²⁷ Programs must have involved a teaching strategy that explicitly linked community service experiences to classroom instruction

studies. No non-English-language studies surfaced, although they would have been translated if found.

Conclusion

Service-learning programs have great potential for inspiring an engaged citizenry in the younger generations. It is unfortunate, however, that the evidence concerning their effectiveness of promoting positive citizenship qualities is extremely thin. The available studies of service-learning programs are lacking in methodological rigor and are not easily generalizeable. There are various challenges to overcome, but with time and effort, more can be done to improve the quality of research.

After a comprehensive literature search, the strongest conclusion that can be drawn from this review is that more research is needed. Additionally, more attention must be given to the variation among service-learning programs in terms of their content, duration, and quality. As enthusiasm and support for service-learning increases, educators, policy-makers, parents, and students ought to know whether these programs are actually helping to promote positive citizenship attitudes and behaviors that will ultimately benefit society and hopefully strengthen democracy.

Appendix 1: Types of Democracy

As classified by Held (1996), there are four different types of democracy:

In a ***classical or direct democracy***, citizenship is based on making decisions through debate and argument in large forums. Personal identity is closely intertwined with one's role as an active citizen. This form of democracy offers the innovation of ideals of liberty, equality among citizens, and respect for justice and law that might otherwise challenge notions of absolute rule. Originating from Athens, Greece, this mentality continues to inspire democracies today.

In a ***civic republican democracy***, a citizen's role is to participate in self-government with emphasis on liberty, virtue, civic glory, and military power. Accordingly, patriotism and setting the common good above self-interest is favored. From this eleventh century notion of democracy came the value of participation that enhances the citizenry as decision-makers and the value of participation in order to protect one's own personal liberties.

The following two types of democracies are the models by which the role of the citizen is generally formulated today:

In a ***liberal democracy***, individualism is the emphasis, and freedom of choice and toleration are key components. These citizens have the protection to pursue their interests within the private sphere, and it is by choice that individual's participate in the public sphere. Under this idea, it is seen either that citizens must protect themselves from any state infringement or that the state should operate based on the common interests of the citizens.

In a ***participatory democracy***, democratic principles of participation in decision-making are extended to institutions beyond government that are most involved in the daily life of individuals, such as work and family. In other words, a person is a citizen in all areas of life, not just in the public or political sphere. The notion of a more collective, committed citizenry emerges as people concern themselves with solving problems collectively.

Appendix 2: Types of Citizens

The ***personally responsible citizen*** acts responsibly toward his or her community. For example, this person will pick up litter, give blood, recycle, obey laws, stay out of debt, and volunteers to help the less fortunate (e.g., participating in a food drive or helping at an elderly home)²⁸. Programs seeking to develop personally responsible citizens are concerned with character

²⁸ These types of behavior should be considered in a broader social context, less they risk advancing civility or docility instead of democracy. Governmental leaders in a totalitarian regime would be as pleased as democratic nation leaders if their young citizens carried out these examples of the personally responsible citizen. These traits can be desirable for people living in any community, but they are not necessarily reflective of democratic citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne 2004).

development and focus on traits such as honesty, integrity, self-discipline, and hard work (Lickona, 1993, Mann, 1838, Wynne, 1986).

The ***participatory citizen*** actively participates in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at the local, state, or national level. Programs emphasizing this kind of citizen focus on preparing students to engage in collective, community-based efforts, teach students how government and community-based organizations work, and train them to organize efforts to care for people in need. Engaging in collective endeavors helps develop relationships, common understandings, trust, and collective commitments; citizens live together communally despite their overlapping and sometimes competing interests (Barber, 1984).

The ***justice-oriented citizen*** seeks to analyze and understand the interaction of social, economic, and political forces. Education programs developing this type of citizen emphasize social justice, preparing students to improve society by critically analyzing social, political, and economic structures and strategizing for change that challenges injustice. These citizens are less likely to volunteer and rather focus on the root causes of social problems (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004).

Appendix 3: Data Collection Form

Data Collection Form

Reviewer:	Included / Excluded Study / Undecided / Bin			
Study Name:				
Identified:	☐ Electronic (Cochrane)	☐ Hand Search (Website search)	☐ Personal Contact	
Reviewed:	☐ Article	☐ Abstract	☐ Title	☐ Missing
Need Additional Information:	☐ No	☐ Yes: _____		
School-Based:	☐ Yes	☐ Community-based ☒		
	☐ Other	☐ Not Reported ☒		
Intervention:	☐ SL	☐ Discusses Community Service only ☒		☐ Not Reported ☒

Notes:			
Participants aged 11 to 18 / middle and/or high school: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ ☐ Not Reported ☒			
RCT: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒			
Randomization: ☐ Computer ☐ Other Reported Method: _____ ☐ Not Reported ☒			
☐ Cluster ☐ Quasi-randomized ☐ Not Reported ☒			
Analysis: ☐ ITT ☐ PP ☒ ☐ Not Reported ☒			
Blind Allocation: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Reported			
Blind Assessment: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Reported			
Method of Blinding: ☐ Adequate ☐ Inadequate ☐ Not Reported			
Researcher Conflict of Interest: ☐ No ☐ Yes: _____ ☐ Not Reported			
Diagnostic Instrument: ☐ Interview ☐ Questionnaire/Survey (paper, computer, etc.) ☐ Other Valid Instrument ☐ Not Reported ☒			
Notes:			
Comparison Group: ☐ No intervention ☐ General community service ☐ Other: _____			
Baseline Differences: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not reported			
Notes on Baseline Differences: (e.g., behavioral problems; school achievement; race/ethnicity; gender)			
Cost Data: ☐ Reported ☐ Not Reported			
Notes:			
Participant Satisfaction: ☐ Reported ☐ Not Reported			
Notes:			
Compliance Data: ☐ Reported ☐ Not Reported			
Notes:			
Adverse Events: ☐ Reported ☐ Not Reported			
Notes:			

☒ = Exclude

<i>Intervention</i>	Intervention	Comparison
Number in Group		
Duration of Assessment		
Other Voluntarism Reported		
Duration of Intervention (Weeks/Years)		
Youngest Subject (Years)		
Oldest Subject (Years)		
Mean Age		
% Male/Female		
School Setting HS=High School, MS=Middle School		

Notes:

<i>Duration of Follow-Up</i>	Intervention	Comparison
Post Treatment (Yes, No, or NR=Not Reported)		
Follow-Up 1 (Weeks/Years)		
Follow-Up 2 (Weeks/Years)		

<i>Dropouts</i>	Intervention	Comparison
Did not complete assessment		
Did not complete intervention		
Notes:		
Post-Treatment		
Follow-Up 1		
Follow-Up 2		

<i>Measure of Specific Outcome:</i>	Intervention	Comparison
Specific Outcomes Post <i>M</i> (SD)	()	()
Specific Outcome Follow-Up 1	()	()
Specific Outcome Follow-Up 2	()	()

<i>Measure of Specific Outcome:</i>	Intervention	Comparison
Specific Outcomes Post <i>M</i> (SD)	()	()
Specific Outcome Follow-Up 1	()	()

community service* OR

AND

student* OR

young person* OR

young people OR

teen* OR

adolescen* OR

child* OR

AND

(citizen* near3 (good or skill* or attitude* or educat*)) OR (civic near3 (responsibil* or engage* or knowledge or behavior* or

behaviour* or attitude* or perception* or efficac*)) OR

(social* near 3 (responsibil* or connect* or aware* or consci*)) OR

(politic* near 3 (efficac* or knowledge or aware*)) OR

ethic* near3 service* OR

youth* near3 develop* OR

communit* near3 efficac*

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