

12-2019

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Recommended Citation

Krown, Telia and Bui, Nhat-Dzu T., "Creating a Meaningful Experience: On Service Learning and Teacher Preparedness" (2019). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 704.
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Creating a Meaningful Experience: On Service Learning and Teacher Preparedness

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Abstract

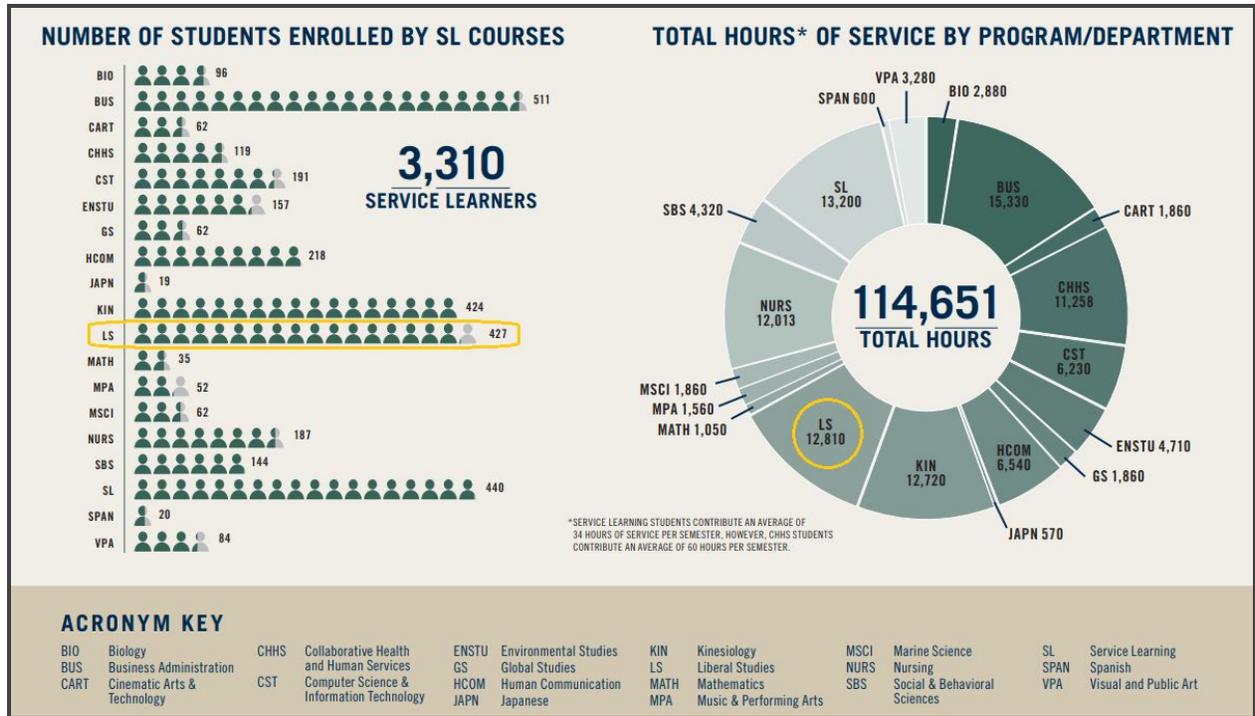
The focus of this Capstone project is on the effectiveness of service learning and its role in teacher preparedness. This is an important issue for Liberal Studies students, professors, and the community because in the Integrated Teacher Education Program, service learning is treated as preparation for teaching, and it can be seen that way for Traditional Pathway students as well. It is argued that while service learning works towards an admirable goal, there are obstacles and design decisions that keep it from being fully effective in preparing Liberal Studies students in becoming teachers. The three primary stakeholder perspectives chosen were service learners, professors, and service learning faculty because of their involvement and engagement. Three major action options emerged from an analysis of the data and were explored as ways to address the issue presented. In order for service learners and students in the community to both receive meaningful experiences, professors need to work closely within the community and its schools and teachers, while receiving active support from the University's Dean and Chair. This is argued to be the most effective way to achieve the goals of improving the service learning experience for Liberal Studies students at California State University Monterey Bay.

Creating a Meaningful Experience: On Service Learning and Teacher Preparedness

A few semesters ago I was in a service learning course and I was placed at a charter school. I had a friend in the same course, who was also placed at the same charter school. The teacher I had was very attentive to her students. There were art projects involving storytelling, math, or science. The students had discussions and their seats changed once a month to keep the students stimulated and help the teacher maintain control. When at the site, the teacher would always be willing to answer my questions, even asking some of her own to either gauge what I knew or help me come to an understanding for myself. I was able to tutor, facilitate lessons, and I had opportunities to read to the class as well. All in all my service learning experience went very well. My friends, on the other hand, felt they had a lackluster experience. During their first hour of service learning they were in the back of the class watching the teacher read and the students only listening, then the students would be working on workbooks. They felt the most they did was checking the students' work or grading worksheets and homework. Recess would be a slight relief for my friend because this is when they saw the students' personalities the most, they also had the opportunity to speak with other teachers including my site teacher. They felt they were there mostly for busy office work, and did not get an enriching service learning experience. When comparing both of our experiences, I find a huge contrast in them. It makes me wonder how can we make a more enriching and goal oriented service learning experiences for future Liberal Studies majors?

Literature Synthesis

Service learning, part of the *early field experience* as a requirement for Liberal Studies students' of the state of California, is to bridge the concepts learned, put into practice, and encourage student learning while also providing opportunities for critical thinking, social awareness, and developing skills in a real world setting. The emphasis of pedagogy in the Liberal Studies undergraduate program gives a lot of insight of the larger concepts of social justice, civic duty, and the moral responsibility of being part of a community. Servicing our communities in the classroom is to help future teachers understand how the issues of low income, inequity, and other injustices affect the learning and teaching of underprivileged students (Mitchell,2012). What is beneficial to the student is what they are learning from the experience. As noted on the official California State Monterey Bay website, service learning in conjunction with the Liberal Studies program, “students have the opportunity to lead lessons with children, tutor, develop curricular units, and engage in classroom management-all skills useful for teachers”(California State Monterey Bay, 2019). The state requires 50 hours of service learning and to be done with a credentialed teacher (2019). This chart (see figure: 1) shows how many hours students at CSUMB spent doing service learning in the 2017-2018 academic year. Liberal Studies has the third highest in hours of service behind Service Learning itself with 13,200 hours and Business with 15,330 hours (2019).



1

With all of the hours being spent at service learning site how are the hours being spent? Looking at the major learning outcomes of the Liberal Studies program students are expected to become developed educators by having students think, write, and speak critically about the general knowledge of a California public educator in the classroom, school, community, and national contexts (2019). As researchers Dwight Giles Jr. and Janet Eyler (1994) note from the educational reformer John Dewey, “the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative”. According to the fourth MLO social justice collaborator, “students combine disciplinary knowledge, community experience, and reflective practice to become ethically and socially responsible educators working toward a just and sustainable world” (CSUMB,2019). The lower and upper

¹ This chart provided by CSUMB shows the 2017-2018 service learning hours of the Liberal Studies department.

division service learning outcomes ask students to identify their civic duties and own social awareness to eventually act for systemic change and civic action. According to the Theoretical Roots of Service Learning in John Dewey: Toward a Theory of Service Learning by Dwight Giles and Janet Eyler, “The purpose of the interaction is to derive learning from experience through reflective thinking which led to inquiry.” (Giles and Eyler, 1994) The intention of our research is to examine service learning in regards to the Liberal Studies department. We want to find where service learning provides early field experience that benefits the students and community and where if at all needs more development.

Why is it an Issue/Opportunity?

To understand how service learning can affect teacher preparedness we have to know what issues or opportunities service learning provides. According to Carnegie Mellon University in teaching excellence and educational innovation (2019), “Service-Learning is a potentially rich educational experience, but without careful planning, students can wind up learning far less than we hope or internalizing exactly the opposite lessons we intend.” With thoughtful planning and deliberate execution, service learning can foster positive relationships (2019). The paper on K-12 school based service learning by Shelby Billing’s (2000), states that service learning was developed in the late 20th century in response to concerns that youth were not engaged with their communities and with society as a whole. Service learning was offered as a powerful pedagogical alternative that allowed students to gain greater understanding of concepts while they contributed to their communities (2000). Reflection is a critical component of effective service learning. According to Robert Bringle and Julie Hatcher’s article on Reflection in Service Learning: Making Meaning or Experience 1999, “... they connect the service activities to the

course content extending educational agenda beyond rote learning.” Traditionally speaking, two issues arise in education, the first is connect specific learning and the frustrations of content learning and its lack of promoting personal understandings (1999). Active learning strategies were introduced to develop problem based learning and collaborative learning within student. Service learning is a learning activity that meets identified community needs, reflects on the service and commits to a broader sense of appreciation and responsibility (1999). The MLO diversity and multicultural scholar asks students to evaluate their own and others’ experiences as influenced by social identities, socialization practices and societal institutions. Students then inform their educational practices by applying concepts of diversity and multiculturalism (CSUMB, 2019). Understanding the social and educational functions in a classroom through service learning could be providing students with the knowledge needed for future teachers. However, are Liberal Studies students getting the framework needed to assist and reflect in a real classroom setting? According to Andrew Furco’s *Service Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education*, “..defies service learning as any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience” (p.9, 1996). The focus on providing a much needed service and on student learning would balance the benefits of the provider and the recipient. By providing academic context and designing the program in such a way that ensures an enhancement of learning and of service (p. 14, 1996).

Opportunities that are provided by participating in service learning are social awareness, social justice, skill development, engaging in reciprocal service, and professionalism. According to the service learning quick facts on the CSUMB website (2018), “Through direct involvement

in addressing social challenges, students learn to value the importance of cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and social justice, and they develop new knowledge and skills relevant to their future careers.” By making connections between the classroom and our community Liberal Studies majors will have the opportunity to lead lessons, tutors, develop curricular units, and engage in classroom management (2019). These skills are useful for future teachers and can be accomplished.

What Has or Should be Done?

Campus based civic and social awareness engagement has become more intimately involved with learning objectives in the classroom. To understand the service learning that is actively being done at CSUMB we should understand the different types of service learning that is possible. According to Robert Sigmon, “If we are to establish clear goals [for service learning] and work efficiently to meet the, we need to move toward a precise definition.” (Sigmon, 1979) He proposed a typology that broadened the notion of reciprocal learning to a more balanced outcome to learning goals and service (Furco, 1996).

Table 1. Sigmon (1994) proposed typology: differentiating the levels of service learning pedagogy

SL step continuum	Primary and secondary beneficiaries
service learning	service and learning goals completely separate
service-LEARNING	learning goals are primary; service outcomes are secondary
SERVICE-learning	service outcomes are primary; learning goals are secondary
SERVICE-LEARNING	service and learning goals of equal weight,reciprocity

2

What was found in the chart and comparing it to the CSUMB service learning goals, is that the primary and secondary beneficiaries have separate service and learning goals. So it can be seen as 'service learning.' The same program might appear to have an equal emphasis on service and learning, providing benefits to both the recipients and providers of the service (1996). SERVICE LEARNING is the last step in the continuum, service and learning goals have equal weight. By having a reciprocal goals we could achieve greater experiences for both students and the recipients. In terms of the service learning in the Liberal Studies program students being at the school site they should be able to use the course content to assist in issues dealing with social and self awareness and civics while also being able to learn more about classroom management, lesson planning, and other skills needed to be an educator.

Currently in the California State Universities units are being cut in certain programs at the Chancellor's discretion. An article from the Monterey Weekly speaks on the manner, "Executive Order 1100, handed down last August from CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White to all CSU presidents, reorganized the general education requirements of the system's lower division." (Duan, 2018) At CSUMB in the Liberal Studies program they decide those cuts would be going to Service Learning Course. This places obstacles in front of students. Service learning was built into the schools foundation, the belief that sending students into the community to foster and promote social justice (2018). A new course LS, 386S, Service Learning for Social Change in Education has been created in efforts to improve professional development for future teachers. There are talks between the Dean's office and the Teacher Education Program, to cut charter

² This chart was made by Robert Sigmon in his work on Serving to Learn, Learning to Serve. Linking Service with Learning. Report

schools from the inclusion of service learning. Charter schools are relevant to the Liberal Studies curriculum involving alternative schooling and meet public school state standards.

Conclusion

Overall, service learning has been more than just a form of experiential education. It has taken a serious role in educating students on the actions of civic duty and social constructs. Getting them ready to be an active member in their community. It serves as a process that shapes our students into personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented citizens (Wetheimer & Kahne, 2004). CSUMB has a positive outlook and reputation of service learning. In 2015 California State University Monterey Bay was recognized as a national leader in service learning and civic engagement (CSUMB,2018). Earning in two categories, the prestigious Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in Higher Education. The General Community Service and the Economic Opportunity in 2014-15 (2018). With awards and commendations such as these expectations from the commitment of service learning should be raised. It is not only about the hours being completed but the work being done in our communities. In 2014, the Service Learning Institute, thinking globally, engaged in service learning projects in countries such as, Leon and Spain (2018). This is can be seen as a great thing, but what is happening now? What is the course work in the classrooms teaching students to relate to in their communities? Where are the students choosing to go and what are they doing at the sites that are teaching them more skills in relation to the degree they are trying to achieve and the service they are providing their communities?

Methods

For this Capstone Project the researcher investigated how Liberal Studies undergraduate students, faculty, and professors view the service learning program and what they think could be done to improve it. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researcher used what they learned to formulate an action that responds to the focus issue in a way that inspired, informed, or involved a particular audience.

Context

We will be conducting our interviews at the California State University Monterey Bay campus.

Participants and Participant Selection

Researcher

As Liberal Studies undergraduate students, we do not feel like we have received enough preparation for teaching. We and our peers have had shared experiences with service learning in LS courses at CSUMB, and we would like to identify issues within the service learning curriculum. Our biases as students may impact how we see service learning, while professors and faculty may have different perspectives on the matter.

Informants

We invited 20-50 Liberal Studies major students, professors, and Liberal Studies

faculty to participate in this study. This group of prospective participants were invited to participate because of their relevant experience/expertise/knowledge.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

Student Semi-Structured Interview.

1. Do you want to be a teacher?
2. If you are not planning on teaching, are you planning on a career in education? If so, could you elaborate?
3. Are you a transfer student?
4. Do you know what the concept of early field experience is? What is your understanding of it to be?
5. What are some examples of things that you learned during your service learning experience(s)?
6. What are some examples of things that you wish that you learned during your service learning experience(s)?
7. What were your expectations going into service learning?
8. What were your professors' learning outcomes of your going into service learning?
9. What activities done in the classroom lined up with what was outlined in your professor's syllabus?
10. What activities did you do in your classroom(s)? How involved were you? (i.e. Did you tutor? Plan lessons? Assist directly or observed?)
11. Did you develop any practical skills that you could use as a teacher? What were they, and how were they developed?
12. Do you believe that the service learning experiences that you had is effective for teacher training? Why or why not?
13. What are your concerns when it comes to Service Learning?
14. What is currently being done to improve service learning - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
15. What do you think should be done about service learning?
16. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages to changing service learning?
17. Is there anything else that you would like to say about service learning and/or the improvement of service learning?

Professor Semi-Structured Interview.

1. Have you taught in K-12 schooling? How many years were you in K-12?
2. What is your understanding of early field experience based on the CTC definition?
3. Have you taught any service learning courses in LS?
4. What are your expectations for early field experience?
5. What differentiates high school volunteers from service learners?
6. In what ways do you think service learning has been successful? In what ways does there need to be more development?
7. What are your expectations from your students' service learning experiences? Do your assumptions compare with the students' expectations and actual experiences?
8. What are the benefits of having a certified K-12 teacher facilitate service learning?
9. Are there any barriers when it comes to placements/completing hours for service learning? How are these considered when designing the SL curriculum?
10. What do you see as the problem with service learning?
11. What is currently being done to improve service learning - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
12. What do you think should be done about service learning?
13. What do you think are the obstacles to changing service learning?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to say about service learning and/or the improvement of service learning?

Service Learning Coordinator/LS faculty Semi-Structured Interview.

1. What ideas, thoughts, or concepts do you want students to know?
2. What is your understanding of the CTC's definition of service learning and early field experience?
3. What are your expectations for early field experience?
4. What differentiates high school volunteers from service learners?
5. In what ways do you think service learning has been successful? In what ways does there need to be more development?
6. What do you think your professors expect from their students' service learning experiences? Do their assumptions compare with the students' expectations and actual experiences?

7. What are the benefits of having a certified K-12 teacher facilitate service learning?
8. To get a better understanding of the new service learning curriculum. Can you tell us what is being changed?
9. How do we ensure that students are placed with credentialed teachers?
10. Are there any barriers when it comes to placements/completing hours for service learning? How are these considered when designing the SL curriculum?
11. What do you see as the problem with service learning?
12. What is currently being done to improve service learning - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
13. What do you think should be done about service learning?
14. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages to changing service learning?
15. Is there anything else that you would like to say about service learning and/or the improvement of service learning?

Procedure

Participants were interviewed or surveyed. Surveys were collected anonymously. All interviews were done individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or paper and pencil survey of the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place in the Tanimura & Antle Family Memorial Library. A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews, to allow for follow-up questions to unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews will be coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

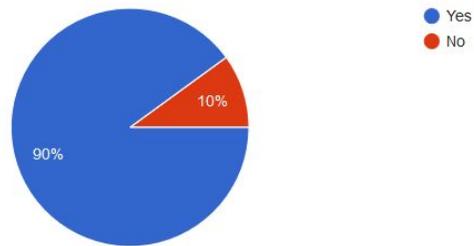
Student Survey Results

50 surveys were sent out through university email to students via Google Forms.

Individualized responses of our survey can be found at this [Survey Responses link](#).

Do you want to be a teacher?

10 responses



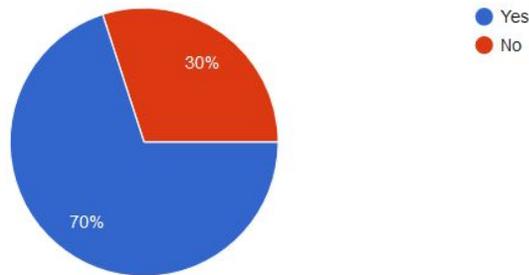
1.

- 2. If you are not planning on teaching, are you planning on a career in education? If so, could you elaborate?

open to different possibilities
elementary school. preferably 2nd-4th grade
Yes, I would like any job in a school district so that i can work while my son is in school and have the same time off in the year
I want to work with youth, but more on a level of working with troubled youth and helping them get back on track with both life and school

Are you a transfer student?

10 responses



- 3.

4. Do you know what the concept of early field experience is? What is your understanding of it?

Early field experience is a way for future teachers to go out into schools and observe different grade levels.
I would compare it to service learning, otherwise I'm not sure.
That we get to practice implementing lessons.
I feel like this refers to service learning hours we are required to do but I am not entirely sure
Yes, early field experience is getting introduced to the responsibilities and duties of a job position before officially becoming an employee or salary.
Not really heard of it.
No, I am not familiar with the concept of early field experience. If I had to guess I would say that it is likely related to the concept of student teaching.
No, working in the field you want to go into before graduating
To get a feel of what it's like in the classroom and to work with students before you make a commitment to teaching
The term of early field experience was not mentioned in any of my courses.

5. What are some examples of things that you learned during your service learning experience(s)?

<p>I have learned about different grade levels and what it is like to be in the classroom of that grade level. I have learned different strategies as well as teaching styles from observing. Lastly, I have learned what it is like to be a teacher at the school in their community.</p>
<p>It is the best way to learn about my future career.</p>
<p>To manage a classroom and how to teach lessons</p>
<p>how NOT to run a classroom.</p>
<p>1. Students need consistent boundaries and rules to follow 2. How to build professional relationships 3. Teaching students to be responsible and accountable is an additional part of teaching</p>
<p>How to help children read and learn some math problems.</p>
<p>I think that the biggest take away from my service learning class was the exposure that I got from visiting three different schools, classrooms and grade levels. It gave me an idea of the different context that I could find myself working in as an educator.</p>
<p>New teaching tools from observing teachers</p>
<p>How to gain classroom control, do's and don'ts in certain cases, fun activities for</p>

<p>building classroom environment , how to build relationships with students and families, how to gain trust with students.</p>
<p>Observing the teacher showed me classroom management skills, I've seen and had meaningful interactions with students.</p>

6. What are some examples of things that you wish that you learned during your service learning experience(s)?

<p>How to become a substitute in that district.</p>
<p>I wish I went to a wider array of schools. Otherwise I returned to the school I liked. But, I wish I knew more about lesson planning and curriculum.</p>
<p>How to create a lesson plan and how to do different activities</p>
<p>classroom management, attention getters, participation</p>
<p>1. Having an opportunity to teach a lesson to the class 2. How to organize and schedule a curriculum 3. How to select good teaching materials and strategies for effective teaching</p>
<p>How to actually have a classroom and the teaching methods used.</p>
<p>I wish that I would have learned a little more about: - how to teach a lesson in class. - classroom management strategies - alternative ways of assessing students</p>

How to follow/create curriculum and lesson plans, more experience in actually teaching
How to make sure everyone gets the lesson before moving on, how to get students engaged when they don't show interest. How to make sure no one gets singled out or left out.
Seeing a teacher make a curriculum and actual lessons plan would have been extremely beneficial.

7. What were your expectations going into service learning?

That I would learn and experience what it is like to be in a classroom.
Total open to it, loved it.
I knew I had to work with a teacher that was fully credential
learning A LOT
I expected to be co teaching after two weeks of observing and getting to know the classroom dynamic but ended up becoming a teacher's helper
For it to be like the credential program.
The very first time that I did service learning, I thought that it was going to be a more

<p>hands on experience than what it was. I am not even sure why I expected that because there was no real direction from my professors about what the objectives of this work was.</p>
<p>I thought I would have had more guidance in the classroom. Teachers often let you observe and that's it.</p>
<p>To be able to learn from my teacher, build relationships with the students and teachers, and to be able to teach a little something</p>
<p>I simple expected more experience within a class, but I wish it would have shown us more behind the scenes aspects of teaching and the work that goes into planning a day.</p>

8. What were your professors' learning outcomes of your going into service learning?

<p>To learn about schools in the community.</p>
<p>Do the time and get a good evaluation.</p>
<p>That I was not just a teacher assistant</p>
<p>I do not remember</p>
<p>1. Multi lit required mostly cultural observations and reflections 2. Social issues in education required more of the same 3. Teaching multicultural education required 30 hours in the classroom no specific tasks stated, more reflections</p>

Not sure
Honestly, I am really not sure. The outcomes were not clearly defined because I didn't feel like I had any particular focus going into the classroom/school where I would complete my service learning.
I'm not sure, they were more elaborate and intricate than what I was doing though
To learn classroom life and to get comfortable being and working with students
N/A

9. What activities done in the classroom lined up with what was outlined in your professor's syllabus?

Multicultural books and reading lessons.
n/a
Doing multicultural lessons
the teachers I did service learning with showed me what not to do when I become a teacher. I did not have very good role models to follow
Several in class, not service learning
Not sure

For the kinesiology class, the PE lessons lined up well. For the LS 390 class, I am not really sure if it lined up with the syllabus, but I did get to see LA lessons.
I was able to read culturally diverse books to students one on one or in groups for LS 390/394s
Working with the children in small groups or one on ones
N/A

10. What activities did you do in your classroom(s)? How involved were you? (i.e. Did you tutor? Plan lessons? Assist directly or observed?)

I was an assistant in the classroom for the teacher.
Totally hands-on. I did several lessons on my own.
Observation and creating a lesson
basically hovered and observed
Create lesson plans, lots of group projects
I just listened to kids read and help with math. I mostly just watched the teacher do everything or do a bit of their errands like taking books to the library, organizing, etc.
For KIN, I planned and led lessons. For my other service learning experiences, I got to assist with small groups during centers. Other than that, I walked around the room and

assist any students who needed help. Sometimes, the teachers would ask me to prep work for them.
I would be in charge of small groups, work one on one with a student, monitor, and observe
I've observed, worked with students one on one, help the teacher prepare materials for lessons, walked around and was available for help and questions
Within the T-K classroom I worked at various stations with the kids and assisting in art projects.

11. Did you develop any practical skills that you could use as a teacher? What were they, and how were they developed?

I learned different skills to manage a classroom.
How to manage students with special needs.
How to manage my classroom and what how to help them with a subject
Learned more organizational skills, creativity, adjusting to time constraints and lack of group contributions, developed over time with the several classes I've taken
Not really, I know how to help kids read.

<p>Honestly, I am not really sure if I learned any NEW practical skills that I could use as a teacher. I guess I also got to see how the teacher leads lessons and transitions her class from one thing to the next. I wouldn't say that this was developed in any way, it was just an observation.</p>
<p>Not really. Just some fun lesson plans and ideas I was able to see from observing</p>
<p>Classroom management, talking with students and building relationships, how to deal with students who need extra help and or attention</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>no sadly</p>

12. Do you believe that the service learning experiences that you had is effective for teacher training? Why or why not?

<p>No, service learning teachers did not seem like they knew how to model proper teaching.</p>
<p>Yes, because I am now more comfortable in the classroom setting. No because I have no idea of the expectations I'm walking into as a new teacher.</p>
<p>No because it hasn't taught me how to control a classroom or skills on teaching students.</p>

No, not really. There was very little direction for both myself and the teacher(s) that I did my service learning with.
No. From 3 semesters of taking a service learning class I feel no more prepared to teach than I did before taking these classes
I believe yes, but could be improved with the expectations from the teachers and students
I feel our service learning program is great for those to see if they want to go into education to get a feel for the classroom, however for upper division it should be more about teacher/school relations and the actual planning of lessons and curriculum.
Yes, I believe it was a great way to be introduced into schools in the community.
Absolutely
Yes so we can learn how to manage classrooms

13. What are you concerned about when it comes to Service Learning?

There seems to be a lack of urgency by professors when it came to starting service learning and getting paperwork in.
Dealing with unresponsive teacher contacts.
We aren't taught to create lessons with a plan

<p>being placed with teachers who are not conducting their classrooms very well.</p>
<p>I'm concerned that I haven't had enough guidance or practice. Service learning in general has been a challenging task as I've had to work and care for my child, who is now four.</p>
<p>Wasting my time.</p>
<p>With the exception of the KIN class, I didn't learn how to design a lesson plan or how to execute one. This concerns me because I am going into an intern teaching credential program in the fall. This means that I will begin working as the teacher of record before I have ever learned how to teach. I get that this pathway isn't ideal for that reason, but it is a pathway that is offered none the less. It is for that reason that I think service learning should be modified to give students more opportunities to have teaching experiences.</p>
<p>There's no point. I think there needs to be more guidance and requirements because otherwise service learners are just another pair of eyes in the classroom for 20-30 hours</p>
<p>If I'm going to get a teacher who actually will give me things to do in class instead of just sitting there and observing</p>
<p>The experience i did have did not prepare me enough for an actual classroom of my own.</p>

14. What is currently being done to improve Service Learning--by whom--and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?

I am unsure.
?
I think it's indifferent because different teachers have ideas
I don't think anything is being done... or at least I haven't heard of anything. this is bad, i think teachers who get service learners should be excelling in their craft.
I have no clue what is being done or by who. I believe that the learning experiences should be evaluated and taken into consideration to improve the service learning program.
I'm not sure.
I am not sure.
I'm not sure, I think change needs to happen to the service learning department
I don't know what is being done to improve it, but all the teachers I've gotten have been great to work with
I do not know of any changes happening in the program.

15. What do you think should be done about Service Learning?

<p>Service learning might be better if there was a one time only class about what to do what to expect and how to fill out forms.</p>
<p>no thoughts</p>
<p>It should be explained differently</p>
<p>modeling the teacher, more interactions with students, conversations with teachers one on one</p>
<p>Look at answer above*</p>
<p>I think it should be a teacher learning system where the teacher helps incorporate the service learner into teaching lessons. (only for people who want to be teachers though)</p>
<p>I think I answered these two questions above.</p>
<p>I think that there needs to be a more clear goal. Either working on lesson plans during class and then teaching/co-teaching with the teacher you're placed with (like how KIN 373 is being done now) would be more helpful than what it is now. More guidance and structure would help so that everyone is learning from their own experience instead of observing</p>
<p>It should have higher expectations</p>
<p>N/A</p>

16. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages to changing Service Learning?

Funding.
n/a
The times of the Golden ticket meetings are an obstacle because it is sometimes during our classes
large class sizes make it hard to have good classroom management.
Higher expectations for new students is unfair for the current students, ie more hours and more work.
It could make people who don't have a lot of time hate it.
I could see students complaining about the amount of work that they would have to do in service learning classes. It might overwhelm students and even scare them away from the profession. I am not sure if that is a good or bad thing. I could make an argument for both.
I think that it is harder to actually monitor and guide college students in an outside classroom. And students probably wouldn't be happy about more requirements but I think that it would help the most
It can be hard to find time to do between work and school, so maybe the classes should be hybrid to make sure students can make it to their hours

N/A

17. Is there anything else that you would like to say about Service Learning and/or the improvement of Service Learning?

No
I think teachers who take on service learners need to be told what it is they should be modeling for us, ensuring they are properly conducting their own classes, have proper classroom management skills. KNOW WHAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY DOING (bad experiences with past teachers)
Nothing to say.
Introduce aspects of the credential program during service learning.
No
-
It is helpful, but should be more flexible
N/A
No thank you.
no and good luck

Interview Transcriptions

Interviews are edited for clarity and length. Interviewees consisted of professors and faculty members in either the Liberal Studies or Service Learning departments. [Scans of our interview notes](#) are found at this link, and [here](#) as well. Below we have included a sample of interviews done.

Interview 1: “Abby” - Professor

1. Have you taught in K-12 schooling? How many years were you in K-12?

“My experience with K-12 is varied. Early on, I did nature education. I parlayed that a number of years later into being the naturalist on site that worked with specific school groups--you may remember science camp from 5th Grade--this was that kind of experience in Ohio. It was a couple years. I went to get my credential in secondary, and for two years, I did not get a position, so I was a substitute teacher at the middle school level and then at the high school level. I taught in Wisconsin. I went on to graduate school and I worked with people who were going to be teachers. So, since that time, my experience has been with people who were going into the public school classroom.”

2. What is your understanding of early field experience based on the CTC definition?

“The CTC calls for early field experience, and they’re very general about what that means. At CSUMB that means that they’re not merely observing--which would be acceptable to

the CTC--but at CSUMB it's service learning, which means they should be actively involved in the classroom assisting in some way. Often what that means for Liberal Studies students that means tutoring, sometimes doing more general assistance, sometimes doing teaching at the front of the [class]room. The definition is very, very general, so there's a lot of latitude, and in some institutions, all they ask of the students is to sit at the back of the classroom and take notes as they observe what happens in the classroom."

3. *Have you taught any service learning courses in LS?*

"I have been primarily teaching Social Foundations of Education, which is also my professional area. I think ever since I was hired, about 15 years ago, there's been a service learning course associated with Social Foundations. I have been teaching service learning then for about 15 years."

4. *What differentiates high school volunteers from service learners?*

"I can't speak very knowledgeably about what happens in the high schools in California because I haven't been involved in that end of it."

5. *In what ways do you think service learning has been successful? In what ways does there need to be more development?*

"For me, service learning has been most successful when I have been able to form a partnership with a high school or elementary school site leader, most often a principal or vice principal. For example, Del Rey Woods Elementary had a very successful had a very successful partnership with that school because of Ray Ramirez, their vice principal, who had done some doctorate work in the value of mentorship. He and I put our heads together and designed curriculum that was unique to the placement of my service learners at that site such that our

course material and what was happening at the school were very tightly related. In fact we did some courses. Some days we had a class meeting on site at the school where Ray was the instructor. Success was guaranteed by local control and flexibility and a shared vision between instructor and principal.”

Q: Do you think that's possible in every case?

“The challenge is that the only institutional requirement--the CTC early field experience--the dean is looking out for the ‘bottom line’, which is what he can tell the CTC that all of the service learners are going to approved sites and are doing what’s required by the CTC. What I mentioned to you that makes it all successful goes on top of that, and the challenge is that there’s very little at this point in time any institutional reward for putting in that kind of effort. To form a relationship with Ray, to work with him, it required a lot of extra effort and time--both in managing the course and working with those teachers. It was highly rewarding for me and for Ray--we did it for 7 to 8 years--and it was very beneficial for the students. The feedback that I got was that it was very successful on their end, too. But you’re asking, ‘Can it be done broadly and then continuing through time?’ It could, but it’s going to need that soft commitment from the instructor to establish and maintain that partnership. Without any institutional motivation, reward, or guarantee, these sorts of things can come and go. If it’s institutionalized, you risk losing that special quality, that relationship; it becomes standardized.”

“There’s one more piece I would add: the research that I did was to implement a mini-workshop that would focus more particularly on the tutoring skills that the students should be practicing at the site. I was specifically asking them to tutor, to be tutors. In Social Foundations, I took 4 different classes where I focused in on tutoring skills, like task analysis or

modeling the language for modeling lessons. The research showed that the students benefited--and learned--the skills that I introduced through the application of them at the site, and they appreciated being taught those skills to use and put into practice. The additional layer of giving students things to practice as well as look for and comment and reflect on related to the more abstract parts of the course. Those two things worked really well in conjunction with one another, also on a more conceptual level.”

6. *What are your expectations from your students’ service learning experiences? Do your assumptions compare with the students’ expectations and actual experiences?*

“My course is a bit more unique as it’s focused on very large issues, like with policy--what’s happening with the Trump administration--or how can we build playgrounds and on what basis--should we design them to support the mission of schools? Rather than sending them in like the Children’s Literature course, where they’re going to deal with something specifically in schools, like teach a piece of literature to kids, I’m less prescriptive. That’s kind of why I created the workshop, to give them something specific to pursue. I’m asking them to tune into these larger institutional issues, like what’s the salary schedule like in the school district and then to compare them with other schools. I’ve been very freehanded in how I invite them to work in the classroom. It’s more about what’s on their agenda and how they use those opportunities to discuss it in the class. I haven’t been very thorough about [discussions] because we haven’t had that kind of time while teaching the content.”

7. *What are the benefits of having a certified K-12 teacher facilitate service learning?*

“The most obvious benefit would be the practical application. A credentialed teacher would understand the language being used, how state testing is being done, how it’s driving the curriculum, how you integrate--or choose not to integrate--arts, the values of your school or administration... They have those details for students. I’m not a California credentialed teacher, so I don’t know those specifics, as opposed to someone like Dr. [REDACTED]. They are the kind of teachers that Liberal Studies students are going to be, so they act as two models: a role model, by virtue of seeing what they do, and also by the extent to which of how they see themselves as a model. Some teachers are very direct about what they do about that, and others do nothing. They just accept [service learners] into the classroom.”

8. *Are there any barriers when it comes to placements/completing hours for service learning? How are these considered when designing the SL curriculum?*

“We’re actually embroiled in a controversy about that right now. The Dean of Education and the credential program don’t care for charter schools. I don’t understand why, categorically, but they don’t. There’s some questions about the curriculum in Liberal Studies and the Dean and the Teacher Ed program are trying to constrain placement in LS to non-charter schools. We don’t know why that is a useful restriction.”

“At the level of daily barriers, there’s all sorts of challenges. Instructor time, because it does take a great deal and investment the more you want to focus or develop a partnership related to service learning. Qualified teachers--how to identify qualified teachers--is challenging. Teachers receive our students without any pay at all, so it’s very generous for them and the principal to accept students. It’s challenging to put any restrictions on the quality of teacher who would do that as well as put in the time to figure all of that out, so that’s a challenging process to

identify who's going to receive students at any given time. Student time is a bit of a challenge--I don't think it's all that hard, I just give them a schedule and tell them to sign up for it. When we had coordinated placement at one place, we did it that way. It's much easier to just tell them to go find a school and they work it out themselves. But students' schedules, where they go, and where they want to go can also be a challenge. Some want to go to a school they're familiar with, or where they want to get hired at, but the instructor wants them to go somewhere where they think they'll get a unique experience, and then they have to negotiate that. Student transportation can be a challenge, especially for lower division students. The logistics of getting to the placement is a constraint."

9. *What do you see as the problem with service learning?*

"The biggest problem--I actually wrote an article about this 12 years ago--the best service learning that I've seen in place is unique to the relationship between the instructor and the school. [REDACTED] has had some relationships with some schools in Salinas, where he's worked closely with the site administrators and the teachers. I've worked with a number of different partners, 3 different partners particularly since I've been at CSUMB. Each of those partnerships have worked well because I spent a year getting to know the site leader and teachers and another year talking with them about what service learners should be doing and coming to them about what the agenda was. Previously I was at Olson Elementary, and the principal came to me specifically asking for reading instruction help, providing assessments and helping with these reading skills. We were on the verge of creating a workshop for these skills in my class, which would have been powerful, because students would have a comparative experience, they would know the teachers working at the school and the administrators, so if there are any

problems anywhere down the line, I would know about it through them. I could do check-ins and updates. At the end of the semester, I'd get with the teachers and ask them how we could improve, what worked and what didn't. I could coordinate different aspects of the experience to keep it focused and to ensure its quality. The challenge is that it takes a lot of time and makes it a very unique thing, and the university as an institution doesn't like 'unique'. It likes 'standardized', it likes implementation, and that's true of all levels of government. And that's what the CTC wants, because of the scope of the work that it has to do. The university is not that much different; it has service learners in every department in all different parts of the community--why would it want to bother with supporting the unique investments that I need to make? It doesn't, it wants to be more or less of a regulatory agency, and then that goes down to the departmental level, where instructors might not want to do some of the things I do. Standardization starts to become more general and less unique. The biggest thing is just the time and desire to build the relationships that ensures the quality of instruction for the students."

10. What is currently being done to improve service learning - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?

"I've been on sabbatical, so I don't know much about it; I think there's a 'service learning coordinator' now, but I'm not the person to ask. My perspective is that this is what institutions do. In standardizing the work, if they're having trouble in the grass roots level, they create another level, a title, another layer of standardization to close out the perceived problem. A bureaucracy only wants to increase itself, and that usually happens through exactly these sorts of processes. I've been doing this for 15 years. There is a Service Learning Institute, and there is a person over there that coordinates to some extent. Their job is to go out and find partnerships to

connect professors and partners in order to let them build partnerships and take care of things like paperwork and risk management. That function is done, I'm not sure what the thinking is in creating a local service learning coordinator."

"Institutions also like to suck power up towards the top. I've noticed that with teachers--as a teacher 20 years ago, we were left largely to determine our own curriculum. Then came in the standards, and then, principals started buying scripted curriculums so that they could control teacher work. Control's moving up out of the hands of teachers and into the hands of administrators, so this sounds like the same kind of thing. You have a coordinator who can be coordinated by the person above them--who I assume is the chair--so you start to have a bureaucracy that's reaching down in terms of its control, and taking it away from the official instructor. Now I don't know how that's going to work out. For example, if I still had that relationship with Ray, who isn't a principal anymore, would this coordinator come to me and say that I can't do X or Y because we want a more coordinated effort--I don't know."

"Perhaps they're there to play a more assistive role, or providing support. If I had a problem I could go to them and ask them. Time is a factor, I don't have time to find amazing principals that are going to be good to build a relationship with. If this coordinator makes it their job to find these great sites, that's great. I can go to them and ask, 'Who should I talk to?' That saves me a lot of time and gets me to where I need to go."

11. What do you think should be done about service learning?

"I'm a big fan of building a mindset from the ground up. In my ideal world, the department and chair would have conversations with the instructors and find out what they care about, what they're passionate about, the kind of situations that they think work best, what their

needs are, and to try and coordinate that toward a shared understanding of what we want to obtain in service learning and find out what that should look like going forward. Building a sense of what's possible and setting goals and trying to make that happen at the grass roots level going up. That's not usually what happens in bureaucracy, it usually comes down."

12. What do you think are the obstacles to changing service learning?

"[Bureaucracy] would only be a barrier if somebody wanted it to be. Right now there's nothing stopping building a mindset, building a culture--I think that's what leadership is. You get folks to have a vision, and then you find a way to pursue that vision. We really want to get serious about not only building teacher skills, but social justice actions. That would require getting everybody on board, getting them excited about it, finding out what kind of sites would be interested in doing things like that, what the relationships look like... Maybe the chair would go to the dean and get money to buyout time for instructors to build these relationships and do social justice work. All of that could be implemented, but that would take leadership, and there's nothing that is required of that by the institution."

13. Is there anything else that you would like to say about service learning and/or the improvement of service learning?

"I think in the LS program, active early field experience--students really get a lot out of that. On course evaluations, I will get more comments about beneficial service learning experiences than I will about what I did in the classroom. I take that as a marker that when you want to be a teacher, going out into the classroom and seeing that happen is one of the highest quality experiences that you can have. So in that regard, service learning is very valuable in Liberal Studies because it anticipates what many students don't see as their future. I think they

also just enjoy the activity. The buzz of school and working with kids is much more fun than just sitting in class or reading a book. When it's done well, when you add the social justice and social consciousness elements to it, it's also very valuable. CSUMB has some very good ideals, it's a question of how to make them real in every instance, and that's a bit of a challenge. I'm a big fan of service learning, I think we need to continue to do it. We just need to keep making it a rich experience for the students, but I don't think it's always the first priority. Sometimes the first priority is, 'We have to make curricular changes', so we get correspondence from the Chancellor's office. Things get lost having to make changes to meet other standards."

"The one thing I'm excited about is having a course that's not tied to content. Students tend to be concerned about similar things, like discipline--behavioral concerns, how they get handled, etc. If we have people in different classrooms, we can create a feedback loop with students. We build that discussion each week, and it has real promise."

Interview 2: "Babby" - Professor

1. *Have you taught in K-12 schooling? How many years were you in K-12?*

"Yes, I taught in K-12 for five years."

2. *Have you taught any service learning courses in LS?*

"Yes."

3. *What differentiates high school volunteers from service learners?*

"Most service learners are seriously considering this field."

4. *In what ways do you think service learning has been successful? In what ways does there need to be more development?*

"Students learn from hands-on experience. More student prep needed."

5. *What are your expectations from your students' service learning experiences? Do your assumptions compare with the students' expectations and actual experiences?*

“Learning from being in the class-room and interacting.”

6. *What are the benefits of having a certified K-12 teacher facilitate service learning?*

“They would get more practical guidance.”

7. *Are there any barriers when it comes to placements/completing hours for service learning? How are these considered when designing the SL curriculum?*

“Students put off finding classes and rush at the end. Enforce early deadlines.”

8. *What do you see as the problem with service learning?*

“Lack of supervision/feedback while in the classroom.”

9. *What is currently being done to improve service learning - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?*

“I don't know.”

10. *What do you think should be done about service learning?*

“I don't know.”

11. *What do you think are the obstacles to changing service learning?*

“I don't know.”

12. *Is there anything else that you would like to say about service learning and/or the improvement of service learning?*

“Not at this time.”

Interview 3: “Cabby” - Professor

1. *Have you taught in K-12 schooling? How many years were you in K-12?*

“I did not teach K-12 schooling. I volunteered in schools from preschool to 6th Grade on a weekly basis. We practiced reading instruction because I was a Linguistics instructor. We led reading circles and stuff like that. I also led after school groups, and when I was a doctoral student, I collected data in a middle school for 8 months, by shadowing students in 4th and 5th Grade classrooms. My experiences are different, but I got to sit in with so many awesome teachers, and I have an appreciation for what elementary teachers do. They set the tone for learning for the rest of life. Elementary school teachers are much more important than college professors. That was one of my motivating factors for getting my PhD in Education rather than Linguistics.”

2. *What is your understanding of early field experience based on the CTC definition?*

“I have seen it two ways. At Fresno State, when I was teaching there, they didn’t have the early field experience requirement. I knew students who went through their 4 years and they ended up hating teaching. I admire our program because of how much exposure to classrooms students get. I think a lot of times people go through school and they don’t know what to do for themselves, but they were modelled by teachers their whole lives through school, and they end up deciding to teach and hating it.”

“I think early field experience, the value of it, is learning about yourself. The other side of it is, I see in my students, while they’re struggling, when they go into the classroom they’re

not in a vulnerable position. They're authorities, but children don't see them as scary. For a couple hours a day, they get to know school cultures, principals, and kids."

3. *Have you taught any service learning courses in LS?*

"Just one course, LS277S."

4. *What are your expectations for early field experience?*

"I really think it's important. In lower division, it's mostly observing. I know we try really hard to make sure students aren't just filing the whole time and interacting with the children. I think it would be really nice if we could train students a little bit more directly on how to work one-on-one with kids, like reading. When I taught LS277, students went out into a variety of different classes, it was more about the social context of institutions, what happens in schools, different experiences in schools, developmental models--Waldorf, Montessori--key philosophical pieces... For classroom interaction, I had a list of things students could potentially do, but it was up to their teacher what to do with them. Some of them were in after-school programs, where they were supervised by a teacher."

5. *What differentiates high school volunteers from service learners?*

"I don't know what high school students do in classrooms. I'm more familiar with K-8, so I don't know what high school students are asked to do compared to service learners. They're probably just told to do whatever the teacher tells them to do. For our purposes, college students are thinking more critically and abstractly about the classroom. There's this assumption that we are going to critique and we have this higher status, but we have to go in with an open heart and an open mind. We need to recognize that we can't account for everything we see. We might see things happening that aren't optimal, but we don't know the whole story. We're guests to the

classroom, we have to see it as a privilege. Having one more adult in the classroom really helps and keeps kids on their toes. In the service learning contracts, there's a list of what students can do, and we hope the teachers adhere to those expectations."

6. In what ways do you think service learning has been successful? In what ways does there need to be more development?

"When this campus was established, people didn't really know what it did. The service learning component really helps people outside of the campus understand what we're trying to do. Our presence on the Monterey peninsula is enhanced by the service learning program. It's important for us to have this kind of presence so the community stands behind us. This is only year 25 of this university--it's young--so making its mark is important. When I compare the preservice teachers that I taught from Fresno State to the preservice teachers here, there's a difference. You guys have a better sense of what's happening in schools, a lot of you may change your mind and do something else, and that's fine--but you've learned something. You have information to base your career choices on. Things may have changed, service learning is more common. I would love to see service learning more linked to linguistics and children's literacy. The things that I talk about are very applicable in elementary school classrooms."

Results

Through the process of interviewing faculty and professors and surveying Liberal Studies students, we gained insight about what it is that students felt they needed to gain a more meaningful experience in service learning and how professors wanted more from their students' experiences at the school sites. After evaluating the data, understanding the perspectives, and

learning from the research, three action options emerged. These were: 1) Professor-crafted service learning experiences to make them more meaningful, 2) CSUMB providing transportation to service sites, and 3) simplifying the placement process for students. Our criteria for judging their worth were Cost, Time and Effectiveness.

Table 2. Evaluation of the Three Action Options

	Cost	Time	Effectiveness
Professor-crafted learning experiences	High	High	High
CSUMB-provided transportation	Medium	Medium	Low
Simplifying the placement process for students	Low	Medium	Low

Professor-crafted service learning experiences would allow professors at CSUMB to establish stronger and more personalized partnerships with school site principals and teachers. This would help site teachers have a better understanding of what expectations to have for the students coming into their classrooms. Having professors build interpersonal relationships with the school sites would be costly. They would need to be compensated accordingly for how much more time and work is being put into creating lectures and lessons in class while also molding experiences with site teachers. We know that there is a Service Learning Field Placement Coordinator who would work as a liaison between the Liberal Studies department and school sites. By having the person in this position work closely not only with the site but with

professors, that could strengthen the partnerships being built. We do believe this would be highly effective in the learning process for students participating in service learning at the school sites, however. By implementing more hands on, professor and teacher-controlled learning experiences, students would be able to observe, assist, and potentially retain more information pertaining to the school system, community and themselves.

Students and faculty of CSUMB have both said that transportation is a barrier students face. Transporting students would be a costly option. There are also liability forms and information that would need to be relayed to students. With different times and sites being throughout the Monterey County, its effectiveness would not be able to reach all students in need of transportation. The time spent on transporting students affects how much we would have to pay and train drivers.

Simplifying the placement process for students was our final action option. With this option, the cost would be low in terms of how much more money we would need to make this feasible. Students would have more time in class to understand the paperwork such as the learning agreement, short term agreements. In our survey students noted that they were concerned about the difficulty of finding a placement. They cited different obstacles such as scheduling conflicts, limited number of placements, and a confusing paperwork process relating to the MPUSD orientation. Other barriers related to the placement process were the cost of TB tests and fingerprinting, with some sites requiring fingerprinting at separate county offices with varying costs.

As we were discussing our options we came across the realization that we would need not only one of the action options, but all three to create a more meaningful, well-balanced

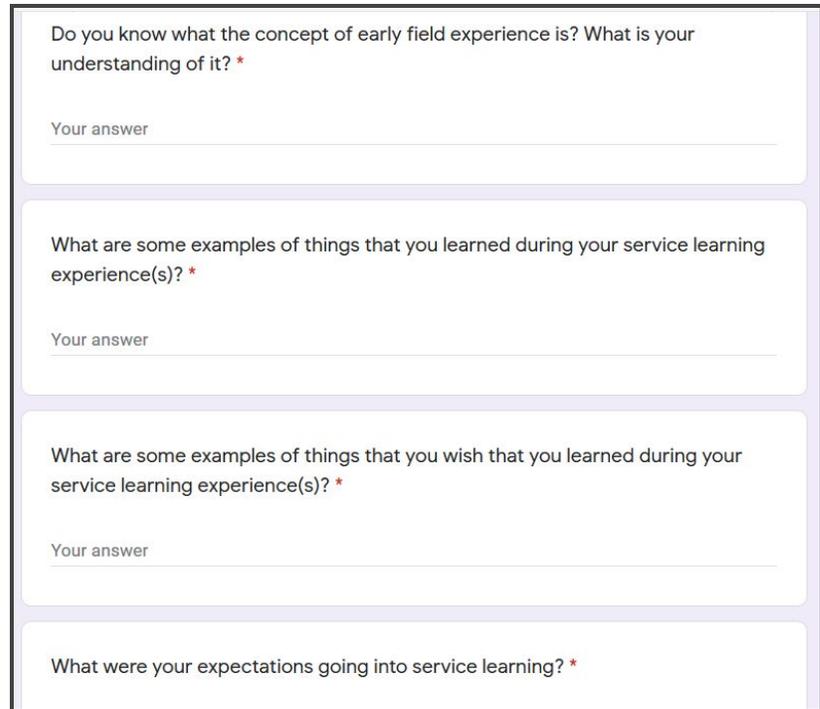
experience for the students in the Liberal Studies major. The need for all three options led us to imagining changing how service learning courses are scheduled. Professors could be able to have content-filled days once a week and the next day have students at the service learning site or multitude of sites chosen with the assistance of the course professor and the service learning field placement coordinator. Students could be able to carpool together to sites or van transportation could be available with the permission of CSUMB. Limitations could be found in the action of creating a hybrid service learning course. We have little knowledge of how the university could change future courses. The decision to cut units in service learning could also be seen as a limitation. The number of units of the course should be directly proportional to the number of hours students and professors are expected to work each week. Due to the professors' pronounced roles in carefully planning experiences relating to coursework along with the site teachers, reflections and observations made in the site classrooms would be more beneficial in the learning process. If changed to hybrid courses, students and professors would have the time to create a more meaningful and community ordained experiences unique to the course descriptions and following the Major Learning Outcomes of Service Learning and Liberal Studies.

Action Documentation & Reflection

Service Learning is an integral part of the education system, especially at CSUMB. According to the Service Learning quick facts on the California State University Monterey Bay website, in the 2017-2018 academic year Liberal Studies had the third highest in Service Learning hours, 12,810, right behind Service Learning itself, 13,200, and the Business

department with 15,330 hours (CSUMB, 2018). Although the hours are being met, we wonder how well the hours are being spent at the Service Learning sites--are future teachers getting good teaching experiences, or is the work mostly observation and reflection? The question we posed for ourselves in the research being done was, how can we improve Service Learning in providing teacher preparation before Liberal Studies Students enter the credential program? It was important for us to understand what students were struggling or excelling in relation to Service Learning.

We decided to send an online survey to Liberal Studies students to reach a greater number of people while also respecting their time constraints and other school and personal priorities. We sent out 50 surveys to students who either already completed a Service Learning course or were in the process of completion. The surveys garnered 10 responses of which the students responded with issues of transportation, flexibility, scheduling, and hands on experiences as major barriers of Service Learning. Other responses such as not understanding the learning objectives of the course or what the role in the classroom were also noteworthy. Students noted in their surveys that they wanted to know more about teaching such as classroom management, how to teach a lesson plan, how to assess students, and how to effectively get students' attention and participation in activities. Figure (3) shows partly how the survey looks like:



Do you know what the concept of early field experience is? What is your understanding of it? *

Your answer _____

What are some examples of things that you learned during your service learning experience(s)? *

Your answer _____

What are some examples of things that you wish that you learned during your service learning experience(s)? *

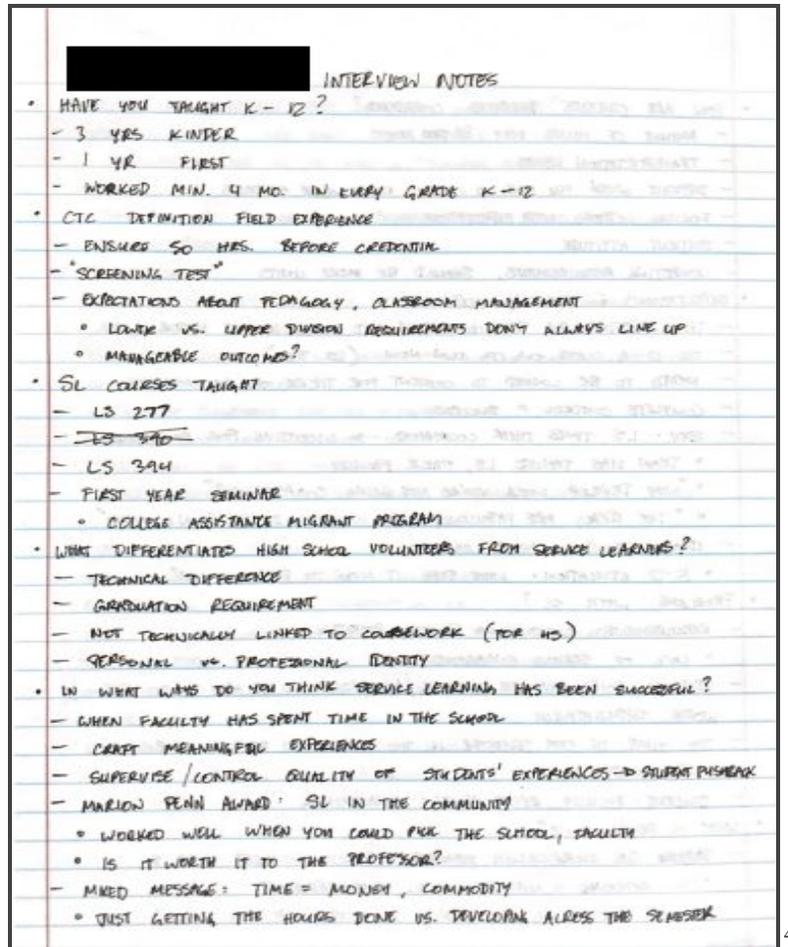
Your answer _____

What were your expectations going into service learning? *

3

We found it important to reach out to the stakeholders who were knowledgeable about Service Learning and could provide possible action options. We interviewed faculty and professors from the Liberal Studies department and the Service Learning Institute would be helpful in our research of understanding how Service Learning works at CSUMB, in what ways it enhances students' education, and how, if at all, it needed improvement on. Figure(4)

³ This shows an example of the survey questionnaire for the students of the Liberal Studies department.



We interviewed Professor Pamela Motoike of the Service Learning Institute, Dr. Ondine Gage, Assistant Professor of Education, Dr. Miguel Lopez, Associate Professor of Multicultural and Social Justice Education, Dr. Scott Waltz, Professor of Social Foundations and Education, Professor Judy Huddleston, Lecturer of Liberal Studies, and Alma Uribe, Service Learning Field Placement Coordinator. We found through the interviews that professors were in support of Service Learning. If they had anything to add it was to call for improvements to the existing program. Such as, intensive, crafted experiences, strengthened university support, and students critical reflection of the work being done at the school sites.

⁴ This document shows an example of interview notes taken of a faculty member.

From the research and interviews we wish we knew how to reach more students in the surveying process and following a current Service Learning course. When first starting the project we were afraid of not being taken seriously because we thought we might be viewed as angry or impatient students. What we found was that other students also had concerns about their experiences in not only Service Learning, but also how they felt they were being viewed. We think it is important that students express their concerns to their professors and those in the Service Learning Institute. Being honest in the evaluations, reflections, and during class to ensure a better quality education for themselves and their classmates.

Critical Reflection

While working on this project I learned a lot about myself, teaching, how to learn, and what changes I want to make and see in the world. At the beginning of the semester I found myself getting frustrated at how the education system can fail students in forms of cost, transparency, how disconnected I felt to the campus, how disconnected the professors were to their students. I really needed some clarity in the muddled mess my brain was tail spinning in. California State University Monterey Bay, prides itself on being sustainable, low cost, and community based school. The mission statement of the Liberal Studies department is to provide instruction and opportunities that prepare students for future careers. To lead the collaboration with other departments and institutions, and to foster students skills in ethical reflection and critical thinking in the contexts of families, cultures, and communities (CSUMB, 2019). The program is designed for students who desire to become elementary or special education teachers. I know that there are people in the program wanting to do something in education but not

directly related to teaching, there are those in every department. The belief that Liberal Studies is for future educators is backed by the school and its statements on the website. Service Learning, I believe, should truly reflect that. By integrating early field experience hours with service learning, there is an understanding that they should correlate with both learning objectives. As the semester continued I found through research and interviews, I wasn't alone. Other students felt that they were also feeling how I was. Professors noted that the system does not always go in favor of the student, as higher education is still a business and can sometimes overlook how its students can feel or how their lives are affected by the choices they make. Observation and reflection is not going to extend the knowledge a student gains any longer. With clearer goals striving to enhance the skills and knowledge I think that service learning could become more beneficial for students, school site, and for the colleges.

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