SERVICE LEARNING: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC-
ENGAGEMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

AIMEE MOORE MILLER. Service-Learning: Social-Emotional Development and Civic-Engagement of Elementary School Students.
(Under the direction of DR. REBECCA SHORE).

Social-emotional learning and character education are topics which have both become more commonplace in schools (Shriver & Weissberg, 2020). While no one reason has been identified, many school children seem to have become more self-absorbed and are less engaged in their communities (Borba, 2016; Turkle, 2015). Some scholars suggest this has impacted their ability to have positive interactions with their peers as well as kept them from developing an awareness of and connection to their communities. Borba (2016) and Turkle (2015) suggest that involving students in their communities through service is a possible strategy to help develop empathy and civic engagement in children. This bounded, single-case study explored the potential influence of a service-learning experience on second-grade students. Students participated in a seven-session module designed by the researcher over the course of four weeks, and completed surveys before and after their participation. Qualitative data was compiled from written reflection journals, discussion transcripts, and observations, and quantitative data was collected from surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the study. A line-by-line analysis of the qualitative data produced themes of emotion, empathy and civic engagement. Students demonstrated some understanding of the themes; however, there was no significant change in any of the students' responses over time. A paired t-test of the quantitative data did not show any significant influence. Limitations related to the short duration of the study, and the lack of student voice may have hampered identifiable influences in students.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Many students in schools today are, according to research studies, engrossed in self-absorbed activities, often driven by technology, which has led to isolation and concern for self-promotion (Atarodi, Rajabi, & Atarodi, 2020; Chassiakos & Stager, 2020; Turkle, 2015). When self-absorbed, children are less likely to develop empathy and compassion for others. With this increased isolation likely brought on by persistent technology use, children have less experience interacting with their peers and their communities. Borba (2015) describes this as the "Selfie-Syndrome." Children are immersed in using technology, particularly social media, to an extent that isolates them and can impede social-emotional development and effective interpersonal communication. Studies have shown that developing care and concern for others and encouraging positive social interaction can counteract negative behaviors and low self-esteem (Jenkins, Demaray, & Tennant, 2017; Espelage, Hong, Kim, & Nan, 2018). Delving into literature around common observations of changes in care and concern for others and how educators address this change with educational programming served as the impetus for this study.

Background

Borba (2016) suggests a potential method for combating negative changes in empathy is to involve children in service-learning where they are interacting with community members and doing so with the intent of helping others. A substantial body of literature supports that helping others aids in developing a moral identity (Felten & Clayton, 2011) and perspective-taking (Fair & Delaplane, 2014; Lovat & Clement, 2016; Williams, 2016) and provides an opportunity to practice kindness. Studies related to the

impact of service-learning on students have generated evidence of improvement in academic performance and attitudes (Billig, 2000; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Scott & Graham, 2015), stronger personal and social skills (Billig, 2000; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Scott & Graham, 2015), and increased interest and involvement in the community, which can also be referred to as civic-engagement (Billig, 2000; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Scott & Graham, 2015; Wade, 2000; Williams, 2016). Students who have the opportunity to learn about their community can begin to see the value of the role they play in supporting the well-being of others (Chiva-Bartoll, Moliner & Salvador-Garcia, 2020). Some research studies have shown that service-learning has helped develop and nurture empathy by actively involving students in community work to help them recognize the importance of kindness, compassion, and contributing to their community. Through service, not only have these experiences influenced student behaviors and attitudes in schools, but also they have supported overall student self-concept and development of social skills (Billig, 2000; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Scott & Graham, 2015; Warren, 2016).

Research supports that service-learning has shown to be a possible and viable strategy for schools to implement to strengthen students' empathy, self-concept, and dedication to the community (Fox, 2010). Academic skills, such as written and oral communication, are sometimes incorporated into the practice of service-learning (Cumbo & Vadeboncoeur, 1999: Fair & Delaplane, 2014). Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are also developed throughout the service-learning experience. (National Youth

Leadership Council [NYLC], 2010). Schools are now looking for ways to support social-emotional growth and maintain academic learning while also giving students real-world opportunities to build awareness of and desire to become involved with their community (Blanco, 2019).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

In a commencement speech at Northwestern University in 2006, then-Senator Barack Obama stated:

> There's a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit – the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, to see the world through those who are different from us (para. 16).

Concern for empathy and civic-engagement is not a new phenomenon in school settings (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2019). Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a recognized and widely used strategy among educators to address these concerns and has been a formal component of education for many. A study conducted by Edge Research for the National Association of State Boards of Education in 2019 found that "parents and community leaders support K-12 schools preparing students for the real world and teaching them values like respect, leadership, and responsible decision making" (Blanco, 2019, p. 1). SEL curricula and standards have become more prominent in school settings and can be found in state standards in eighteen states (Yoder et al., 2020). National support of social-emotional learning became evident in 2019 when Congress passed and the president signed a bill to allocate $123 million towards a Social-Emotional Learning Initiative to focus on educating the whole child.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning [CASEL], founded in 1994, provides SEL guidelines, developmentally appropriate lessons, and resources related to research, literature, and information about various organizations for schools, K-12, that support programming as an integral part of the school experience. CASEL (2019) provides this definition of social and emotional learning; "SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions," (para.1). Also, since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, character education has become an integral part of the curriculum within many school systems nationwide. These are examples of intentional efforts to address a recognized need for supporting and developing the social-emotional skills, including empathy, of students.

The recognition of a need for our country to address our citizens' empathy and engagement has been evident for decades. Educators have attempted to incorporate service-learning into already existing curricula by integrating this practice into content areas, such as social studies. In doing so, teachers may find that they can address standards while also contributing to the positive development of students' social-emotional skills and engagement with others in both the immediate and global communities.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential influence of a service-learning experience on second-grade students, specifically focused on empathy and civic-engagement.

Research Questions

1. How does participation in a service-learning module influence second-grade students' social-emotional skills?

2. How does participation in a service-learning module influence second-grade students' civic- engagement?

3. How do second-grade students characterize their experience with the service-learning module?

Theoretical Framework

Roots of service-learning can be linked to progressive activists and educators and social reformists, such as Jane Addams and John Dewey. In the late 19th century, it was deemed that both the ideals of democracy and the morals and values of society were in decline and that intentional education and encouraging involvement in communities provided an avenue to help eradicate this issue. The belief was that, through engaging with the community, individuals would be able to develop individual moral character and strengthen society. According to Flecky (2010), Dewey's democratic ideals are evident in the foundations of service-learning. Dewey believed that through involvement with society, students would be able to develop a greater understanding of and connection to their community, creating a commitment to their civic responsibility. In addition to building a stronger democracy, progressive educators found schools as an opportunity for social reform, teaching morals and values that would strengthen society. "The human condition is enhanced when individuals engage in the everyday activity of their social community thoughtfully and positively, to the point where they are able to change that

community through the force of their own actions" (Glassman, 2001, p.4). Also, service-learning was believed to be a way to influence social change by altering the values and awareness of participants. Dewey (1938) stated, "the primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done as a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute" (p.58). Shumer, Stanton, and Giles (2017) connected Dewey's work to the idea that as education is joined with the outside world, students become exposed to curricula relevant and necessary for understanding the principles of civic-engagement. By participating in service-learning, students play an active role in societal change and develop new attitudes and values (Myers-Lipton, 1996).

<center>Pedagogical Framework of Service-Learning</center>

The practices of service-learning are easily paralleled with the ideas of experiential education. Much of Dewey's work laid the foundation for this pedagogical framework for future educators. Howard (2001) outlined some fundamental concepts of the practice that are derived from Dewey's Experience and Education (Dewey, 1938): "experience is necessary for learning, learning is for some beyond itself, thinking and action are connected by reflection, and democracy requires active participation by engaged citizenry" (p. 2, para. 8). The practice of service-learning in schools is closely connected to the pedagogy of experiential learning of David Kolb, who based his work on the foundational principles of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Kurt Lewin. The development of knowledge through education happens when "ideas are formed and reformed through experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 26). The interactions with the environment provide concrete experiences that result in reactions and responses leading to deeper, more meaningful abstract learning. This learning then influences future actions and ideas.

Kolb's stages of experiential learning - concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active-experimentation mirror the process of effective service-learning practice.

Figure 1

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

From: McPheat, S (n.d.). What are Kolb's learning styles and what do they mean? https://www.skillshub.com/what-are-kolbs-learning-styles/
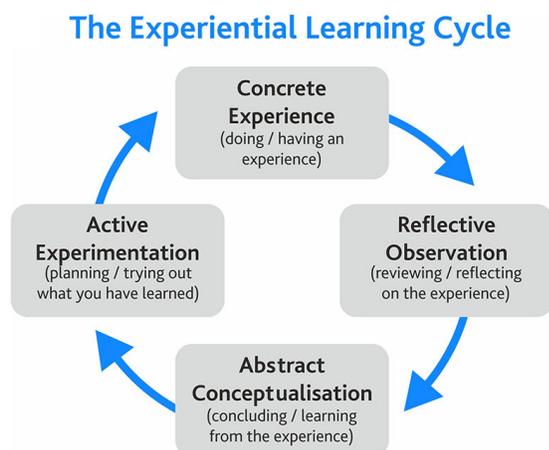
Kurt Lewin's work on action-research identified the critical component of the "dialectic tension and conflict between immediate, concrete experience and analytic detachment" (Kolb, 1984, p. 9, para. 2). The importance of student engagement in an experience is at the heart of successful, meaningful, and long-lasting learning.

Personal Positionality Statement and Study Design

As an elementary educator of over 25 years, I have experienced a notable change in student attitudes, engagement, social-emotional skills, and behaviors. I have also noticed increased bullying, disinterest in school, and diminished care and compassion for others. Research suggests that the trend I have observed is not unique. This study used a qualitative, bounded, single-case study design. Students participated in a service-learning

module that included four lessons and a field trip. The lessons were designed and presented by the researcher and included various teaching strategies such as presentations, whole group discussions, and a read-aloud. Each lesson was video recorded and ended with written reflection journals from each student. Transcripts from group discussions, written reflection journals from students, and observational notes provided data collected for the study. In addition, students completed a survey at the beginning and at the end of the module as an additional form of data to provide further evidence for the study.

Population

This study's participants were 21 students from a second-grade class at an independent school in the southeast. The sample class was selected for convenience. The school selected for the study has a pre-existing service project for the grade level, which was also considered when choosing this group for the study.

Assumptions

1. Responses will be truthful.

2. Students will engage in discussions and provide sufficient detail in written reflections.

Limitations

1. This study included only one module, limiting the students' experiences with service-learning. Conducting the research over a longer period, including multiple modules, may have provided more validity for the results.

2. Students may have had trouble understanding some terminology when the first survey was administered.

3. In some cases, a student from this class may have had prior experiences with service-learning and interactions within the community. This background knowledge may have impacted the amount of perceived growth from the student.

4. Student attendance may not have been consistent throughout the module.

Delimitations

1. Participants were only members of the selected second-grade class.

2. The soup kitchen used for the foundation of the service-learning module had a pre-existing relationship with the school and could not be changed.

3. Class discussions and written reflections were selected as data sources because they were standard practices used in this classroom.

4. The topics of the lessons aligned with the grade-level standards related to the service-learning curriculum.

Significance of the Study

Most research on service-learning has focused on high school or college students (Scott & Graham, 2015). Service-learning is an integral part of many elementary school communities; however, there is a lack of sufficient studies related to the impact of service-learning on children in grades K-5 (Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2019). In addition, most studies tend to focus on a specific outcome of service-learning, such as academic performance, general self-efficacy, or community engagement. Few studies have focused on elementary school students' involvement in service-learning and its influence on empathy towards community members, and civic engagement. The findings from this study have the potential to challenge current practices of service-learning in elementary schools.

Summary

This bounded single-case study explored how participating in a service-learning module that included intentional lessons and reflections may have influenced second-grade students' empathy and civic engagement. Research suggests that participating in service-learning can positively influence students' social-emotional growth and engagement within the community. This study investigated such experience to determine the extent to which participation may have influenced students' empathy and civic-engagement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Many students today spend a significant amount of time using technology. Using social media, surfing the internet, and playing games engage students in self-absorbed, often isolated experiences that can limit interactions with their peers, families, and others (Atarodi, Rajabi, & Atarodi, 2020; Chassiakos & Stager, 2020; Turkle, 2015). Often with increased isolation, fewer opportunities arise to experience the world, have conversations, and understand one's role in the community. Many students utilize technological devices for either schoolwork or personal matters throughout the day, resulting in hours spent in isolation of others. Konrath, Obrien, and Hsing (2011) found a decrease in empathy and increased anti-social behavior among students and speculated one dominating factor was the increased use of technology. In a study conducted by Errasti, Amigo, and Villadangos (2017), adolescents who used Twitter frequently scored high on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. In addition to affecting relationships with others, lower empathy in children has been linked to an increased tendency to bully others (Williford, Boulton, Forrest-Bank, Bender, Dieterich, & Jenson, 2016). A meta-analysis of nationally collected data focused on bullying suggested that intentional, universal efforts to reduce bullying among children and adolescents are needed, starting at an early age (Lebrun-Harris, Sherman, Limber, Miller & Edgerton, 2019). Research also suggests that bullying is often related to the consistently rising rates of suicide and school violence. (American Association of Suicidology, 2017) Due to these alarming trends, educators and parents are looking for ways to help students develop and build empathy, positively engage with others and cultivate a respect for and understanding of the world in which they live. In addition to these concerns, social-emotional learning (SEL) has become an important

topic to be addressed by educators. Schools are now finding ways to incorporate this kind of programming into the curriculum intentionally. SEL is not entirely new. In 1994, the term "Social-Emotional Learning" emerged in conjunction with the founding of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), whose mission was to establish "high-quality, evidence based social and emotional learning as an essential part of preschool through thigh school education" (CASEL, History, para.1).

With the need to help develop the social-emotional skills of students to support their personal and academic growth as they prepare for the future, educators are looking for ways that can combine curricular objectives while also addressing students' needs. One strategy identified to encourage greater empathy, compassion, and appreciation for others, while also achieving academic goals is engaging in service-learning. Price-Mitchell's research (2015) suggested that the participants in her study experienced challenges both cognitively and emotionally when involved in community service, which required them to understand right and wrong and provided opportunities for problem-solving and collaboration and created a connection to the community. Their experiences working in their communities broadened their perceptions of others, developed empathy and concern for others, and inspired participants to be more committed to the community.

Service-learning research has demonstrated the potential for positive academic, social, and emotional impacts on students (Billig, 2000). A meta-analysis of the research investigating the impact of service-learning on students, conducted by Celio, Durlak, and Dymnicki (2011), generated evidence of improved academic performance and attitudes, stronger personal and social skills, and increased interest and involvement in the community. Billig (2000) compiled the results of numerous service-learning program

evaluations, which resulted in the same conclusions. Hinck & Brandell (1999) reviewed qualitative and quantitative studies that illuminated academic achievement findings, favorable social and psychological development, and a positive effect on the community members. More focused studies have generated evidence in an increase in civic-engagement (Richards, Sanderson, Celio, Grant, Choi, George, & Deane, 2013), empathy (Fair & Delaplane, 2015), and both civic-engagement and empathy (Scott & Graham, 2015). Service-learning has been found to help develop and nurture empathy by actively involving students in community work that will help them recognize and experience the importance of kindness, compassion, and contributing to their community. Research has shown that not only can these experiences influence student behaviors and attitudes in schools, but they also support their overall self-concept and development of social skills. A study of 122 elementary school aged students (third to fifth grade), conducted by Chiva-Bartoll, Moliner, and Salvador-Garcia (2020) concluded that participating in service-learning positively impacted elementary school students' well-being.

Research has shown that service-learning is both a possible and viable strategy for schools to implement in the effort to strengthen our students' empathy, self-concept, and dedication to the community, among other benefits (Fox, 2010; Price-Mitchell, 2015). Service-learning is different from community service as it involves a specific learning cycle that addresses curricular objectives in academic areas such as communication (Fair & Delaplane, 2014) as well as includes a reflective component (NYLC, 2010). When implemented correctly, service-learning may have the potential to impact student achievement positively, develop and strengthen social-emotional skills and prosocial

behavior, and create a strong sense of civic-engagement and connection to the community (Billig, 2000; Serriere, Mitra, & Reed, 2011).

This literature review will first provide a historical context for service-learning. Next, an overview of the existing definitions of service-learning will be provided. Then, after a brief section addressing some pedagogical foundations of service-learning, best practices will be described. A review of the implications of service-learning will follow. Then, the researcher will provide an overview of how schools are finding ways to address social-emotional learning and civic education. Finally, a review of literature that explored some of the arguments against the implementation of service-learning will be presented.

Historical Context of Service-Learning

Service-learning is a long-standing practice within schools across the United States. The groundwork for service-learning was in place from the work of John Dewey and Jane Addams. After the Industrial Revolution, national and world-wide events influenced developing education which affected student involvement in communities. Moments of crisis, such as the Great Depression, influenced national assistance programs such as emergency food programs. While these were not directly linked to schools, the creation of programs prompted national and far-reaching attention to the greater community's need. The Civil Rights Movement provided an impetus for more student involvement within their communities. For example, the Freedom Schools of the 1960s educated African American students "to develop political awareness, self-confidence, and organizational skills within the community — not just among adults but among young people too" (Civil Rights Movement, History & Timeline, para. 7). These students were then encouraged and inspired to go out into their communities to help others. In 1961,

President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps to help underdeveloped nations around the world. This organization heightened awareness of the positive impact that volunteering could have in communities. Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was created in 1964 to focus on national poverty issues specifically. A "new pedagogical approach" (Busch, 2018, para. 14), influenced by the activism of the 1960s, was developed by VISTA and Peace Corps officials along with university faculty and students in 1969. This recognized the need for and possibility of school-supported service programs, which laid a foundation for educators' future endeavors.

By the 1980s, schools and communities began to recognize the value of service-learning and how incorporating this pedagogical approach into educational experiences could improve academic, social, and behavioral outcomes for all participants while also addressing community needs (Conrad & Hedin, 1991). While service-learning was introduced to college campuses in the 1960s and 1970s, the programs gained popularity in the 1980s (Kessinger, 2004). In 1983, the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) was founded to educate others about service-learning and provide support and guidance for implementing programs for students in grades K-12. JC Kielsmeier, the founder and CEO of the NYLC (1983-2011), believed that "service, social justice, environmental stewardship, and compassion toward neighbors should be built into the growing up experience" (p.104, 2012). This organization became and remains a valuable resource for schools and groups to develop and sustain service-learning programming.

In 1990, Congress passed the National and Community Service Act (NCSA), creating the Commission on National and Community Service, which provided funding and guidelines to encourage more volunteerism in the United States. The Commission

combined VISTA and the Peace Corps and created additional new organizations in order to provide a broad-reaching plan for service. This legislation came at a time when developing a shared understanding and purpose as citizens were deemed important. In his State of the Union Address on January 29, 1991, President George H.W. Bush stated, "We can find meaning and reward by serving some purpose higher than ourselves…Join the community of conscience. Do the hard work of freedom. That will define the state of our Union." The NCSA provides rationales for the implementation of service-learning including to support "Americans' desire to affirm common responsibilities and shared values, and join together in positive experiences that transcend race, religion, gender, age, disability, region, income, and education" (National and Community Service Act [NCSA], 1990, p.6). Not only did this legislation recognize and endorse community service, but also it created nationally supported programming which would both bring people together and serve the needs of others.

This NCSA identified numerous community and national service opportunities; however, a section of the act was specifically dedicated to service-learning for school-aged children. This legislation stated that it would provide support to "expand and strengthen service-learning programs through year-round opportunities, including opportunities during the summer months, to improve the education of children and youth and to maximize the benefits of national and community service, in order to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community for children and youth throughout the United States" (p. 7). This statement demonstrates support of and commitment to service-learning for children at a national level.

While service-learning had been a part of numerous school communities, the implementation was limited and not recognized as a necessary part of a student's education. After this legislation, it became clear that providing students with service-learning experiences should be considered an integral part of school programming. Later, The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was passed, which created an independent federal agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service. This private-public organization's role was to oversee three national initiatives, including Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps. While all three initiatives supported volunteerism, Learn and Serve America specifically provided support to programs in K-12 schools and higher education institutions, and community organizations. In a review completed by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (1998), "the number of high school students engaged in service-learning increased by 363 percent between 1984 and 1997" (Hinck & Brandell, 1999, p. 18). This exponential increase demonstrates the change in attitudes and actual implementation of service-learning programming in schools.

As service-learning became more commonplace, other benefits beyond strengthening civic responsibility became apparent (Conrad & Hedin, 1991). In 2009, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act provided amendments to the original NCSA, which strengthened and clarified the government's support of service-learning and provided support for and outlines of accountability measures that would assist agencies in reporting progress and how service-learning was beneficial to students. In addition to provisions made for grants to conduct specific research, a ten-year longitudinal study was launched to investigate the impact of service-learning on academic achievement, student

engagement, graduation rates, and the continued participation in public service after completing service for participants in service-learning. After recognizing service-learning's evident, positive influence on student achievement, schools began to implement service-learning more commonly as a strategy to combat failing schools. Additional research found that there was more to gain from service-learning than just academic achievement (Billig, 2000).

<div align="center">Defining Service-Learning</div>

The term service-learning was unveiled in the late 1960s by the Southern Regional Education Board (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999). Service-learning has taken on several forms in a variety of contexts, making it difficult to ascertain a single definition. Organizations, researchers, policy-makers, and educators have developed their interpretations to best suit their needs. While different, there are a number of similar elements in each definition that can be found across all explanations. As opposed to a curriculum, service-learning is often viewed as pedagogy or philosophy that can help support instructional practice. Robert Sigmon, who is cited throughout the literature as the first to define the term service-learning, simply states that service-learning is "the defined needs/requests of individuals, communities, or agencies [that] are linked to defined learning experiences" (1997, p.4). The NYLC (2010) identifies service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy that can meet academic goals, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and keep students engaged and eager. Billig's (2000) analysis of service-learning research and projects stated that while there are differing opinions, there are common elements that include curriculum alignment, interactive and structured experiences that allow students to apply skills and learn new ones while also

improving knowledge of and compassion for the community. Bhaerman, Cordell, and Gomez (1998) believe service-learning can be identified as:

> active participation, thoughtfully organized experiences, focus on community
>
> needs and school/community coordination, academic curriculum integration,
>
> structured time for reflection, opportunities for application of skills and
>
> knowledge, extended learning opportunities and development of a sense of caring
>
> for others." (p. 4)

In a report by the National Commission on Service-Learning (2002), service-learning is identified as "providing opportunities for students to become active, positive, contributors to society, service-learning helps them develop a sense of civic and social responsibility, while they acquire an ethic of caring and community connectedness" (p. 36). Service-learning programs should be designed to challenge students to gain respect and understanding for community issues while also designed to challenge students "to be their best, to listen, to explore, to learn, to share from their emerging capacities, and gained increased capacity for self-learning" (Sigmon, 1997, p.4) The culminating result of this range of definitions created by researchers and practitioners has laid the foundation for educators to understand the purpose of service-learning.

Differing opinions regarding the definition of service-learning are often connected to determining if it is a philosophy, a program, or an educational tool (Billig, 2000). These differences are often detected in how service-learning is operationalized in schools and programs. Philosophical supporters tend to focus on the role of service-learning as a method for schools to encourage civic engagement and citizenship (Bhaerman et al, 1998). Schools that offer isolated service-learning experiences may view the individual

opportunity to promote caring and connections with the community. When service-learning is closely aligned with standards and teaching practices, it is viewed more like a tool - a means to help students attain a variety of skills, both academic and personal. The NYLC defines service-learning as a teaching approach in which students apply their knowledge and skills to learn about and become involved within their community to meet others' needs (2019). Regardless of using any one of these definitions of service-learning to support a practice or philosophy, all renderings of the term have validity applied in an educational setting.

<div align="center">Implementation of Service-Learning</div>

Practitioners have developed research-based methodologies that incorporate different stages and experiences to maximize the benefits of participating in service-learning. Toole and Toole (1995) developed a Service-Learning Cycle that lays out students' and teachers' processes as they engage in a service-learning experience. The first step is to identify the need, create a project to meet the need, and plan out the project's execution. The second phase is the experience itself, and the third is the intentional reflection of the experience. In addition, Toole & Toole (1995) posit that reflection is a critical practice that should occur in all stages of the process of service-learning. The process of reflection is defined by Toole & Toole (1995) as "the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from the service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs" (pp.100-101). The Service-Learning Cycle is presented as a spiral model because the reflection process in the last stage serves as a catalyst for the next experience.

Terry & Bohnenberger (2004) acknowledge the importance of having a structured set of expectations for service-learning; however, they developed a service-learning typology that recognizes students' developmental needs (Fig. 1). There are three stages through which students will proceed when participating in service-learning that are differentiated by the level of engagement, developmental needs, and abilities of students and the type of service to the community. The first stage, Community Service, is for the younger students. This stage focuses more on building knowledge of the community by volunteering without attaching a learning component. This helps develop an awareness of the needs of the community and creates a basic level of comfort for students. Community Exploration involves students in experiences within the community that does not necessarily have a service component attached. In this phase, students can build a stronger understanding of the community and interact with community members in unique ways. The third stage, Community Action, involves a combination of service and learning for students. Often, this stage will include sustained interactions between the community and the schools where all parties benefit.

Figure 2

Terry and Bohnenberger's (2004)K-12 Developmental Service Learning Typology

The NYLC's standards, Toole & Toole's service-learning cycle, and Terry & Bohnenberger's K-12 Developmental Service Learning Typology provide guidelines and scaffolding for practitioners to develop and implement a successful service-learning program.

Billig (2000) found that, while the definitions differed, common elements to the implementation of service-learning were important to ensure quality experiences that were scaffolded with various layers to help attain the most out of working within the community. Research shows that the integrity of implementation of service-learning experience is instrumental in positively impacting students (Felten & Clayton, 2011; NYLC, 2010). The NYLC has identified eight key elements for successful service-learning: Meaningful Service, Link to Curriculum, Reflection, Diversity, Youth Voice, Partnerships, Progress Monitoring, and Duration and Intensity. Research indicates that students will benefit the most when educators can follow these guidelines (NYLC, 2010). These guidelines provide consistency and accountability for teachers and students to ensure "high-quality service-learning" (NYLC, p. 12), resulting in an engaging and impactful experience.

Reflection in the Service-Learning Experience

Reflection is often cited as a crucial part of the service-learning experience. When students recognize connections between themselves and others in a social context, their learning is internalized. The experience influences emotion, creates deeper understanding, and improves retention of concepts and new learning (Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; O'Keefe, 1997). Paolo Freire's work related to "Praxis" can be related to the idea that student reflection leads to further action and more

profound connections of the experience (Freire Institute, 2018). Smith (2002) defines praxis as "informed action linked to values" (para. 4) that can contribute to "enhancing community and building social capital" (para.4). Freire (1970) stated that "human activity consists of action and reflection; it is praxis; it is a transformation of the world" (p.98, para.4). In addition, Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle includes an intentional reflective process that conceptualizes, analyzes, and plans based on the experience.

Fair and Delaplane's (2014) research involved students in the reflection process. Second-grade students participated in a yearlong service-learning project in which they interacted with older adults as a retirement home. After each visit, students completed reflection journal entries. Fair and Delaplane (2014) suggest that the journal writing's reflection experience allowed students to process their interactions, express their feelings, demonstrate a change in mindset and emotions over time, and create a lasting impression of their experience. "They [the students] were able to identify areas of discomfort at the beginning of the experience and reflect on these to inform the next group" (p.25). The information from these reflections not only supported the idea of the helpful nature of reflection but also provided valuable insight for future service-learning projects. A meta-analysis conducted by Conway, Amel & Gerwien (2009) noted that the mean effect sizes of the studies that included a reflective component demonstrated a benefit in personal outcomes for students who used structured reflection as compared to students who did not. Reflection also can allow students to contemplate the impact of their work and see the benefit to their involvement (O'Keefe, 2001).

An additional aspect to reflecting upon service-learning which is not always identified is that, in the process of planning, executing, and reflecting upon a service-

learning experience, students work on learning and applying skills such as listening, reading, oral and written communication, problem-solving, spelling and possibly other content areas such as math or science. Fair and Delaplane (2015) posit that through the reflection process alone, "children worked on oral communication skills, writing, narrative development, editing and illustrations" (p.25). Reflection provides practice and development of these academic skills connect to the essential NYLC guideline of connecting service-learning to curricular outcomes.

<center>Student Voice in Service-Learning</center>

Student voice is an essential element in successful service-learning (Celio et al., 2011; Fair & Delaplane, 2014). Student voice, also referred to as youth voice, has been defined as "the inclusion of young people as a meaningful part of the creation and implementation of service opportunities" (Fredricks, Kaplan, & Zeisler, 2001, p.1). When students participate in selecting a project and making decisions on the process, they are more likely to buy into the idea, be more engaged, and be more impacted by the experience. After reviewing research, Billig (2002) determined that when students take on a high level of responsibility for the planning and executing the project, the positive outcomes are likely to be maximized. Students are also more likely to continue their involvement in the community if allowed to fully engage in the planning and executing the project (Leeper, 2010). Serriere, Mitra & Reed (2011) found that while student voice is critical, it is also dependent upon the teacher's influence. The researchers posited that teachers must provide a scaffolding approach to involving students in decision-making to attain a high level of student voice and participation. In their study, three classes, each with a different teacher using a different approach, were followed throughout the process

of a service-learning project. The class, whose teacher allowed maximum student involvement with teacher support, was the most successful. When the teacher "worked well to balance the priorities of eliciting students' voice at times, with leading them to a definite and attainable goal" (Serriere et al, 2011, p.563). Billig's (2002) review of research found that student autonomy in participation maximized the experience's impact.

Attention to Other Guidelines

The other elements of successful service-learning stated by the NYLC (2010), Meaningful Service, Link to Curriculum, Diversity, Partnerships, Progress Monitoring, and Duration and Intensity, have not been the focus of extensive research but support for these ideas can be found by linking the results of various studies. Meaningful service can be interpreted in various ways; however, the NYLC identifies it as providing "a sense of purpose, connection, relevance, and usefulness" (Lyngstad, 2009, p.2) for the students. The implied individualized impact may include acquiring new skills, understanding, and appreciation of one's community, or feelings of accomplishment (Lyngstad, 2009). Billig (2002) concluded that when teachers made connections to the curriculum, engaged students in academic practices that supported proficiency, and regularly assessed their programs' success, the service-learning experience was positive. Teachers can link learning goals and requirements to the experience as well as incorporate existing, approved materials and methodologies to support curriculum expectations (NYLC, 2010). Service-learning that takes students out of their comfort zones, exposing them to aspects of the community with which they are unfamiliar, promotes awareness and acceptance of diverse cultures and thinking. Eyler and Giles (1999) note that in addition to reflection, community placement and integrating diverse experiences for students that

allowed them to interact with people from different backgrounds were connected to student development. Williams (2016) found that by participating in service-learning, middle school students confronted and challenged stereotypes and became more understanding of others.

Service-learning that is intensive and lasts over time is also more likely to positively impact students. (Yates &Youniss, 1996). Fair and Delaplane's (2014) study, which took course over a school year, produced positive results, while Scott and Graham (2015) noted that the limited amount of time to conduct the research in their study might not have allowed time to demonstrate greater growth. Duration and intensity were addressed in the research of Richards et al. (2013) that identified the short-term nature of their project as a possible limitation. The study suggests the importance of providing more time for students to be involved. Chiva-Bartoll et al. (2020) suggest that service-learning should take place for at least an entire school year to influence students' positive outcomes.

Partnerships within the community allow for a more successful experience. Billig and Fredericks (2008) believe that partnerships within the community mean" that service-learning participants have a collaborative and ongoing relationship with community organizations or members which enables partners to benefit, among service recipients" (Lyngstad, 2010, p.2). Additionally, both parties will have "a shared vision and common goals" (Lyngstad, 2010, p.2), communicate effectively, and develop the service-learning experience together. Building strong partnerships may also encourage longevity in a service-learning program. Progress Monitoring refers to keeping track of the level of impact of service-learning projects by using assessment protocol. If schools consistently

follow the data, participants can make changes to their process to meet the community's needs or possibly change the curriculum (NYLC, 2010). This has the potential to make the service-learning experience more relevant, sustainable, and impactful for its recipients.

<center>Service-Learning Implications for Students</center>

The implementation of service-learning programs has the potential to change a school community for the better by supporting academic achievements and character development. The results of studies related to the impact of service-learning on students have generated evidence of improvement in academic performance and attitudes, stronger personal and social skills, and increased interest and involvement in the community. The improvement in academic performance includes better grades and improved attendance, behavior, and engagement in school (Billig, 2000; Celio et al., 2011; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Hinck & Brandell, 1999). In addition, Billig (2000) discovered, through her analysis of research, that participating in service-learning helped improve school climate by creating a greater connectedness to the school and positive relationships between teachers and students. Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson (2006) utilized a large amount of quantitative data taken from 1,799 principals from across the United States as well as over 200,000 middle and high school students who represented 300 different school communities. A sample was taken from one racially and economically diverse school system where data was collected from 5,136 students, grades 6-12. The research found a positive correlation between academic success and service-learning experiences.

Student attendance, school engagement, and overall academic achievement also improved. Tannenbaum and Brown-Welty (2006) studied elementary school students' records who participated in an after-school service-learning program. These students demonstrated an improvement in academic achievement and conduct. In another study conducted by Scales et al (2006), students maintained their commitment to school work and had a drive for better grades. Furco and Root (2010) reviewed a number of studies that demonstrated a positive impact on service-learning. The areas effected were: improved academic achievement, improved engagement in school and learning, enhanced civic responsibility, and enhanced personal and social skills. Conrad and Hedin (1991) found that students demonstrated changes in attitudes towards school, and higher interest and motivation in learning. The results of these studies articulate a positive correlation between participation in service-learning and an improvement in many facets of students' lives in and outside of the classroom.

<div align="center">Increased Civic-Engagement due to Service-Learning</div>

Service-learning provides opportunities for students to realize their potential in contributing to their community, developing a greater understanding of and commitment to it. Civic engagement may be defined as "working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community and developing the knowledge, skills, values, and motivations to make a difference" (youth.gov, n.d., para 1). Civic engagement and community engagement are often used as descriptors of the same concept. In a review of studies, Billig (2000) found that students showed a greater understanding of community needs, recognized their capability to contribute to the community, and were more likely to be committed to volunteering if they were engaged in meaningful service-learning. A study

of 155 elementary school students indicated an increase in community engagement after the involvement in a five-session service-learning experience (Scott & Graham, 2015). In a study conducted by Richards et al. (2013), fifth-grade students demonstrated a positive change of civic responsibility, leadership, and personal and social responsibility. Students "use service-learning opportunities to evaluate themselves, the roles in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities, and their relationship to community issues and problems" (Richards et al., 2013, p.7). The incorporation of service-learning is believed to encourage democracy, commitment to others, and community involvement (Fair & Delaplane, 2014). In reviewing these studies, one can surmise that participating in service-learning has the potential to develop civic engagement in students.

<p style="text-align:center">Social-Emotional Benefits of Service-Learning</p>

Stronger personal and social skills are also a probable outcome of participating in service-learning. These skills are imperative for student success in school and later in life. Service-learning can help develop leadership skills, improved relationships with others, and altruistic behaviors (Richards et al., 2013). Social-emotional skills span a wide berth of individual capacities. Kindness, compassion, respect, trustworthiness, consideration of others, and empathy are all elements that support one's ability to maintain positive interactions with others.

Empathy has been found to support prosocial behavior and counteract negative behaviors like aggression and bias (Billig, 2000; Celio et al., 2011; Fair & Delaplane, 2014; Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Scott & Graham, 2015). In addition, a student may develop greater self-esteem and self-efficacy by recognizing his ability to help and improve the lives of others (Conrad & Hedin, 1991). Felten and Clayton (2011) cite the

work of Eyler and Giles (1999), who suggested that "service-learning encourages students to consider perspectives other than their own and helps them cultivate capacities for making informed judgments" (p.79). The strengthening of interpersonal skills, acceptance of others, and improved decision-making skills are qualities that will not only reduce bullying but can also create a more positive, caring, and safe school environment (Williford, Boulton, Forrest-Bank, Bender, Dieterich, & Jenson, 2016). It is also important to note that "empathy and prosocial behavior have been linked with children's social competence and lower problem behaviors" (Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009, p.120).

Dahms (1994) posits that students can develop their "emotional comfort zones" (p.92) by participating in service-learning. Through their work in the community, students can develop a broader understanding of and openness to a population with which they may not be familiar. Working in the community helps reduce prejudice and promotes a deeper understanding of social justice and diversity concepts. Through service-learning, students are able to unite with others for a common cause to address community challenges.

Addressing Social-Emotional and Character Development in Schools

After the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the implementation of character education programs in schools became visible. One of the objectives in the U.S. Department of Education's Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 was to "promote strong character and citizenship among our nation's youth" (p.43). The strategies to strive towards this objective included launching "a national campaign for character" (p. 46), funding character education programs in schools, and highlighting "opportunities for civic awareness" (p.49). The passing of NCLB and the U.S. Department of Education's

strategic plan prompted school systems nationwide to adapt their curricula to meet these objectives. Also, there has been an increase in attention to meeting the social and emotional development and needs of students in all grades Pre-K through 12 (Shriver & Weissberg, 2020). Schools are now expected to incorporate intentional instruction or experiences to address character development.

Currently, most states have legislation that mandates the implementation of a character education program. For example, North Carolina passed the Student Citizen Act of 2001, which requires school districts to implement character education programming. The Character Education Handbook (2002), developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as part of this programming, provides teachers with rationale, guidelines, and ideas and discusses character education and service-learning. Character education is referred to as being "grounded in relationships" (NCDPI, 2001, p.1), creating a "positive and moral climate" (NCPDI, 2001, p.2). Service-learning is mentioned as an experience for students to help build character through involvement in their communities. It is believed to enhance "educational goals," develop "skills and virtues for full participation and leadership in their democratic communities," and serve "the public good" (NCDPI, 2001 p.2). The enactment of this law and the creation of the programming exemplifies the school system's dedication to having character education as an integral part of curricula. Today's standards remain derived from this legislation.

Character education programming has led to improvements in school climate, student attitudes, achievement, and relationships (U.S. Department of Education, 2007); however, the inclusion of intentional service-learning has shown to be a research-based

practice that has the potential to support academic goals while also addressing the social-emotional needs of students. These interactive experiences in the community can "provide opportunities to step out of their own skins, build caring connections, nurture compassion (and) open the doors to empathy" (Borba, 2016, p. 140). The National Council for the Social Studies published a position paper in 2000 that stated "Service-learning provides essential opportunities for students not only to develop civic participation skills, values, and attitudes, but also to acquire first-hand knowledge of the topics they are studying in the curriculum" (NCSS, 2000).

According to the Education Commission of the States (2014), 24 states in the U.S. have policies or formal legislation related to service-learning and education. While not explicitly citing service-learning, North Carolina Social Studies Standard 2C & G.2 for second grade identifies "Explain why it is important for citizens to participate in their community" as an overarching understanding. Detailed descriptions of intended student awareness include understanding: the responsibility of a citizen, how participation can make a difference, and the importance of participating and volunteering in your community (NCDPI, 2013), Based on research, involving the children in service-learning would not only support the standards, but also would provide a hands-on opportunity to get students involved in their community while addressing character development.

Negative Beliefs about Service-Learning

Service-learning is most commonly seen as a positive experience for all parties involved; however, some critics have identified some flaws with the practice. Cipolle (2004) states, "that service-learning rather than creating counter-hegemony" (p.18) it supports the "missionary ideology" where the experiences of volunteering are seen as

altruistic. Members of the community who are receiving help are being saved by those who are volunteering. These acts are seen as charitable instead of an opportunity to confront and address inequity and issues in the community.

Individuals may have a sense of "personal satisfaction" (Cipolle, 2004, p. 18) because they helped others in the hopes of improving their lives, the community, and society. This perpetuates a "better than thou" (Cipolle, 2004, p.18) attitude, placing the volunteers in a position of power. Service-learning may "unintentionally reinforce larger ideologies that keep people in poverty [and] maintain harmful stereotypes" (Lawless, 2019, p.1-2). While individuals who participate in service-learning tend to have good intentions, acting out of concern and compassion, the impact is usually temporary. It addresses an immediate need rather than the underlying issue.

With this in mind, educators must ensure service-learning supports the idea that it must "never be done for others but with others" (Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2000, p. 675). Volunteers have often "ignored the effects of service and the voices of the recipients of service for so long that we generally don't even notice that we are doing so" (Weah et al., 2000, 674). Cipolle (2004) posits that "the challenge for service-learning is to be transformative and liberatory in its action and move beyond immediate needs" (p. 21). Ideally, students can experience service-learning as an opportunity for personal growth and reflection that builds an awareness of the community's needs founded on inequity. The focus can be on the intended outcome of the recipients of service, not of the individuals providing it.

Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, and Davi (2007) conducted a study that considered the impact of participating in service-learning on students' understanding of socioeconomic

and racial identity. Students first needed an "awareness of their own socioeconomic status and/or white privilege in contrast to community partners resulting in 'cognitive disequilibrium'" (p.20). After students progressed through the stages: Trigger Event, Grappling, Personalization, the "Divided Self" and Disequilibrium (Dunlap et al., 2007), they became more aware of their own racial identity. This involved developing a "realization about and, and efforts toward abandonment of racism, as well as a resulting less-racist white identity" (Dunlap et al., 2007, p. 27). Once students accept their racial identity, often highlighting an unspoken position of power and privilege, they will be able to truly participate in service-learning to help the greater community and combat inequity and injustice.

Conclusion

While there has been significant research on the impact of service-learning, it has been focused mainly on high school and college-aged students. Little has focused on elementary school students (Scott & Graham, 2015; Richards et al., 2013). Further research into the effects of these experiences on younger students is needed to help support strengthening the implementation of programs into elementary schools if they are shown to be successful. Service-learning for elementary school children is ideal as the age of these students correlates with a stage of social and emotional development. It is particularly important as empathy and civic engagement are "critical constructs to develop during childhood as empathy mediates prosocial behavior in adolescence" (Scott & Graham, 2015, p.366). Developing these skills at an earlier age may help students transition to middle school, where bullying and social pressures are prevalent.

Research has suggested that many students today spend considerable time engaging in self-absorbed activities, often driven by technology, which has led to greater isolation and concern for self-promotion (Borba, 2016; Turkle, 2015). Children have less experience interacting with not only their peers but also their communities. Both bullying and increased anxiety levels, which have been linked to lower self-confidence and empathy, have been related to unpleasant and sometimes unsafe school environments (Williford et al, 2016). A general decrease in overall citizen empathy and civic engagement has become apparent (Mirra, 2018). Educators seek ways to improve and enhance their practice to include experiences that will support and develop greater social-emotional development. Service-learning has been found to help cultivate and nurture these characteristics by actively involving students in community work to recognize and experience the importance of kindness, compassion, and contribution to their community.

Service-learning has existed as part of the educational landscape for decades; however, much of this targeted adolescents and young adults. Unlike community service or volunteering, where students have little to no connection to or understanding of their purpose, the intentional and properly implemented service-learning experience has shown potential for engaging students in a curriculum-based planning, executing, and reflection process that may benefit students in a variety of ways. While service-learning began to promote democracy and social change, it has become a strategy to improve academic, behavioral, emotional and social skills while also contributing to society. There are organizations and educational standards that support service-learning's pedagogical approach to help educational leaders incorporate service-learning as a core experience in schools. With the intentional connections to curriculum, use of best practices, and the

positive impact on communities, this is a promising option to address parents' and

educators' current concerns. More research is needed to determine the potential benefits

of service-learning for younger children.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLGY

This chapter presents an explanation of the research design and methodology used to guide this study. A bounded, single-case study design was selected because "the generalizations, principles, or lessons learned from a case study may potentially apply to a variety of situations" (Yin, 2018, p 38). The study's purpose statement and research questions will be followed by an explanation of the recruitment, methodology, and trustworthiness. Next, the data collection and analysis process will then be presented. Finally, a subjectivity statement is included.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to determine how participating in a school-based service-learning experience might impact the empathy and civic-engagement of second-grade students.

Research Questions

1. How does participation in a service-learning module influence second-grade students' social-emotional skills?

2. How does participation in a service-learning module influence second-grade students' civic engagement?

3. How do second-grade students characterize their experience with the service-learning module?

Research Design

This was a descriptive, bounded, single-case study by which data was collected from qualitative and quantitative measures. Cresswell and Poth (2018) define case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life,

contemporary bounded system…over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p.96, para 4). This was a bounded, single-case study as the participants were selected from one class at one school. In addition, the study took place within a determined time frame that included a specific service-learning experience.

The class discussions from the module lessons provided transcripts similar to that of an unstructured interview. Yin (2018) describes case study interviews as "guided conversations" (p.118, para. 3). This practice required the researcher to ensure that the discussion remained focused on the research questions while remaining "friendly" and "non-threatening" (Yin, 2018, p. 118, para. 4). Field observations contributed to the qualitative data. The researcher used an observational protocol which included "both descriptive and reflective notes" (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 168, para. 8). Data from observations can "yield invaluable data to complement" other information as well as "add new dimensions for understanding" (Yin, 2018, p. 122, para. 2) the impact of the study. Student-written reflection journals were successfully used in a qualitative study by Fair and Delaplane (2014). Students were asked to keep a reflective journal of their experiences throughout a year-long service-learning experience. The study found that written reflective journals were age-appropriate and an effective method for students to express their feelings about the experience. The inclusion of a survey provided quantitative data to support potential findings from the qualitative data. By collecting data from various sources, this mixed-method design allowed for a collection of a "richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished by any single method alone" (Yin, 2018, p. 63, para. 5).

Recruitment

This study took place at an independent elementary school in the southeastern part of the United States. Twenty-one second-grade students from the same classroom participated. This class comprised of 11 boys and 10 girls; 20 of the students were Caucasian, and one was Indian. The researcher is an employee at this school working with a different grade level. This class was selected due to the relationship that the researcher had with the two classroom teachers and past involvement of these teachers with service-learning projects. After IRB approval, the students' parents received letters outlining the study along with the consent form. The letters clearly outlined the rationale and the process of the study. Also, parents were informed of what data will be collected, how it will be collected, and how confidentiality of all students will be maintained. Parents were given the option not to have their children participate.

Methodology

The students participated in a service-learning module that included six in-class sessions facilitated by the researcher and a field trip to the local soup kitchen (see Appendix A) for a total of seven sessions.

During the first in-class session, the researcher met with the students. After a brief introduction and explanation of the project, the students completed a ten-question survey (Appendix B). This survey was an adaptation to White and Mistry's (2016) Child Civic Engagement Indicators. The ten questions were related to empathy, understanding of the community, and concepts of civic-engagement. The survey was on a three-point rating scale (1 – No, 2 – Sometimes, 3 – Yes) with a fourth unscored option ("Not Sure"). In

consideration of developmental readiness, the survey offered pictorial representations for each number on the scale. The researcher read the questions and reviewed the meanings of the pictorial representations for all ten responses.

After completing the survey, the students participated in three, 40-minute, in-class lessons that were created and taught by the researcher. These lessons were related to community issues, such as homelessness, poverty, and hunger, and how we, members of a community, can become involved to help address these concerns. Each lesson consisted of three parts: Read Aloud or Presentation, Discussion, and Written Reflection Journal Entries. The read-aloud text, Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan (1997) was shared during the third session. This text is familiar, available, and currently included in many social studies curricula. The class discussion for each session was facilitated by the researcher and recorded for later review and transcription. After the class discussion, students completed a written reflection journal entry based on a selected prompt created by the researcher. All lessons took place during the school day at times allocated for social studies or similar subject matter.

After the initial three lessons, the class went on a field trip to a local soup kitchen. The researcher accompanied the class. While on this trip, students toured the facility, asked questions, and participated in the serving of meals to the soup kitchen visitors. The researcher observed student interactions and recorded their questions and comments. Following the trip, there was one 40-minute lesson to review and discuss the experience. The class discussion was facilitated by the researcher and recorded for later review and

transcription. A final written reflection journal entry was the closing to this lesson. Within a few days of the last lesson, the survey was re-administered to the students. This concluded the research.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

Construct validity was achieved due to the multiple sources of data. The survey was intended to provide quantitative information that correlated with the proposed outcomes of the study, identifying potential influence of the service-learning experience on the students. Providing students the opportunity to participate in class discussions, write reflections, and interact with others in an informal setting offered the researcher different data types. Students who may not have been comfortable participating in class had an opportunity to express their thinking through written reflection journal entries. Students who were not comfortable writing were able to participate in discussions. The informal observation allowed the students to interact without specific attention to individual responses.

Triangulation of the data was used to support validity. This was achieved by the collection of data from multiple sources. This process of triangulation "is a powerful strategy for increasing the credibility of your research" (Merriam &Tisdell, 2016 p.245, para 3). The data collection from different methods nullifies the concern that the data represented only demonstrates a single experience (Patton, 2015). The quantitative data from the surveys and the subsequently paired t-test were carefully reviewed by the methodologist for this study to ensure accuracy.

Ethical considerations were practiced when transcribing and reporting data. Student names were not used in the reporting of the data. Students were prescribed a

letter (A, B, C, etc.) to sort and analyze data; however, the letters are not included in the presentation of the data. The names of the teachers, school, and soup kitchen remain anonymous. No pseudonyms were needed in the reporting. The Institutional Review Board of the university thoroughly reviewed and approved the procedures for this research, providing additional reliability support.

<div align="center">Procedures and Data Collection</div>

A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data for this study. Before the service-learning lessons began, the first session of the module provided class with an introduction of the researcher, review of the study, opportunity to complete the Empathy and Civic Engagement Survey (see Appendix A). This survey is an adapted version of the Child Civic Engagement Indicators developed by White and Mistry (2016) created by the researcher. Some statements from the original indicators were removed and others were added to serve the purpose of the study and to better meet the needs of second-graders. This survey was administered both before the service-learning lessons began and after the final lesson was completed. The researcher read each question of the survey, one at a time, to the students. Students recorded their responses based on a three-point scale. After the surveys were completed, the researcher collected them and input the data into the SPSS statistical software.

The first three in-class lessons comprised of an informal presentation and discussion facilitated by the researcher, and written reflection journal entries completed by the students. The written journal reflection entries were collected by the researcher at the end of each lesson, and later transcribed. Each lesson was video recorded, then transcribed by the researcher after the completion of the module. The video recordings,

the transcripts from the discussion, and content from the written reflection journals provided qualitative data that was stored electronically for analysis and reviewed upon completion of the module.

The first lesson served as an introduction to the concepts of hunger, homelessness, and poverty. The researcher posed questions to the students to elicit information, gain insight to their experience and knowledge, and lay the groundwork for the service-learning experience. After the discussion, students returned to their seats to complete the written reflection journal entry. At this time, because it was the first lesson, the students were introduced to the procedure of completing the reflective journal prompts by the researcher reading the prompt and modeling a response. Written reflection journal entries were collected for later transcription and analysis.

The second lesson began with a Power Point presentation that included images and statistics related to homelessness in the students' local community. The researcher used the Power Point to review of the previous lesson and to highlight potential connections to the students' personal experiences. After a brief discussion prompted by the Power Point, the researcher read Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen to the class. When the book was finished, the researcher asked questions to facilitate a conversation about both homelessness and soup kitchens. At the end of the lesson, students completed a written reflection journal entries. Written reflection journal entries were collected for later transcription and analysis.

The third class lesson, was focused on preparing to go on the class field trip to the soup kitchen. This lesson began with a brief video, provided by the soup kitchen, that provided some basic information about the program. After the video, the researcher

facilitated a discussion and elicited questions from the students that they might have had about the soup kitchen. At the end of the lesson, students completed a written reflection journal entries. Written reflection journal entries were collected for later transcription and analysis.

The next session was the field trip to the soup kitchen. The researcher went with the class to allow observational field notes to be taken throughout the experience. In addition to the students and teachers, there were four parent chaperones who attended the trip. When the students arrived at the soup kitchen, they were greeted by the head chef and a volunteer from the organization. She gave the class some background information and reviewed the procedures of the students' role as volunteers. As soon as she was finished, students were directed to their assigned areas to prepare. Students were engaged in serving plates, clearing tables, interacting in conversation, and playing a card game with the visitors game for about an hour. When the time was up, students gathered for a brief recap of the experience before they returned to school. The researcher used observational protocol to record conversations between students, questions that students asked, and interactions of students with one another as well as individuals at the soup kitchen. The notes were transcribed and stored electronically.

The fourth lesson was focused on a reflective discussion around the field trip experience. After students shared their comments, they completed the final written reflection journal entry. Written reflection journal entries were collected for later transcription and analysis. The following day, the final session, the Empathy and Civic Engagement Survey was administered again by the researcher. The surveys were collected by the researcher and analyzed using SPSS software.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data, transcripts from lessons, written reflection journals, and observational notes, served as the primary source of information for this study, while the quantitative data retrieved from the Empathy and Civic Engagement Survey served as a secondary source. In reviewing the qualitative data, the researcher developed a coding system by conducting a line-by-line analysis to identify "any segment of data that might be useful" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.204, para 3). Transcripts, written reflection journal entries and observational notes were repeatedly reviewed to extract "themes for which the preponderance of information supports a tentative answer" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017, p. 67, para.1). The survey's quantitative data were analyzed using a paired t-test from the results of the pre-module and post-module surveys.

Subjectivity Statement

Subjectivity is often a concern when research is conducted at the workplace of the researcher. As part of this study's preparation, I engaged in reflexivity to ensure that I provided the most accurate and subjective data for the study. Reflexivity may be defined as an "awareness of the influence the research has on what is being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process affects the researcher" (Probst & Benson, 2014, p. 814). I believe my knowledge of the existing service-learning programming at the school was a benefit to my research. The field trip experience included in this study had been perceived as successful for numerous years, and the school's overall philosophy aligned with the inquiry of this study. I did not have any formal interactions, nor did I have pre-existing relationships with the students or their parents, except for one. Therefore, I could remain objective in my evaluation of their responses. My relationship

with the classroom teachers was a long-standing, respectful and professional one. They were in full support of my research and could turn over the classroom for my lessons without reservations, suggestions, or judgment. The comprehensive review of literature gave me a broad perspective of service-learning that provided an unbiased lens with which I can analyze data.

Summary

The chapter presented the methodology used for this study. This descriptive, bounded, single-case study planned to investigate the potential influence of the participation of service-learning on the empathy and civic-engagement of second-grade students. Students participated in a service-learning module that included six in-class lessons developed by the researcher. The students also participated in a field trip that corresponded with the lessons. Qualitative data was collected from transcripts of class discussions, written reflection journal entries, and observational notes. Quantitative data was collected from the Empathy and Civic Engagement Survey developed by the researcher as an adaptation of the Child Civic Engagement Indicators (White & Mistry, 2016). This data was analyzed using a paired t-test. Measures of reliability have been put in place to support the accuracy and validity of the data. The following chapter presents the reporting and analysis of all data collected.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine how participating in a school-based service-learning experience might influence the empathy and civic engagement of second-grade students. This chapter will first summarize the lessons and experiences from the service-learning module as presented by the researcher. This information will provide a context for the qualitative data that was collected. After the summary, an analysis of the qualitative data will be offered. Finally, a review and analysis of the quantitative data will be shared.

Service-Learning Module Review

The service-learning module was made up of seven sessions. The first session was the introductory session where students met the researcher, learned about the research, and completed the Empathy and Civic-Engagement survey. The next three sessions were in-class lessons. These sessions were video recorded and written reflection journal entries were completed by the students at the conclusion of each lesson then collected by the researcher. The fifth session was the field trip to the soup kitchen. Data from this session was collected from field observation notes. The sixth session was the final in-class lesson. This lesson was video recorded and written reflection journal entries were completed by the students and collected by the researcher. The seventh and final session was the second completion of the Empathy and Civic-Engagement survey.

Session One

Initially, the researcher met with the class to briefly introduce the researcher and a simple overview of the research project. The goal of this session was for the students to complete the Empathy and Civic Engagement survey. After all students received a copy

of the survey, the researcher reviewed the process of filling out the survey by presenting it on the smartboard. Each question was read out loud as students completed the survey. There was no discussion, and questions were not allowed. Once all surveys were completed, the surveys were collected by the researcher for later analysis.

Session Two

The first lesson took place two days later at the end of the day, on a Friday. The students were restless and had a hard time settling down. The researcher began by presenting the concept of community, specifically that the class would be talking about the entire city, not just the school or neighborhoods. Next, the concepts of wants and needs were discussed. The students had some background on this concept, and it was fairly easy to get the students to participate and share their ideas.

The guided discussion on needs established a focus on shelter, food and clothing, and eventually money. Students then shared what they knew about the community. Student responses were more on the tangible ideas in the community, identifying specific locations such as schools, restaurants, and banks. One student mentioned that "most people are nice." The researcher then asked, "Do you think there are any problems in the community?" After giving students time to turn and talk, the researcher called on a few to share their ideas. The first responses related to trash and recycling. This was not surprising as the students have participated in various school-related initiatives related to this topic. Unexpectedly, the conversation took a different direction. Students talked about robbers, the dangers of biking, and texting while driving.

The researcher attempted to redirect the discussion by attributing their comments to a need for safety and connecting safety with having shelter and asked, "Does

everybody here in our community of ---- have shelter?" Response: "No." The researcher then asked, "What would I call that for people who don't have shelter? What's that called?" Response, "Homeless." A student then commented, "(Homelessness is) because they are not making good choices." This was an interesting and valid comment which needed to be addressed at another time. The researcher responded, "Today, we are not going to talk about the reasons for homelessness because there are many reasons across the board. And in most cases, it is probably not what you think." The next question posed to the students was an attempt to get students to mention hunger or poverty, "Can anyone think of another one (need) that kind of relates to this one, homelessness? The first student response, "Oh, I need a school to learn." This comment was validated and it was noted that while this might be another issue to address. The next response, "Insects. There are a lot of insects that fly in people's faces."

At this point, the researcher decided to be straightforward and tell the students what they needed to know. Not only was time running out, but the students' restlessness and disengagement were apparent, and they were going to need time to respond to the written reflection journal prompt. The researcher too the last few minutes of the discussion to highlight and explain the words: Homeless, Hunger, and Poverty. The researcher gave a brief explanation of perspective to provide students with a little understanding of the term that was included on the survey.

Students were provided with directions on how to complete the first reflection, "I feel…because." Additionally, the researcher modeled a response to ensure students were aware of the expectations and formatting. The purpose of this reflection was to gauge their emotional response to the idea that there are people in our community who suffer

from homelessness, hunger and poverty. The responses suggested that students had some negative emotions related to this idea. "I feel sad" was the most common response. One student responded, "I feel scared because I don't know what it feels like to be or to have hunger, homelessness, and poverty." While feeling scared is a strong sensation, this student demonstrated a recognition that they cannot relate to people in this position. A different student said, "I feel lucky because I have everything I need," and a few others mentioned that they have their needs fulfilled along with other things like "I can go on trips." While not specifically stating their understanding that there is inequality and that they have advantages that most people do not, these students seem to recognize that something is not right.

One student said, "I feel sad because not many people think about it when it is a big problem. But some people don't think about it because they have it. But if we do think about it, it will help so much. And then our world will be much better." Another student, "I feel sorry and angry because we are not doing enough to help these people. I am disappointed in myself because I am not doing enough." This student's response demonstrated a sense of civic duty and a desire to become involved in the community by identifying, "I am not doing enough." Overall there seemed to be a sense of compassion connected to the concepts of homelessness, hunger, and poverty. Some students demonstrated a recognition that they can't relate and feel bad. One student's response seemed way off, but spoke to this student's conception of the terms community, needs and helping others, "My mom is a physical therapist and she helps enough. Yes, it is important to help to community." The outcome of the written reflection journals

presented a solid baseline from which to measure the students' understanding of the concepts and provided the researcher with a sense of how they were feeling.

Session Three

The next in-class lesson was much more successful. Students were more attentive to the content and actively participated in the discussion. The time of day was more conducive to instruction, and the researcher well prepared to meet the students at their level of understanding that was determined from the previous session. Additionally, the researcher had laid the groundwork for the premise of the lesson by introducing the vocabulary and had developed a rapport with the children. Finally, the researcher was more aware of the tendencies of the students to veer off track during discussion and was well planned for a much more guided lesson.

The researcher developed a Power Point presentation with vocabulary and pictures to help guide the discussion. This was shown to students on the smartboard in the classroom. The session began by revisiting the terms homelessness, hunger and poverty to check for student understanding. Responses were brief but provided evidence that concepts were sufficiently encoded and it was reasonable to move forward. In an effort to make some more meaningful connections, students were shown pictures of homelessness occurring on their community. These examples included adults and children from diverse backgrounds in shelters, soup kitchens, and on the streets. Recognizable landmarks and signage in the images allowed students to easily identify the locations of the pictures. Students appeared engaged.

Next, the students were shown a slide with the number of homeless people in their community the month before the lesson, 2,762. The students seemed surprised by this

number. The students gasped and mumbled to one another for a moment before moving on to the next part of the lesson. I read the story, Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (1997), straight through. This book is about a boy who goes with his Uncle Willie to volunteer in a soup kitchen. Homelessness, hunger, and poverty are addressed in this story. Questions were not encouraged, but students were given a few moments at the end of the page to think about what had been read.

When the book was finished, students were asked to turn and talk and discuss the first question, "What does this story make you think about? Was there anything new that you learned?" After a few minutes, students were called on for responses. One student commented, "I was wondering if it is our fault that some people are homeless?" This a question demonstrated an interest in understanding the "why." The researcher took this opportunity to refer to the point made in the previous lesson about people being homeless because they make bad choices and stated that this was not always the case allowing for students to make their conclusions. One student said, "Like you are saying there might have been someone who has done something to make another person homeless?" A different student asked, "Like if their house burns down?" Then, silence. "Anything else?" the researcher asked. A student responded, "I was wondering how we can help?" Then another said, "I was just impressed on how many people there are who are homeless in one big city." Next a student shared, "I was wondering how they know where the soup kitchen is if they can't afford a map." These questions and wonderings were not addressed at this time due to limitations of the length of the session.

Students then directed their comments and voiced concerns about how homeless people could find the soup kitchen. The discussion was redirected by providing students

with a few examples of how this problem (helping people locate a soup kitchen) could be addressed. One student commented, "About the Can Man, it never really answered the question, like the Uncle Willy dude, he never answered the kids' question, like why did the Can Man, like does he have a home or not?" Students were referred back to the book where Uncle Willie responded to his nephew who asked this question. Uncle Willie's response was, "I never asked." While this was a valuable insight, we didn't have the time to address the student's specific question. A student asked if it could be a true story. Students were asked direct questions that connected what they saw or read about in the book to things students might have seen in their community (i.e., shopping carts, park benches). Students appeared to start building an awareness of how working in a soup kitchen might have an impact on an individual through their questions and comments that were shared during the discussion. Students responded that they believed the people (characters in the book) were feeling good, proud of themselves and happy that they helped the community.

One student compared the feeling that one gets when they volunteer as being similar to how one might feel on Christmas morning. The next slide had various pictures of people helping others in our community. Each picture was briefly described to give the students an idea of different kinds of organizations/ways that individuals were helping others in their community: builders for Habitat for Humanity, individuals passing out food to the homeless, Goodwill taking in donations and a picture of a local, well-publicized organization that helps homeless, a food drive, a picture of people walking for a cause, and finally a lemonade stand. A few students acknowledged recognizing one or more of the experiences by nodding and putting their thumbs up. One student mentioned

a time she and a friend had a lemonade stand and donated their money to help animals.

Two other students referenced that organizations to which they belonged had temporary

shelters for the homeless. Students were then directed to complete the written reflection

journal prompt for this lesson. The prompt was read to the students; however, much less

teacher guidance was needed than the first lesson.

Except for one response, all students stated that either they believed they should

help and/or included a specific example of how they are or would like to become

involved in supporting others. Eight students mentioned donating money or unwanted

items (such as clothing and toys) as a way to help the community. Four students

specifically mentioned interactive experiences like passing out food or serving cookies at

a shelter. There was some evidence of deeper connections to emotion, empathy, and

civic-engagement. One student stated, "It (helping) makes me feel super proud, happy,

excited and warm-hearted." Another student said, "it is important to get involved in some

problems because it can make a big difference." Yet, another student pointed out that

"people in our community need us."

Session Four

The third in-class lesson was developed to prepare students for the trip to the soup

kitchen. The organization provided a video about the soup kitchen, which had been used

by the second-grade classrooms in the past, to give students an idea of where they would

be going. The session began with a recap of the previous lesson and introduced the field

trip. The first topic we discussed was, "Why do communities have soup kitchens?" After

a few unrelated comments, it was reiterated that soup kitchens provided food for anyone

who was hungry. Hunger impacted all kinds of people, not just homeless people.

The students were prompted to pay close attention to the video to try to identify reasons the soup kitchen was started and to listen for other details. The discussion after the video highlighted some important background information. The students learned a specific reason behind the start of this soup kitchen: The church identified a need for healthy meals to be provided on Thursdays because other soup kitchens in the area were closed, and people needed a place to go. The students also learned that the food did not magically appear. The soup kitchen relied on food donations from farmers, restaurants and grocery stores, and monetary donations to provide the meals. The soup kitchen also required a team of volunteers to operate.

When the video was over, the researcher solicited questions from the group to bring to the field trip. While the questions may not be answered, this line of inquiry had potential to bring some curiosity and awareness to the class. Some of the questions had already been answered in the video or clarified at another time. The recorded questions were: "What do you do if it is a holiday?" (Students were fascinated with the fact that the soup kitchen was only open on Thursdays and asked additional questions about this phenomenon). "Where do you get the food?" "How do people know where it is?" "What else do they need to make it work?" "How do they get people to help in the soup kitchen?" The researcher added, "How long it takes to feed the neighbors?" and "How long are volunteers at the soup kitchen?" Written refection journal prompts were distributed and completed by the students. The purpose of this written reflection journal prompt was to allow students an opportunity to state how they were feeling about going to the soup kitchen as well as provide a chance for them to ask additional questions.

Twelve students responded with a positive emotion using the words happy, excited, good, and helpful. Nine of these students related their emotions to the fact that they were going to help someone and take care of someone. A few of the positive emotions could be related to a general sense of excitement from a second-grader: "I have never been so I want to see,'" "I like doing good deeds," "I love to cook and meet new people." Some students identified feeling nervous or scared. These students mentioned something related to not knowing who these people were and being around "random people." One student mentioned that "I am nervous because what if I drop the tray and everything goes flying everywhere all over the soup kitchen?" This same student also mentioned that "I feel happy because I get to help other people." One student said, "I feel a little confused about everything."

These insights would be helpful when making observations and later comparisons to how they felt after the experience. There was a sense of excitement, even for those who were a little tentative.

Session Five

The field trip to the soup kitchen took place the following day. Most students seemed eager and excited, chatting happily with their seatmates; there were a few who were very quiet, kept to themselves, and stared out the window. Upon arrival, the group was escorted into the lobby of the church, where the soup kitchen is located. While most of the group quickly fell in line and filed through the door, there were two students who lagged behind. One grabbed the hand of a chaperone and stated, "I'm nervous." Next to this student, another said, "I'm nervous too, but I am also really excited," as she skipped along.

First, the group was greeted by a volunteer and the main chef for the soup kitchen, Ms. Sue. She gave us information about the operation of the soup kitchen, where the food came from, and why they were open on Thursdays. Also, important to note, Ms. Sue shared some other ideas that became important for the students' experience later on. The first was that she discussed the importance of treating the guests of the soup kitchen like family. Additionally, she referred to the people who came to the soup kitchen as neighbors. Ms. Sue also mentioned to remember that many of the neighbors "suffered from" homelessness rather than "are homeless." Differentiating the two helped make the point that homelessness is like a condition that can be treated as opposed to a situation that is stagnant. Finally, Ms. Sue stressed the importance of the work of the volunteers and said thank you to the students.

As the group descended the stairs to the soup kitchen space, students bounded down bursting with excitement and others grabbed the chaperones' hands and walked slowly to stay at the back of the line. As the group entered the space, some students responded with "Wow" or "Cool," but most walked in quietly and stayed towards the back of the room. The space was divided in half, each with five long tables, which could seat about 20 people. The class was assigned to work with one half of the room as the other space was reserved for a community organization that worked with homeless adults with disabilities.

After a formal welcome by Ms. Sue, the students were given the directive to begin. At first, there were only a few people at the tables assigned to the class. The more eager students went into the kitchen with chaperones and began bringing food back from the kitchen. Over the next 10 minutes, neighbors started to stream in and the seats were

filling up. Some of the students acted as greeters, happily welcomed new guests, and invited them to sit at their tables. Within a few minutes, the students were serving plates to the neighbors. At first, each student, regardless of their perceived excitement, followed closely behind a chaperone. There gradual change of the disposition of the students. Students became more independent, expressive, and energized.

In most cases, after serving two or three times with the shadow of a chaperone, students began visiting the kitchen independently and helping people on their own. Interactions with the neighbors also changed over time. At first, apart from the few quite outgoing students, there was little dialogue between the neighbors and the students; however, students began saying. "Would you like soup?" "Would you like some bread?" "Do you need anything else?" "Enjoy your meal!" "Is there anything else I can get you?" There were a few students who were very tentative at first. They followed behind a chaperone and retreated to the side of the room as soon as a plate was served. These students slowly began to become more engaged and comfortable. Two of them paired up on their own and began serving neighbors together. They eventually split up and became more independent. One student stayed at the side of the chaperone but took charge of serving and collecting plates. The students were smiling, laughing, giving high fives to the neighbors, and skipping (even though they weren't supposed to). It seemed like they were all delighted. The tentative students even showed some emotion.

After the meal was complete, neighbors stayed in their seats to socialize with one another. At this point, the students were prepared to formally interact with the guests by playing math games with cards they had brought from the classroom. Students politely asked, "Would you like to play a math game?" Most neighbors looked surprised but

eagerly said, "Yes!" With this response, a student pulled out the deck of cards and explained the rules of the simple game. Students also held out their hands, introduced themselves and said, "Nice to meet you!" Some students worked in a pair, while others worked by themselves. Some neighbors were not interested in playing. In this case, the students smiled and moved on to another guest. The faces of both the kids and the neighbors appeared to light up. The quiet din of the space gradually changed into a jovial buzz. There was a lot of laughter and high fives. Some students played one round; some played two, others played with one person the entire time. A few students, who had already played a round with a neighbor, were in the back playing with each other. When asked by a chaperone why he wasn't interacting with the neighbors, one student responded, "Well, I already played with them (the neighbors)." The student didn't seem to notice or be concerned that his peers were busily interacting with the neighbors while he was off to the side, not engaged. The chaperone, likely unsure of how to respond, let it go. When it was time to go, a few students exchanged formal goodbyes with their new friends. There were high fives and handshakes, along with one student saying, "See you next time!" Most students quickly lined up, but waved goodbye.

At the end of the visit, the group reconvened in the lobby. The classroom teacher said to the students, "Now that we have finished our work in the soup kitchen, how do you feel?" Students responded enthusiastically. The class then returned to school.

Session Six

The next day, the researcher returned to the class for the final lesson, a reflection from the visit. This lesson consisted of a brief discussion and time for final written reflection. Students were asked to share their general thoughts about the visit. The

responses were positive. Many students responded either "I liked it" or "I loved it." One student was more specific, "It was really fun, because we got to help them and we made them feel good." I asked, "How do you know you made them feel good?" The student responded, "They were really nice and at the end they said thank you so much its made my day. At first, I was nervous." The class was asked if anyone else was nervous, a few others raised hands, and then continued with the discussion. More positive comments followed, "I sort of wanted to stay." "I was surprised. This guy was so good (at the game) because he beat us twice. At first, I was thinking about how good I was, but then I realized at first you should think about others first." After this first burst of responses, the students became quieter.

Observations of the researcher and reflection points were shared with them to see if that might help prompt responses. The researcher asked, "What was your favorite part?" One student mentioned, "Everyone seemed to be having fun." They expressed that they liked serving the food and playing the games. The researcher then asked, "How did it feel? On the inside?" Responses included "proud" and "happy." One student said, "I felt like it was worth it." When questioned if he thought it wasn't going to be, his response was "Yeah. But I like helping people."

Before the students were asked to complete the written reflection journal entry, students were encouraged to share final thoughts. One student said, "I really liked that they let us help even though we are kids. It was really nice to have a partnership and maybe have a place in the community that is going to welcome children and provide you with an opportunity to help." One student said under her breath as we were passing out the journal reflection pages, "I wonder that they do after?"

Session Seven

The final visit to the class was to have the students complete the survey for the second time. It was the identical survey to the one they had filled out in the beginning. The surveys were collected for later review.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data from this research was acquired through transcripts of the video recorded class discussions, written reflection journal response entries and field observation notes. Themes of emotion, empathy, and civic-engagement were determined by coding student responses during discussions and from written reflection journal entries. Under the theme of civic-engagement were sub-themes such as connection to the community, future intentions and recognition of the needs of the community. There was some familiarity and understanding of community needs and civic duty present in discussions.

Emotions

The written journal reflection entries from the initial, introductory lesson asked students to respond to how they felt about homelessness, hunger, and poverty. Specifically, the terms sad (14), bad (1), mad (1), scared (1), and sorry and angry (1) were used to describe the emotions the students felt in regards to these issues. These terms have negative emotional connotations.

The second written reflection journal entries from the next lesson (Power Point presentation and read aloud) were focused on how individuals can help in the community, not eliciting emotional responses; however, one student responded, "It (helping) makes me feel super proud, happy, excited and warm-hearted."

The journal prompt for the third lesson where the class prepared for the field trip asked students how they felt about the upcoming trip to the soup kitchen. Positive responses included: happy (5), helpful (2), excited (4), and good (1). Negative emotional responses were: scared (2), nervous (3), and confused (1).

While at the soup kitchen, observational notes identified students displaying a variety of emotions, which in some cases transformed over the course of the visit. It was observed that students seemed happy and excited because of their smiles and excited behavior. Some students appeared nervous or scared at first because of their disengagement and reliance on adult comfort. Even the more tentative students who were less engaged became visibly at ease over time.

The final written reflection journal entry, completed at the conclusion of the fourth, in-class lesson asked students to reflect upon how they were feeling after their experience at the soup kitchen. The responses demonstrated a variety of emotions with explanations to qualify them. Students stated that helping others, giving to others, and learning new things (about the soup kitchen) made them feel happy (3), good (3), and proud (5). A few students identified that they still had negative emotions using words such as scared, confused, and uncomfortable. Three students specifically noted a change from feeling scared or bad to now feeling proud, good, and "less scared." One student used the term determined.

Table 1

Theme of Emotions – Specific emotions and frequency identified by students in the written reflection journals.

Emotion	Frequency
Sad	14
Bad	1
Mad	1
Scared	4
Sorry & angry	1
Happy	17
Helpful	2
Good	4
Nervous	3
Confused	1
Proud	1

Empathy/Perspective

Empathy can be defined as "an affective response that is identical or very similar to what another person is feeling or expected to feel" (Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009, p.119). How empathy is expressed may be recognized as solely as an emotional response, demonstrating concern, or a combination of an emotional and a cognitive response, where an individual is able to take perspective in a situation (Warren, 2018). The first lesson asked students to identify their feelings about homelessness, hunger, and poverty and explain the reasons why. The written reflection journal responses were not very detailed; however, students expressed their feelings regarding their understanding that others who

were suffering from homelessness, hunger, and poverty had negative connotations. Two students specifically mentioned homelessness in their responses:

1. *I feel sad because people are homeless.*

2. *I feel sad because they are homeless.*

Students were also more detailed in their responses about why they felt bad.

1. *I feel sad and angry because those people do not have enough of those things and they might get really sick and not be able to survive.*

2. *I felt really sad when we talked about the homeless people because they don't have food, water, and probably clothes.*

3. *It is not fair for him.*

4. *I feel sad because people get treated that way and it is not nice.*

Five students responded in ways that demonstrated understanding of how they were fortunate for have what they did. These statements did not specifically mention homelessness, hunger, or poverty but provided an insight into a potential understanding of inequality. Only one student specifically mentioned a negative feeling, providing a clearer connection to empathy; however, the other responses, while more egocentric than others, still represented a recognition of their privilege.

1. *I feel lucky because I have everything I need.*

2. *I feel important because I can go on trips. I have food, water, shelter, oxygen and trees.*

3. *I feel scared because I do not know what it feels like to be or have hunger, homelessness and poverty.*

4. *I feel sad because I want other people to have food water clothing and shelter like we do.*

5. *...Some people don't think about it because they don't have it.*

I believe that the student who responded with "I feel important…" used this term not in a boastful manner, but in a way to express a recognition that he was fortunate to have these things.

Data that provided insight into empathetic emotions related to homelessness, hunger, and poverty was only collected from this written reflection journal entry. Demonstrating an understanding of perspective was limited. Taking perspective, putting yourself in another's shoes, could be implied by the student who commented, "I do not know what it feels like." While this student didn't specifically state how others must be feeling, she recognized that it was different than what she experiences.

Empathy is connected to an individual's emotions. When an individual recognizes his/her negative feelings and connects those feelings to a disadvantageous situation in others, empathy is expressed. There is a fine line of distinction between the meaning of empathy and sympathy. Sympathy may refer to the sorrow or concern for others. The student comments seemed to express some emotion that could be categorized as either empathy or sympathy. I believe a deeper understanding of the students' true conceptualization of homelessness, hunger, and poverty would help delineate between the two.

Civic-Engagement

White and Mistry (2019) identified civic engagement to include" children's civic values (e.g., the importance of environmentalism, helping those who are less fortunate)

and notions of social responsibility (i.e., responsibility to the community, responsibility to people)" (p.184). In the second, third and final lesson, students expressed their understanding and beliefs related to their involvement in the community. In the second lesson, students were asked specifically if they believed they should help others in the community. Sixteen of 17 present students said "Yes" they should help and/or provided a specific example of something they could do to help others in the community.

In the written reflection journal, four students identified actions that would require interaction with community members directly:

1. *Go serve cookies at a shelter.*

2. *I think we could make like this box of food and have cans of food maybe bags of food and then we can walk around our community carrying the box of food and seeing if there is anyone that is hungry and give some of the food to them or we could put the box in front of our house and write only for hungry people.*

3. *I think my family can help by walking around ..... and giving money, food and water and all of that stuff.*

4. *Giving food or taking food in the car so if you find a homeless person.*

Seven students mentioned donating either money or other items.

In preparing for the field trip, the third lesson, students were asked to talk about how they felt about going to the soup kitchen. In the written reflection journals, students expressed positive emotions that were connected with helping others.

Some responses were:

1. *I feel happy because I get to help people.*

2. *Helpful because I want to help people have an easier life.*

3. *I feel helpful because I am helping people in need.*

These responses demonstrated a positive feeling associated with helping others. These statements did not identify helping others as a civic duty; however, the recognition that this was a positive experience for the student encourages the thoughts of future involvement. While the second lesson provided some evidence of students seeing the need to be involved in helping the community, few specifically mentioned their intentions for the future.

At the end of the field trip, one student exclaimed, "I can't wait to come back!" This was met with a few cheers and nodding heads. In our final lesson discussion, a student responded, "I feel like returning to help more people." Journal reflections from the final discussion included:

1. *I feel determined because I want to keep helping other people that need help.*

2. *I feel sorry and angry because we are not doing enough. I am disappointed in myself because I am not doing enough.*

3. *If we do think about it (homelessness, hunger and poverty) it will help so much and then our world will be much better.*

The written reflection journal entries provided some insight into themes of emotion, empathy, connections, and future intentions to maintain civic engagement. There was no evidence of transformational changes of any student throughout or at the end of the module. It is questionable whether the service-learning experience was influential in making positive changes in attitudes, empathy, and community responsibility; however, I believe that an awareness was created. Additionally, the

perceived interest and excitement of some students to return to the soup kitchen implies that, while small, something had changed for a few of these students.

Quantitative Findings

To determine potential changes in empathy and civic-engagement of the students from the start to the completion of the module, data was collected using descriptive statistics were measured for comparison. While there was a slight increase in the mean from the pretest to the posttest, the Paired t-test did not yield a p value (.076) to represent a statistically significant difference.

Table 2

Pre- and Posttest Descriptive Statistics

	Pretest	Posttest
Valid	21	20
Missing	0	1
Mean	2.7740	2.8358
St. Error of Mean	.04226	.04661
Median	2.8000	2.8944
Std. Deviation	.19366	.20846

Table 3

Paired Samples Statistics

	0Mean	N	SD	St. Error Mean
Pretest	2.7927	20	.17817	.03984
Posttest	2.8358	20	.20846	.04661

Individual analysis of each student's responses represented a variety of patterns. There was not a definitive impact on the overall group on any one question, making it a challenge to determine if any one area was influenced positively or negatively. Additionally, the inconsistency in the change in responses, did not present a visible pattern to ascertain a potential impact. The majority of the responses did not show a change from the pre- to the posttest. There were some students who either showed a strengthening of understanding, but also some students who demonstrated a reduction. In the case of a negative change in scores, students may have not understood the concepts at the beginning of the module and, after some exposure, realized that they were mistaken about what it meant, therefore answering more truthfully the second time around. Additionally, there is the possibility that some students may have felt their involvement (or lack thereof) was sufficient at the beginning but believe that they should now be more involved.

There was no identifiable correlation between student survey scores and journal entries. The journal entries were more indicative of changes in student attitudes or ability to express their feelings than the results of the survey. The short duration of the study may have also influenced the student responses. They did not have the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of and connection to the vocabulary included in the survey.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The purpose of this case study was to determine if participating in a school-based, service-learning experience could impact the empathy and civic-engagement of second-grade students. Over the course of four weeks, students engaged in a seven-session module that included six in-class meetings and a visit to a local soup kitchen. Qualitative data was collected from class discussion transcripts, written reflection journal entries, and observational notes. Quantitative data was collected from a survey administered at the beginning and at the end of the module. While the quantitative data did not demonstrate any significant changes in students' empathy or civic-engagement, themes extracted from the analysis of the qualitative data provided evidence of student emotions, empathy, and recognition of community responsibility.

Emotions/Empathy

Developmentally, empathy is challenging to demonstrate at a younger age. Emotions, however, are more readily identifiable and easily expressed. In this study, written reflection journal entries encouraged students to express emotions, but the entries did not always make a specific connection to why they felt a certain way or mention the plight of others. While the emotions themselves do not demonstrate empathy, the ability for a student to identify a feeling and connect it to a specific experience is a step toward empathetic understanding. The written reflection journal prompts specifically asked "How does this make you feel?" in an effort to elicit empathetic responses through the expression of emotions. The data shows that students were influenced in some way by the lesson content and the experience at the soup kitchen.

Empathy/Perspective

Evidence of empathy included examples of students sharing both emotional and cognitive responses to the experience. Warren (2018) identifies that emotional responses demonstrate empathetic concern while a cognitive response is more deeply rooted in taking perspective. Some students demonstrated a simple empathetic response by connecting their feelings to certain conditions of others in the community. For example, these two responses identify specific concerns about others: "I feel scared because I do not know what it feels like to be or have hunger, homelessness and poverty," and "I feel sad because I want other people to have food water clothing and shelter like we do." In most cases, the responses were solely related to feelings; however, these examples, along with a few other statements, show that some students had the potential to express empathy.

Influence on Prosocial Behaviors

There was no identifiable influence of this experience on the students' prosocial behaviors. Interactions among students did not provide evidence of a change in attitudes towards one another. This may be attributed to the limited duration of the module. Additionally, the researcher was only able to observe the students during the lessons and on the field trip. Extended interaction by the researcher with the students may have contributed more insight.

Civic-Engagement

Qualitative data provided evidence related to the recognition of student interest in continuing to help in their communities as well as an understanding of the importance of their involvement: "I feel determined because I want to keep helping other people that

need help," and "If we do think about it [homelessness, hunger and poverty], it will help

so much and then our world will be much better." A student also stated, "I can't wait to

come back!" after the trip to the soup kitchen. This experience seemed to awaken

realization in some students that their involvement was valuable and needed.

Additionally, a few recognized the positive impact their work had on their own feelings:

"I feel happy because I get to help people." There was not significant evidence of this

theme in the data; however, a few responses could serve as an example of students

beginning to make a connection between their experiences and the community.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

There were limitations that may have impacted the volume and expressive nature

of data collected in this study which, in turn, impacted the researcher's ability to establish

significant evidence to support the research questions (Fair & Delaplane, 2014, Graham

& Scott, 2015, Yates & Youniss, 1996). First, the duration of the study was limited to

four weeks. Ideally, the length of this study would have been longer, lasting for the

school year. The NYLC (2010) identifies duration as one of the main components to a

successful service-learning experience. More time would have provided more exposure to

ideas and opportunities to explore and deepen understanding of homelessness, hunger,

and poverty. Extended time might have contributed to a potential more meaningful and

long-lasting effect on student learning.

Additionally, the students demonstrated limited knowledge at the beginning of the

module as demonstrated in the first class discussion. Being presented with ideas without

the opportunity to make meaning and personal connections, minimized the potential

understanding of the concepts. Student-voice has also been identified as an important

element in successful service-learning (Ceilo et al., 2011, Fair & Delaplane, 2014, NYLC, 2010). In the case of this study, the pre-planned, structured module did not allow for student voice and choice in the planning of the service-learning experience.

Student attendance was also inconsistent over the course of the sessions. There were four students who did not attend one or more of the lessons, potentially impacting the level of data considered for the study outcomes.

<div align="center">Future Research</div>

While there is a significant body of research on the impact of service-learning on college aged and high-school students, studies related to elementary school students remain limited (Chiva-Bartoll, et al., 2019, Scott & Graham, 2015). Schools across the Unites States have become more intentional in incorporating service into their curricula and/or school's mission as well as character education and social-emotional learning programs. Additionally, there are schools that are founded on the principle of developing civic-engagement through community work and leadership. As schools continue to seek opportunities to develop social and emotional growth as well as civic-engagement, additional research into service-learning programs at the elementary level have the potential to provide supporting evidence to encourage schools to adopt more intentional service-learning programming.

Ideally, future research would engage students over a longer period of time to allow a more in-depth look into the changes in student attitudes over time. A longitudinal study of a group of students over the course of a school year would allow additional time for students to learn more about their community, develop an understanding of vocabulary, experience service-learning opportunities, and reflect. Another option might

be to follow a group of students from Kindergarten to fifth grade, allowing an even greater amount of time for service-learning to have an impact. Incorporating a control group in one of these longitudinal studies may also provide a useful set of data for comparison, potentially strengthening results.

When developing service-learning experiences, having more student involvement in the planning of the project as well as ensuring a better, consistent understanding of the issues would also likely improve the identifiable outcomes. Allowing students to select the issue to address and plan the project would give the students more ownership of the service-learning experience. Finally, teacher preparation programs may want to consider incorporating service-learning into the curriculum either as an experience for the teacher candidates or as a course focusing on the potential values of service-learning and ways to weave it into instruction. Further research into this topic will help provide valuable evidence for school leaders to make concerted efforts to implement service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy in their schools while also benefiting their greater communities.

<div align="center">Implications</div>

Schools are recognizing the need for addressing the social-emotional learning of students and the importance of understanding and being connected to the community. The inclusion of character education and civic responsibility in state standards implies a recognition of the need for attention to these areas and inclusion of educational experiences that support development of both characteristics. Teachers are increasingly encouraged to produce greater academic achievement of their students. The concept of service-learning is sometimes perceived as just one more thing to add to their already full

plates. Teachers are already faced with the challenge of finding ways to incorporate required lessons and activities to fulfill expectations of meeting these standards and increasing test scores. This study provides a framework of a service-learning module for educators which would be adaptable to meet the needs of the school, students, and community. Rather than an add-on, service-learning should be seen as a strategy to support character development and civic-duty while also addressing academic requirements. When implemented properly, service-learning can effectively meet curricular objectives including communication and writing skills and with some creative planning may also incorporate math, history, science, and computer literacy. For example, the students in this study might have been asked to calculate the differences in the number of homeless individuals in the community over the course of a few years or create a digital presentation reflecting upon their experience. This study highlights resources, such as the NYLC and CASEL, that provide guidance and research to support developing programming for educators. While service-learning requires teachers to reframe some of their teaching practices, the potential for covering multiple standards with an experience which has tremendous positive impacts beyond the classroom is hard to ignore.

<div align="center">Final Reflection</div>

This study sought to provide insight into the potential influence of participating in a service-learning module on a student's empathy and civic-engagement. While there was no significant evidence demonstrated in the data, the extracted themes from the qualitative information may imply that there was an awareness and developing understanding of the issues in the community as well as the benefits to becoming

involved. If this service-learning module had lasted over a longer period of time, such as an entire semester or even a school year, a more recognizable influence might have been recognized.

Service-learning is both a possible and viable strategy for schools to implement in the effort to strengthen our students' empathy, self-concept, and dedication to the community. At the elementary level, the curricular component of service-learning could easily take the place of or enhance the social-emotional curriculums that are now becoming commonplace in many schools. Most communities have numerous agencies, both local and national, that would welcome the attention and assistance from schools. The potential developed partnerships have the potential to strengthen the sense of community and provide children with a memorable, tangible experience that may positively influence their empathy and civic-engagement to become more thoughtful, compassionate, and committed citizens of the world.

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APPENDIX A

Outline of Sessions

Session One: Introduction

- Researcher will introduce self and provide information about the study.

- Students will sign participation waiver.

- Researcher will review survey with students. Students complete the survey individually as the researcher reads the questions and reviews answer options.

- Researcher will collect surveys.

Session Two: Opening Discussion and Reflection: Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty

- Researcher will tell students that they will spend a few lessons getting to know our local community. They will be building an understanding of what kinds of things we might be able to do to help in the community and why it is important to be involved. They are also going to talk about how we feel related to certain things we discuss or read about.

- Researcher will conduct discussion. Discussion questions/topics msy include:

  o Define community and needs.

  o What do you know about our community?

  o What kinds of things do you know about other people in our community?

  o If you were to say that there were some problems in our community, what would they be? How do you know?

  o What do you know about these issues? (homelessness, poverty, hunger)

  o Introduce the word perspective.

- Students will complete reflection journal. Written reflection journal prompt: Today we talked about our community has problems like poverty, homelessness and hunger. *This makes me feel… because…..*

Session Three: Discussion, Power Point, Read Aloud, and Written Reflection: Moure about the community and how to help

- Researcher will review last discussion.

- Researcher will share Power Point presentation with pictures and statistics about homelessness in the community.

- Researcher will read aloud: *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan.

- After read aloud is complete, researcher will facilitate discussion. Discussion questions may include:

  o What kinds of things did that story make you think about? What do you think are some ways that people can get involved in our community to help these issues?

  o Why is it important to do these things?

- Researcher will return to Power Point presentation that will share examples of local organizations and pictures of people in the community helping others.

- Students will complete written reflection. Written reflection journal prompt: *How do you think you and your family might be able to help in our community? Do you think it is important to get involved in your community?*

Session Four: Discussion and Written Reflection: Prepare to go to Soup Kitchen

- Researcher will review last lesson. Question prompts for brief discussion may include: How we (students) can become involved in the community? Why it is important?

- Researcher will remind students about the read aloud, *Uncle Willy and the Soup Kitchen*.

- Researcher will share information about the soup kitchen that they will visit. Use video provided by the soup kitchen to share with students. After the video, discuss. Discussion questions may include:

  o What kinds of things did you learn about the soup kitchen?

  o Was there anything that was a surprise or a concern to you?

  o What might be some questions we could ask at the soup kitchen?

- Students will complete written reflection. Written reflection journal prompt: *How do you feel about going to the soup kitchen? Why? Do you have any other thoughts or questions about the trip?*

Session Five: Field Trip to Soup Kitchen

- Researcher will accompany students on field trip. Researcher will take observational notes. There is no formal lesson or discussion.

Session Six: Discussion and Written Reflection: Field Trip Reflection

- Researcher will lead a discussion about the field trip. Prompting questions may include:
  o What did you like about the trip?

  o Was there anything that made you uncomfortable?

  o What was your biggest take away from visiting the soup kitchen?

- o Is there anything that you might want to do to help this issue in our community, other than help at the soup kitchen?

- Students complete written reflection. Written reflection journal prompt: *One problem in our community is _____. This makes me feel _____ because _____. It is important for me to get involved in the community because _____. How did your feelings or what you know about your community change from the first lesson?*

Session Seven: Follow up Survey

- Researcher will administer final survey. No formal discussion or interaction.

- Students will complete survey independently.

- Researcher will collect surveys.

APPENDIX B

Student Survey

Name: _____ Date: _____

Empathy and Civic-Engagement Survey

1	2	3	4
☹	🙄	🙂	🤔
No	Sometimes	Yes	Not Sure

1. I want to help when I see someone having a problem.

1	2	3	4
☹	🙄	🙂	🤔

2. I try to be kind to other people.

1	2	3	4
☹	🙄	🙂	🤔

3. I apologize when I hurt someone's feelings.

1	2	3	4
☹	🙄	🙂	🤔

4. I try to help when I see people in need.

1	2	3	4

5. I try to understand others better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

1	2	3	4

6. I think it is important to help people in my community.

1	2	3	4

7. I know about problems in my community.

1	2	3	4

8. I think it is important to change things that are unfair in our community.

1	2	3	4

9. It is important for me to help people in my community.

1	2	3	4

10.   By working with others in the community, I can help make things better.

1	2	3	4

Adapted from:
White, E.S., & Mistry, R.S. (2016). Child Civic Engagement Indicators [Database Record]
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