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An action research study of Mexican teachers' and administrators' experiences in developing and implementing a service learning program

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AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY OF MEXICAN TEACHERS' AND

ADMINISTRATORS' EXPERIENCES IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A

SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy

by

Kym Acuña

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Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the High Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' knowledge of the service learning model upon which the school's service learning program has been based, their views regarding their role in student character formation through service learning, and the teachers' feelings of ownership regarding the service learning program.

1 overarching research question and 3 sub-questions were explored. The overarching question was:

How do teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School experience service learning?

3 sub-questions that aided in answer the overarching research question were:

What is the High Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' knowledge of the service learning model that serves as the foundation for the service learning program that has been implemented school wide?

What are the views of the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators regarding their role in the shaping of students' character through service learning?

What, if any, feelings of ownership do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators experience regarding the service learning program that has been implemented school wide?

Data was collected from an online questionnaire and a focus group completed by 12 teachers and administrators who participated in the planning and implementation of the school's service learning program. Findings from the study showed that 4 primary factors influenced teachers' and administrators' feelings of ownership about the service learning

project: belief that educating students in character is their responsibility, having a strong sense of caring, having sufficient knowledge of the service learning model, and feeling empowered by the implementing of service learning.

2 primary conclusions were derived from the study. First, experiential learning was more important than academic learning in teachers and administrators understanding the service learning model used at the school. Second, the feelings of ownership of the SL program held by the teachers and administrators at the school are derived from (a) belief that educating students in character is their responsibility, (b) having a strong sense of caring, (c) having sufficient knowledge of the service learning model, and (d) feeling empowered by the implementing of service learning.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

After almost 30 years in which teaching values were considered to be outside the scope of the responsibility of educators, except in the form of citizenship education (Leming, 2008), developmental psychologist Thomas Lickona, in the 1990s, reintroduced the need for schools to include student moral development in the form of character education (CE), which is instruction with a focus on helping students in the formation of individual moral character and individual performance character (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Proponents have claimed that various forms of CE exist, including: (a) caring (Noddings, 2008), (b) service learning (SL) (Winings, 2002), and (c) an integrated approach (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Although commercial CE curricula have been developed, schools leaders have also been encouraged to build CE programs to fit their unique situations (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

Schwartz (2008) identified eight features present in effective CE programs including: (a) professional development, (b) peer interaction, (c) direct teaching and skill training, (d) explicit agenda, (e) family and/or community involvement, (f) models and mentors, (g) integration into academic curricula, and (h) the use of multiple strategies. One strategy that is directly linked to academic curricula is SL. For a service project to be considered SL, a link to academic subjects must be present. Winings (2002) defined SL as "a means by which students participate in organized service experiences that are beyond the classroom with an eye toward integrating these experiences into their academic curriculum, thereby enhancing learning" (p. 9).

SL is different from other kinds of experiential learning because both the student performing the service and the agency or institution where the service is being performed receive mutual benefit. This reciprocity is unique to SL (Winings, 2002). Students have the opportunity to give something of themselves in the form of time, effort, and talent while they gain valuable experience.

SL is an important part of any successful CE program (Vincent, 1999). Teachers and administrators are essential in the development and implementation of SL programs within schools (Winings, 2002); however, how these professionals contribute to the effectiveness of those programs at the middle school level is unclear because most studies on the role of the faculty in SL programs have been conducted within higher education settings (Warner & Esposito, 2009). This lack of evidence about (a) middle school teachers' knowledge of SL, (b) their beliefs about their roles in CE, and (c) their ownership of SL programs led to the necessity for research on the topic to inform program development better.

The High Tec Middle School (Grades 7 to 9) was founded in 2007 in northern Mexico with CE as one foundational principle. The school has won recognition for its CE efforts since its first year in existence; school administrators strive continually to strengthen the program. In August 2010, the newest CE initiative was begun: a formal SL component as an academic requirement in each of the three grades. All students were expected (a) to make a decision about where they wanted to do their service; (b) to obtain permission from the organization, their parents, and their teacher; and (c) to write objectives for their service and their learning regarding the experience. Each student was to complete 10 hours of service during the following eight months. Finally, students

were asked to reflect on their service in regard to the help they actually provided and the personal learning they obtained. In seventh grade, the project was linked to the environmental education class, and it was required that the service was be done with an organization with programs to protect the environment. In eighth grade, the project was linked to the ethics class, and the students were required to do their service in an organization such as an orphanage, nursing home, food bank, soup kitchen, or other similar institution. In ninth grade, the project was linked to the civics class, and the students were required to do their service in governmental organizations such as the Adult Education Service or the Electoral Commission, among others. School administrators and the faculty who taught the related subjects developed the SL program together. These educators had negotiated agreements with the governmental agencies from April to August before the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year.

The administrators and faculty members involved met at least monthly to discuss students' progress in the SL program; however, they encountered many obstacles in working with government agencies. In particular, the agreements for allowing students to do service in the agencies were not honored when the incoming state administration changed in September 2010. After conceding that the program could not proceed as conceived due to the problems with the service partner institutions, the group decided, in the second half of the school year, to focus on only the seventh grade program.

The CE coordinator for the school contacted a public elementary school in a low-income area to establish a new service partnership. The seventh grade tutors, who were each responsible for a particular group of students, were asked to prepare their groups to visit the public elementary school to give an English-as-a-second-language class to first-,

second-, and third-grade students. The tutors, who were also all English teachers, guided

their students in preparing lessons and accompanied them to the elementary school.

Seventh-grade students prepared lesson materials and took extra lunches to share with the

elementary students. After teaching the 45-minute lesson to the elementary students, the

seventh graders played games and ate with the elementary students during recess. This

was a one-time activity in the 2010-2011 school year.

After the 2010-2011 school year attempts at school-wide SL, the program was

changed for the 2011-2012 school year. Ninth-grade students were assigned to continue

the project that the seventh grade students began the previous year. The project was

linked to the ninth-grade English class, and the students planned to visit the elementary

school four times in the year rather than once.

In the eighth grade, the SL project was linked to academic objectives in Spanish

and Ethics classes. The project consisted of sensitizing the community about the proper

use of handicapped parking spaces. On 12 Saturdays throughout the school year,

students visited three different local shopping centers for three hours to share information

with drivers about the proper use of handicapped parking spaces. In small groups,

students wearing t-shirts with the activity logo ("Do you really want to take my place?")

held up a sign with the same logo and stood in the handicapped parking spaces. When a

person approached the parking spot, the students backed up to give the drivers access to

the parking space. If the person had a handicapped sticker on their car, the students

offered assistance if the drivers desired it. If the driver did not have a handicapped

sticker and appeared to have no disability, the students invited them to leave the space

available and gave them a brochure from the State Commission on Persons with

Disabilities (CEISD). If the person had no handicapped sticker on their vehicle but appeared to have a disability or expressed their disability, the students gave them a brochure and invited them to visit the CEISD stand in the parking lot to obtain a handicapped-parking sticker.

The new seventh grade SL project was linked to the subjects of biology and environmental education. The students visited a public elementary school four times throughout the year to facilitate activities with first through sixth grade students to promote environmental awareness. Students facilitated activities they had designed, such as (a) an awareness campaign, (b) an elaboration of recycled paper, (c) an environmental rally, and (d) environmental awareness games. After facilitating the activities in 45-minute class sessions, the seventh graders shared lunch that they had prepared with the elementary students.

Before the design and implementation of the SL program, teachers were not given formal training in SL programming. Teachers' and administrators' knowledge was developed from informal discussions in the planning sessions. At the end of the first year of the program, 15 teachers attended a half-day workshop on SL at a national CE conference in Mexico. No other formal training was provided, although a 20-hour professional development course in SL was scheduled for the second semester of the second year of implementation.

At the end of the first year, the effect on the students was studied using reflection exercises. The SL team sought to understand students' opinions about the activities and how the students felt they were affected through participation in the SL projects. No assessment was done regarding the teachers' and administrators' knowledge of the SL

process, their beliefs about their roles in student character development, or their ownership of the program they had developed.

Problem Statement

Educators at High Tec Middle School in northern Mexico have been implementing an SL program in Grades 7 through 9 as a part of a CE initiative for more than one year. Teachers and administrators involved in the SL activities have observed student enthusiasm for, and parent appreciation of, the SL endeavor. These responses have been assessed through student reflection activities and anecdotal evidence gathered from conversations with parents. An opportunity exists, however, to explore (a) what the teachers and administrators know about SL, (b) their roles in SL program implementation, and (c) their feelings of ownership of the SL program. It is important to understand these three aspects of the teachers' and administrators' experience in SL program implementation as a potential reference for further development of the program and for aspects related to preparation and motivation for educators who shape the SL program. A need exists, therefore, to examine these educators' knowledge of SL, their perspectives on their roles in student character development through SL, and their feelings of ownership of for SL projects.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current middle school action research was to examine the High Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' (a) knowledge of the SL model upon which the school's SL program has been based, (b) views regarding their roles in student character formation through SL, and (c) feelings of ownership regarding the SL program.

Research Questions

To explore knowledge of the SL model, views related to roles in character development, and feelings of SL project ownership of teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School in northern Mexico in the development and implementation of an SL program, one overarching research question and three subquestions were examined. The overarching research question was: "How do teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School experience service learning (SL)?"

The three subquestions that were used to aid in answering the overarching research question were:

RQ1. How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?

RQ2. How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?

RQ3. How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?

The three subquestions were chosen to explore the knowledge, beliefs, and feelings of teachers and administrators regarding SL and the school's SL program. Specifically, the effect of one or more of the components or their interaction on the teachers' or administrators' participation in the SL project was examined.

Importance of Study

Anticipated practical implications. Educators with an understanding of the factors that have a shaping effect on teachers' and administrators' participation in SL can

make better-informed decisions about how to develop and support their own SL programs.

Theoretical implications. Although much research has been conducted on effects of SL on students (Winings, 2002), little research has been conducted on how teachers and administrators involved in developing SL experience the process. Understanding the influences on teachers' and administrators' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding SL could be used to shape theoretical discussions in development of SL programs.

With the current findings regarding teachers' and administrators´ experience in implementing SL, an action plan for the school could be designed to prepare faculty members to implement SL programs. Specifically, professional development designed to address teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about SL might be developed in place of more technical models of training that are focused only on the design components of a SL program. This could lead to a continued evolution of SL programs with effects on decisions such as teacher pre-implementation training, on-going support during the implementation process, and teacher and administrator reflection regarding the process and outcomes of the SL. The goal would be that a more effective model of teaching and administrative training and support for implementing SL would result in SL being more influential for students.

Delimitations

This action research involved one private bilingual middle school (Grades 7 to 9) located in northern Mexico. Twelve total subjects/co-researchers participated in the study. The subjects/co-researchers included nine teachers who are implementing the

school's SL program and three administrators. One administrator served a dual role as

teacher and administrator, and another teacher served as the school's SL coordinator.

The study was conducted in the early spring and summer of 2012, during the second year

of the school's SL program.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of the study was that the researcher also was the

principal of the school used as the site of the study. This limitation includes a possibility

that the teachers and administrators unconsciously might have framed their responses and

perspectives about their own ownership and knowledge of the program to sound

favorable to the principal. To mitigate this limitation, the study was designed as action

research in which the teachers and administrators served simultaneously as co-researchers

and subjects. The teachers and administrators co-analyzed the collected data with the

researcher to provide for transparency and trustworthiness.

Assumptions

It was assumed that teachers and administrators will give honest responses. It was

also assumed the focus group answers and the online questionnaire responses of the

teachers are typical of educators' thoughts throughout the SL process.

Researcher's Relationship to Study

I am the founding principal of a private middle school in Zacatecas, Mexico. I

have lived 13 years in Zacatecas where my husband and I are missionaries, which was the

purpose for our living in Mexico. One primary goal in my life is to be of service to

others and to help them to become the best people they can be. As I explored what

should be the foundational principles for our school, I learned about CE. I became

convinced that this area of CE is of equal importance with academics, although CE often has been overlooked or has been given lesser priority in student formation in Mexico.

Mexico is currently a country struggling with violence and corruption (Grayson, 2010). I believe that the future success of the country is related to educating children differently. My goal is to use all of my abilities and resources to help students become more caring, honest, committed people. One way to help students in value formation and practice, while simultaneously advancing in academic objectives, is to use SL (Winings, 2002). For this reason, an SL program for all grades was implemented at High Tec Middle School. An aim of the current research was to explore the influence of adults who administer the SL program on the program's successful outcomes in student character development.

Operational Definitions and Key Terms

Operational definitions. The following terms are defined operationally as they will be used throughout the study discussion.

Experiences. Experiences are "people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 141). The participants' experiences were measured through a focus group with participants and an online questionnaire.

Knowledge of SL model. Teachers must be knowledgeable as to what goals they are trying to accomplish with an SL program and how the program can be used to accomplish those goals (Winings, 2002). Teacher knowledge was measured by participants' discussions in a focus group and an online questionnaire.

Stakeholder ownership. Stakeholder ownership occurs as the stakeholders feel that they are equal partners and typically develops when stakeholders invest themselves in the project they are creating (DuFour, DuFour, & Baker, 2008).Ownership was measured by participants' discussions in a focus group and an online questionnaire.

Teachers' views of their roles in CE. Lickona and Davidson (2005) posited that one key for developing character was having a community of educators "take a strong stand for integrity in all phases of school life" (p. 29). To do this, teachers needed to perceive themselves as essential in the CE process. Teachers' views of their role were measured through participants' discussions in a focus group and an online questionnaire.

Key terms. The two key terms for the current study are defined in the following paragraphs.

Character education (CE). Character education includes both "the quest for excellence as well as ethics" (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 16). In the current study, this means CE includes both academic achievement and moral development.

Service learning (SL). Service learning is "a means by which students participate in organized service experiences that are beyond the classroom with an eye toward integrating these experiences into their academic curriculum, thereby enhancing learning" (Winings, 2002, p. 9).

Organization of Study

The current research discussion consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study, which included (a) background, (b) statement of the problem, (c) research questions, (d) importance of the study, (e) delimitations and limitations of the

study, (f) the researcher's relationship to the study, and (g) operational definitions and key terms.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature in which three primary areas are addressed. First, a theoretical framework for the study is included in discussion of empowerment theory and an ethics of caring. Next, SL is examined through its history, definition, purpose, and role in CE. Engagement in SL is addressed in the areas of implementation and evaluation. The context of SL is explored through the topics of SL in teacher preparation programs, SL in Mexico, and SL as related to moral development and current social challenges in Mexico. Finally, the teacher's role in education is examined as it relates to knowledge of instructional practices, ownership of the teaching-learning process, and whole child development.

Chapter 3 is a description of methodology for the study. The research design, site, participants, human subjects' protection, instruments, data management, and data analysis are described. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the collected data and its analysis. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings, implications, and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Service learning is an educational model that is in use throughout the United

States (Bilig, 2000), and SL is one component of a well-rounded CE program. Character

education would include both "the quest for excellence as well as ethics" (Lickona &

Davidson, 2005, p. 16), which means CE includes both academic achievement and moral

development. Advancing moral development in schools is the process of using strategies

to build moral intelligence (Borba, 2001).

According to Fiske (2002), implementation of SLhas been on the rise in the last

decade, and Bilig (2000) explained that SL was well accepted in communities in which

SL was understood. Many educational environments exist, however, in which SL

requires clarification. Giles and Eyler (1994) identified the need to explain faculty

participation in SL and how SL affects faculty as one of the "top ten unanswered

questions in SL research" (p. 65). Although in a few studies the role and effects of

faculty participation in SL have been explored (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan,

1996; Eyler & Giles, 1998, Hesser, 1995; Stanton, 1994), all the examined faculty were

university-level educators and none of these studies were conducted in Mexico.

Opportunity exists to expand studies beyond the university level and outside the

United States; therefore, the focus of the current study was at the middle school level and

in Mexico. The purpose of the study was to examine the High Tec Middle School

teachers' and administrators' (a) knowledge of the SL model upon which the school's SL

program has been based, (b) views regarding their roles in student character formation

through SL, and (c) feelings of ownership regarding the SL program. This understanding

could lead to better teacher and administrator preparation programs for SL, which might contribute to expanding use and efficacy of SL. In addition, a study setting within Mexico was used to ensure that specific national cultural issues might not cloud the data analysis and data interpretation, as the data were related specifically to Mexican educators.

The literature review is divided into three main sections. The first section on theoretical considerations includes examination of two theoretical models, empowerment theory and the ethics of caring, in the context of education. The second section is a review of literature on SL, which includes three main subdivisions: (a) the background of SL, (b) engagement in SL, and (c) the context for SL. The background for SL includes literature on its history, definition, and purpose, as well as the role of SL as a part of CE. Engagement in SL includes the elements and steps of implementation and SL evaluation. The context subdivision is an analysis of SL use in preservice teacher preparation, its use in Mexico, and the challenges of moral development within difficult social climates. The third section is an examination of the teacher's role in education with specific attention to (a) knowledge of instructional practices, (b) ownership in the teaching-learning process, and (c) whole child development.

Theoretical Considerations

Two theoretical models were explored regarding individuals. The first theory was empowerment theory and how external influences can have shaping effects on a person's experience of self-efficacy. The second theoretical framework was the ethics of caring. Its origins and relationship to education were examined.

Empowerment theory. Empowerment is "the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance to an individual or group" (Fawcett et al., 1994, p. 471). An SL project could share in common many of the same characteristics that are necessary for developing empowerment in students. These characteristics have been noted as: (a) ownership, (b) choice, (c) autonomy, (d) decision-making, (e) responsibility, (f) independence, (g) risk-taking, (h) collaboration, and (i) self-evaluation (Stone, 1995, as cited in Duhon-Haynes, 1996). As people became empowered, they gained more from the learning or teaching process. Houser and Frymier (2009) agreed: "Empowered learners are more motivated to perform classroom tasks, and they feel more competent in the classroom, find the required tasks more meaningful, and feel they have an impact on their learning process" (p. 1).

Empowerment meant having control or power over significant events or circumstances (Fawcett et al., 1994). According to Perkins and Zimmerman (1995), empowerment theory was the connection between personal well-being and larger society; that is, a person's state of well-being was linked to their endeavors to help others. For that reason, Zimmerman (1995) also linked individual empowerment to a person's sense of control, understanding of the environment, and perspective about personal ability to make change.

Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler, and Yapachai (1998) provided empirical support for Rappaport's (1984) assertion that empowerment might appear in different forms in people, was entrenched in the context, and could change over time. Foster-Fishman et al.'s findings showed multiple pathways existed for empowerment that could be experienced individually or in a combination of pathways. Participants in their study

expressed feelings of empowerment linked to job autonomy, knowledge in their area of expertise, and trust/respect received in their jobs. The findings showed that this feeling of being able to make a difference was context specific and changed during turbulent times in the organization. Changes in the experiences of empowerment were due to the changing circumstances in organizational members' responses to problematic situations.

Zimmerman (1995) distinguished between the empowering process and empowered outcomes. The empowering process was the opportunity for individuals to make a difference in the decisions that had effects on their lives. Empowered outcomes were the results of the empowering processes. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) suggested that empowering processes could include community service, collective decision making, and shared leadership. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) proposed an empowerment process model, which was applied specifically to research and psychological practice. This model included: (a) setting goals that are personal, meaningful, and power oriented; (b) looking at self-efficacies; (c) setting a course of action; (d) gaining competence in necessary areas; (e) taking action; and (f) measuring impact (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). Others (Busher, Lawson, Wilkins, & Acun, 2011; Camp & Oesterreich, 2010; Rocha-Schmid, 2010), however, connected empowerment strategies and pedagogy, and discussed how use of empowerment strategies could result in successful teaching practices in difficult circumstances.

Ethics of caring. The concept of caring has grown in importance in the last decade. According to Pink (2006), the high-touch ability to care and jobs in the caring profession have risen in number and importance in our current "Conceptual Age" (p. 59). In "Section 5431: Partnerships in Character Education Program" in the *No Child Left*

Behind Act of 2001, federal government officials, for the first time, listed character traits

deemed necessary for American citizens (Spring, 2010). Caring was one character trait

listed. According to Taulbert (2006), caring was a key ingredient in building community

in schools.

The concept of care was developed into a theoretical construct known as the

ethics of caring (Noddings, 2003). Nucci (2008) described its scope as: "Ethics, from a

care perspective, is first and foremost about reaching out to others, empathizing with their

circumstances, and making decisions not on abstract principles of justice, but on caring

for the other" (p. 26). Noddings (2003) strongly connected the ethics of caring with

education, stating that "the primary aim of every educational institution and of every

educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring" (p. 172). Not

only did Noddings express that caring was the aim of education, but also that caring was

the foundational bedrock for successful education. Noddings defined the roles in caring

as the *one-caring* and the *one cared for*. This one-caring has as a foremost goal the

promotion of caring in self and others (Noddings, 2003, 2005), which was a natural fit as

the primary aspiration in education.

Noddings (2005) described the four major components of the ethics of caring as

(a) modeling, (b) dialogue, (c) practice, and (d) confirmation. Modeling is demonstrating

to students how to care by caring for them. The second essential component, dialogue, is

described as genuine, open conversation without predetermined answers for decisions at

hand, and also is described as the quest for answers. Practice is the transformative

ingredient that will touch not only students and schools, but also, eventually, society.

Finally, confirmation is encouragement and affirmation that sparks the growth of the person.

Noddings (2005) affirmed that using an ethics of caring in education would cause a fundamental shift. The thought process of teachers would be changed so that they refrained from asking, "How can I get kids to learn math?" and began asking, "How can my subject serve the needs of each of these students?" (p. 179). Noddings (2008) also linked a moral climate in schools to guiding students to find self-worth, not in academics or in other talents, but in capacity to hold caring relationships. Noddings suggested that SL was a "promising area in which to produce caring" (p. 171), although it must be carefully supervised to ensure that students were meeting the needs of the cared-for.

Service Learning

Nine different facets of SL will be examined. First, the history, definition, and purpose of SL will be addressed. How SL fits into the larger picture of CE is the next facet analyzed. The elements necessary for and the steps in implementation will then be explored. The need for SL program evaluation will follow. The use of SL in teacher preparation programs will also be discussed. Then, the extent that SL is being applied in Mexican educational institutions will be reviewed and situated within the current social challenges in Mexico as they relate to moral development.

Background. The background of SL will be explored through its history, definition, purpose, and role in CE. An analysis of the historical and theoretical origins of SL leads to an understanding of its current manifestations. Several definitions of SL will be discussed in order to arrive at one clear definition for the teaching-learning model.

The purpose of SL will be analyzed as it relates to implementation in schools. Finally, the role of SL in a larger CE program will be addressed.

History. Although not named SL or based in an educational theory, Taulbert (2006) claimed that SL was practiced in schools as early as the 1950s in the form of doing for others and learning about society. The earliest theoretical roots of SL were noted in the works of John Dewey (Giles & Eyler, 1994) in his principle of experiential continuum, the principle of interaction, and his idea of reflective thinking. Building on Dewey's ideas, Kolb (1984) created a model of experiential learning. According to Winings (2002), "SL represents the best aspect of experiential learning" (p. 16). In addition to roots in experiential education, Furco (2001) connected SL to constructivism.

Apart from Dewey's theoretical connections for SL, Hart, Matsuba, and Atkins (2008) described four other theoretical frameworks to which researchers and theorists have linked SL. They cited Kenny, Simon, Kiley-Brabeck, and Learner along with Warter and Grossman, who emphasized the *transactional reciprocity* between student and context. A second connection that Hart et al. (2008) discussed was that of developmental opportunities that lead to adjustment in values and identity. The third connection was a social learning perspective, as communicated from the significant adults involved in the SL project. Finally, Hart et al. discussed Eisenberg's model of reasoning and behavior, which showed the relationships of empathetic response, reflection, and motivation to help.

Although SL has been utilized more often in U.S. schools for the last 50 years, Fiske (2002) suggested that SL was now "a proven method of instruction that teachers in thousands of U.S. schools nationwide have successfully employed to increase student

motivation for learning and promote traditional academic goals" (p. 1). Fiske attributed

this in part to presidential and congressional funding and actions, including the National

and Community Service Act of 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act

of 1993. He described the growth of SL in schools as reaching 32% of all public schools

and involving more than 13 million students.

Apart from the government action and funding, SL has been supported by

organizations such as the National Youth and Leadership Council, founded in 1983

(Kielsmeier, 2011). The council's mission was stated with goals to encourage students'

engagement with the world around them while applying their academic skills and

knowledge. Kielsmeier, the organization's founder, expressed concern about a recent

drop in schools' participation in SL, which he attributed to the current narrow focus on

standardized test preparation.

Definition. Potentially, more definitions of SL exist than could be expressed by

educators interested in SL (Furco, 2003); however, many researchers have thought it

important to distinguish between SL and community service (Hart et al., 2008). The

following five definitions are varied descriptions of SL, but they all have two important

elements in common.

Mowry (2008) indicated that SL was one of many guided school activities in

which students were afforded opportunities for moral action in a forum for academic and

character development. Moral action might include "all that people do that involves

issues of right and wrong, of caring and of justice" (p. 111). Fiske (2002) defined SL as

"a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study

to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities" (p. 15).

Winings (2002) stated that "service learning is a program whereby young people develop

both their sense of caring and compassion as well as their intellect through living for the

sake of others (the community) in a meaningful and valued manner" (p. 10). In their

step-by-step guide to SL, Knox, Wangaard, and Michaelson (2003) offered a simplified

definition for SL: "acquiring or using new knowledge or skills by helping someone or

something" (p. 72). A definition from Berger (2010) included the two additional

elements of being research based and addressing authentic community needs:

> SL can be defined as a research-based teaching method where guided or
> classroom learning is applied through action that addresses an authentic
> community need in a process that allows for your initiative and provides
> structured time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of
> acquired skills and knowledge. (p. 9)

> In defining SL, the definition of community service must be considered to avoid

confusion between the two practices. Spring, Grimm, and Dietz (2008) defined

community service activities as:

> non-curriculum-based; recognized by the school; may be mandatory or voluntary;
> may be arranged by schools or other organizations; generally do not include
> explicit learning objectives, organized reflection or critical analysis; and may
> include activities that take place off of school grounds or may happen primarily
> within the school. (p. 9)

Hart et al.'s (2008) description of community service was less specific; they simply

referred to community service as volunteering.

Definitions for SL each have distinct wording and elements of providing

opportunity for moral action (Mowry, 2008) such as: (a) teaching civic responsibility and

strengthening community (Fiske, 2002), (b) living for the sake of others (Winings, 2002),

and (c) being research-based and addressing authentic community needs (Berger, 2010).

The commonalities among these definitions are components of teaching/learning and

service. One of these two identifying traits is the distinguishing feature between SL and

community service. Learning goals and outcomes associated with SL were not connected

necessarily with community service (Berger, 2010; Colby, Bercaw, Clark, & Galiardi,

2009; Winings, 2002). Different than community service, SL must include explicit,

intentional, learning objectives that meet curricular learning objectives for the subject in

which the SL is taking place. This distinction is important when considering desired

outcomes for the service project within the scope of the CE initiative at any given school.

   Purpose. For SL to be accepted in schools, teachers, administrators, students,

parents, and the community need to understand why some educational institutions choose

to implement SL programs. Service for some is seen as a way of life with its own

inherent value (Ryan & Boylin, 1999). This generalized benefit might not seem

sufficient reason for many educators to dedicate their time and energy to guiding students

in SL; therefore, a variety of objectives or outcomes of SL are discussed in this section.

Pink (2006) viewed empathy as an essential sense or rational skill that was necessary to

thrive in this new era. With the rise of high touch, high concept jobs in the world

economy, such as the caring professions in medicine, empathy has risen in importance. It

is not a technical skill to be learned, but rather an ethic to guide a person's life. With a

need for a life ethic, the question becomes how the quality of empathy could be

developed in students to prepare them for the future. Vincent (1999) proposed the

answer that SL was a fundamental element for developing empathy.

   LeGette (1999) connected the role that parents and schools have in character

development through service. LeGette claimed that one significant responsibility of

parents was to develop in their children the joy and meaning of service to others.

Teachers' ownership in the value of SL was attributed to their eyewitness accounts of SL in action. These personal accounts showed the changes in attitudes and behavior that could be seen in students as a result of service activities. Berger (2010) added the assertion that "teachers confirm that with service learning, their students go beyond required assignments, reveal hidden talents, apply themselves in ways that stretch their intellect, retain what they have learned and transfer skills and knowledge to new situations" (p. xii).

In research on middle school students, Melchior (as cited in Hart et al., 2008) found three very compelling social outcomes that resulted from connections between involvement in SL and certain destructive behaviors. In this study, students involved in SL were less likely to be pregnant, less likely to be arrested, and consumed less alcohol. These results might be attributed to the gains in moral reasoning from the role-taking experiences and active reflection inherent in experiential learning (Conrad & Hedin, 1982).

Another key objective of SL is academic learning. Winings (2002) attributed the enhanced learning constructed in the SL process to the active learning dynamics. Active involvement of the students in looking at relevance and applicability of what they are learning were such attributes of SL. Winings indicated that the higher retention rates obtained with this method of teaching-learning were related to the students' active participation in the process.

Lickona and Davidson (2005) delineated some outcomes achieved through SL by including quotes from students and parents about experiences in SL projects. Students experienced results in themselves including: (a) learning social skills and multi-tasking,

(b) becoming a leader, (c) finding focus in life, and (d) learning self-control. Parents

described their children as finding direction in their lives and developing self-confidence

while losing fear of the problems they might encounter in life.

In answer to the question of why SL was important, Berger (2010) developed a

list of reasons:

- Service learning provides meaningful ways for students, teachers, administrators, and community agencies and members to move together with deliberate thought and action toward a common purpose that has reciprocal benefits.

- Students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally; develop skills; explore numerous career options; and may come to appreciate the value of civic responsibility and actively participating in their community.

- Teachers make school and education more relevant for their students, often seeing students blossom and develop previously untapped strengths in the process; collaborate with their colleagues and community partners to develop exciting curriculum; and may find themselves professionally reenergized.

- School administrators may observe a boost in staff and student morale as desired academic outcomes are achieved, and the school's profile is raised in the community.

- Parents find new avenues for conversation with their children, and may help support SL within the school and create family service experiences.

- Community partners receive much needed help and may find themselves learning from the students as they teach or interact with them. (p. 2)

Finally, Fiske (2002) outlined five important accomplishments of SL. With SL,

(a) student disengagement from schooling was reversed, (b) standards-based reform was

reinforced, (c) public purposes of education were promoted, (d) students' willingness to

become involved in service was built, and (e) students' personal and career development

was enhanced. Fiske also indicated research on SL as linked to increased attendance and

reduced dropout rates.

Role in CE. Service learning is a key component of CE programs in schools (Billig, Jesse, & Grimley, 2008; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Mowry, 2008; Nucci, 2009; Vincent, 1999; Winings, 2002). DeRoche (2004) stated that, "character education without SL is like baseball practice without a game" (p. 62). DeRoche's analogy was an indication of the relationship between CE and SL. Just as in baseball, as a player applied the skills learned in practice during a game, SL is a structured time when the student could practice the character qualities that have been developed through the CE program, while deepening and strengthening those qualities.

In delineating the eight strengths of character that they viewed as outcomes of CE, Lickona and Davidson (2005) defined promising practices drawn from research with teachers and schools as helpful in achieving those outcomes. The seventh strength of character they defined was a "contributing community member and democratic citizen" (p. 85). One of their four promising practices to help students develop that strength of character was SL. They connected SL to the character trait of responsibility saying, "If we want students to develop responsibility, we should give them responsibility" (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 183).

Billig et al. (2008) conducted a comparative study of students in CE initiatives to investigate differences in self-reported character traits between those who participated in SL and those who did not. Their findings showed "the promise of SL as an instructional approach for impacting character outcomes" (p. 31).

Winings (2002) dedicated an entire book to the topic of CE and SL. She recognized that SL was not the only component of CE but, through SL, character was nurtured in the areas of (a) becoming responsible, (b) caring, (c) developing perspective,

and (d) contributing to the community. In the exercise of the moral concepts in real-life situations, students moved from an intellectual understanding of the concepts to developing a moral feeling as they worked to serve others. Similarly, Vincent (1999) claimed that SL was an essential component for success in CE, noting SL as a way of applying the concrete to the abstract. Students had the opportunity to take the abstract concepts of character and put them into practice in a concrete way through service.

Nucci (2009) included classroom - ready examples of how to use the academic curriculum for moral and social development. Among these, an SL American History lesson expansion was entitled *Fair Trade* and Nucci suggested that this lesson was meant as an example of how SL can be incorporated into the curriculum. Nucci's three reasons for students' engaging in SL were their (a) increased level of civic engagement, (b) increased positive moral action, and (c) decreased rates of delinquent content.

As Mowry (2008) discussed improvements for character across the curriculum, she included SL under the broader category of learning through moral action. Likewise, Ryan and Bohlin (1999) included the concept of service among the actions they discussed which can build character in schools.

The previously mentioned authors conveyed their beliefs that, to differing degrees, SL was an important part of developing character; however, others would say that this relationship has yet to be proven. Hart et al. (2008) indicated that many claims made regarding SL, such as its difference from community service and the components necessary to make it successful, were not backed by empirical evidence. Although they expressed that researchers, theorists, and practitioners could strengthen what is known

about SL and its contribution to development, too many gaps in current research and theory prevented making a fair judgment on the effect SL has on character development.

Background synthesis. As viewed through the lens of the discussion of the history, definition, and purpose of SL, and its place in CE, four key concepts emerged. First, SL is not a new idea. It had theoretical roots at least as far back as John Dewey and practical roots that predated the beginning of World War II. Second, the common denominator for a practice to be recognized as SL was that it must contain both the component of a connection to academic learning objectives and the component of service. Third, a dual purpose to engaging in SL was demonstrated. That purpose was to stimulate academic learning through experiential learning and to stimulate moral development through the personal experience of service. Finally, SL was one of the key action components of CE.

Engaging in SL. To engage in SL, two primary areas should be regarded. First, the elements of and steps in implementation of SL should be considered. Second, aspects of evaluation of the SL project should be examined.

Implementation. Implementation of SL includes two key components, the elements of implementation and the steps of implementation.

Elements. The experts at the National Service-Learning Cooperative (1999) have outlined the following essential elements for quality SL:

1. Service projects have clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines and involve students in constructing their own knowledge.

2. Projects engage students in challenging cognitive and development tasks.

3. Teachers use assessment to enhance student learning and to document and evaluate how well they have met standards.

4. Service tasks have clear goals, meet genuine community needs, and have significant consequences.

5. Teachers use formative and summative evaluation in a systematic evaluation.

6. Students have a voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating their service project.

7. Diversity is valued and demonstrated by participants, practice, and outcomes.

8. Service projects foster communication, interaction, and partnerships with the community.

9. Students are prepared for all the aspects of their work.

10. Students reflect before, during, and after service. Reflection encourages critical thinking and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.

11. Multiple methods acknowledge, celebrate, and validate students' service work. (p. 18)

In addition, Kielsmeier (2011) added the elements of duration and intensity as sufficient

to meet specified outcomes.

Mowry (2008) highlighted the importance of reflection as an essential element.

She characterized high-quality reflection as: (a) purposeful; (b) structured; (c) combining

concrete, affective, conceptual and active features; (d) helping students connect

academics, content, and values; and (e) occurring before, during, and after the project. In

contrast to Mowry, Hart et al. (2008) claimed that their review of empirical studies

showed little evidence to support the idea that structured reflection was essential for

students to benefit from SL activities. Additionally, Hart et al. argued that curriculum

integration of service did not show benefits over participating in community service,

which has no academic connection or objectives. Finally, they also questioned the

indispensability of student voice and choice in their service projects.

Steps. Winings' (2002) design for SL began with five necessary steps before the program. They included:

- creating a clear administrative structure to manage the program,

- developing community support for SL,

- formulating a training program for faculty and staff,

- networking with community organizations and sharing program expectations, and

- developing a service culture in the school and community. (p 132)

Knox et al. (2003) considered the steps to implementing SL specific to students and the classroom. They described the implementation steps as: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration. Their step-by-step guide included detailed instructions for accomplishing each step.

The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) has developed a graphic to show the three phases of an SL project and the implementation steps for each phase. The three phases of SL are: preservice, service, and postservice. During the preservice segment, those involved in the project must (a) identify the academic environment, (b) identify genuine needs, (c) establish the learning objectives, (d) develop ownership, and (e) plan and prepare. During the actual service, the students must conduct meaningful service and observe the impact. Postservice, the students should evaluate the experience, demonstrate new understanding, and attempt to go deeper with the project as they begin the process anew.

Berger (2010) included many of the same elements as the NYLC, but described them as five interdependent stages of (a) investigation, (b) preparation and planning, (c) action, (d) reflection, and (e) demonstration. Berger clarified that although each stage

might be explained separately, often they were experienced simultaneously. In the first stage of investigation, a personal analysis of the students' resources, talents, interests, and skills, and a social analysis of the community's needs was incorporated. In the second stage of preparation and planning, students thought critically about how best to match what they learned from their personal and social analyses to shape their service projects. The third stage, action, could occur over a period of a year, months, weeks, or a day, but for this step, the important value was to create continuity. The fourth stage, reflection, was considered essential for SL. In the reflection stage, students "put cognitive, social and emotional aspects of experience into the larger context of self, the community and the world" (p. 17). Reflection intentionally might be structured, but could occur spontaneously. The final demonstration stage included presenting the actions and learning through various media such as in-class presentations, letters to the editor, photo displays, and performances.

Evaluation. Brown and Lerman (2008) described program evaluation as "a process that is designed to support program planning and implementation in real-world schools" (p. 137). Process evaluation and outcome evaluation were the two necessary types of program evaluation described. Process evaluation included reviews of planning and implementation and whether they were conducted effectively. Outcome evaluation was used to examine whether target audiences were addressed and whether their needs were met in the program. Their logic model for program evaluation started with the question, "What should we evaluate and why?" (p. 147), and included a seven-step process of determining assumptions, resources, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. They also described a case study of a high school and named the assessment

tools used to evaluate the success of its SL program. The tools included (a) a Community Service Attitude Survey, (b) unit rubrics and student commentaries, (c) surveys, (d) department activity summaries, (e) disciplinary statistics records, (f) academic achievement indicators, and (g) an Annual National Service-Leader School Progress Report.

Winings (2002) delineated four essential questions for the evaluation of a SL program. Evaluation should include: "Were the projects appropriate for our school, students, staff, program and community?; What area(s) need(s) more improvement?; Did the SL program meet our needs effectively?; and How can we effectively measure the results of our program?" (p. 166).

These questions were aligned with Brown and Lerman's (2008) logic model in addressing what should be evaluated and why.

DeRoche (2004) developed two instruments for the evaluation of a SL program that included a teachers' perceptions survey and a program impact questionnaire. Rather than provide specific evaluation tools, the Learn and Serve Clearinghouse, in conjunction with RMC Research experts, developed *The Educator's Guide to Service Learning Program Evaluation,* which takes the educator step by step through how to design and implement an individualized program evaluation.

Engagement in SL synthesis. Three components are necessary to maximize the effect of an SL program on students: (a) alignment of essential elements, (b) implementation of each consecutive step of the process, and (c) evaluation of the process and outcomes. Adherence to the elements and steps allows for implementation consistent with established purposes of SL. The evaluation of SL could be conducted with

commercially available evaluation tools or through on-site developed tools, but must include evaluation of effectiveness in achieving each of the desired outcomes.

Context. The context of SL to be addressed includes three distinct considerations. First, the implementation of SL as a part of teacher preparation programs was reviewed. Second, the saturation of SL as a teaching-learning model in Mexico was explored. Finally, the promotion of moral development in a challenging social climate was examined.

In teacher preparation programs. The inclusion of SL in universities had risen due to an increasing acceptance of the benefits for students of using this teaching-learning model (Hesser, 1995). At the same time, Furco (2001) recognized that, for SL as pedagogy to be accepted more widely at research universities, campus administrators needed to view SL as a means to achieving the campus academic goals rather than as a separate, stand-alone program.

Service learning as part of teacher preparation programs has been found in a particular niche for the benefits for teachers in training. In the area of multicultural education, SL in teacher preservice programs has been shown as helpful for introducing teachers to those different from themselves and for connecting with a disenfranchised community (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Sulentic Dowell, 2008). Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray (2003) also found that preservice teachers who participated in SL improved in their ability to problem solve and think critically while expressing greater satisfaction with their quality of learning. Lawrence and Butler (2010) found benefits for preservice teachers in SL projects which included: (a) grappling with student understanding, (b) requiring teachers to obtain extensive knowledge of their students, (c) concentrating on

how well students are learning, and (d) understanding that making learning relevant

benefits students in various ways.

In addition to this extensive list of benefits, Donnison and Itter (2010) added

various personal and professional benefits for preservice teachers. They identified three

personal benefits of enjoyment, personal reward, and motivation for future involvement.

Professionally, the benefits included: (a) development of skills and attitudes for teaching,

(b) understanding of teachers' work, (c) affirmation of career choice, (d) socio-cultural

understandings, (e) understanding the role of community groups and volunteers, and (f)

developing community connections. Finally, Donnison and Itter saw SL as an

opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop their identity as teachers.

In Mexico. A lack of SL use in Mexico seemed apparent. The country's federal

education website did not include the term SL. A search of literature revealed only one

article documenting SL use in a Mexican middle school (Schneller, 2008) and one

conference paper presentation documenting the use of SL at the university level (Isla

Esquivel & Pacheco Pinzon, 2010). This lack of documentation did not mean that SL is

not used in some schools; however, it does indicate that SL in Mexico was not being

documented and researched.

The private, not for profit, university system of the Tec of Monterrey, which has

31 university campuses and 40 high schools throughout Mexico, did not mention SL as a

didactic technique used in the system-wide educational model. Other than these three

documents, no mention of use of SL in Mexican schools was found; however, numerous

cases were documented of American universities participating in SL with their students in

benefit of Mexican people living within Mexico (Camacho, 2004; Florman, Just, Naka

Peterson, & Seaba, 2009; Metcalf, 2010; Simonelli, Earle, & Story, 2004). Most of these are projects in which the students traveled to Mexico to provide a service (Camacho, 2004, Florman et al., 2009; Simonelli et al., 2004). One of the projects was conducted in the university's home state in benefit of those in Mexico needing a wheelchair (Metcalf, 2010).

One supposition from Schneller (2008) regarding the lack of SL in Mexico was that the country's traditional teaching pedagogy still hinged too much on lecture/presentation models of teaching to allow for the use of experiential learning strategies. With the educational reform movement in Mexico in the last 15 years, some question existed whether the necessary political conditions will be present for the transformation of the traditionalist public school system (Tatto, 1999).

Moral development and current social challenges in Mexico. Borba (2001) defined moral intelligence as "the capacity to understand right from wrong; it means to have strong ethical convictions and to act on them so that one behaves in the right and honorable way" (p. 4). Although moral atmosphere has been in decline, moral intelligence could be learned. From this idea, two distinct issues might be involved with the relationship between moral development and a negative moral social climate. The first issue is how to educate for moral development in a negative moral environment in the greater community. The second is how moral education affects the greater community.

Bandura (1977) developed social learning theory, which included modeling as one of the origins of behavior. The current modeling in Mexico in the greater community had enormous challenges to families and schools as crime rates have soared due to organized

crime (Shirk, 2010) and have led to the American government posting warnings for

American citizens traveling in Mexico. Questions have arisen of how to educate for

moral development when the models in the community are not positive. Lies, Bronk, and

Mariano (2008) stated that it is widely recognized that community has an essential role in

the moral development of young people. Nucci (2009) posited that two forms of social

regulation of behavior exist: morality and convention. Morality might be learned and

was linked to moral intelligence (Borba, 2001). Convention is the norm that society

members established as acceptable (Nucci, 2009). Marrella (2009) described the high

rate of student cheating on tests and plagiarizing as linked to this phenomenon of

convention.

Taboada (1998) believed that moral education could and should have a positive

effect on the greater community. In addressing the issue of organized crime, he boldy

asserted, "Moral education is the context in which we can best conceive the framework of

our crime prevention policy" (p. 41). He maintained that teaching people to deal with

and resolve issues of antisocial behavior was the best way to prevent crime. Nucci

(2009) confirmed Taboada's conviction that schools can have a positive influence on

children's moral development. Nucci indicated two important areas in which a school

can shape the moral development of students: through the overall social, emotional, and

moral climate of the school, as well as through schools and teachers responding to issues

of discipline and classroom management.

Context synthesis. The literature discussion of the context of SL resulted in

several conclusions. The inclusion of SL as a part of teacher preparation programs has

been reported almost universally as successful in developing teachers' sensitivity to

students and their learning needs. In Mexico, opportunities are apparent to stimulate educational institutions' leaders to engage in SL and to conduct research specific to Mexico regarding SL implementation. Currently, because of the violence and crime in Mexico, it is possible that moral development is negatively affected by societal factors; however, this cultural awareness indicates a greater urgency of encouraging moral development through participation in SL.

Teacher's Role in Education

The teacher's role in education was examined. First, the teacher's role as it relates to knowledge of instructional practices derived from academic knowledge and experiential knowledge was reviewed. Second, teacher attitudes toward the teaching and learning process were explored, particularly in relationship to teacher investment in the process. Finally, teacher attitudes toward whole child development were addressed in the literature. These three areas of a teacher's role in education might overlap, but they will be discussed separately to understand how one may contribute or subtract from another in the teaching process.

Knowledge of instructional practices. Teachers gained knowledge of instructional practices primarily through two sources. The most obvious source was the academic knowledge they gained through their teacher preparation courses in college and later professional development courses. The less obvious but no less important pathway was the acquiring of experiential knowledge through actual teaching and lived experiences of teachers. This experiential knowledge also was developed through teacher collaboration.

Academic knowledge. One important factor for teachers to be effective in the classroom was for them to receive content-specific preservice training followed by content-specific professional development (Brandt, 1999). Brandt indicated that this requirement was applicable across different subject matter such as teaching math or critical thinking skills. Trilling and Fadel (2009) also added a challenge for quality professional development as they noted "In all successful transformations, professional development of both new and practicing teachers is a top priority of educational leaders" (p. 124). In their study regarding technological pedagogical content knowledge, Harris and Hofer (2011) suggested that the gap between the desire to use certain pedagogical strategies and the actual use of them was connected to the lack of teachers' knowledge of how to implement the strategies.

Experiential knowledge. Experiential knowledge for a teacher could be derived from many different sources. Lawrence and Butler (2010) considered SL projects in preservice training to provide numerous benefits for expanding teachers' knowledge of the teaching process, particularly as related to understanding students and their needs. Two kinds of collaboration were contributors to growth in teachers' experiential knowledge. First, teachers who worked together collaboratively grew in professional knowledge (DuFour et al., 2008). These authors named this kind of collaboration a professional learning community. Teachers learn from one another about class planning, instructional techniques, assessment, enrichment, classroom management, and relating to students. A second kind of collaboration occurred when teachers worked together with others beyond their own school as it opens a "whole gamut of new skills, relationships, and orientations" (Fullan, 2001, p. 264).

In addition, when teachers worked in an environment of shared leadership, they grew in knowledge and experiences as teacher-leaders (Lambert, 2003). Leadership experiences from the school environment were applied in the classroom as well as in the entire school environment. Finally, teachers tended to grow in knowledge from their experience of relating to the school culture. Schein (2004) indicated that the culture of an organization tended to be changed slowly and most of its members tended to adapt to the culture of the institution. This meant that teachers, especially new teachers, had the opportunity to acquire significant experiential knowledge as they began to integrate into the school's culture.

Ownership in the teaching-learning process. According to Rainer and Matthews (2002), "ownership could be described as the linchpin, or a central and cohesive element, of knowledge construction" (p. 22). They also acknowledged that the issue of ownership was complex. Bruyere, Nash, and Mbogella (2011) pointed out that teacher ownership of the teaching-learning process of environmental education has been measured by examining four characteristics of their relationship to that process. Those characteristics were (a) exploring the teachers' knowledge about issues, (b) their personal investment in issues, (c) their knowledge of consequences and behavior, and (d) their personal commitment to issue resolution. Bruyere et al. discussed the continuum of entry-level interest, ownership, and empowerment of teachers related to responsible behavior. They showed how teachers moved along this continuum in their teaching practice.

Having a voice and participating in the development and implementation of teaching-learning processes were two important factors identified in achieving teacher

ownership (Koster & Dengerink, 2008). Rainer and Matthews (2002) have shown

interest in the conditions necessary for promoting teacher ownership. Their research

resulted in the establishment of a framework for encouraging ownership in teacher

education. The three non-sequential phases of this framework included: (a) building

community, (b) exploring content, and (c) pursuing in-depth learning. The concept of

teacher ownership seems to suggest that teachers' dedication to and belief in their

professional activities not only was important but also might be shaped by implementing

certain strategies.

Developing the whole child. Gillies (2011) suggested that holistic education was

supported among feminists, liberal educators, and others and suggested that the idea of

holistic education was connected to social and emotional learning. The doubt remains,

however, about whether this type of education is within the teacher's role. Teachers

might hold contrasting opinions about their responsibility for a student's development.

Schultz et al. (2010) claimed that teachers followed school administration policies about

what were teachers' responsibilities and what was important in student development.

Most teachers would consider students' social and emotional development to be included

in their role as teacher if the administrators noted it as a priority in the school. Teachers

might work with students on academic achievement and social and emotional

development at the same time; however, this would not happen automatically without

administrative support.

Inclusion and academic success have also been linked to social and emotional

learning. Reicher (2010) claimed that teachers must be trained in social and emotional

learning to provide inclusive learning environments, to meet students' needs, and to allow

for learning. He specifically named SL as a social and emotional learning teaching strategy for promoting student engagement, building self-concept and self-esteem, and fostering collaboration and unity. All of these factors also were contributors to academic achievement. Denham and Brown (2011) named five associations of social and emotional learning with academic success: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, (d) responsible decision making, and (e) relationship/social skills.

Whole child development might be addressed under the category of character development. Chang and Muñoz (2006) investigated the impact of a particular education program, *The Child Development Project*, on teachers' self-assessment and student development. They found that the program had a positive effect on students and stated, "students need not only the academic and knowledge skills for their future, but they need to learn to become productive and caring citizens" (Chang & Muñoz, 2006, p. 48). They concluded that schools' leaders had an imperative to educate the whole child through a dual approach consisting of academic achievement goals and CE.

Summary

This literature review included examination of two theoretical frameworks, SL, and aspects of the teachers' role in the teaching-learning process. Empowerment theory, the first framework reviewed, included a definition of empowerment as the connection between the individual and larger society and the influence that the individual might have over outside forces. The forms of personal empowerment and empowering processes were discussed. The ethics of caring was then reviewed as a concept of increasing importance in light of emotional intelligence and human connections. The four major components of the ethics of caring and the two primary roles were delineated.

Three major areas of background of SL, engaging in SL, and context for SL were explored. The background of SL was discussed by addressing its history, definition, purpose, and place in CE. Although the definitions and roots of SL were varied, a consensus was noted that SL had a dual purpose of promotion of academic learning and development of empathy in students. SL was perceived as the practical part of CE where the ideas are put into action.

Two aspects of engaging in SL were considered. First, implementation was addressed. When participating in and planning for SL activities, the teacher must ensure that the activity or project includes the essential elements of SL and that the necessary steps are included. Second, evaluation of SL was addressed. The need for both process evaluation and outcome evaluation was established along with the essential questions to consider during evaluation.

Context for SL was then examined in teacher preparation programs, in Mexico, and within the current social challenges in Mexico. Literature showed that the use of SL in teacher preparation programs was helpful for teachers to become more reflective and aware of their students' needs. Lack of research was shown about use and documentation of SL practices in Mexico. Finally, the distinct challenges of attempting to participate in SL within the current environment of crime and violence in Mexico were discussed.

The teacher's role in education was the final area of the literature review. The importance of teachers obtaining both academic knowledge and experiential knowledge was examined. Discussion of teachers' ownership of their own teaching-learning process indicted that this important issue in schools was influenced by administration practices and strategies. The teacher's responsibility to the student as a whole child was the final

element of the teacher's role explored. Inclusion and academic success were important educational concepts that have been linked to holistic education through social and emotional learning or CE.

The breadth and depth of this literature review was a solid foundation for the understanding of the concepts pertinent to the current study. The theoretical considerations of empowerment theory and ethics of caring, understanding of SL, and clarification of teachers' role and responsibility in education were the basis for the interpretation of the qualitative study of teachers' and administrators' role in the implementation of SL.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion of the methods used for the action research study. First, a general description of action research methodology and the rationale for this choice of method is presented as appropriate to examine the experiences of teachers and administrators in planning and implementing a school-wide SL program at a Mexican middle school. Both a description of the school site for the action research study and information about the participants are provided. The methods section of this chapter contains a look at the research design, research questions, human subjects protection, instrumentation, data management, and data analysis.

The current action research was an examination of the High Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' (a) knowledge of the SL model upon which the school's SL program has been based, (b) views regarding their roles in student character formation through SL, and (c) feelings of ownership regarding the SL program.

One overarching research question and three subquestions are explored. The overarching question was: "How do teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School experience SL?" The three subquestions used to answer the overarching research question were:

RQ1. What is the High Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' knowledge of the SL model that serves as the foundation for the SL program that has been implemented school wide?

RQ2. What are the views of the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators regarding their role in the shaping of students' character through SL?

RQ3. What, if any, feelings of ownership do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators experience regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?

Research Design

An action research design was used for the study. The subjects of the study, teachers and administrators, were co-researchers in the action research study. Action research is designed to provide findings with practical applications that can be reviewed and tested by a greater public (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008). Sagor's (2000) definition of action research was: "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the 'actor' in improving and/or refining his or her actions" (p. 3).

According to Sagor (2000), action research is often used to "professionalize teaching" (p. 32) in addressing non-routine problems, considering multiple perspectives, building a professional knowledge base, and promoting accountability. This can be accomplished by utilizing qualitative data collection and analysis tools which deepen understanding of circumstances and motivation through informing the areas of meaning, context, and understanding of processes and causal relationships (James et al., 2008).

Herr and Anderson (2005) discussed six possibilities of the researcher's position on a continuum of insider to outsider. The second position from the left (insider) is the "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (p. 89). It contributes to "knowledge base, improved/critiqued practice, and professional/organizational transformation" (p. 90). The traditions for its use are: feminist consciousness-raising groups, inquiry/study groups, and teams. Action research was chosen as the research methodology for the current study

because of the possibility of the teachers' and administrators' participation as co-researchers in examining their own context and looking for practical applications to professionalize the SL practice at the school. This holds true to the *by* and *for* mentioned in the definition above.

Site

High Tec Middle School opened in 2007 with CE as one of its foundational principles. High Tec is a private middle school located in northern Mexico and is in the early stages of an SL program as part of its CE program. The seventh through ninth grade school, which had a population of 195 students in 2011, is located in Zacatecas, Mexico. It is part of a prestigious private school system in Mexico that includes 31 university campuses, 40 high schools, and 7 middle schools. The school leaders have been growing the CE program since the school's foundation.

In August 2010, the school's newest CE initiative was implemented: a formal SL component to the academic requirements in each of the three grades. Based on the school's experiences in 2010, the SL program was redefined in 2011 to include a distinct SL project for each grade. The SL project for seventh grade was related to biology and environmental education classes. The eighth grade project was a component of the civics class, and the ninth grade project was linked to the English as a Second Language class.

Participants

The participants/co-researchers for the study were the 12 teachers and administrators at the school site who have been involved in the SL program. Three participants are administrators; nine are teachers. One of the nine teachers also coordinates the SL program. The participants included three men and eight women, all

between 23 and 56 years old. None of these educators studied to be teachers; participants

had studied law, accounting, chemical engineering, sociology, chemistry, Spanish,

medicine, English, business administration, or communications. One of the

administrators was involved in the SL project because he coordinates extra-curricular

activities. Another administrator also teaches two sections of eighth grade Civics. As

principal of the school, I (the researcher) was the third administrator and was a

participant as I am also involved in implementing the SL program. Collectively, these

group members had a range of 1 to 23 years of teaching experience.

Human Subjects Considerations

Several measures were taken to ensure the protection of human subjects. All of

the participants/co-researchers completed the human subjects investigator education

tutorial to learn of necessary protection considerations. In addition, the study was

designed as action research to include the subjects as co-researchers to better understand

their own experiences as they developed and implemented the SL program. The

inclusion of the subjects as co-researchers was used to promote the transparency of the

entire process, to increase trustworthiness of the study, and to allow teachers and

administrators the opportunity to co-construct understanding from the data. All

participants were given the opportunity to participate or opt out of the action research

study. Additionally, the participants were provided two separate informed consent forms

explaining the non-evaluative and voluntary nature of their participation. One informed

consent form was used for participation in the online questionnaire and a separate

informed consent form was used for participation in the focus group. Each

researcher/participant answered the anonymous online questionnaire.   They were given

written instructions for answering the questionnaire when they returned their signed

consent form. The principal, who was the primary researcher, reviewed only the

aggregate data. The focus group was co-facilitated by participants using the focus group

prompts previously established by the action research team. The link for the online

questionnaire is included in Appendix D. No track ID feature was activated for the

questionnaire so personal identification of participants was not allowed.

Instrumentation

Many ways to collect information can be used for a qualitative study (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2010). Based on the data collection criteria chosen, the data set included online

questionnaires completed by each of the participating teachers and administrators and a

focus group including the entire action research team.

This action research data was collected from two sources, using two methods of

data collection: first, an anonymous online questionnaire followed by a co-facilitated

focus group. Various sources and data collection methods were chosen to permit

triangulation of data and corroboration of findings (Sagor, 2000).

Questionnaire. Each teacher and administrator was asked to complete an online

questionnaire after one of the on-site service activities that they supervised. The

questionnaire included three open-ended prompts:

1. How did the on-site service activity compare with what I understand about the
   SL model we are using in this program?

2. Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, do I see
   myself as promoting CE through this SL experience? How?

3. Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, how do I see my voice represented in the project?

Each of the prompts was geared to solicit self-reflections from the teachers and administrators to provide data about their knowledge of the SL model, their view of their role in CE through SL, and their feelings of ownership about the SL program. The self-reflection prompts were validated through review by a qualified expert in the field. The expert has a doctorate in education with an emphasis on moral development. As a result of the review, the wording in the third question was adjusted to use the word *voice* instead of the original term, *point of view*.

The questionnaire also included three self-rating questions related to how teachers and administrators self-evaluate their degree of knowledge regarding SL, their level of impact on character building through SL, and their ownership of the SL project. The prompts were designed for participants to rate themselves on a scale from 1 (*completely agree*) to 5 (*completely disagree*) for the following statements:

1. I have sufficient knowledge about SL to adequately implement a SL project with my students.

2. I think that our SL project has a positive impact on students' character development.

3. I feel that I have played an important part in the development and/or implementation of the SL project.

Each of the three open-ended and self-rating prompts was designed to address one of the three subquestions, respectively; however, it was understood that knowledge of SL and views regarding the teachers' role in character development through SL might have an inherent relationship with the ownership of the SL project. It was useful to address them separately to be able to understand the impact that each may play on ownership.

Focus group. A co-facilitated focus group was conducted using the following prompts:

1. Please describe your experience working with SL.

2. Describe the process of how your school got started in SL and how the program evolved.

3. What do you think a teacher's role is regarding the shaping of students' character through SL?

4. What do you believe is the purpose for SL?

5. How do you think SL projects should be developed?

6. What motivates you to do SL with your students?

7. What are some of the outcomes that you have seen in your students or in those benefiting from the service as a result of SL projects?

8. Describe your students' learning from their SL projects.

9. How has involvement in SL with your students affected you?

10. How have you been influenced regarding service and social change from your experience with SL?

11. Given the current security climate in Mexico, what do you think the role of SL should be in schools?

12. Would you recommend SL to other schools? What advice would you give them about implementation?

In Table 1, each of the focus group prompts is shown as linked to one aspect of the research question.

Table 1

Research Variable-Focus Group Prompt Correlation

Research variable (subquestions)	Focus group prompts	Online questionnaire prompts
1) How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?	1, 4, 10, 12	1, 4
2) How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?	3, 6. 7	2, 5
3) How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	3, 6

The focus group prompts were each designed to understand one of the three variables expressed in the research question. The prompts about on the teachers' and administrators' knowledge regarding SL were directed at understanding previous experience and their beliefs about what SL is and what can be accomplished with SL. The prompts regarding views on shaping students' characters were focused on whether the teachers believed SL affects students' character and how, which was linked to teachers' views about their roles in CE. Nine of the 12 prompts were directed at understanding teachers' and administrators' ownership of the SL program.

Table 2 shows the correlation between each of the variables that were examined, each focus group prompt that corresponds to the variables, and pertinent literature

relating to each. Some overlap exists between variables that each prompt was used to address because the issues of knowledge about SL and views on the role of the teachers in shaping character through SL could have a direct impact on the teachers' ownership of the SL project. This also explains why more questions were associated with the variable of teacher and administrator ownership. The focus group prompts were validated by review by a qualified expert in the field.

Table 2

Focus Group Prompts, Concepts, and their Literature Sources

Variable	Focus group questions	Literature sources
Knowledge of service learning	• Please describe your experience working with SL. • What do you believe is the purpose for SL? • How have you been influenced regarding service and social change from your experience with SL? • Would you recommend SL to other schools? What advice would you give them about implementation?	Berger, 2010; Mowry, 2008; Winings, 2002),
View of the teachers' role in the shaping of students' character?	• What do you think a teacher's role is regarding the shaping of students' character through SL? • What motivates you to do SL with your students? • What are some of the outcomes that you have seen in your students or in those benefiting from the service as a result of SL projects?	Cohen, 1999 ; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008

(continued)

Variable	Focus group questions	Literature sources
Ownership of the Service Learning Project	• Describe the process of how your school got started in SL and how the program evolved. • How do you think SL projects should be developed? • What motivates you to do SL with your students? • What are some of the outcomes that you have seen in your students or in those benefiting from the service as a result of SL projects? • Describe your students' learning from their SL projects. • How has involvement in SL with your students affected you? • How have you been influenced regarding service and social change from your experience with SL? • Given the current security climate in Mexico, what do you think the role of SL should be in schools? • Would you recommend SL to other schools? What advice would you give them about implementation?	Berger Kaye, 2010; Hiatt-Michael, 2008

Translation issues. The questionnaire and focus group were conducted in Spanish as all of those involved were native Spanish speakers. All of the data collection and analysis were completed in Spanish. After the analysis had been completed using the action research methodology of involvement of the co-researchers, the findings were translated into English. All translations are those of the researcher. The translation of the questionnaire questions and the focus group prompts were validated by a university English as a Second Language professor who is also a native Spanish speaker. The translations of the findings from Spanish to English were validated in the same manner. The researcher is a fluent Spanish speaker, validated through studying for a Master's degree in Mexico using only Spanish, over 13 years living in Mexico, and presentations

at more than 15 conferences/workshops to parents and teachers in Spanish. To further

ensure reliability of the Spanish in the transcript and translation of the findings, both were

reviewed by a university ESL professor who is a native Spanish speaker and who has

over 630 points on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Exam.

Data Management

All questionnaires were completed online. The aggregate data were available

through the online questionnaire program. After the aggregate data were copied into a

document, the online questionnaire responses were erased. Audio recordings of the focus

group were digitally recorded. The recording was transcribed. The recording, the

transcriptions, and the questionnaire aggregate data were stored digitally in a password-

protected computer and the transcripts and questionnaire data were also stored on paper.

The print documents were stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. No names

were included in the focus group transcriptions. These measures were to ensure

confidential treatment of the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). All recorded data, computer

files, and paper files will be destroyed after three years.

Data Collection Procedures

Each participant/co-researcher was asked to complete the online questionnaire.

When subjects signed the informed consent form, they were given instructions for the

online questionnaire including the link to begin the questionnaire. There were no

identifying characteristics for individual responses. The ID tracking feature of the

software was disabled. The questionnaires were completed first. After the allotted days

for answering the questionnaire, an aggregate report from the questionnaire software was

generated and the responses were deleted from the survey website. The focus group was

co-facilitated by members of the action research team. Each of the participants was given a list of the focus group prompts. The principal researcher and one of the action researchers in turn asked participants to respond as desired to the focus group prompts. Participants were asked to respond when they wanted to contribute. Often, the participants responded to each prompt in order around the table, with some responses coming out of the seating arrangement order of when a participant added something to another participant's response. The focus group discussion was digitally recorded and transcribed with no names included. Members of the action research team checked the transcription for accuracy. All translation was completed post-interpretation.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the following steps were taken: (a) organize data, (b) categorize the data, (c) interpret single instances, (d) identify patterns, and (e) synthesize and make generalizations based on the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In conjunction with the co-researchers of the action research study who chose to participate, the data were coded by creating categories, which emerged as responses for each of the research questions (Sagor, 2000). Responses for each prompt were analyzed for data that could be grouped into categories of responses. The categories were then compared against categories for the other focus group and questionnaire responses. The principal researcher coded the data with some participation by two of the action researchers. When coding, the action research team looked for data that were related to knowledge of SL, views about roles of teachers in developing students' character through SL, and ownership of the SL program in place in the school. Specifically, in the area of knowledge of SL, data were coded in the areas of (a) training provided by the school; (b)

duration, quality, and timing of that training; (c) self-learning regarding SL; (d) level of

self-identified knowledge about SL; and (e) experience in implementing SL. The first

three themes were predetermined by the action research team before coding based on

expected findings. Other themes were coded as they emerged.

In the area of views on the roles of teachers in developing students' character

through SL, the following themes were considered: (a) belief about responsibility to

develop character though SL, (b) belief about effectiveness of SL as a way to develop

students' character, (c) positive or negative experiences in using SL as a means to

develop character, and (d) other themes that emerged. These areas were determined as

they emerged during the coding process.

In the area of teacher and administrator ownership of the school SL program, data

were coded into the following themes: (a) level of self-identified ownership, (b) influence

of SL on teacher/administrator, (c) belief about appropriateness of SL in current security

climate in Mexico, (d) observed results of the use of SL, (e) motivation for SL, and (f)

others as they arose. These themes were identified during the coding process.

Similarly coded data were grouped together and the action research team prepared

a list of tentative findings. Finally, lessons learned from the action research study were

discussed (Creswell, 2007). Data coding and analysis were done in two sessions with the

action research team. The principal researcher brought preliminarily coded data to the

sessions. The two action researchers who participated in coding reviewed themes and

how data were coded and made suggestions for adjustments in the coding.

The action research team provided validity (James et al., 2008) of the findings by

discussing the degree to which the findings accurately reflected what they were trying to

express through their answers to the online questionnaire and focus group discussion. Additionally, they reviewed the findings to consider credibility, whether the findings would make sense to others, and reliability, whether these findings might transfer to another context.

Chapter 4: Findings

Restatement of Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current middle school action research was to examine the High

Tec Middle School teachers' and administrators' (a) knowledge of the SL model upon

which the school's SL program has been based, (b) views regarding their roles in student

character formation through SL, and (c) feelings of ownership regarding the SL program.

Restatement of Research Questions

To complete the purpose of research at High Tec Middle School in northern

Mexico in the development and implementation of a SL program, one overarching

research question and three subquestions were examined. The overarching question was:

How do teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School experience service

learning?

The three subquestions used in answering the overarching research question were:

RQ1. How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their

knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?

RQ2. How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their

views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?

RQ3. How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe

their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school

wide?

The three subquestions were chosen to explore the knowledge, beliefs, and

feelings of teachers and administrators regarding SL and the school's SL program.

Specifically, the influence of one or more of the components, or their interplay on the teachers' or administrators' participation in the SL project, was examined.

Summary of Research Design and Implementation

The current action research study involved the participation, as co-researchers and subjects, of the nine teachers and three administrators who implement the SL program at the High Tec Middle School. The researcher is the principal of the High Tec Middle School and one of the three administrators who participated in the study. As co-researchers, the administrators and teachers collaboratively designed the study and analyzed the study findings. As subjects, these individuals responded to an online questionnaire and participated in a focus group interview.

All 12 of the teachers and administrators consented to serve as subjects in the study by signing two separate informed consent agreements, one for completing an online questionnaire and the other for participating in a focus group. Eight of the 12 participants completed the online questionnaire and all 12 of the teachers and administrators participated in the focus group.

This chapter includes presentations of the data collected in response to the two study instruments (online questionnaire and focus group interview) and triangulations of that data. The findings for each of the study research questions are presented. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary of key findings.

Online Questionnaire Findings

The online questionnaire consisted of three open-ended prompts and three self-rating prompts (see Appendix E). Responses related to each prompt will be discussed in

the order they appeared on the questionnaire. Eight of the 12 subjects responded to the online questionnaire.

Questionnaire prompt 1. The first question was: "How did the on-site service activity compare with what I understand about the SL model we are using in this program?" Teachers' and administrators' knowledge of the SL model used by the school was explored by coding responses into three categories: (a) identifying elements of the SL program, (b) comparison of the SL model to practice, and (c) suggestions for improvement. Table 3 shows the three categories in column one, the number of responses related to each category in column two, and representative responses in column three.

Five of the eight respondents discussed the two primary elements in the school's SL program and identified learning objectives and service to others. Some of the responses were direct statements regarding the elements, such as, "Service learning is focused on learning through doing service." Other responses brought out these two elements as they discussed the on-site activity. One subject wrote,

…given that the students had the opportunity to transmit to other younger kids the knowledge they had obtained in one of their subjects, and with this opportunity, my students were able to learn many other things like: solidarity, understanding the work of teachers, empathy, generosity, and so forth.

Six of the eight respondents compared the actual service activity to the SL model. All six responses were positive. Respondents used words to describe the relationship of the two such as: "very well connected, goes hand in hand, similar, satisfying, closely

Table 3

Online Questionnaire Prompt 1

Category	# responses	Examples of language used
Identifying elements of the SL program	5	• "…knowledge learned…service to the community" • "Service learning is focused on learning through doing service." • "…the activities are intrinsically linked to learning objectives…achievements can be reached through this system of …quality service." • "The students that plan or develop the activities learn concrete knowledge from the subject involved in the program, and that way also reinforce abilities and live values. The students offer a service that simultaneously satisfies the needs of the community and contributes that the community can also learn and live their values. This is mutual learning." • "…given that the students had the opportunity to transmit to other younger kids the knowledge they had obtained in one of their subjects and with this opportunity my students were able to learn many other things like: solidarity, understanding the work of teachers, empathy, generosity, etc."
Comparison of program to practice	6	• "The way I understand it, it is very well connected to what we are doing in the middle school." • "I think our activity goes hand in hand with our model of SL because it has a structure that is implemented in various subjects and grades." • "Very similar." • "The activities that we have done to fulfill the SL program have been very satisfying." • "I think that the activities that we have done this year are more closely aligned with what I consider to be the model of SL." • "I think the success is in the details and the planning."

Category	# responses	Examples of language used
Suggestions for improvement	3	"We just need to include the parents." "We can be emphatic that activities that we are doing are intrinsically aligned with learning objectives." "It is important that the student sees exactly what is expected of him and that we motivate him."

aligned and success." No respondents indicated they felt that the actual service activity was not aligned with the school's SL model.

Three of the eight respondents identified at least one suggestion for improvement of the SL program. One of the suggestions was to include parents in the SL process. A second suggestion described the need to "be emphatic that activities that we are doing are intrinsically aligned with learning objectives." The final suggestion was to stress the need to motivate students and set clear expectations that they can understand.

Questionnaire prompt 2. The second question asked was, "Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, do I see myself as promoting CE through this SL experience? How?" The responses were categorized into three categories: (a) belief about responsibility to develop character through SL, (b) belief about effectiveness of SL to develop character, and (c) positive experiences using SL (see Table 4).

None of the eight respondents expressed a negative belief about their responsibility to develop character through SL. Five of the respondents described different forms of responsibility they felt in developing character through SL. This belief can be divided into three categories: (a) those who hold this belief for themselves

individually, (b) those whose belief is tied to responsibility to the educational institution, and (c) those whose belief is tied to their own individual fulfillment as they guide students' character development through SL. Three separate responses described an individual responsibility exercised by:

- Creating opportunities where students can act in favor of the community. Always making them aware that they are doing the activity only to receive a moral reward.

- Designing activities in my subject.

- Being a facilitator. I motivate and invite my students to reflect how the activities help them to be better people, and how they help to reinforce positive attitudes.

Table 4

Online Questionnaire Prompt 2

Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, do I see myself as promoting CE through this SL experience? How?		
Category	Number of Responses	Examples of Language Used
Belief about responsibility to develop character through SL	5	• "Creating opportunities where students can act in favor of the community. Always making them aware that they are doing the activity only to receive a moral reward." • "Designing activities in my subject." • "Being a facilitator. I motivate and invite my students to reflect how the activities help them to be better people, and how they help to reinforce positive attitude." • "I participate in an active manner with the activities that the school initiates." • "I love being able to promote CE in people to be a benefit to society in the future…being able to shape men and women with a great character of service toward themselves and the community. "
Belief about effectiveness of SL to develop character	8	• "Yes." • "Definitely."

(continued)

Category	Number of Responses	Examples of Language Used
Positive experiences using SL	3	• "Through these activities the kids really live the values that we promote in CE, values such as, responsibility, empathy, solidarity, honesty and respect. Each of the activities that is organized requires them to live and practice each of the values so that they can do the activity successfully". • "Because these SL activities are able to strengthen positive attitudes in students that reinforce values of character such as citizenship and respect." • "I think that I have seen students reflect on the importance of doing things for others. I have seen the kids express that they have seen people with poor attitudes and that they don't want to be like that. I have also seen the enthusiasm the kids have shown in preparing to share their knowledge with others."

These responses showed the individual teacher's or administrator's method of promoting character through SL. One subject expressed the responsibility felt to promote CE through SL by participating actively with school-wide SL initiatives. Another subject linked her belief about responsibility to promote CE to SL to her personal fulfillment in doing so: "I love being able to promote CE in people to be a benefit to society in the future…being able to shape men and women with a great character of service toward themselves and the community."

All eight of the respondents expressed their belief that they felt they were promoting CE through SL by either stating "yes" or "definitely." With these responses subjects seemed to show no doubt on this issue.

None of the eight respondents described negative experiences that they have had with SL. Three described specific positive experiences:

- Through these activities the kids really live the values that we promote in CE, values such as, responsibility, empathy, solidarity, honesty, and respect. Each of the activities that is organized requires them to live and practice each of the values so that they can do the activity successfully.

- Because these SL activities are able to strengthen positive attitudes in students that reinforce values of character such as citizenship and respect.

- I think that I have seen students reflect on the importance of doing things for others. I have seen the kids express that they have seen people with poor attitudes and that they don't want to be like that. I have also seen the enthusiasm the kids have shown in preparing to share their knowledge with others.

Questionnaire prompt 3. The third question asked, "Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, how do I see my voice represented in the project?" The different forms in which respondents see their voice represented were examined (see Table 5).

The ways in which teachers and administrators saw their voice represented varied widely with only one or two responses. Examples of the responses follow:

- As teachers, at the middle school level, our voice is reflected in the suggestions of activities that we give to the students, in the motivation that we give them and in the particular focus that each teacher gives to the project. At the same time allowing the students to have their own voice and freedom in planning. The teacher's voice always permeates the activity.

- As a voice of initiative.

- As someone who is taken into consideration, where my opinion counts and is valuable.

- As a teacher that pushes and guides students to do these activities and who is primarily responsible for guiding students in this learning process…I am responsible to guide and motivate them to do a good job.

- I see myself or how I am reflected in the project. I see that I give all of my positive essence for the good of others.

- I consider that in the school, my voice and the voice of everyone is always listened to and taken into consideration. There are spaces for this and this permits me to express myself and to give my point of view to develop the SL activities.

- I feel that I have been able to see that the importance of doing service has been transmitted to the students.

Table 5

Online Questionnaire Prompt 3

Category	# responses
Being taken into consideration/suggestions listened to	3
Motivating students	2
Personal initiative	1
Focus each teacher gives to the project	1
I am reflected	1
My positive essence	1
In the importance of SL for our students	1
Permitting students' voice to be heard	1

One of the respondents discussed the objectives of SL, but did not address the issue of voice. The different ways in which the subjects saw their voice reflected were: (a) in personal initiative, (b) in motivating students, (c) in the focus each teacher gives to the project, (d) in a reflection of herself, (e) in leaving her positive essence, (f) in transmitting the importance of SL to students, (g) in letting students' voices be heard, and (h) in being taken into consideration and having their suggestions listened to. Only in this final category of suggestions being considered or listened to were at least three respondents included.

Questionnaire prompt 4. Prompts four through six of the online questionnaire were self-rating statements in which the respondent chose a position on a scale from 1 (*completely agree*) to 5 (*completely disagree*). Prompt four was: "I have sufficient knowledge about SL to adequately implement an SL project with my students." Two of the respondents chose "completely agree." Four of the respondents choose "agree." Two of the respondents chose "neutral" (see Figure 1). Seventy-five percent of the subjects
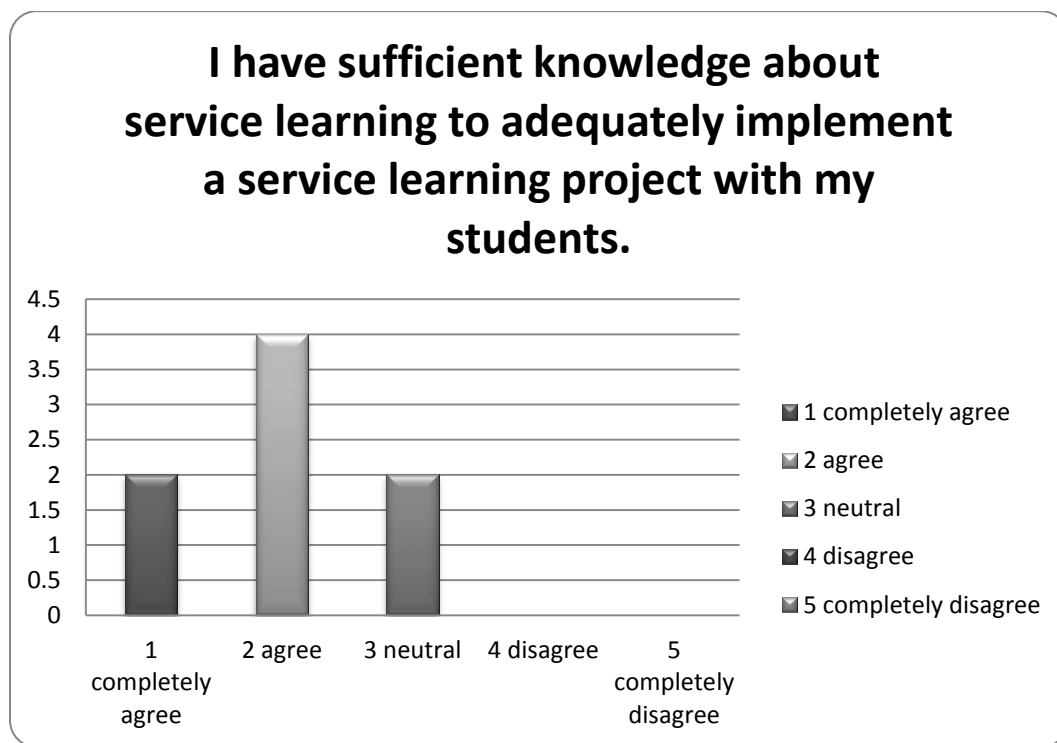
Figure 1. Prompt 4.

expressed a sufficient knowledge of SL adequately to implement SL projects with their students. Twenty-five percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. None of the subjects expressed that they did not have the knowledge to implement adequately an SL project with their students.

Questionnaire prompt 5. Prompt five of the online questionnaires was: "I think that our SL project has a positive impact on students' character development." Six respondents chose "completely agree." One respondent chose "agree." One respondent chose "disagree," as shown in Figure 2. Of the respondents, 87.5% were in agreement that their SL projects have a positive impact on their students' character development; 12.5% disagreed with the statement.
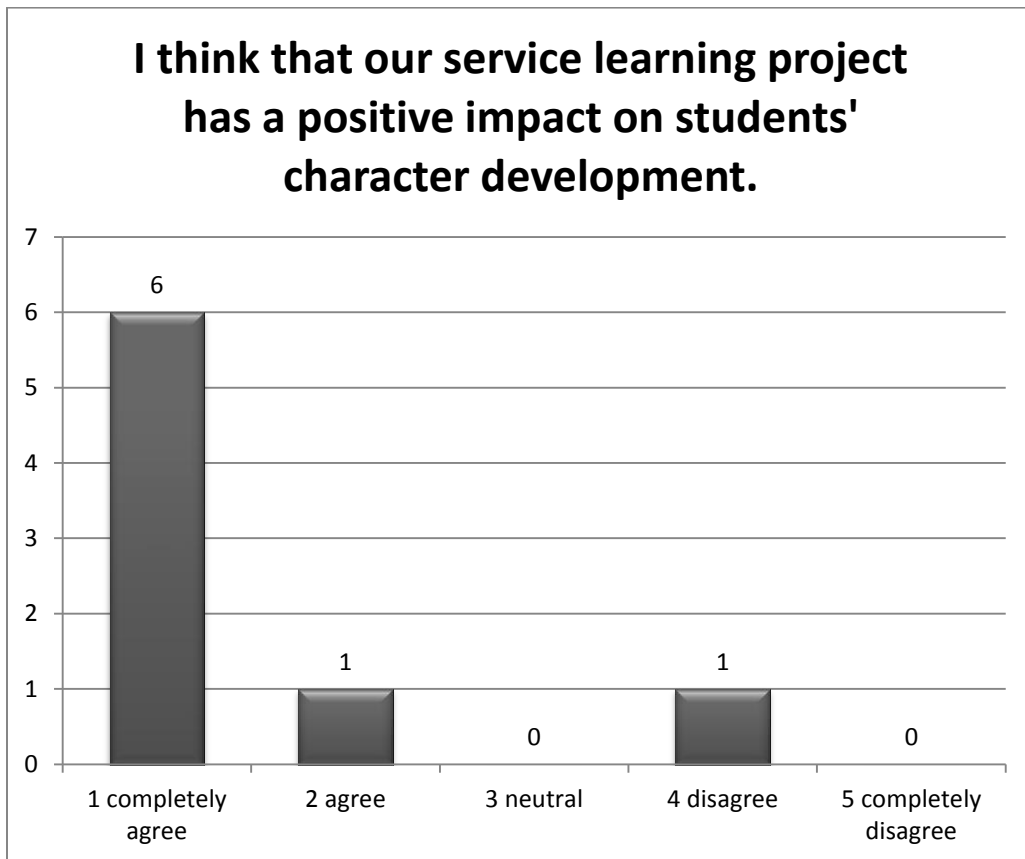
Figure 2. Prompt 5.

Questionnaire prompt 6. Prompt six of the online questionnaire was: "I feel that I have played an important part in the development and/or implementation of the SL project." Five of the respondents answered "completely agree" with this statement. Three of the respondents chose "agree" (see Figure 3). One hundred percent of the

respondents expressed that they agree with the statement that they have played an important part in the development and/or implementation of the SL project.
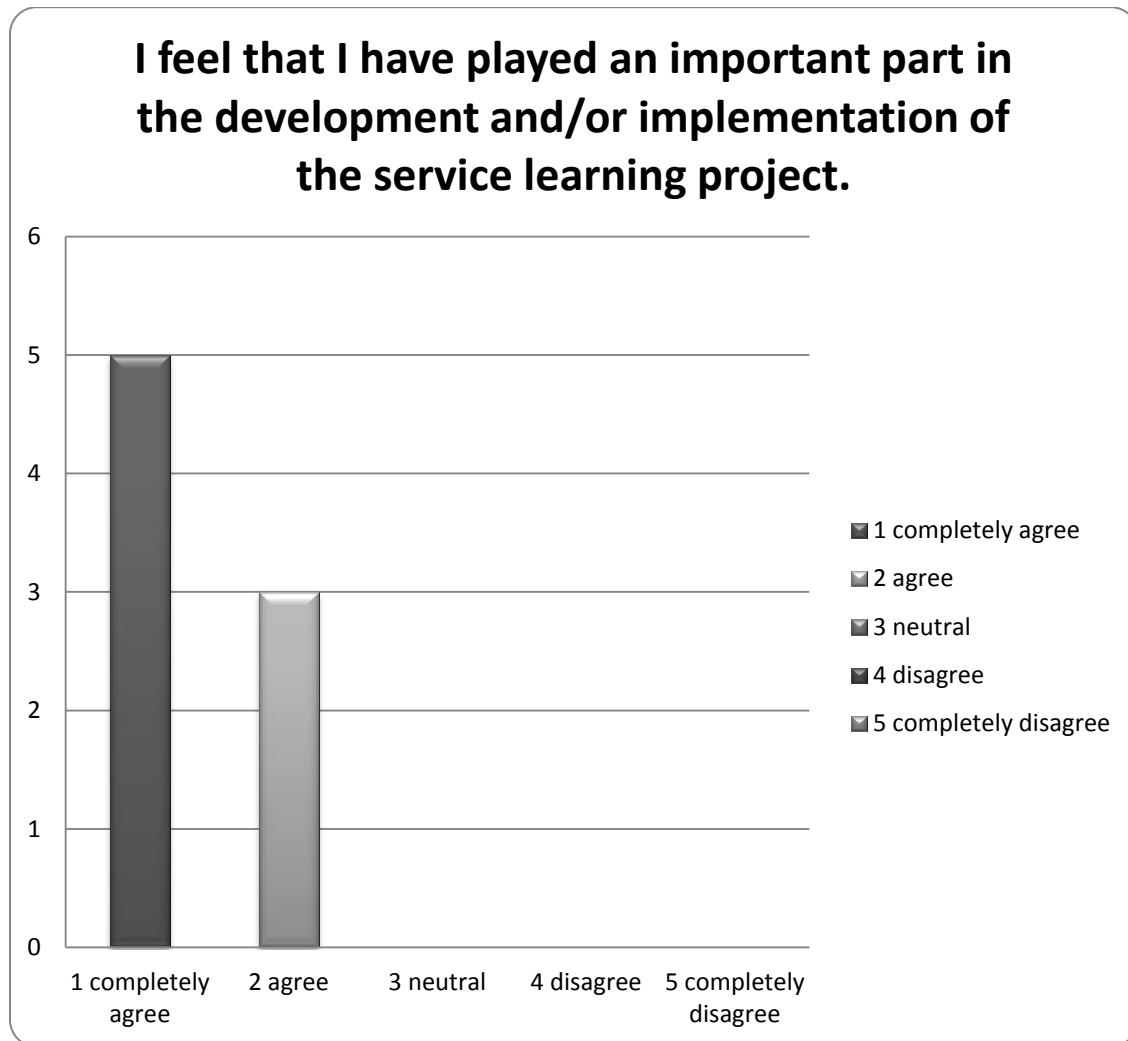
Figure 3. Prompt 6.

Focus Group Findings

Findings from the focus group are presented first with the data obtained from each prompt and then according to the findings in general. All 12 of the subjects commented during the focus group, but each subject did not comment on each of the prompts.

Focus group prompt 1. Focus group prompt one was: "Please describe your experience working with SL." The experiences working with SL described all related to

students and their development or changes in the areas of attitudes, values, and

knowledge (see Table 6).

Table 6

Focus Group Prompt 1

Attitudes	Values	Knowledge
• Students' attitudes change over time.	• Students live civics through practical experiences.	• Feedback is important for students and teachers.
• Students see a different reality.	• Students live their feelings	• Students learn over time in the phases of the project.
• Students understand that they are not better than those they serve; they just have a different reality.	• Students continue to develop their values such as a sense of generosity and learning to give.	• Students learn about teaching, preparing a class and about not underestimating their students.
• Students see they can learn from those they serve.		• Students transmit what they have learned.
• Students demonstrate enthusiasm for they SL project.		

Attitudes. Five areas of growth in students' attitudes were mentioned. First,

students' attitudes change over time and it is necessary to take actions regarding negative

attitudes that arise.

> If we saw, in the beginning, the students' desire to go the first time and the last
> time… At least in my group they didn't want to participate any more. They say,
> "No. How lame. What's the point?" When I hear, "What's the point." I stop and
> stop everything the kids are doing and say…

The second and third points are directly related. Teachers and administrators identified

their students witnessing the different reality in which other kids live and accepting that

people who have less are not less, just different. This was considered an important aspect

of their experience with SL.

> Also the last time that the students prepared fruit for the kids…They were serving
> a little…They were saving the rest for themselves…They're not used to serving
> others or giving what they have. Probably because when they get home they
> always see a full fruit bowl.

> …All of this is a change of perspective. They have to learn that it is another
> reality. One isn't better or worse. It is only another reality that exists and they
> got to learn that it exists.

The fourth point expressed is that students can learn from those they are serving.

> We have got to change the mentality that you're going to give what you have and
> start to absorb what they give. In a lot of things our kids have learned how, when
> the children are given a cup of fruit, they say thank you. The child says please.
> The child shakes your hand and says thanks for coming…things our students take
> for granted.

Finally, teachers and administrators have experienced students' enthusiasm for their SL

projects.

> …and I think they learn and this is that, as with any project, they have a lot of
> enthusiasm. The important thing is to motivate them to give and that they do
> things with enthusiasm. But I think that the satisfaction they obtain…

> *Values.* Subjects identified three areas in which students' values were influenced

by SL: (a) living civics, (b) living their feelings, and (c) developing values. The idea of

living civics through practical experiences was mentioned more than any other concept.

Teachers, all well as students, were considered to live civics.

> I have considered it as a situation in which students, and teachers also, in a certain
> way live civics because a lot of times in class we give theory or we tell them how
> they should behave or how they should act, but the fact of living it and doing it
> gives them a different perspective of how they should be in society and in social
> experiences. It's something practical.

> It's not the same to teach on paper what the civic spirit is as when it comes from
> them.

I believe that there is where the value is and, in the end, life is like that. You leave college knowing a lot of things, but in life you confront very different things.

A second important area of values development described is students living their feelings:

My experience is the kids living their feelings. This is a reflection of their feelings, a reflection of who they are. They share the moment of doing their SL…You can see the empathy, the anger, the frustration, wanting to say things, wanting to stay quiet. This is how things are measured, their feelings in whatever situation. So, they live and manage their feelings. This is my experience.

Finally, students continue to develop their values. Most prominent of these values mentioned is a sense of generosity or a willingness to give. They mention that some students give because of pity and others have trouble giving:

As far as values in education and all of that, what happens is their perspective is changed. It's that I see that they are used to giving. It's that I have things and I'm sorry that you don't.

I also had some students the last time that prepared fruit for the children and they were being stingy serving little to the kids and saving half of the fruit. So I arrived and said, "Serve it all. Ok." And they wanted to save some to eat themselves. But I didn't say, "How selfish." I only said, "No, share it. Serve them. Serve them." But I noticed that it wasn't easy for them. They're not used to serving or giving what they have…That's what I realized. So we had to involve them in this so they could learn that giving is a beautiful thing.

Knowledge. The final category of experiences in implementing SL described by teachers and administrators is knowledge. The subjects discussed four important aspects of knowledge. They discussed the importance of feedback from the teacher and from the students in the SL activity. They also discussed how they saw the evolution of the learning over time in the different phases of the project:

And also that the same students, their experiences were varied each time we went. The first time, they were super sensitive, wanting to give everything, really touched. The second time, there were situations where they had more confidence

than in other situations. And the third time, I told them they had to handle this and that everything isn't milk and honey and it is really when they're learning.

The subjects also described how students learned about teaching, preparing a class, and about not underestimating their students:

> Seeing what the situation was, they saw it wasn't easy. What we are doing as teachers in classroom management is not easy. Many of the students have said they want to be teachers…but this signs need to be measured and sadly take you to a context to be measured and how to handle the situation can been seen in a positively or negatively and can be beneficial for the future.

> They face a situation where they feel frustrated because they can't control a child that is very unruly and then they value, up to a certain point, the work of a teacher.

Finally, subjects described how their students transmitted their knowledge to others:

> I really like activities more than anything because I see the kids dealing with situations where they can transmit what they have learned to others.

> **Focus group prompt 2.** Focus group prompt two was: "Describe the process of how your school got started in SL and how the program evolved." The combined understanding of several of the subjects told the story of the school's initiation and evolution in SL. They seemed to tell the story together:

> I remember when we started, the first thing we did was go to the Chiripa. Right? We went to a school that was chosen that a teacher proposed. We all went.

> How did it come about?

> The objective was to strengthen the pillar of CE. We were looking for something to do so they could work on CE. We had been talking about values but how would we apply them. Someone suggested the idea of _____ who was working…

> She had been working…

> She had taken one of her groups to a kindergarten to throw them a Christmas party. It was suggested from there that we could all do service there to physically improve the school. It was a great activity because all of the students participated. They fixed bathrooms, even cleaned bathrooms, and painted tables. Parents were even involved because a group of moms took lunches and shared with the kids.

It was really great. That's how it started and it kept evolving until it became a little more systematized and the activities were structured by subjects or areas.

We are still looking for annual projects of this type.

The conversation began with one person remembering the first service activity that took place at the school. Then, someone discussed the objective for doing the activity. Next, someone discussed how the school-wide activity grew from a service activity that one teacher was doing with one group of students. Then, a participant described the first school-wide service activity and added how the SL program had evolved from there. Finally, someone made a comment about the future of the SL program by stating that more projects of this type are needed. The description given by the subjects can be visualized as a process with various contributors (see Figure 4).

Beginning of program

Objective

Grew out of existing activity

Description of SL activity

Evolution of program

Future needs
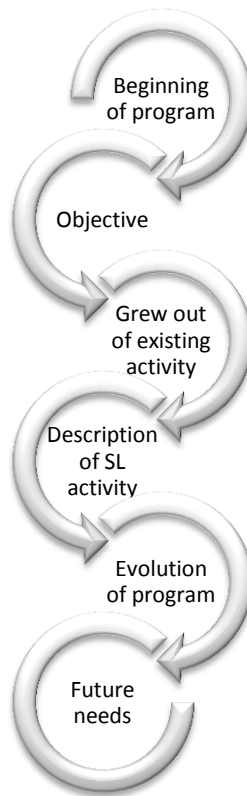
Figure 4. Description of beginning and evolution of SL program.

Focus group prompt 3. Focus group prompt 3 was: "What do you think a teacher's role is regarding the shaping of students' character through SL?" The subjects suggested 11 roles for teachers in the shaping of students' character through SL. The roles are shown in Figure 5.

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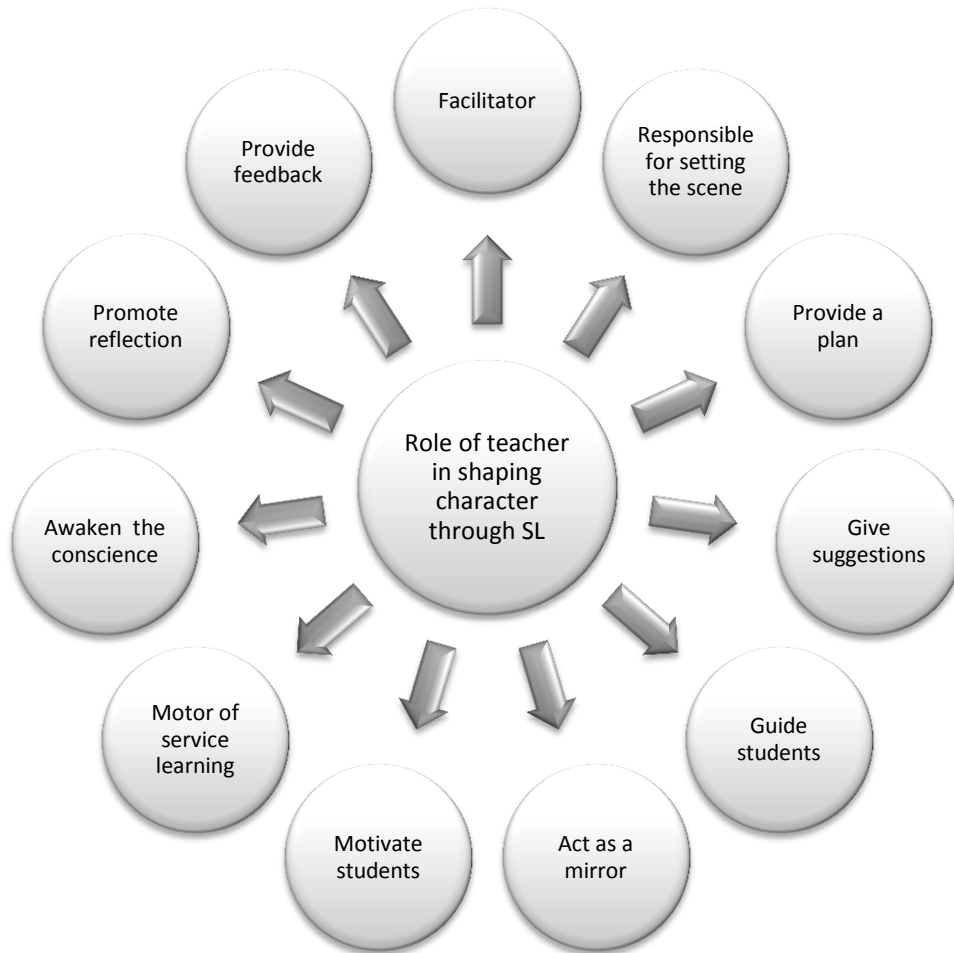
Figure 5. Role of teacher in shaping character through SL.

Perhaps two of the concepts are less clear. They are best understood through the words of the subjects. Acting as a mirror is described as:

> In my case, I believe that the teacher is like a mirror. He reflects to the kids how they are seen. When they return from the service…What did we do well? And

you begin to analyze but at the same time you are saying…Guys, we were lacking in this, we fell short in that.

Being the motor of SL is explained as:

Practically, we are the motor to move and above all we must leave very clear in the students that we aren't doing SL just to do more work but that it is really an activation of the conscience.

Focus group prompt 4. Focus group prompt 4 was: "What do you believe is the purpose for SL?" Subjects' answers fell into two categories: the purpose of SL as it relates to teachers and the purpose of SL as it relates to students (see Figure 6). They expressed that SL allows teachers to be an example and helps teachers see another side of their students. Observing students in a different setting provides an opportunity for teachers to understand their students better and to analyze how to change the way they give classes to those students.

The purpose of SL for students also fell into two categories: learning academic objectives and shaping people's lives. While mentioned more than once in the focus group, little variation was shown in the category of how SL serves to advance learning of academic objectives. However, in the category of shaping peoples' lives, there were a variety of opinions regarding the purpose of SL (see Figure 6).

Focus group prompt 5. Focus group prompt five asked, "How do you think SL projects should be developed?" Four themes were present in the discussion of how SL projects should be developed (see Table 7).

Purpose of Service Learning Program

with students

with teachers

learn academic objectives

shaping people's lives

see another side of students

teacher provides example

learn to take advantage of their abilities

understand students better

learn to serve community and world

change how you give class

help, listen, give, and do

win-win: give and receive

learn to give what they would like to receive

create conscience

give of themselves and their effort

like a balance: results worth the effort

learn how to change the world

make a difference individually or a group

understand other's point of view

learn empathy

develop the desire to give the best of yourself

Figure 6. Purpose of SL program.

Table 7

Developing Service Learning Projects

Structure	Community service vs. SL	Who	How
Spontaneous	Example of a community service activity	Include all students	Not provide incentives for students to participate (i.e., grades)
Systematic	Discussion of the difference between community service and SL	Motivate more teachers to participate	
Structured and planned	Difference in community service and SL is that SL links specific academic learning objective to the service project	Inclusive	
All year long			
Variety of activities			
Difficulty in finding partners means a need for structure			
Structure with freedom for students to develop activities and feel useful			

Structure. Structure was the most discussed aspect of SL project development. The subjects expressed a definite interest in the planning, structure, and systemization of SL projects.

> We now do it more structured. We have dates. We know what we have to do. I like this because it is planned. That doesn't mean that those before weren't planned but we worked all year and it's not just one activity.

> I believe that there are a lot of ways to develop them and they can be a lot or a few but they have to be very structured. The objective of whatever or the teaching process has to be very structured because the planning and the kids know what to do and that's how they are developed and they see the results.

> Maybe there should be a variety of activities but structured and planned. Because it is not easy to get a place and the dates, it's better to have everything well planned.

Some concern existed about the flexibility within the structure.

> Some should be spontaneous because they are not so methodical and systematic. Then other situations present themselves that you don't see when you have a plan.

> They have to be very structured with the freedom that they (the students) can develop them and feel useful.

> What can happen is to plan the activity and you make changes in your classes. I don't know. But you can make a variation. As the teacher, you can ask your students, What do you propose? To do something more or something different with what is already structured. You understand? It serves the same, for example, the first planning and then turn in the second planning and changes. You are looking to add or take away and change. And it's the same activity put with feedback to do the same thing in a different way. It could work.

Finally, there was an interest in the duration of the project as one participant noted: "It's the whole year."

Community service vs. SL. Following the opening comments about structure in SL projects, a specific community service project was mentioned and discussion ensued about the difference between community service and SL:

- I don't know if SL is something systematic and community service is a one-time thing. Is there a difference? Or..

- Does anyone have an idea?

- Maybe SL has to be systematic…

- Maybe it's the same. No?

- Yes, there is an important difference.

- Is it being systematic?

- No, the learning. Community service is not necessarily linked to…

- …a subject…

- ...to learning objectives. This is the difference.

- Oh, yeah.

Who. One subject mentioned that one of the two important components of SL is that it be inclusive for all of the community, including students, teachers, and parents. Another subject mentioned that it is important to include all the students. Finally, another subject mentioned that more teachers should be involved:

> Something that I would like to implement is to motivate the teachers more, give them more information and for the all of the teachers to participate. Not just some but all, because if they are involved we can do more things. If they have the knowledge, the ones who want to can participate. At least they can say they knew about it.

How. The only mention of how SL should be carried out came from a subject who mentioned two important components that must be present in SL. One of those mentioned is that students should not be given anything as an incentive to participate:

> And another element that we have used a lot is that we shouldn't give something- a grade – something, so they will participate. I think it is something that has helped us a lot in that the students do things without expecting something in return.

Focus group prompt 6. Focus group prompt 6 was: "What motivates you to do SL with your students?" Subjects gave six different things that motivate them to do SL (see Table 8).

Focus group prompt 7. Focus group prompt 7 was: "What are some of the outcomes that you have seen in your students or in those benefiting from the service as a result of SL projects?" The subjects discussed five different results that they saw in their students as a result of SL. Those results can be grouped into the three categories of abilities, attitudes, and values (see Figure 7).

Table 8

Motivation for Service Learning

Motivation	Statements
Personal preference	• "I like it."
Change in students	• "I can see a real change in our students in their way of perceiving everything. So I see an opportunity and I think about what else can I do but it did motivate to see and it moved me too that they were really touched by the situation and they also prepared their classes…They used a lot of things in their classes to motivate like puppets and a train…spectacular things."
Responsible for the future	• "I feel responsible for the future." • "You can never say "Ok, I'm finished." Because we can do more. You open the door and you open minds."
Shaping lives	• "Well, I think we are shaping persons. Forming people with body, soul, and spirit and this is what motivates me or my legacy…what I'm going to leave-people shaped for the good."

(continued)

Motivation	Statements
Doing your part	• "You do what you can and you give them the opportunity for them to change but you can't be responsible if they change or not." • "But as a teacher you can be sure that you did your part and wait to see the results."
Inspired by students' energy	• "One of the things from my point of view that really motivates me is this energy that you see in the students that I have seen. They are good and noble."

The two abilities seen were thinking skills and finding their vocation. The

reflection on the results and what they experienced during their SL projects seemed to

promote their development of thinking skills.

> Because they began to reflect on seeing social injustice…linked to my
> subject…makes them analyze with thinking, questioning, critical thinking,
> reflecting. The result that I have seen is that I feel that they are developing the
> thinking abilities with all the questioning they are doing.
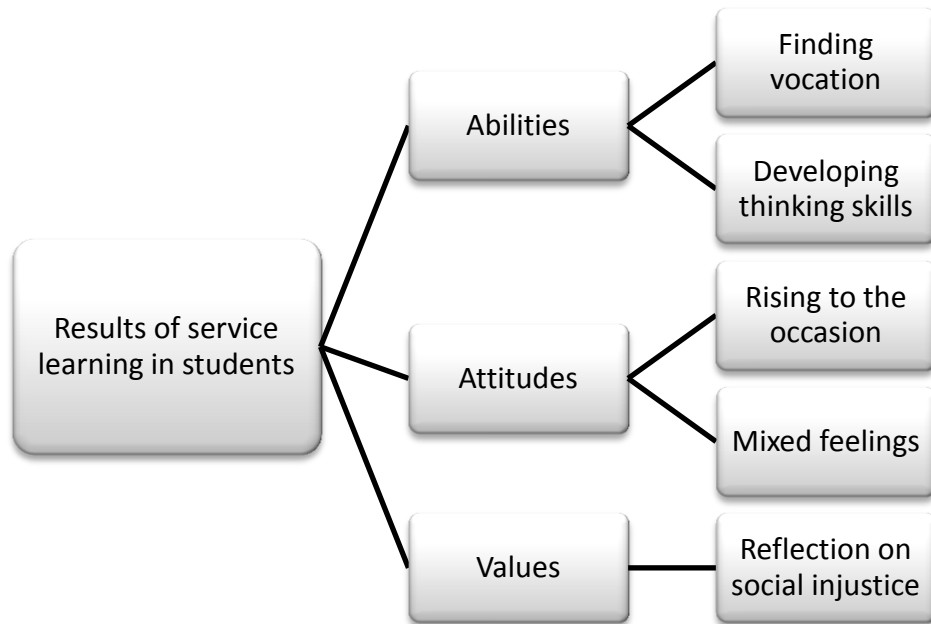

Figure 7. Results of SL in students.

One teacher also saw students who expressed that, through the project, they had found an affinity for teaching:

> It was very interesting to me that four students said, "Teacher, I know what my vocation is. I am going to be a teacher." And I thought, oh, this served a purpose.

Teachers also mentioned having witnessed two distinct attitudes in their students from the SL projects. The first attitude mentioned was the mixed feelings that the students experienced when they confronted resistance to what they were doing in the service project. The students could not understand why someone would resist their efforts when they were just trying to help. They also were not sure what to do when someone wanted to reward them monetarily for the service they were performing as part of the SL project:

> I have seen feelings, mixed feelings. They were very motivated and happy but on a few occasions when someone complained to them, they said that they weren't doing anything wrong. On one occasion the guard at Soriana said we couldn't be there. The kids said why, if we are just helping. On the contrary, we are not hurting anyone. They said that we have permission and we are supposed to be there. Regardless, the reflection helps shape them and they finished the project happy that they could help someone who needed it. We had one special case of a lady who came out of the store with three carts of groceries. The kids helped her put the groceries in her car. The lady, who had a baby with her, left them a tip. They asked me what to do with the 50 pesos. They didn't want to take the money because that's not why they helped.

A second, very different attitude was apparent in some of the students' performance as they prepared for the service activity and how it changed during the actual activity, rising to the occasion:

> I had some students and when they said what they were going to do, they showed me the activities and supposedly they were going to sing. I told them to present their activity and they showed what they were going to do and nobody sang. I told them it was better to not do it if they weren't up to it. But when they were with the children, they sang a 1000 times better and the children were excited. You could see some of the big guys dancing and singing. I was so…I thought that they weren't going to do anything but in the moment with the children they did things that I thought they wouldn't.

Subjects also mentioned that they saw the students' values also affected as a result of the SL projects. Students reflected on social injustice:

> The comments they made after…I have everything in my house. This kid ate everything because he didn't have anything at home…Because they began to reflect and see social injustice.

Focus group prompt 8. Focus group prompt 8 was: "Describe your students' learning from their SL projects." One subject described students as learning organizational skills. Another subject described eight things that students learned through the SL project: (a) values, (b) social skills, (c) thinking skills, (d) teamwork skills, (e) success depends on them, (f) responsibility, (g) importance of doing quality work, and (h) commitment. Other subjects repeated some of the same learning results:

> All of these abilities that are needed to live in society…They are the things that I think are useful for the students. Not so much the emotional part but the values in practice, and the type of abilities they need, social skills and thinking skills, all of the skills that are useful to them in life and in school. Because they always have to work as a team…They always have to take something, homework, and it helps them to understand that it is up to them to do something. This is their motivation…to improve. Because sometimes I've seen students take something very well made and others not and they are embarrassed. The next time they take something made better because they had been embarrassed. It helps them to improve in a positive way.

Focus group prompt 9. Focus group prompt 9 was: "How has involvement in SL with your students affected you?" Only two subjects commented. One of the teachers said she realized that she needed to be better at planning. She said seeing how her lack of skill in that area could affect how the SL project influenced her. The other teacher said that she thought that it made her more sensitive:

For me, for example, in the project "Do you really want to take my place?" I see that I am more sensitive and realize that maybe one day I will be someone with this need and my students might be the ones who will use the handicapped spaces.

Focus group prompt 10. Focus group prompt 10 was: "How have you been influenced regarding service and social change from your experience with SL?" Subjects identified four ways in which they have been influenced regarding service and social change. One person discussed how they could see the power of working together and how we all can be change agents:

I don't know if the question is really asking this, but I think both I and the students are becoming conscious that we are agents of change. To me, maybe because of the type of subject I teach, they begin to think about whether society is just or not and what we can do about it. I said this about the milk, What can I do? I can't give them all they need. But if we can get together 40 liters of milk a week between all of us, at the end of the year, how much milk have we given? And we feel like we really can. The point is, we have to do it. And we don't think that the government or someone else is going to do it. Of course we can do this if we educate ourselves. This is something that we and our families are seeing. We are left with the consciousness that we can be agents of change. We have to keep doing things and be proactive.

Another subject was introspective in describing the influence SL has had. She said that she can do more and do it better. She also said that she must be an example for the students:

You keep seeing what you can do. Or how you can do it. After each event you think, wow, and you're left with thinking what you could have done better. Where did you fail? To do it better next time. And in my experience, I think that the kids first have to see how you do it.

Focus group prompt 11. Focus group prompt 11 was: "Given the current security climate in Mexico, what do you think the role of SL should be in schools?" Subjects expressed two distinct considerations for the use of SL in Mexico, given the current situation of violence and crime (see Figure 8). They mentioned how the current situation shapes SL in Mexico by making it necessary to consider SL projects within the

school campus and the special care that must be taken when choosing sites to do service.

On the other end of the spectrum, several subjects expressed their belief that the current

security climate in Mexico makes SL an even greater necessity in schools:

> I believe that the current situation in Mexico tells us that SL is a must to be able to be part of a change…to teach our students that change depends on us.

> Service learning helps us to show our students that they can and should make a difference.

Focus group prompt 12. Focus group prompt 12 was: "Would you recommend

SL to other schools? What advice would you give them about implementation?" The

subjects agreed that all of the teachers and administrators would recommend SL to other

schools, but with several recommendations: you must believe in the program, be

inclusive, create it as part of an integral CE program, choose the sites for service

carefully, and not make it obligatory:

> The answer is yes. I would recommend it to other schools. The recommendation is that you have to believe in the program, be inclusive, and make it part of an integral CE program.

> Look for the sites.

> I believe that it shouldn't be an obligatory program. It could fall into another program that doesn't work if the people don't believe in it.

Figure 8. Service learning in Mexico.

Summary of Findings Research Question 1

The online questionnaire and the focus group provided information regarding the themes for coding identified in Chapter 3. Tables 9, 10, and 11 show how data were triangulated by indicating which parts of the data were obtained from which of the instruments and where that data came from both instruments.

Research Question One asks, "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?" No information provided by the subjects regarded specific training provided by the school or obtained otherwise. One prompt brought out data about the subjects' self-learning about SL. Eight of the prompts provided data about self-identified knowledge about SL, and responses from seven prompts provided data regarding subjects' experience in implementing SL as it related to their knowledge about SL (see Table 9).

Nine specific findings were identified from the triangulated data:

- Subjects could define SL and identify many of the necessary elements.

- Subjects could identify the objectives for the use of SL and could recognize the benefits for students linked to the design of the SL activities.

- Subjects expressed that they have sufficient knowledge of the SL model to adequately implement it with students. This knowledge primarily came through experience and self-learning.

- Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to suggest improvements to the program.

- Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to compare it to practice as they experienced it.

- Subjects could describe how SL began and has evolved over time in their school.

- Subjects could identify their place as teachers and administrators in the SL program, specifically, as the one responsible for planning, feedback, setting the stage, and guidance.

- Subjects struggled with understanding the distinctions between community service and SL.

- Strikingly absent from the data were mentions by the subjects of formal training in SL through professional development courses or other avenues.

Table 9

Findings Knowledge of Service Learning

How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?					
Prompt	Training provided by school	Training duration, quality, and timing	Self-learning about SL	Self-identified knowledge about SL	Experience in implementing
Questionnaire Prompt 1				X	X
Questionnaire Prompt 2				X	
Questionnaire Prompt 3				X	
Questionnaire Prompt 4				X	
Questionnaire Prompt 5					
Questionnaire Prompt 6					
Focus Group Prompt 1				X	X
Focus Group Prompt 2			X		X
Focus Group Prompt 3				X	
Focus Group Prompt 4				X	X
Focus Group Prompt 5				X	X
Focus Group Prompt 6					X

Prompt	Training provided by school	Training duration, quality, and timing	Self-learning about SL	Self-identified knowledge about SL	Experience in implementing
Focus Group Prompt 7					X
Focus Group Prompt 8					
Focus Group Prompt 9					
Focus Group Prompt 10					
Focus Group Prompt 11					
Focus Group Prompt 12					

Summary of Findings Research Question 2

Research Question Two was "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?" Data regarding the subjects' views of their role in the shaping of character through SL was obtained through 11 of the 18 prompts in the online questionnaire and the focus group (see Table 10). Data about the subjects' belief about their responsibility to develop character through SL were found in five prompts, information about their belief about the effectiveness of SL were found in nine prompts, and data about their experiences in implementing SL were found in five prompts.

Five specific findings were identified from the data:

- Subjects expressed their belief that it is their responsibility to shape students' character through SL.

- Subjects see their role as facilitators who awaken the conscience of students, help them reflect, help them discover things about themselves, and motivate them.

- Subjects enjoy their role of shaping students' lives through SL.

- Subjects feel responsible for the future–the future of their students–and feel a duty to society to form change agents.

- Subjects feel they must be an example for students with their service.

Summary of Findings Research Question 3

Research Question Three was, "How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?" Data regarding subjects' feelings of ownership of the schools' SL program were obtained from 15 of the 18 prompts in the combined online questionnaire and focus group (see Table 11). Four of the prompts showed data for the level of self-identified ownership of the SL program by the subjects and the influence of

Table 10

Findings Role in Building Character through SL

Prompt	Belief about responsibility to develop character through SL	Belief about effectiveness of SL	Positive or negative experience in implementing
Questionnaire Prompt 1		X	X
Questionnaire Prompt 2	X	X	X
Questionnaire Prompt 3			
Questionnaire Prompt 4			
Questionnaire Prompt 5		X	
Questionnaire Prompt 6			
Focus Group Prompt 1		X	X

Prompt	Belief about responsibility to develop character through SL	Belief about effectiveness of SL	Positive or negative experience in implementing
Focus Group Prompt 2			
Focus Group Prompt 3	X	X	
Focus Group Prompt 4		X	X
Focus Group Prompt 5			
Focus Group Prompt 6	X	X	X
Focus Group Prompt 7		X	
Focus Group Prompt 8		X	
Focus Group Prompt 9			
Focus Group Prompt 10	X		X
Focus Group Prompt 11	X		
Focus Group Prompt 12			

SL on the subjects, respectively. Two prompts showed information about the subjects'

beliefs about the appropriateness of SL in today's security climate in Mexico. Ten

prompts showed data about the subjects' observed results of the SL program, and five

prompts showed data with information about subjects' motivation for participating in SL:

Six specific findings were identified through the data:

- Subjects believe that SL is a necessity in schools in the current security climate in Mexico.

- Subjects have seen positive results in students as a result of SL in the areas of development of: attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and values.

- Subjects' inner motivation to participate in SL is because they enjoy it and/or they want to make a change in students and in the world.

- Subjects feel that they are taken into consideration in the school and that they have taken part in shaping the SL program.

- Subjects view themselves as having a key role as the motor of SL.

- Subjects see the positive impact that SL has had in themselves.

Table 11

Findings Ownership of SL Program

Prompt	Level of self-identified ownership	Influence of SL on teacher or administrator	Belief about appropriateness of SL in current security climate in Mexico	Observed results of use of SL	Motivation for SL
Questionnaire Prompt 1				X	X
Questionnaire Prompt 2				X	
Questionnaire Prompt 3	X			X	
Questionnaire Prompt 4					
Questionnaire Prompt 5				X	
Questionnaire Prompt 6	X				
Focus Group Prompt 1				X	X
Focus Group Prompt 2					
Focus Group Prompt 3	X				
Focus Group Prompt 4		X		X	X
Focus Group Prompt 5					
Focus Group Prompt 6	X	X		X	X
Focus Group Prompt 7				X	

Prompt	Level of self-identified ownership	Influence of SL on teacher or administrator	Belief about appropriateness of SL in current security climate in Mexico	Observed results of use of SL	Motivation for SL
Focus Group Prompt 8				X	
Focus Group Prompt 9		X			
Focus Group Prompt 10		X		X	X
Focus Group Prompt 11				X	
Focus Group Prompt 12				X	

Summary of Findings Highlights

Subjects are knowledgeable about the SL model implemented at the school, although some holes in their knowledge of SL are apparent. They were able to take the knowledge and put it into practice and reflect on the differences and similarities in the SL model and the actual SL experience. Their knowledge of SL came primarily from experience and self-learning, not from a formal professional development course or program. It was clear that gaps in teachers' and administrators' knowledge of SL exist in the areas of: how to evaluate students' learning and how to incorporate student voice in the SL program (National Service-Learning Cooperative, 1999), as well as how to encourage student ownership of the school's SL program (Rainer & Matthews, 2002).

Subjects expressed a strong sense of responsibility regarding their role in shaping students' character through SL. They also viewed themselves as being the key factor in the implementation of SL. Subjects demonstrated a strong ownership of the SL program being implemented at their school. Some of the key factors which point to this sense of ownership are: (a) having experienced positive results with SL in their students, (b) a

belief in the necessity for SL within the current social context, (c) their desire to be change agents, and (d) their view of their key role in developing and implementing the SL program.

        Although it could have been enlightening to further understand why one of the questionnaire respondents answered that she believed that the SL program was not having a positive impact on students, this avenue was not explored due to human subjects' protections. Because the primary investigator was also the principal of the school, the decision was made not to try to identify the person who felt negatively about the impact of SL with the students.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Interpretation of Findings by Research Question

Eight of the 12 subjects in the study answered an online questionnaire and all 12 of the subjects participated in a focus group. In the following, the interpretation of the findings is divided into subgroups per research subquestion. The subquestions were designed to understand better the overarching research question, "How do teachers and administrators at High Tec Middle School experience SL?"

Research question 1. Research question one asks, "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?" There were nine specific findings identified from the data. Each of these findings will be examined and discussed as they relate to pertinent literature in Chapter 2.

Finding 1. Finding one states, "Subjects could define SL and identify many of the necessary elements." Subjects included the essential parts of the definition of SL: specific learning objectives and providing a service (Berger, 2010; Fiske, 2002; Knox et al., 2003; Mowry, 2008; Winings, 2002). Various subjects were able to accurately define SL:

…knowledge learned…service to the community

Service learning is focused on learning through doing service.

…The activities are intrinsically linked to the learning
objectives…achievements can be reached through this system
of…quality service.

Subjects collectively were able to identify many of the essential elements for quality SL outlined by the National Service-Learning Cooperative (2002):

1. Clear educational goals:

   The activities are intrinsically linked to learning objectives.

   The students that plan or develop the activities from the subject involved in the program.

   We can be emphatic that the activities we are doing are intrinsically aligned with learning objectives.

2. Challenging cognitive tasks:

   Because they began to reflect on seeing social injustice…linked to my subject…makes them analyze with thinking, questioning, critical thinking, reflecting. The result that I have seen is that I feel that they are developing the thinking abilities with all the questioning they are doing.

3. Teacher assessment and evaluation:

   In my case, I believe that the teacher is like a mirror. He reflects to the kids how they are seen. When they return from the service…What did we do well? And you begin to analyze but at the same time you are saying…Guys, we were lacking in this, we fell short in that.

4. Tasks with clear goals:

   I think the success is in the details and the planning.

   It is important that the student sees exactly what is expected of him.

5. Formative and summative evaluation:

   This element was not identified by the subjects.

6. Student voice:

   What can happen is to plan the activity and you make changes in your classes. I don't know. But you can make a variation. As the teacher you can ask you students, What do you propose? To do something more or something different with what is already structured. You understand?

7. Diversity valued:

…All of this is a change of perspective. They have to learn that it is another reality. One isn't better or worse. It is only another reality that exists and they got to learn that it exists.

8. Projects foster interaction with the community:

   Creating opportunities where students can act in favor of the community…

9. Students prepared:

   I had some students and when they said what they were going to do, they showed me the activities and supposedly they were going to sing. I told them to present their activity and they showed what they were going to do and nobody sung. I told them it was better to not do it if they weren't up to it. But when they were with the children, they sang a 1000 times better and the children were excited. You could see some of the big guys dancing and singing. I was so…I thought that they weren't going to do anything but in the moment with the children they did things that I thought they wouldn't.

10. Student reflection before, during and after:

    And also that the same students, their experiences were varied each time we went. The first time they were super sensitive, wanting to give everything, really touched. The second time there were situations where they had more confidence than in other situations. And the third time I told them they had to handle this and that everything isn't milk and honey and it is really when they're learning.

11. Acknowledgement and celebration of service:

    This element was not mentioned by the subjects.

    Finding 2. Finding two states, "Subjects could identify the objectives for the use of SL and could recognize the benefits for students linked to the design of the SL activities." Subjects identified SL as a means to develop empathy (Vincent, 1999) and to stretch students' intellect (Berger, 2010):

    Through these activities the kids really live the values that we promote in CE, values such as, responsibility, empathy, solidarity, honesty and respect.

> Because they began to reflect on seeing social injustice…linked to my subject…makes them analyze with thinking, questioning, critical thinking, reflecting. The result that I have seen is that I feel that they are developing the thinking abilities with all the questioning they are doing.

Subjects also noted that SL can help to reveal hidden talent (Berger, 2010) and contributes to students' career development (Fiske, 2002):

> It was very interesting to me that four students said, "Teacher, I know what my vocation is. I am going to be a teacher." And I thought, oh, this served a purpose.

Finding 3. Finding three states, "Subjects express that they have sufficient knowledge of the SL model to implement it adequately with students. This knowledge primarily came through experience and self-learning. Seventy-five percent of subjects agreed that they had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to implement SL projects adequately with their students, and 25% were neutral. This finding is striking in that there is no mention by the subjects of professional development, conferences, or other training on SL. Subjects, however, discuss extensively their experience doing SL. Perhaps this knowledge of SL is experiential knowledge that comes from the teachers working together to plan the SL activities (DuFour et al., 2008) and the knowledge they can gain in working with others beyond the school (Fullan, 2001).

Finding 4. Finding four states, "Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to suggest improvements to the program." Subjects offered the following improvement areas for the program:

> We just need to include the parents.

> We can be emphatic that activities that we are doing are intrinsically aligned with learning objectives.

> It is important that the student sees exactly what is expected of him and that we motivate him.

While there is no indication that the teachers' reflection on their perceptions of the program is part of a formal evaluation process, it is aligned with the idea of the importance of process evaluation (Brown & Lerman, 2008; DeRoche, 2004).

Finding 5. Finding five states, "Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to compare it to practice as they experienced it." Subjects expressed their impressions of the alignment of their experience to what they understand as the SL model adopted by the middle school.

- The way I understand it, it is very well connected to what we are doing in the middle school.

- I think our activity goes hand in hand with our model of SL because it has a structure that is implemented in various subjects and grades.

- Very similar.

- I think that the activities that we have done this year are more closely aligned with what I consider to be the model of SL.

What is unclear from this finding is exactly on what the subjects are basing their idea of the model of SL. They do not express that they have received training in SL but they do express that they have knowledge of the SL model. There is no clear distinction provided as to how they made the connection between practice and the model.

Finding 6. Finding six states, "Subjects could describe how SL began and has evolved over time in their school." This finding indicates that the teachers and administrators have been involved as participants or observers in implementing the SL program. Lambert (2003) suggested that this shared leadership can help teachers to grow

in knowledge. Schein (2004) discussed how this shared experience can also work to help members of an organization to adapt its culture.

Finding 7. Finding seven states, "Subjects could identify their place as teachers and administrators in the SL program, specifically, as the one responsible for planning, feedback, setting the stage, and guidance. The teachers' and administrators' recognition of their roles in SL, which are aligned with the essential elements for quality SL (National Service-Learning Cooperative, 2002), points to their depth of knowledge about the SL model.

Finding 8. Finding eight states, "Subjects struggled with understanding the distinctions between community service and SL." This lack of knowledge about an important concept (Berger, 2010; Colby et al., 2009; Winings, 2002) in SL suggests that, while the teachers and administrators demonstrate a proficiency in knowledge of the SL model implemented and the school, there are still areas where their knowledge of SL is incomplete.

Finding 9. Finding nine states, "Strikingly absent from the data were mentions by the subjects of training in SL through professional development courses or other avenues." This finding indicated that the SL program at the school lacks one of the five necessary steps for initiating a SL program as defined by Winings (2002): formulating a training program for faculty and staff.

Research question 2. Research question two asks, "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?" There were five findings identified from the data. Each

of these findings will be examined and discussed as related to pertinent literature

discussed in Chapter 2.

    Finding 1. Finding one states, "Subjects express their belief that it is their

responsibility to shape students' character through SL." Teachers and administrators

expressed this belief in a variety of ways:

> Creating opportunities where students can act in favor of the community.
> Always making them aware that they are doing the activity only to
> receive a moral reward.

> Being a facilitator. I motivate and invite my students to reflect how the
> activities help them to be better people, and how they help to reinforce
> positive attitude.

> I love being able to promote CE in people to be a benefit to society in
> the future…being able to shape men and women with a great character
> of service toward themselves and the community.

This desire to help students grow in character and service to others shows the teachers'

desire to provide a holistic education (Gillies, 2011) for their students. It also identifies

the teachers and administrators as the one-caring defined by Noddings (2003, 2005). The

one-caring is the person whose goal is to promote caring in self and others. Noddings

(2008) also posited that SL is one promising way to produce caring.

    The interior beliefs of teachers is not the only factor which seems to be promoting

teachers' and administrators' belief that they are responsible for shaping students'

character through SL. The other important factor evidenced through the data is the

administration's leadership in promoting SL. One subject stated:

> I participate in an active manner with the activities that the school
> initiates.

Schultz et al. (2010) claimed that teachers take their cues from the administration. The priorities of the school expressed by the administrations' words or actions become the priorities of the teachers.

    Finding 2. Finding two states, "Subjects see their role as facilitators who awaken the conscience of students, help them reflect, help them discover things about themselves, and motivate students." This role that teachers self-appoint is closely related to social and emotional learning as it relates to academic success (Denham & Brown, 2011). Reicher (2011) claimed that the social and emotional learning skills that students need can be furthered through SL. There is no evidence from the findings that teachers link their practices to social and emotional learning although, in practice, this seems to be occurring.

> Creating opportunities where students can act in favor of the community. Always making them aware that they are doing the activity only to receive a moral reward.

> Designing activities in my subject.

> Being a facilitator. I motivate and invite my students to reflect how the activities help them to be better people, and how they help to reinforce positive attitudes.

    Finding 3. Finding three states, "Subjects enjoy their role of shaping students' lives through SL." This enjoyment can be linked to the empowerment experienced by the teachers and administrators in perceiving their own ability to make a change in the well-being of their students and society as a whole (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). Empowerment means having control or power over significant events or circumstances (Fawcett et al., 1994). The subjects appear to feel that they have some control or influence over the significant event of the shaping of students' character through SL:

I love being able to promote CE in people to be a benefit to society in the future…being able to shape men and women with a great character of service toward themselves and the community.

Finding 4. Finding four states, "Subjects feel responsible for the future: the future of their students and feel a duty to society to form change agents." The school is described as including CE as one of its bedrock principals from the schools founding. Because this culture of CE exists at the school, the tendency is for most of its members to adapt to this culture (Schein, 2004). One of the strengths of character viewed as an outcome of CE is a "contributing community member and democratic citizen" (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 85). It is probable that this culture of CE and CE's emphasis on being a contributing community member have an impact on the teachers' and administrators' feelings of responsibility for shaping students and forming change agents.

Finding 5. Finding five states, "Subjects feel they must be an example for students with their service." Noddings (2005) named modeling as one of four major components of the *ethics of caring*. She said that modeling is demonstrating to students how to care.

You keep seeing what you can do. Or how you can do it. After each event you think, wow, and you're left with thinking what you could have done better. Where did you fail? To do it better next time. And in my experience, I think that the kids first have to see how you do it.

Research question 3. In Research Question Three, the question asked is, "How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?" There were six different findings identified from the data. Each of these findings will be examined and discussed as it relates to pertinent literature discussed in Chapter 2

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Finding 1. Finding one states, "Subjects believe that SL is a necessity in schools in the current security climate in Mexico." The unequivocal response of subjects regarding the appropriateness of SL within the current realities in Mexico seems to confirm that teachers and administrators are in agreement with Taboada (1993) who said that moral education is the best crime prevention policy.

> I believe that the current situation in Mexico tells us that SL is a must to be able to be part of a change…to teach our students that change depends on us.

> Service learning helps us to show our students that they can and should make a difference.

It is also likely that this affirmation comes from the empowerment (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995) of the teachers and administrators who express the belief, stated above, that it is imperative to teach the students that change depends on them.

Finding 2. Finding two states, "Subjects have seen positive results in students as a result of SL in the areas of development of: attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and values." In finding one of Research Question Two, it was established that teachers and administrators feel that it is their responsibility to shape character through SL. As they see positive results in their students in the area of character development, they strengthen their belief that SL is an effective tool for character development (Billig et al., 2008; Winings, 2002). LaGette (1999) also attributed teachers' buy-in to the value of SL to their eyewitness accounts of SL in action. As teachers and administrators participate in the SL activities that are bringing them desired results, they also strengthen their perspective about their personal ability to be a change agent (Zimmerman, 1995) and feel more empowered.

Finding 3. Finding three states, "Subjects' inner motivation to participate in SL is because they enjoy it and/or they want to make a change in students and in the world." The subjects' enjoyment from participating in SL is one of the personal benefits of SL described by Donnison and Itter (2010). It is possible that part of this enjoyment is directly linked to finding the task meaningful (Houser & Frymier, 2010) as they see that they have some control over their environment and can personally make change happen (Zimmerman, 1995).

Finding 4. Finding four states, "Subjects feel that they are taken into consideration in the school and that they have taken part in shaping the SL program." These two factors of having a voice in and participating in the development and implementation of the teaching and learning processes are specifically identified by Koster and Dengerink (2008) as important factors in contributing to teacher ownership. The act of being included and feeling that their opinion matters, has been significant for the subjects as they have worked to evolve the school's SL program.

Finding 5. Finding five states, "Subjects view themselves as having a key role as the motor of SL." The self-efficacy of the subjects has been impacted through the empowering process (Zimmerman, 1995) of seeing that they are key players in the SL activities which they have witnessed making an impact on the lives of their students. The teachers and administrators have experienced the SL projects and see that their participation is what pushes the students to do their best work and to reflect on their experiences.

Finding 6. Finding six states, "Subjects see the positive impact that SL has had in themselves." Within the framework ethics of caring, the one-caring is not only

concerned for developing caring in others but also in themselves (Noddings, 2003, 2005). The teachers and administrators have witnessed the changes within themselves. They have seen that they are more aware of the need for service and also where they have fallen short in demonstrating care through service. Their own personal well-being is affected (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995) as they see that it could and should be tied to the well-being of the larger society.

Conclusions by Research Question

Six conclusions resulted from data analysis and interpretation. Data from Research Question One led to two conclusions; data from Research Question Two led to three conclusions; and data from Research Question Three led to one conclusion. The final conclusion, from Research Question Three, was also highly connected to conclusions one, three, four and five.

Research question 1. The nine distinct findings for Research Question One, "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?" point to two conclusions. First, experiential knowledge was the key factor for teachers and administrators in understanding and implementing the school's SL program. The shared leadership of the program helped them to grow in knowledge and experiences (Lambert, 2003). Second, while the experiential knowledge was the most important, it did not provide a complete understanding of the SL model. Harris and Hoffer (2011) suggested that the lack of knowledge in how to implement a specific pedagogical strategy is often the disconnect between desire and practice.

Research question 2. The five research findings for Research Question Two, "How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?" lead to three conclusions. First, teachers and administrators at the school possess a strong sense of caring. According to Noddings (2005), caring is the essential element which causes a fundamental shift in the aim of education to focus not on the concepts and knowledge but on the needs of the students. Second, teachers and administrators are empowered by implementing SL with their students. This is what Zimmerman (1995) referred to as an empowering process. Finally, teachers and administrators are firm in their belief that holistic education through CE is their responsibility (Chang & Muñoz, 2006).

Research question 3. The six research findings for Research Question Three, "How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?" lead to one overarching conclusion. The teachers and administrator exhibit a strong degree of ownership of the school's SL program. While they do not specifically use the language of ownership, they do demonstrate possessing the four characteristics of ownership identified by Bruyere et al. (2011) and the two important factors in achieving teacher ownership delineated by Koster and Dengerink (2008).

Bruyere et al.'s (2011) four characteristics of ownership are: (a) teachers' knowledge about issues, (b) their personal investment in issues, (c) their knowledge of consequences and behavior, and (d) their personal commitment to issue resolution. Their knowledge of issues is seen in their understanding of the need for moral education through SL in the current security climate in Mexico. The personal investment in the

issues is witnessed through their enjoyment of SL and a desire to also impact themselves. Their knowledge of consequences and behaviors is seen in the recognition of the impact SL is having on their students. Their personal commitment to issue resolution is seen in their desire to make a change in students and in the world.

The two important factors described by Koster and Dengerink (2008) are voice and participating in the development and implementation of the project. Subjects clearly hear their voice represented as they are listened to and their ideas taken into consideration. They participate in the development and implementation of the project as they help shape it and drive it.

Overall Conclusions

There are six conclusions derived from the three research subquestions. Those conclusions are.

1. Experiential knowledge was the key factor for teachers and administrators in understanding and implementing the school's SL program.

2. The experiential knowledge did not provide a complete understanding of the SL model.

3. Teachers and administrators at the school possess a strong sense of caring.

4. Teachers and administrators are empowered by implementing SL with their students.

5. Teachers and administrators believe that educating in character is their responsibility.

6. Teachers' and administrators' ownership of the school's SL program is derived from: having sufficient knowledge of the SL program, possessing a

strong sense of caring, feeling empowered by the implementation of the SL

program, and possessing a belief that it is their responsibility to educate

students in character.

Conclusions one, three, four and five seem to be the determining factor for

conclusion six. In other words, having sufficient knowledge of the SL program,

possessing a strong sense of caring, feeling empowered by the implementation of the SL

program, and possessing a belief that it is their responsibility to educate students in

character are elements that lead to the feelings of ownership of the SL program held by

the teachers and administrators at the school (see Figure 9).
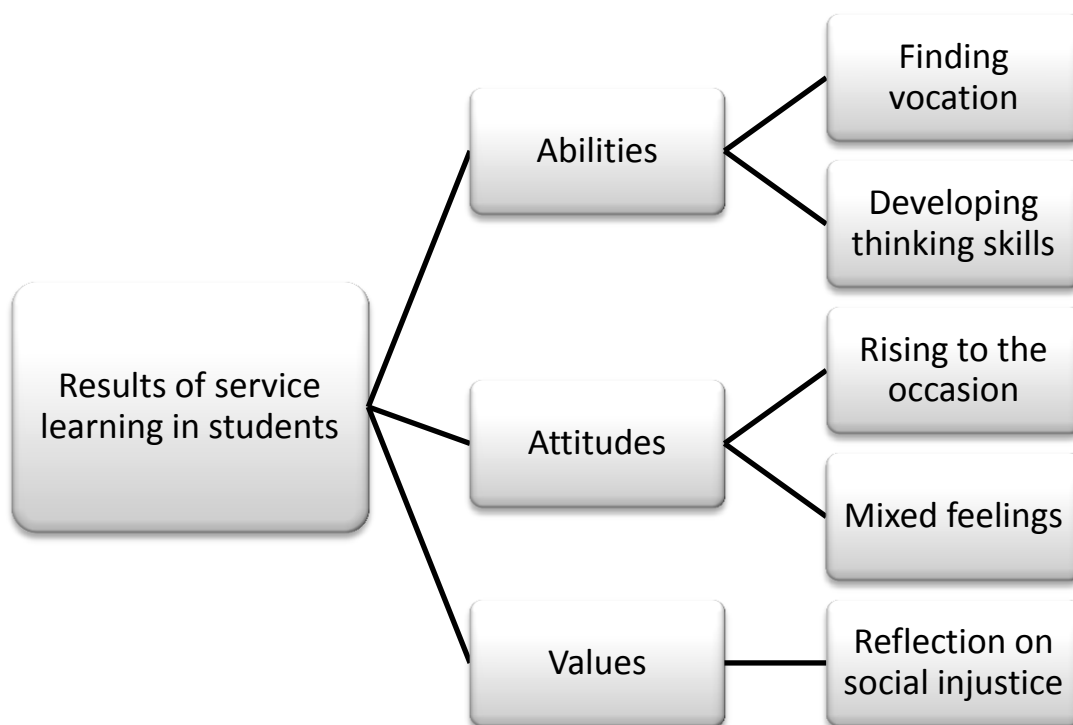

Figure 9. Relationship of factors in SL to program ownership.

Recommendations for Practice

The conclusions from this study provide information for recommendations for the development of teacher and administrator ownership of their schools' SL programs. The entire SL program should be developed as part of a greater CE initiative within the school (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). This will strengthen of the belief of teachers and administrators that educating in character is part of their responsibility as educators. While it is imperative that the administrators show a commitment to the development and implementation of the program (Schultz et al., 2010; Winings, 2002), equally important is including the teachers as part of the development and planning team (Koster & Dengerink, 2008). Their input, opinions, and feedback regarding the program should play a key role. It is very possible that two important elements will expand as the program evolves. First, the teachers' sense of caring will likely grow (Noddings, 2005). Attention must be paid to how they view the program and its impact on themselves and students. Second, the teachers and administrators will learn more about SL as they are experiencing it. However, it is recommended that professional development (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) on SL be held to fill in the gaps of the experiential knowledge. The relationship between research questions, key findings, conclusions and recommendations for practice can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12

Relationship Between Research Questions, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Research Questions	Key Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their knowledge of the SL model implemented school wide?	• Subjects could define SL and identify many of the necessary elements. • Subjects could identify the objectives for the use of SL and could recognize the benefits for students linked to the design of the SL activities. • Subjects express that they have sufficient knowledge of the SL model to adequately implement it with students. This knowledge primarily came through experience and self-learning. • Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to suggest improvements to the program. • Subjects had sufficient knowledge of the SL model to compare it to practice as they experienced it.	1. Experiential knowledge was the key factor for teachers and administrators in understanding and implementing the school's SL program. 2. The experiential knowledge did not provide a complete understanding of the SL model.	It is recommended that professional development on SL be held to fill in the gaps of the experiential knowledge.

(continued)

Research Questions	Key Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
	• Subjects could describe how SL began and has evolved over time in their school.		
	• Subjects could identify their place as teachers and administrators in the SL program, specifically, as the one responsible for planning, feedback, setting the stage, and guidance.		
	• Subjects struggled with understanding the distinctions between community service and SL.		
	• Strikingly absent from the data were mentions by the subjects of formal training in SL through professional development courses or other avenues.		

Research Questions	Key Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
How do High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their views about their roles in the shaping of students' character through SL?	• Subjects express their belief that it is their responsibility to shape students' character through SL. • Subjects see their role as facilitators who awaken the conscience of students, help them reflect, help them discover things about themselves, and motivate students. • Subjects enjoy their role of shaping students' lives through SL. • Subjects feel responsible for the future: the future of their students and feel a duty to society to form change agents. • Subjects feel they must be an example for students with their service.	*1. Teachers and administrators at the school possess a strong sense of caring.* *2. Teachers and administrators are empowered by implementing SL with their students.* *3. Teachers and administrators believe that educating in character is their responsibility.*	The entire SL program should be developed as part of a greater Character Education initiative within the school. This will strengthen of the belief of teachers and administrators that educating in character is part of their responsibility as educators.

Research Questions	Key Findings	*Conclusions*	Recommendations
How do the High Tec Middle School teachers and administrators describe their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program that has been implemented school wide?	• Subjects believe that SL is a necessity in schools in the current security climate in Mexico. • Subjects have seen positive results in students as a result of SL in the areas of development of: attitudes, abilities, knowledge, and values. • Subjects' inner motivation to participate in SL is because they enjoy it and/or they want to make a change in students and in the world. • Subjects feel that they are taken into consideration in the school and that they have taken part in shaping the SL program. • Subjects view themselves as having a key role as the motor of SL. • Subjects see the positive impact that SL has had in themselves.	1. Teachers' and administrators' ownership of the school's SL program is derived from: having sufficient knowledge of the SL program, possessing a strong sense of caring, feeling empowered by the implementation of the SL program, and possessing a belief that it is their responsibility to educate students in character.	Administrators must show a commitment to the SL program. Teachers should be involved in the development and planning of the SL program. Pay attention to how teachers view the impact of the SL program on themselves and their students.

As a result of this study, our school has determined that the primary change to be implemented will be to provide professional development for teachers and administrators to address the gaps in SL knowledge that were identified. The professional development will provide guidance on evaluation and assessment of the impact of SL on students, how to include student voice in the SL design, and how to encourage student ownership of the SL program.

Recommendations for Further Study

This action research study has examined the experiences of teachers and administrators involved in implementing a school wide SL program at one middle school. The findings and conclusions have shed light on the development of ownership of the program. Even though the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the SL program were included in the study, there was no program evaluation involved to examine the impact the SL program has on students. A further investigation is needed into how teacher and administrator ownership of a SL program influences the efficacy it has in impacting students. This program evaluation of the SL program could be done by asking students to do journaling before, during, and after service on topics identified as objectives of SL such as: empathy development, empowerment, and service. The data gathered from the journaling could be analyzed to show the impact of the SL program on students over time.

A second recommendation for further study for someone replicating this study is to include specific questions which ask participants to describe the difficulties they have had in implementing SL. It is also recommended to include questions regarding how

teachers assess and evaluate students' learning and character development as a result of the SL program.

Final Thoughts

The use of SL in the context of a larger CE program provides the opportunity for a school to include a practical component into the teaching-learning process that has the potential to impact students' academic learning and character formation. A key issue that can be understood from this action research study is the importance of ownership by teachers and administrators of the school's SL program. Rainer and Matthews (2002) even went as far as to say, "ownership could be described as the linchpin, or a central and cohesive element, of knowledge construction" (p. 22).

It appears that there are specific components of a SL experience that contribute to the teachers' and administrators' ownership of the program. These are: location of the SL program within a greater CE context in the school, promoting teacher empowerment through teacher voice within the project, providing professional development regarding service learning, and providing opportunities for teachers to experience SL in action.

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APPENDIX A

Personal Invitation

Kym Acuña, Principal Investigator
Dr. Linda Purrington, Dissertation Chair
██████████████████████

As you are all aware from the work that we have been doing on the action research team, you are all being invited to participate as subjects in the action research study for my dissertation regarding our role in the SL program in our school. The study is entitled, "An action research study of Mexican teacher and administrator experiences in developing and implementing a SL program."
Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study as a subject you also may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.
I am giving all of you an informed consent form. If you choose to participate, please read and sign it. You can leave it in the red folder on the desk of my administrative assistant.
You may answer the online questionnaire by going to the following website: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JTKMFH3. The track ID feature is NOT checked on the data collection website.

 Your answers will be confidential as there is no tracking mechanism utilized in the questionnaire software.
If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Purrington, by email or phone.
Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B

Permission from University President

TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY.

November 16, 2011

To Whom it May Concern:

Having talked with Kym Acuña and understood her research proposal, I give her the permission of the *Tec de Monterrey, Campus Zacatecas* to conduct the Action Research project entitled, "An action research study of Mexican teachers' and administrators' experiences in developing and implementing a service learning program" with the understanding that the action research project will involve teachers and administrators of the *Secundaria Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Zacatecas*.

If I can be of further assistance, feel free to contact me at

guardado@itesm.mx

Sincerely,

Angelberto Guardado Astorga
General Director
Tec de Monterrey, Campus Zacatecas

Campus Zacatecas
Pedro Coronel No. 16
98600 Guadalupe, Zac. México

Campus Zacatecas

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent For Participation In Research Activities – Online Questionnaire

Participant:

Principal Investigator: Kym Acuña

Title of Project: An Action Research Study of Mexican Teacher and Administrator Experiences in Developing and Implementing a Service Learning Program_____

1.   I , _____, agree to participate in the dissertation research study being conducted by Kym Acuña under the direction of Dr. Linda Purrington.

2.   The overall purpose of this dissertation research is to examine the Secundaria Tecnologico de Monterrey teachers' and administrators' knowledge of SL, views regarding their role in student character formation through SL and their feelings of ownership regarding the SL program.

3.   My participation will involve the following:
I will answer an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 15-20 minutes to answer.

4.   My participation in the study will take place over a period of one month. The study shall be conducted at the Secundaria Tecnologico de Monterrey.

5.   I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research are:
To better understand teachers experiences in designing and implementing SL. This understanding can help to train and support teachers and administrators to increase the impact of SL on students.

6.   I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include:
Sharing information about my involvement in the SL program with other teachers and administrators at my school. I also understand that I only need to share what I feel comfortable sharing.

7.   I understand that my estimated expected recovery time after the experiment will be:
Not applicable

8.   I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

9.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I also understand that I may participate in all or part of the study.

10.   I understand that the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others. I understand there is a possibility that my medical record, including identifying information, may be inspected and/or photocopied by officials of the Food and Drug Administration or other federal or state government agencies during the ordinary course of carrying out their functions. If I participate in a sponsored research project, a representative of the sponsor may inspect my research records.

11.   I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. Linda Purrington at ███████████████ , ███████████ if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Jean Kang, Manager of the GPS IRB Pepperdine University, ███████████████ .

12.   I will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of my participation in this research which may have a bearing on my willingness to continue in the study.

13.   I understand that in the event of physical injury resulting from the research procedures in which I am to participate, no form of compensation is available. Medical treatment may be provided at my own expense or at the expense of my health care insurer which may or may not provide coverage. If I have questions, I should contact my insurer.

14.   I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

Date

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator	Date

APPENDIX D

Instructions Online Questionnaire

Dear Action Research Team Subject:

By answering this online questionnaire you are expressing your consent to participate as a subject in the action research dissertation study "An Action Research Study of Mexican Teacher and Administrator Experiences in Developing and Implementing a Service Learning Program."
The online questionnaire should take you from 15-20 minutes to complete. When you finish please click on submit. The link for the questionnaire is:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JTKMFH3

There will be no identifying or tracking data on your questionnaire answers to ensure confidentiality.
Thank you for your time.
Regards,
Kym Acuña
Principal Researcher
Doctoral Student, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX E

Online Questionnaire Service Learning

Please answer the following 3 questions in your own words.

1. How did the on-site service activity compare with what I understand about the SL model we are using in this program?

2. Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, do I see myself as promoting CE through this SL experience? How?

3. Based on my experience supervising the students' on-site service, how do I see my voice represented in the project?

Please answer the following three self-rating questions by using the following scale from 1 to 5: 1 - completely agree, 2 - somewhat agree, 3 - neutral, 4 - somewhat disagree, and 5 - completely disagree:

1. I have sufficient knowledge about SL to adequately implement a SL project with my students.

2. I think that our SL project has a positive impact on students' character development.

3. I feel that I have played an important part in the development and/or implementation of the SL project.

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Prompts

Please describe your experience working with SL.

1. Describe the process of how your school got started in SL and how the program evolved.

2. What do you think a teacher's role is regarding the shaping of students' character through SL?

3. What do you believe is the purpose for SL?

4. How do you think SL projects should be developed?

5. What motivates you to do SL with your students?

6. What are some of the outcomes that you have seen in your students or in those benefitting from the service as a result of SL projects?

7. Describe your students' learning from their SL projects.

8. How has involvement in SL with your students affected you?

9. How have you been influenced regarding service and social change from your experience with SL?

10. Given the current security climate in Mexico, what do you think the role of SL should be in schools?

11. Would you recommend SL to other schools? What advice would you give them about implementation?

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent For Participation In Research Activities–Focus Group

Participant:

Principal Investigator: Kym Acuña

Title of Project: An Action Research Study of Mexican Teacher and Administrator
Experiences in Developing and Implementing a Service Learning
Program

1.   I , _____, agree to participate in the dissertation research study
being conducted by Kym Acuña under the direction of Dr. Linda Purrington.

8.   The overall purpose of this dissertation research is to examine the Secundaria
Tecnologico de Monterrey teachers' and administrators' knowledge of SL, views
regarding their role in student character formation through SL and their feelings
of ownership regarding the SL program.

9.   My participation will involve the following:
This includes participating in a focus group which will take approximately 1
hour and 30 to 45 minutes

10.   My participation in the study will take place over a period of one month. The
study shall be conducted at the Secundaria Tecnologico de Monterrey.

11.   I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research are:
To better understand teachers experiences in designing and implementing SL.
This understanding can help to train and support teachers and administrators to
increase the impact of SL on students.

12.   I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated
with this research. These risks include:
Sharing information about my involvement in the SL program with other teachers
and administrators at my school. I also understand that I only need to share what I
feel comfortable sharing with the group as the action research team will know
which of the opinions from the focus group are mine.

13.   I understand that my estimated expected recovery time after the experiment will
be:
Not applicable

15.   I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.

16. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I also understand that I may participate in all or part of the study.

17. I understand that the investigator(s) will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others. I understand there is a possibility that my medical record, including identifying information, may be inspected and/or photocopied by officials of the Food and Drug Administration or other federal or state government agencies during the ordinary course of carrying out their functions. If I participate in a sponsored research project, a representative of the sponsor may inspect my research records.

18. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Dr. Linda Purrington at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Jean Kang, Manager of the GPS IRB Pepperdine University, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

19. I will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of my participation in this research, which may have a bearing on my willingness to continue in the study.

20. I understand that in the event of physical injury resulting from the research procedures in which I am to participate, no form of compensation is available. Medical treatment may be provided at my own expense or at the expense of my health care insurer which may or may not provide coverage. If I have questions, I should contact my insurer.

21. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

_____

_____
Participant's Signature

_____
Date

_____

_____
Witness

_____
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

_____   _____
Principal Investigator   Date