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# "Because of my Identity:" Valuing the Experiences of Latina Students in the Culturally Responsive Service-~Learning Classroom

Janessa Schilmoeller

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, [janessa.schilmoeller@gmail.com](mailto:janessa.schilmoeller@gmail.com)

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"BECAUSE OF MY IDENTITY:" VALUING THE EXPERIENCES OF LATINA STUDENTS  
IN THE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSROOM

by

Janessa Schilmoeller

Bachelor of Arts - International Relations  
St. Catherine University  
2011

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Master of Science - Curriculum & Instruction

Department of Teaching & Learning  
College of Education  
The Graduate College

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## **Thesis Approval**

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Janessa Schilmoeller

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“Because of My Identity:” Valuing the Experiences of Latina Students in the Culturally Responsive Service-Learning Classroom

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Master of Science – Curriculum and Instruction  
Department of Teaching and Learning

Christine Clark, Ed.D.  
*Examination Committee Chair*

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.  
*Graduate College Interim Dean*

Jori S. Beck, Ph.D.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Howard R.D. Gordon, Ed.D.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Doris L. Watson, Ph.D.  
*Graduate College Faculty Representative*

## Abstract

This qualitative case study examined the experiences of three Latina students in a higher education service-learning program. A review of service-learning literature found limited research dedicated to understanding the qualitatively different experiences of students of color operating in historically and predominantly white higher education institutions' service-learning programs. Though the diversity benefits of service-learning are documented, research is inconclusive on whether service-learning program culture adequately meets the needs of all racially/ethnically diverse students. The study utilized student interviews and classroom observation to build understanding of the unique experiences of three Latina students participating in a service-learning course taught by a Latina instructor at a large public Minority Serving Institution (MSI) in the southwestern United States.

Results of this study revealed that all three Latina students had overall positive experiences in the service-learning course; these experiences included an inclusive classroom environment, feeling encouraged to share personal experiences on issues of oppression and power, and gaining an overall sense of agency and empowerment for engaging in the community. The professor's race/ethnicity was important to the Latina study participants who felt that her proud Latina identity made her more relatable and a positive role model of a strong, civically engaged Latina woman in a white male-dominated world. Factors that were found to influence disengagement from service-learning in this study include lack of awareness, scheduling conflicts, socioeconomic status, age, nationality, and exposure to community engagement growing up. Study participants agreed that, most often, issues of race and equity were brought up in the course by individual students sharing personal stories in connection with the course content. This study suggests that service-learning courses in which students of color

enjoy positive experiences are also reflective of culturally responsive classrooms that value the unique experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students. The results of this study provide a model for culturally responsive service-learning design and offer recommendations for future studies on the differentiated experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students based on the identity of the course instructor and level of cultural responsiveness being implemented in the classroom.

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## **Chapter One: An Introduction to the Study**

### **Introduction**

Service-learning programs on university campuses have been shown to have positive impacts on student learning outcomes (Eyler, Giles, Jr., Stenson, & Gray, 2001). However, few of these studies have examined the differentiated experiences and outcomes of service-learning programs for students of color (Seider, Huguley, & Novick, 2013). Though several studies show evidence that students of color experience service-learning programs differently than white students, the methods and results of these studies are discrete and mainly focus on aggregate outcomes rather than specific programmatic experiences (McCullom, 2003; Seider et al., 2013; Winans-Solis, 2014). Service-learning programs are not to be confused with service projects, such as organized volunteer projects, community outreach, and off-campus student employment; service-learning programs include a specific academic component linked directly to student learning. The most common forms of service-learning include internships and service-learning courses. This study focuses on service-learning courses because they are the most commonly studied service-learning program. In order to adequately meet the needs of all students in higher education service-learning courses, these programs' offerings must be culturally relevant, taking into account the unique needs of student participants across race, class, gender, and other cultural/identity factors (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Single-case study methods were implemented to explore how students of color experience a service-learning program at a large public, Minority Serving Institution (MSI) in the southwestern United States.

### **Personal Connection to the Study**

My own experiences in service-learning began in high school when I started participating regularly in service-learning programs. I have since spent over five years coordinating both

domestic and international service-learning programs and numerous additional years participating in such programs throughout high school and college. I consider myself to be critically conscious of many issues of power and equity related to gender, race, class, nationality, and other aspects of diversity. I attribute much of my critical thinking on these topics of diversity to my own experiences participating in critical service-learning programs. I gained awareness of my identity and privilege as a white, middle-class female in such *critically grounded* programs and through that awareness I began to question the racial dynamics of the non-critically grounded service-learning programs in which I also participated. Regardless of criticality, the overwhelming majority of students participating in all of the service learning programs I have experienced were white and/or middle-to-upper class. While I still experienced many "ah-ha" learning moments through my service-based interactions with various local communities, I began to wonder why the only persons of color and/or working class people that I was interacting with were in the communities I "served," not "serving" with me. Additionally, if these experiences proved so meaningful in my understanding of racial power dynamics, why were students of color not also receiving this important knowledge about social justice and structural change? I enter this research with a desire to better understand the differentiated experiences of students of color within service-learning programs in order to better influence program design and policy to meaningfully serve diverse groups of students in the future.

### **Problem Statement and Background**

Over 200 studies have explored the outcomes of service-learning on university students; however, few studies have examined the differentiated experiences of students of color participating in these programs (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Holsapple, 2012; Seider et al., 2013). Though several studies show evidence that students of color experience service-learning

programs differently than white students, the methods and results of these studies are too discrete to be able to draw meaningful general conclusions (McCullom, 2003; Seider et al., 2013; Winans-Solis, 2014). In order to adequately meet the needs of all students in higher education service-learning, programs must be responsive to the unique needs of student participants across race/ethnicity, class, gender, and other cultural/identity factors (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Accordingly, additional research is necessary to begin to broaden what is known from the discrete to the general regarding the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs. Continuing to expand the research in this area may provide more insight into these differentiated experiences such that program culture can be improved, thereby increasing the recruitment and experiences of students of color in service-learning courses.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore and document the experiences of students of color in a service-learning course at a large public, Minority Serving Institution in the southwestern United States. This study utilized a single-case study method to explore the unique experiences of three participating students of color through individual interviews, observation of these students in one program activity, program artifact review, and informal/informational interviews with program staff. This study fills a void in research on the experiences of students of color in service-learning and, in so doing, seeks to expand on the results from previous studies that have also sought to explain why the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs have been qualitatively different than those of white students.

### **Introduction of the Research Questions**

This study answers the primary research question: How do racially and ethnically diverse students experience a service-learning program at Southwest State University (pseudonym).

Since previous research affirms that students of color have different experiences than white students in service-learning programs, this study narrows the scope of past research to explore how and why these experiences are different for students of color in one such program (Chesler & Scalera, 2000; Jones, Robbins, and LePeau, 2011; Winans-Solis, 2014). Several ancillary research questions support answering the primary research question:

1. What factors attract racially/ethnically diverse students/groups to the program, what factors keep them involved with the program over time, what factors influence their disengagement from the program?
2. How might the service-learning interests/needs of students from different racially/ethnically diverse groups be similar and/or divergent? What factors contribute to the similarities and divergences?
3. How do issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest in service-learning programming, including related coursework? How do racially/ethnically diverse students/groups perceive the facilitation of these issues in the classroom relative to their needs?

### **Operational Definitions**

#### **Minority Serving Institution**

A Minority Serving Institution (MSI) refers to an institution of higher education that enrolls a high percentage of racially/ethnically diverse students (U.S. Department of Interior, n.d.). Government-designated MSIs are eligible for grants under Title III & Title V provided that the institution shows commitment and support to these diverse student populations. The institution in this study was granted MSI status in 2012.

### **Hispanic Serving Institution**

The institution selected for this study also qualifies for status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015a), an institution of higher education is eligible to apply for grants as a HSI if it has an undergraduate full-time enrollment of students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic in the year preceding the application.

### **Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution**

The institution in this study additionally meets federal requirements for designation as an Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The U.S. Department of Education (2015b) qualifies institutions as AANAPISI if the undergraduate student enrollment population is at least 10 percent Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander. In order to receive new grants under Title III & Title V, the institution must successfully complete applications for official AANAPISI and HSI status demonstrating institutional support for these specific student populations.

### **Student(s) of Color**

In this study, the term student(s) of color is defined as a student identifying as African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino/Latina, Native American/Alaska Native, more than one race, and other. In the United States, 67% of Hispanic/Latino/Latina adults say being Hispanic is part of their racial and/or racial and ethnic background (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2015). Hispanic/Latino/Latina is referred to as both a race and ethnicity in this study per participants' preferences. In order to avoid overgeneralization and further racialization between "white" students and "everybody else," this study refers to participants and results in terms of specific racial/ethnic identity preferences whenever possible.

## **Community-Learning**

The term "service" implies a connotation of unequal and unbalanced relationships (Rosenberger, 2000). According to Kendall (1990), the term "service" provokes an understanding of inequity between the "servers" and "those served" in which the "server" possesses the resources that "those served" do not possess. Thus, using the term "service-learning" can easily be wrapped with deficit thinking that overshadows the justice-oriented goals of many "service" learning programs in higher education. Rosenberger (2000) suggests the term "community-learning" as a way to balance the power dynamics present in the dialectic nature of service-learning research. For the purpose of this study, community-learning will be used interchangeably with service-learning as a reminder of the need for balance of power between learners on both the university and community side of the educational exchange. It must also be noted that when the term "service-learning" appears in this study, the hyphen is used to highlight the interconnected and reciprocal link between service and learning.

### **Scope and Significance of the Study**

Much of the research and discussion pertaining to multicultural issues in service-learning centers on a human relations approach to learning, emphasizing reducing prejudice and fostering intergroup relations rather than affirming differences and promoting social justice. According to O'Grady (2000) many researchers in the field of service-learning use "students" or "communities" as coded language for white students and middle-class communities. This research challenges this racially coded language by exploring the unique experiences of students of color as qualitatively different from white students in service-learning.

This study is also significant for research in the fields of multicultural education and service-learning because it seeks to fill a gap in understanding the experiences of students of

color in service-learning programs, and to build on limited previous studies that have sought to explain why the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs have been different than those of white students. By identifying and explaining these differences, service-learning programs can make structural changes to better affirm the diversity of students and better meet the needs of students of color.

### **Chapter Summary**

In order to adequately meet the needs of all students in higher education service-learning, programs must be responsive to the unique needs of student participants based on race, class, gender, and other cultural and identity factors (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2004). The study challenges the dominance of Euro-centric service-learning research by focusing on the experiences of students of color participating in service-learning programming and building on limited research that has sought to explain why the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs have been different than those of white students. By identifying and explaining these differences in the context of a specific service-learning program, the selected institution can make structural changes to better meet the needs of specific diverse student populations as an emerging HSI and AANAPISI. Chapter two of this study reviews the literature pertinent to the study. Chapter three outlines a method for implementing this study's goal to answer the research question: How do racially and ethnically diverse students experience the service-learning program at a public university in the southwestern United States? Chapter four presents the findings of the study, and Chapter five engages in a discussion of the importance of the study for research in the broader field.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Chapter one provided background information for the study and outlined the importance of further research on the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs. This chapter will, through a review of the relevant literature, provide background knowledge on research related to the study. First, this chapter will explain the conceptual underpinnings that guide this study, namely critical service-learning and multicultural education. Next, this chapter will review the research outlining the potential diversity-related benefits of service-learning programs. This review will continue with literature examining race-related issues in service-learning and describing the differentiated experiences of white students and students of color who participate in service-learning programs. Finally, this chapter will discuss the need for further research to expand on the existing literature.

Though a database search of service-learning research produces hundreds of results pertaining to the effects of service-learning programming on student and community outcomes, there is very little information available about how these programs directly impact students of color. Therefore, studies were chosen for review based on their direct ties to race-related issues in service-learning and the potential diversity-related benefits of service-learning.

### **Defining Traditional and Critical Service-Learning**

The term *service-learning* has evolved as both a pedagogy and practice under many definitions and interpretations over the years; however, traditional service-learning generally refers to the process in which students engage in community action that ties academic theory to practice through action and reflection to enhance student learning and meet community needs (Rosenberger, 2000). Barbara Jacoby (1996) defines service-learning as "a form of experiential

education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning" (p. 5). Critics of traditional service-learning claim the emphasis on *service* is unbalanced, volunteerism, charity-focused, and reinforces power hierarchies and welfare approaches to social change (Cruz, 1990; Densmore, 2000; Mitchell, 2008; O'Grady, 2000; Rosenberger, 2000; Sleeter, 2000). Critical service-learning emerged from these critiques as an attempt to address the social justice challenges associated with the field.

Critical service-learning adopts a Freirean lens, recalling the message of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to suggest that the act of service-learning promotes critical consciousness among students and community partners to challenge structural inequalities (Freire, 2014; Rosenberger, 2000). Critical service-learning based on Freirean principles challenges the dialectic of how we refer to the privileged and less privileged as subjects and not objects (Rosenberger, 2000). Though both traditional and critical service-learning models include a recursive cycle of action and reflection with both a classroom and community component of learning, the two models are distinct in how they incorporate social change, power, and relationship-building (Mitchell, 2008). Through an extensive literature review, Mitchell (2008) identified three major components unique to the critical service-learning model: a social change orientation, redistribution of power, and development of authentic relationships with community partners (Figure 1).

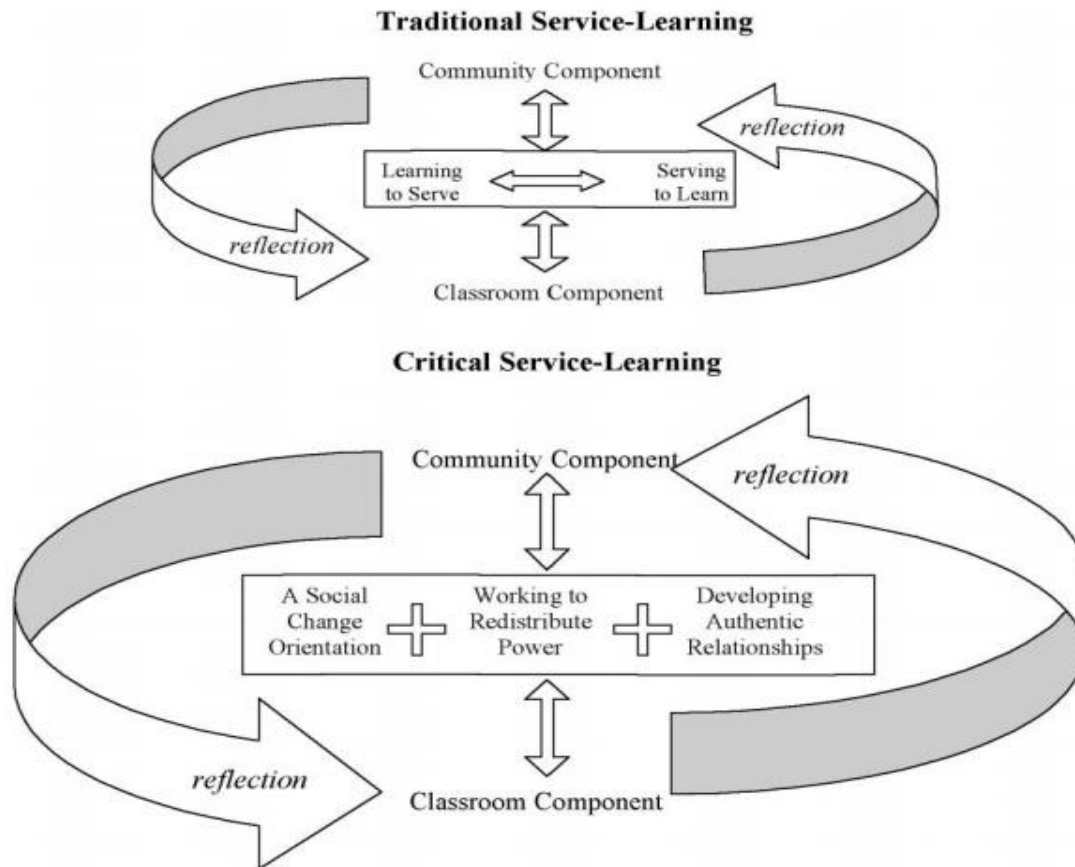


Figure 1. Traditional vs. Critical Service Learning. Mitchell (2008).

### Integrating Service-learning and Multicultural Education

This study seeks to understand the experiences of students of color through not only a critical service-learning lens but also through a multicultural education framework. Similar to critical service-learning pedagogy, multicultural education calls for an examination of structures of domination and oppression within education. Multicultural education expands on critical service-learning pedagogy by critically examining the power structures within the service-learning program to determine whose needs are being met within the academic system. There is concern among researchers that the field of service-learning, while emphasizing prejudice reduction and intercultural education, maintains a curriculum and program structure that is centered on the experiences of white, middle-class students (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Coles, 1999;

Green, 2001; O'Grady, 2000; Seider et al., 2013). According to O'Grady (2000), "without the theoretical underpinnings provided by multicultural education, service-learning can too easily reinforce oppressive outcomes" (p. 12). Even institutions that promote critical consciousness among students participating in service-learning programs are at risk of marginalizing culturally non-dominant students within the service-learning program as long as power is arranged in a way that silences and excludes diverse student voices (Kincheloe as cited in Winans-Solis, 2014). In order for a service-learning program to adequately meet the needs of culturally non-dominant students, the program must, "incorporate into their teaching a conceptual framework that analyzes the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups" (Densmore, 2000 p. 55). Nieto and Bode (2012) outline three primary multicultural goals for any successful educational program:

- 1. Tackling inequality and promoting access to equal education*
- 2. Raising the achievement of all students and providing them with an equitable and high-quality education*
- 3. Providing students with an apprenticeship in the opportunity to become critical and productive members of a democratic society*

(Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 8)

Nieto and Bode's (2012) third goal is particularly salient when discussing the integration of critical service-learning and multicultural education in that students in a multicultural learning environment must be given an opportunity to apply critical thinking on issues of justice and equity on a tangible level within the community as civically-engaged individuals. Based on the goals of critical service-learning and Nieto and Bode's multicultural education goals, it can be argued that a service-learning program in which racially/ethnically diverse students enjoy

positive experiences will also include coursework and instruction that address issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. Additionally, provided that "both the process and the goal of equal participation of all groups in society is the purpose of multicultural education," it can be assumed that a critically multicultural service-learning program would include participation from a diverse demographic of students (O'Grady, 2000, p. 4).

### **Diversity Benefits of Service-Learning**

Over the past two decades, hundreds of studies have examined the effects of service-learning on college students, faculty, institutions, and communities, finding numerous positive personal, social, academic, and relational effects (Eyler et al., 2001). Though most of these studies are not specific to diversity-related issues, an extensive review of over 100 studies published between 1993-2000 on the effects of service-learning found at least 30 studies whose results show that service-learning has positive effects on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding among students (Eyler et al., 2001). Multicultural service-learning specifically has been found to aid in the preparation of teachers to work in culturally diverse contexts (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000).

The success of a service-learning program's ability to reduce rather than promote prejudice depends on how well programs implement contact theory in programming (Erickson & O'Connor, 2000). As a whole, research in the field has found overall positive outcomes of service-learning programs related to diversity and racial attitudes. A separate review of 55 service-learning studies found six specific diversity-related outcomes of service-learning programming: tolerance of difference, stereotype confrontation, recognition of universality, interactions across difference, knowledge about the served population, and belief in the value of diversity (for a detailed review see Holsapple, 2012). Some research suggests, however, that

service-learning may reinforce rather than challenge prejudice and stereotypes (Erickson & O'Connor, 2000; Houshmand, Spanierman, Beer, Poteat, & Lawson, 2014; Tallez, Hlebowtish, Cohen, & Norwood, 1995). Researchers emphasize the important role of the instructor in directly addressing issues of race and equity in the classroom through deliberate dialogue and reflection on differences (Coles, 1999; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Jay, 2008).

### **Race Issues Related to Service-Learning**

The critical consciousnesses of systemic oppression, cross-cultural competence, and prejudice reduction that can stem from multicultural community-learning programs are benefits that should be experienced by all students participating in these programs. Yet, research has shown that many of the participants in service-learning programs are white, middle-class students (Butin, 2006; Coles, 1999; Green 2001; Green, 2003; Seider, et al., 2013). Butin (2006) argues that the "ideal type" of service-learning student is "one who volunteers her time, has high cultural capital, and gains from contact with the 'other'" (p. 481). Demographic data on nationwide participation in community-learning programs are not widely available, however "the overarching assumption is that the students doing the service-learning are white, sheltered, middle-class, single, without children, un-indebted, and between ages 18 and 24" (Butin, p. 481). Chesler and Scalera (2000) challenge this narrative, citing the University of Michigan (at the time of their study) for its overrepresentation of African-American female students in their service-learning program. White students are still acknowledged to be the main recipient of service-learning by many researchers in the field (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Butin, 2006; Coles, 1999; Jones, Robbins, & LePeau, 2011; Winans-Solis, 2014). Due to the prevalence of white students in community-learning programs, much of the research on the diversity outcomes of service-learning centers on the experiences of white students.

This hegemonic body of Euro-centric research has recently been challenged by a growing number of studies on the differences in experiences of white students and students of color in service-learning programs. Several recent studies affirm that students of color experience service-learning differently than white students (Coles, 1999; Green, 2001; Jones, Robbins, & LePeau, 2011; Seider, et al., 2013; Winans-Solis, 2014). One explanation for the discrepancy is that service-learning provides a context for many white students to advance through the stages of white racial identity development while students of color are more likely to identify with community members at the site of engagement from the beginning of the project (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Green, 2001; Winans-Solis, 2014). It is important to note that the intersection of race and class can also impact the different experiences of students (Green, 2001). While students of color may not undergo "white" racial identity development, Jay (2008) suggests that students of color still explore issues of identity when students "border cross" into communities which are racially/ethnically different from their own racial/ethnic identity, though research on this topic is very limited.

Emergent studies on the unique experiences of students of color in service-learning programs look specifically at outcomes of student participation in communities that are racially or socioeconomically similar to the participants of color (Green, 2001; McCullom, 2003; Winans-Solis, 2014). A qualitative study of 14 undergraduate men and women of color tutoring in a service-learning program revealed that participants felt the community-learning process prompted critical thinking on issues of tracking and educational equity, students reported that race and ethnicity played an important role in making strong connections to tutees, and students of color made direct connections between tutoring and future careers (McCullom, 2003). Green (2001) also found that students of color were able to make strong connections to community

members during service-learning projects because of similar race and class backgrounds as participants at the community site of engagement. Winans-Solis (2014) conducted a multi-case study of three students of color participating in a service-learning course to demonstrate the potential of service-learning as an empowerment pedagogy for marginalized students to re-examine identity and reclaim power over oppressive structures in their lives through meaningful service-learning courses. More research is needed to expand on these distinct and valuable potential benefits of service-learning for students of color.

### **Experiences of Students of Color in Service-Learning Programming**

The emerging literature on the experiences of students of color focuses mainly on the outcomes of service-learning pertaining to interaction with the community site; however, only two studies could be found that specifically examine how students of color experience the service-learning program from an institutional perspective. More specifically, how do students of color experience the service-learning program's culture? The answer to this question encompasses student enrollment, retention, and sense of affirmation within the institution's community-learning program. Coles (1999) conducted an informal case study using conversations, observations, and informal survey data to explain why students of color enrolled in her service-learning courses at lower rates than white students. Coles then implemented pedagogical interventions to her courses to encourage more students of color to participate in service-learning. Based on informal conversations, observations, and informal survey data, Coles speculated that students of color were less likely to participate in community-learning courses because they often possess full-time jobs, are displeased with the service-learning program's white charitable image, or feel they do not need extra exposure to people of color or low income individuals.



Seider et al. (2013) expanded on Coles (1999) research through a comprehensive mixed-methods study of university students who participated in a year-long service-learning program. Researchers surveyed 362 university students and interviewed 30 students in order to better understand the culture of service-learning programs from the perspective of the students of color who participate in them. The results of the study indicated a statistically significant difference in participants' sense of community within the service-learning program based on race. Gender, religiosity, and political orientation were not statistically significant indicators, and socioeconomic class was a marginally significant indicator of participants' sense of community. This finding is consistent with Coles (1999) and Green (2001). Qualitative data from interviews found that participants of color felt silenced in classroom discussions related to race out of concerns about appearing overly sensitive to issues of racism, frustration with conveying their perspectives on race to their white classmates, and concerns about being seen as a spokesperson for their race. The study also attributed students of colors' weaker sense of community within the service-learning program to the "othering" language used by white students in the classroom, which created pointed boundaries between students with racial and socioeconomic differences.

### **Filling the Gap and Expanding Knowledge**

This study seeks to fill part of the gap in research on how students of color experience the culture of service-learning programs in higher education. This study builds on the work of Seider et al. (2013) in exploring whether students of color experience similar feelings of silencing and "othering" in a service-learning program in a different university context. The contribution of this additional research on how students of color experience service-learning programs in higher education can increase external validity of past research and reveal ideas for improving service-

learning programs in order to increase participation and inclusion of students of color in these programs in the future.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one of this paper explained that the purpose of this study is to expand on related research and answer the question: How do racially and ethnically diverse students experience a service-learning program at a large southwestern public university? This chapter reviewed related research to show the connections between multicultural education and service-learning and highlight the gap in research about the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs.

A review of the related literature shows potential for the integration of critical service-learning pedagogy and multicultural education that focuses on promoting critical consciousness of structures of oppression and creating tangible opportunities for students to apply critical thinking on issues of justice and equity within the community. Based on the goals of critical service-learning and Nieto and Bode's (2012) sociopolitically-located multicultural education, a service-learning program in which racially/ethnically diverse students are actively engaged in positive learning experiences should also include coursework and instruction that addresses issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. Additional literature from the past two decades supports the notion that service-learning promotes positive diversity outcomes such as prejudice reduction, critical thinking, and belief in the value of diversity (Holsapple, 2012). However, the existing research posits that the benefits of service-learning programming are experienced differently between white students and students of color (Coles, 1999; Green, 2001; Jones et al., 2011; Seider, et al., 2013; Winans-Solis, 2014). The very limited research that exists on these differentiated experiences emphasizes the different outcomes of service-learning

from a community-centered standpoint (McCullom, 2003; Winans-Solis, 2014). Only two primary studies explore the ways in which students of color describe their interactions with service-learning program culture (Coles, 1999; Seider et al., 2013). Thus, there is an imminent need to expand the research base on how students of color experience the culture of service-learning programs in higher education. Chapter three explains the methods used in this study to research how students of color experience the service-learning program at Southwest State University. Chapter four describes the findings of the study in detail. Chapter five discusses the results and their importance to service-learning research as a whole.

## **Chapter Three: Methods**

### **Introduction**

Chapter one of this study introduced the research question and importance of this study in challenging racially-coded service-learning research by providing insight into the experiences of students of color participating in these programs. Chapter two provided a review of literature pertinent to this study, including conceptual understandings of multicultural education and critical service-learning, the diversity benefits of service-learning and limited studies on the differentiated experiences of white students and students of color in service-learning programs. This chapter explains the methods used in the study by restating the research question and reviewing the researcher's approach to the study. The role of the researcher is examined in relation to ethical risks of study. Additionally, this chapter outlines the methodological procedures implemented in the study including participant and data selection, collection, and analysis.

### **Restatement of Research Purpose**

This study utilized a single-case study method to explore the unique experiences of students of color in a particular higher education service-learning context. This study sought to fill a gap in research on the experiences of students of color in higher education service-learning programs from the perspective of students of color participating in such a program. Research suggests that the integration of critical service-learning pedagogy and multicultural education theory will result in a service-learning program that is culturally affirming, which incorporates critical dialogue and reflection via coursework and instruction that addresses issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity (Densmore, 2000; O'Grady, 2000). Research also suggests that to actualize a critical multicultural service-learning program,

participation from a diverse demographic of students must exist (O'Grady, 2000, p. 4). Based on these key elements of inclusive service-learning programming, this study explored whether the experiences of students of color reflect the existence of a critical multicultural service-learning program; the study also sought to document the unique experiences of students of color in the service-learning program at a large public, MSI in the southwestern United States. This study builds upon previous studies that have sought to explain how and why the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs have been qualitatively different than those of white students.

The primary research question: *How do racially and ethnically diverse students experience the service-learning program at a large public university?* was explored through the following three subcategories of ancillary research questions:

1. What factors attract racially/ethnically diverse students/groups to the program, what factors keep them involved with the program over time, what factors influence their disengagement from the program?
2. How might the service-learning interests/needs of students from different racially/ethnically diverse groups be similar and/or divergent? What factors contribute to the similarities and divergences?
3. How do issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest in service-learning programming, including related coursework? How do racially/ethnically diverse students/groups perceive the facilitation of these issues in the classroom relative to their needs?

Two additional questions were initially included in the research questions: *What are the racial/ethnic demographics of students involved in the program?* and *Are there any demographic*

*patterns in how students from different racial/ethnic groups participate in the program?* These questions were removed from the study because they were secondary to the specific experiences of the three participants of color in the study and there was no data available through the institution's service-learning program that would enable the study to accurately or meaningfully address these questions.

### **Approach to the Study**

A single-case study approach was selected for this study because of the open-ended nature of the research questions (how and why approach), which focus on contemporary events, including many behavioral events that may not be easily controlled in other research designs (Yin, 2009). The case study method is important to this study due to the explanatory nature of the research questions and the need to provide an extensive qualitative description of the experiences of students of color (Yin, 2009). Case studies allow the researcher to "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). This case study was instrumental in nature, starting and ending with a dominant focus on the issues that present themselves in the specific case context (Stake, 1995). In this particular study, I explored the issues, or unique experiences of students of color, as they are intricately tied to political, social, historical, and personal contexts within these students' participation in the specific service-learning program at the selected university. Rather than control for the social, political, and personal variables affecting students of color's experiences, the case study method allowed me to emphasize the complexities of these interconnected variables in affecting the unique experiences of the participants (Stake, 1995). Individual interviews were used to collect data on the first and second ancillary set of questions pertaining to the ways in which students of color experience the service-learning program with emphasis on factors of participation and academic student needs.

Class observation provided data on the third ancillary set of questions by enabling me to examine the ways that the program addresses issues of race in a service-learning course through the interactions between students and instructor.

## **Methods**

### **Setting**

The case for this study was a service-learning program at a public institution in the southwestern United States. More specifically, the study looked at a specific service-learning course housed under the broader service-learning program at the institution. The program's service-learning courses claim to promote increased understanding of class topics, hands-on job experience, opportunities to contribute to the local community, development of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, growth in understanding of diverse cultures and communities including root causes of social issues, improved ability to handle ambiguity and be open to change, and development of communication and leadership skills (Southwest State University, 2015). A more detailed description of the specific case site will be provided in chapter four.

Access to the site was gained through a purposive approach via pre-existing contacts with site program staff. From this initial access, I gained additional access to other program staff through formal and informal relationship building with staff members within the Office of Civic Engagement and Diversity. My first site contact put me in touch with the Program Coordinator for Service Programs. Through this contact, I was able to connect with the Director of Service Learning (referred to using the pseudonym Anthony Schwartz). After meeting with both of these contacts, I developed a working relationship with them through which I was able to gain permission to access to the research site. The Director of Service Learning recommended an instructor who he thought might be willing to collaborate with me for the purposes of this study.

Through engagement with that course instructor, I was eventually put into contact with the course instructor of the service-learning course selected for this study.

An additional informational interview was conducted with the Director of Service Learning to gain background information pertaining to the program's current enrollment, course offerings, program structure, and services. This interview with the program director took place at a time and location of convenience to the interviewee. The purpose of this preliminary interview was to garner background information on the service-learning program.

### **Participants and Sampling**

This study sought to interview five participants of color enrolled in a service-learning course at the institution. Due to difficulties accessing participants in a limited amount of time from a limited pool of students enrolled in one specific course, only three participants were ultimately selected for participation in the interview portion of this study. Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling method. I gained access to the course through the aforementioned purposive snowballing contacts that emanated from the initial contact with program staff. Initial contact with the program coordinator and Director of Service Learning allowed me to identify service-learning courses that were being offered during the time of my research. Then, I contacted instructors of these courses to identify which course or courses would be most appropriate for this study based on the enrollment of students of color and the willingness of the professors to cooperate with the parameters of my study and my schedule. The instructor of the selected course was asked to informally speak about my research with individual students of color in her courses. The instructor identified students to contact me about the study and provided these students with a flyer containing information about the study and contact information. This participant identification process avoided the singling out of students of color



during an otherwise open call for participants via a classroom presentation. All students of color, including those who identify as more than one race, were considered for participation in this study; once chosen to participate, participants were given the opportunity to racially/ethnically self-identify during the interview. Browne (2005) found that snowball sampling can be an effective strategy for recruiting participants from marginalized backgrounds or from groups whose experiences are not validated by the dominant narrative because it allows for easier identification of potentially difficult to access populations and the process allows participants to become more familiar and comfortable with the research process before agreeing to participate. Students who agreed to participate signed an informed consent document prior to participating (Appendix A). I did not intend for participants to be compensated for their participation in the study; however, a lack of initial responses to the call for participation led me to offer a \$10 Starbucks gift card to participants who agreed to participate in the interview portion of this study (the study IRB was amended accordingly). At the outset of the interview, participants were informed that their personal information would be de-identified in the study through the use of researcher-selected pseudonyms. Participants were also informed that they could leave the study at any time with no consequence. Three students responded to the call for participants and were interviewed individually at a time and location convenient for each participant.

### **Risk of Participants**

There was no foreseen risk to participants, beyond them experiencing some discomfort in answering interview questions and/or in being observed during program activities. As mentioned previously, because participants could drop out of the study at any time for any reason without consequence, risks of participation were particularly low. One major limitation and potential risk of previous service-learning studies was that data were collected from students' course

assignments, leading the researchers to assume that students' responses were honest and truthful in spite of the pressure to complete assignments that would result in high grades (Holsapple, 2012). "This is a particularly concerning assumption for studies that address diversity-focused programs, as college students are well-practiced in parroting responses about racism and inequality that present what they believe instructors want to hear" (Holsapple, p. 14). In order to elicit honest responses from students and eliminate the risk for participants to give the "correct" answer, participants were assured in the consent process that their responses to interview questions would be kept as confidential as possible and would not affect their grade. Participants were also assured that participating in the study was not in any way a condition of doing well in the course.

### **Data Sources**

This study used two primary data sources: individual interviews with students of color and observation of one service-learning course. An artifact review (course syllabus and project rubrics) and informal/informational interviews with the Director of Service Learning also served as supplemental data for the purpose of providing background context to the case site. The staff member involved in this informational interview was not presented with an informed consent document because the purpose of the interview was to collect background information about the service-learning program and not about the staff member's opinions of the program. Therefore, since the purpose of the interview was "about what" and not "about whom," it was not considered human subject research by the Institutional Review Board (Hicks, 2014). The single-case study focused on the service-learning course, housed within the service-learning program, as its primary unit of analysis. Individual interviews examined the ways in which students of color experienced the service-learning course and classroom observation examined the ways that

the program addresses issues of race and power in its service-learning courses through the interactions between students and instructors.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected via interviews and direct observation. Because qualitative interviews often evolve with each interviewee's unique responses, a simple set of interview questions (See Appendix C) were used to guide the process (Stake, 1995). The interview questions were designed to elicit information relating to the main and ancillary research questions at focus in the study. The interview questions focused on information about participants' experiences in the service-learning classroom. Participants were also asked to self-identify race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status in the interview. All three participants in this study identified as a similar race/ethnicity; therefore, this demographic information narrowed the focus of this study to the similar and/or divergent experiences of participants who identified as Latina. The interviews also elicited information about overall satisfaction in the program and the particular needs of students of Latina heritage participating in the study. Interview questions also asked students to explain their involvement in class discussions, especially those related to issues of race, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. Students' perceptions of the ways that race/ethnicity, privilege/oppression, and equity were addressed in the course have particular salience for assessing whether the course provided affirming multicultural spaces for students of color (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Interviews took place in a convenient location near campus based on each student's availability and location preference. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. For the duration of the study, all data were stored on a password protected laptop that only used a password-protected hotspot to connect to the Internet.

The laptop was kept in a locked office in the researcher's home and/or in the office of the Principal Investigator on the university campus. Two interviews took place prior to the observations in order to provide context for possible actions to watch for in the class observation. Due to scheduling conflicts, the third interview was completed the day following the observation.

Direct observation in the service-learning classroom focused on identifying connections between students' interview responses and classroom interactions and dynamics between interviewees, other students in the course, and instructors. All students in the class were presented with a consent form to allow collection of data during the observation (Appendix B). Consent forms were handed out and collected from all students at the same time so that students choosing to participate would not be identifiable from students choosing not to participate. All 26 students in the class did consent to participate in the classroom observation. The consent form for the observation portion of this study only referred to the use of such data to identify answers to the third ancillary question area pertaining to how issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest in the service-learning program, including related coursework. Therefore, there was no direct mention in this form about the students of color who were selected for individual interviews. This was done to further protect the confidentiality of interviewees. A single two and a half hour instructional period was observed for the selected service-learning course. All interviewees were selected from this same service-learning course. Through direct observation of instruction, I sought to identify how the instructor facilitated dialogue and reflection on differences, and whether the responses of white students and/or students of color elicited language of "othering" and deficit thinking (Jay, 2008; Seider et al., 2013). I also observed for ways that the teachers' racial/ethnic identity was incorporated into her

teaching methods and for the instructor's reaction to students who shared personal experiences in the class discussion. The observation also focused on whether students or the instructor were primary initiators of conversations about race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, or equity.

### **Data Collection and Procedural Timeline**

Data collection was scheduled to begin in September; however, the study was delayed due to set-backs with the Institutions Review Board and subsequent scheduling conflicts with the course instructor due to midterm exams. Interviews finally took place in mid-October. Course observation occurred October 22, 2015 after two of the interviews were complete. Due to the delay of approval from the Institutional Review Board, course scheduling conflicts with midterm exams, and the graduate college deadline for theses submissions, there was no time to complete a second classroom observation. The third interview was completed on October 23, 2015.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The purpose of data analysis is to understand behavior, issues, and contexts with regard to the particular case of study (Stake, 1995). To do this, data were aggregated for themes using Creswell's (2005) process of dividing the text into segments, labeling segments with codes, reducing overlap, and transforming codes into themes. Interviews were coded and grouped in themes related to the primary research question, including feelings of inclusion or isolation in class discussions, teacher qualities that impacted the experience, and the prevalence of critically multicultural topics in course content. A code book was created to separate codes into themes related to the ancillary research questions (Appendix E). Transcripts from all three interviews and single class observation were coded and separated into themes using the same code book.

Both data triangulation and investigator triangulation were used to support the construct validity of the study. Data triangulation occurred by comparing responses from the three

interviews with data from direct observations to identify converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 2009). An external audit from a second researcher who is of color and who has content expertise on issues relating to multicultural research provided additional investigator triangulation for the study (Stake, 1995). Two external auditors were selected for this study. Each investigator was selected based on her similar racial/ethnic identity to the participants. One secondary researcher identified as Mexican-American female and subsequently reviewed the interview data from a Mexican-American female participant. The second external investigator identified as a Latin American woman from Central America and subsequently reviewed the data from the remaining two Latin American female participants of Central American heritage.

First, I reviewed each interview transcript individually and created codes that were related, though not limited, to the ancillary subcategories of the study. Then, the first external auditor reviewed data from the first interview transcript independently, without access to my original codes. An initial code book was created by simplifying the overlapping codes that appeared on both of our data analyses of the first interview transcript. Then, I presented the code book to the second external auditor to use as she coded the second and third interview. Meanwhile, I also coded the second and third interview using the code book. The auditor was not constricted to the codes in the book, and any additional codes that were identified were subsequently added to the code book. I compared coding from each external audit against my own coded data and then reduced overlap and looked for common codes between both coded transcripts for each participant. After reducing for overlap and finding common codes among each participant, I sorted the codes into themes relative to the sub questions and then looked for themes that arose across all three interviews. Then, I coded the data for the observation using the same code book and identified overlap between the observation and the three coded interviews.

Once data had been coded and triangulated, I analyzed the data against Nieto and Bode's (2012) Characteristics of Multicultural Education to evaluate whether the experiences of students of color in Southwest State University's service-learning program were consistent with critical multicultural programming (Figure 2). The Characteristics of Multicultural Education chart was used to determine whether the level at which racially/ethnically diverse students enjoyed positive experiences in service-learning aligned with the level of critical multicultural characteristics exhibited by the program culture as hypothesized earlier in chapter two.

	Characteristics of Multicultural Education		Characteristics of Multicultural Education		
	Monocultural Education	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Antiracist/antidiscriminatory	Racism is unacknowledged. Policies and practices that support discrimination are left in place. These include low expectations and refusal to use students' natural resources (such as language and culture) in instruction. Only a sanitized and "safe" curriculum is in place.	Policies and practices that challenge racism and discrimination are initiated. No overt signs of discrimination are acceptable (e.g., name calling, graffiti, blatantly racist and sexist textbooks or curriculum). English as a second language (ESL) programs are in place for students who speak other languages.	Policies and practices that acknowledge differences are in place. Textbooks reflect some diversity. Transitional bilingual programs are available. Curriculum is more inclusive of the histories and perspectives of a broader range of people.	Policies and practices that respect diversity are more evident, including maintenance bilingual education. Ability grouping is not permitted. Curriculum is more explicitly antiracist and honest. It is "safe" to talk about racism, sexism, and other examples of discrimination.	Policies and practices that affirm diversity and challenge racism are developed. There are high expectations for all students; students' language and culture are used in instruction and curriculum. Two-way bilingual programs are in place wherever possible. Everyone takes responsibility for challenging racism and discrimination.
Basic	Defines education as the 3 Rs and the "canon." "Cultural literacy" is understood within a monocultural framework. All important knowledge is essentially European American. This Eurocentric view is reflected throughout the curriculum, instructional strategies, and environment for learning.	Education is defined more expansively and includes attention to selected information about other groups.	The diversity of lifestyles and values of groups other than the dominant one are acknowledged in some content, as can be seen in some courses and school activities.	Education is defined as knowledge that is necessary for living in a complex and pluralistic society. As such, it includes much content that is multicultural. <i>Additive multiculturalism</i> is the goal.	Basic education is multicultural education. All students learn to speak a second language and are familiar with a broad range of knowledge.
Pervasive	No attention is paid to student diversity.	A multicultural perspective is evident in some activities, such as Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo, and in some curriculum and materials.  There may be an itinerant "multicultural teacher."	Student diversity is acknowledged, as can be seen not only in "Holidays and Heroes" but also in consideration of different learning preferences, values, and languages. A "multicultural program" may be in place.	The learning environment is imbued with multicultural education. It can be seen in classroom interactions, materials, and the culture of the school.	Multicultural education pervades the curriculum, instructional strategies, and interactions among teachers, students, and the community. It can be seen everywhere: bulletin boards, the lunchroom, assemblies, and so on.
Important for all students	Ethnic and/or women's studies, if available, are only for students from that group. This is a frill that is not important for other students to know.	Ethnic and women's studies are only offered as isolated courses.	Many students are expected to take part in curriculum that stresses diversity. A variety of languages are taught.	All students take part in courses that reflect diversity. Teachers are involved in overhauling the curriculum to be more open to such diversity.	All courses are completely multicultural in essence. Students of all backgrounds are visible in all aspects of the school, curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular.
Education for social justice	Education supports the status quo. Thinking and acting are separate.	Education is somewhat, although tenuously, linked to community projects and activities.	The role of the schools in social change is acknowledged. Some changes that reflect this attitude begin to be felt: students take part in community service.	Students take part in extensive community activities that reflect their social concerns.	The curriculum and instructional techniques are based on an understanding of social justice as central to education. Reflection and action are important components of learning. The community's concerns are evident in school activities.
Process	Education is primarily content: "who," "what," "where," "when." The "great White men" version of history is propagated.	Education is both content and process. "Why" and "how" questions are tentatively broached.	Education is both content and process. "Why" and "how" questions are stressed more. Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, students of all backgrounds are more apparent.	Education is both content and process. Students and teachers begin to ask, "What if?" Teachers build strong relationships with students and their families.	Education is an equal mix of content and process. It is dynamic. Teachers and students are empowered. Everyone in the school is becoming a multicultural person.
Critical pedagogy	Education is domesticating. Reality is represented as static, finished, and flat.	Students and teachers begin to question the status quo.	Students and teachers are beginning a dialogue. Students' experiences, cultures, and languages are used as one source of their learning.	Students and teachers use critical dialogue as the primary basis for their education. They see and understand different perspectives.	Students and teachers are involved in the "subversive activity of real learning." Decision-making and social action skills are the basis of the curriculum.

Figure 2. Characteristics of Multicultural Education. Nieto & Bode (2012).



### **Role of the Researcher and Ethical Considerations**

The role of the researcher in this study was that of a nonparticipant observer and interviewer. As a primary researcher of a dominant racial group interviewing students of a non-dominant racial group, there were ethical considerations to consider when analyzing data in order to avoid researcher bias because of my white identity. Therefore, two skilled and knowledgeable Latina researchers served as secondary coders of the research data. Using experienced external auditors to code the data of participants with a similar racial/ethnic identity as the auditor strengthens the validity of the study's results.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one introduced the research questions and purpose of this study to examine how students of color experience service-learning programs. The researcher's interest in the topic of study was introduced and the scope and sequence of the research was explained. The second chapter revealed, through literature, the need to expand research on the experiences of students of color in service-learning through a multicultural critical-service learning lens. Chapter three explained the methods used in this study to document the experiences of students of color in a service-learning program.

This study utilized single-case study methods to examine the unique experiences of students of color in a specific service-learning program at Southwest State University. Interviews with three students of Latina heritage and direct observation of each student in a service-learning class provided data on how the Latina participants experienced the service-learning program and explored why their experiences may be different from how other students experience the program. Data were coded for themes and triangulated to increase validity. Two experienced external auditors of color also coded the results to provide investigator triangulation because of

the sensitive nature of the power dynamics between the white racial identity of the researcher and the marginalized racial/ethnic status of the participants. Informed consent was gathered from all participants prior to collecting data, and the researcher took steps to ensure responses were honest by informing participants that their responses would remain anonymous and participation in the program would not affect their grade in the service-learning course. The findings of this qualitative case study, which are presented in chapter four, contribute to a limited body of research on the understanding of how and why the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs have been qualitatively different than those of white students. Chapter five provides insight into program changes that can better meet the needs of racially/ethnically diverse students in service-learning programs and implications for this study to service-learning research more broadly.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this study, as described in chapter one, was to describe how students of color experience service-learning programs through a case study utilizing data from three students of color in a specific service-learning course at Southwest State University. Chapter two explained the theoretical importance of critical multicultural service-learning programs in creating positive experiences for students of color. Chapter two provided a review of relevant literature pertaining to the diversity benefits of service-learning programs while simultaneously outlining the limits of previous research to specifically document the experiences of students of color participating in these programs. Chapter three outlined the methods used in this single-case study, primarily three student interviews, one classroom observation, an informational interview with program staff, and artifact review of the course syllabus and assignment rubrics. Data from these sources were coded for themes by the primary researcher as well as by two external auditors of racial/ethnic groups reflective of that of the participants. Data were then triangulated to answer the primary research question: how do racially and ethnically diverse students experience a service-learning program at Southwest State University? This chapter documents the results of the completed study by first providing a detailed description of the case site, including a description of the institution's service-learning program and an overview of the selected service-learning course in this study. The chapter then describes the experiences of each student interview based on themes related to the ancillary questions of this study:

1. What factors attract racially/ethnically diverse students/groups to the program, what factors keep them involved with the program over time, what factors influence their disengagement from the program?
2. How might the service-learning interests/needs of students from different racially/ethnically diverse groups be similar and/or divergent? What factors contribute to the similarities and divergences?
3. How do issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest in service-learning programming, including related coursework? How do racially/ethnically diverse students/groups perceive the facilitation of these issues in the classroom relative to their needs?

Next, this chapter documents the findings of the class observation as it pertains to the third ancillary question regarding the ways in which issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest themselves and/or are facilitated by the instructor. The observation findings also highlight similarities and/or divergences from the experiences described in participants' interviews.

As previously noted, the names of all participants, including program staff, instructor, course title, university, department and college names, are referred to herein using pseudonyms in order to further protect the privacy of participants and confidentiality of the data. As mentioned, the university in this study is referred to as Southwest State University. The service-learning course instructor is referred to as Ms. Valenzuela. The service-learning course in this study is referred to using the pseudonym CEUC 200. Ms. Valenzuela teaches in a helping profession-related department, housed in a disciplinarily eclectic academic college at the

university (hereafter referred to as the “College of City Affairs”), in which Lluvia Ontiveros, Sara Lainez, and Isabel Aguilar (the three participants in this study) are all enrolled students.

## **Overview of the Site**

### **Service-Learning Program**

The Service-Learning program at Southwest State University has experienced exponential growth since 2012 when the current director took over the position as Director of Service Learning. Prior to 2012, the program had been fairly inactive; however, when the university underwent its undergraduate curricular reform process, the undergraduate learning outcomes were changed to reflect a need for civic engagement and community engagement, which led to the resurgence of the service-learning program under the leadership of a new director, Anthony Schwartz. The current program has gone from serving roughly a dozen courses in 2012 to serving over 100 courses with a service-learning component in 2015. Of these courses, 80% reach first-year students, 15% are second-year students, and the remaining 5% include the upper classes of students. The majority of these courses, which include a service-learning project component coordinated through the university's service-learning program, are embedded in required first-year seminar courses on exploring majors. Several similar courses with service-learning components are beginning to be developed in the second and third year courses as well. Schwartz hopes that by introducing service-learning in the first year courses, students will develop an expectation and desire for further community-learning in their future coursework (personal communication, 16 October, 2015).

There are no available definitive data at Southwest State University on the demographics of all students participating in service-learning courses. However, the Service Learning Spring '15 Learning Outcome Survey (N.A., 2015) presented to all students enrolled in a spring service-

learning course does provide limited data on the demographics of 140 student respondents. The breakdown of respondents by ethnicity is as follows:

- 17.5% - Asian
- 0.63% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 20.62% - Hispanic/Latino
- 31.87% - White
- 5.0% - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- 8.75% - Black/African American
- 15.63% Multiracial

The survey, which is administered by the service-learning program at the end of each semester, reveals that 68.82% of respondents were very satisfied with the variety of dates and times service projects were available. The survey also showed that 64.52% of respondents were very satisfied with their ability to link their service experiences with the course written assignments, 34.07% of respondents felt their knowledge on political, economic, or social issues in the community was enhanced by these courses, and 48.89% of respondents identified that their awareness of privilege or sense of obligation to other citizens in the community increased based on their participation in service-learning. Unfortunately, the survey provides no breakdown of responses by ethnicity or other demographic factor, thus, it is unclear for whom the service-learning program is having these benefits.

The existing service-learning courses are mainly episodic, meaning students participate in a one-time, 3-5 hour service project and incorporate that project into their learning through some sort of reflective paper or presentation component. "The goal is if we plant enough project seeds we'll start seeing curriculum in courses that fall along the lines of an intentionally built service-

learning program" said Schwartz (personal communication, 16 October, 2015). Schwartz has seen evidence of service-learning specific courses emerging as a by-product of the embedded community engagement projects that began in the required courses; however, intentionally-designed service-learning courses that include on-going community engagement throughout the semester are very limited and depend heavily on the individual instructors of these courses.

Due to the extreme growth of the service-learning program in a short period of time run by an office with just two full-time staff members, the focus of the service-learning program has been to find stability, maintain existing community partnerships, and seek a sustainable mechanism for moving forward that will build departmental support and long-term buy-in from instructors so that courses can continue in spite of faculty turn-over. Schwartz has developed open forums for faculty and community organizations to meet and find areas of convergence in order to build meaningful partnerships that meet both the needs of community members and the need of instructors. Though there is an effort to simultaneously meet the needs of both the community and institution, Schwartz did not mention how the needs of students were addressed in this process or whether a separate forum exists to solicit the needs of students enrolled in service-learning courses beyond the end-of-term survey. The program currently has over 180 community organizations seeking partnerships with the university; yet, Schwartz struggles to meet the overwhelming community interest because of limited faculty committed to ongoing service-learning partnerships. Because the institution is a commuter school, where undergraduate students are members of the local community and instructors are more often transplants, Schwartz sees a need to find instructors of service-learning courses who are committed to making the institution *of* the community and not just *in* the community where their students reside. The service-learning program sees itself as a conduit to ease resistance to implementing

service-learning courses by managing liability waivers, mitigating logistics with the organizations, and helping nonprofits navigate the institutional climate in order to find the right courses for the right projects.

At this point, there is no database for students to search for listings of service-learning courses. Students can identify service-learning sections of courses when registering; however, many of these sections simply fall under course requirements that students discover during the first class. While most of these courses include episodic, one-time service projects, Schwartz emphasized the important role of the instructor in teaching students about the systemic impact of project-based service activities in terms of encouraging students to ask questions about the root causes that community non-profits are trying to address and encouraging students to stay involved in the organizations as a volunteer after the course ends. Schwartz hopes that though repeated one-time service-learning projects, instructors will begin to value community-learning and make curricular changes to incorporate ongoing service-learning into their syllabi.

### **Service-Learning Course**

Because the design of each service-learning course at Southwest State University is highly dependent on the instructor, providing background on the specific course selected for this study is important. The service-learning course selected for this study is a second-year seminar on civic engagement in urban communities (referred to as pseudonym CEUC 200). The course is a requirement for all students enrolled in a major offered through the Southwest State University's College of City Affairs. The course is taught by Ms. Valenzuela, a self-identified Latina instructor in a helping professions department in the College. According to the course syllabus, CEUC 200 "introduces students to principles of citizenship in a democratic society. This course will focus on civic engagement, with particular emphasis given to the urban



environment and urban issues in a multicultural and global context. Ultimately, this course will explore societal issues and the roles citizens can play to positively impact their communities" (see Appendix F).

In order to achieve the learning outcomes related to civic engagement in a multicultural and global context, the course includes three main assignments: a book panel discussion project, a research paper on a social/urban/civic challenge, and the civic engagement project and presentation. All three assignments were brought up by participants in this study. Each student in the course participated in a panel discussion about one of the five books listed in the course syllabus. Group members presented the thesis and key points of the book to the remainder of the class and facilitated a discussion based on the presentation. Book topics included: systemic issues in criminal justice, the struggle of the working poor in the United States, oppression of women worldwide, the making of a Mexican American middle class, and economic reform in ending poverty.

The studied service-learning component of the course is episodic, as is typical of service-learning courses at Southwest State University. Students in CEUC 200 were required to complete a minimum of four hours of community engagement at an organization of the student's choosing. The instructor provided students with a list of 32 local community organizations that had agreed to accept participants from the course. Students were not limited to the 32 organizations and were free to contact any organization to garner permission to complete their hours. Students were free to spread out the engagement over a period of several site visits or complete it all in one visit depending on the schedules of the site and the student. At the conclusion of the experience, students developed a 10-minute presentation to classmates explaining the basics of the issue that the organization addresses, the basic history and mission of the program, how the

organization is working to address the issue, who the organization's stakeholders are, what the organization's needs are, and recommendations for engaging the organization's stakeholders in furthering their mission. Students could complete their project any time before the end of the semester. Although CEUC 200 includes a one-time service-learning opportunity, the course differs from other project-based service-learning courses in that themes of community engagement and civic responsibility are intrinsically woven into the remainder of the course curriculum outside of the specific service-learning component. The interconnectedness of these themes will be explored in the discussion section in chapter five.

### **Findings**

The findings of the study are based on the data collected from the individual interviews with the three study participants and field notes from a single classroom observation. Each participant will be introduced, and then her interview will be discussed relative to the foci of the three ancillary research questions: 1) Factors that influence engagement/disengagement from service-learning; 2) Factors that contribute to similar/divergent experiences of students; and, 3) Prevalence of issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. The classroom observation data is presented generally, and then relative to student book discussion presentations and instructor lectures.

#### **Participant 1: Lluvia Ontiveros**

Lluvia Ontiveros is a self-described Mexican-American undergraduate student hoping to be accepted into one of the specific helping profession degree programs at Southwest State University. Lluvia has lived in the local area since she was in the fourth grade. Lluvia expressed overwhelmingly positive experiences in CEUC 200, citing multiple references to an inclusive classroom environment, a newfound sense of agency and empowerment for civic engagement,

and feeling comfortable participating in class discussion. Lluvia's experiences are described below as they pertain to the ancillary questions of this study.

**Factors that influence engagement/disengagement from service-learning.** As previously mentioned, CEUC 200 is a required course for all students enrolled in an academic program through the College of City Affairs. Therefore, as a student hoping to be accepted into the helping professions degree program, Lluvia enrolled in the service-learning course to fulfill her degree requirements. Though the course was required, Lluvia said she would "absolutely" sign up for another service-learning course in the future, citing "lack of knowledge" of what opportunities are available as a reason for disengagement in similar courses. Lluvia expressed apprehension about signing up for CEUC 200 because she felt participating in community engagement activities would be difficult to manage into her schedule as an undergraduate student with two children. On four occasions, Lluvia stated that she was apprehensive about being able to complete a service-learning project in the community. She cited that she thought the work would be overwhelming and not feasible in her schedule with her two children. Lluvia's positive experience in the service-learning course made her feel that engaging in the community, both during the course and afterwards, was possible even with her two children. When asked if there was anything else Lluvia wanted to share about her service-learning experience, she said,

I was really nervous and scared because the way that [the university] made it seem like you had to commit like 100% to the school...and that for me is hard to do because I have a family, but just going through this class has made me see that you can still get involved, you can still help and whether you have a family or not you can find ways to work around that and even get them involved, so that really opened up my eyes to that, which really took a lot of weight off my shoulders and just has made that experience a lot better.

Lluvia made similar attributions to the course experience as a factor contributing to her sense of agency and empowerment as well as the importance of the course in showing the feasibility of civic engagement on several other occasions. The instructor in particular was cited as an important role model in helping Lluvia realize that community engagement is manageable in her life. According to Lluvia,

The teacher has a daughter too, and she talks about how she includes her daughter and for me that's important too. When she said that, it made me feel like just because I have kids and I have a life doesn't mean that I can't participate.

Lluvia said her experiences in the course gave her confidence that she can be involved in her community and stated that the instructor provided "a lot of information" about organizations and activities that students can get involved with in the community. Although Lluvia had not yet completed her service-learning project, she had scheduled a six-hour engagement activity and expressed a desire to stay involved in the community as a civically engaged citizen after the completion of the course.

**Factors that contribute to similar/divergent experiences of students.** When asked how her race/ethnicity has impacted her experience in the course, Lluvia said that because of her race there were certain topics related to service-learning that she had never experienced growing up. Lluvia said that community service was not a part of her childhood, and that her lack of exposure to community engagement changed the way she approached the course because she did not know what was available to her in the community. It is important to note that while Lluvia cited race as a factor for disengagement from community service growing up, other participants of a similar racial backgrounds did have exposure with community engagement as a child, indicating other factors may be involved, such as socioeconomic status. Growing up, Lluvia's

parents worked two jobs and did not have much time to spend with the family. When her parents were home, they spent time with their family and never really got involved in the community.

Lluvia believed that socioeconomic status, lack of education and lack of awareness of opportunities in the community may have also influenced her family's lack of engagement in the community growing up.

Lluvia did not feel disadvantaged in the course despite not having exposure to community engagement as a child. Instead, Lluvia liked the instructor's approach to the course because she was conscious of all different kinds of backgrounds, including differences in social capital. According to Lluvia, the instructor went "into detail about everything, and so it doesn't exclude you for example, if you come from a poor family or something." While citing socioeconomic status and race as a potential reason for being unfamiliar with community service opportunities, Lluvia also discussed socioeconomic status as a factor in her ability to better relate to the course content where other students may not. According to Lluvia, some students might not be able to relate to topics such as the social welfare system as easily because they might never have experienced poverty. For Lluvia, her adverse economic situations growing up added, rather than subtracted, to her better understanding of the course content.

On two occasions, Lluvia said she felt comfortable participating in class discussions whereas she feels uncomfortable speaking in other classes. She attributed her comfort to the instructor's awareness of social issues and social welfare, saying that other teachers were not as open minded. Lluvia said that the only other course where she felt comfortable speaking in class was another course taught in a helping professions department. She felt that the specific helping profession department she has chosen may have taught their instructors to be more aware of social issues in their teaching. Lluvia said that her interest in this helping profession program

contributed to her positive interest in the course content and wondered whether students from other degree programs felt disengaged from the course.

**Prevalence of issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity.**

When asked to discuss the ways in which issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity arise in course readings and discussion, Lluvia said that issues have been brought up by specific students in the course based on personal experiences. Lluvia said that race and gender specifically had come up in the class discussions by students who have made statements that began, "because of my race" or "because of my gender." Lluvia experienced the instructor's facilitation of these discussions as inclusive and affirming. She said that the instructor never shut anyone down for sharing their personal experiences during class time. Instead, "If you have an opinion or you have an answer you can give that out and [the instructor] doesn't look down on that, and that kind of welcomes more responses and more answers." Lluvia said she felt that her racial/ethnic identity was valued by the professor, saying that the instructor never said any negative remarks about her identity. Lluvia said the opposite was true and that, "when anyone asks questions or gives an idea, she always seems happy to have us answer and get engaged in the class." Lluvia did not list any definitive connections between the assigned readings and how they addressed issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, or equity; at the time of the interview, Lluvia had only read the first textbook for the course. However, she did mention that topics of race, equity, power/privilege, and oppression arise in ways that students do not really stop to think about in terms of why people are not as involved in the community anymore. Lluvia did not expand on why people are not as involved in the community beyond factors of age.

Lluvia's experience in the service-learning course was positive. She said she, "loved this class," and made numerous references to the inclusive environment created by the instructor.

Lluvia said she felt more confident as a result of the course, felt more comfortable participating in the discussions, and thought that the instructor encouraged participation from all students and provided information that makes civic engagement feasible for students.

**Participant 2: Sara Lainez**

Sara Lainez is a self-identified Spanish female from Canada. When asked to identify racially/ethnically, she said, "Well, I always say I'm Spanish, and I always get slack for that, I mean I should be saying I'm Salvadorian and Canadian. I always just pretty much say Canadian and Spanish and that's my identity." Sara moved to the United States with her husband a few years ago and relocated to the local area in May 2015. Sara enrolled in CEUC 200 to fulfill the requirement for her helping profession program and was not aware that there was a larger service-learning program at the institution. At the time of the interview, Sara had not yet completed her service-learning project, nor had she selected a site to visit. Sara's experience in the service-learning course was mostly positive. Her experiences are documented below.

**Factors that influence engagement/disengagement from service-learning.** Throughout the interview, Sara reiterated her belief that being engaged in the local community is important for students. Though Sara enrolled in the course to fulfill a program requirement, she was pleased that the course was required and felt that all students should be required to take a service-learning course regardless of major. When asked if she was glad to be participating in a service-learning course, Sara said,

I think it's essential. I think they need to make sure that, at this school I think you have to take the course regardless, but I think that's great and I think more people need to get out and kind of get involved and just learn about the community more, but I think all schools should do that to be honest.

Sara also discussed the importance of service-learning courses as a motivator to get involved in the community. She said,

I do like that it's required to do the service-learning component because it kind of gets you into the community and gets you out of your comfort zone. I just got here in May so I really don't know many of the nonprofits yet so I think it's kind of a great push into the community.

When asked if she would be willing to sign up for a future service-learning course, Sara said she would definitely take another service-learning course because of her desire to get involved in her community and because of the benefits that getting to know the community will have for her as a helping professions specialist.

Ties to the community were important for Sara, and she wished that the course required more than four hours of community engagement. She believed that everyone can make time for community engagement; however, Sara also recognized her own economic privilege to be able to not work while going to school. "I definitely think everybody can make time for [community engagement] but I'm also speaking like I'm not working right now," she said. Sara recalled how other people in the course had to balance difficult schedules and that students without a car may have to pay extra money to take a bus to visit their organization's site. Sara said,

I think for people with other schedules, having some other activity might be useful, or to be honest even going somewhere during a class period might help others. Again, for me it's not an issue but for others getting that extra time is a little difficult, especially if someone doesn't have a car or what not.



She recommended completing an activity as a class or scheduling two days out of class time to devote to some sort of awareness activity on campus as a good alternative to get students to engage with other students and participate without having to travel to another site.

Growing up, Sara had many opportunities to participate in community engagement activities. Her Catholic school required that students participate in a minimum of 40 hours of community service in order to graduate. Additionally, her father instilled a sense of civic responsibility to help others in any way that you can afford to do so. The perseverance of her father as a poor man from El Salvador who eventually immigrated and received a PhD in the United States instilled in Sara an appreciation for the things she has and a strong value for giving back to the community.

**Factors that contribute to similar/divergent experiences of students.** When asked to reflect on the service-learning course experience, Sara said she loved the class discussion portion and was surprised to find herself participating in the class discussions much more than she ever did in high school. Sara attributed her increased participation in the course to the informal dialogue method of instruction that emphasized personal experiences in the learning process. Hearing other students' personal stories in class made Sara aware of her economic privilege relative to course topics of social welfare and poverty. Sara said she had "never really experienced poverty" and "hearing other peoples' situations is just definitely an eye opener because you would never guess that someone has gone through something just from looking at them." Sara explored the idea of ethnic stereotypes from her own identity as a Spanish woman. According to Sara, there are many ethnic stereotypes about people of Spanish backgrounds having poor uneducated parents, yet she grew up in a single-parent household and said she was always taken care of well. Sara discussed the prevalence of stereotypes about her ethnicity at

other points in the interview as well. When asked if she felt like her professor valued her racial/ethnic identity, Sara said she definitely felt that her professor affirmed her identity and made her want to be more in touch with her ethnic identity. Sara said,

When I was younger the Spanish people would always make a joke that I was whitewashed or whatever, I mean it's not that it bothered me, but it was just that like I didn't live in the area that all the Spanish people lived and what not and I think that to be honest moving out here to [local area] makes me kind of a little more in touch with my Hispanic side and then you know it's having [a Spanish] teacher, you can tell when she teaches just the way she teaches and just the way she talks, you can hear that she's proud to be Spanish and I think it's subconsciously kind of made me want to be more in touch with my heritage and more vocal with it. I don't know, I think it's just nice to have a teacher who is Hispanic, is proud of it, you know she's proud of her identity and you know it's not like she's just like 'I'm Hispanic' and what not, I definitely think she welcomes all different cultures and she makes it evident when she speaks.

I asked Sara to explain how she could tell that the instructor was proud of her heritage; Sara said it was evident in Ms. Valenzuela's pronunciation of Spanish words, including the names of students. According to Sara, the professor would say, "I'm a Latina," with a distinct Spanish accent while all other English words in the sentence would be spoken in an American accent. Sara said that when she says, "I'm a Latina," herself, she generally used the English pronunciation of the word, "Latina," even though she speaks fluent Spanish and "should" pronounce it the proper way. Sara believes that the instructor's Spanish pronunciation in her speech is evidence of the instructor's pride in her Latin heritage.

**Prevalence of issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity.**

Having a professor of a similar ethnic identity was also important to Sara in the facilitation of dialogue around issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. Sara said,

I think it's important to have a professor like Ms. Valenzuela. She's a Latina so I can relate. I'm Hispanic as well, and I think not only having a Caucasian teacher all the time in a lot of courses, I don't know, it just kind of makes it a little more comfortable when you talk about oppression or things you can relate to. I just think having her being the same culture as well it makes things easier.

Sara cited discussion on topics of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity as arising based on the personal experiences shared by classmates in the form of "because of my race" or "because of my background" statements. The facilitation of these statements within the larger group discussion was perceived to be inclusive by the participant. Sara cited a specific example of a student who shared a personal experience with the welfare system during the discussion of a group's book presentation. Sara said the professor welcomed the personal share and encouraged other students to think about how to advocate for policy changes and speak up on the issue. In doing so, Sara felt that the instructor was encouraging further discussion.

Although Sara welcomed the instructor's facilitation of class discussions, she felt that the required readings were not as resourceful for her learning because the narrative layout of the book was difficult to follow. Sara preferred a qualitative method of learning from the stories of others and questioned whether the course needed a textbook at all. The book was centered on U.S. society and therefore did not reflect Sara's Canadian identity. Sara also assumed the book was referring to participants in community engagement as white Americans; she did not notice any explicit critical multicultural themes in the first required book for the course. Sara had not

yet read her discussion book nor had the class started reading the second required textbook for the course prior to the interview. Sara found class discussions to be much more valuable to learning and believed that Ms. Valenzuela had created a "safe space" in the classroom where many students felt comfortable speaking. The course itself gave Sara a sense of agency and empowerment to believe that anyone can make a difference and be engaged in the community.

### **Participant 3: Isabel Aguilar**

Isabel Aguilar is a self-identified El Salvadorian woman who relates, "to being Hispanic and Spanish and Latin American culture." Isabel moved to the United States at the age of three because her father received political asylum in the country. Her family grew up in a poor neighborhood in the local area, and due to her ability to acquire a helping professions position based on her personal life experiences, Isabel now identifies as being part of the middle class because she is able to pay for college, own a car, and live with her fiancé and two dogs. Isabel considers herself a nontraditional undergraduate student because she is older than most students who are in their twenties and attributes her success in her work place to her personal experiences in the community in spite of not having yet finished formal postsecondary schooling.

**Factors that influence engagement/disengagement from service-learning.** Isabel had not yet completed her service-learning project at the time of the interview. However, she was excited about the community engagement component as a way to step outside her comfort zone and expand her passion for diverse populations in the community. Isabel said,

I want to be able to make it a priority to be involved. Not only in my [helping profession] career am I going to be involved, but I want to do it because I want to. I want to be able to broaden my populations that I'm going to be helping, so for this assignment that I have, I'm going to go outside my comfort zone. I've been working with kids with disabilities,

Autism, and specific Spanish speaking families so I've never volunteered or been around populations that are older in hospice care or nursing homes so I'm hoping ... not only to step outside my comfort zone but find a different passion that I didn't have before or make becoming involved a priority of my life.

Isabel enrolled in CEUC 200 to fulfill her degree requirements without understanding the topic of the course. Isabel was initially frustrated that she had to sign up for another required course and pay for the additional credit hours for a course her academic advisor told her she was required to take. According to Isabel, the counselor did not explain the course well and did not mention anything about the course content besides "civic engagement." Now that Isabel has been in the course, she said she would be willing to sign up for future service-learning course because it has helped her make community involvement a priority in her life even with all the other things going on in her life. The course has been a "reality check" for Isabel. According to Isabel,

If it's a reality check for me getting older, I think that it's a good learning experience for college students who are younger...I think it's very important to learn now what's happening around the world and not just by one media source but to educate yourself on that, and I think this course does a good job of reminding people, don't just get your news from *here*, get it from *here*, and then reference it to *this*, so I think that's one of the reasons I really like it.

Age came up as a potentially differentiating factor in Isabel's experience in the course on multiple occasions. However, Isabel also said that her experience in the course changed her perceptions on 20-year-old college students and she realized that,

[Young college students] really do care about certain things and really do want to get involved but maybe sometimes just don't know how, or maybe like the rest of us we're all

consumed with something...but for the most part what I learned is that people do really have that interest and I think that the class is needed to give more doors and more branches to pull from so they can know where to go.

The course itself was "forcing" Isabel out of her shell to stop "making excuses" and get involved in her community again regardless of her other life commitments. Isabel said that the instructor's emphasis on personal awareness of media sources helped her become aware of social movements that are happening and understand that, "civic engagement is important no matter who you are or what you're doing."

**Factors that contribute to similar/divergent experiences of students.** Isabel extensively discussed the role of personal experiences relative to learning in her interview. Similar to Lluvia and Sara, Isabel referenced how students in the course typically brought up personal experiences as they related to the course content. At first, Isabel did not enjoy these personal stories because she felt they could not be easily generalized, possibly because of the age difference between her and younger students, and because she felt that the stories sometimes got "too carried away." Though Isabel said the instructor did a good job of bringing these personal stories back to the course topic. Isabel also said that she did not like the personal stories in part because her instructor in another helping professions course had said that personal opinions do not matter in her helping profession because students have to focus their work on the experience of their clients, so students in her other courses sometimes get cut-off by the teacher for sharing personal stories. Isabel said CEUC 200 is different from the other helping professions courses and that personal stories fit with the content. She said, "I don't think people should be cut off for sharing something because obviously you're sharing based on what [the instructor] is asking or what the lecture is."

Isabel struggled with her opinions on this topic and revisited the conversation later on by stating the importance of personal life experiences in understanding the content as well as helping others become more aware of sociopolitical situations. Isabel mentioned one specific conversation in which a student brought up her emotional experiences in the welfare system that could have gotten very tough since it tied social welfare and race into the discussion, but "the professor did a good job of directing it towards what we were talking about." Isabel said,

That was one of those situations where that was a very personal experience but I think she was very brave to share that especially when she got so emotional about it because it did bring a light to people who might not have known that or who have very negative thoughts about that because of what they've heard or what their parents say...so it was very brave of her to share such raw emotion of what she went through, but it was perfect because it showed she's really proof of how the system affected her and that's what I mean, those personal stories are important for this class and that was a really good example and I think the professor did a good job.

Isabel appreciated that the professor brought the conversation back up in another class to tie together the personal experiences of students with future content.

Isabel said she felt comfortable sharing her own experiences as a helping professions specialist in class as it related to the content; however, she was apprehensive about whether she felt comfortable sharing such a raw story as the other student. As Isabel explored her discomfort sharing raw life stories, she did say that although it seemed too touchy for her, she acknowledged how valuable the story was to her own learning experience and so if she felt that if there was an appropriate topic that she had something to share about, she would maybe feel more comfortable sharing that experience to benefit the learning of other students in the classroom.

Though Isabel did not share all of her personal experiences in class, she did feel comfortable participating in discussion and said that her cultural background as a Salvadorian woman helped her connect with the course material in ways her other classmates might not.

I feel that culturally I can understand some things faster and quicker and absorb things or adapt to them...so when I read other things where a culture believes this or they believe you have to do something to get to something else in their lives, it intrigues me more because I grew up with different [traditions].

Isabel made a comparison between the controversial practices of female genital cutting (FGM), which were referenced in a book presentation discussion during the class observation. Although Isabel cited this as an extreme example, she did say her own cultural background helped her be more aware and/or understanding to women who say that FGM is a part of their culture and a rite of passage.

**Prevalence of issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity.** When asked specifically how issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity come up in class discussion and readings, Isabel said the five discussion books collectively referenced all of the critically multicultural topics. Isabel felt that the required text was more difficult to relate to, but that the books for the book discussion projects were either more relatable or more eye opening to what is going on in the world. The book that Isabel presented on was *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (Kristof & WuDunn, 2008). Though she could not relate to the experiences of women's oppression in economically underprivileged countries, Isabel did think the book gave a "reality check" to the actual situations that women face in the world and made her question why she did not hear about these stories in the news she chose to watch. As someone who is older than her classmates, Isabel wondered,



Why was I not paying attention? What was I not doing that I didn't see that? And so I think that's what the books are doing...I think they open your eyes and force you to see what's going on and make you want to be more educated on the topic.

Isabel thinks the books for the discussion project should be required for all students because of the explicit stories of women's situations in different countries as well as the connections between sex trafficking in the United States and abroad as well as the role of American men in purchasing child prostitutes in other countries. According to Isabel,

[The book] did a good job of literally bringing in all aspects and saying this is what needs to be done, and it talked about cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity and not wanting to go in and be a hero because you're an American and I think the book did a good job of showing all aspects of it.

Isabel thought the next book discussion, which covered Hispanic Americans struggling to make it into the middle class, would be very relatable for her because of her ethnic and socioeconomic background.

One critique Isabel had of race, power, and privilege in the texts was that there were few examples of average citizens who are not of privilege and power who were still able to make a difference. Isabel felt that the people who start charities, foundations, or host galas are the people who have power, privilege, and money. She would like to see more examples in the text of people from her generation who are students and work and start organizations or movements that have been successful. Though Isabel said,

I think that's what [the class] is building up to, like hey, everyone can be a part of civic engagement...like the guy in the Middle East who didn't make enough money to feed his family and who lit himself on fire, and obviously that's extreme but movements like that

where it's just average citizens...I think that is important because sometimes I don't think we even realize how important writing a letter to Congress can be and what that can make.

Isabel said that acts as simple as telling personal stories or writing letters can make a big difference in the community.

Throughout the course as a whole, Isabel felt supported racially/ethnically by her Hispanic classmates and her Latina professor. Isabel felt that her instructor valued her racial/ethnic identity because she always pronounced her name correctly, as well as the names of other Latina/o students in the course. "I think with her being Hispanic, she will pronounce your name the right way, that's always very nice, she makes the effort to say, okay, I know your name's pronounced like this," she said. Additionally, Isabel said that her instructor made a point to remember things that students brought up in past classes about their cultural identity and/or personal interests and would bring these experiences back up in future classes, which showed that she values students' identities and also motivates students in the classroom.

Having a Latina professor who is similar in age was motivating for Isabel and provided her with a sense of agency and empowerment. Isabel said about her instructor,

She talks about her work and volunteer experiences in a very male dominated world because when she mentions a lot of her colleagues, she's mentioning men, and for me I think that's so admirable as a Hispanic woman, to be a professor, to be so well educated, and very well connected and doing so much for her community. So I see that as a motivator you know, that she's in this position doing this and it's totally possible for her to do this as a female, as a Hispanic female, in a male dominated, white male dominated world, doing all the things she does.

Isabel mentioned having a second instructor in a Spanish course at Southwest State University who is also a well-educated woman from Latin America. She said that being around two very intelligent, well-traveled, well-educated Latina professors had been "very impactful" in a way that "has been very different for me from pretty much all of my college classes so far."

### **Classroom Observation**

A two and a half hour class period was observed for the purpose of this study. The observation notes were coded for themes using the same code book as the three participant interviews. The main topic of the observed class fell under section IV of the course syllabus: Power, Politics, and People (Appendix F). The subtopic covered in the class was social prelude to revolution, including examples from Tunisia, Iceland, Hong Kong, Venezuela, and Egypt. The class also included a panel discussion on the third book in the discussion project series: *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (Kristof & WuDunn, 2008). The purpose of the observation was to look for similarities or divergences in the ways in which the classroom facilitation compared to the experiences of the three Latina participants documented in the interview process. Additionally, the observation sought to address the third ancillary question of the study pertaining to the ways in which issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity were incorporated into the course. The class consisted of 26 students and one instructor, all of whom consented to participate in the observation. The findings of the observation are separated by the two main class activities that were observed: the book discussion presentation and the lecture on the assigned weekly reading.

**Book discussion presentation.** The class started with a panel presentation and discussion facilitated by a group of five students, including Isabel. The group began the presentation by giving an overview of the book, which compares the forced sex trafficking of women today to

the Trans-Atlantic slave trade of the past. Joseph, a white German male (self-disclosed in presentation), provided an explicit description of the acts of oppression that women face in other countries. Joseph discussed in detail the systemic issues affecting teenage girls in Thailand who are lured into the big cities for economic opportunities and are tricked, kidnapped, or sold into prostitution. He discussed the shame and stigma associated with prostitution in Thailand and explained the corruption by government authorities who are paid off by brothel owners to avoid the problem. He also shared a story from the book about a young woman who was helped to escape from sex trafficking by a nonprofit organization; however, the girl in the story returned to the brothel on her own because of the severe morphine addiction she developed when she was "broken-in" by the brothel owners. Other systemic issues of oppression were discussed as well including economic oppression, immigration laws, health issues such as HIV/AIDS, and discriminatory law enforcement.

A second group member, Susan, extended the conversation about women's oppression worldwide to discuss the long-term health impact of rape for women in Africa. Although she started the conversation by speaking generally about women in Africa as a whole, she did narrow the conversation with facts about maternal mortality in the specific country of Sierra Leone. The speaker discussed the controversial practice of FGM, which was also discussed in Isabel's interview. Susan discussed the fact that FGM can lead to infections if not treated properly. "People are not doing it right," she said. "Well, really there's no right way to do it. It's wrong, but people are, I think, brainwashed in these countries to think women should not have pleasure or something and a lot of women see it as a rite of passage in these countries; it's a human rights issue, and you never hear about it on TV or anything here." Susan's statements were in contrast to Isabel's interview comments about FGM as a cultural practice. This cultural conflict will be

raised again later in this chapter. The group transitioned to a third speaker, who discussed education as an important part of addressing the issues facing women worldwide. According to the female group member, women are not part of the problem, but are part of the solution. She talked about microfinance loans as a part of creating economic opportunity for women and the role of television and media in transforming women's lives because of the ability to become educated and aware of opportunities that women have in different situations from their own. In affirmation of Isabel's comments about the course's promotion of critical awareness of media sources, the speakers referenced the importance of different media sources in either contributing to or countering oppression at least two times during this section of the presentation.

At the end of the presentation, the group presented several key criticisms of the book, including: overly feminist bias, a lack of examples of women's oppression in the United States, and American privilege in volunteerism. The self-determined critiques were critical of social issues related to race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. The group felt the book only portrayed men in a negative image as alcoholics, unsupportive of their children's education, as rapists, and consumers of prostitution. The group also felt that the book focused too heavily on women's oppression in other countries while only providing one paragraph of information about women in the United States who are pushed into prostitution. The group felt that having more examples of people in the United States would help the reader see that "it's not just those people's problems, it's our problem too." Third, the group felt that the only examples of American volunteers in the book were economically privileged and financially able to travel across the world and work with nonprofits in an international context. "I want to be involved in this too but am I financially able to do that in college? Not really," said one female presenter who felt there should be more examples of how average students could get involved. The group's criticisms

raised important critically multicultural topics about privilege and oppression in international service work and echoed the concerns of Isabel, Sara, and Lluvia about the financial setbacks that disengage students from community engagement.

Isabel concluded the presentation by addressing how the book connected to the topic of civic engagement. Isabel emphasized that there are many ways people can get involved either by raising money or going across seas to help. She said the book was "specific about organizations that began by victims of rape themselves, but some of them were American too." Isabel listed at least five specific organizations that were referenced in the book and said that many of the organizations in the book were started by social entrepreneurs who were not satisfied by just giving money, but who wanted to make movements happen instead. Isabel's contribution to the presentation was reflective of her interview responses about the value of intrinsic community engagement and her desire to learn more about average people in the community who have started nonprofit organizations, such as community members directly affected by social issues.

After the forty-five minute presentation had concluded, the panel facilitated a question and answer session with students. During the discussion portion, the instructor responded to the critique that the book was "overly feminist" by emphasizing that the co-authors of the book were a male and female pair. Ms. Valenzuela said,

And although there were some more feminist sections, I think that if the female author would have written the book I think it would've had even more of a feminine perspective, but I appreciate that the male actually wrote it and was out in the field interviewing these girls and was able to illustrate that in the book; it was captured well in the book...it was a very heavy book. It can be very disturbing to realize what is really happening.

Joseph responded to the instructor's statements by sharing a personal experience about how difficult it was to read this book to his wife, who had just given birth to their son. His personal experience was welcomed by the instructor, who thanked him for sharing.

At this point, Isabel responded to an earlier statement by Susan pertaining to the cultural practice of FGM. Isabel mentioned that women in the book felt like people were being invasive of their culture and said they did not need help because FGM is what they are supposed to do in their culture. Isabel reaffirmed her interview responses about her ability to understand other cultural practices because of her ethnic identity. Isabel talked about the complexities of recognizing FGM as part of another culture while knowing there is a lack of knowledge among women in other regions, but, "having it forced down their throats made them not receptive to help from the outside. If you don't look like you're from that region you can't really help sometimes." The instructor affirmed Isabel's statements directly, saying,

As you mentioned, some of the people being interviewed in the book said 'this is my life, why are you coming in here telling us how we should be living or that this is wrong? This is just what happens here,' so some women took it very offensively because people are telling them 'you shouldn't be putting up with this,' and the response is, 'this is our tradition. This is what happens,' and so I thought that was good that you brought that up because it teaches us a lesson, right? We're looking at this issue from an outsider perspective. As we're learning these different stories in different countries we're still outsiders, so who are we to tell them how to live their lives?

Ms. Valenzuela's response showed an understanding of cultural differences, a respect for different cultural identities and personal experiences in class, and a challenge to the dominant

way of thinking, all of which affirmed traits of multicultural education that were brought up in the interviews by all three participants.

Another student challenged Ms. Valenzuela, saying that, "in the past Europeans looked at the slave trade as wrong, but they figured it was a way of life, but we look at the sex trade elsewhere and say 'it's wrong, but it's a way of life.'" A female panelist offered a response to this statement, saying that one of the women interviewed in the book criticized American women who claimed that Muslim women were oppressed for dressing modestly by saying that American women are oppressed because they expose so much skin. The instructor rephrased the comment and challenged the class to think about how they define others as "oppressed." Valenzuela told the class that, "it is important to be culturally aware when trying to help others and to be honest in their stories and what we do and do not know about another person's situation." Her use of questioning to provoke critical thinking demonstrates critical awareness of multicultural issues, especially in relation to civic engagement. The professor transitioned from the book discussion to the lecture on the required readings by discussing her personal experiences with the topic, making connections to sex trafficking in the local area, and emphasizing how her personal reflections helped her see that the book brings awareness about the possibility for "transformational change."

**Lecture.** The professor started the lecture by announcing that the discussion was going to be centered on the notion of power and lack of trust that leads people to social revolution. Valenzuela wrote the word "revolution" on the board and invited students to share what images the word evoked. The instructor utilized a combination of visual PowerPoint slides and videos to introduce examples of counter-power social movements in five different countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Iceland, China, and Venezuela. The instructor discussed occupied spaces as a form of



counter-power movement whereby individuals physically occupy public land to regain power from an oppressive institution. A local connection was made to a recent act by community members in the local area to protest and bring awareness to economic oppression. Valenzuela discussed the importance of occupied spaces for deliberation, which she said gives people the opportunity to reclaim rights. She said,

We've engaged in a few deliberations here in class; a couple weeks ago we were talking about the welfare system and we had a discussion and some of you were not afraid to share your opinions about the welfare system, both positive and negative, so it's creating space in order to do that and discuss those difficult topics.

Valenzuela brought up previous personal experiences shared by students, which affirmed Isabel's statements that the instructor made a point to remember specific information about students and brought up those personal connections in an affirming way throughout class.

Valenzuela showed a video clip that explicitly listed systemic causes, such as high unemployment, rising food costs, political repression, corruption, and lack of free speech as reasons contributing to the Tunisian revolution in 2011. She stopped the film to comment on the way that television networks in Arab countries censored the news of the revolution and highlighted how social media and technology spread the movement to other countries, thus referencing critical media literacy. When transitioning to a video of the Icelandic revolution against economic oppression in Europe, the instructor emphasized that protests were started by "average citizens," who ended up winning seats in Parliament. The role of average citizens was emphasized again in the discussion about the Egyptian revolution, which aligned with Isabel's desire for more real-life, everyday examples of citizens participating in community change.

When the lecture transitioned to the oppressive economic system in Venezuela, the instructor asked if anyone had heard of the revolution on the news last year. When no one said yes, the instructor reminded the class that "several television networks covered it, not just the Spanish networks" (observation, October 22, 2015). Valenzuela repeatedly asked students to think about their news sources, censorship, and the role of social networking in social movements. The focus on awareness of media sources affirmed Isabel's comments, shared in her interview, that the course prompted her to think critically about where she gets her news. While the instructor was discussing the social revolution in Venezuela, she used a Spanish accent to refer to Spanish words, such as "Caracas, Venezuela," as well as the Spanish names of her friends in Venezuela who sent her updates about the protests. As Isabel and Sara both stated in their interviews, the instructor also used a distinct Spanish accent when calling the names of Latina/o students to pick up their midterm exams after class.

At the end of the lecture, Valenzuela emphasized the agency of individual students to take part in social movements for change. She said,

Some of these situations are so monumental we feel so small, but it's important to realize that we each have power. A lot of these revolutions, students were the ones who got involved and said 'enough is enough.' Sometimes you feel like 'I'm just a student,' if you don't like something in the university, people will tell me, 'I'm just a student,' well no, you are not just a student, you have a voice.

Valenzuela gave a specific example of a group of students at Southwest State University who recently came together to prevent an 18% tuition increase. The instructor reiterated that students do have power, both small in terms of joining a group to tell the university to increase parking for students to large examples of creating overall funding changes in the educational

system at the state level. She told students that, "a lot of folks out in the community who hold these fancy jobs are able to do what they're doing towards our communities because we are not speaking up, we are not doing something about it." Valenzuela emphasized the importance of civic engagement to counter privileged companies that make decisions that oppress the majority. Valenzuela asked a specific male student to share a few organizations that he works with locally to create changes. The student eagerly shared the organization he works with and encouraged students to join him. The specific examples of average students engaging in civic engagement align with Isabel's need for more direct, tangible examples of civic engagement in the community and also provide feasible examples of engagement and a motivating sense of agency and empowerment, which were referenced as a positive part of the course by all three interview participants.

Although the observation was heavily filled with examples of civic engagement and discussion of critical multicultural issues in society, the only connection Valenzuela made directly to the course's service-learning project was a reminder at the end of class that the service-learning presentation was coming up and students needed to complete at least four hours of involvement if they had not already done so.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one of this thesis introduced the purpose of this study in investigating the experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students in a service-learning course. Chapter two examined the existing literature on critical multicultural service-learning and the limited documentation of the differentiated experiences of students of color in such programs. Chapter three outlined the qualitative methods, mainly interviews and observations, used to gather data in this study. This chapter provided the findings of the study based on the three interview

participants and one classroom observation. The service-learning program at Southwest State University was described in detail, which revealed that the institution's service-learning courses are largely based on episodic service projects that vary greatly depending on the design implemented by the individual course instructor. The interview results of all three participants were discussed relative to the ancillary questions of this study. All three participants expressed overall positive experiences in the service-learning course. Although none of the three participants had taken part in the actual service-learning project at the time of the interview, each expressed a value for continuing engagement in the community and a willingness to participate in future service-learning courses. The observation data from one class observation were presented based on the two main activities in the class: the book presentation project and the lecture on the required reading. Critical issues of systemic privilege/oppression and cultural awareness were raised by students and the instructor on several occasions throughout the observation. The observation data affirmed statements presented in the three interviews.

Triangulation of data from the three participant interviews and one classroom observation revealed several general themes contributing to the overall positive experiences of three Latina participants in service-learning course CEUC 200 at Southwest State University. These themes include the positive experience that the Latina instructor provided as a role model for Latina students, the value of personal experiences validated by the professor in the learning process, an emphasis on critical cultural and media awareness, and differentiated experiences among Latina students based on age, socioeconomic status, and nationality. These themes will be discussed in chapter five in connection to the specific research question followed by a discussion of the data relative to the characteristics of multicultural education outlined in chapter three of this study.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The first chapter in this study introduced the main research question and ancillary sub-questions pertaining to the qualitative experiences of students of color in a service-learning program at a large public institution of higher education in the southwestern United States. Chapter two discussed the importance of the current study relative to limited existing research on the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs and outlined the ideal characteristics of a critically multicultural service-learning program. Chapter three outlined the qualitative case study methods utilized in this study to document the experiences of students of color in a particular service-learning course via interviews and classroom observation. Chapter four presented the findings of the study by first detailing the case site and then outlining the experiences of each participant followed by a summary of the findings of the classroom observation relative to the experiences of each participant.

This chapter uses the triangulated data from the classroom observation and the overall positive experiences of three Latina participants in service-learning course CEUC 200 at Southwest State University to answer the initial research question of this study: How do students of color experience a service-learning program at Southwest State University? This question will be answered based on themes generated from the ancillary questions of the study and informally introduced in the discussion of the participant interviews in chapter four. These themes include the positive experience that the instructor provided as a role model for Latina students, the value of personal experiences that were validated by the instructor in the learning process, and differentiated experiences among Latina students based on age, socioeconomic status, and nationality. After revisiting the research questions, this chapter discusses gaps in the current

study including the lack of sustained service-learning project integration throughout the course. The results of the study will then be evaluated against the Characteristics of Multicultural Education (figure 2) introduced in chapter three of this study. This chapter will discuss the implications of the research findings and conclude with recommendations for future studies and program design in the fields of service-learning and multicultural education.

## **Discussion**

### **Ancillary Sub-Questions Part I:**

**What factors attract racially/ethnically diverse students/groups to the program?** All three participants in this study enrolled in the service-learning course to meet an academic program requirement. Therefore, the only factor that could be directly linked between the participants and their enrollment in the service-learning course in this study was the course requirement of the College of City Affairs. Additionally, the interview with the Director of Service Learning at the institution confirmed that students are enrolled in service-learning courses because of program requirements, not because of choice. The only place where prospective students can see a list of available service-learning courses is by looking for a special designation next to the course section during the time of online registration. Lluvia was the only participant who was aware that CEUC 200 was part of a larger service-learning program at the institution. Isabel and Sara did not know there was a service-learning office on campus. Therefore, the only factor that could be determined as a reason for enrollment in the service-learning program for the three study participants at Southwest State University was course requirement.

**What factors keep them involved with the program over time?** All three participants expressed a willingness to participate in a future service-learning course at the institution.

Themes that arose as possible factors for continued involvement in the program, and community engagement more generally, over time include: an intrinsic value for community engagement, a sense of agency and empowerment to engage in feasible civic engagement, economic privilege, and access to information about available programs. Lluvia, Sara, and Isabel each expressed positive opinions about wanting to be involved in the community for intrinsic reasons and a personal responsibility to be engaged. All three participants planned to participate in more than the required four hours at their community site. Sara and Isabel in particular said that if they had a good experience at their organization they would try to stay involved over time, and Lluvia expressed a desire to get her children involved in the community as well. Sara believed that because of the intrinsic value of community engagement, all schools, not just Southwest State University, should require students to participate in a service-learning course.

All three participants made references to the feasibility of civic engagement as a result of participation in the course. Lluvia directly attributed this sense of agency and empowerment to complete the service-learning project to the instructor as a role model who is a mother that is engaged in the community even with her children; Lluvia felt that she too could get involved and even include her children in the process, saying, "it's refreshing to know it is doable." Isabel also saw the professor as a motivator and role model of feasible community involvement, saying that it was motivating to have a Latina professor who is well connected and well educated and showing it is "totally possible for her to do all this" in the community as a Latina in a white male-dominated world. Sara affirmed the feasibility of achieving the service-learning project because of the resources provided by the instructor, but acknowledged her economic privilege in being able to access the organization to complete the project without having to balance a work schedule since she was not working while going to school. Lluvia, Sara, and Isabel all said that

the professor provided resources on service-learning projects and resources available in the community for further engagement. This theme was supported by the classroom observation, during which the professor highlighted resources for finding out more about how to get involved with the organizations discussed in the book presentation as well as at least three local organizations students could contact pertaining to sex trafficking of young girls in the local area.

**What factors influence their disengagement from the program?** Factors that could potentially influence students' disengagement from the program include scheduling conflicts, lack of awareness of service-learning courses and community engagement activities, low socioeconomic status, and lack of role models in the community. All three participants acknowledged busy lifestyles as a difficulty in scheduling their service-learning engagement activity. Sara said that although her financial situation allowed her to go to school full-time, she knew of other students who had very busy schedules and had difficulty scheduling the service-learning project. Additionally, she said socioeconomic factors could prevent other students from getting to the actual service-learning project site if they do not have a car and need to pay bus fare. Isabel also said that scheduling conflicts were a reason for disengagement from community involvement and from participating in the service-learning project. However, Isabel viewed these busy life conflicts like school, work and even the desire to rest after a busy week, as excuses for not prioritizing community involvement in her own life. Isabel said she was surprised to find that young college students in the course actually were interested in engaging in the community but were either consumed with their busy schedules or lacked awareness of how to get involved. Isabel also expressed similar concerns as Sara that the majority of people who organize movements and start community organizations are privileged economically. Isabel felt that the course could provide more examples of organizations and social movements locally that are



started by young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which could show that community engagement is for everyone, not just the privileged and powerful. Panelists in the group observation of the book discussion presentation expressed similar concerns about the need to have money in order to participate in civic engagement. The professor was observed in the classroom directly addressing these concerns by emphasizing the role of students in social revolutions because of, not in spite of, low socioeconomic status as a result of economic oppression and promoting service-learning activities happening on campus for students who could not travel to an organization off-campus.

### **Ancillary Sub-Questions Part II:**

**How might the service-learning interests/needs of students from different racially/ethnically diverse groups be similar and/or divergent? What factors contribute to the similarities and divergences?** Themes relative to the interests and/or needs of the three Latina participants in this study include the importance of a professor that affirms the cultural needs of participants, exposure to community engagement growing up, the value of personal experiences in the learning process, and selection of course texts that are relatable to students' identities.

All three participants emphasized the role of their Latina professor as a role model in the service-learning course. Lluvia said the professor helped her realize the feasibility of partaking in service-learning with children. Isabel and Sara were more explicit in emphasizing the value of having a Latina professor who they felt affirmed their identity as Latina students. Having a professor of a similar ethnic background was a factor contributing to the similar experiences of Isabel and Sara. Sara, however, made an explicit connection between Ms. Valenzuela's prideful Latina heritage and her ability to become more in touch with her own ethnic heritage after

struggling with ethnic stereotypes growing up. Sara specifically mentioned feeling that she never "fit" her ethnic stereotypes and was called "whitewashed" by other members of the Spanish community. Sara was the only participant who did not feel she grew up in an underprivileged economic situation; therefore, socioeconomic status may have been a factor in her differentiated and specific needs relating to the affirmation of her ethnic identity by her Latina professor. Additionally, Lluvia is the only participant with children; therefore her family life may be a factor in her divergent explanation for viewing Ms. Valenzuela as an identity-affirming ally in the service-learning course. Having a professor who personified a prideful Latina identity was an important shared factor in participants' positive experiences.

Exposure to community engagement activities as a child also impacted participants' value of community engagement in the service-learning course. Sara expressed the most exposure to community engagement in her childhood, attributing the experiences she had to her Catholic school's community engagement requirements and her father's values for giving back. Isabel said that her father did not value community engagement, but her mother influenced her desire to help people because she would give whatever little money she had, even a dollar, to those who had none. Lluvia said that because of her race she was not exposed to community service in her community growing up and it was not valued by her family. Although Lluvia is Mexican-American whereas Isabel and Sara both have Salvadorian backgrounds, all three participants identify as Latina and had differentiated exposure to community service as children. Socioeconomic status could be a greater factor contributing to participants' exposure to community service growing up because Sara identified as a higher socioeconomic status in her childhood and had the most opportunities to participate in community engagement activities.

Personal experiences, either hearing others' experiences in discussion or relating course content to one's own life experiences, also contributed to the positive experiences of all participants. Lluvia and Sara both felt comfortable speaking in CEUC 200, while saying they did not feel as comfortable speaking in other courses. Sara and Isabel discussed the value of personal stories in opening their eyes to new perspectives on topics such as social welfare and poverty. Isabel, however, struggled with the valuable impact of personal stories on her own learning with a concern that some stories dragged on too long. Though, Isabel attributed some of her concerns with the types and length of students' stories to her identity as an older, non-traditional undergraduate student, which she said impacted her divergent experience in the course on several occasions. Sara, on the other hand, said she preferred the class discussion because the text was not relatable to her because of its centrality on what she assumed to be Caucasian experiences in U.S. society, which did not value her racial or national identity. Sara felt class discussion, which valued and encouraged personal experiences in connection to course content, was most valuable to her learning, especially because of the inclusive environment facilitated by Ms. Valenzuela.

### **Ancillary Sub-Questions Part III:**

**How do issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity manifest in service-learning programming, including related coursework?** All three participants stated that issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity came up in the class discussion when initiated by students in a "because of my..." background statement. This was affirmed in the classroom observation in the ways in which students on the panel brought up issues of privilege/oppression, power, and cultural differences pertaining to the book being discussed. Additionally, Isabel said that all of the above issues were addressed in at least one of the five discussion book projects. Participants had more difficulty pinpointing specific examples

of explicitly race-based discussions, but acknowledged the topic was discussed in conjunction with welfare and in other personal stories of students. One book discussion project specifically addressed race/ethnicity through a book on the Mexican American middle class. Issues of economic power, privilege, and oppression were prevalent in the classroom observation in both the book discussion project and in the lecture presented by Ms. Valenzuela on counter-power social revolutions in different countries. All participants also discussed the importance of one's personal socioeconomic and/or ethnic cultural background in their ability to make sense of the course content. Critical awareness of cultural sensitivity and media sources relevant to sociopolitical issues affecting the community were emphasized by the instructor in class, which was observed in the classroom and raised by Isabel's interview. Other students were observed in class raising critical issues of media as either a hindrance or driving force in social change movements during the book panel discussion as well.

**How do racially/ethnically diverse students/groups perceive the facilitation of these issues in the classroom relative to their needs?** Sara, Lluvia, and Isabel felt that Ms. Valenzuela facilitated discussion about race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity in an inclusive way that encouraged participation and never shut anyone down. Isabel said Ms. Valenzuela valued the identities of students and made curricular connections back to individuals' experiences throughout the course. Class observation documented these connections between students' interests and course content on multiple occasions during the two and a half hour observation. Isabel said the instructor's attention to cultural identity motivated students, and Sara said having an instructor with a similar ethnic background made her feel more comfortable talking about issues of oppression. Ms. Valenzuela facilitated discussion about critical multicultural issues by responding to the personal experiences of students and asking guiding

questions to promote critical awareness about social issues and students' role in service-learning projects as culturally-sensitive to the needs of the community. It was evident in the observation that Ms. Valenzuela valued personal experiences by openly inviting students to share their stories, providing culturally relevant examples to spark connections between students' experiences and the content, and by sharing her own personal experiences as a Latina-American in a helping profession field, working in the community on issues related to the course.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Though the results of single-case study designs do not produce strong results for analytical generalization to the population of studies in this field, qualitative studies, especially those in qualitative multicultural research, are more concerned with finding reasons, concerns, and understanding for participants relative to the research question (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008). Therefore, there is much content in single-case studies that can be added to the generalized body or knowledge, can challenge old generalizations based on similar studies, or serve as a basis for further research in the field (Stake, 1995). The factors contributing to the experiences of three Latina students in CEUC 200 are largely dependent on the instructor's ethnic identity, culturally-responsive teaching methods, and a course topic directly connected to civic engagement. Therefore, the experiences of students enrolled in the specific service-learning course cannot be applied to other courses offered through the service-learning program at Southwest State University. Additionally, the experiences of the three Latina students in this study should not be extended to the experiences of all Latina students enrolled in the course nor should they be applied to the experiences of students of other racial/ethnic groups participating in the program.

It is important to note that none of the students who participated in this study had engaged in the required service-learning project prior to the interview. However, students were still able to reflect on experiences and factors contributing to future engagement in the community either independently or via a future service-learning course due to the unique topic of the course, which focused specifically on teaching students to be being civically-engaged members of their communities. The only direct integration between the required community service-learning project and the curricular learning process was through a final project presentation. The course itself did still follow elements of Mitchell's (2008) model of critical service-learning (Figure 1) because the community component was linked to the curricular classroom content of civic engagement through the course content's emphasis on social change, redistribution of power, and developing authentic culturally-sensitive relationships within the community. Reflection was tied throughout the learning process through discussion and classroom assignments. However, the community component in CEUC 200 was largely discussed in the classroom context, either through guest speakers from community organizations or lectures on various social issues affecting the community, both on a local and global scale. The service-learning project itself was not fully integrated into the reflective, recursive learning process, and instead was incorporated as a one-time reflective component at the end of the semester. Therefore, it is unclear whether the experiences of the three Latina participants in CEUC 200 would have included critical awareness of sociopolitical issues pertaining to community engagement had the course not explicitly addressed civic engagement in the course objectives throughout the semester.

Due to the sensitive nature of race-based research, it is difficult to control for informal manipulation that may take place during interviews and observation. As a nonparticipant

observer, it is possible that my presence during direct observation may have disrupted the normal flow of class participation. Additionally, it is difficult to determine whether participants were honest in interviews about experiences of race, especially because my position as a researcher is coupled with the power dynamics of my position as a member of the dominant racial group interviewing participants from non-dominant racial groups. Strides were taken by the researcher to build trust with participants at the beginning of the interview and assure participants that their responses would be anonymous and not have any negative consequences on their grade or participation in the service-learning program. I attempted to build trust with participants by openly stating my goals for the research and providing context for my personal interest and background in the fields of service-learning and multicultural education. I also allowed students of color to ask me any personal or academic questions prior to beginning the interview.

Time and access to participants were also two limitations in this study. Setbacks in acquiring Institutional Review Board approval delayed the start of this study until the beginning of October, leaving just four weeks to collect and analyze data. At this point, I coordinated with the professor of the service-learning course to recruit participants. Since all participants were selected from one particular course, there was limited access to participants. The Institutional Review Board required that participants contact me directly rather than allowing the participants to give the professor, and subsequently myself, their contact information. Therefore, I relied heavily on the course instructor to follow-up with potential participants. Potentially due to these setbacks, I was only able to secure three participants in time to complete the study. Midterm exams may have also been a factor in the difficulty recruiting participants as was noted as a concern with scheduling by one of the interviewees.

### **Implications for Multicultural Service-Learning**

Although the results of this study cannot be analytically generalized to experiences of other students of color in the same service-learning course nor to the experiences of other Latina students in service-learning courses, there is still valuable knowledge and understanding to be found in the study that can be added to the general body of research pertaining to the experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students in service-learning programs (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008). Specifically, the relationship between the positive experiences of the three Latina participants in this study and the prevalence of multicultural characteristics in the instructor's course design and culturally relevant teaching practices may provide a possible explanation for the different experiences of Latina students in this study and the experiences of students in other research documenting the experiences of students of color in service-learning programs.

### **Characteristics of Multicultural Education**

In chapter two, it was argued that a service-learning program in which racially/ethnically diverse students enjoy positive experiences will also include characteristics of a culturally responsive classroom. More specifically, a critically multicultural course that is responsive to the needs of racially/ethnically diverse students will include coursework and instruction that addresses issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity. Using Nieto & Bode's (2012) seven characteristics of multicultural education as a guide for analyzing a multicultural classroom, CEUC 200 falls along the spectrum of acceptance and respect, with a few examples of affirmation, solidarity, and critique being weaved in and out of instruction and course readings, and no indicators of monoculture or tolerance education (Figure 3).



	Characteristics of Multicultural Education		
	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Antiracist/antidiscriminatory	<u>Policies and practices that acknowledge differences are in place. Textbooks reflect some diversity. Transitional bilingual programs are available. Curriculum is more inclusive of the histories and perspectives of a broader range of people.</u>	<u>Policies and practices that respect diversity are more evident, including maintenance bilingual education. Ability grouping is not permitted. Curriculum is more explicitly antiracist and honest. It is "safe" to talk about racism, sexism, and other examples of discrimination.</u>	<u>Policies and practices that affirm diversity and challenge racism are developed. There are high expectations for all students; students' language and culture are used in instruction and curriculum. Two-way bilingual programs are in place wherever possible. Everyone takes responsibility for challenging racism and discrimination.</u>
Basic	<u>The diversity of lifestyles and values of groups other than the dominant one are acknowledged in some content, as can be seen in some courses and school activities.</u>	<u>Education is defined as knowledge that is necessary for living in a complex and pluralistic society. As such, it includes much content that is multicultural. Additive multiculturalism is the goal.</u>	<u>Basic education is multicultural education. All students learn to speak a second language and are familiar with a broad range of knowledge.</u>
Pervasive	<u>Student diversity is acknowledged, as can be seen not only in "Holidays and Heroes" but also in consideration of different learning preferences, values, and languages. A "multicultural program" may be in place.</u>	<u>The learning environment is imbued with multicultural education. It can be seen in classroom interactions, materials, and the culture of the school.</u>	<u>Multicultural education pervades the curriculum, instructional strategies, and interactions among teachers, students, and the community. It can be seen everywhere: bulletin boards, the lunchroom, assemblies, and so on.</u>
Important for all students	<u>Many students are expected to take part in curriculum that stresses diversity. A variety of languages are taught.</u>	<u>All students take part in courses that reflect diversity. Teachers are involved in overhauling the curriculum to be more open to such diversity.</u>	<u>All courses are completely multicultural in essence. Students of all backgrounds are visible in all aspects of the school, curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular.</u>
Education for social justice	<u>The role of the schools in social change is acknowledged. Some changes that reflect this attitude begin to be felt: students take part in community service.</u>	<u>Students take part in extensive community activities that reflect their social concerns.</u>	<u>The curriculum and instructional techniques are based on an understanding of social justice as central to education. Reflection and action are important components of learning. The community's concerns are evident in school activities.</u>
Process	<u>Education is both content and process. "Why" and "how" questions are stressed more. Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, students of all backgrounds are more apparent.</u>	<u>Education is both content and process. Students and teachers begin to ask, "What if?" Teachers build strong relationships with students and their families.</u>	<u>Education is an equal mix of content and process. It is dynamic. Teachers and students are empowered. Everyone in the school is becoming a multicultural person.</u>
Critical pedagogy	<u>Students and teachers are beginning a dialogue. Students' experiences, cultures, and languages are used as one source of their learning.</u>	<u>Students and teachers use critical dialogue as the primary basis for their education. They see and understand different perspectives.</u>	<u>Students and teachers are involved in the "subversive activity of real learning." Decision-making and social action skills are the basis of the curriculum.</u>

Figure 3. CEUC 200 Characteristics of Multicultural Education. Nieto & Bode (2012).

Throughout their interviews, Lluvia, Sara, and Isabel talked about an inclusive classroom environment, an instructor who was conscious of differences among students, a space where each student felt comfortable talking about race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity, and an instructor who valued students' language and culture in the course, all of which are indicative of respect, acceptance, and affirmation in the multicultural classroom (Figure 3). Whereas students in the Seider et al. (2013) study felt that students used "othering" language that separated the classroom around issues of race and economics, the students in this study attributed the professor's inclusive facilitation of personal experiences as a positive learning technique that helped students connect better with the content around issues of race and economic privilege/oppression. Even Isabel, who was morally conflicted on whether she would feel comfortable sharing deeply personal experiences related to race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, or equity, acknowledged that she felt comfortable sharing personal examples of these issues as they pertained to her work as a helping professions specialist and said that because of the value of these personal examples for her own learning, she would be willing to share a raw example from her own life if she thought it would benefit her classmates. The instructor's ethnic identity as a Latina also contributed to the Latina participants' feelings of comfort when speaking about critical topics and feeling that their language and culture were both accepted and respected in the classroom community setting.

The service-learning course in this study blends multicultural characteristics of acceptance and respect with a few indicators that the instructor is pulling students in the course towards an affirming, solidarity, and critique environment. Students in CEUC 200 demonstrate the beginning stages of engagement in a meaningful dialogue, as has been done on at least one occasion around the topic of social welfare and race, as referenced to by the instructor in the

classroom observation and by all three participants in the interview portion of this study. The Latina students in the study also emphasized the value of students' experiences, cultures, and languages as a source of learning that is encouraged and validated by an instructor of a similar cultural background as the Latina students in the study. These important connections between an accepting and respectful multicultural classroom environment and positive experiences of Latina students in a service-learning course should be further explored to test for causal connections between the two.

The results of this study differ from Seider et al. (2013), which found that students of color in service-learning classrooms felt silenced in discussions related to race, were concerned about being overly sensitive to issues of racism, were frustrated when trying to explain race issues to white classmates, and were concerned about being the spokesperson for their race. Students of color in the study also reported a weaker sense of community and an "othering" language that further separated students in the classroom based on race and socioeconomic status. The three Latina participants in this study did not express any of these negative experiences. Instead, Latina participants expressed feelings of acceptance, respect, and affirmation on account of racial/ethnic identity in accordance with the characteristics highlighted in Figure 3. The culturally-responsive classroom setting facilitated by the instructor can help explain these differences in experiences between participants of color in Seider et al. and the Latina participants in this study.

The results of this study also differ from Coles (1999), who found that students of color were more likely to disengage from service-learning courses because of scheduling conflicts, disapproval of noncritical white charity-based projects, and a belief that exposure to people of color or poor neighborhoods was not necessary for their learning. All students in the College of

City Affairs are required to take the course, which engages students a community-learning project while also embedding an understanding of social justice and responsible civic engagement for all students. Although participants in this study did share concerns about difficulties scheduling service-learning projects due to work or family commitments, the Latina participants in this study said service-learning was achievable when prioritized as a value in one's life. Additionally, Isabel provided a counter-example to Cole's idea that people of color do not believe they need exposure to communities of color or poor neighborhoods. Though Isabel did not mention poor communities of color specifically, she did say that she wanted to take advantage of the service-learning project as an opportunity to step outside of her comfort zone and interact with a community that she is not yet familiar with or where she has no previous experience interacting. For Isabel, this meant stepping outside of her Spanish-speaking community where she worked with adolescents with Autism and entering a community of the elderly. Sara also said she was glad the service-learning course helped her step out of her comfort zone and get involved in new parts of her community.

The results of this study also challenge Butin's (2006) hypothesis that students participating in service-learning courses are overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Although there are no comprehensive data on the racial/ethnic or socioeconomic status of all student participants in the Southwest State University service-learning program as a whole, participants who self-reported race on a 2015 end-of-semester service-learning survey were 31.87% white with 20.62% of participants identifying as Hispanic/Latina/Latino and 17.5% Asian, with the remainder identifying as either American Indian/Alaskan Native, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or Black/African American (N.A., 2015). Additionally, the fact that Southwest State University is a MSI that meets the requirements for HSI and AANAPISI

status, and given that CEUC 200 is a required course for all students enrolled in the College of City Affairs, it is likely that the demographics of students enrolled in CEUC 200 and other service-learning courses are not overwhelmingly white and middle-class. In this way, the study challenges the assumption that the major recipients of service-learning programming are white students and discusses the positive experiences that Latina students, and potentially other students of color, gain from culturally relevant critical multicultural pedagogy implemented on the curricular side of service-learning courses.

Though participants in this study expressed positive experiences in an accepting and respectful multicultural classroom, social justice educators problematize the use of "safe space" as it can reproduce dominant narratives and shift the conversation to focus on dominant individuals (Sensory & DiAngelo, 2014). Critical dialogue around issues of race, privilege, and equity will not always be comfortable for students, yet multicultural educators still desire a space where all students can contribute to the tough conversations. The complexities of "safe space" in the multicultural classroom beg the question, for whom is the "safe space" created? In this study, feelings of "comfort," "safe spaces," and "inclusion," were raised directly by Latina students, therefore suggesting that "safe space" in Ms. Valenzuela's classroom is affirming rather than limiting for racially/ethnically non-dominant students. Questions remain, however, as to whether "safe space" serves different narratives at different levels of multicultural education, for instance between classrooms exhibiting multicultural characteristics of tolerance versus those exhibiting characteristics of affirmation, solidarity, and critique.

### **Recommendations**

This study provides important recommendations for improving Southwest State University's service-learning program and the institution's overall need to create programs that

directly support students of color as a MSI, and more specifically as an institution seeking federal support as an HSI and AANAPISI institution. CEUC 200, as facilitated by Ms. Valenzuela, provides a valuable example of a culturally responsive service-learning course offered through Southwest State University's service-learning program. The service-learning program can use CEUC 200 as a model for other instructors to identify how to meaningfully connect community-learning to topics of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity in the curricular design. However, the service-learning program will need to critically evaluate how to incorporate ongoing reflection on systemic issues in the community in other service-learning courses that include only an episodic community-learning project without making any curricular changes to meaningfully incorporate civic engagement into the course content throughout the semester. Because of the meaningful impact that having a professor of a similar ethnic identity had on Latina students' positive experiences, the institution as a whole needs to diversify the faculty on campus, both in and out of service-learning courses, to reflect the diverse demographics of its student population.

More research is needed to explore how the experiences of students differ based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age. Specifically, it is important to study how and why factors contribute to differentiated experiences among students from the same ethnic background such as the three Latina students in this study, and also to study how the needs of students of color differ between students from different racial/ethnic groups. Further research can also help identify whether the experiences of students of color differ based on the racial/ethnic identity of the service-learning instructor as was indicated in this study and to determine in what ways the experiences of students of color in service-learning differ based on the level of cultural-responsiveness created in the classroom setting.

## **Conclusions**

This study has described the qualitative experiences of three Latina students in a higher education service-learning course. Based on a review of the literature, it was determined that there was limited research available on the programmatic experiences of students of color relative to the service-learning program culture and course experiences. This study used qualitative case study methods, including student interviews and program observation, to build understanding of the unique experiences of Latina students participating in a service-learning course taught by a Latina instructor at a large public Minority Serving Institution (MSI) in the southwestern United States.

The results of this study determined that the three Latina participants in this study enjoyed overall positive experiences in the service-learning course, attributing these positive experiences in part to an inclusive classroom environment, feeling encouraged to share personal experiences in class on issues of oppression and power, and gaining an overall sense of agency and empowerment for engaging in the community. The instructor's identity was an important factor in the positive experiences of Latina students who felt that the professor's proud Latina identity made her more relatable, culturally affirming, and a positive role model of a strong civically-engaged Latina woman in a white male-dominated world. Factors that influenced disengagement from service-learning as well as possibly contributed to divergent experiences among the Latina participants in this study included unawareness of opportunities in service-learning and the community, scheduling conflicts, socioeconomic status, age, nationality, and exposure to community engagement growing up. The classroom environment that facilitated the positive experiences of Latina students was experienced as culturally responsive and a space where students felt comfortable discussing issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression,

and equity. Students agreed that most instances in which issues of race and equity were brought up in class were because topics were brought up by individual students sharing personal stories in connection with the course content. Participants emphasized that the professor facilitated discussion on critical issues in an inclusive way that valued the differences in experiences that students shared. Classroom observation also showed that the instructor raised critical issues of privilege/oppression in response to students' stories in order to prompt critical questioning on the importance of cultural sensitivity as well as critical media literacy in relation to responsible community involvement.

The positive experiences of inclusion, cultural affirmation, and empowerment that students expressed relative to the service-learning course were associated with an accepting and respectful multicultural classroom environment. Although the instructor did not always embed connections in the curriculum to an affirming, solidarity, and critique approach to critical multicultural education, it was evident that the instructor valued her students, was critically conscious and made an effort to build connections, when applicable, between students' personal experiences, community engagement, and critical issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity (Figure 3). This study affirmed the hypothesis that service-learning courses in which students of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds have positive experiences will be reflective of a multicultural classroom setting that values the unique experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students. Moving forward, institutions should diversify faculty to reflect the growing racial/ethnic diversity on college campuses and use CEUC 200 as a model for the culturally responsive service-learning classroom; though, critical discussion is needed to determine how to incorporate ongoing reflection on multicultural service-learning topics in courses that do not include civic engagement as a primary course objective. Further



research should explore the differentiated experiences of racially/ethnically diverse students based on the identity of the course instructor and level of cultural responsiveness being implemented in the classroom.



## INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Teaching & Learning

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**TITLE OF STUDY:** A Single-case Study of the Experiences of Students of Color in a Higher Education Service-learning Program (working title)

**INVESTIGATOR(S):** Janessa Schilmoeller & Dr. Christine Clark

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Janessa Schilmoeller at **651-353-9996** or Dr. Christine Clark at **702-895-3888**.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact **the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

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### **Purpose of the Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of students of color in the service learning program at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

### **Participants**

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit these criteria: a student of color enrolled in a service-learning course at UNLV.

### **Procedures**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: participate in one 30-60 minute interview pertaining to your experiences as a student of color in the service-learning program at UNLV. You will be asked to answer questions about your racial/ethnic and socioeconomic identity,

factors that influence your engagement/disengagement in the UNLV service-learning program, interests/needs that you expect to be met by the UNLV service-learning program, your perception of the ways in which issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity are facilitated or manifested in the service-learning program, and your overall satisfaction with the program. The interview will be audio-recorded.

The second portion of this research project includes a classroom observation of multiple students enrolled in the same service-learning course. Following the study, you may be asked to participate in a classroom observation involving your classmates. Consenting to this interview does not indicate consent to the classroom observation. You will be given an opportunity at a future time to indicate consent or non-consent to a classroom observation.

### **Benefits of Participation**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope that you will be able to express any praise or grievances that you would like to voice about your experiences in the service-learning program and we hope to learn what the service-learning program can do to better affirm the needs of diverse participants in service-learning courses.

### **Risks of Participation**

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. You will be asked to discuss potentially uncomfortable experiences related to race and equity in the service-learning program. If you feel uncomfortable and unable to answer any of these questions, you are free to abstain from answering select questions at any time. Your responses to the interview questions will be kept as confidential as possible. Your participation will not affect your grade in your service-learning course in any way and is not a requirement of participation in the course.

### **Cost /Compensation**

There is no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take 30-60 minutes of your time on a day that is convenient for you. You will be compensated with a \$10 gift card for your time.

**Confidentiality**

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All data will be stored on a password protected laptop that only uses a password-protected hotspot to connect to the Internet. The laptop will be kept in a locked office in the researcher's home and/or in the office of the Principal Investigator on the university campus.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

**Participant Consent:**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

---

Signature of Participant

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Date

---

Participant Name (Please Print)

Audio/Video Taping:

I agree to be audio taped for the purpose of this research study.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Participant Name (Please Print)



**INFORMED CONSENT**

**Department of Teaching & Learning**

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**TITLE OF STUDY:** A Single-Case Study of the Experiences of Students of Color in a Higher Education Service-learning Program (working title)

**INVESTIGATOR(S): Janessa Schilmoeller & Dr. Christine Clark**

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Janessa Schilmoeller at **651-353-9996** or Dr. Christine Clark at **702-895-3888**.

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**Purpose of the Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the diverse experiences of students participating in the service learning program at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. This purpose of this portion of the study is to explore how issues of race, power, and privilege are facilitated in service-learning courses.

**Participants**

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit this criterion: a student enrolled in a service-learning course at UNLV or an instructor of a service-learning course at UNLV.

### **Procedures**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: participate in a regularly scheduled service-learning course. By signing this form, you consent to allow the researcher to observe your participation in the scheduled class. The researcher may or may not document your participation or lack of participation, including responses to discussion questions, communication with other participants, and body language. The observation is intended to document the ways in which issues of racial justice, power, privilege/oppression, and equity are facilitated or manifested in the natural flow of instruction in the service-learning course.

### **Benefits of Participation**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, your participation in the program will help the service-learning program to better affirm the needs of diverse participants in service-learning courses.

### **Risks of Participation**

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. You will be asked to discuss potentially uncomfortable experiences related to race and equity in the service-learning program as they arise in class discussion. If you feel uncomfortable and unable to answer any of these questions, you are free to abstain from participating at any time. Your participation will not affect your grade in your service-learning course in any way and is not a requirement of participation in the course.

### **Cost /Compensation**

There is no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take between one and five regularly scheduled class periods of your time. You will not be compensated for your time.

### **Confidentiality**

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All data will be stored on a password protected laptop that only uses a password-protected hotspot to connect to the Internet. The laptop will be kept in a locked office in the researcher's home and/or in the office of the Principal Investigator on the

university campus. The data collected in the observation process will not refer to you by name. Each participant will be referred to in the observation data collection process by a study ID code.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study. If you choose not to participate, the researcher will not collect any data regarding your participation in the observed class. This means that no observations will be recorded pertaining to your participation in the class discussion, including your interaction with consenting participants.

**Participant Consent:**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Participant Name (Please Print)

## APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol (taken and partially adapted from Seider et al., 2013)

### **Introduction**

1. Tell me about how your service-learning experience has gone so far in this class.
  - a. What have you most enjoyed about the service-learning program?
  - b. What have you least enjoyed about the service-learning program?
2. Why did you sign up for a service-learning course?
3. What do you hope to get out of your experience?
4. Would you sign up for another service-learning course? Why or why not?

### **The Service-learning Experience**

1. How has the service-learning program compared to what you were expecting?
2. Tell me about the classroom component of service-learning course.
  - a. What have you thought of class discussions?
  - b. What do you feel like you've gotten out of the experience?
  - c. How do issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity show up in class discussions?
  - d. How are these discussions facilitated? How would you describe your participation in these discussions?
3. Tell me about the readings you have been assigned for your class.
  - a. What do you think you've gotten out of the readings?
  - b. How have issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, and equity shown up in the course readings? What do you think of these readings?
4. Tell me about your experience at your service site.
  - a. Has it been challenging to incorporate this service into your schedule? Why?



- b. Have you selected your site? Which site did you select and why?
- 5. How do you feel your experience in service-learning has compared to your classmates'? How do you think your experience has compared to that of white students?
- 6. Are you glad you signed up for the service-learning course? Why or why not?
- 7. Do feel supported by your instructor? Your classmates? The program staff?
- 8. Do you think your professor values your identity racially/ethnically? In what ways?

**Biographical**

- 1. How do you identify racially/ethnically?
- 2. How do you identify your socioeconomic status?
- 3. What opportunities did you have growing up to participate in community service?
- 4. Who has influenced the way you look at the world?
- 5. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your service-learning experience?

## APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL



### **UNLV Social/Behavioral IRB - Expedited Review Approval Notice**

DATE: September 23, 2015

TO: Christine Clark, Ed.D.  
FROM: UNLV Social/Behavioral IRB

PROTOCOL TITLE: [741873-3] A Single-Case Study of the Experiences of Students of Color in a  
Higher Education Service-Learning Program

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: September 23, 2015

EXPIRATION DATE: September 22, 2016

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for submission of Revision materials for this protocol. The UNLV Social/Behavioral IRB has **APPROVED** your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a protocol design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Upon approval, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the protocol most recently reviewed and approved by the IRB, which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent forms and recruitment materials. The official versions of these forms are indicated by footer which contains approval and expiration dates.

Should there be any change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a Modification Form through ORI - Human Subjects. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved.

**ALL UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS** involving risk to subjects or others and **SERIOUS** and **UNEXPECTED** adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

**All NONCOMPLIANCE** issues or **COMPLAINTS** regarding this protocol must be reported promptly to this office.

This protocol has been determined to be a Minimal Risk protocol. Based on the risks, this protocol requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Submission of the Continuing Review Request Form must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of September 22, 2016.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of Research Integrity- Human Subjects at [IRB@unlv.edu](mailto:IRB@unlv.edu) or call 702-895-2794. Please include your protocol title and IRB Net ID in all correspondence.

Office of Research Integrity- Human Subjects  
4605 Maryland Parkway . Box 461047 . Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047  
(702) 895-2794 . FAX: (702) 895-0805 . [IRB@unlv.edu](mailto:IRB@unlv.edu)

## APPENDIX E: Code Book

### Themes

#### Sub-themes

#### Codes

### Community Involvement

#### **Factors that encourage community involvement**

- Family involvement
- Family not an excuse for nonparticipation
- Willingness to participate
- Community activities information
- Feasible involvement
- Economic privilege
- Desire to prioritize community involvement
- Values community engagement

#### **Factors that discourage community involvement**

- “Lack of knowledge”
- Unawareness of opportunities
- Schedule challenges (for participation).
- No previous exposure to community service due to ethnic background, 3
- No community building due to tight nuclear family bonding.
- No community involvement due to cultural background.
- Unaware of available resources
- Low family educational background

Inactive in community

Adverse family circumstances

Low socioeconomic status

Lack of role models from lower socioeconomic status

### **Factors contributing to differentiated experiences in course**

Age

Life experiences

Economic status

Might be experiencing cultural identity crisis/ cultural hybridity

### **Perceptions about service**

“Being able to help”

Offer support

Offer Advise

Offer assistance

Intrinsic

humanity

### **Other**

Opportunity Village (name of organization)

No site visits

Site-to-Course connections through final class Presentations

4-10 hours commitment

Hand out tickets

## Course-related experiences

### Course Likes and benefits

Teachers' approach

Comfortable participating

Diversity

Inclusion

Cultural capital value

Inclusive

Feels valued

"Loved the class"

Inclusive class environment

Career-specific

Professional benefits

Class helped participant to be unprejudiced

Networking

Collaboration

Bonded with classmates over similarities

Class structured, yet flexible

Adequate structure and workload

Course gave participant confidence

Civic responsibility

Sense of agency and empowerment

It's nice to reciprocate (give back to community)

Readings related to topic

Reality-check

Awareness

Personal experiences valuable to learning

Course complements and relates to their major which contributes to student interest and engagement in the course

### **Course dislikes**

Disliked readings

Personal experiences can be distracting from course

Desires more explicit instruction on engagement in different countries

### **Perceptions about Course**

Misperceptions about class

Misperceptions about class commitment

Afraid of commitment

Relieved by feasibility of community involvement

No previous knowledge of class content

Required class, not optional

Apprehensive

Confident about course completion

Positive experience

High Participation

Unidentified class interests

No class discussion about community involvement

Discussion on types of community involvement

Personal experiences valuable to specific course topic

**Issues of race/ethnicity, power, privilege/oppression, equity in course**

Race brought up by “specific people”

“Because of my race”

Race discussion in a different class

Unsure as to race discussions

Age diversity in community involvement

Reasons for inactivity in community

Unsure about community involvement demographics

Hard evidence from book

Statistical perspective from book

Interaction with staff discussed

Participant has no interaction with program staff

“I knew what [] I wanted”

Self-directed

No need to connect with staff

Book presentation discussions

cultural awareness

cultural sensitivity

American privilege

Emphasizes consciousness and awareness of social issues and media sources



### **Impact of race/ethnicity on course experiences**

Other students might be disengaged

Different life experiences from other students

Disconnected from hardships

Sheltered, privileged students

Participant unaware of sociopolitical circumstance

Experienced differently for someone with exposure to community involvement

No previous exposure to community service due to ethnic background

Cultural capital/funds of knowledge; prior experiences help student relate to course material

Having role models from their own cultural/ethnic group important for student's identity development, self-esteem and growth

Might be experiencing cultural identity crisis/ cultural hybridity

### **Teacher's Qualities**

Teacher was conscious of differences

Receptive

Affirming

Encourages participation

Humanizing lived experiences

Critically conscious

Fair, no preferential treatment

Inclusive

Available for clarifications

Approachable

Values student's identity

Values participation

Provides direction

Provides Guidance

Accessible

Motivating

Takes pride in their own ethnic/cultural group

Course/professor values students & prior experiences and relates it to course material

### **Negative experience with other professors**

Felt invalidated

Other teachers uncritical

Narrow-minded

Personal experiences cut-off by other professors;

Personal experiences "not relevant" to helping profession program

### **Participant**

#### **Participant's Background**

Mexican-American

El Salvadorian

Canadian

Upper Middle Class

Middle Class

Raised as a local

Do not "fit" ethnic stereotype

Might be experiencing cultural identity crisis/ cultural hybridity

### **Participant's Influences on Worldview**

Adverse family situations

Sought resources and assistance to help family

Family influences

## APPENDIX F: CEUC 200 Course Syllabus

### Second-Year Seminar

Fall 2015

**Time:** Tuesday 1:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**Classroom:** [REDACTED]

**Office:** [REDACTED]

**Office Hours:** M: 3:30 – 4:30 pm, T/TH: 10 am-11 am or by appointment

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

#### Course Description:

This is a course that introduces students to principles of citizenship in a democratic society. This course will focus on civic engagement, with particular emphasis given to the urban environment and urban issues in a multicultural and global context. Ultimately, this course will explore societal issues and the roles citizens can play to positively impact their communities.

#### Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply theories from the various disciplines in the College [REDACTED] to define, reflect on, and evaluate urban problems in a global context. (UULO 1).
2. Recognize the complexity of urban problems and identify different perspectives from which problems may be viewed (UULO 2).
3. Communicate (speak and write) clearly and effectively, demonstrating good preparation, organization, and argument (UULO 3).
4. Identify multicultural perspectives linked to urban life within local, national, and international contexts (UULO 4).
5. Identify the various rights and obligations that citizens have in their communities (UULO 5).
6. Apply various forms of civic engagement in service to the community (UULO 5).

**UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES (UULO):**

**1. Intellectual Breadth and Lifelong Learning** – Graduates are able to understand and integrate basic principles of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts, and health sciences, and develop skills and a desire for lifelong learning.

**2. Inquiry and Critical Thinking** – Graduates are able to identify problems, articulate questions, and use various forms of research and reasoning to guide the collection, analysis, and use of information related to those problems.

**3. Communication** – Graduates are able to write and speak effectively to both general and specialized audiences, create effective visuals that support written or spoken communication, and use electronic media common to one's field or profession.

**4. Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness**– Graduates will have developed knowledge of global and multicultural societies and an awareness of their place in and effect on them.

**5. Citizenship and Ethics** – Graduates are able to participate knowledgeably and actively in the public life of our communities and make informed, responsible, and ethical decisions in their personal and professional lives.

**Required Texts:**

Castells, Manuel. (2015). (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). *Network of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Putnam, Robert. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

**Group Discussion Texts:**

Benforado, B. (2015). *Unfair: the new science of criminal injustice*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Ehrenreich, B. (2002). *Nickel and Dimed*. New York: Holt Paperbacks

Kristof, N., and WuDunn, S. (2009). *Half the sky: Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide*. New York: Vintage Books.

Vallejo, J.A. (2012). *Barrios to the burbs*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yunus, M. (2007). *Creating a world without poverty: social business and the future of capitalism*. New York: Public Affairs.

**Supplemental Readings:**

The instructor will provide links to/copies of selections from supplemental texts and articles, including:

Bickford, D.M. & Reynolds, N. (2002). "Activism and service-learning: Reframing volunteerism as acts of dissent." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, v. 2 (2), pp. 229-252.

Kristof, Nicholas D. & Sheryl DuWunn. (2010). *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. New York: Vintage Books.



- Katz, Bruce & Jennifer Bradley. (2013). *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Makau, M. M., & Debian, M. (2013). *Dialogue and Deliberation*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Tisch, J.M. & Weber, K. (2005). *The power of we: Succeeding through partnerships*. (Ch. 1, "The power of partnerships: Getting from me to we"). New York: Crown Publishing.

### **Course Assignments and Exams**

Student learning will be assessed through written assignments, exams, and a student project/presentation. This course is intended to enhance your writing skills. Thus, it has a heavy written component. There are several written assignments required for the course, each with a specified minimum number of pages. Students must complete the minimum length described in each assessment and work to ensure quality content.

#### **1) Thinking and Writing Activities (TWAs): 100 pts**

Each student will participate in a panel discussion about a book listed above. The duties as a group member will be to explain the thesis and key points to the remaining audience, field questions, and distribute an outline for all audience members. Audience members will turn in questions based on the presentation. Attendance for all of the panel discussions for all class members is mandatory.

Fulfills Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

#### **2) Research Paper: 250 pts**

Students will complete a 10-page paper discussing some social/urban/civic challenge of their choice. The perimeter of this assignment will be discussed in class. Specifically, students will research an issue related to civic engagement and

- a.) Apply appropriate theories and concepts explored in course texts and lectures to analyze the issue
- b.) Identify different perspectives from which the issue may be viewed
- c.) Identify multicultural and global contexts related to the issue
- d.) Identify opportunities for civic engagement related to the issue.

This assignment will be completed in **three phases**:

1. Turn in an outline complete with a tentative works cited list, which will be reviewed and returned with feedback. (50 pts)
2. A first draft will be due and after reviewed, will be returned with comments. (50 pts)
3. Finally, students will revise the first draft and submit it for a final grade. (150 pts)

This paper will cite at least five academic books or journals. The paper will conform to APA style. Further information on the assignment will be provided in class.

Measurement Procedure: Students will be evaluated on the degree to which they successfully complete the assignment (see rubric for evaluating course paper).  
Fulfills Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

### **3) Civic Engagement Project and Presentation: 150 pts**

Students will complete (either individually or in groups) a service-learning project outside of class.

At the conclusion of the experience, students will each develop a 10-minute presentation of the case, highlighting the main analysis points, and pitching recommendations to classmates who will act as their primary stakeholder target group. The presentation can include a Power Point/Keynote, a video, or other presentation visuals. The presentation should conclude with a leave-behind of some sort (e.g., fact sheet, brochure, etc.) summarizing the main points of the presentation and including a clear call to action for the recommended civil engagement actions.

Measurement Procedure: Students will be evaluated on the degree to which they successfully complete the assignment (see rubric for evaluating civic engagement project and presentation).

Fulfills Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

### **4) Mid-term Exam: 250 pts**

The mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice questions, true/false questions, and essay questions.

Measurement Procedure:  
Grades for the mid-term exam will be based upon the accuracy of responses and proper correlation of answers to course materials and lectures.

Fulfills Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

### **5) Final Exam: 250 pts**

The final exam will be conducted in class and consist of short answer and brief essay questions.



Measurement Procedure:

Grades for the final exam will be based upon the accuracy of responses and proper correlation of answers to course materials and lectures.

**Grade Breakdown:**

♦					
♦	A	940-1000	C+	770-799	D- 600-639
♦	A-	900-939	C	740-769	F 590 or below
♦	B+	870-899	C-	700-739	
♦	B	840-869	D+	670-699	<b>Total points for the course=1000</b>
♦	B-	800-839	D	640-669	

**Extra Credit Opportunities**

Students will have multiple opportunities throughout the course to earn up to 20 points in extra credit toward their final score. Some extra credit opportunities include:

- Attending special meetings, lectures, etc. at the university or within the community and presenting a 5 minute summary in class discussing the event, your observations, and concepts/theories from course materials.
- Prior approval of the meeting is required to receive credit. Possible points: 10 per event. Please note that you will need some sort of documentation in order to take part in this opportunity. More will be discussed in class.
- Other opportunities will be identified in the course of the class.

**Attendance & Participation**

An important part of your Second Year Experience will be establishing and maintaining relationships with your classmates and participating in the class. As such attendance is required. Students are allowed two absences without penalty. All subsequent absences will result in a letter grade deduction from the final term grade. For example, a student with three absences will have his or her grade changed from a B- to a C-. Each absence over three will lower the student's grade an additional letter grade.

The two allowed absences constitute your "sick leave." Doctors' notes or other documentation will not entitle you to additional absences. In the case of extreme ill health or dire family emergency, contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Learning is a cooperative effort between each individual, the teacher, and the classroom community. You are expected to attend class each day having read the assigned material and being prepared with comments or questions about the readings. Preparation, discussion, and other class participation are important to both you and your classmates' learning and development.



**Students are expected to:**

1. Attend class consistently and punctually.
  - a. Obtain all materials from missed classes. Missing class time will have a negative effect on students' learning and likely their grade.
2. Complete assignments on time.
3. Engage in at least *five hours* per week of individual study outside the classroom (e.g., reading, writing, reviewing, researching, class preparation).
4. Complete assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to participate respectfully in class discussions with questions and comments about the readings, the information presented in class, and your own ideas.
5. Participate in class discussions with *respectful* thoughts, comments, and questions regarding the readings and materials presented in class.

**Additional University Policies**

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the [REDACTED] community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in [REDACTED] assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with [REDACTED]'s function as an educational institution. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at:  
[http://studentconduct.\[REDACTED\]edu/misconduct/policy.html](http://studentconduct.[REDACTED]edu/misconduct/policy.html).

**Copyright:** The University requires all members of the University Community to become familiar and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: [http://www.\[REDACTED\]edu/committees/copyright/](http://www.[REDACTED]edu/committees/copyright/).

**Cell Phones & Electronic Devices:** Please turn off cell phones and electronic devices during class, unless you have made arrangements with the instructor prior to the class period.

**Audio & Video Recording:** Students must obtain permission of the faculty member before recording any lecture. Recording of class lecture or discussion without express permission or knowledge is prohibited.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC):** The Disability Resource Center (DRC) determines accommodations that are "reasonable" in promoting the equal access of a student reporting a disability to the general [REDACTED] learning experience. In so doing, the DRC also balances instructor and departmental interests in maintaining curricular standards so as to best achieve a fair evaluation standard amongst students being assisted. In order for the DRC to be effective it must be considered in the dialog between the faculty and the student who is requesting accommodations. For this reason faculty should only provide students course adjustment after having received an "Academic Accommodation Plan." [REDACTED] complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC-A), Room 143 (phone (702) 895-0866, fax (702) 895-0651). For additional information, please visit: [http://drc\[REDACTED\].edu/](http://drc[REDACTED].edu/).

**Religious Holidays Policy:** Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than **September 1<sup>st</sup>** of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays that do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university that could have been avoided. For additional information, please visit: [http://catalog\[REDACTED\].edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=164](http://catalog[REDACTED].edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=164).

**Tutoring:** The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all [REDACTED] students taking [REDACTED] courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex, #22 on the current [REDACTED] map. Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling (702) 895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at: [http://academicsuccess\[REDACTED\].edu/tutoring/](http://academicsuccess[REDACTED].edu/tutoring/).

**UNLV Writing Center:** One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to [REDACTED] students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. More information can be found at: [http://writingcenter\[REDACTED\].edu/](http://writingcenter[REDACTED].edu/)



Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
<b>Part</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Citizenship, Communities &amp; Social Capital</b>		
1	8/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Syllabus</li> <li>Class Introductions</li> </ul>		
2	9/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to Civic Engagement, Civic Roles, and Social Capital</li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 1	
3	9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connectors in the Outside Community</li> <li>Informal Social Connections</li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 2-4	
<b>Part</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>Altruism &amp; Philanthropy</b>		
4	9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Altruism, Volunteering, and Philanthropy</li> <li>Reciprocity, Honesty, and Trust</li> <li>Navigators</li> <li>Documentary: <b>"HAPPY"</b></li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 7-8	<b>Panel Discussion #1</b> Unfair: the new science of criminal injustice
5	9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Groups and Social Movements</li> <li>Local Civic Engagement: Guest Speaker</li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 9 Castells p. 1-19	<b>Library Day</b>
<b>Part</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>Social Movements, the Net, &amp; Time</b>		
6	10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking Minds, Creating Meaning, Contesting Power</li> <li>Why Civic Engagement Changed</li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 10-13	<b>Panel Discussion #2</b> Nickel and Dimed

7	10/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generation 9/11</li> <li>• From Generation to Generation</li> <li>• What Killed Civic Engagement</li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 14-15 Midterm Review	<b>Research Paper Outline due</b>
8	10/15	--- Midterm ---	-----	-----
<b>Part</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>Power, Politics, People</b>		
9	10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Prelude to Revolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Tunisia and Iceland</li> <li>◦ Egyptian Revolution</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Castells p. 20-197	<b>Panel Discussion #3</b> Half the sky:
10	10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Way we Live Today</li> <li>• The Politics of People Like Us</li> <li>• Local Civic Engagement: Guest Speaker</li> </ul>		<i>Full Day</i>
11	11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why it Matters? Health and Happiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Education and Children's Welfare</li> <li>◦ Safe Neighborhoods</li> <li>◦ Economic Prosperity</li> <li>◦ Democracy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Putnam Ch. 16-21	<b>Panel Discussion #4</b> Barrios to the burbs  <b>First draft of research paper due</b>
<b>Part</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>Ourselves as Citizens</b>		
12	11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is to be done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Dark Side of Social Capital</li> <li>◦ Lessons of History</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Changing the World in a Network Society Beyond Outrage, Hope</p> <p>Advocacy</p>	Putnam Ch. 22 Castells p. 218-246  Guest Speakers	<b>Panel Discussion #5</b> Creating a world without poverty
13	11/19	<b>Presentations</b>	Civic Engagement Project	<b>**Attendance Required**</b>
<b>Part</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Collectivizing, Revisiting, Reflecting</b>		
14	11/26	--- NO CLASS --- --- Thanksgiving Day ---	-----	-----
15	12/3	<b>Presentations</b>	Civic Engagement Project	<b>**Attendance Required**</b>  <b>Final research paper due</b>
16	12/10	--- Final ---	--- 1pm – 3 pm ---	

## References

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Curriculum Vitae

**Janessa Schilmoeller**

janessa.schilmoeller@gmail.com

**EDUCATION**

- 2015      **University of Nevada, Las Vegas**  
*M.S. Curriculum & Instruction, Multicultural Education*  
Thesis: "Because of My Identity:" Valuing the Experiences of Latina Students in the Culturally Responsive Service-Learning Classroom
- 2011      **St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota**  
*B.A. Summa cum Laude, International Relations*  
Honors Thesis: "Organizing for Social Change in the East African Immigrant Community: A Case Study of Crossing Barriers and the Jane Addams School for Democracy"
- 2010      **School of International Training, Amman, Jordan**  
*Semester Abroad in Modernization and Social Change*  
Research Topic: "Generations of Hatred: The Role of Stereotypes and Prejudice in Obstructing the Peace Process"

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

- 2013-  
Present      *Technology Teacher*  
**Merryhill School, Las Vegas, Nevada**  
Implement culturally-responsive lesson plans integrating technology with classroom content for 10 K-5 classes emphasizing Microsoft Suite, digital citizenship, electronic recycling, keyboarding, and basic computer programming through a multicultural lens
- 2012-2013      *Teaching Assistant*  
**Augsburg College Center for Global Education, Windhoek, Namibia**  
Course taught: Religion & Social Change in Southern Africa (fall & spring semester)

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

- 2014-2015      *Accreditation Lead*  
**Merryhill School, Las Vegas, Nevada**  
Successfully led the school through the completion of the AdvancED accreditation renewal process; compiled evidence and wrote the school's accreditation report to demonstrate AdvancED standards of excellence
- 2013-2015      *Camp Director*  
**Merryhill School, Las Vegas, Nevada**  
Coordinated programming and evaluation of a 9-week summer camp program serving 70 students; established relationships with community vendors and maintain effective

communication with summer camp families; hired, trained, directly supervised summer camp staff

2011 *Assistant Camp Director*

**Louis August Jonas Foundation, Rhinebeck, New York**

Developed culturally-responsive multicultural programming for 7-week international leadership program for 60 international students; trained, supervised, and evaluated 22 international staff members

2008-2011 *America Reads Program Coordinator*

**St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota**

Interviewed, trained, and supervised over 70 America Reads tutors across 7 educational sites; conducted site visits and one-on-ones with tutors as a liaison between tutoring sites; organized interactive workshops and cultural trainings between SCU and tutoring sites

### **PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Schilmoeller, J., Candel, S., Fayazpour, S., & Johnson, M. (2015, October). *How do you see me? (re)Defining gendered oppression through critical pedagogy*. Presentation. National Association of Multicultural Education. New Orleans, LA.

### **INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

Schilmoeller, J., Candel, S., Fayazpour, S., & Johnson, M. (2015, October). *Redefining gendered oppression through critical pedagogy*. Gender & Sexuality Studies WMST 101, Interdisciplinary Degree Programs, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

2015-Present Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, Member

2014-Present National Association of Multicultural Education, Member

2011-Present Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society, Member

2011-Present Kappa Gamma Pi National Honor Society, Member

2011-2012 Louis August Jonas Foundation MN Alumni Association, Interim Director of Alumni Relations

2005-Present Louis August Jonas Foundation, Selection Committee Member