

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES: EXPLORING  
LEARNING THROUGH COUPLING INTERNSHIPS AND SERVICE-LEARNING**

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study describes the experiences of college-age students (18–24 years) engaged in multiple high-impact practices simultaneously in an internship experience in Washington, DC, and in a service-learning experience. They reflected weekly on their experiences and wrote three culminating articulated learning statements focused on their academic, civic, and personal learning. The journals were analyzed via an interpretative phenomenological approach. Key findings were as follows: (a) reflection on personal growth helped the students to find clarity with career aspirations, (b) confidence was gained as a result of engaging in high-impact practices, (c) participants demonstrated heightened levels of self-awareness as a result of their experiences, (d) reflections shared by participants validated some core curriculum courses (e.g., writing-intensive courses, public speaking courses, and political science), (e) lifelong learning was addressed by some participants but could be a continued focus to address, (f) students engage in service-learning increased their understanding of social issues, (g) students who had internship and service-learning experiences that had overlapping social issues provided deep reflections, (h) learning occurred when students interacted with people different from themselves, (i) students should continue to engage in experiential learning practices as part of the core curriculum, and (j) students consistently learned through observation and experience across the three categories of personal, academic, and civic learning. Recommendations for practice focused on how to apply the Describe, Examine, and Article Learning (DEAL) model of critical reflection and how to prepare and structure

reflection for participants in these programs. It was concluded that the addition of service-learning to the internship created additional learning opportunities.

Understanding learning styles could benefit program coordinators of service site placements. Recommendations for future research included the following: (a) content analysis of program and reflection materials between the Public Policy Internship Program and Natural Resources Policy Internship Programs, (b) individual case studies of students whose internship and service-learning experiences were in alignment, (c) longitudinal study of past participants, (d) scoring of reflections using the critical thinking rubric developed by Ash and Clayton, and (e) application of the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale or Kolb's learning style inventory to create additional avenues for research.

## **DEDICATION**

This document is dedicated to my husband, Michael Shehane; to my son,  
William Shehane; and to my parents, Eugene and Elaine Baumann,  
for their love and support throughout my life.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has released numerous publications to encourage and challenge institutions of higher education to think differently about teaching and learning (AAC&U, 1998, 2007, 2012). Specifically, AAC&U developed the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative that advocates for a 21st-century liberal education that "demands for more college-educated workers and more engaged and informed citizens" (AAC&U, 2012, p. 1). This charge would result in college graduates with an enhanced learning experience: robust intellectual and practical skills that would help them to navigate the complex environment more responsibly (AAC&U, 2012).

AAC&U postulates that high-impact practices are a means to promote a 21st-century liberal education. High-impact practices are widely researched teaching and learning practices that have been proven effective for a wide background of students (Kuh, 2008). These practices include first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity or global learning, service-learning or community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. Several of these active learning practices, such as internships, study abroad, and service-learning, allow students to learn by doing, which is similar to John Dewey's philosophy of experiential education. Unfortunately, these practices are somewhat haphazardly

organized at a majority of American campuses and universities, and access to these experiences is limited to nonmajority students, meaning non-White, first-generation students or those from a lower socioeconomic background (Kuh, 2008).

Research has shown that learning and development are intertwined and inseparable elements of the student experience (Keeling, 2004). Therefore, student learning outside the classroom and inside the classroom are mutually reinforcing roles. There are benefits of integrating what some might view as two unlikely partners. Astin's (1985) theory of involvement stated that "students learn by becoming involved" (p. 133), which can help to explain dynamics of how students change or develop. This theory directly applies to Dewey's (1938) idea that all learning is experiential and is dependent on its quality. When students become involved on college campuses in undergraduate research, service-learning, and numerous other high-impact practices that encourage students to learn by doing, it is important to employ critical reflection. This allows students to continue to grow in their learning. Furthermore, critical reflection provides more substantive data than surveys or inventories alone (Ash & Clayton, 2009a).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers and other practitioners want to know that students are learning what they think they are learning (Bain, 2004). Experiences are intentionally crafted to engage students in critical thinking, reflection, and integrative learning. Considerable time and effort is put forth, but it is a challenge to measure the learning that takes place outside the classroom. Institutions of higher education are asked to prove the learning gleaned both in and out of the classroom. Educators and practitioners alike are asked not only to

design, implement, and manage the high-impact practices that they facilitate, but to provide evidence that their programs are doing what they should do. During difficult economic times, higher education institutions must prove the worth of their programs and intentionally construct experiences that promote deep, integrative learning that stimulates students to become lifelong learners (Texas A&M University, 2012). Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Kolb, D., 1984) focuses on the learning process that takes place when a person engages in an experience and critically reflects on that process. The step that is often skipped or not paid attention to is reflection (Kolb, D., 1984).

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe comprehensively the experiences of college-age students (ages 18 to 24) who engaged in two high-impact practices simultaneously. At Texas A&M University there are two policy internship programs: the Public Policy Internship Program (PPIP) and the Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Internship Program (ANRP). "The Public Policy Internship Program [PPIP] is an academic program designed to give students from all majors the opportunity to work full-time in a policy-related internship for a full semester" (PPIP, 2014a, para. 1).

Learning outcomes associated with the PPIP program are as follows:

Master the depth of knowledge required for a degree

Demonstrate critical thinking

Communicate effectively

Practice personal and social responsibility

Demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence

Prepare to engage in lifelong learning

Work collaboratively (PPIP, 2014b, para. 5)

The ANRP program is open to students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and allows students to intern with policy-related settings in Washington, DC, for one semester. Participants gain “practical work experience in a professional environment, students are able to build on and enhance knowledge from previous coursework” (ANRP, 2014, para. 5). Program objectives associated with the ANRP program are as follows:

To provide opportunities for students to understand the policy-making process and how it can be applied, and related, to agriculture and natural resources.

To enable students to develop personal and professional skills, explore career interests, and form networks.

To provide opportunities for students to evaluate and apply knowledge gained from academic coursework in a professional work environment.

To provide congressional offices with student interns who are interested in learning about agriculture and life sciences through practical work experience.

(ANRP, 2014, para. 4)

Students enrolled in the PPIP program are required to take a one-credit, online course in conjunction with the program, whereas ANRP students are not required to do so. Credit requirements associated with ANRP are administered through the students’ respective departments.



After thoroughly reviewing the literature and seeking to understand the complex nature of how one learns from experience, the researcher approached the subject descriptively. Moustakas (1994) shared that, “when we reflect upon something and arrive at its essence, we have discovered another major component of meaning” (p. 70). Thus, the researcher was interested in how students make meaning from the experiences in which they engage, through the lens of critical reflection.

Three research questions guided this study:

1. How has a student’s personal growth been enhanced by engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?
2. How has a student connected his or her academic discipline with high-impact experiential learning practices?
3. How has a student’s civic learning been enhanced by engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?

### **Significance of the Study**

Due to AAC&U’s LEAP project (AAC&U, 2012), scholars across the country are engaging in conversations about enhancing learning in the college experience. Kuh (2008) discussed a list of 10 high-impact practices that have been proven through empirical research to heighten learning. Texas A&M University, where this study was conducted, has embarked on a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to meet the standards set forth by the regional accrediting board. Within this QEP project, the institution hopes to measure integrative and lifelong learning as defined by AAC&U. Many faculty and staff struggle in locating techniques to measure learning in some of the experiential high-

impact practices because it is not as simple as administering a quantitative survey nor would that approach capture the essence of the experience. Thus, the researcher, who is a point person for service-learning initiatives at the institution, began to explore ways to measure learning through qualitative approaches.

Ash and Clayton (2009a) developed the concept of *critical reflection* and noted that the perception of written reflection for many is “touchy feely” rather than rigorous. Those sentiments have been shared among some of the faculty at the target institution. The researcher’s ultimate hope was to find a solution and viable tool for faculty and staff to facilitate service-learning or other types of experiential learning. This tool would help to promote meaningful and measurable learning from student experiences.

### **Context of the Researcher’s Experience**

Studying the influences of high-impact practices on college student learning arose from my background in agricultural leadership and college student development. Indirectly, my past and personal experiences were the root of my curiosity related to how students learn by doing. Growing up in a rural area of less than 500 people shaped my framework of learning. My involvement in 4-H allowed me to practice what I was learning in the context of a real-life setting. Only later in college did I realize that these leadership development experiences rooted in experiential learning would be the basis of my future studies.

Upon completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Renewable Natural Resources at Texas A&M University, I realized that the out-of-classroom experiences in which I had engaged were a foundation for deeper learning. Thus, I pursued a Master of

Education degree in College Student Affairs from The Pennsylvania State University, where focusing on the holistic development of students was integral to my studies. Furthermore, that knowledge could be applied while working directly with students involved in cocurricular or outside-of-the-classroom experiences.

Through my past and current work experiences in leadership and service-learning-focused offices in higher education, I began to question how students really learn from their experiences. What makes one experience richer than the next? The push from national and institutional levels to engage in high-impact practices paralleled my own reflection and development of my research questions. Thus, these reflections ultimately led me to study high-impact practices and the influence of critical reflection in fostering student learning.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Critical reflection*: Reflection that generates, deepens, and documents learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009a); an “evidence-based examination of the sources of and gaps in knowledge and practice, with the intent to improve both” (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 28).

*DEAL model*: A critical reflection model that stands for *describe, examine, and articulate learning* (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). It was designed using 11 critical thinking standards: integration, relevance, accuracy, clarity, precision, writing, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness (Paul & Elder, 2009). The model has three perspectives on which students can reflect: academic enhancement, civic learning, and personal growth. The outcome for completing this structured critical reflection process is that

students will be able to act on their learning and improve their thinking in the future (Ash & Clayton, 2009b).

*Experiential learning*: “Experiential learning can be described as a four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation” (Kolb, D., 1984, p. 40).

*Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)*: A mandatory component of Texas A&M University’s reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ Commission on Colleges. Specifically, the QEP is an institutional course of action that focuses on improving student learning and enhancing educational quality (Texas A&M University, 2012).

*Service-learning*: “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the background and significance of the study and the purpose and objectives. The purpose of this study was to describe comprehensively the experiences of college-age students (18–24 years) who engaged in two high-impact practices simultaneously. The purpose was to understand how students make meaning from the experiences in which they were engaging through the lens of critical reflection.

This chapter also included the context of the researcher's experience, definition of terms, basic assumptions, and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter explores the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. In addition, empirical research focused on service-learning and internships as high-impact practices is reviewed.

The purpose of this study was to describe comprehensively the experiences of college-age students (18–24 years) who engaged in two high-impact practices simultaneously. This chapter offers a review of literature related to the theoretical framework of experiential learning and the conceptual framework of critical reflection. The chapter focuses on service-learning and internships as high-impact practices. Empirical research was reviewed on both frameworks and both high-impact practices. The chapter is divided into the following sections: theoretical framework, conceptual framework, high-impact practices in service-learning and internships, and summary.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

In his book *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938) emphasized the value of progressive education. Numerous foundational ideas regarding education were shared, but at the center of this philosophy is the value of learning by experience. Specifically, Dewey (1938) highlighted the value of expressing and fostering individuality and learning through experience, focusing on intelligent activity rather than activity as an end, initiating instruction with experience students or learners have, and getting subject matter from everyday life experience. Dewey (1938) contended that all learning is experiential but all experiences are not educative. His cyclical model has been reviewed

and critiqued by many and this seminal work has been the foundation of the work by many experiential learning scholars.

Several theorists have also provided foundational insights into the concept of experiential learning. Before reviewing these scholars, it is important to note that some theories are based on the process of experiential learning while others are based on the context in which experiential learning takes place. Kurt Lewin developed the T-Group theory after inviting trainees whom he observed in a lab setting engage in discussions related to their experiences (Kolb, D., 1984). He found that “learning is best facilitated in an environment where there is dialectic tension and conflict between immediate, concrete experience and analytic detachment” (Kolb, D., 1984, p. 9).

Jean Piaget was a developmental psychologist who discovered age-related regularities in the reasoning processes of children (Kolb, D., 1984). Not only was he credited with defining developmental stages; he also articulated the learning processes called assimilation and accommodation. In practice, this is referred as *accommodating* concepts to experience and *assimilating* experience to concepts (Kolb, D., 1984). Laura Joplin developed a cyclical model of experiential learning that was specific to outdoor education. The model emphasized the need for continuous feedback and support (Joplin, 1981).

The discussion primarily focused on D. Kolb (1984), who developed the experiential learning theory, which “follows constructivist views of learning in that it is the process of connecting new experiences and knowledge to the learner’s pre-existing personal knowledge” (Baker, Robinson, & Kolb, 2012, p. 3). This is a four-part learning

cycle (Figure 1) that includes “*concrete experience* (CE), a feeling dimension; *reflective observation* (RO), a watching dimension; *abstract conceptualization* (AC), a thinking dimension; and *active experimentation* (AE), a doing dimension” (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 138).

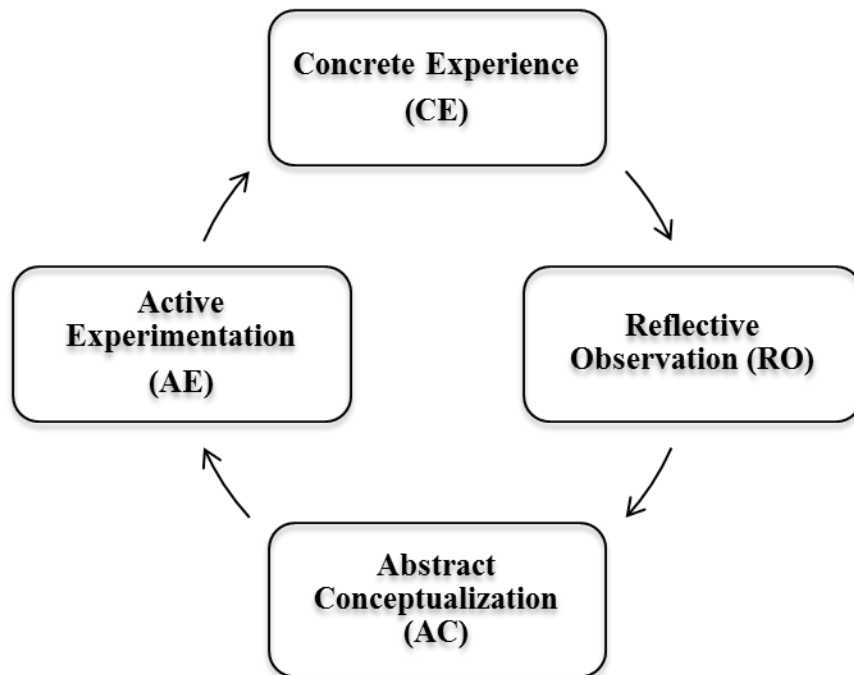


Figure 1. The four-stage cycle of learning adapted from Kolb.

Many scholars know this theory as a learning theory; however, it is more broadly based as an adult development theory (Evans et al., 2010). D. Kolb’s (1984) work focused on the relationships between learning and development, which are framed around individual learning styles. Learning styles within the model consist of assimilating, accommodating, converging, and diverging. An assimilating style (AC and RO) emphasizes ideas rather than people. Strengths in this style include the ability to



create theoretical models, integrate observations, and use inductive reasoning (Evans et al., 2010; Kolb, D., 1984). Those with an accommodating style (CE and AE) are action oriented, work well with people, and use trial and error when problem solving. They are open to new experiences, adapt to change well, and follow through with plans (Evans et al., 2010; Kolb, D., 1984). Convergers (AC and AE) prefer technical tasks rather than social or interpersonal venues. They are strong in problem solving, making decisions, and practical application. Divergers (CE and RO) tend to be feeling-oriented people. They are gifted in generating and analyzing alternatives, being aware of meaning and values; they are imaginative (Evans et al., 210; Kolb, D., 1984). A. Y. Kolb and Kolb's (2005b) learning style inventory has been used in many contexts, including training, education, and research.

## **Research**

Numerous studies have been conducted on Kolb's theory of experiential learning, from implementing the model to enhancing teaching in a specific context or using the learning styles inventory to explore learning styles (Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, 2005a, 2005b; Spence Laschinger, 1990). Several studies are highlighted below that focus on Kolb's work (Baker et al., 2012; Chan, 2012; Forney, 1994; Pinto, Geiger, & Boyle, 1994; Salter, Evans, & Forney, 2006; Yamazaki, 2005).

Research conducted by Yamazaki (2005) on the relationships between learning styles and cultural differences found that culture is important when understanding learning styles. Another study that looked at learning styles focused on student affairs master's students and found that the accommodating learning style was used most often

and the assimilating learning style was used least often (Forney, 1994). An implication of the study could tie to the selected mode of teaching by educators (Forney, 1994).

Salter et al. (2006) conducted a study of student affairs graduate students and found that the converging learning style was least stable over time. Pinto et al. (1994), in a longitudinal study of business students, found varied support that learning styles of college students would change over time.

A recent qualitative study in China used the work of D. Kolb (1984) as a theoretical framework (Chan, 2012). Chinese students completed a community service experiential project in a post-earthquake area. The researcher documented student learning through focus group interviews and the data were analyzed from the lens of Kolb's theory. The researcher suggested that the community service experience provided opportunities for students to gain experience and reflect on their learning. Furthermore, "this type of learning would help to achieve educational aims, such as tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems, increasing intercultural understanding and encouraging global citizenship" (Chan, 2012, p. 408). Chan noted that every learner does not move through Kolb's cycle in the same way. The movement varies greatly depending on personal and environmental factors. Overall, Chan (2012) maintained that experiential learning is a "major teaching and learning component in the upcoming curriculum reform in Hong Kong higher education" (p. 414) and is a viable means to improve undergraduate education.

Baker et al. (2012) explored how experiential learning theory could be applied to a comprehensive agricultural education model in secondary education. Through analysis

of Kolb's experiential learning theory and a personal interview with Kolb, the reported that experiential learning enhances meta-cognitive skills, can be goal-oriented, and can be assessed. Agricultural educators must be present and intentional to guide the learning. As a result, eight recommendations for practice were posed, including categories associated with professional development of agricultural educators, teacher preparedness, goals for instructors working with experiential learning, and assessment (Baker et al., 2012).

### **Limitations and Relevance**

One challenge mentioned in the literature regarding Kolb's theory of experiential learning is that there is little research on how learning styles are related to gender, race, cognitive level, and culture. In addition, various scholars have categorized Kolb's theory as an adult development theory. However, in its current state, it does not categorize development over a lifespan. It seems to lie best within the learning theory category. In sum, the student development professional and leadership educator must understand that students involved in this research are made up of multiple realities in the learning environment (Evans et al., 2010). Knowing this will help researchers to frame the significance of experience and reflection in the learning process.

Kolb's theory of experiential learning is directly relevant to this study. Even though some scholars say that it is an adult development theory, for the context of this study, it was used as a lens to look at learning. It provides a theoretical framework that validates that learning can take place when one engages in experiences (e.g., service-learning and internships). Furthermore, experiential learning emphasizes the importance

of reflection through the learning process. Dewey (1938) emphasized that all learning is experiential but all experiences are not educative. Eyler (2002) validated Dewey's argument by noting that students are unlikely to reflect on their own when engaging in service-learning unless it is incorporated into the experience.

### **Conceptual Framework**

D. Kolb (1984) stated, "learning is the process whereby development occurs" (p. 132). Ash and Clayton (2009b) postulated that every experience is worthy of reflection. Moreover, Dewey (1938) stated that learners must focus on intelligent activity rather than activity as an end so that learners do not miss the meaning in experiences.

How does learning emerge from these three different but connected ideas? Reflection is the key to connecting learning, doing, and development. Scholars have defined the term *reflection* in various ways. Rogers (2001) suggested that reflection was a process that allows the learner to "integrate the understanding gained into one's experience in order to enable better choices or actions in the future as well as enhance one's overall effectiveness" (p. 41). Eyler (2002) noted that reflection, at times, gets little attention in the larger scope of service-learning and that students do not always naturally link the subject matter that they are studying with the service-learning experience (Eyler, 2002). Students are not likely to reflect on their own when engaging in service-learning unless it is intentionally folded into the experience (Eyler, 2002).

Eyler (2002) suggested that few studies have measured the impact of reflection in service-learning and that the research on reflection has failed to define and measure the associated outcomes. Due to national pushes and the enhanced learning that takes place

in high-impact practices, one may conclude that critical reflection is needed to provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences and serve as a means for educators to measure learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009a). Critical reflection generates, deepens, and documents learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009a). Furthermore, it is an “evidence-based examination of the sources of and gaps in knowledge and practice, with the intent to improve both” (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 28). In order to guide students in integrating what they are learning through experiences outside of the classroom with their academic curriculum, reflection must be intentionally designed and should be “a purposeful and strategic process” (Eyler, Giles, & Schmiede, 1996, p. 16). Before discussing the design components essential for critical reflection, one must distinguish critical reflection from critical thinking.

### **Critical Thinking Versus Critical Reflection**

Paul and Elder (2009) defined *critical thinking* as “the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it” (p. 2). The following served as an operational definition of critical thinking for this study:

Individuals should be able to do some or all of the following: identify central issues and assumptions in an argument, recognize important relationships, make correct references from the data, deduce conclusions from information or data provided, interpret whether conclusions are warranted based on given data, evaluate evidence or authority, make self-corrections, and solve problems.

(Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 156)

Critical reflection is “one particular aspect of the larger process of reflection” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 527). Brookfield (1995) stated that critical reflection has two purposes. First, it is important for the learner to understand and consider how power may “undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions” (p. 530). Second, the learner must question norms and practices that seemingly make our lives simpler but actually work against long-term intentions (Brookfield, 1995). In a sense, critical thinking is an outcome, while critical reflection is the means to achieving that outcome.

### **Designing Critical Reflection**

Ash and Clayton (2009a) suggested three principles of good practice when designing critical reflection in applied learning or experiential learning: determining the desired learning outcomes, designing reflection to achieve those outcomes, and integrating formative and summative assessment into the reflection process. They emphasized that the service-learning facilitator is also an instructional designer. An instructional designer is able to “make choices throughout the design process that are influenced by their goals and constraints and by their students’ abilities as well as their own” (p. 28). The designer is a reflective practitioner as well and engages in the same critical reflection process alongside the student whom he or she is teaching (Ash & Clayton, 2009a). This mirroring of practice with students allows the designer to continue to improve and deepen student learning.

The first step in designing critical reflection is to determine the desired learning outcomes; thus, one must begin with the end in mind (Covey, 1989). A *learning outcome* is an action that a student is expected to demonstrate from a learning experience in terms

of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind (Suskie, 2009). There are several approaches to writing learning outcomes. One can start by writing specific learning goals that will take place and then categorizing those goals, or one can start with categories and then highlight specific goals. Next, the learning goals must be formed into learning outcomes or objectives that are measurable. Many educators use Bloom's (1956) taxonomy as a tool for writing measurable learning outcomes in the cognitive domain. In education, the cognitive domain focuses on knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. It is important for the facilitator of the service-learning experience to reflect on what the facilitator hopes the students will learn as a result of this experience.

The second step in designing critical reflection is to consider the strategies and mechanisms needed to implement the reflection. Ash and Clayton (2009a) described strategies as the “over-arching structure that may combine various reflection activities” (p. 24) and mechanisms as the tools used to demonstrate the reflection. Among the strategies to implement reflection, one must consider how frequently the reflection will occur (before, during, and after) and whether it will be inside or outside of the classroom. Furthermore, will students, faculty/staff, and community partners be involved or will there be just one audience? Among those groups, who will take the lead in facilitating the discussion? How will feedback be given and the work be graded? The term *mechanisms* refers to the tools used for reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009a). One must first decide to what learning outcomes the reflection will be connected and then choose the medium of demonstrating the reflection (e.g., journals, discussion, concept

maps). Finally, the facilitator must decide what prompts will help guide the process, the products expected from the experience, and the criteria by which the materials will be graded.

Third, integrating formative and summative assessment is essential when designing critical reflection. Summative assessment is used at the end of a process to measure and document overall outcomes. Formative assessment is a way to give feedback continuously throughout the learning process (Ash & Clayton, 2009a). It should be used to “empower students as self-regulated learners” (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 199). Ash and Clayton (2009a) encouraged service-learning facilitators to develop reflection prompts based on Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy. These prompts can both “guide students to desired levels of reasoning and determine the level of reasoning they have attained” (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 40). The standards of critical thinking can be used in both formative and summative assessment.

### **DEAL Model**

In order to measure how critically a student has reflected on an experience, Ash and Clayton (2009b) developed a structured model known as the DEAL model: describe, examine, and articulate learning. The model was developed to provide a tool for educators to deepen the learning occurring through service-learning experiences. However, it is a flexible model and can be used across experiential learning opportunities. The DEAL model, as described by Ash and Clayton (2009b), results in three separate articulated learning statements focused on personal growth, civic learning, and academic enhancement.



Personal growth allows students to “consider their feelings, assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, traits, skills, and sense of identity” (Ash & Clayton, 2004, pp. 140–141). When analyzing experiences from a civic perspective, it allows students to “explore decisions made and actions taken in light of consequences for the common good, consider alternative approaches and interpretations, identify elements of power and privilege, and analyze options for short-term versus long-term and sustainable change agency” (p. 142). Finally, academic enhancement gives students the opportunity to “examine their experiences in light of specific course concepts, exploring similarities and differences between theory and practice” (p. 140).

During the *describe* phase of the DEAL model, students are asked to describe in detail what they are experiencing. Students often tend to interpret before reflecting deeply on the details of an experience. As a result of engaging in description, “enhanced skills of mindfulness and attentiveness are often required for—and developed by—this step” (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 42). Documenting what senses were engaged—what was seen, what was heard, where the experience was located, who was there or not there, and what happened or did not happen—is an important part of the *describe* phase (Ash & Clayton, 2009a).

During the *examine* phase, pointed reflection questions are posed to guide students learning through their experience. Specifically, “the desired learning outcomes—whether expressed as learning goals or, in a more assessable fashion, as learning objectives—within each category of learning” should be crafted to guide the reflection within this phase. (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 42). The purpose of this phase is

to encourage questions and unveil issues for further conversation rather than to critique the reasoning of students.

The most crucial component of critical reflection is having students *articulate their learning* in a culminating four-part statement. Students are asked to review their past reflections to summarize their experience within a series of four questions: (a) What did I learn? (b) How did I learn it? (c) Why does this learning matter? and (d) What will I do in light of this learning? The central element of this phase is the action associated with the learning.

Even though students in higher education continue to be encouraged to be reflective learners, Ash and Clayton (2009a) contended that reflection has been considered too subjective and lacking in rigor in some education arenas. Other educators find that grading reflection assignments is time intensive. Critical reflection, as a conceptual framework, advances the current topic significantly. The DEAL model provides a structured approach to critical reflection that is grounded in critical thinking and guides students in developing substantive rather than surface-level responses. Since the model is relatively new (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, 2009b), there has been little research or outcomes assessment associated with its use. Furthermore, the authors suggested that it is a flexible model, which can be beneficial but could pose a challenge to identify the best approach for the current study. Because this study examined service-learning and an internship experience, it could be challenging to delineate where significant learning was taking place or whether it happened through both learning opportunities.

## **Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development**

The term *student development* is often used in student affairs practice and has been a debated phrase for quite some time (Evans et al., 2010). A variety of scholars have made attempts to define student development (Miller, T. K., & Prince, 1976; Rodgers, 1990; Sanford, 1967). In a synthesis of the literature in *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research*, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) looked at the body of literature associated with student development theory through the lens of development and change. They followed Lerner (1986), who contended that development should be systematic, organized, and successive in order for change to occur. In contrast, change “refers only to alterations over time in students’ cognitive skills, affective characteristics, attitudes, values, or behaviors” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 17). As a result of this synthesis, theories and models were organized into four categories: psychosocial, cognitive, typology, and person-environment interaction theories. In addition, college impact models of student change were discussed by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005). For the purposes of this section, Chickering’s seven vectors of student development are reviewed.

Chickering’s work is believed to be one of the most influential theories in student development (Evans et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) summarized the theory by sharing that “development involves differentiation and integration as students encounter increasing complexity in ideas, values, and other people and struggle to reconcile these new positions with their own ideas, values, and beliefs” (p. 21). As college students move through vectors, which are

conceptual lenses that help one to look at college students in a variety of contexts, it is important to note that movement through vectors can “occur at different rates and can interact with movement along the others” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p.34). The seven vectors were identified: achieving competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. The vectors are summarized below.

### **Developing Competence**

Developing competence focuses on three types of competence: intellectual competence, physical and manual competence, and interpersonal competence.

Intellectual competence “involves using the mind’s skills to comprehend, reflect, analyze, synthesize, and interpret” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 53). Specifically, a person with intellectual competence has the ability to reason and solve problems, be an active learner, and be original in his or her thought processes. Physical and manual competence “involve using the body as a healthy vehicle for high performance, self-expression, and creativity” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 54). Interpersonal competence focuses on the ability to communicate effectively and to collaborate with others. Skills associated with interpersonal competence are active listening, asking questions, providing feedback, engaging in dialogues, and providing self-disclosure.

### **Managing Emotions**

Managing emotions focuses on helping students to identify signals that help them to “learn appropriate channels for releasing irritations before they explode, dealing with

fears before they immobilize, and healing emotional wounds before they infect other relationships” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 46). Dealing with emotions cannot be escaped for students as they enter or return to college. Finding a balance between self-control and self-expression is essential (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

### **Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence**

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence focuses on the ability to function with relative self-sufficiency, take responsibility for actions and goals, and not be consumed by other opinions (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In order to move within this vector, one must have both emotional and instrumental independence. “Emotional independence means freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval” (p. 47). It starts with “separation from parents and proceeds through reliance on peers, nonparental adults, and occupational or institutional reference groups” (p. 47). A person who has moved through this vector would be able to stand firm in his or her interests and convictions. Instrumental independence allows the person to think critically and independently in order to move ideas to action. Developing autonomy concludes with the student revising how he or she views relationships with others. In sum, “the need to be independent and the longing for inclusion become better balanced” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 47).

### **Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships**

Developing mature interpersonal relationships involves tolerance and appreciation of differences and the capacity for intimacy. Tolerance allows a student to respect differences rather than reinforce stereotypes. Chickering and Reisser (1993)

shared that “awareness, breadth of experience, openness, curiosity, and objectivity help students refine first impressions, reduce bias and ethnocentrism, increase empathy and altruism, and enjoy diversity” (p. 48). A capacity for intimacy focuses on the individual moving away from narcissistic tendencies toward healthy relationships that are grounded in honesty, responsiveness, and unconditional respect. The relationship focuses on more in-depth sharing, acceptance of flaws, and valuing of assets (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

### **Establishing Identity**

Establishing identity is formed by movement on the above-mentioned vectors and influences progress on succeeding vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), development of identity involves:

(1) comfort with body and appearance, (2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (7) personal stability and integration. (p. 49)

In sum, self-esteem and stability grow and “a solid sense of self emerges, and it becomes more apparent that there is an I who coordinates the facets of personality, who ‘owns’ the house of self and is comfortable in all of its rooms” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 49).

### **Developing Purpose**

Developing purpose focuses on a student identifying a vocation. Chickering and Reisser (1993) defined *vocation* in the broadest sense to include either career aspirations or an overall calling. Furthermore, purpose entails increasing the ability to be “intentional, to assess interests and options, to clarify goals, to make plans, and to persist despite obstacles” (p. 50). A person must have a clear understanding of personal values in order to aid in the decision-making process when the realities of life surface.

### **Developing Integrity**

Growth in developing integrity involves clarification and recalibrating personal values and beliefs. Three sequential and overlapping stages fall within this vector: (a) humanizing values (i.e., moving from relying on uncompromising beliefs to thinking about one’s self-interest and the interests of other humans), (b) personalizing values (i.e., affirming one’s beliefs while respecting the beliefs of others), and (c) developing congruence (i.e., matching individual values with socially responsible behavior; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In this vector, students examine their previous beliefs, discern what is suitable for them as individuals, and incorporate their reframed beliefs into their lives.

### **Research**

Considerable research has been conducted on Chickering’s seven vectors theory that focused on validation of the theory and explored how it relates to specific student populations, along with other development factors (Evans et al., 2010). Mather and Winston’s (1998) study supported Chickering’s development of the autonomy process.

However, the need for control throughout the process was noted. Researchers found that “developing autonomy occurred in the form of relational, personal, and educational events” (Mather & Winston, 1998, p. 45). Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, and Barnes (2005) conducted a single-institutional study with 247 participants. Results supported the theory as students developed in the areas of mature interpersonal relationships, purpose, academic autonomy, and tolerance. Contradictory to the model, students showed that they developed purpose earlier rather than later in the college career. Some support for the relationship between psychosocial development and college experiences, hypothesized by Chickering, was confirmed by Martin (2000).

Research focused on specific student populations as they relate to the seven vectors has included women’s development, ethnic groups, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. Several studies focused on women’s development found that developing mature interpersonal relationships appeared to occur before developing autonomy (Greeley & Tinsley, 1988; Straub, 1987; Taub, 1995). Furthermore, many women attained autonomy through developing healthy relationships (Straub & Rodgers, 1986; Taub, 1995). Research highlighting African American students suggested that, in the context of interpersonal relationships, interdependence and autonomy seemed to occur (Hughes, 1987). Kodama, McEwen, Liang, and Lee (2001, 2002) found that Chickering’s theory did not adequately address Asian American student development. While there is limited research associated with Native Americans, Utterback, Spooner, Barbieri, and Fox (1995) found that Caucasians scored higher on intimacy than Hispanic Americans, African Americans, or Native Americans. Not a considerable amount of



research has been conducted on the development of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. However, Chickering and Reisser (1993) included sexual orientation as part of the establishing identity vector. D'Augelli (1994) noted that added stress associated with developing a new minority identity, as opposed to a major identity through the coming out process. Fassinger (1998) found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students may be at a disadvantage in resolving developmental tasks in vectors one through four, which leads to challenges in the last vectors.

### **Limitations**

Even though Chickering's theory is one of the most revered theories in college student development, gaps have been identified by researchers (Evans et al., 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For example, Schuh (1994) maintained that additional research on the interplay between race and student development is needed. Evans et al. (2010) noted the need for longitudinal research that would examine development over time. Furthermore, more research to test validity is needed, since much of the research is correlational and looks at only one or two vectors rather than exploring how the vectors work in concert (Evans et al., 2010). Although Chickering's model is empirically grounded, some believe that it "lacks specificity and precision" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 80). Many of the vectors are described in general terms. Specifically, integrity is challenging to grasp. Reisser (1995) acknowledged that more research is needed to explore interrelationships of identity. Continuing qualitative research to explore Chickering's vectors could help to close gaps associated with multiracial populations (Evans et al., 2010).

## High-Impact Practices

The AAC&U's recent push to promote high-impact practices through LEAP is a national research initiative and campus action campaign that champions the importance of a 21st-century liberal education (AAC&U, 2007, 2012). LEAP demands an increase in college-educated workers and more informed and engaged citizens (AAC&U, 2007, 2012). Furthermore, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement released a call to action and report in January 2012 entitled *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). This task force encourages institutions of higher education to reclaim their civic mission. Several strategies were mentioned to accomplish this charge, among them service-learning. Research has shown that service-learning is a powerful pedagogy that promotes civic learning and has shown positive effects on numerous learning outcomes, including but not limited to critical thinking, cultural awareness, moral development, and increasing students' sense of civic responsibility (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). Internships are another form of experiential learning. The purpose of internships is to "provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field" (Kuh, 2008, p. 11). Service-learning and internships are two high-impact practices that were the focus of the current study.

## **Service-Learning Defined**

Service-learning is a multifaceted pedagogy that incorporates both teaching and civic engagement (Davis, 2009). There is a general understanding among scholars that service-learning provides students the opportunity to learn from service in the community through reflection. Some academicians contend that service-learning is only classroom based, while others view it more broadly and hold that it can be an organizational or individual experience outside of the classroom (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Davis, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996). In any case, research has shown that service-learning heightens student learning (Eyler et al., 2001; Kuh, 2008). Furthermore, this pedagogy emphasizes the importance of serving one's community as an essential college outcome. Through assisting community partners, college students prepare for citizenship, work, and life (Kuh, 2008).

Jacoby (1996) shared that service-learning, broadly defined, "is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to promote student learning and development" (p. 5). This definition can be used in both curricular and cocurricular learning settings. Cocurricular learning occurs "both intentionally and serendipitously through both formal and informal interactions, and in both curricular and co-curricular contexts" (King, 2003, p. 260). Outside of teaching in the classroom, casual contacts with faculty, staff, campus life, social venues, and community involvement are places where cocurricular learning can take place (King, 2003).

However, other scholars have contended that true service-learning can be conducted only inside the classroom (Chupp & Joseph, 2010). In addition, such scholars maintain that two key components must be present for students:

(a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112)

Chupp and Joseph (2010) synthesized the literature and classified service-learning in four categories: traditional, social justice, critical, and service-learning with institutional change. Traditional is classroom-based service-learning that enhances academic learning through application of reflection (Chupp & Joseph, 2010). The other three categories expand this traditional approach. Social justice-focused service-learning is community service that focuses on students' moral and civic values to promote change (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007). Critical service-learning promotes critical consciousness and equity between students and community while striving for social change (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Mitchell, 2008). Service-learning with institutional change allows students to assess and transform institutional structures (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

Morton (1996) identified two fundamental types of service-learning courses: service centered and content centered. A service-centered course is designed to “integrate learning with service” (Morton, 1996, p. 277). This type of course is inductive and empirical and assumes that learning is a process in which one “transforms

experience into knowledge” (Morton, 1996, p. 277). This type of course may stem from institutional efforts to create integrative educational experiences. Content-based service-learning courses integrate service to achieve pre-existing course outcomes. The service is intended to enhance outcomes in the academic discipline. In sum, service-learning is defined differently depending on the context in which it is experienced.

**Characteristics of effective service-learning.** While service-learning can occur in both curricular and cocurricular settings, five characteristics of effective service-learning hold true in either context: placement quality, application, reflection, diversity, and community voice (Eyler & Giles, 1999). First, placement quality refers to the service in service-learning. Service-learning practitioners must pay close attention when establishing community relationships so that they will provide intentional learning environments for students and genuine resources that will aid the community. Placement quality can have an effect on both personal and interpersonal development outcomes. Second, Eyler and Giles (1999) described application as “the degree to which students can link what they are doing in the classroom to what they are experiencing in the community and vice versa” (p. 170). Application is a predictor of academic learning outcomes. Service-learning that includes reflection and application is consistently a predictor of student performance on problem analysis outcomes (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Third, reflection has been described as the *hyphen* in service-learning. In this metaphor, the hyphen represents the link between a student’s experience in the community and his/her academic learning. Reflection is central to effective service-learning; without it, students would be merely doing acts of good work through volunteering their time. This

reflection can take the form of written or verbal discussion. Reflection is also an element of the service-learning experience that predicts academic outcomes (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Bringle and Hatcher (1999) pointed out that reflection directs the student to new interpretations of their experiences. Fourth, diversity predicts both tolerance and transformation in that it reduces stereotypes. Students have the capability to see likenesses between themselves and the community partners, which gives them greater cultural appreciation. Fifth, community voice is a predictor of personal development in that “it predicted tolerance, cultural appreciation, reward in service, valuing a career of service” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 178). All of these characteristics help to ensure meaningful learning experiences for students.

Howard (1993) developed a list of principles of good practice in service-learning, as shown in Table 1.

**Civic dimension of service-learning.** Service-learning can assist facilitators to meet academic outcomes of their curricular and cocurricular experiences. Battistoni (2002) reiterated the need to be attentive to the civic dimensions of service-learning. Critical reflection will foster deeper learning.

For service-learning to work optimally as a vehicle for civic education, students need to be pushed to dig deeper in their thinking/reflection on the service experience, beyond how they feel or what they are doing or the charitable motivations behind what they’re doing to the “civic” or “public” dimensions of their work. (Battistoni, 2002, p. 53)

Students must to be open to examining their experience critically.

Table 1

*Principles of Good Practice in Service-Learning*

Principal	Summary
1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service	Credit is awarded for academic and civic learning not for completion of or quality of service
2. Do not compromise academic rigor	There is a perception that service-learning is a “soft” or less rigorous learning strategy. Service-learning students must master academic content, but also apply what they are learning in the context of unstructured community experiences.
3. Establish learning objectives	Intentional planning of academic and civic learning objectives is essential.
4. Establish criteria for selection of service placements	Deliberate service-site selections leads to enhanced learning experiences for students.
5. Provide educationally-sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives	Service experiences enable learning when the educational interventions promote critical reflection, analysis, and application.
6. Prepare students for learning from the community	Provide support that will help students acquire needed skills to learn in community (e.g. – participant/observer skills) and/or examples to exemplary assignments to provide context for students.
7. Maximize the distinction between the students’ community learning role and classroom learning role	Shape learning environments so that learners assume similar roles between the community and classroom contexts in order to create a more seamless learning environment.
8. Rethink the faculty instructional role	Move towards a more active learning environment for both the faculty member and the student.
9. Be prepared for variation in, and some loss of control with, student learning outcomes	Classroom discussions and content of papers will be less predictable than other assessment strategies.
10. Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course	Purposeful civic learning should be integrated into the course by renorming the traditional roles of the classroom. (e.g., convert individual to group assignments)

**Research.** Several studies have compared final scores from courses that integrated service-learning versus courses that did not (Astin & Sax, 1998; Berson & Younkin, 1998; Gray et al., 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). Students who engaged in the service component scored significantly higher than those who did not (Berson & Younkin, 1998; Markus et al., 1993). For example, in the Markus et al. (1993) study, where political science course sections were examined under two instructional conditions (i.e., community service and control), students who engaged in 20 hours of service with reflection scored higher than similar peers in a course without service-learning. Berson and Younkin (1998) replicated this quasi-experiment and found similar results. Other studies have noted that participation in service-learning enhanced a student's life skill development, academic development, and sense of civic responsibility (Astin & Sax, 1998; Gray et al., 1996). Some studies have found that, even though students' achievement scores were not higher, their ability to apply course concepts was greater than that of their counterparts (Miller, J., 1994).

In 2001, a group of researchers conducted a review of the literature spanning 1993–2000 to identify the effects of service-learning on college students. The outcomes stated in this review provide a powerful platform to demonstrate the validity of service-learning experiences in both curricular and cocurricular settings (Eyler et al., 2001). The following outcome themes emerged from this review: personal, social, learning, career development, relationship with the institution, and processes examined in qualitative studies (Eyler et al., 2001). Researchers found that “service-learning has a positive effect on student personal development such as sense of personal efficacy, personal identity,



spiritual growth, and moral development” and that “service-learning has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills” (Eyler et al., 2001, p. 1). The review also provided evidence that service-learning positively affects academic learning, the ability to apply concepts in real life, and outcomes such as critical thinking and cognitive development (Eyler et al., 2001). These outcomes can assist faculty and student affairs educators in developing purposeful service-learning experiences. The literature review not only focused on student outcomes; it also categorized effects of program characteristics on students, the impact of service-learning on faculty, the impact of service-learning on colleges and universities, and the impact of service-learning on communities. The most limited research stemmed from the impact of service-learning on communities.

Scholars have developed and adapted research scales to measure student experiences in service-learning. In the text *The Measure of Service Learning: Research Scales to Assess Student Experiences* (Bringle, Phillips, & Hudson, 2004), the authors grouped useful service-learning scales to assess student experiences in six categories: motives and values, moral development, self and self-concept, student development, attitudes, and critical thinking. Researchers can select 41 distinct scales from within these six categories.

**Limitations.** Service-learning is a powerful pedagogy that can enhance student learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler et al., 2001; Kuh, 2008; Morton, 1996). However, it comes with challenges. These challenges or costs manifest in “time spent mastering a new pedagogy, anxiety associated with what may feel like less control over the direction

of a course, and the increased logistical complexity of incorporating community partners into the teaching process” (Morton, 1996, p. 276). Many faculty members use service-learning in their courses successfully; however, to sustain this effort, it is essential to have institutional support (Morton, 1996). Integrating service-learning was a new avenue for the policy internship programs that was examined for this research study (i.e., ANRP and PPIP). Therefore, there could be challenges related to the quality of community placements and the time required for the program organizers to understand the pedagogy.

Morton (1996) categorized service-learning courses as service centered or content based. Some faculty who are trained to teach deductively are uncertain of using service-learning as they fear their colleagues may feel that they are implementing a less rigorous pedagogy. Institutions of higher education may have to acknowledge their support formally so faculty can see the legitimacy (Morton, 1996). It is important to balance learning and service objectives and to ensure that community partnerships are of high quality. Morton (1996) also described confusion related to the definition of *service* in the classroom. Service can be defined as a continuum ranging from charity and project management to social change. Students often ask, “How much service is enough?” and “Is it required or optional?” One’s understanding of service can directly affect teaching; if the concept is not defined, it can be confusing for students. Related to these examples, students’ service-learning experiences may vary significantly; therefore, some may have a deeper learning experience than others.

## **Internships Defined**

Internships are another form of experiential learning. They “provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field” (Kuh, 2008, p. 11). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) stated that internships are an “integral part of a college education” (CAS, 2012, p. 2). Upon looking at how institutions of higher education define internships across the country, O’Neil (2010) concluded that definitions included “a reflection component, onsite supervision/guidance, and gaining exposure to a career or furthering one’s interest in a career” (p. 3). Furthermore, universities characterize internships as “‘experiential’, ‘active’, and ‘real world’” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 3). In sum, internships can vary depending on the precedence and structures that the institution puts in place, as well as how students approach them (O’Neill, 2010).

Internships can be completed for any of multiple reasons. First, students may use an internship to explore or identify their choice of major and gain exposure to the working world (O’Neill, 2010). Second, for students who are more solidified with their discipline, an internship could help them to apply learning from their discipline to real-world settings (O’Neill, 2010). Nance-Nash (2007) shared that internships are necessary for students to become competitive in today’s job market. Internships can be taken for course credit; however, some students engage in internships to gain experience outside of the classroom without receiving credit. When internships are completed for course credit, the expectations may vary among academic disciplines. In order to demonstrate

learning, some academic units may require students to develop a portfolio, write a paper, or present to the professor upon completing the internship. The product depends on the student and the faculty member who supervises the internship.

**Characteristics of effective internships.** According to CAS (2012), internships should be organized as a learning activity that includes doing, reflection, and feedback for improvement. CAS (2012) encouraged institutions to be deliberative, while AAC&U (2007) charged institutions to integrate internships into the curriculum intentionally. O’Neill (2010) gleaned from Kuh’s (2008) literature regarding high-impact practices that

an internship is more likely to be “high impact” for students when it is intentionally organized as an activity that leads to particular learning outcomes; when students apply what they have learned in courses to work experiences, reflect on these experiences, and receive feedback that helps them to improve; when students build mentoring relationships with supervisors, faculty, and peers; when students are exposed to differences across people and in ways of thinking; and when students are asked to use their experiences to clarify their values, interests, and personal goals including, in this case, their values, interests, and goals related to careers. (p. 2)

**Internships as a means for career development.** Pascarella and Terenzini’s (2005) synthesis of the literature noted that work or internship experiences positively influenced students’ development of career-related skills and increased the chances of a student receiving a job immediately after college. Donald Super’s life-span, life space

career theory emphasizes the complexity of career development and provides a practical view of how careers develop over a life span (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009). Super highlighted five stages and their substages of career development: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. In the growth stage, which typically occurs during childhood, people are “confronted with the career development tasks of developing self-clarity and a basic understanding of the world of work” (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009, p. 73). Children move through substages of fantasy, interest, and capacity. The next stage of development, exploration, occurs in early adulthood. During this stage, people address tasks of crystallizing and specifying occupational preferences. Crystallizing focuses on gaining more information about occupational interests; self-understanding is essential part of this substage. In order to specify occupational preferences, the ability to make decisions is essential (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009). After the exploration stage, the person moves to the establishment stage, which includes stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing substages. Within stabilizing, the person assesses whether the chosen occupation has enough opportunity for self-expression. Once the person decides that the choice is good, he or she moves to consolidating, to become a producer in that context. Advancement depends on how the person decides whether to move to maintenance or to repeat exploration (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009). The move maintenance is the stage in which the person holds, updates, and innovates. Holding focuses on how employees improve their level of performance in the respective role. Updating focuses on the workers’ ability to update their skills, and innovating focuses on how they employ innovative ways to their current position. Disengagement is

the point in a person's career where physical capacities may begin to decline and plans for retirement are initiated (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009).

Internships provide opportunities for students to experiment within their potential careers. Niles and Hutchinson (2009) emphasized the importance of "remembering that students cannot appropriately implement and advance in their educational planning without adequate exploration" (p. 76). This exploration allows students to make educated decisions based on what is meaningful to them.

**Research.** As one may infer from the previous description, outcomes associated with internships depend on the academic unit where the internship is housed or the internship provider. Often, there are not consistent learning outcomes because the experience is unique to the individual and unique to the location where the student is completing the experience. Because internships are not clearly defined, it is difficult to measure learning broadly; thus, the literature is often specific to the discipline. Beard and Morton (1999) found when studying mass communications students that the following key elements led to successful internship predictors: academic preparedness, proactivity or aggressiveness, positive attitude, quality of worksite supervision, organizational practices and policies, and compensation. Knouse and Fontenot (2008) found that, to enhance business internships, there should be active student participation, active employer participation, clear expectations, prerequisites that reflect predictors more closely related to intern success, mentorship opportunities, and journaling. Understanding the research related to creating quality internship experiences will help experiential educators to shape experiences in which students learn by doing.

Gavigan (2010) noted that reflection is critical when considering the value of the internship experience:

It is really the only opportunity for students to “try on” a career, to apply and strengthen what they have learned in the classroom, to validate a chosen major or career path and, sometimes most important, to reflect and change directions while time allows. (p. 18)

In sum, internships are a valuable high-impact practice that can enhance learning. Reflection is key for students to make connections between their learning in the classroom and their learning outside of the classroom.

**Limitations.** Like many forms of experiential learning, inconsistency can limit the students’ learning experiences. Internships that allow students to “explore their interests, clarify their values, and test their knowledge and skills in new settings” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 1) should lead to quality internship experiences. However, many students have internships that do not allow them to contribute to purposeful work nor do they provide sufficient direction. Students tend to be frustrated and disappointed about the experience (O’Neill, 2010). If institutions do not put structures in place to ensure that students are engaging in quality high-impact practices, inconsistent experiences will occur.

### **Chapter Summary**

Dewey (1938) stated, “Amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience” (p. 25). The reviewed literature presented D. Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle as

the theoretical framework and Ash and Clayton's (2009b) DEAL model as a conceptual framework for the study. The two contexts in which these frameworks were studied were internships and service-learning simultaneously; thus, literature associated with these contexts was described. Understanding the literature base helps to bring Dewey's quote to life in helping the student to understand the connection between education and personal experience.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

Chapter 3 describes the method used in the study. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is reviewed in depth. The population and sample, institutional approval, and data collection are reported.

#### **Research Design**

IPA was selected as the method to allow the researcher to understand the experiences of the students who were engaged in the internship and service-learning experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA assumes that the data “can tell us something about people’s involvement in and orientation towards the world, and/or about how they make sense of this” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). Choosing this method was consistent epistemologically with the focus of the research questions. Due to the individualized learning that takes place through experiences, qualitative approaches are emergent and flexible and allow the researcher to understand participants and engage in the complexity of each unique experience (Merriam, 2009; Smith et al., 2009).

#### **Population and Sample**

The participants in the study were purposively selected because they were all part of a structured internship program at Texas A&M University, a large land grant research university that sends student interns to Washington, DC. As part of their internship experience, these students engaged in individual service-learning experiences in the District of Columbia area. In IPA research, the participants represent a perspective on the phenomenon being studied (Smith et al., 2009); thus, purposeful selection was

essential for this qualitative study. Coordinators of the program identified a wide array of community partners to meet the interest areas of the students in the program. The study has two categories within the population being sampled: (a) PPIP was open to any student at the university, and (b) ANRP was open to students studying in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Twenty-three participants were a part of the study over the course of two semesters. During spring 2013 there were 3 participants from ANRP and 3 participants from PPIP; during summer 2013 there were 7 participants from ANRP and 10 participants from PPIP.

### **Institutional Approval**

After the researcher consulted with the internship program and designed the reflection assignments in conjunction with the program, a proposed plan outlining the study and data collection methods was submitted to the Office of Research Compliance at Texas A&M University. Once the Institutional Review Board approved the study (Protocol Number: IRB2013-0200), the researcher began the data collection process.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher chose to collect and analyze reflection documents for the purpose of the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Merriam, 2009). As part of the internship experience, participants were given a series of weekly journal prompts focusing on academic enhancement, civic learning, and personal growth. During the last 3 weeks of the experience, they were asked to write three culminating reflections, or articulated learning statements, focused on academic enhancement, civic learning, and personal growth. These prompts are based on Ash and Clayton's (2009b) DEAL model

of critical reflection. The articulated learning statements were analyzed for the purposes of this study. Templates that were shared with the students are located in Appendix A. The qualitative research process was emergent, meaning that the proposed plan of inquiry could shift as the researcher collected data (Cresswell, 2009). The researcher recognized the possibility of discovering a new avenue to take based on the testimonies shared by the participants.

Prior to the participants leaving for the internship experience, the researcher met them in a training session in her role as a service-learning educator. The initial contact related to the study was made via email. This email invited the students in the PPIP and ANRP to participate in the study.

Specifically, the researcher developed an email using the approved IRB language and attached the approved IRB consent document (Appendices B and C). Then, the researcher sent the email to the PPIP and ANRP program coordinators. They could not share the email addresses of the participants directly with the researcher due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), so they forwarded the email on behalf of the researcher to the participants. As stated in the email, the participants were asked to reply to the researcher disclosing whether they would or would not like to participate in the study (Appendix B). The researcher compiled a list of those who indicated willingness to participate and those who did not and sent it to the PPIP and ANRP program coordinators. The program coordinators removed the students who did not want to participate in the study. The names and email addresses were linked to the

data but the researcher was unable to identify who wrote each reflection. Then, the program coordinators sent the data to the researcher to be analyzed.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The researcher conducted a formal presentation during the participant orientation to operationalize service-learning and describe the DEAL model of critical reflection for the participants, as well as how reflection was structured throughout the course of their internship and service-learning experiences. Confidentiality of participant identities was ensured between speaking to the students and collecting the data (name, major, hometown). The researcher did not have access to the identifiers linking the students' names to their reflections. The policy internship program coordinators had that information and sent only reflection data with a PPIP or ANRP code attached.

### **Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the researcher investigates how participants construct their own realities. Internal validity focuses on how findings from the research are in alignment with real life (Merriam, 2009). As a human instrument, the researcher is closer to reality than if the data were collected via an instrument (Merriam, 2009). Thus, multiple measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness of the data. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as criteria to judge the soundness of the research inquiry. Credibility was maintained as the reflections were written directly by the participants. In relation to transferability, thick descriptions of the participants were shared in the findings for the reader to make meaning associated within the respective context. Dependability was

ensured as the researcher kept an audit trail and reflexive journal. Confirmability, like dependability, was linked to the audit trail so that readers can confirm the researcher's decision-making process. Additional methods of trustworthiness were purposive sampling and theoretical triangulation.

**Credibility.** Since the data were written directly by the student participants, they were verified via member checking (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Member checks allow participants to review the data to make sure they depicts their story accurately (Erlandson et al., 1993). In this case, the reflections were reviewed by the participants. Since all participants in the program were required to write journal entries, the researcher hoped to have adequate engagement to understand the experience. In addition, peer debriefing was folded into the process to ensure another perspective from a trained researcher: the research advisor (Erlandson et al., 1993).

**Transferability.** The extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts or with other individuals was an important part of the research inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research one cannot generalize to a population; rather, observers make their own judgments about how they can apply findings to their particular context. In order for the observer to make these judgments, thick descriptions were included of the participants' lived experiences to capture fully the nuances of the learning that took place (Erlandson et al., 1993).

**Dependability.** In order to ensure reliability and consistency, the researcher kept an audit trail, a process that "describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 2009,

p. 223). The purpose of this approach was to ensure consistent findings in the event that the study was replicated with the same participants. A reflexive journal was written by the researcher to document how the investigator made specific decisions related to the inquiry to explain the reasons for the decisions that were made (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Confirmability.** Like dependability, confirmability was ensured through an audit trail. This allowed the “external reviewer to make judgments about the products of the study” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 35). An audit trail can validate and confirm the researcher’s decision-making process.

### **Researcher Bias**

Reflexivity, which is “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2000, p. 183) was employed. The researcher articulated biases and assumptions to help the reader understand the researcher’s worldview (Merriam, 2009).

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data in phenomenological research was an iterative and inductive process (Smith, 2007). Due to its analytic nature, IPA “directs the attention toward our participant’s attempts to make sense of their experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 79). When analyzing data in IPA research, six steps guide the process: reading and re-reading, initial noting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving to the next case, and looking for patterns (Smith et al., 2009).

## **Reading and Re-Reading**

The first step in the IPA research process was to read the articulated learning statements thoroughly. People often quickly review a written document and make a summary of what was said rather than to take time to study the data and record personal reflections, especially if they were part of an interview experience (Smith et al., 2009).

## **Initial Noting**

The second step focused on initial noting, in other words, making notes from the reflective reading process that was conducted in the first step. Then the analyst noted emergent themes as they arose; there was no structure to the process. This was the most detailed and time-consuming portion of the analysis as it “examines semantic content and language use on a very exploratory level” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). Exploratory commenting was not prescriptive or exhaustive. Documenting descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments was an analytic tool that Smith et al. (2009) suggested so the researcher can be immersed in the data. Descriptive comments are key words, phrases, or explanations that the participant used to describe his or her life world (Smith et al., 2009). Linguistic comments are typically noted in interviews but they can be noted in written reflections as well. The analyst would note pronoun use, pauses and laughter in the case of an interview. The third level of annotation was conceptual comments, which shifts the analyst’s focus to the overarching understanding of the matters that were discussed. Finally, deconstruction can also be used to decontextualize the detailed focus of the participant transcript. The analyst read each paragraph backward to fracture the flow in order to have another view of the written transcripts.

## **Developing Emergent Themes**

After reviewing the transcript and conducting exploratory comments, the researcher identified emergent themes. A shift occurred in the analysis. The researcher moved from working with the transcript to working with initial notes. The researcher then fragmented the participant's feelings, which could have been an uncomfortable process but it allowed the researcher to identify emergent themes. It was essential for the researcher to communicate a concise statement to articulate an emergent theme clearly. "The themes reflect not only the participant's original words and thoughts but also the analyst's interpretation" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92).

## **Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes**

Exploring connections across emergent themes was not a prescriptive process. It was important to note that not all emergent themes had to be included in the process. Smith et al. (2009) suggested several techniques to identify connections but encouraged researchers not to limit themselves to those approaches.

Abstraction allowed the researcher to identify patterns among emergent themes while developing a *super-ordinate* theme, which involved naming a cluster. In other words, the researcher put concepts with other similar concepts (Smith et al., 2009). Subsumption and abstraction have similarities; however, subsumption serves as an emergent theme and has super-ordinate status. This allowed the researcher to pull together a series of themes (Smith et al., 2009). Polarization looks at opposite relationships between emergent themes. Instead of looking at how the themes are alike, the researcher sees how there are commonalities between differences (Smith et al.,



2009). Contextualization focuses on the context or narrative elements of the transcript in order to identify themes (Smith et al., 2009). Other researchers see how frequently a theme is observed that is called numeration (Smith et al., 2009). The function strategy focused on how themes are examined from a language standpoint, that is, consistent themes in the way people use language to articulate their experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

Once theming was completed, the researcher kept a diary of the process. As recommended by Smith et al. (2009), the researcher created a graphic representation of the data to see the structure of the emergent themes.

### **Moving to the Next Case**

In this phase of IPA research, the researcher repeated the above steps to analyze the next case systematically. Furthermore, it was essential to review the next case as a standalone experience. In order to keep IPA's idiographic commitment, "bracketing the ideas emerging from the analysis of the first case while working on the second is crucial" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 100).

### **Looking for Patterns Across Cases**

Once a graphic representation of each case was developed, the researcher laid out all of the visuals and looked for patterns across cases. During this step, the researcher moved to a more theoretical level in analyzing the themes. Once the patterns across cases were identified, the researcher illustrated the patterns for the reader.

### **Summary of Methods**

IPA was employed to understand the experiences of the student participants. The researcher followed the six steps suggested by Smith et al. (2009) to analyze the reflective journals of participants at a large land grant research institution. The purpose of using IPA was for the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the participants and explore what they were learning as a result of high-impact experiential learning practices.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the findings from the study. The findings are reported in relation to each of the three research questions, focusing on personal growth, academic enhancement, and civic learning. Thick descriptions of the students' experiences are shared.

Each participant was asked to reflect weekly during his or her experience. The questions were presented on a rotation so that they would cover broadly the personal, academic, and civic reflection topics over the course of the spring and summer semesters. During the final 3 weeks, participants were asked to write three articulated learning statements that would capture their overall learning in these three categories. The articulated learning statements were analyzed using a phenomenological method; the results (summarized in Appendix D) are reported below.

Codes were assigned to each participant in the form of ANRP-SP#, PPIP-SP#, ANRP-SU#, or PPIP-SU#. ANRP and PPIP designate the program; SP and SU designate spring or summer semester participation; # is the numerical code for the participant.

#### **Research Question 1: Personal Growth**

##### **Articulated Learning Statements**

The purpose of Research Question 1 was to explore a student's personal growth from engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices. Ash and Clayton (2009b) posited that critical reflection that is focused on personal growth "will help you learn more about who you are (your strengths, weaknesses, assumptions, skills, convictions,

etc.) and who you want to be (personally and professionally)” (p. 6-1). Thus, students’ lived experiences were captured by sharing what they had learned from engaging in two high-impact practices simultaneously.

### **What Did I Learn?**

In this section, participants were invited to discuss what they had learned from a personal growth perspective. The primary goal in this category was for participants to learn more about themselves and to consider what changes they might make as a result. Ideally, participants would identify personal characteristics and discuss their learning in first person. Furthermore, Ash and Clayton (2009b) suggested that students discuss “in general terms, and not just in the context of the experience, so that it can be applied more broadly” (p. 6-14). Participants experienced learning through interactions with people, building self-confidence, gaining self-awareness, and enhancing their office skills.

**Interact with people.** Participants experienced growth through interacting with people different from themselves (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SU17). One student’s learning stemmed from navigating living with a wide variety of roommates and working with people in the internship office (ANRP-SP1). ANRP-SP2 had several growing moments when fielding phone calls from irate constituents. The student pinpointed the root of the frustration: “It frustrates me when people have complaints that are founded in misinformation and are unwilling to engage in a courteous exchange of information to sort it out” (ANRP-SP2). Another student identified learning through interacting with a much older age group while in Washington, DC, compared to doing so in College Station, Texas (PPIP-SU17). Stepping out of the comfort of his or her same age group

was a growing experience: “Conversing with different age groups has been the most challenging obstacle I have dealt with while interning in Washington, DC” (PPIP-SU17).

**Self-confidence.** Some students expressed a deeper sense of self-confidence after living, interning, and serving in DC (PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU17). Two participants recognized that they were more capable than they had realized. PPIP-SU12 recognized his or her capability to navigate the city seamlessly when friends were visiting. PPIP-SU14 experienced increased confidence in the ability to perform internship tasks. “At my job I have realized that even after a few weeks, people started to pick up on my strengths and actually use my skills to help them achieve their goals” (PPIP-SU14).

I learned that I will not only survive, but I will thrive in Washington, DC. As I drove up to the District from Texas, I was very unsure of myself because I have always had problems with self-confidence. Even after sizing up my fellow PPIP/ANRP peers at the orientation before we left, I still felt that my experience and my background left me inadequate to not only perform well in my position within the International Trade Administration, but also to navigate and enjoy the city itself. (PPIP-SU10)

Additional statements were made that tied to increased self-confidence in the workplace (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU14). PPIP-SU14 recognized “I am not as experienced, but still am an asset to them.” Another student developed confidence in conversing with older adults in the workplace (PPIP-SU17).

**Self-awareness.** Numerous participants noted an enhanced sense of self-awareness (ANPR-SP3, PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SP6, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). Participants learned about themselves and how they work with others, expressed career discernment, and discovered strengths and weaknesses. Due to the intense pace of the experience, one participant noted, “I have learned more about myself, my surroundings, and future goals in such a short period of time” (ANRP-SP6). Another participant recognized how to manage emotions in the work place: “I tend to bottle up my feelings that I have and wait until I [am at] a tipping point before saying anything” (ANRP-SU2). Two other students recognized needs that they had associated with their career. ANRP-SU5 discovered a need for a career that allowed autonomy, while PPIP-SP4 shared, “As an economics major, I have a huge interest in policy and how it shapes the lives of millions of individuals, but I have learned that it is not necessarily the career path for me.” Other students recognized strengths and weaknesses from the experience. PPIP-SU15 recognized types of situations in which he or she could thrive, while PPIP-SU8 found a weakness that to work on. Specifically, PPIP-SU8 noted, “The qualities of passion and perseverance, both of which I lack sufficient amounts of at the moment, will and are important to my growth as an individual and any future a happiness I may hope to have.” PPIP-SU8 continued by recognizing, “I will grow more as an individual if I augment my perseverance.”

**Office skills.** Numerous participants reported growth through office skills developed while working in Washington, DC (ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). Basic and

advanced office skills were noted, along with communication, professional reputation, and respecting diverse backgrounds. Participants shared several points associated with communication skills (ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17). ANRP-SU3 recognized the importance of balancing opinions shared with others in the office, while PPIP-SU17 fine-tuned the art of asking questions to make conversations with new people. PPIP-SU15 looked at communication from the other end of the spectrum and identified learning through listening. “By meeting new people and listening to their stories, I garner the kind of knowledge that isn’t always in a textbook” (PPIP-SU15). Other participants focused on intentionality in the office setting as it relates to maintaining a good reputation (PPIP-SU11) and creating meaningful networks, rather than “meeting as many people as you can” (ANRP-SU5). Several participants reported learning basic office skills. PPIP-SU16 learned how to balance “short-, medium-, and long-range projects.” PPIP-SU9 reported difficulty in working in groups, noting that it was “difficult to balance the desire for individual achievement with the desire to contribute to a group’s goal or cause.” PPIP-SU16 recognized that “even the greatest of jobs, you most likely will end up with at least one or two tasks that are not particularly delightful.” PPIP-SU15 learned to “respect others with varying backgrounds” and PPIP-SU17 “found that the things you learn from each other’s differences are often more interesting than what you have in common.”

### **How Did I Learn It?**

Participants were asked to connect back to their experiences so the reader could understand what had happened in the setting of their experience. In short, the participant

was asked to provide evidence of the source of the learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). Several participants shared how they learned office skills, how to improve interaction with others, and how they developed a greater sense of self-confidence and self-awareness through both experience and observation.

**Experience.** Participants noted that both work and personal or life experiences triggered learning from them while in Washington, DC. Perspectives from both aspects of the participants' lives are highlighted.

**Work.** Numerous participants went into depth about the learning that occurred while working at the internship site (PIIP-SP4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU16). Specifically, PPIP-SP4 shared, "I was able to come to this discovery by attending hearings on The Hill, and seeing how day-to-day business is conducted between the government and private sector." PPIP-SU16 struggled to strike a balance with long-term thinking projects and short-term tasks. "I really enjoyed researching, but often would leave other less exciting tasks I do every week that are very short-term tasks in my mind to the end of the week" (PIIP-SU16). The participants recognized the challenge of balancing a healthy workload. PPIP-SU13 summed the thoughts well: "The best way to learn is often simply by doing."

In writing my first This Week in Washington article during my first week, she simply forwarded me examples of previous publications and told me to take my best shot at it, rather than wasting her time holding my hand through the process.  
(PIIP-SU13)

By being allowed to take ownership of the project, the participant learned by doing.



Other participants gained experience through interacting or communicating with others (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU15). ANRP-SU2 had difficulty in communicating with other interns in the office. Her supervisor pointed out that she should stand up for herself. “It was hard to accept constructive criticism, but I learned from it” (ANRP-SU2). Through conversations with staff members, ANRP-SU4 was affirmed about personal maturity. PPIP-SU10 recognized learning: “When I was able to hold engaging and challenging conversations rooted in experience and backed by credible sources, I realized that I was finally among people who were as thirsty to learn as I am.”

***Personal or life.*** Many participants noted that they learned by moving to and living in Washington, DC (ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP6, PPIP-SP6, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). ANRP-SP3 recognized that this could be the only time to have this type of experience and was happy to seize the moment. PPIP-SU15 better understood the best-suited type of living environment, and ANRP-SP3 gained confidence in potentially living on one’s own in a city due to this experience. Others recognized the new perspective in interacting with those different from themselves. PPIP-SP6 recognized DC as a “stretching” experience:

Coming from a conservative family and university, one of the major eye opening experiences has been the adjustment of living in a more liberal community. . . . Before spending this semester in Washington DC, I was close-minded when it came to others’ beliefs and practices.

When thinking in retrospect, PPIP-SU12 realized “how much I’ve grown since leaving Texas.”

**Observation.** Not only is this experience a deeply meaningful way in which students learned while interning and serving in the District; learning also occurred through observation (PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU8). PPIP-SP5 shared, “I watched more seasoned journalists to learn their interviewing techniques, and I asked for help from my supervisor.” Another participant recognized the need to balance how much to share opinions on issues by observing an overbearing intern colleague (ANRP-SU3). As a result of this observation, the participant felt “more trusted and appreciated than the other intern” (ANRP-SU3). Two other participants observed the behaviors of well-respected leaders in their office (ANRP-SU7 & PPIP-SU8). For example, ANRP-SU7 wrote, “The Congressman and his staff have been the upmost example of integrity, hard work, and selfless service.”

### **Why Does This Learning Matter?**

Participants were invited to explain why this learning was significant or mattered. Ideally, participants would consider the ideas that they brought forth both in the short and the long term (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). For the purposes of this study, it was expected that they would look at both their service-learning and internship experiences, as well as at their life more generally. Participants highlighted how they gained confidence, experienced career discernment, and gained self-awareness.

**Confidence.** Three participants recognized the importance of gaining confidence while moving on through life. PPIP-SU12 understood that this experience had helped to

gain confidence in becoming an independent adult, by feeling more assertive to face obstacles and personal challenges independently (PPIP-SU12). Both PPIP-SU14 and PPIP-SU17 reported feeling more confident about the skills and abilities that they brought to the workplace.

**Career clarity.** PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SU10, and PPIP-SU15 expressed an element of career clarity after interning in Washington, DC. They recognized the type of work environment that would be ideal for them.

I enjoy the firm I work with, but I realized that I enjoy being busy. A drawback of working for a firm in the public or private sector is that when Congress is not in session or when the bills do not pertain to my firm's interest, things are slow.

(PPIP-SP4)

PPIP-SU10 noted, "I had no idea where or what I wanted to do when I grew up. Now, I have found an organization and a city that could foster my love for international business and trade and marry it with history and credibility" (PPIP-SU10).

**Self-awareness.** Participants also recognized the significance of their learning in relation to self-awareness through both a personal and a professional lens. Perspectives from participants are shared in this section.

**Personal.** ANRP-SP1 was able to see a "glimpse of [my] strengths and weaknesses." ANRP-SP3 affirmed that statement by sharing that this experience had allowed students "to really find out what you're made of and who you really are, you must step outside of your comfort zone and venture where you never have before." PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU4, and PPIP-SU17 wrote that their learning mattered because it

helped them to value those who were different from themselves. PPIP-SP6 shared, “DC is a community full of differing opinions, beliefs, and cultures. I have learned to fully embrace these differences and to be more open minded in regards to differing opinions.” ANRP-SU4 recognized that learning and interacting with differences led to maturity. PPIP-SU17 shared, “I can now understand others that are different than me better than I did prior to my experience in Washington, DC.” The other participants discussed the significance of their learning from a broader perspective. ANRP-SU5 shared that this learning was significant because it is “how we grow; this learning is how I grow.” ANRP-SU7 recognized this learning as a way to “becoming a valuable member of society.” PPIP-SU8 noted that they were “being forced to evaluate who I am, what I believe in, how I act, and what makes me succeed and be happy.” PPIP-SU14 was affirmed through learning through recognition that “I know that I can live anywhere and be happy, and I also know that I can make all kinds of friends despite differences.”

***Professional.*** From a professional standpoint, participants recognized how their learning mattered in a variety of ways (ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU16). Participants found their internships to be valuable work experiences. PPIP-SP5 noted that the internship had led to becoming a better reporter, noting that “nervousness and insecurity on the reporter’s part can dampen the most enticing plots” (PPIP-SP5). Another student who was faced with fielding telephone calls from irate constituents reached an epiphany: “This internship has given me a lot of practice at letting it all go, and accepting that I cannot please everyone, and that I do not *want* to please everyone” (ANRP-SP2).

ANRP-SU2 and PPIP-SU11 recognized leadership qualities as essential to their learning. For example, ANRP-SU2 shared, “The quicker I can learn to be a good leader, the more time I have to develop these skills and hone them so that I can be effective later on in life.” Another student recognized the power of integrity: “In my future, my actions will form others’ opinions of me, and if they are not positive, it could follow me for the rest of my life” (PPIP-SU11).

### **What Will I Do in Light of This Learning?**

Three actions were identified by the participants, ranging from having a more defined understanding of career to identifying how skills had been developed and how they had a deeper understanding of who they were (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU12, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15).

**Defined career.** In general, participants found this experience to be valuable for their future careers (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU12). Career-focused perspectives noted how the experience would help in the search for jobs, help in being more proficient in the future job, and provide skills to prepare for next steps in the career search (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3). PPIP-SP4 said, “I will take the skills and career realizations I have learned with me when I leave, and use it to help me be more successful in my career.” Others expressed excitement and confidence in their next steps (ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU12). For example, PPIP-SU12 shared, “I could not be more confident or happier with the way I will face my decisions in the near future.”

Several participants clearly defined the next steps in their careers, starting at the most basic level of finishing the degree and extending to gaining clarity about the career (ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, & PPIP-SU15). PPIP-SU10 shared, “I am more resolved than ever to finish out my undergraduate degree in the strongest way possible and adequately prepare myself to enter graduate school.” Other students said that they felt validated in their career pursuits. PPIP-SU13 noted, “I will continue to pursue a career in economics with a better idea of exactly what I want to end up doing with my life.” PPIP-SU15 noted the ability to “apply for jobs that involve face-to-face communication and I will surround myself with mentors.”

**Skill development.** Honing skills was mentioned as something that participants recognized as a takeaway (PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). PPIP-SP4 reported more self-sufficiency in the workplace. ANRP-SU2 left “actively thinking about how to be a leader” and PPIP-SU9 learned a leadership lesson related to working with others: “I do realize that the power of one can only go so far and that unity can arguably prove a greater force.” Several participants focused on communication as an area of learning and continued growth. ANRP-SU2 kept in mind “how to be kind and firm around others.” PPIP-SU17 noted that “this internship has truly sharpened and refined my socializing skills, so I can meet others and expand my network.” PPIP-SU8 recognized the importance of perseverance: “In reality, the creation of this habit is the creation of growth and happiness.”

**Self-awareness.** Self-awareness was a common theme throughout all sections of the personal growth articulated learning statements. Numerous participants reported that

they had developed a deeper understanding of who they were and how they would proceed in the future (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). ANRP-SP2 recognized the importance of managing emotions: “Every interaction of every day benefits from remaining calm and letting go of anger and bitterness.” Other participants noted that they would be more open-minded (PPIP-SU9), trust others more (PPIP-SU14), uphold values in all groups (PPIP-SU11), and continue to have confidence in the future (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). Several participants expressed that they had learned through being in a different place and pushed themselves through experiencing new opportunities (PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU14). ANRP-SP3 summed final thoughts: “[I will] go home having reaffirmed in my mind who I am, what I want to achieve in life, how I’m going to do it, and who I’d want to do it with.”

## **Research Question 2: Academic Enhancement**

### **Articulated Learning Statements**

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to explore how a student is connected to the student’s academic discipline with engagement in high-impact experiential learning practices. Ash and Clayton (2009b) shared that reflection focused on academic enhancement helps students to understand academic material, consider ways to improve both their understanding and use of academic material, identify gaps in knowledge, and consider other ways to think about, apply, or present the material. Ash and Clayton’s model typically focuses on academic material associated directly with a course, whereas

the students in this study took a broad approach and reflected on courses in their academic discipline.

### **What Did I Learn?**

Participants were invited to discuss what they had learned from an academic enhancement perspective. The primary goal in this category was for participants to explain key ideas that they learned through their experience in the District. Ideally, participants would be able to describe a particular element of academic material that they understood at a deeper level. In addition, participants should discuss learning in general terms so that the learning could be applied to a broader scope (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). Participants connected their learning back to the classroom, drawing from cocurricular experiences, meeting challenges, and office skills.

**Classroom application.** Participants expressed learning through applying what they had learned in the classroom to the experiences in both their internships and service-learning experiences (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). Several participants made connections to communication, including public speaking, journalism, and basic writing (ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU16). ANRP-SP3 shared, “I have also had the opportunity to greet constituents and take them on tours of the capitol, and I use the skills I learned in my public speaking classes to give good presentation.” PPIP-SP5 highlighted how reporting techniques had been integrated into what had been learned in the classroom by practicing outside the classroom, such as using Associated Press style,



interviewing techniques, data research, and the basic structure of a story. ANRP-SU2 focused on basic writing techniques: “I have learned how to write constituent letters and I used the skills I learned in my journalism classes to do that task.” PPIP-SU12 noted, “This internship has challenged me to use my writing skills and my analytical skills to communicate with my superiors.” PPIP-SU15 recognized the level of skill required to be a journalist: “I learned that journalism requires an extensive amount of research, writing skills, and critical thinking skills.”

Other students shared that they understood policy more deeply after having been surrounded by and involved in it on the front lines (PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU16). PPIP-SU16 learned “that a policy is a written set of rules for carrying out a particular action in order to mitigate some sort of problem or meet a particular need.” This participant took the basic knowledge related to policy, connected it to more advanced concepts, and reached a personal conclusion:

I developed a deep understanding of the need for citizen driven data when developing a program in order to support your statement of need to address a problem. In conjunction with this, I came to understand what it means to be working on behalf of citizens who desire better lives. On a real level, I also learned how to make causal path models between problems and their systemic roots. (PPIP-SU16)

ANRP-SU2 reported “multiple opportunities to use my knowledge about economics to discuss policy items not normally tied together.” An intern in an

agriculture field noted several moving parts in the government and the ability to apply theory in practice:

We talked about the different federal government bodies that are involved in the creation and implementation of the farm bill, Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, respectively. We talked about what motivated different decisions in different farm bills, and the aftermath of those decisions. During my internship I have been able to see, almost first hand, the theory and facts I learned in the classroom. (ANRP-SU5)

A few students discussed in general terms how their academic major had aided their learning. ANRP-SP1 shared, “My background from my major gave me the foundation I needed to learn more about each issue that was important to the office.” PPIP- SU17 reflected that the liberal arts degree had been preparation for this experience and for life in general, specifically, “to learn how to learn.” PPIP-SU17 noted:

In my three years at Texas A&M, I have not acquired a plethora of facts, but I have been taught to learn and organize ideas. I am able to understand new material more quickly and thoroughly than some of [my] peers. I strongly believe my ability to complete unfamiliar tasks timely and correctly can be linked and accredited to the wealth of diverse knowledge I have studied as a Liberal Arts major. Knowledge builds upon knowledge. The more I learn now, the more I can learn later since the mind understands best by relating new information to old knowledge already understood. Each time I learn new information, I reinforce my old habits of learning, becoming more efficient each time I challenge myself.

While most students applied in-class learning with their experiences on a deeper level, a few students seemed surprised at the level of challenge that they faced.

In assessing my academic enhancement throughout this summer, I have discovered that both fundamental knowledge and learning skills I have learned in the academic setting have been tested in my internship, but the more advanced concepts and concerns of my classes have not been probed significantly. (PPIP-SU8)

PPIP-SU13 noted that “as an economics major, interning at a nonprofit membership association that focuses on the administration of human services did not entirely correlate with what I have learned in my classes at Texas A&M.”

**Cocurricular learning.** A few students drew on cocurricular experiences in addition to academics that supported their learning. ANRP-SU4 shared, “Everything I have ever learned in college and high school has been in preparation for what I should expect in any field.” The participant then reflected that cocurricular experiences at Texas A&M had influenced learning. “Courses, organizations, and the Aggie way of life have all shaped me to where I am today and I have used them throughout the community, my internship, and at the Washington Humane Society” (ANRP-SU4). PPIP-SU11 noted specific tools that had been gained prior to the internship and service-learning experiences that equipped the student for the future, for example, time management, prioritization, and focus. “Being involved as a student has helped me to learn and master all of these skills which have helped me become productive both in and out of the classroom” (PPIP-SU11).

**Meeting challenges.** Other students recognized challenges that they faced while in Washington, DC (PIIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3). PIIP-SP6 wrote, “Applying what I learned in the classroom to my internship has given me the chance to prove the worth of my qualifications and to show that I can successfully and maturely perform in the role I have been given.” ANRP-SU3 recognized the need to adapt to situations: “Doing new things isn’t always easy and every employer expects something different.”

### **How Did I Learn It?**

Participants were asked to connect back to their experiences so the reader could understand what happened in the setting of their experience. In sum, the participant was expected to provide evidence of where these ideas had been learned (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). References regarding coursework, learning by doing, and observation were elements of where participants learned in relation to academics.

**Coursework.** Participants cited past coursework as an essential element of their learning associated with their experiences in Washington, DC (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU16). A variety of elements of communication was referenced related to public speaking, journalism, and writing courses. ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4 explained how public speaking courses had helped them to excel in the internship, and PPIP-SP5 focused on learning associated with a journalism class. The students reported that they had not realized the intentionality behind the faculty member’s teaching approach but, while interning, they gained a new perspective. PPIP-SP5 recalled a journalism professor having students

practice ledes by having students line up by word count and assigned grades based on that word count: Students with the least words got the best grade. One participant wrote, “Although in the moment, word count seemed like a petty way to grade an assignment, I now realize how vital that lesson is” (PPIP-SP5). Through their experience writing ledes in their internship that would influence readership, the participant recognized the point that the professor was making.

Other participants recognized that it was essential to fine-tune their writing skills for the workforce (PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU8). PPIP-SP6 cited the mandatory writing courses for Texas A&M students. During one of those courses a faculty member had provided extensive critical feedback on their papers. PPIP-SP6 shared, “It took quite some time to finally realize that criticism should not be treated as a negative, but as a learning opportunity and way to better myself.” The student made connections from the faculty member’s feedback to the internship:

Experiences like these have really benefitted [me] during my internship experience. As a policy focused intern, I have been given responsibilities that entail reading policy and regulations, providing comment, as well as issuing correspondence to national, as well as international agencies. My supervisor has provided critical feedback towards some of my projects, but I have learned to take criticism and respond with a stronger, more exceptional piece of work. I have learned that there is always room for improvement. (PPIP-SP6)

ANRP-SU2 recognized that the skills that had been learned in school correlated with the ability to complete tasks successfully. “It helped so much that I actually was

given progressively harder tasks until I was writing reports for our policy team.” PPIP-SU8 draw on the ability to “write both concisely and poignantly.”

Three students made note of political- and government-focused courses that had equipped them for their experiences in Washington, DC. PPIP-SU9 wrote that “learning the initial concepts of the Constitution, Congress, and the Executive branch was necessary to understand the daily activities of my office.” PPIP-SU13 reflected:

During the issues over splitting up the farm bill, for example, rather than simply thinking about the effects of agricultural subsidies or income supplementation programs in general, I found myself thinking about the political and economic implications of splitting the bill up or eliminating certain provisions.

PPIP-SU16 saw the impact of a capstone course project that had synthesized learning from several courses. The student noted that, as a result of the course, “I learned what policy actually is, who controls its creation, and how administrators at multiple levels of government implement it” (PPIP-SU16). This experience directly informed work at the internship site.

Two students focused on the critical thinking and research skills that had equipped them to excel academically. PPIP-SU8 said, “Being able to see new material and synthesize a reaction allowed me to adapt to the environment of government service, namely bureaucracy, nomenclature, and different systems of keeping information, in a quick way.” PPIP-SU12 focused on research skills that had been developed. Being confronted with research-based tasks and documentation of meeting content, the intern found research ability to be a paramount skill. “My research practice proved to be very

helpful when I was instructed to do research on different Congressmen and their committee affiliations” (PPIP-SU12).

**Learning by doing.** Several participants explained how they learned by doing (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SU5, & PPIP-SU17). Both ANRP-SP1 and ANRP-SU5 discussed how assignments given to them in their internship had allowed them to use their academic background and apply course content to real-world applications. ANRP-SU5 mentioned the impact of listening during U.S. Department of Agriculture meetings and reading the news actively. One student explained how they approached an assigned project:

I was given a new task or instructed to search for unknown information online. I am able to complete a newsletter blurb in an unfamiliar format about a subject I am not familiar with. I have frequently written blurbs about military procurement in regards to the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act. I have learned to patiently read this bill and pick out important information. (PPIP-SU17)

**Observation.** Some participants described how they learned by observing others. PPIP-SP4 stated, “As I started attending hearing[s] each week, I would take notice of the members on each committee, the individuals asked to testify, and the types of questions the committee members asked.” PPIP-SP4 explain that learning took place through observing a variety of committee members.

It became evident to me that the questions the members asked were typically pertinent to issues in their district or state. Also, there is usually an individual from each political party that is asked to testify, which gives the hearing a more

balanced feel. I think that learning how the government functions on a day to day basis is important because it increases my knowledge on how the government and private sector work together. (PPIP-SP4)

ANRP-SU5 recognized through exposure to the Food, Farm, and Jobs Act that revealed process behind the bill and identified influential stakeholders. PPIP-SU15 stated that feedback from a supervisor identified the student's consistent mistakes, which led to improvement in future posts for the blog. One student focused on observations made while serving in the local area:

I saw the vastly different lifestyle of a different socioeconomic level in the city. I was awestruck when I saw people who literally had to come to the kitchen every day for a meal. It is so unfortunate to see the real poverty that some folks live in. Most of them would give almost anything for a chance at a real income to support their families. Unfortunately, a life of poverty often continues to stay in poverty, and there is no real way out. (ANRP-SU7)

### **Why Does This Learning Matter?**

The participants reflected on the significance of academic learning. It was expected that the participants would consider that their learning has value as related to their specific experiences and their lives in general. It was further expected that participants would explore how the learning applies to their professional aspirations (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). The learning mattered for participants because they saw it affecting their current and future opportunities.



**Current experiences.** Numerous participants focused on the idea that their learning mattered because it influenced their current actions (ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU16). Three students focused on how learning tied to policy implications. ANRP-SP2 recognized that the critical thinking skills associated with reading bills was beneficial in the current role as an intern. ANRP-SP2 also reported drawing “conclusions along with the author, rather than letting the author draw all the conclusions for you, prepared me to read and understand bills and realize when I’m being manipulated or misled while reading a news article.” PPIP-SP4 stated that learning mattered because it had enhanced understanding of how the private sector and government work together. PPIP-SU13 stated, “Participating in calls with administration officials, going on visits to the Hill with Congressional staffers, and attending Congressional hearings and other events in DC has certainly given me a much deeper understanding of this [political] process.”

Three participants referred to communication skills that were associated with their current performance (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU4). PPIP-SP5 recognized the need to make news post stand out due to competition with other news outlets. PPIP-SP6 focused on taking critical feedback to improve the work. Another participant noted, “My communication and leadership matters when I really need to get a message across to an angry constituent and ensure that they understand why the congressman has made a particular decision” (ANRP-SU4).

PPIP-SU16 took a different approach to recognizing how learning mattered. This participant's intern and service-learning experience were connected to two organizations that fought similar injustices. She commented about the learning tied to her internship:

My knowledge has helped me gain much respect from my supervisors and therefore be given an incredible research assignment over the summer. . . . This assignment is a long-term project that requires me to develop a program logic model for our government relations team, detailing how in the next 3 to 5 years we will achieve a Comprehensive Slavery Eradication Program (CSEP) in the United States Federal Government. This logic model assess our current resources and includes ways of monitoring and measuring our success. Various policy benchmarks have been identified as a necessary means to accomplishing this end. I am only able to accomplish this task through the knowledge I carried with me from A&M. In my volunteering with Courtney's House, I have applied my knowledge of nonprofit organizations and of domestic prostitution. I have been able to help with grant writing, program development, and volunteer management, in addition to being trained to help man their 24-hour domestic minor sex trafficking hotline. (PPIP-SU16)

The participant's work in both areas allowed her to integrate and reflect deeply on the experiences.

**Future employment.** Some participants stated that integrating their academic knowledge with their experiences would be beneficial for future employment opportunities (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-

SU11, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17). Not only did students learn practical office skills (ANRP-SU2); PPIP-SU11 recognized the importance of being a responsible employee. The student shared that responsibility is an essential skill “that is required to be able to manage any amount of work and an employer needs to be able to trust that a person they hire can be responsible and trusted.” From a content perspective, the experience provided ANRP-SU5 with “better understanding of how the law is created and implemented in the area, agriculture, which I want to build my career in.” PPIP-SU15 interned with a news agency and recognized that the experience would boost career opportunities and that the writing skills that were gained would be beneficial eventually. Not only were the basic skills enhanced, but PPIP-SU15 recognized the importance of being humble: “Working with more experienced journalists taught me to be humble and to take advice whenever possible.”

Other students expressed appreciation for the confidence that they had developed that would benefit them in future employment (PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17). PPIP-SU8 said, “I can feel comfortable in my future endeavors because I have the necessary skills such as time management and writing ability, learned through coursework, to succeed after college.” Other students noted that they were prepared to make the leap from college to employment. PPIP-SU15 stated, “The knowledge I have gained through school and through this internship is important because it contributes to the confidence I will have in my career field.” PPIP-SU17 expressed increased appreciation for what had already been learned through coursework and a continued pursuit of lifelong learning.

### **What Will I Do in Light of This Learning?**

Participants explored actions that they planned to take as a result of what they learned from an academic perspective. It was expected that participants would set specific assessable goals relative to this learning over the short and long terms while considering the benefits and challenges related to achieving them (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). Some participants reported that they expected to engage in deeper levels of learning upon returning to the university and throughout their lives and others shared that they hoped to apply their skills to the future.

**Deeper learning upon return to A&M.** Numerous students reported excitement about returning to the university to finish coursework. They focused on the deeper level of understanding that they expected to have in the classroom. Some were invigorated about potential classes to pursue, and others hoped to apply their new skills (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16). PPIP-SU13 shared, “I will continue my study of economics with a much more informed view of the impact any of my future work could have at the federal level of public policy.” One student summed what had been learned as follows:

In light of this learning, I am so excited to be going back to A&M to learn more! I have gotten to see so clearly how much what I am learning in school allows me to do my job well and informs my community involvement. I do not know how I could successfully do my job without the classroom knowledge I came in with. I am anticipating continuing to learn many great and highly useful skills, theories, and techniques, when back at school this fall. (PPIP-SU16)

One participant planned to apply what had been learned in the internship to the classroom setting:

In my last semester, I plan on taking multiple journalism and communication classes where I will be able to use what I learned from this internship. For classes that require research, I will be able to find reliable sources and know the proper way to quote individuals. (PPIP-SU15)

**Lifelong learning.** Many participants focused on plans to continue to learn after these experiences (PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU17).

I will continue to learn more advanced concepts while tweaking my basic knowledge I have gained. I will also seek out more opportunities to test and use my academic knowledge so I can feel comfortable getting and succeeding in a job after college. (PPIP-SU8)

PPIP-SP6 recognized that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom and planned to continue to learn in the future. PPIP-SU12 recognized the learning that takes place through applying knowledge learned in various aspects of life:

It is truly a unique thing to be able to take knowledge from one realm and reintroduce it to another for the benefit of not only oneself but for others as well. Overall, this learning has opened my eyes to my ability to make an impact no matter my station or environment and has introduced the challenge of continuing the growth of my academic skills inside and outside of the classroom in my future. (PPIP-SU12)

PPIP-SU17 expanded those sentiments: “I will challenge myself to obtain knowledge in fields I am the least knowledgeable in, so that I can broaden my horizons.” This participant articulated an approach to lifelong learning and provided rationale for the chosen field of study:

Education is a life process, not just a process that occurs at an institution of higher learning. I will continue to educate myself through books, reading, travel, and conversations. It is important to listen to others to live a full and complete life, for learning does not always come from a book. Education is a journey that makes all the other moments in life that much richer. I will continue to encourage others to pursue a degree in the College of Liberal Arts. (PPIP-SU17)

**Apply skills to future.** Several participants focused on skills that were learned while in Washington, DC, and how they might apply those skills to their future (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU15). PPIP-SP4 hoped to apply skills to analyze the news more effectively and to be a contributing member of a campaign one day. PPIP-SP5 hoped to apply skills learned from professors to be a better journalist, while PPIP-SU11 hoped to continue to practice responsibility for future environments. PPIP-SU15 expected to be more confident in professional settings and to demonstrate improved writing techniques in future jobs. ANRP-SU7 planned to use listening and analytical skills to track how the United States is taking care of the poor.

### **Research Question 3: Civic Articulated Learning Statements**

The purpose of Research Question 3 was to explore a student’s civic learning from engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices. Ash and Clayton (2009b)

expected that students, in reflecting on civic learning, would explore “how groups of individuals, organizations, or policies attempt to accomplish a set of common goals” (p. 7-1). Furthermore, critical reflection should help one to identify and better understand underlying issues connected to service-learning activities and “what it might take for collective action to be oriented towards systemic solutions to these complex problems” (Ash & Clayton, 2009b, p. 7-1).

### **What Did I Learn?**

Participants were invited to discuss what they had learned from a civic learning perspective. It was expected that the share content would be “expressed in general terms rather than just in the context of the service-learning experience” (Ash & Clayton, 2009b, p. 7-16). Participants in the study identified the differences between volunteering and service-learning, expressed learning by encountering diversity, experienced personal growth, learned about a variety of social issues, identified policy impacts, and expressed a need to take action.

**Volunteerism versus service-learning.** Participants who engaged in the service-learning experience emphasized the value of discerning volunteerism versus service-learning (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6).

Prior to this internship semester, I had been fortunate to take part in mission and service opportunities all over the world. Looking back, I always classified these experiences as “service” and not “service-learning.” I knew I was making a difference but I lacked the aspect of taking these experiences, learning from them, and then making a difference on my own life. (PPIP-SP6)

Two participants recognized learning that took place while serving in Washington DC. Prior to this experience, they had not been educated about the issues or reflected deeply on the work that they were completing. PPIP-SP4 shared, “After spending many hours volunteering, I have grown passionate about helping those in need. However, my civic engagement in Washington, DC has differed in one way, and that is how thought provoking it has been.” Another student noted,

I have volunteered with homeless shelters on several occasions in the past, but DC Central Kitchen was the first organization to take the time to teach me what causes and why the project I was designated to work on would be making a difference. (PPIP-SP5)

**Diversity.** Students who engaged in service-learning had opportunities to interact with people who were different from themselves and learned through those interactions (PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7). ANRP-SU7 stated, “People everywhere, regardless of race, religion, [or] gender deserve to be treated with respect. In a world where the poor are often overlooked and skipped over, it felt really good to show decency to those people.” Another student shared that the service-learning experience had provided a deeper understanding of the people who live in Washington, DC. “I have learned about the people who make up the city, why they are the way they are, and I have learned a lot about myself” (ANRP-SU3). Another student found value in embracing the variety of backgrounds and ideas for self-improvement:

While serving in DC I learned to not only work to achieve a certain goal, but also to embrace the people who I was surrounded by in order to learn. There are



always ways to become a better person, and I learned through service that interacting and listening to others who come from completely different backgrounds, opinions, and lifestyles is one of the best ways to accomplish this. (PPIP-SP6)

Other students cited interactions with diverse groups of people who were described as together based on their common interest in serving people in need (PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU10). “Though everyone there had different background and was in different stages of their lives, we were all brought together by our collective dedication to service” (PPIP-SU13).

Although most of my time was spent shoveling poop and spraying down dog pens, I got to interact with other people who legitimately love animals and love the District and I feel like I found a place to return to if/when I return to the city. (PPIP-SU10)

**Personal growth.** The service-learning experience provided opportunities for personal growth (ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU10). ANRP-SU6 realized that “patience is a virtue” while teaching children. Other students recognized, “I have learned a lot about myself” (ANRP-SU3) that the service-learning experience was enjoyable because “I was able to help others, but also because of the significant growth I experienced through my service” (PPIP-SU8). Identifying the camaraderie gained by serving alongside like-minded people, and especially the confidence gained through finding a place to return to serve was shared by this participant. The participant who

served at the animal shelter was convinced that volunteering would a part of a return to the city.

**Social issues.** Social issues that emerged from the analysis were homelessness/ poverty, human trafficking, and animals/humane society. All three social issues tied directly to the students' service-site locations (PIIP-SP5, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU16, ANRP-SU4).

***Homelessness or poverty.*** Numerous participants in the study served at the DC Central Kitchen, an organization that distributes food to local shelters in the area (PIIP-SP5, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). This allows the shelters to focus on needs other than just the need for food. In addition, DC Central Kitchen trains community members in culinary techniques in hopes of helping them find jobs once they have completed their training. Students were affected by the learning that took place while preparing meals for the homeless. PPIP-SU15 recognized the need for food in this country: "There is a huge population of individuals living in Washington DC who struggle to feed themselves every day." PPIP-SP5 reported having seen "the social problem of homelessness in a new light" after serving at DC Central Kitchen. Several students articulated facts and figures that they had learned in their intensive training.

Through volunteering at the DC Central Kitchen, I learned that the U.S. homeless population is a serious problem and that despite the politics surrounding the issue, a solution needs to be found and implemented. In 2012, Washington DC had the fifth largest homeless population in the United States at 13,205 people.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, this meant there were 24 homeless individuals for every 10,000 people. (PPIP-SU9)

One of the participants not only was serving the homeless in her service-learning experience; she was also interning for a human service organization. This was a rich learning opportunity that allowed her to integrate her two experiences.

First of all, I have learned through many different avenues this summer that poverty is a huge problem in the United States. Working at a human service organization and volunteering at an organization that provides food for those in poverty, I have seen the issue much clearer than I had previously. Not only is poverty affecting those in need, but it affects society as a whole. I have learned about the need to help low-income children so that they don't grow up to repeat their parents' lives in poverty. It worked out quite well that my internship and service opportunity coincided. I learned that the issue of poverty is not an easy problem to fix, but requires prevention and innovation rather than just reaction. (PPIP-SU14)

***Human trafficking.*** Participants who were concerned about human sex trafficking served at an organization called Courtney's House (PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU16). Through the training and volunteer work, they recognized the severity of the social issue, as well as the lack of awareness by society. PPIP-SU11 noted, "Human trafficking is an extremely underestimated problem by both the general public and the government as a whole." PPIP-SU16 recognized other issues surrounding trafficking that sometimes go unnoticed:

Domestic minor sex trafficking can be happening to an individual while they are still living at home with their parents or guardian. The minor is often disciplined for poor behavior, bouts of absence, or “running away” while the parents have no idea their child is being trafficked. This normal, parental reaction of discipline usually only does more damage, driving the child away from the family and into the arms of the trafficker. This happens often in the DC metro community, especially in poorer communities with single parents or near group or foster homes.

***Humane society.*** Several participants served at the Washington Humane Society. ANRP-SU4’s quote is representative of the remarks by participants who served there: “Shat I saw when I volunteered was touching, informative, and gives me hope for what we have coming in the future.” Students could see the impact of the humane society.

**Policy impacts.** Interning and serving in the nation’s capital provided a forum for students to begin to connect their experiences in the local community to policy perspectives (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU14). After observing national events occurring during spring 2013, one student shared that “every single event has the potential to affect a nationwide move for a change of policy” (ANRP-SP1).

For social issues that are deep and complicated, the system causing them seems impossible to understand, much less address through policy at the federal level. Although the congressman may have an excellent understand[ing] of their own district, legislation to address all districts at once seems to create more arguments than solutions. (ANRP-SP2)

Another student reflected on the impact of tax dollars: “There are ways to develop programs to combat poverty that don’t require huge amounts of taxpayer dollars” (ANRP-SU14).

**Take action.** Although a variety of service-learning experiences were completed with agencies in the DC area, many students observed action being taken and recognized the need to take action (ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU15). One student observed, “Involving surrounding residents in its outreach and by providing opportunities for homeless individuals to change their circumstances, DC Central Kitchen seeks to alter both the way the public perceives homeless individuals and the way homeless individuals perceive themselves” (PPIP-SU9). Another participant noted, “One of the most important aspects of preventing human trafficking is raising the awareness of the problem” (PPIP-SU11). PPIP-SU15 reported having learned the importance of “providing educational programs to help develop skills that will aid individuals in overcoming poverty and hunger.”

Other students noted the need for action and shared that, “when problems are realized throughout our community, it is our job to do something about them” (ANRP-SU4). Another participant found through interactions with local veterans that many veterans who have fought for our country do not have financial means to visit the national memorials in their honor. “This deeply saddened me because I felt that it was imperative for these men and women to see the memorials that were built in their honor” (PPIP-SU12). PPIP-SU17 recognized the opportunity for leaders to emerge to work toward change.

I learned that together we can complete much greater things than we ever could individually. To meet challenges and solve problems, communities must work together. Sometimes we must be the leaders and take an idea and turn it into action.

### **How Did I Learn It?**

Participants were asked to provide evidence of their civic learning. They were asked to connect back to their experiences so the reader could understand what had happened in the setting of their experience. It was expected that the participants would provide evidence of where they had learned these ideas (Ash & Clayton, 2009b).

Participants identified various ways that learning took place: observation, experience, orientation and training, and relationship building.

**Observation.** A dichotomy emerged among students who reported learning through political action and first-hand experience when serving the homeless (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU9). From a policy perspective, ANRP-SP1 reflected on the numerous tragedies that had occurred during spring 2013: the Newton school shooting, Boston Marathon bombing, West Texas plant explosion, and Hurricane Sandy. ANRP-SP1 stated, “American people and our representative bodies burst out in solutions to provide a fix to the problem immediately. However, most of the solutions do not truly solve the problem.” Another student had witnessed arguments between Congressmen who believed that “their community will benefit from a policy, and wish to force the policy on all communities, even the ones that might not benefit” (ANRP-

SP2). Another student observed the level of understanding by numerous people who understood the agriculture value chain (ANRP-SU2).

Many of the students in the ANRP and PPIP programs served at the DC Central Kitchen. The participants painted a vivid picture of how they had learned. One student observed the city landscape changing while walking to the DC Central Kitchen location: “It was crazy how drastically the town changed” (ANRP-SU5). Another participant shared, “I learned about the problems surrounding homelessness when I volunteered through DC Central Kitchen and through observing public interactions with homeless individuals on a day-to-day basis” (PPIP-SU9). PPIP-SU9 recognized the need for attention to be drawn to homelessness as a social issue:

Homeless people might as well be invisible on the street, because that’s about as much attention as people pay them. This made me understand how difficult it is (or would be) to fix a problem as complicated as homelessness, which is not at the forefront of the public’s mind.

**Experience.** Participants served at numerous locations in the Washington, DC, area and nine participants described how they learned through real-time experience at their community sites (ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17). One participant reflected on assisting a young girl who “had all the potential and knowledge in the world but was just very reserved when it came to asking questions, as well as trying new things out of her comfort zone” (ANRP-SU6). Another participant discussed her experience at the Humane Society when she “looked into the eyes of Claudia, a big, sweet, 2-year-old pit

bull mix” (PPIP-SU10). PPIP-SU10 noted that the service experience “was the missing puzzle piece in my jigsaw of the summer in DC.” By participating in training and serving at Courtney’s House (PPIP-SU11), one student learned that there are very few grants to address the problem of sex trafficking. PPIP-SU12 developed a passion for veterans not through direct service but through engaging with a couple who were affiliated with veterans’ services and attending an event at the World War II memorial.

Of the nine students, five reflected on their service at DC Central Kitchen (PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17). PPIP-SU13 explained that she had learned “how participating in civic engagement can have a positive impact on not just my surrounding community, but myself as well.” One student was metaphorically taken back to her service experience in high school at a women’s shelter as she listened to a speech by the volunteer coordinator at DC Central Kitchen. “I could see and hear the passion that he had” (PPIP-SU8). This helped the participant to realize the value of serving in one’s own community. PPIP-SU8 noted, “For me, my passion is serving within both the Dallas area and at Texas A&M.” Other participants were struck by the process and sheer numbers of meals created each day at the kitchen.

I learned about this concept of innovative change when I volunteered at DC Central Kitchen. The organization finds food that would otherwise be discarded from local farms, food providers, and other food suppliers, and prepares it for cooking. The food is then distributed to food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters around the area so that they don’t have to purchase food. This



way, those organizations can use their money to help low-income families in more effective ways. (PPIP-SU14)

Another participant interacted with one of the head cooks who had worked his way to the position (PPIP-SU15). PPIP-SU17 recognized that, when 30 people work together three times a day, approximately 5,000 meals are made. “That is absolutely incredible and can only happen when 90 people decide they can give away 3 hours of their time to help someone else eat” (PPIP-SU17).

**Orientation and training.** Participants recognized the learning that took place through their orientation and training sessions (PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16). PPIP-SU4 recalled that, during the Horton’s Kids orientation, demographic information and staggering educational progress were shared by the volunteer coordinator. PPIP-SP4 noted, “Once I started to tutor, it became clear to me that the child I was working with was severely behind in math and reading.” During a training session at DC Central Kitchen, another student learned about the mission, history, and food preparation skills needed to serve there (PPIP-SU15). PPIP-SU16 recognized the need to know “(1) how the trafficking game we are fighting against works and (2) how to best respond to their calls to the 24-hour hotline that we operate” in order to serve the clients and survivors. Through fellowship with others at the orientation session, ANRP-SU4 realized that they were all there because they “wanted to make a difference in their community. . . They came from all different areas and backgrounds, but all had the same intention” (ANRP-SU4).

**Building relationships.** Several participants reflected on the relationships that they had built by engaging in conversation and active listening (ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9). ANRP-SU3 reflected on continued conversations with service-oriented professionals at the capital (e.g., post office and custodial staff), noting, “By building relationships with the people here you get a true understanding and knowledge about their lives” (ANRP-SU3). Another participant discussed the gratitude expressed by clients at DC Central Kitchen.

I served homeless people food; a seemingly simple act of handing out cups of sweet tea and water to people who may not get proper nourishment on a daily basis. Many people seemed legitimately grateful that I was there. I got many “thank you so much” comments, or “God bless you, brother.” These made me feel good. (ANRP-SU7)

PPIP-SU9 reflected on the head chef’s story at DC Central Kitchen:

He told a group of us his story. It’s typical: he’d grown up in a rough neighborhood, gotten involved in drugs at an early age, never finished high school and couldn’t keep a job. He went to jail twice for possession of drugs and afterward, spent a few years living on the streets before he heard about the kitchen’s program. His story turned out happy, but for many it doesn’t. He made it heartbreakingly clear how difficult it is to rise out of poverty—an unending cycle—and I realized that many stories like his end with a life on the street.

## **Why Does This Learning Matter?**

Participants were invited to explore the value of their learning from a civic perspective, as well as in broader terms. For example, are levels of community considered in conjunction with their service-learning experience or are there other examples of how civic engagement connects to what they experienced (Ash & Clayton, 2009b)? It was expected that participants would set specific assessable goals relative to this learning over the short and long terms. These goals would tie to the service-learning experience, organization, or civic engagement. Participants would also consider the benefits and challenges tied to fulfilling these goals and how they would result in sustainable change (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). Themes that emerged in the civic articulated learning statements were social issues, learning from diverse perspectives, providing a need for educational programs/need for action, and developing a desire to serve in the future.

**Social issues.** This learning mattered for the students by revealing the reality of social issues. Some participants were helped to realize that some approaches used to combat these issues did not move toward systemic change. Participants recognized the possibility that band-aids or temporary solutions could occur (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU16, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU8).

***Understand reality of issues.*** While in Washington, DC, participants saw the impact of the media on gun control in the light of several catastrophic events such as the Newton School shooting. ANRP-SP1 commented, “Before the shooting happened, gun control was not a very big issue however once the tragedy hit the media, there was gun

control legislation being rolled out of committees within a couple of months.” Other participants vividly described the shock of what some American citizens are living through.

[This experience] allowed me to see into the broken lives of our clients and understand how something so terrible could happen to them. I wondered for the longest time why a young person would willingly leave home or how they could end up trafficked. (PPIP-SU16)

Another student described a very different reality experienced by homeless people, much different from others:

It is important to understand that not everyone lives in the exact same safe bubble that we pretend the entire world fits in to. Poverty is a real issue, both foreign and domestic and while we might not agree politically on how to solve it, people are still hungry. (ANRP-SU7)

A couple of participants realized the complexity of the issues with which they dealt. One participant noted the need to start locally: “Social issues must start in the local community, where the dysfunction can be unearthed, and then, only if necessary, federal policy can help solve it” (ANRP-SP2). Yet, PPIP-SU14 considered the efforts of DC Central Kitchen to be effective: “The prevention of poverty is key in improving the welfare of individuals and of society.” Another participant identified factors that contribute to the social ills of homelessness:

There are real structural problems in society that have created a homeless situation along with individual factors that increase vulnerability to these

structural problems. These structural problems include the lack of affordable housing, inadequate income and trends in the economy resulting in unemployment. Factors that increase an individual's vulnerability include physical or mental illness, disability, substance abuse, domestic violence and job loss. Thus it's clear that homelessness is directly tied to the housing markets, the economy and social problems. (PPIP-SU9)

***Systemic change versus band-aid.*** Several participants reflected on their learning from a change perspective. They explained the need for innovative ways to approach social issues rather than short-term solutions. ANRP-SU5 expressed the value in “not just [by] putting a band aid on the problem but by understanding the root cause of it and understanding how to give people the power and freedom to help themselves.” The participant continued that this significant realization would lead to future involvement and, if a career path leads to policy, this experience helped to “understand all areas of society that policy can affect” (ANRP-SU5). Yet another student honed in on the complexity of the issue:

Seeing the transformative effect the kitchen has on this city taught me that you can't look at a problem like homeless[ness] at face value. You can't give a homeless man outside of the metro station a five dollar bill and expect that to make a difference. DC Kitchen changed my thinking from ending hunger to ending destructive lifestyles. (PPIP-SP5)

One student recognized that “community service for the sake of serving others is important. However, what has more benefit to a community is when a specific problem

is targeted through a smart approach to solve it” (PIIP-SU8). All in all, the students recognized the complexity of issues facing society today and could see themselves giving back in some way.

**Learn diverse perspectives.** Other participants found that the learning that they had experienced was significant due to the diverse perspectives that they had gleaned from serving others (PIIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3). PIIP-SP6 shared, “I have met some amazing people just by making the effort to engage and understand their diverse lifestyle.” ANRP-SU3 shared the importance of “getting to know those you are serving as it allows you to explore the best ways in which to serve them.”

**Need education programs and/or need for action.** For some participants, serving in the District helped them to visualize a need for action in relation to developing educational programs in a variety of contexts (PIIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, PIIP-SU15). PIIP-SP4 commented, “Tutoring programs and more concerted efforts to help children learn their basics should be implemented nationwide.” ANRP-SU2 noted the need to educate society about issues associated with farming and feeding the world. PIIP-SU15 tied this theme together:

This learning matters because it can influence how other organizations implement educational programs. Donating food, finances, or material objects can make a big impact, but teaching individuals how to sustain themselves can drastically change their life path. This learning is important because providing educational opportunities can redirect people to work for a positive cause and to contribute to society.

**Desire to serve in future.** Several participants recognized the opportunity for continued service in the future (ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU17). They also remarked about an increased level of confidence. ANRP-SU4 shared, “I was only there for a few hours, but it has led to me wanting to get more involved in the cause and hope to make a difference throughout whatever community I end up in.” Other participants seemed to understand civic engagement and how they fit into society.

I feel that I found a place to return to and an organization that aligns with my values and passions. When I return at some point in my life to be a resident of the District, I know that I will be able to plug right back in with the Washington Humane Society and even though I only had the chance to volunteer for a few hours, I know that I have contributed to an organization that does so much good for this community’s animals. (PPIP-SU10)

PPIP-SU17 noted, “I now can contribute more to society consciously. A good society is the result of every citizen consciously making good decisions not only for themselves, but for those around them.” ANRP-SU4 recognized the opportunity to enhance one’s leadership skills. “Civic engagement can transform shy people into social butterflies by giving them the leadership experience to take a stand for what they believe in” (ANRP-SU4). Based on the service-learning experience, student perspectives about serving changed.

This learning certainly reframed the importance of community service in my mind, and it made me a better person. I have realized that there are likely plenty of similar opportunities to volunteer in College Station, which could be a very

good way to spend free time that I have over the course of my next two years at Texas A&M. (PIIP-SU13)

### **What Will I Do in Light of This Learning?**

Participants were asked to reflect on their experience and project what they would do to improve change agency, both for themselves and for others. Were their goals measurable and what benefits and challenges were associated with these actions (Ash & Clayton, 2009b)? In sum, these participants hoped to continue their service in the future, improve their understanding of issues and their changed outlook, enhance their personal growth, and continue to stretch themselves by adapting to different people.

**Future service or address social issues.** In the civic reflection, a wide range of actions were shared by the participants (ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). One student was concerned with agricultural issues associated with the Farm Bill and had already taken steps by writing to a Congressional representative (ANRP-SU2). Another participant summed up reflections in a charge to society.

I feel the importance of giving back weighing on my heart. Mathematically, if every person gave just 2 hours a week to service, our world could potentially be drastically different. Less hurt, more hope, less pain and suffering, and more love. (ANRP-SU7)

PPIP-SU11 hoped to present the issue of human trafficking more broadly by securing additional funding for organizations. “Hopefully, there will eventually be a supply of more money available for organizations that wish to prevent human



trafficking, as well as a more aware public to the realities that face our world.” (PPIP-SU11)

Several students described how the experience had inspired them to serve in their local areas. For example, a student who served at the animal shelter wanted to “get more involved in animal shelters in Texas and continue my civic engagement” (ANRP-SU4). Another student hoped to continue to “stay involved in shelters by providing free services” after becoming a veterinarian (ANRP-SU4). Another shared, “I know that I have gotten a complete picture of life in Washington DC. I have found an organization to come back to and one that I will be proud to associate and contribute with and to” (PPIP-SU10).

Another participant hoped to continue to work with veterans in the Honor Flight program (PPIP-SU12). PPIP-SU13 delved deeper:

I plan to pursue similar volunteer experiences in my home town and at college. In the past, I have often viewed volunteer work as having significant barriers to participation, but now I realize that this is a poor excuse not to become involved in it, as there are many organizations for which signing up to volunteer is very simple.

Several other students recognized the innovative aspect of civic engagement by creating innovative solutions to effect systemic change (PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15).

I plan to continue to volunteer at places that encourage prevention and offer innovative solutions. Of course, volunteers are necessary at a food kitchen so that families can eat. However, I want to spend my time helping that family reach a

place where food is not even an issue. I think that DC Central Kitchen is a great example of innovative civic learning, and it is a model that can be duplicated.

(PIIP-SU14)

**Better understand issues or changed outlook.** Participants articulated a deeper level of understanding of social issues that they had encountered (PIIP-SU17, PIIP-SU9, PIIP-SU8, PIIP-SU16).

I have a broader understanding of societal problems and how these problems are interlinked to a number of factors. I see that homelessness is not a stand-alone problem. It is an issue tied to many other issues, and reducing homelessness will also require addressing issues of poverty, unemployment and drug addiction, among others. (PIIP-SU9)

Another student recognized a lack of awareness about poverty prior to serving in the District:

Often times, poverty and hunger go unnoticed, as do the public policy regarding these issues. I can say with certainty that before this summer I have not taken the opportunity to look into poverty and hunger public policies. However, it struck like a lightning bolt that it is important to know about these things in the community in order to be a contributing and helpful member of the larger community. (PIIP-SU8)

PIIP-SU16 recognized the layers involved in fighting human sex trafficking and hopes to continue to “better understand causal linkages between community and external

factors and crime (trafficking)” in order to understand the background of those whom they serve.

**Personal growth.** Two students focused on the growth that they had experienced while serving in the District (PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5). One shared that “working in Washington has helped to develop skills and maturity that I know will benefit in making a difference in the future” (PPIP-SP6). The other reflected on personal decision-making skills and described how the experience had led to rethinking choices for the future. “By being more aware I hope I can make better choices in my life and how I contribute to society to help with the root causes, not just apply band aids” (ANRP-SU5).

**Adapt to different people.** The ability to adapt to working with others who are different was recognized by several participants (ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU17). Furthermore, the value of relationship building was expressed. ANRP-SU3 hoped to “continue building relationships with people and do my best to help them. Whether that be just them as a[n] individual or a group of people at one time. It’s important to listen and to act.” Another student expressed the “hope to work for an organization that hosts all different walks of life, such as this one. I think it is important to work with people that are not totally similar to you to expand your horizons” (PPIP-SU17). Another participant recognized that, when moving into the workforce, it will be important to interact with a wide range of people and situations. ANRP-SU6 realized that “being able to recognize the variety of personalities is very beneficial and the ability to act or engage when needs arise is vital.”

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reported the lived experiences of the participants, focusing on their personal growth, academic enhancement, and civic learning. Rich descriptions were detailed from each participant. A summary of the findings is contained in Appendix D.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents a summary of the study, including a review of the problem, purpose and objectives, methodology, and findings. Conclusions and implications synthesized from the findings and recommendations for future practice and research are presented.

#### **Summary of the Study**

##### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers and practitioners want to know that students are learning what they think students are learning (Bain, 2004). Experiences are intentionally crafted to engage students in critical thinking, reflection, and integrative learning. Considerable time and effort is put forth, but it is a challenge to measure the learning that takes place outside the classroom. Institutions of higher education are asked to confirm the learning that takes place both in and out of the classroom. Educators and practitioners alike are asked not only to design, implement, and manage the high-impact practices that they facilitate, but also to provide evidence that their programs are doing what they should do. During difficult economic times, higher education institutions must prove the worth of their programs and intentionally construct experiences that promote deep integrative learning that stimulates students to become lifelong learners (Texas A&M University, 2012). Kolb's theory of experiential learning focuses on the learning process that takes place when a person engages in an experience and critically reflects on that process. The step that is often skipped or not paid attention to is reflection (Kolb, D., 1984).

## **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of college-age students (18–24 years old) as they engaged in two high-impact practices simultaneously. After reviewing the literature and seeking to understand the complex nature of how one learns from experience, the researcher approached the subject descriptively. Moustakas (1994) shared that, “when we reflect upon something and arrive at its essence, we have discovered another major component of meaning” (p. 70). Thus, the researcher hoped to understand how students make meaning from their experiences through the lens of critical reflection.

Three research questions guided the study:

1. How is a student’s personal growth enhanced from engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?
2. How is a student connecting his or her academic discipline with high-impact experiential learning practices?
3. How is a student’s civic learning enhanced by engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?

## **Method**

IPA was employed to understand the experiences of the student participants. The study participants were purposively selected because they are all part of a structured internship program at Texas A&M University that sends student interns to Washington, DC. Coordinators of the program identified a wide array of community partners to meet the interest areas of the students in the program. The study had two categories of the

sampled population: (a) a policy internship program that was open to any student at the university (i.e., PPIP) and (b) an agricultural-focused internship program that was open to students studying in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (i.e., ANRP).

Twenty-three participants were a part of the study over the course of two semesters.

During spring 2013 there were 3 participants from ANRP and 3 participants from PPIP; in summer 2013 there were 7 participants from ANRP and 10 participants from PPIP.

The students engaged in individual service-learning experiences in the District of Columbia area in addition to their internships. The researcher followed the six steps suggested by Smith et al. (2009) to analyze the articulated learning statements of the participants: reading and re-reading, initial noting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving to the next case, and looking for patterns across cases. The purpose of using IPA was to understand the lived experiences of the participants and to explore what they were learning as a result of these high-impact experiential learning practices. The participants represented a perspective on the phenomena being studied (Smith et al., 2009); thus, purposeful selection was essential for this qualitative study.

## **Findings**

The findings are discussed in connection with each of the research questions. After students reflected weekly, they were asked to write three articulated learning statements. This process was modeled after the DEAL model of critical reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009b). The following is a discussion of the findings for the categories of personal, academic, and civic learning.

**Research Question 1.** Research Question 1 focused on the students' personal growth as it related to engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices. Personal growth allows students to “consider their feelings, assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, traits, skills, and sense of identity” (Ash & Clayton, 2004, pp. 140–141). Through analyzing the thick description that participants provided in their personal growth articulated learning statements, three overarching themes emerged. Students found clarity in their career aspirations, developed confidence, and demonstrated heightened levels of self-awareness. Consistent within all three categories, participants learned through observation and experience.

**Research Question 2.** Research Question 2 focused on how a student connects his or her academic discipline with high-impact experiential learning practices. Academic enhancement gives students the opportunity to “examine their experiences in light of specific course concepts, exploring similarities and differences between theory and practice” (Ash & Clayton, 2004, p. 140). In their articulated learning statements, the students validated core curriculum courses (e.g., writing-intensive courses, public speaking courses, and political science). Lifelong learning was addressed by some participants, but it could be a focus to address in the program. Within all three categories, participants learned through observation and experience.

**Research Question 3.** Research Question 3 focused on the students' engagement in high-impact experiential learning practices. By analyzing experiences from a civic perspective, students could “explore decisions made and actions taken in light of consequences for the common good, consider alternative approaches and interpretations,



identify elements of power and privilege, and analyze options for short-term versus long-term and sustainable change agency” (Ash & Clayton, 2004, p. 142). The articulated learning statements reflected that the students who engaged in service-learning had a deeper understanding of social issues. Students who had internship and service-learning experiences that had overlapping social issues recorded deep reflections. Learning occurred when the students interacted with people different from themselves. The participants learned through observation and experience, which is consistent with the other two categories.

### **Conclusions**

The ability to apply findings in other contexts or with other audiences is an important part of research inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Generalizability to a population is not the purpose of qualitative research; rather, researchers should construct their own meanings and applications to their particular context. In this case, thick descriptions of the participants’ lived experiences were woven throughout the study to capture the nuances of learning that took place (Erlandson et al., 1993). Thus, caution is advised in generalizing the conclusions to other populations. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are considered:

1. Reflection on personal growth helped students to find clarity regarding career aspirations.
2. Confidence was gained as a result of engaging in high-impact practices.
3. Participants demonstrated heightened levels of self-awareness as a result of their experiences.

4. Reflections shared by participants validated some core curriculum courses (e.g., writing-intensive courses, public speaking courses, and political science).
5. Lifelong learning was addressed by some participants but could be a continued focus to address.
6. Students who engaged in service-learning had a deeper understanding of social issues.
7. Students who had internship and service-learning experiences that had overlapping social issues reported deep reflections.
8. Learning occurred when students interacted with people different from themselves.
9. Students consistently learned through observation and experience across the three categories of personal, academic, and civic learning.

## **Discussion and Implications**

### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked, *How is a student's personal growth enhanced from engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?*

**Reflection on personal growth helped students find clarity with career aspirations.** Participants clearly defined next steps in their careers, starting at the most basic level of finishing the degree to gaining clarity about their careers and futures (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU12, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15). PPIP-SU13 noted, "I will continue to pursue a career in economics with a better idea of exactly what I want to end up doing

with my life.” PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SU10, and PPIP-SU15 expressed elements of career clarity after interning in Washington, DC. They all recognized the type of work environment that would be ideal for them. For example, “I had no idea where or what I wanted to do when I grew up. Now, I have found an organization and a city that could foster my love for international business and trade and marry it with history and credibility” (PPIP-SU10).

In general, participants considered that this experience was valuable for their future careers (PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU12). Career-focused perspectives explained how the experience would help them to search for jobs, be more proficient in future jobs, and provided skills to prepare for next steps in the career search (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3). PPIP-SP4 said, “I will take the skills and career realizations I have learned with me when I leave, and use it to help me be more successful in my career.” Others expressed excitement and confidence about their next steps (ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU12). For example, “I could not be more confident or happier with the way I will face my decisions in the near future” (PPIP-SU12).

As noted in the review of the literature, reflection is the key to connecting learning, doing, and development. Scholars have defined the term *reflection* in various ways. Rogers (2001) suggested that reflection is a process that allows the learner to “integrate the understanding gained into one’s experience in order to enable better choices or actions in the future as well as enhance one’s overall effectiveness” (p. 41). Dewey (1938) contended that learners must focus on intelligent activity rather than

activity as an end in order not to miss the meaning in experiences. Through reflective practice applied in the context of career development, students gain clarity associated with career aspirations.

Super's life-span, life space career theory (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009) overlaid well with the participants' voices in this study. Several participants were in the exploration stage of Super's model and were in the crystalizing substage in which they gained information about occupational interests. Their internships provided a laboratory of experience for them to reflect on person-environment fit. As noted in the review of the literature, self-understanding is an essential part of this substage; thus, reflecting on one's personal growth aligns well with this stage. Several students reflected on the environment in which they worked. Some affirmed that they could easily work in Washington, DC, again at some point in their lives, while others recognized that this lifestyle was not for them. This thought process aligned with the specifying occupational preferences substage. Participants demonstrated an ability to make decisions, which is an essential element of this stage (Niles & Hutchinson, 2009).

**Confidence was gained as a result of engaging in high-impact practices.**

Participating students expressed a deeper sense of self-confidence after living, interning, and serving in Washington (PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU17). They recognized the importance of gaining confidence as they move through life (PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP17). PPIP-SU12 understood that this experience enhanced confidence to move to being an independent adult and led to increased assertiveness to face obstacles and challenges independently (PPIP-SU12).

Both PPIP-SU14 and PPIP-SU17 felt more confident in the skills and abilities that they brought to the workplace. PPIP-SU14 noted this increased confidence in the ability to perform internship tasks. “At my job I have realized that even after a few weeks, people started to pick up on my strengths and actually use my skills to help them achieve their goals” (PPIP-SU14). Additional statements addressed increased self-confidence in the workplace. PPIP-SU14 recognized, “I am not as experienced, but still am an asset to them.” Another student reported having developed confidence in conversing with older adults in the workplace (PPIP-SU17).

The first vector suggested by Chickering and Reisser (1993), developing competence, is in alignment with what these students experienced while interning and serving in Washington, DC. Chickering and Reisser noted that a “sense of competence stems from the confidence that one can cope with what comes and achieve goals successfully” (p. 53). Intellectual, physical, manual, and interpersonal competence were all addressed in the students’ comments. Participants experienced intellectual competence when applying previous knowledge to their internships. Some of these sentiments were evident in the academic integration section as well. Participants who gained confidence in adjusting to life in a new city and being on their own to take care of themselves identified physical and manual competence. Interpersonal competence was addressed by students who gained confidence through communicating, working, and serving alongside others.

**Participants demonstrated heightened levels of self-awareness as a result of their experiences.** Several participants reported an enhanced sense of self-awareness

(ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU6, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). They learned about themselves and how they work with others, and they discovered strengths and weaknesses. One participant noted that, due to the intense pace of the experience, “I have learned more about myself, my surroundings, and future goals in such a short period of time” (ANRP-SP6). Other students recognized strengths and weaknesses revealed by the experience.

Participants recognized that they had developed a deeper understanding of who they are and how they will proceed in the future (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). ANRP-SP2 recognized the importance of managing emotions: “Every interaction of every day benefits from remaining calm and letting go of anger and bitterness.” Other participants noted that they would be more open-minded (PPIP-SU9), trust others more (PPIP-SU14), uphold values in all groups (PPIP-SU11), and continue to have confidence in the future (PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15). ANRP-SP3 summed these thoughts: “[I will] go home having reaffirmed in my mind who I am, what I want to achieve in life, how I’m going to do it, and who I’d want to do it with.” PPIP-SU8 noted being “forced to evaluat[e] who I am, what I believe in, how I act, and what makes me succeed and be happy.”

Several vectors from Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) work came into play upon reviewing the reflections of the student participants. When faced with difficult situations,

some students recognized the importance of managing emotions, either by dealing with a disgruntled constituent or by navigating living with roommates. Others focused on building mature interpersonal relationships through developing tolerance and appreciating differences. Specifically, they noted that they would trust others more. As a whole, some students commented on clarity related to sense of identity. Developing identity was recognized as having a clearer sense of self-concept at this point in the experience.

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked, *How is a student connecting their academic discipline with high-impact experiential learning practices?*

**Reflections shared by participants validate core curriculum courses (e.g., writing-intensive courses, public speaking courses, and political science).**

Participants reflected learning through applying what they had learned in the classroom to the experiences in both their internships and service-learning experiences (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). Several participants made connections to communication: public speaking, journalism, and basic writing (ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU16). ANRP-SP3 shared, “I have also had the opportunity to greet constituents and take them on tours of the capitol, and I use the skills I learned in my public speaking classes to give good presentation.” PPIP-SP5 highlighted integrated reporting techniques that had been learned in the classroom and practiced outside the

classroom. Examples included gaining experience in using Associated Press style, interviewing techniques, data research, and the basic structure of a story (PPIP-SP5). ANRP-SU2 focused on basic writing techniques: “I have learned how to write constituent letters and I used the skills I learned in my journalism classes to do that task.” PPIP-SU12 noted that “this internship has challenged me to use my writing skills and my analytical skills to communicate with my superiors.” PPIP-SU15 recognized the level of skill required to be a journalist: “I learned that journalism requires an extensive amount of research, writing skills, and critical thinking skills.”

Participants referred to past coursework as an essential element of their learning associated with their experiences in Washington, DC (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU16). A variety of elements of communication were noted related to public speaking, journalism, and writing courses. ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4 reported that public speaking courses had helped them to excel in the internship.

Texas A&M University’s (2013) core curriculum is in alignment with the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2013) that students at any state institution complete 42 credit hours in the following course categories: (a) Communication (English rhetoric/composition), (b) Communication (composition, speech, modern language communication skills), (c) Mathematics (logic, college algebra-equivalent or above), (d) Additional Mathematics (finite math, statistics, calculus or above), (e) Natural Sciences, (f) Additional Natural Sciences, (g) Humanities



(literature, philosophy, modern or classical language/literature, or cultural studies), (h) Additional Humanities, (i) Visual/Performing Arts, (j) U.S. History, (k) Political Science, (l) Social/Behavioral Science, (m) Additional Social/Behavioral Science, and (n) Institutionally Designated Option (additional hours in areas listed above or computer literacy, health/wellness, kinesiology, capstone or interdisciplinary areas).

The reflections by the participants in the study reflect the value of the core curriculum courses taken by the students. They noted value in having taken political science and history courses in their ability to give tours and to integrate quickly into the working environment. They continually challenged through writing reports and communicating with supervisors, colleagues, community members, or peers, all of which validated the writing-intensive and communication focused courses.

The core curriculum will change in the spring 2014 semester. Core objectives included in the new curriculum focus on critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, personal responsibility, and social responsibility (Texas A&M University, 2014; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2014). The revised objectives are in alignment with most of the student reflections reported in this study.

**Lifelong learning was addressed by some participants, but could be a continued focus to address.** Several participants focused on plans to continue to learn after these experiences (PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU17).

I will continue to learn more advanced concepts while tweaking my basic knowledge I have gained. I will also seek out more opportunities to test and use my academic knowledge so I can feel comfortable getting and succeeding in a job after college. (PIIP-SU8)

PIIP-SP6 recognized that learning occurs both in and out of the classroom and planned to continue learning in the future. PPIP-SU12 recognized that learning takes place by applying knowledge that is learned in various aspects of life.

It is truly a unique thing to be able to take knowledge from one realm and reintroduce it to another for the benefit of not only oneself but for others as well. Overall, this learning has opened my eyes to my ability to make an impact no matter my station or environment and has introduced the challenge of continuing the growth of my academic skills inside and outside of the classroom in my future. (PIIP-SU12)

PIIP-SU17 expanded those sentiments: “I will challenge myself to obtain knowledge in fields I am the least knowledgeable in, so that I can broaden my horizons.”

While these testimonies are encouraging, only a relatively small portion of the students connected their learning to a longer journey. It is possible that other students were focusing on their current learning rather than what learning would look like over a lifetime. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), values are enhanced during the college years; a taste for lifelong learning is developed (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). AAC&U (1998) expressed the need for a liberal education that “fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of

responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions” (p. 1). One cannot assume that these participants will engage in lifelong learning upon completion of college. Thus, continued research should be conducted on this topic to explore ways in which lifelong learning could be addressed in support of the institutional focus on integrative and lifelong learning (Texas A&M University, 2012).

### **Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 asked, *How is a student’s civic learning enhanced by engaging in high-impact experiential learning practices?*

**Students who engaged in service-learning had a deeper understanding of social issues.** Students who engaged in service-learning gained a deeper understanding of social issues, evidenced by their comments (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16). Students were affected by the learning that took place while preparing meals for the homeless. One participant recognized the need for food in this country and shared, “There is a huge population of individuals living in Washington, DC who struggle to feed themselves every day” (PPIP-SU15). Another participant shared saw the “social problem of homelessness in a new light” after having served at DC Central Kitchen (PPIP-SP5). One participant noted that “human trafficking is an extremely underestimated problem by both the general public and the government as a whole” (PPIP-SU11). Another participant recognized that issues about trafficking sometimes go unnoticed (PPIP-SU16). Another student reflected on the head chef’s story at DC Central Kitchen.

He told a group of us his story. It's typical: he'd grown up in a rough neighborhood, gotten involved in drugs at an early age, never finished high school and couldn't keep a job. He went to jail twice for possession of drugs and afterward, spent a few years living on the streets before he heard about the kitchen's program. His story turned out happy, but for many it doesn't. He made it heartbreakingly clear how difficult it is to rise out of poverty—an unending cycle—and I realized that many stories like his end with a life on the street.

(PPIP-SU9)

Service-learning literature validates this effect on a student's deeper understanding of social issues as a result of engaging in service-learning (Eyler, 2002; Eyler et al., 2001). Interacting with social issues in real time has a positive effect on a student's understanding of social issues.

Service-learning provides the opportunity for students' assumptions about particular social problems and community issues to be challenged through experience. Reflection on these conflicts or surprises is the process by which individuals develop the capacity to understand and resolve complexity; reflection is the mechanism for stimulating cognitive development. (Eyler, 2002, p. 522)

Service-learning should continue to be a high-impact practice for students in the university setting. It exposes students to social issues, invites them to apply critical thinking skills to address these issues, and inspires them to contribute actively in their communities.

**Students who had internship and service-learning experiences that had overlapping social issues provided deep reflections.** One of the participants not only was serving the homeless in the service-learning experience, but was also interning for a human service organization. This was a rich learning opportunity that allowed the student to integrate the two experiences.

First of all, I have learned through many different avenues this summer that poverty is a huge problem in the United States. Working at a human service organization and volunteering at an organization that provides food for those in poverty, I have seen the issue much clearer than I had previously. Not only is poverty affecting those in need, but it affects society as a whole. I have learned about the need to help low-income children so that they don't grow up to repeat their parents' lives in poverty. It worked out quite well that my internship and service opportunity coincided. I learned that the issue of poverty is not an easy problem to fix, but requires prevention and innovation rather than just reaction.

(PPIP-SU14)

One might note that pairing similar experiences of internship and service-learning allowed the student to reflect and integrate experiences. The possibility of synchronizing internship experiences with similar service-learning experiences would be a challenge; however, there is a potential for a deeper level of learning.

Similar to the way in which academic departments encourage students to engage in internships that are in alignment with their field of study, service-learning could also be approached in this manner. Research has shown that “service-learning contributes to

career development” (Eyler et al., 2001, p. 4). Practitioners and educators should explore how to place students intentionally in service-learning experiences that align with their career interests. This would provide students additional experience, exposure to social issues in their field, and avenues to connect with their communities. More important, reflection should be intentionally incorporated. Students will likely not reflect unless efforts are made to structure that practice (Eyler, 2002). “Just adding a service project or placement to a course does not guarantee that students will reflect on ways that the experience relates to their academic study” (Eyler, 2002, pp. 522–523).

**Learning occurred when students interacted with people different from themselves.** Students who engage in service-learning often have the opportunity to interact with people who are different from themselves and learn through those interactions (PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU17). ANRP-SU3 shared that their service-learning experience provided deeper understanding of the people living in Washington, DC. “I have learned about the people who make up the city, why they are the way they are, and I have learned a lot about myself.” PPIP-SP6 found value in embracing the variety of backgrounds and ideas to better oneself:

While serving in DC I learned to not only work to achieve a certain goal, but also to embrace the people who I was surrounded by in order to learn. There are always ways to become a better person, and I learned through service that interacting and listening to others who come from completely different backgrounds, opinions, and lifestyles is one of the best ways to accomplish this.  
(PPIP-SP6)

Other participants found that the learning was significant in the diverse perspectives that they gleaned from serving others. “I have met some amazing people just by making the effort to engage and understand in their diverse lifestyle” (PPIP-SP6). ANRP-SU3 shared the importance of getting to know those whom one serves as it allows one to explore best ways in which to serve them. The ability to adapt to working with others who are different from oneself was shared by several participants. PPIP-SU17 expressed the “hope to work for an organization that hosts all different walks of life, such as this one. I think it is important to work with people that are not totally similar to you to expand your horizons.” ANRP-SU6 realized that “being able to recognize the variety of personalities is very beneficial and the ability to act or engage when needs arise is vital.”

As suggested in Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) fourth vector, in developing mature interpersonal relationships, participants in this study appreciated diversity around them and saw value in the learning that occurred when working with those who were different from themselves (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As seen in the student reflections, the participants experienced growth in developing mature interpersonal relationships. Based on the literature review by Eyler et al. (2001), it was postulated that “service-learning has a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding” (p. 1).

### **General Conclusions**

**Students should continue to engage in experiential learning practices as part of the core curriculum.** Based on the thick descriptions provided by the participants in

this study, students should continue to engage in experiential learning practices as part of the core curriculum. Some academic programs at Texas A&M University require an internship as part of the degree plan (Texas A&M University, 2013); this should be continued. According to Michael Shehane, Senior Career Coordinator at the Texas A&M University Career Center, many other departments highly encourage students to complete internships (personal communication, December 31, 2013). Students' confidence was enhanced, they gained professional skills, they learned through their actions, and they connected what they learned back to the classroom. Due to the value-added learning experience, departments should consider requiring students to complete internships as part of their degree plan. Service-learning experiences are not a current requirement for all students at Texas A&M. However, students can select to complete a service-learning experience as one of their high-impact practice experiences outlined in the Quality Enhancement Plan (Texas A&M University, 2012). Based on the data collected in this study and the need to develop social responsibility in students (AAC&U, 1998; Texas A&M University, 2013), academic departments may explore what service-learning experiences are offered in their college to enhance what currently exists.

**Students consistently learned through observation and experience across the three categories of personal, academic, and civic learning.** Participants noted in their articulated learning statements that they had learned through observation and experience (ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU6, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9,



PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17). One might infer value associated with engaging in internships and service-learning because almost all participants reported learning through the actions associated with these two experiences.

Comments from participants associated with observation and experience naturally fit in Kolb's cycle of learning (Figure 1). This four-part learning cycle includes "concrete experience (CE), a feeling dimension; reflective observation (RO), a watching dimension; abstract conceptualization (AC), a thinking dimension; and active experimentation (AE), a doing dimension" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 138). Participants had a concrete experience, either in their internship or service-learning opportunity. Then they moved to reflective observation, where they observed and reflected on those experiences. Next, they moved to abstract conceptualization, where they applied or integrated their observations in new ideas or theories. Some students drew in learning from previous coursework, while others constructed new knowledge based on their learning. Finally, they moved to active experimentation, where they incorporated new ideas into practice. For example, the student who worked for a news reporting organization applied what she had learned to produce a better product for the organization.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Upon review of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for practice are presented.

1. The semester schedule for reflection submissions culminating in the articulated learning statements does not leave enough room for feedback. Currently, the articulated learning statements are more a summative assessment than a formative assessment of learning. It is recommended to factor in time for feedback for each of these reflections so the student can synthesize feedback, resubmit, and have a better end product.

2. Having explored the lived experiences of the students who engaged in internships and service-learning experiences while in Washington, DC, students would have a much different learning experience if the service-learning experiences were removed. Service-learning gave participants a deeper perspective on social issues. Many students began to couple the service-learning perspective with its effects on policy, their plans to continue to serve, and their heightened confidence to move to a new place. In sum, the added service-learning experience as a requirement for PPIP students and a recommendation for ANRP students resulted in a deeper learning experience.

3. Since the ANRP and PPIP programs approach the reflective project differently, they might consider combining them. PPIP requires a one-credit course, weekly reflections, and a service-learning experience, whereas the ANRP program requirements are contingent on the student's department. Some ANRP students chose to write weekly reflections and participate in the service-learning experience, but many did not. It could be useful to share this model with agricultural departments as an option for their culminating project.

4. Texas A&M University has selected integrative and lifelong learning as foci of the Quality Enhancement Plan. One could infer that lifelong learning was displayed by some of the participants; however, it is an area worth exploring for the program.

5. The theoretical framework for this study was Kolb's experiential learning theory. Participants should take Kolb's learning style inventory before leaving for Washington, DC. Student learning styles could potentially benefit program coordinators in placing students at service sites.

6. The researcher in this study, who also serves as the service-learning coordinator at the institution, was allotted approximately 20 minutes to provide an overview of service-learning and the reflective model in the PPIP and ANRP training. Program coordinators should consider developing three online videos and handouts that focus on each of the articulated learning statement assignments. The students could learn in-depth strategies to complete this assignment.

7. The DEAL model of critical reflection served as the framework for reflection. Many of the participant reflections were repetitive in responding to the first two questions: "What did I learn?" and "How did I learn it?" Practitioners and teachers might consider combining these two questions in the articulated learning statements.

8. Ash (personal communication, June 26, 2012), in a conversation about the DEAL model of critical reflection, shared that it is flexible in nature, meaning that it can be used in other contexts. It is recommended that the developers of this model broaden the program manual to cover other forms of experiential learning.

9. It is recommended that practitioners who would like to use the DEAL model of critical reflection be open to using the model in other contexts. Student affairs practitioners could use the model as a reflective capstone tool for students as they exit their student leadership positions or in formal leadership programs. Internship providers, student supervisors, and study abroad participants could explore using this model as well.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Upon review of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for future research are presented.

1. Participation in the PPIP program requires a one-credit online course and a service-learning experience. ANRP students could opt in or out of that component of the experience. A content analysis of the student's resume content and/or a practice job interview before and after the experience should be conducted to explore whether critical reflection provides students a deeper way to articulate their experiences to employers.

2. In order to gain a comprehensive look at the student's entire experience, researchers should look at several students as case studies and conduct a content analysis that includes application materials, weekly reflections, articulated learning statements, and an exit interview after the experience.

3. The design of the critical reflection tool developed by Ash and Clayton (2009b) prompts students to express action as a result of their learning. A longitudinal study could be conducted to follow up with interested participants to explore the long-

term impact of their experience and to learn whether they took steps related to the action items mentioned in their reflections.

4. Ash and Clayton (2009b) provided a rubric grounded in the tenets of critical thinking. Analyzing the articulated learning statements by applying this rubric should be considered.

5. Students who engaged in internship and service-learning experiences that focused on similar social issues should be studied in greater depth through the lens of integrative learning.

6. With the inclusion of service-learning in the experience, future researchers could explore student leadership capacities through the lens of the social change model of leadership development (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). Participants should complete the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) both before and after their experience. If one program continues to require service-learning and one does not, data from the SRLS could be compared against these two paradigms.

7. The theoretical framework for this study was Kolb's experiential learning theory. Participants could take Kolb's learning style inventory before leaving for the field experience and learning styles could be compared with critical thinking rubric scores.

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## APPENDIX A

### ARTICULATED LEARNING STATEMENT: PERSONAL TEMPLATE

***Instructions:*** *The primary goal of critical reflection in this category is for you to learn more about yourself and to consider what change or changes you want to make as a result. You are engaged in a lifelong process of personal growth, and critical reflection is well-suited to helping you in the process. As a result, reflect on how you have developed personally over the course of the semester? Review your past weekly reflections prior to writing your articulated learning statement. Use the template below to write your response and please keep your response to 1 -1 ½ pages in length.*

I learned that...

I learned this when...

This learning matters...

In light of this learning...

*Note: Use this template to write your 3 separate articulated learning statements.  
(personal growth, civic/service-learning, academic enhancement)*

**Articulated Learning Statement**  
**Academic Enhancement Template**

***Instructions:*** Apply what you have learned from the classroom to your experiences this summer. How have you tested what you have learned in the classroom in the community and in your internship? Review your past weekly reflections prior to writing your articulated learning statement. Use the template below to write your response and please keep your response to 1 -1 ½ pages in length.

I learned that...

I learned this when...

This learning matters...

In light of this learning...

*Note: Use this template to write your 3 separate articulated learning statements.  
(personal growth, civic/service-learning, academic enhancement)*

**Articulated Learning Statement**  
**Civic Learning Template (Service-Learning)**

***Instructions:*** Civic engagement means more than volunteering in the community or providing direct service. It requires thinking about and becoming involved in community processes more systemically, for example: using an understanding of group dynamics to improve team-related activities; learning the circumstances that contribute to public problems and working to change them; developing educational programs directed toward changing problematic behaviors; and examining the economic and social dynamics of social issues so as to better understand and influence policies that address them. What have you learned as a result of serving in Washington, DC this semester? Review your past weekly reflections prior to writing your articulated learning statement. Use the template below to write your response and please keep your response to 1 -1 ½ pages in length.

I learned that...

I learned this when...

This learning matters...

In light of this learning...

*Note: Use this template to write your 3 separate articulated learning statements.  
(personal growth, civic/service-learning, academic enhancement)*

## APPENDIX B

### EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Greetings PPIP & ANRP Interns,

My name is Melissa Shehane and I am a doctoral student in the Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications Department at Texas A&M University. I hope you have enjoyed your internship and service-learning experiences in Washington, DC

I am reaching out to you because I would like to invite you to be a part of my study. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe the experiences of college-aged students who are 18-24 years old engaging in multiple high-impact practices simultaneously (e.g. internship and service-learning experiences). You have been selected because of your participation in the program PPIP or ANRP internship programs.

If you agree to participate in this study, data will be used from your experience in PPIP or ANRP. Examples of these documents are as follows: weekly journal entries and articulated learning statements at the end of the experience. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Melissa Shehane and Dr. Lori Moore will have access to these records.

Please review the consent form and reply to [melissa@tam.u.edu](mailto:melissa@tam.u.edu) if you **will** or **will not** be a part of this study. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Melissa Shehane '04 | Doctoral Candidate

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications

[melissa@tam.u.edu](mailto:melissa@tam.u.edu)

TAMU IRB#2013-0200

Approved: 05/07/2013

Expiration Date: 04/30/20104



## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT

**PIIP and ANRP Research Consent Form**  
**A Case Study of High Impact Practices:**  
**Exploring Learning through Coupling Internships and Service-Learning**

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You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by the Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications Department as they hope to explore the learning taking place through your experiences in Washington, DC. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively describe the experiences of college-aged students who are 18-24 years old engaging in multiple high-impact practices simultaneously (e.g. internship and service-learning experiences). You have been selected because of your participation in the program. Your opinion, along with the opinion of other students, can affect the future of the program.

This form is meant to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

If you agree to participate in this study, archival data will be used from your experience in PPIP or ANRP. Examples of these documents are as follows: weekly journal entries and articulated learning statements at the end of the experience. The only time commitment to you is the 5-10 minutes it will take you to review this document and respond to the investigator with your choice of whether or not you would like to consent for the researchers to use these records for research. The records of this study will be kept private, and no identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Melissa Shehane and Dr. Lori Moore will have access to these records. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may also access study records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly. Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu).

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty if at any time you choose not to participate in this study. The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. There is no

incentive or monetary compensation associated with this study. You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your responses could help leadership and service-learning educators understand the impact of students engaging in multiple high impact practices.

If you have any questions regarding this study, feel free to contact:

Melissa Shehane, M.Ed., 125 Koldus Building, 1236 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1236; [melissa@tamu.edu](mailto:melissa@tamu.edu)

Dr. Lori Moore, 600 John Kimbrough Boulevard, Room 224, College Station, TX 77843-2116; [lmoore@tamu.edu](mailto:lmoore@tamu.edu)

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu).

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction.

By responding to the investigator with the comment that you **will** be a part of the study, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes. If you respond that you **will not** be a part of the study, we will not access your records for research purposes.

Thank you.

Melissa Shehane

## APPENDIX D

### ARTICULATED LEARNING STATEMENT CHARTS WITH CODES

	<b>Personal Growth</b>
<b>What did I learn?</b>	<p><b>Interact with people:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Self Confidence:</b> PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Self-Awareness:</b> ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15</p> <p><b>Office Skills:</b> ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17</p>
<b>How did I learn it?</b>	<p><b>Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work:</b> ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-S6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16</li> <li>• <b>Personal or Life:</b> ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP6, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15</li> </ul> <p><b>Observation:</b> PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU8</p>
<b>Why does this learning matter?</b>	<p><b>Confidence:</b> PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Career Clarity:</b> PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU15</p> <p><b>Self-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal: ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU17</li> <li>• Professional: ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU16</li> </ul>
<b>What will I do in light of this learning?</b>	<p><b>Defined Career:</b> PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU12, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15</p> <p><b>Skill Development:</b> PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Self-Awareness:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SP3, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15</p>

	<b>Academic Enhancement</b>
<b>What did I learn?</b>	<p><b>Classroom Application:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Cocurricular Learning:</b> ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU11</p> <p><b>Meeting Challenges:</b> PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU3</p> <p><b>Office Skills:</b> ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12</p>
<b>How did I learn it?</b>	<p><b>Coursework:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU16</p> <p><b>Learning by doing:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP4, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Observation:</b> ANRP-SU5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU15</p>
<b>Why does this learning matter?</b>	<p><b>Future Employment:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Current Experiences:</b> ANRP-SP2, PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-S13, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU16</p>
<b>What will I do in light of this learning?</b>	<p><b>Deeper Learning Upon Return to A&amp;M:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16</p> <p><b>Lifelong Learning:</b> PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Apply Skills to Future:</b> PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU15</p>

	<b>Civic Learning</b>
<b>What did I learn?</b>	<p><b>Volunteer vs. Service-learning:</b> PPIP-SP4, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SP6</p> <p><b>Diversity:</b> PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7</p> <p><b>Personal Growth:</b> ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU10</p> <p><b>Social Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Homelessness or Poverty:</b> PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15</li> <li>• <b>Human Trafficking:</b> PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU16,</li> <li>• <b>Humane Society:</b> ANRP-SU4</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy Impacts:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU14</p> <p><b>Take Action:</b> ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU15</p>
<b>How did I learn it?</b>	<p><b>Observation:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SU9</p> <p><b>Experience:</b> ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Orientation and Training:</b> PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU15, PPIP-SU16</p> <p><b>Building Relationships:</b> ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9</p>
<b>Why does this learning matter?</b>	<p><b>Social Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Understand Reality of Issues:</b> ANRP-SP1, ANRP-SP2, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU16</li> <li>• <b>Systemic Change vs. Bandaid:</b> ANRP-SU5, PPIP-SP5, PPIP-SU8</li> </ul> <p><b>Learn Diverse Perspectives:</b> PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU3</p> <p><b>Need Education Programs and/or Need for Action:</b> PPIP-SP4, ANRP-SU2, PPIP-SU15</p> <p><b>Desire to Serve in Future:</b> ANRP-SU4, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU17</p>
<b>What will I do in light of this learning?</b>	<p><b>Future Service or Address Social Issues:</b> ANRP-SU2, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU4, ANRP-SU7, PPIP-SU10, PPIP-SU11, PPIP-SU12, PPIP-SU13, PPIP-SU14, PPIP-SU15</p> <p><b>Better Understand Issue or Changed Outlook:</b> PPIP-SU8, PPIP-SU9, PPIP-SU16, PPIP-SU17</p> <p><b>Personal Growth:</b> PPIP-SP6, ANRP-SU5</p> <p><b>Adapt to Different People:</b> ANRP-SU3, ANRP-SU6, PPIP-SU17</p>