

SERVICE LEARNING

Information, Examples, and Advantages

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The basis for my thesis was spawned from personal experiences regarding my limited work experience as I began to search for a job my senior year. I have a good Grade Point Average, was involved in many campus organizations, and I am a member of the Honors Program. While all of this is impressive to employers, the burning question that haunted me in the interview process was “what types of hands on experience do I have?” While I have gained the knowledge and tools of a Bemidji State University four-year degree, I felt my management experience and hands-on understanding needed additional development.

My intention with this thesis is to enhance students’ education through hands on experiences. Textbooks and lectures can provide a great base of technical terms, sample scenarios, and descriptions of equipment, places, and people that the students may not be able to readily access. They provide a solid foundation upon which real world experiences can be built. By harnessing this information while learning and utilizing the experience of professionals within the industry, university graduates can grow with companies and shape their futures in limitless ways.

The question that remains is how does a student gain the practice to make the jump from school to work? The simple answer is an internship. Often overlooked by peers and myself, internships can serve as an open door into a company or at the very least, valuable experience to be referenced in future interviews. Others gain employment and work summers in their respective fields. This can be productive in advancing ones career options also. Other students, who failed to gain these advantages, could benefit from similar on-the-job experiences in school.

One solution to this problem begins with professors encouraging/assigning educational hands on work within the community, Service Learning. By including Service Learning into the curriculum, the students have an opportunity to use the knowledge gained in the classroom in real life situations. It introduces the student to challenges and variables which supplement the text, all the while improving the student's comprehension of a subject. Hailed by many proponents, Service Learning programs could increase course rigor, and may also produce academic improvement, personal growth, and civic development and participation.

In the words of Eyler and Giles ed. Waterman (1997) "Students in (liberal arts) classes where the service was central to the classroom activities were significantly more likely to report that the class was higher in quality than their non-service classes and that they were motivated to work harder, they learned more, and they were more intellectually stimulated" (p.65).

The Corporation for National Service in Washington D.C. defines Service Learning as "involving students in community activities that compliment their classroom studies.... All (programs) aim to help students increase their academic skills through understanding how what they learn in school can be applied to the real world" (Service Learning News, 2000 p.1). While this definition is very thorough, there is much more to service learning.

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that provides a meaningful public/community service with academic improvement, engagement, and understanding of community. Service learning is different from volunteering. Volunteering is a choice, which results in no pay and no class credit. In a Service Learning program, credit is

given to the student, not for the service provided, but for the learning that occurs. Also, it is acceptable under such a program for the students to be paid or to use the program as a community fundraiser. As long as the activity builds on the education of the student and a public/community impact is seen, many things can be defined as service-learning opportunities. The most difficult problem encountered by teachers is matching the course and learning objectives with actual community needs. This can be very challenging!

In order to select a truly educative project, Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, Jr. (1997) of Vanderbilt University recommend using Dewey's four criteria. They are as follows:

The program must-

1. Generate interest.
2. Present problems worthwhile intrinsically.
3. Present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for education.
4. Cover a considerable time span and be capable of fostering development over time. (*Eyler and Giles, ed. Waterman, p59*)

Not only can these objectives be used as program criteria, but they can also be used to judge student outcomes and for final evaluations. It is recommended that these criteria follow the program throughout its phases and that they are used to improve programs and begin new ones.

Once it is clear that a topic meets all of the initial requirements from above, the coordinator may begin mapping out the program and guide it through the following eight steps on paper:

1. Establish program goals.
2. Identify service sites with students having the primary responsibility for securing positions in the field.
3. Help establish educational objectives.

4. Recruit students for sites.
5. Prepare students for learning and field experience.
6. Monitor and support learning.
7. Evaluate and assess the learning.
8. Report the learning on transcripts.

(Eyler and Giles, ed. Waterman, 1997 p.59)

At this point it is very important to indicate the need for documentation of all the planning and at all steps of the project. The reason documentation is important is to build support for and create future programs, as well as to provide information that can be used by others. Thorough documentation can be used as a blueprint for additional projects, a benchmark for evaluation, a guide for future students, and finally it can be used for celebrating and publicizing. Rahima C. Wade (1997) recommends nine documentation procedures for students and educators alike.

1. Paper trail
2. Journals
3. Project log
4. Learning log
5. Letters of support
6. Photos, slide shows, and videos
7. Artifacts
8. Site visits
9. Portfolios *(Wade p.115-116)*

The forms and extent of documentation vary depending on the program and the thoroughness required. It is suggested that at a bare minimum, the project plan, activities, and learning that occurred be documented for future reference.

In Service Learning programs, community support and awareness is essential and this is another place where orderly documentation is helpful. Pictures, encounters, and speeches are all forms of publicity, which will build support for the program. The more citizens are aware of the program and see the benefits it brings, the more people are

willing to participate, donate, or volunteer their assets. One great way to publicize and gain money for the programs are fundraisers.

The financial concerns of such a project can be addressed in a number of ways. It should be noted that most schools insurance policies would cover such off campus activities as long as there is a faculty member present that is supervising students. While schools may cover some of the costs of the Service Learning program, often times these programs call for funds above and beyond the budgets of most courses. "Some group projects can probably support themselves through fundraising events such as fun runs, bake sales, car washes, dances, and movie viewings, district wide programs may need external sources of funding" (*Wade, 1997 p.122*). With this in mind the significance of documentation increases as it becomes important to prove the worthiness of the program to potential financial donors. Taking this into consideration, it would be wise to run a small, internally funded program a few times to get all the "bugs" out before rallying for support. With this approach would-be supporters can get a better feel of the actual results that such a program may yield.

Teachers

As you can see, just the initial planning and gathering of support can be very time consuming and difficult. Make no mistake; the professor/teacher who decides to embark a Service Learning program is in for a lot of work. Some districts require service as a part of their curriculum, but most leave it as an option. "Teachers are often invited to incorporate a new pedagogy or topic into their teaching repertoire through in-service workshops, university courses, or pilot programs" (*Wade, Ed. Waterman, 1997 p.79*).

In other words, the teachers who use such programs are bringing more work on themselves.

So who are the teachers who decide to begin Service Learning programs? A small study of 84 Midwest Service Learning teachers showed “the distribution is almost evenly spread between early, mid-career, and late career” (*Wade, Ed. Waterman, 1997 p. 79*). The majority had just begun using Service Learning and indicated less than four years of experience. Reasons for getting involved ranged from instilling various positive characteristics in students, increasing personal contributions to the community, and others noted the success of other teachers using similar methods. While no data exists linking a teacher with prior service experience as more likely to become Service Learning supporters, previous studies of adults have found prior service a factor. In a 1992 national survey, Hodgkinson & Weitzman found that “early community service experience to be a significant factoring predicting adult community service involvement” (*Wade, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p. 81*). This information could be a force for the support and creation of Service Learning programs in primary education.

Some of the major types of community involvement demonstrated in Service Learning plans include or were created from teachers’ previous experiences. Retirement homes, inner city, and churches have been extremely successful places for Service Learning projects. Also, a Service Learning program does not have to be started from the ground up. Teachers can incorporate their class into programs already in place at local shelters, food banks, Habitat for Humanities, hospitals, libraries, animal shelters, community centers, and museums among many community locations. Locations such as these are remarkably important and as Battistoni (2002) points out

“Can be critically transformative because students are immersed in a community setting, potentially working with an organization or a school on an issue of public dimensions, working with people coming from different backgrounds or different interests in the issues” (p.51)

While the benefits of a combination of school and community may be priceless, the endeavors to create such a program could prove overwhelming to some teachers.

In order to balance the challenges of planning, time constraints, and contacting community agencies, it is important that the teacher have support and open communications within the school and community. Some teachers do this by targeting a pressing local issue. Others allow those interested to participate in the planning process, sometimes including student ideas. Still, others pick an area of personal interest or expertise to increase its chance of success. Regardless of which route is chosen, to create a successful project, the students must be dedicated to the service at hand. To invoke this type of enthusiasm it is recommended that the students be allowed to develop their own personalized project within a general set of guidelines. Battistoni (2002) states “Listening to the voices and concerns of the students is certainly one element of program quality” (p52). Brainstorming can be an initial assignment used to narrow down the areas of project possibility. From here the students should be assigned interviews and phone inquiries in order to determine the need for such services. By doing this, the teacher can produce a sense of student ownership in the project.

According to Battistoni (2002) when the project is determined, the students are committed, and the primary service business is on board, the intricate planning takes place. It is important to incorporate the help of school counselors, fellow teachers and

principals, parents, and secondary businesses. Juggling transportation, meals, and supplies will be very difficult. Some school districts may have a coordinator who organizes and plans such events from busses and insurance to permission slips and first aid. It is also a very good idea to have extra supervisors on hand for assistance as needed. Parents of participants make great volunteers and can easily be alerted to such opportunities by sending a letter home informing them of the project and requesting their help and feedback. Such parents and citizens, as Battistoni (2002) points out, "May serve as paid "Community Advisors" to individual courses, with a co-teaching role negotiated with the faculty member assigned to the course" p54.

As if all of the initial communication and planning is not enough, teachers have noted other problems that may be encountered when offering service learning programs, the greatest of which is time. Since a Service Learning program is non-traditional, much more work must be put into the curriculum. Every program is an original and linking the service to various lessons to be taught in the classroom is difficult because no textbook is available. This forces the educator to develop original plans and objectives each time it is needed. There are no correct procedures or manuals on how to set it up, so the teacher is on his or her own. This is where building support comes in. As Wade (1997) indicates "the key to building support for Service Learning programs in a time efficient manner is to focus on how singular efforts can serve multiple purposes" p126. Wade (1997) also notes the importance of creating relevant reflection assignments that will force the student to communicate what he/she has learned from the experience and how it relates to the context of the class.

Another problem cited by many resources was the lack of time a teacher has to actually make contacts and communicate with them. Whether it is community or parents, a teacher's day is spent with the class, leaving only evenings and weekends for organizing. This "Operational Leadership" as Greenleaf (1977) points out "Can consist of those who do the tasks of organizing, sustaining, and reviewing the programs" (p.24).

The final common problem that most teachers encountered was various unexpected circumstances at the service site. This problem can create a great deal of stress because it can happen under the strictest of plans. An example of such a problem might be the bus breaks down on the way to a homeless shelter where 50 people are waiting for food. These problems cannot be avoided, and can happen in regular classroom plans, the outside world, or Service Learning plans. The best must be made of the situation, and any learning experience should be salvaged.

Some other small problems that may be encountered include misbehaving students, the need for additional funds, and parental complaints. Despite the indication of all these problems, time being the biggest, it should be noted that not all teachers find Service Learning programs that difficult. In fact, "Some teachers indicated that planning for service learning activities did not take any more time than planning for other subject areas in their classroom" (*Wade, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p.88*).

Examples of positive results mentioned by teachers include recognition from colleges, administrators, and parents. With help from these people, a well-organized plan, and dedicated volunteers, public media may focus their attention on the program and can act as a catalyst for future programs. Many teachers simply enjoy the service students provide their communities. Whatever benefits teachers may perceive, the major

goal of every Service Learning program is to enhance their students' education. It must be stated that student interest must exist in order for successful results to be seen. As Waterman (1997) points out "Both altruistic and egotistic motives are prominent in the motivations for undertaking volunteer service" (p.99). Still, these noted outcomes cannot be overlooked and should be considered by any teacher of struggling students in a stagnant classroom.

Students

The most important role within a Service Learning program is what the students take away from such experiences. While academic benefits are of significant importance, personal benefits are a bonus and can include students improved self-esteem, moral development, and an increase in social skills. "Classes in which reflection about service were consistently integrated into the class were consistently viewed as more powerful intellectually than those where service was performed but not well integrated" (Eylar, Giles & Braxton, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p.65).

When students are put into a learning environment within the community it provides them with an appreciation of the needs they might serve. As Joyce Glover and Emily Helsa of Grantsburg Middle School, Grantsburg, Wisconsin indicate "The students are also becoming quite adept at seeing other areas where they could be of service in our community" (Babcock, 2000, p.61) One middle school teacher was quoted as saying "I cannot provide for them within the context of the classroom, the kinds of experience that will be useful to them in interacting with the community and the world outside these walls" (Wade, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p.81).

Of the programs most commonly used to provide interaction with the community, four main categories can be used: community service, community study, internships, and environmental improvement. Upon examining the effects of each program, Conrad and Hedin (1980) found that “general program types did not make a difference” (*Eyler and Giles, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p.63*). The learning experiences are seeded in the actual service and a thorough reflection, in a structured class, linking education to the experience.

Another factor that aids students is the duration and intensity of the service learning program. Eyler and Giles (1997) note it is acceptable and common practice for programs to require a bare minimum of two to three hours a week out of students or, on some occasions, a single day of service is all that is required. But, students have linked more value and a thorough education to a longer, intense service. Eyler and Giles add “Qualitative studies have demonstrated that Service-Learning placements do provide many of the learning opportunities advocated by practitioners and experiential learning theorists and that more intensive experiences may provide more of them.” (*Eyler and Giles, Ed. Waterman, 1997, p.62*) It is easy to see how the benefits of a larger program could far exceed a less rigorous Service Learning experience.

A short program can be fruitful for the entire class, but might not yield the quantity of positive results sought after. A lengthy program may be too intense for some students and without proper motivation and sense of ownership, the educative properties could be lost. This is why it is so important to survey the students on their interests in volunteering before planning takes place. Every class is different and changes in results and program intensity should be expected year to year. Thus, by modeling a specific

program after the student's needs, teachers can be more likely to communicate the intended effect of positive educative results.

Other dilemmas, as discussed by professors and students at the Minnesota Campus Compact Service Learning Northern Gathering at Bemidji State University (Personal Communications, February 2002) headed by Minnesota Campus Compact Executive Director Mark Langseth are as follows. Some students have misconceptions of service. Commonly, students view service as a punishment or something they have to do to pass the course. Sometimes this is handed down from teachers who believe in mandating students to do services because it is in fact educational. To make a Service Learning program successful the students should be informed of the benefits of service learning. Another way to do this is to make the program optional or extra credit.

Some problems are created from family or community members. Service is sometimes seen as old fashioned and commonly related to religious faiths. Also, legal liabilities become an issue and in some cases a risk management policy should be incorporated into the plan. In any event, if the service is indeed educational and if the benefits are explained thoroughly to all opponents, the goal should remain clear.

In many cases teachers find it wise to develop a Service Learning contract between the student and the organizational agency. By doing this both sides are clear as to what is expected from them, what is to be achieved, and what each side brings to benefit the other. All questions and obligations should be clearly answered in the contract so all issues are covered and a consensus can be reached.

As discussed at the Campus Compact Service Learning Northern Gathering (Personal Communications, February 2002) some students will still have a problem with

the people they are supposed to help. It is common for a few students to stereotype the elderly or the homeless and to refuse to come into contact with them. To counteract such behavior it is important, prior to the service, to have a guidance counselor or employee from the service learning site explain to the students the types of people and scenarios they will encounter. It is essential to create a safe environment and to be sure every student is comfortable with his or her assigned task. What if a student is still uncomfortable with the service? Additional work and assignments could substitute for a Service Learning experience, but much of the personal practice would be lost. The effectiveness of required or optional Service Learning programs really depends on the quality of the service. Langseth (Personal Communications, February 2002) discussed how a horribly planned optional assignment could be less enlightening than a research paper on the same subject.

Personal and Actual Experiences

With the basic knowledge of Service Learning under my belt I felt it was time for me to experience it for myself. The Department of Industrial Technology at Bemidji State University has an internship class, but I decided I would find an existing Service Learning group to join. Since I had limited construction experience, I utilized the Bemidji State University chapter of Habitat for Humanity, and I decided that the area of construction would be an excellent challenge for me.

I made some contacts and joined Habitat for Humanity shortly after the beginning of spring semester 2002. They were intensely planning for a spring break house building trip to Columbus, Georgia and had a few openings left, so I signed up. This trip is essentially free to students who accumulate forty or more sweat equity hours prior to the

trip. These hours are gained through community service acts on campus and in the community and really help the avocation of Habitat for Humanity. Some of the experiences students gain before and after the trip are: nursing home bingo, Adopt-A-Highway, Raise the Roof benefit concert, animal shelter, soup kitchen, and area church help. These tasks give students a greater sense of serving the community and many find it brings them closer together before the spring break trip. This is essential when living in close quarters for an entire week with the same large group of people.

Our plan, for spring break, was to drive 22 fairly inexperienced carpenters in Bemidji State University vans some 1,500 miles to Columbus, Georgia and within five days build a house excluding all interior work. Included in this "Collegiate Challenge" were 20 other colleges and universities from all around the country that would also be building houses in the same neighborhood. Various experienced Americorps members joined the college students, bringing their hands on knowledge for support. I had never been involved in such a large, great plan. I was genuinely excited! For myself and a handful of others this trip was not volunteering, it was a self-appointed Service Learning opportunity. We had gained the knowledge of courses at school, and now we planned to use that structured course work to gain experience. While this experience was not planned or documented as thoroughly as most Service Learning programs, one cannot dispute the education we would gain through our service.

We departed Bemidji, Minnesota at 7:30 A.M. the first day of spring break, Saturday, March 16th, 2002. After surviving treacherous snow, ice, and wind storms we arrived in Columbus Sunday at about 4:30 P.M. to welcoming faces. We were aquatinted with our job site and the church where we would be residing, got some supper, and

retired early, eagerly waiting for our first day on the site. The first day transpired much the same way as all five days of construction.

- ✓ 5:00-6:00 A.M.- Wake-up, shower, get ready
- ✓ 6:00-7:00- Eat breakfast at a neighboring church; devotions and safety
- ✓ 7:00-12:00- Construction of home
- ✓ 12:00-12:30- Lunch
- ✓ 12:30-5:00- Construction of home

From there, we would go back to the church, shower and go out to supper. Concluding this, we had free time to explore the community and pursue personal interests.

Each job site was overseen by at least one foreman who was a knowledgeable construction worker from the area. Our foreman's name was Mac. Mac, as well as his counterparts, donated a week's worth of their professional skills and wages to supervise this massive project. Since most of the students had little to no experience, he was very busy.

When we began, all that existed on the site was a foundation including the rough plumbing, gas, and electric sources. From here we framed the house, put up plywood, roofed and sided the house, and installed windows and doors. It was difficult but very rewarding when we were able to see how our course work was directly related to the new skills we were learning. Some of these new skills took much patience and dedication, supplies had to be scrapped and many reworked after mistakes were made. Sometimes it was frustrating for us, but looking back on it now, I feel much more confident in my construction abilities. This knowledge and confidence was gained through the combination of a solid foundation of education at Bemidji State University and a great Service Learning experience.

At the job site volunteers kept us hydrated and well-fed with meals and snacks donated from local businesses. Such businesses also donated many of the materials we needed. All in all more than 36 businesses, churches and stores donated food, money, services, and supplies to make for a successful event. As a participant, it's easy to see that a program of this magnitude must have taken an enormous amount of time to plan and execute.

Dependent on time constraints, many groups were able to meet and work with the family for whom they were building the house. Although this wasn't true for our group, we were able to meet a single mother who lived next door to the house we were building. She was living in a Habitat home that was built the year before and graciously thanked us for all of our hard work. It really made an impression on our group to watch her little boys play in a yard and home they might not otherwise have had without the help of people like us. This same feeling was felt at the end of the week, when we walked around this former run down neighborhood and saw 12 new homes. We had a great time meeting interesting students and people from the community, and we had learned, served and affected a whole neighborhood. Actions similar to this could be advantageous to other students and could be utilized in communities nationwide.

In Hastings, Minnesota the third Saturday of every month is very busy at Downtown Tire and Auto. Here helpful, learning community members and professional mechanics work on vehicles for people in the community who lack the means for such costly repairs. The community Car Care Program takes requests from community members and prioritizes the requests by the level of severity and need. Using money donated from churches, the United Way, and local businesses, parts are bought to repair

the vehicles. Repairs are then made using the donated tools and the facility of Mr. Greg Kasel of Downtown Tire and Auto. Additional funds are raised from donated vehicles that are repaired, thoroughly checked, and then sold. For those wishing to take advantage of the program, financial seminars offered by mentors are included. Due to the success of the Community Car Care Program and high demand, a committee is looking for an additional garage for expansion. Similar programs are also offered in Lake Elmo and Lakeville, Minnesota. These programs are perfect examples of how current community programs could easily be altered to enhance the education of high school and technical college students while providing needed services within communities.

The University of Minnesota-Morris has deep roots in the area of Service Learning. Since its initiation in the summer of 1994, Service Learning programs have expanded and become very important fixtures for learning. In some cases, grants are actually awarded to faculty who incorporate Service Learning into their courses. Loren Hacker, a Service Learning professor at University of Minnesota Morris states: "Not more work, not less work, but a different way to teach" (Farrel, McCannon, 1999, p.14). Utilizing grants from such groups as the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Minnesota Campus Compact SEAMS (Science, Agriculture, Mathematics, and Computer Science), and the Corporation for National Service Farrel and McCannon (1999) also note that professors have developed programs to enhance the student's education, as well as surrounding communities. An example of such a program is the TREC Program (Tutor, Reading, and Enabling Children). Here University of Minnesota Morris tutors can aid children struggling in various components of their education. The University students can gain knowledge by creating lesson plans, developing student

aids, and reflecting about the service experience. To date, over 180 tutors have helped in excess of 800 children. Other programs have been developed in the areas of math, statistics, environment, computer instruction, and mentoring.

Volunteers

The success of these programs and many like them make Service Learning programs seem simple after the complex planning process. But the truth of the matter is the best teachers and students in a community cannot complete a program alone.

Volunteers or citizens are essential from beginning to end in simple and complex tasks.

The programs will not continue without community oriented citizens. Such citizens may include individuals, professionals, families, and neighbors. Their motives behind helping may vary from person to person but their main goal remains the same, to enrich the community. Service Learning programs are dependent upon community volunteers.

Therefore, it is relevant to cover some of the simple facts of Minnesota volunteerism.

In the Minnesota State of Volunteerism Report (2000), findings from the University of Minnesota Center for Survey Research show that Minnesotan's volunteer at one of the highest rates in the nation. It was also calculated that "groups 18 years and older volunteered 6.5 billion dollars in service in 2000" (p.7)! Bemidji State University can take advantage of the fact that "people in greater Minnesota consistently spend more time volunteering per week than their Twin Cities neighbors" (*Minnesota State of Volunteerism Report, 2000, p.7*).

To encourage such helpful acts, Minnesota has 16 volunteer centers that aid both organizations and volunteers with information, ideas, placement, and training. Interested

Bemidji citizens could possibly utilize Grand Forks, Itasca County, or Fargo/Moorhead centers for further help.

Volunteering does not require an individual to become a member of a particular organization. However, regarding Service Learning, I believe joining the organization is the most convenient and beneficial to the community. By no means do I wish to overshadow the accomplishments or needs fulfilled by private volunteers. Both serve a great purpose within the community and should be congratulated.

In an effort to discover what type of people most commonly volunteer in Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Center for Survey Research included a profile survey in their 2001 report. This survey, commissioned by the Minnesota office of citizenship and volunteer services, shows some very interesting trends. Beginning with age, volunteerism grows until it peaks between the ages of 35 and 44 at 72.3% then, despite the increase in volunteerism in the elderly, percentages drop to 58.7% in ages 65 and older. The information also conveys that a higher level of education and a higher household income are related to a dramatic increase in volunteerism. Also as a person matures, becomes married, has children, volunteerism can be expected to grow. This information can be very useful in deciding which volunteer group should be focused on from an organizational standpoint and what can be done as a state to increase the numbers from poorly performing groups.

One reason these numbers need to be watched and evaluated is the ever-growing amount of community non-profit businesses. "According to the Minnesota Non-Profit Economy Report, Minnesota had 4,410 non-profit organizations with employees in 1998, an increase of 465 since 1995" (*Minnesota State of Volunteerism Report 2000, p.19*).

This figure is notable considering that it does not include religious organizations and local chapters of national organizations. All of this information together illustrates the vital need for volunteers and how they benefit our State and its communities.

Closing

The information provided should create a solid background and confidence for any instructor interested in beginning a service learning program in one or more of their courses. From basic information, teacher and student perspectives, actual experiences in programs, and volunteer statistics, an interested party should feel more confident in creating such a program after reading this thesis. Also, I believe I have fulfilled my personal goal to find useful information as it pertains to Bemidji State University in aiding the start up of Service Learning programs. While the initial process will be difficult and time consuming, I believe such programs will greatly develop Bemidji State University and could become a future corner stone of its education process.

I would like to thank and recommend the Minnesota Campus Compact for any questions, aid, or information that may be needed. Clearly if such a program is to be started at Bemidji State University, they should be involved to support informatively and monetarily. "Campus compact receives \$230,000 per year from the Minnesota legislature for grants to campuses and communities for joint civic projects" (*Star Tribune, August, 23, 2001*). The Compact contributes generously to the State Universities. Bemidji State University, a member of the Minnesota Compact's 50 Colleges and Universities, is in a prime position to benefit from more of this funding.

As it may be known, some smaller classroom projects have shown great amounts of service learning experience but many have never materialized into the intended

beneficial learning tools. One idea that I find very interesting and fitting as a Service Learning project is Dr. William Brauer's interest in integrating Bemidji State Universities construction management courses and students with local chapters of Habitat for Humanity. This type of linkage is the exact experience I believe would assist in students' education and could be very fruitful if planned and presented carefully. I know students would be very receptive to such an idea and the hands on learning and community impact in such a situation would be significant. This idea and others like it spawned my interest in Service Learning, and I hope this thesis may serve as a resource to Dr. Brauer, the construction professors at Bemidji State University, and any other interested faculty.

Finally, to quote a 2000 declaration on the civic responsibility of higher education signed by presidents of Minnesota Colleges and Universities "This country cannot afford to educate a generation that acquires knowledge without ever understanding how that knowledge can benefit society" (*Service Learning, 2000*).

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