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# Service Learning: A Look into the Real World for Criminal Justice Students

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Service Learning:  A Look into the Real World for Criminal Justice Students

A Thesis Presented

By

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Service Learning:  A Look into the Real World for Criminal Justice Students

A Thesis Presented

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**Abstract**

The goal of this study was to better understand the impact that criminal justice based service learning experiences have on criminal justice students at Bridgewater State University.  For the purpose of this study, the research questions focused on students' personal and professional outcomes post- service learning experience.  The study used an electronic survey that utilized closed and opened ended questions to gather data.  Using a grounded theory approach the data was collected and analyzed simultaneously.  Through a coding process, themes and concepts specific to the open responses were identified. The results of the study indicate that students felt their service learning experience had a lasting impact on them during and after the course was completed.  Personally and professionally, students were impacted in a positive manner.  The findings of the study were in line with the current body of literature on service learning.  Beyond this, the data gathered greatly contributes to the current and growing body of literature that surrounds the pedagogy of service learning in the discipline of criminal justice.

Key terms: SERVICE- LEARNING, POSITIVE IMPACT, PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES

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**Chapter 1: Literature Review**

**Transformative Learning Experiences**

According to Jackson (1986) there are two prominent outlooks in education, the mimetic and the transformative.  The mimetic outlook in education is one to which most students and educators are familiar with.  This outlook focuses on the transmission of predetermined information from educators to students (Jackson, 1986).  It is focused on faculty teaching their students information, and measuring their knowledge through tests and papers.  Pugh, Linnenbrink- Garcia, Koskey, Stewart, & Manzey (2009) state that "the majority of our efforts for educating [children] have focused on transmitting knowledge, rather than enriching, expanding and transforming everyday experiences" (p. 1).  This statement makes note that the mimetic outlook is not the best, but rather the more convenient approach.

The transformative outlook focuses on transforming qualities in a person, such as values, attitudes, world views and perceptions (Jackson, 1986).  It is not used nearly as often as the mimetic, but is extremely beneficial for the transmission of information as well as the transformation of personal qualities.  This transmission may be explained in part by the added work and engagement associated with the transformative outlook. Service learning courses fall under the transformative outlook in education, as they lead to greater interactions with the environment that surrounds a person, which can lead to both personal and academic transformation (Marvell, 2008).  Personal attitudes and views of the world are also transformed through this experience, broadening the impact that is made in an individual's life.

Transformative learning experiences aim to integrate theory learned and pair it with hands on practice and engagement.  According to Pugh (2011) "transformative

experiences occur when students actively use curricular concepts in everyday life to see

and experience the world in a new, meaningful way" (p. 107). Students do this through

first-hand experiences, enabling more rich and relevant learning (Marvell, Simm, Schaff

& Harper, 2013).  Through this, the result is a form of active learning that is extremely

deep and transformative in nature (Marvell et al., 2013).

Transformative learning experiences have been labeled as a form of engagement.

Engagement, as a concept, speaks to the intensity and emotional quality of student

involvement (Connell, 1990; Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).  Engagement, for the purpose of

transformative learning experiences, is described as a holistic construct that has a

behavioral, affective and cognitive component (Ainley, 1993; Blumenfeld, Megendoller

& Puro, 1992; Caraway, Tucker, Reinke & Hall, 2003; Connell, 1990; Furrer & Skinner,

2003; Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1998; Skinner, Wellborn & Connell, 1990).  The

behavioral component describes the task oriented nature situated alongside the goal

directed activities.  The affective component speaks to a student's interest and curiosity in

the subject matter and tasks given. The final piece is the cognitive component that draws

on the use of deep- level learning.  According to Pugh et al (2009), "transformative

experience fills a gap by defining a form of engagement that extends beyond the

classroom" (p. 3).  This allows us to understand how transformative learning experiences

go beyond simple classroom, teacher oriented learning experiences.

Pugh (2002, 2004) further defines transformative experience through three

qualities: motivated use, expansion of perception and experiential value. Motivated use is

described as a transfer of information and refers to the application of learning (Pugh &

Bergin, 2006).  Expansion of perception refers to the process of understanding aspects of

the world in new and different ways (Pugh et al., 2009).  Experiential value refers to

valuing content for its usefulness in everyday experience (Pugh et al., 2009)

Service learning can be situated as a form of transformative learning, and aligns

perfectly with the principles of a transformative learning experience.  At their cores, both

forms of learning aim to offer a learning experience that transcends beyond the

classroom.  As Pugh (2002, 2004) discusses, these forms of learning encourage

individual's to see the world around them in a new way by expanding their perceptions

and situating experiences in their everyday life.  Jackson (1986) explains that

transformative learning, at its core, aims to transform qualities in a person such as values,

attitudes, world views and perceptions.  Similarly, service learning aims to transform

these same qualities through learning and experience.  Service learning, like

transformative learning, focuses engagement and its three components; behavioral,

affective and cognitive (Pugh et al, 2009). Service learning is extremely goal-oriented,

offers many opportunities for deep learning and active reflection, and aims to encourage

students' interests and curiosities (Pugh et al, 2009).

## Reflection and Reciprocity

Reflection and reciprocity are learning components that are indicative of service

learning participation.  These two elements are extremely beneficial to service learning,

but are not seen as substantial outcomes in other outlooks of learning.  Reflection and

reciprocity differentiate service learning from other traditional classroom teachings,

community service or internships (Gardner, 1983; Honet & Poulson, 1989; Elyer& Giles,

1999; Furco, 2002; Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Jacoby, 1996; Penn, 2003).

According to Cooper (1998), heightened active and critical reflection and writing skills

are common outcomes of participation in service learning.

This reflection during and after service learning offers a more genuine form of learning and understanding for students.  It forces students to integrate new and more complex ways of looking at the social world around them (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede, 1996; Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Kendall, 1991; Penn, 2003).  Being active in their own personal learning along with having traditional classroom engagement has been proven to be better for students' academic development throughout the course (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006).

Reciprocity is the second learning experience that sets service learning apart from traditional classroom teachings and internships. According to Furco (2002) the clear sense of reciprocity (a mutual exchange of services) between the service provider and those served is beneficial to learning.  In service learning this mutual exchange can be seen in a few ways.  One way is between universities and communities and another way is between students and the population they are serving.

This mutual exchange is so important because it meets the needs of the community as well as the student (Jacoby, 1996). The more these partnerships build, the stronger they become.  This opens the door for future service learning experiences. Some students will even be offered a job within the community that they served.  Through this exchange of benefits both parties learn a lot from each other, which is extremely beneficial on both ends (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006).

**Service Learning Defined**

Service learning is defined by Penn (2003) as "an academic tool that addresses real-life human and community needs through structured educational techniques that involve traditional educational format, active participation, and reflection" (p. 371). Service learning is a pedagogical approach that brings together community service and classroom teachings to provide a richer learning experience for students. There is an explicit link between the service being rendered and the learning that is occurring (Jacoby, 1996; Wade, 1997). The goals of service learning are to improve subject comprehension (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002), create ownership of the learned material, increase student civic engagement, and enhance cultural competency (Blundo, 2010; Lemieux & Allen, 2007; Maccio, 2011; Wells, Maschi, & Slater, 2012). Beyond this, personal outcomes such as self-confidence, self-esteem and personal efficacy have been linked to service learning (Austin & Sacks, 1998; Boss, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1996; Giles & Elyer, 1999; Gray, Feschwind, Ondaatje, Robyn, Klein, Sax, Astin & Astin, 1996; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard & King, 1993; Waterman, 1993).

At its core, service learning addresses the needs of the community, as determined by the community. At the same time, it offers students an outlet to use their knowledge in a hands on setting. Moreover, service learning has received increased attention as a valuable tool for encouraging critical thinking, student involvement, and more meaningful academic experiences (Madsen 2004; Love 2008). Many educators believe students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process (Bradford, 2005). The engagement comes from bringing learned materials into fruition by working through the concepts in a hands on manner, in a real work setting. By engaging students

in the learning process there is an opportunity for a better and more genuine understanding of the material.

## Service Learning in a Historical Context

Service learning emerged as an important and valuable educational model during the 1960's and 1970's. At the time, other forms of community- oriented learning were also emerging (Gutierrez, Gutierrez & Helm, 2012). This emergence of more community- oriented learning models was influenced in part by student, educator and community stances on the teacher- centered learning model (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999). As a collective, it was decided that the teacher-centered learning model was failing to engage students to learn (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999). Rather, these students were only concerned with knowing the material to pass tests or write papers. This causes a lack of retention of the information learned. The collective outlook was that a community service oriented learning model could rejuvenate learning while also incorporating a real- world application (Iverson & Espenschied- Reilly, 2010). By 1980, service learning had established a substantial place as a valued and important learning model in higher education (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).

## Benefits of Service Learning

Service learning offers students a form of real world experience while simultaneously offering an academic grounding that is not found with traditional classroom teachings and internships (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger-Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Overall, 2010; Penn, 2003). Overall (2010) states that this real world experience helps to equip students for careers later in life. By engaging in service learning, students have the opportunity to critically examine the work force and the role

that they want to take within it.  (Gutierrez et al., 2012).  This offers some form of aid for

students who do not know what path or job track that they want to follow. Through

traditional classroom teachings, students may enjoy a concept but will not know if they

truly enjoy the field until they experience it.  Service learning offers students this "free-

trial" within the field before you have to commit to the "full- version". Through this,

students are not only getting a critical look at the field but also an inside look into the

population with whom they may work.

In addition to job outcome, service learning has been proven to help students

develop a higher level of acceptance towards cultural differences (Coles, 1993; Kezar &

Rhoads, 2001; Myers- Lipton, 1996; Neurer & Rhoads, 1998; Rhoads, 1997, 1998a,

1998b). In criminal justice, professionals are exposed to many different people with many

differences. This experience offers students a better understanding of the population prior

to them accepting a job (Davis, 2015).  Service learning furthers the understanding of

these populations and offers a reduced or eliminated belief in the stereotypes associated

with the community population (Hirschinger-Blank and Markowitz 2006; Pompa, 2002;

Vigarta, 2002).

## Barriers of Service Learning

There are multiple facets of service learning that, in one way or another, may

create difficulties for both parties.  Service learning in any academic discipline can add a

significant amount of time and hard work into a student's schedule, as well as a faculty

member's workload. Location, faculty engagement and time constraints all pose threats

to successfully implementing and running service learning courses.

The location of the service learning course may be a barrier for many students

(Hartmus, Cauthen, & Levine 2006).  Universities are diverse and are made up of on

campus residents, off campus residents and commuters.  Because many students live on

campus, they may not have their own form of personal transportation. It is noted that

students do not always have access to transportation of any sort and may struggle to

accommodate any off campus engagements.  When students do not have easy access to

transportation, going off campus and engaging in service learning may be time

consuming, anxiety inducing or even out of the question.  Because service learning is

employed within the community, there is no way around students needing a form of

transportation to get to the offsite community partner.  This component of location and

transportation may turn many students away from service learning courses as it adds

stress and time into a student schedule.

Faculty members, like students, have an added responsibility when it comes to

service learning courses (Love, 2008; Madden, Davis & Cronley, 2014; Penn, 2003).

Creating a plan for a service learning course is not an easy task. Preparation for these

courses cuts across all three main areas of faculty work.  Teaching, research and service

are all components that go into identifying, setting up and maintaining a successful

service learning course (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001).  Faculty members spend an increased

amount of time and energy to implement all the components of service learning programs

(Love 2008; Penn 2003).  These components include researching a community partner as

well as creating a lesson plan and course outline that works with the community partner.

Once this is set up, faculty members must go through and select students they feel would

be a good fit and contribute to the overall course. Currently, there are few incentives for

faculty members to engage in service learning.  It is stated that if service learning is to be

a common pedagogical approach, then incentives need to be explored for faculty (Rhoads, 1997; Ward, 1996, 1998; Zlotkowski, 1998).

Time constraints are a barrier for both students and faculty when it comes to service learning.  For students, there is an added time component for both the course as a whole as well as the work that needs to be put into the course (Rosing et al., 2010).  According to Rosing et. al. (2010), students want to be able to spend an ample amount of time in the community with their community partners, but have to be cognizant of their other duties and busy schedules outside service learning.

Time management is a tool that does not always come naturally to students, which causes difficulty academically.  When scheduling becomes a problem, students' motivations are dramatically decreased (Rosing et al., 2010).   Beyond this, students' motivations to be involved will notably decrease when they feel that their time is not being used effectively to serve their community (Rosing et al., 2010).

## Course Design in Service Learning

Service learning courses are often structured two ways.  The first is a traditional classroom meeting course, with an added out of class time component to work with community partners (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Penn, 2003). The second is an immersion course, where the service is incorporated into every class meeting (Pompa, 2002; Starks et al., 2011; Vigorita, 2002). An example of an immersion course can be a course where students and inmates attend class together every week inside the prison and learn the material together (Pompa, 2002; Vigorita, 2002).

Regardless of the structure that is chosen for the service learning course, there is

always a reflection component associated.  These reflections can focus on course material

or course climate, and can be implemented in different ways.  Some educators may ask

students to write weekly journal entries to reflect (Penn, 2003).  Other educators may

have students write weekly essays (Starks et al., 2011).  Another form of reflection that is

commonly used is weekly group discussion (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006).

Often courses will implement a combination of the three for effective reflection on course

material and service.

## Community and Service Learning

Service learning puts a large emphasis on community, as it is a key component.

Service learning helps bring theory into practice to help students understand community

wide issues (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hardy & Schaen, 2000; Simmons & Clearly, 2006)

The link between student learning and community concerns is at the core of any service

learning course (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001).  This link gives institutions of higher education

the opportunity to address community needs while challenging students to consider their

roles as community members (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001) For the purpose of service

learning, community becomes a valuable asset in fostering education (Koliba et al., 2006;

Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).  Going out and serving and learning in your own

community helps to create stronger ties and a more meaningful connection to the world

around students.

Community in the sense of service learning is understood by the strengths and not

the weaknesses of the group collective (Koliba et al., 2006; Kretzman & McKnight,

1993).  When focusing on the strengths to achieve a common goal, there is more

empowerment for all involved.   This component of empowerment can be seen for

students, as well as community members, when they come together to resolve community

problems (Koliba et al., 2006; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).

For service learning to be successful, a competent community partner needs to be

clearly articulated (Koliba et al., 2006; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).  In service

learning, community can be defined at two levels; institutional or individual (Koliba et

al., 2006; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).  Many times, these community partners are

willing but not equipped to handle service learning courses.  At an institutional level,

community partners can take the form of state agencies or local governments (Koliba et

al., 2006; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).  At an individual level, community partners can

take the form of the people who make up these institutions (Koliba et al., 2006; Kretzman

& McKnight, 1993).

Sigmon (1979) noted two principles related to the implementation of service

learning and community involvement.  The first was that those being served ultimately

control the service project (Sigmon, 1979).  What this means, is that the community

partner should control the service being rendered, although there should be equal

participation from both parties.   The second principle proposed by Sigmon (1979), it that

those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions

through the partnership.  This speaks to the impact that service has on those communities

being served.  This mutual exchange of services empowers those being served to be able

to better serve others down the line.

Kendall (1990) expanded on Sigmon's principle that those being served should

control the service project. Kendall (1990) stated that "In service-learning, those being

served [ought to] control the service provided; the needs of the community determine

what the service tasks will be [or ought to be]. It is this sense of reciprocity that creates a sense of mutual responsibility and respect between individuals in the service-learning exchange" (p. 22). The community ultimately knows what it is that they need and can better articulate this to those serving them. This helps the community in ways they are unable to accomplish themselves.

Brown (2001) and Eby (1998) warn that much of the service learning work being done is shaped for the benefit of the student, not the community, which needs to be addressed. The work being done reflects "the skills, schedules, interests and learning agenda of the students in service learning rather than to meet real community needs" (Eby, 1998. p. 4). This tendency shifts the focus away from the community being serviced and takes away from the impact of the service being provided. The focus on privileging the needs of the student, rather than the community, speaks to the reality of the implementation of service learning. This means there is a need to check in and ensure service learning is being implemented properly. It is necessary to seek the mutual benefit for all parties in the experience at all times (Brown, 2001; Eby, 1998).

**Paternalism and Serving Versus Helping**

There is an inherent paternalistic nature associated with helping others. Paternalism occurs when people in positions of higher authority supply their subordinates with resources or services (Merriam Webster, 2018). This creates an extreme power differential, where one party holds all the power and can dole it out where they see fit. This ultimately opens up service learning to the criticism that it reinforces hierarchies or perpetuates paternalism (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Cooks, Scharrer & Paredes, 2004; Cruz, 1990; Forbes, Garber, Kensinger, & Slagter, 1999; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002;

Levinson, 1990; McBride, Brav, Menon, & Sherraden, 2006; Pompa, 2002; Sleeter, 2000). In these situations, there is a lack of reciprocity, or a mutual exchange of services, as a result of the power differential. Due to this, service learning comes under scrutiny.

Kendall (1990) explains that without the key concept of reciprocity in these situations, service learning can become paternalistic in nature. It is extremely important to avoid this paternalistic nature, as it not only goes against the goals service learning but can damage the parties involved. This is why service learning places so much emphasis on the mutual exchange of services. Moreover, it is important to note that participation in service learning has to be completely voluntary or there becomes a component of "forced volunteerism" or "charity".

## Service Leaning and Other Types of Learning

Service learning is a form of experiential learning that has set itself apart from the other forms such as volunteerism and internships. According to the Campus Compact (2014), since the 1990's, service learning has become vastly popular in higher education settings. The Campus Compact "is a national coalition of 1,000+ colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. [They] build democracy through civic education and community development" (2016). The Campus Compact and its members are proponents of experiential learning, especially service learning. Since its inception in 1985, the Campus Compact has grown from three member institutions to over 1,100 member institutions as of 2014 (Campus Compact, 2014; Harkavy &Hartley, 1994). Beyond this, the 2012 Campus Compact member survey revealed that 95% of the membered college and universities offered service learning courses (Campus Compact, 2012). The rise in institutions joining the Campus

Compact and implementing service learning courses speaks to its benefit at a high educational level.

## Service Learning versus Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a form of experiential learning. However, it differs from service learning, another form of experiential learning, in many ways. (Bell & Carlson, 2005; Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Brzozowksi, Homedna & Roy, 2012; Lim & Bloomquist, 2015; Witbooi, 2004). Service learning is a course that is taken for academic credit whereas volunteerism is done for academic or professional references. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Lim & Bloomquist, 2015; Thomson et al., 2011; Witbooi, 1995; Yontz & McCook, 2003). Volunteerism can also be done for purposes related to self-happiness. Service learning, unlike volunteerism, has a large emphasis on not only service but also the learning that is amassed while serving (Witbooi, 1995). In contrast, volunteerism focuses solely on the service being rendered during the experience (Witbooi, 1995). Service learning places emphasis on the goals of the course and the experience, whereas volunteerism is extremely task oriented, playing off a person's current capabilities to further strengthen them (Bell & Carlson, 2006).

The outcomes of service learning courses and volunteerism also differ vastly, much like their make-up. When the course is finished, the credits earned while doing service learning will

reflect the learning accomplished as an outcome of the service rendered (Thomson et al., 2011). Conversely, the references gained from volunteerism reflect solely the service done, not the

learning or knowledge gained (Thomson et al., 2011).  Service learning has benefits for

not only the student, but also the community where the benefits of volunteerism focus

more on the community (Witbooi, 2004).  Service learning incorporates a two-way

transfer of knowledge between the student and the community and volunteerism is most

often a one- way transfer of knowledge (Brzozowksi, Homedna & Roy, 2012). Overall,

service learning sets itself apart from volunteerism by offering the student and the

community a service and a learning component. Volunteerism focuses closely on the

service being rendered and the community that it serves overall.

**Service Learning Versus Internships**

Internships are a form of experiential learning, much like volunteerism and

service learning.  However, internships differ vastly from the other two forms (Ball,

2008; Ball & Schilling, 2006; Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Lim & Bloomquist, 2015;

Maccio & Voorhies, 2012; Moore, 2010; Petracchi et al., 2010; Seifer &Connors, 2007;

Thomson et al., 2011; Witbooi, 2004).  These differences can be seen through the

structure, goals and outcomes. Service learning is imbedded in a course, whereas

internships can stand alone without an academic course basis (Ball, 2008). Internships are

created to be very skill based for the profession desired, whereas, service learning may or

may not include skill based activities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Moore, 2010).  In

service learning, the objectives are mutually decided by the community and those serving

the community (Seifer & Connors, 2007).  Because of this factor, the role of the student

in service learning courses is truly dependent on the needs of the community (Petracchi et

al., 2010).  For internships, the community partner sets the objectives on the basis of what

is needed (Seifer & Connors, 2007). Because of this, students' roles are based on what

they can offer in the internship and what is needed by the community (Petracchi et al., 2010).

Outcomes of service learning and internships also differ vastly.  Service learning aims to promote and increase civic engagement and critical reflection in hopes to help the students view themselves and their community in a larger social context (Ball & Schilling, 2006; Maccio & Voorhies, 2012; Thomson et al., 2011).  Conversely, internships are focused on developing a particular skillset designed to make a student proficient in the job field (Maccio & Voorhies 2012).  Service learning's outcomes benefit not only the student, but also the community while holding an even balance between service and learning (Mordridge Center, 2012).  An internships outcomes benefit the student solely while focusing predominantly on learning (Mordridge Center, 2012).

### Criminal Justice Internships, Not Enough

Criminal justice internships offer students the chance to immerse themselves in the field.  Like service learning courses, internships can be vital for helping students find a career path in the field of criminal justice (George, Lim, Lucas & Meadows, 2015; Hiller, Salvatore & Taniguchi, 2014; Reed & Carawan, 1999; Southerland, 1991, 1992; Stone & McLaren, 1999).  Internships offer students the chance to take theory and put it into practice, but often only offer real world experience with limited academic grounding involved (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Penn, 2003; Ross & Elechi, 2001).  Internships can fall short, however because students focus on the practical aspects of internships and lose the learning component in the commission of the internships tasks (Penn, 2003).  These practical aspects include efficiently completing tasks, networking and gaining a skillset geared towards the internship.

Service learning goes beyond the scope of an internship on many levels.  Service learning, like internships, offers students the chance to take theory and put it into practice (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Penn, 2003; Ross & Elechi, 2001). However, service learning is more immersive and effective, as it has a heavy emphasis on deep learning and reflection while gaining real world experience (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Overall, 2010; Penn, 2003; Pugh et al, 2009). Service learning aims to transform student perceptions of the world around them and the people in it (Jackson, 1986).

Service learning courses can be much harder to implement when compared to their internship counterparts.  This can be due to preparation, workload, course set up and community partner identification.  Internships are more feasible and easier to obtain, as many different organizations and institutions need extra help and can offer experience. Service learning courses take this further, needing community partners that can handle the workload and can effectively collaborate to offer students a transformative experience (Koliba et al, 2006; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).  This need for a deeper level of collaboration can make it difficult to identify willing and able community partners.  Most notably, institutions such as prisons, jails, courts, rehab centers and restorative justice centers take on the role of able and willing community partners for the purpose of service learning courses (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Pompa, 2002; Vigorita, 2002).

## Service Learning in Criminal Justice

Service learning within the discipline of criminal justice is a fairly new practice. The earliest publications and implementation of service learning within criminal justice education appeared in the late 1990's (Lersch, 1997; Situ, 1997; Swanson, King, &

Wolbert, 1997). There have been a few fundamental publications surrounding service learning.  These publications discuss courses best suited for service learning in criminal justice, effective course designs, faculty and student motivations and barriers, and academic and personal outcomes for students (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Love, 2008; Penn, 2003; Pompa, 2002; Starks et al., 2011; Swanson et al., 1997; Vigorita, 2002). The literature reveals that even though it has been studied and implemented for the past two decades, service learning in criminal justice is still in its infancy (Lersch, 1997; Madden, Davis & Cronley, 2014; Situ, 1997; Swanson, King, & Wolbert, 1997).   Because of this lack of implementation in criminal justice courses, there have been few evaluations conducted (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006).

Like other disciplines, criminal justice educators implement service learning courses to positively support specific course goals and outcomes (Zlotkowski, 2001). The move to advocate for more service learning courses in the discipline of criminal justice came from a realization that passive, lecture based, teacher-centered learning was not sufficing (Cromwell & Birzer, 2012; George, Lim, Lucas & Meadows, 2015; Robinson, 2000; Wolfer & Baker, 2000).  These courses were not facilitating active learning and retention of information learned. Active, hands on courses are needed to motivate students to see their potential and the place they can take in the professional world. Beyond this, these courses can help facilitate a higher level of retention of both theory and practice.

**Criminal Justice Courses and Service Learning**

Service learning in criminal justice can be utilized in a number of different courses.  There are core courses, as well as special topics courses that can benefit from a service learning based approach.  Core courses like courts and the judicial process can have a service learning component where students go into court rooms, assist as court monitors and talk with judges (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006).  Special topics courses have more leeway to integrate service learning components, as they are specifically focused around a particular topic for the full duration of the semester.  Courses like juvenile delinquency (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006), crime prevention (Penn, 2003), restorative justice (Vigorita, 2002), women in the criminal justice system (Love, 2008) and prison based courses (Pompa, 2002; Vigorita, 20002) have all been used as service learning courses.  These courses are solely based on one specific topic or aspect of the criminal justice system and can be paired with an outside community force for the purpose of integrated learning.

**Desired Outcomes in Criminal Justice based Service Learning Courses**

There are desired outcomes for service learning courses that span across all disciplines in higher education as well as some outcomes that are specific to the discipline of criminal justice education.  These desired outcomes in the discipline of criminal justice can come in the form of educational, personal and professional growth and understanding.  Educators seek to increase subject comprehension on the issues associated with the discipline and field of criminal justice (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Hirschinger- Blank, Simons & Kenyon, 2009; Penn, 2003).  Additionally, educators seek to help students bridge criminal justice theories with hands

on practice (Breci & Martin, 2000).  Some educators may also desire to challenge

students to construct alternatives to current criminal justice models in place (Pompa,

2002).

Beyond educational outcomes, educators may desire to influence students'

personal and professional lives.  Educators in the field of criminal justice strive to reduce

and eliminate students' perceived stereotypes of offenders (Eyler & Giles, 1999;

Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Hirschinger- Blank, Simons & Kenyon, 2009;

Pompa, 2002; Swanson et al., 1997; Vigorita, 2002).  This is done by offering students a

first-hand perspective on victim and offender difficulties (Vigorita, 2002). Criminal

justice educators also strive to influence and encourage their students to find their career

passion and motivate them to work in the field of criminal justice (Dantzker, Kubin &

Stein, 1997; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Vigorita, 2002).

### Barriers of Service Learning in Criminal Justice

There are a multitude of different barriers that educators across all disciplines face

when implementing service learning courses.  Criminal justice educators may face a few

different and unique barriers when compared to other disciplines (Vigorita, 2002).  For

criminal justice educators, identifying able and willing community partners can be

difficult (Koliba et al, 2006; Kretzman & McKnight,1993).  Beyond this, due to the small

number of institutions that act as community partners, it can be hard to implement these

courses because of time management and location in some cases.  One example of a

community partner that is often associated with service learning is prisons.  Gaining

access to an offender population can be quite challenging for security and safety reasons

(Vigorita, 2002).  For students, learning and serving alongside offender populations may

cause discomfort or anxiety (Vigorita, 2002). This is expected and understood, as it is a new environment for many students. Beyond this, the public opinion of students learning and serving alongside offender populations may deter the number of students who want to engage in service learning courses (Vigorita, 2002). This may be due in part to the lack of understanding that the public has about offenders and protected populations.

Criminal justice educators may also have a general apprehension to utilize a service learning component in their courses for a few different reasons (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002). There is a general lack of knowledge on service learning and how it can and should be implemented (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002). This factor may scare many educators away from the use of service learning due to the lack of knowledge on its uses, forms and implementation. Conversely, educators who do understand service learning and are knowledgeable on the subject may be too busy balancing their regular duties to take on a service learning component (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002). The biggest apprehension for educators stems from the lack of institutional support for service learning, which deters many educators from exploring this educational approach (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002; Bringle, Hatcher & Games, 1997). It is extremely hard to try and implement something when there is a lack of understanding and support from higher authority.

**Service Learning at Bridgewater State University in Criminal Justice**

Service learning in the discipline of criminal justice at Bridgewater State University is fairly new. Since its creation, service learning has taken on both a traditional classroom style course with added out of class service learning components, as well as an immersion style course where the service learning component is intertwined

into every class (Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Penn, 2003; Pompa, 2002, Starks et al, 2011; Vigorita, 2002). When it was first implemented in 2007, it was structured as a traditional classroom style course with an added outside service learning component.  The classroom style course was focused on restorative justice.  The outside service learning component was either to attend the Alternatives to Violence project basic workshop or attend the Lifers Group at Old Colony Correctional Complex.  In 2010, the service learning course changed from a more traditional classroom style with an added service learning component, to an immersion style service learning course.  This immersion style class is known as Behind the Walls, and it is taught at the Old Colony Correctional Center, just a few miles from the campus.

**Alternatives to Violence Project**

The Alternatives to Violence Project, (AVP) is defined as "a movement dedicated to building peace in ourselves and our homes, schools, institutions and communities" (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  AVP is made up of members from local communities, schools and prison based groups that come together to participate in experiential workshops (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  These workshops strive to offer and foster "personal growth, community development and creative conflict management" for all involved (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).   These goals are achieved by using the shared experiences of not only participants, but also facilitators. Together participants and facilitators examine how injustice, prejudice, frustration and anger can lead to not only aggressive but also violent behavior (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  This is done through intense discussion in large groups as well as more intimate groups and one-on-one conversation.

**Alternatives to Violence Project History**

The Alternatives to Violence Project was founded in Green Haven prison, in New York.  It was developed from real life experiences of the inmates.  During the early 1970's there were events and realizations that took place, opening the eyes of inmates as well as members of society, that helped lead to the formation of AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  At that time and prior, the Vietnam War was ongoing and the Quakers were going into Green Haven Prison to hold non-violence training centered around war demonstrations (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  In 1971, the inmates at Green Haven were exposed to the Attica Riots.  Attica Correctional Facility was located just a few hours away from Green Haven in Attica, New York (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  Beyond this, the inmates were witnessing the revolving door of the criminal justice system.  Youthful offenders were entering the prison system on minor charges and when released, they would return on more serious charges as they got older.  This realization prompted many inmates to take action and question what they could do for society, from inside.

Together, the inmates and Quakers worked together to develop effective non-violence workshops with the first official Alternatives to Violence workshop being held at Green Haven in 1975.  These workshops became very successful, very quickly and the benefits were apparent.  The inmates, prison staff and the prison climate as a whole benefited from the workshops (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  Due to its success in Green Haven, AVP was in demand and quickly spread throughout the New

York prison system (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  Notable inmates such as Eddie Ellis and Bernard Lafayette and notable Quakers such as Larry Aspeny, Lee Stern and Steve Angell went on to do more work in the field of non-violence training (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).

Over forty years since its creation and implementation in the New York prison system, AVP continues to thrive.  As of 2017, AVP is utilized in 33 different states in different places like churches, schools, prisons, jails and shelters (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  AVP has also expanded globally, being utilized in 45 different countries around the world.  Notable countries using AVP are Sudan, Palestine, Burundi and Rwanda (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).

**Alternatives to Violence Project Workshops**

The key facet to AVP are the workshops. The AVP workshops are broken up into different phases or levels.  The first is the basic workshop.  The basic workshop is an intensive three-day learning experience that spans the entire day, each day (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  During these three days individuals learn interpersonal conflict resolution skills through step by step processes such as small group discussion and one on one interactions.  These activities focus on affirmation, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  Through these processes there is a sense of community and a sense of trust formed between members of the workshop and facilitators (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017).  This sense of community creates a climate in which members feel they can open up and be vulnerable.  This allows for effective and genuine conversation and understanding of one another and the problems at hand.

Once the basic workshop is completed an individual can move on to the advanced workshop. The advanced workshop is structured like the basic workshop, but gets more in depth with emotions and discussions. The advanced workshop focuses more on the underlying causes of aggression and violence (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017). Topics such as fear, anger, power, communication, forgiveness and gender awareness are touched on and discussed (Alternatives to Violence Project, 2017). Once completed, outside members can go on to become facilitators and then run AVP workshops inside the prison. This is extremely beneficial because it gives many more inmates and civilians the chance to participate and grow AVP further.

### Bridgewater State University and AVP

The Alternatives to Violence Project held at Old Colony Correctional Center (OCCC) served as a service learning partner for students enrolled in Restorative Justice classes at Bridgewater State University. Several students participating in the restorative justice courses offered at Bridgewater State University participated in AVP workshops at OCCC. The AVP workshop was the choices for the service learning component of the course. Students attended the full basic workshop alongside inmates at OCCC. These students engaged in in-depth group and one-on-one conversations as well as activities with other members of the workshop. During the duration of the weekend, students spent sixteen hours attending the workshop.

### Inside Out Prison Exchange Program

The Inside Out Prison Exchange Program (Inside Out), is a college course held in correctional facilities across the country. The course brings together college students and inmates, for a college level course. It is an educational program that is tailored to

effectively facilitate dialogue across different social barriers.  Not only is the prison

barrier being crossed, but multiple different social barriers are also being crossed from

both inside and outside perspectives.  This is done by bringing together college (outside)

students and inmate (inside) students.  Together, these students learn and discuss different

topics through an engaging learning process.   Through this engaged learning, there is a

transformative learning experience that takes place and allows participants to take

leadership in addressing prevalent issues in society (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).

The Inside- Out course is described through its mission statement as "education in

which we are able to encounter each other, especially across profound social barriers, is

transformative and allows problems to be approached in new and different ways" (The

Inside-Out Center, 2017).    This course stems from the notion that society is

strengthened when higher education and the opportunity for learning is made readily

available and accessible to all equally (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  The discussion that

takes place is genuine and in goes in depth regardless of the education level of those

discussion the prevalent issues.  This discussion and understanding allows for everyone

involved to feel empowered and educated.

The vision statement associated with Inside Out explains that it aims to "create

opportunities for people inside and outside of prisons to have transformative learning

experiences that emphasize collaboration and dialogue and that invite them to take

leadership in addressing crime, justice and other issues of social concern" (The Inside-

Out Center, 2017, Vision Statement).

**History of Inside Out**

Inside Out did not start out as what it is currently, today. In 1995, Temple University Professor Lori Pompa took a group of fifteen undergraduate students on a tour of the state correctional facility located in Dallas, Pennsylvania (The Inside-Out Center, 2017). While on the tour, the students had the opportunity to meet with inmates, many of whom were lifers. The inmates talked to the students about different prevalent issues such as social issues, economic issues, racial issues and psychological issues and their relation to crime and criminal justice (The Inside-Out Center, 2017). Once the tour concluded, Pompa and one of the inmates spoke, the inmate suggested that they take the conversation held during the tour, further. His suggestion was a semester long course, bringing together inside and outside students, to learn about and discuss the prevalent issues in society (The Inside-Out Center, 2017). Both inside and outside students would read the same material, do the same assignments and then come together once a week to discuss their thoughts and feelings. For college students, university credit would be gained.

In 1997, this suggestion became a reality through collaboration of Pompa and the Philadelphia prison system. That year, the first official Inside Out course was held and labeled "The Inside Out Prison Exchange Program: Exploring Issues of Crime and Justice Behind the Walls". Inside Out was taught solely by Pompa for three years after its creation and in 2000, two more Temple University Professors joined her in teaching the course (The Inside-Out Center, 2017). Inside Out was growing in popularity with both inside and outside students and in 2002, the Inside Out course grew to SGI Graterford, in the Pennsylvania State Correctional System (The Inside-Out Center, 2017). Through the

implementation of Inside Out at Graterford, a think tank was created as well.  This think tank allows for inside and outside students to stay in contact outside of the course, and still discuss prevalent issues across social barriers (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).

Just two years later, in 2004, Graterford held the first instructor training for teaching Inside Out. The benefits for Inside Out were readily noticed and the course continued to grow both in the United States and around the world.  In 2011, Inside Out expanded to Canada (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  Just three years later, in 2014, Inside Out had been expanded to England, Scotland and Australia (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  As of 2017, there are more than one hundred prison and higher education partnerships for the purpose of Inside Out (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  With this partnership comes hundreds of instructors of higher education from around the world who are teaching this course behind the walls of their local correctional facilities.  In the twenty years since its creation and implementation, over thirty thousand students have benefited from Inside Out (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  The course has grown since its creation and has been used and adapted for a variety of different forms of educational and community based programming (The Inside-Out Center, 2017).  Different disciplines of education have employed inside out and have been very successful at doing so.  Beyond that, there has been a strong international network of students, faculty and alumni fostered through Inside Out and its core values and principles that will continue to grow.

### Bridgewater State University and Inside-Out

Bridgewater State University has offered the Inside- Out course for criminal justice students since 2010.  Throughout the campus community, the course is known as "Behind the Walls: Crime and Justice".  The course is held inside Old Colony

Correctional Center (OCCC) in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, which is located just four miles from the Bridgewater State University campus. The course follows the same criteria as any other college course held at Bridgewater State University and adheres to the same institutional standards.

Inside- Out at Bridgewater State University started out with a focus on masculinity and violence. Since its creation, the course has also focused around restorative justice issues. The course's focus is decided by the faculty member teaching the course, and usually centers around their area of interest or expertise. Inside- Out can be taught with a focus on many different topics. Masculinity and violence and restorative justice are specific to Bridgewater State University.

The course itself is held once a week, off campus, at OCCC. Prior to the first course inside, students meet with the professor on campus. This meeting is to set forth the ground rules of the course, expectations for students set forth by both OCCC and Bridgewater State University and discuss the syllabus. For the remainder of the semester, students are required to find their own ride to and from OCCC, and are often encouraged to carpool. This helps students to get to know their peers and also offers a chance for discussion and reflection on the course, a principle of service learning.

Due to the course being held inside a correctional complex, students have to adhere to the rules and regulations set forth by the facility. One of these regulations is the dress code. There is a long list of clothing and accessories that cannot be worn. Students are not to wear sneakers or boots above the knee. No skirts, dresses, jewelry or hair accessories are permitted. Sweatpants, jeans, sweatshirts with drawstrings or any other forms of baggy and casual clothing are not permitted. No white tees, camouflage

clothing or hats are to be allowed into the facility.  The most important clothing

restriction is what creates the distinction between incarcerated persons, workers and

students.  Students are not to wear anything that looks similar to clothing issued to

incarcerated persons or personnel of OCCC.  In my experience, students stuck to a

similar dress code for the entirety of the semester, often wearing the same outfit each

week.  The outfits generally consisted of dress pants, dress shoes and either a dress shirt

or a sweater.

        Being prompt and early for the course is a necessity.  Students are to come

prepared with their license or a form of identification.  These are collected and held for

the duration of the class and are returned afterwards.  Students are then required to sign in

and state the purpose of the visit.  The processing then takes place.  Students are searched

and sent through a metal detector.   Often one student is chosen as a random search,

where they are searched and patted down. Once everyone is processed in, students are

allowed to enter the trap to receive a visitor's badge.  Students then head up to the

classroom to meet with their inside classmates.  The classroom is set up with chairs in a

circle.  The seating alternates between inside and outside students, and often switched up

every week.  By doing this, everyone is integrated together and there is the opportunity

for students to get to know everyone a little better by sitting with someone knew every

week.

### Lifers Group

        Another service learning component option in the restorative justice course held

at Bridgewater State University was to attend the lifers group at OCCC. The lifers group

at OCCC meets once week and brings together a group of men serving life in prison.

Together, these men hold a support group and discuss issues such as living life in prison, parenting from prison and a plethora of policy issues. It creates an open dialogue for these men to discuss what they are thinking and feeling with others who are in similar situations and may have similar thoughts and feelings.

## Bridgewater State University and Lifers Group

The lifers group at Old Colony Correction Facility served as a service learning partner for students enrolled in Restorative Justice at Bridgewater State University. Students would go into Old Colony and attend the lifers group weekly. Each week, a student would lead a discussion on a topic pertaining to restorative justice. The student would evoke thoughtful and in depth discussion from the group as a whole. During the semester, students participated in five to six lifer's groups for a total of ten to twelve hours over the course. This service learning component offered students the opportunity to get a real, raw look into prison life.

## Toastmasters

Toastmasters is an international organization focused on communication and leadership development. The core values of the organization center around integrity, respect, service and excellence for all members (Toastmasters International, 2017). The mission statement states that they aim to "empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders" (Toastmasters International, 2017, pp.1).

The first official Toastmasters club was held by Ralph Smedley, the founder, in 1924 at the Santa Ana, California YMCA (Toastmasters International, 2017). Quickly, other people started inquiring about starting their own Toastmasters club, and the organization began to grow. As of 2017 there are 352,000 memberships throughout

16,400 different Toastmasters clubs (Toastmasters International, 2017).  The organization

has clubs in 141 different countries, currently.

### Bridgewater State University and Toastmasters

Toastmaster group members from OCCC interacted with both the restorative

justice course as well as throughout Behind the Walls.  Members of the restorative justice

course at Bridgewater State University debated members of the OCCC toastmasters

group.  For Behind the Walls, the final project has often been a debate.  The course was

split into two groups, to be on either side of the debate.  Members of the OCCC

toastmasters group were brought in to help assist and teach the two teams how to debate.

### Current State of the Literature

The current literature discusses a broad spectrum of benefits and barriers related

to service learning.  For the purpose of this thesis, I focused on student experiences in

service learning courses.  The literature discusses that service learning falls into the

transformative outlook in education, which sets itself apart from traditional classroom

courses (Jackson, 1986).  At its core, the transformative outlook focuses on transforming

student attitudes, values, world views and perceptions (Jackson, 1986).  This is done

through deep engagement and active learning (Connell, 1990; Marvell et al., 2013).

Beyond this, the current literature highlights the immediate positive impacts that service

learning offers students.  Real-world, hands-on experience is gained through participation

in service learning courses (Burke & Bush, 2013; Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz,

2006).  Students' are also able to critically examine the workforce and the place they

want to take within it through their service learning experience (Gutierrez et al, 2012;

Overall, 2010). Although there is currently a strong body of literature on service learning, there are still some limitations.

The current literature on service learning and criminal justice service learning does not focus on the longitudinal effects of service learning on students. The current literature discusses the positive impacts of service learning during and immediately after the completion of a service learning course. There is a gap in the literature as far as how students are positively impacted days, months and years following a service learning course. As researchers, we need to understand what aspects of a service learning experience transcend beyond graduation and follow a student throughout their life. For the purpose of this study, I was extremely interested in filling the gap that currently exists surrounding how a service learning experience positively impacts a students' personal and professional life, post-graduation and beyond.

## Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, two research questions were identified:

- Did your experiences in a criminal justice based service learning course have a lasting impact on your personal life?

- Did your experiences in a criminal justice based service learning course have a lasting impact on your professional life?

## Chapter 2: Methodology

### Introduction

The analysis and findings from this project derive from a survey administered to nineteen Bridgewater State University alumni.  Bridgewater State University was selected as the central focus of the research due to convenience and familiarity.  The focus of the study centers around the criminal justice based service learning courses offered to undergraduate students who attend BSU.  Fortunately, Bridgewater State University has implemented service learning across disciplines throughout the university including but not limited to criminal justice. For the purpose of this study, alumni can offer an insight into their experiences and feelings towards the course. Through this, there can be an increased understanding of the experiences, as well as personal and professional outcomes of individuals who took part in these courses in criminal justice at BSU.

### Sample Selection

The goal of the study was to better understand the personal and professional outcomes of students who participated in a criminal justice service learning course at Bridgewater State University.  Therefore, the sample was made up of only men and women who completed a criminal justice service learning course while attending BSU. This is the only sample that can accurately help to complete the study and offer appropriate findings.  These individuals are able to offer thoughtful and insightful answers to help better understand service learning and its benefits as a whole to the university.

**Recruitment Strategy**

Participants were recruited with the help of the Bridgewater State University Assessment Office and Dr. Della Giustina's previous course records.  Due to the limited amount of alternative (non-BSU) email addresses listed for alumni, the initial sample became smaller than desired.  This added a challenge to the recruitment process, as it limited the possible participant pool from the beginning of the study.  The final outcome was 88 email addresses of BSU alumni who were once enrolled in a criminal justice service learning course.  The 88 alumni were then emailed and asked to consent to participate in the study.  Of the 88 alumni emailed, nineteen consented to participated.

It is important to note that there was no compensation offered for being a part of this study.  Due to this, possible participants may have had little to no motivation to participate in an online survey.  Also, possible participants may have been reluctant to participate due to concerns of how the information they provided would be used in the final production of the findings.

**Institutional Review Board**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Bridgewater State University is the entity that oversees research.  They are to be consulted when there is data being obtained through interaction or when a person's identifiable private personal information is being accessed.  Prior to any human research being done, the IRB needs to review and approve the application and all additional resources provided.

The investigator, is expected to go through the IRB training process prior to submitting an application. This training includes videos, presentations and PowerPoint modules.  Once this is completed, CITI training has to be completed.  This training

involves reading and answering questions to show an understanding of the material. Once all the trainings are completed, the certificated of completion is submitted to the IRB.

Once the certificate of completion is submitted, the IRB will review the application. This application consists of a completed and signed IRB application that outlines the purpose of the study. A tentative consent text, a copy of any recruitment tools, a copy of all the instruments of the research and a tentative debriefing text need to be submitted. For the purpose of this study, the IRB was given a consent text, a copy of the email to be sent to participants, a copy of the survey questions and a debriefing text (See Appendix A for email consent text)

It is important to note that the IRB follows three basic principles when reviewing applications. These principles are respect for personal dignity and autonomy of subjects, protection of subjects by maximizing benefits and minimizing harm and fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of research (Bridgewater State University Institutional Review Board, 2018). The IRB felt that the research being done and the data being collected for the purpose of this study was of minimal harm and maximum benefit. Ultimately the application was reviewed and approved by the IRB allowed research to begin (See Appendix B)

**Participant Characteristics**

Participants were primarily women (n=15). Participants mostly identified as white (n=11). The mean age of participants was 28 years, but ranged from 24 to 44 years old. The majority of participants identified as either Catholic (n= 7) or did not identify with any religion (n=8).

**Table 2.1 Participant Demographics.**

| Participant Demographics | N |
|---|---:|
| Gender | |
| Women | 15(83.33%) |
| Men | 3(16.67%) |
| Race | |
| White | 11(57.89%) |
| Black | 2(10.58%) |
| Other | 5(26.52%) |
| Age | |
| Mean | 28 |
| Range | 24-44 |
| Religion | |
| Catholic | 7(36.84%) |
| Protestant | 1(5.26%) |
| None | 8(42.11%) |
| Other | 3(15.79%) |

Participants had a significant range of grade point averages with the mean being a

3.4.  The grade point averages ranged from a 2.8 being the lowest, to a 4.0 being the

highest.  Participants had a wide variety of graduation years, with the mode being 2011.

The graduation years ranged from 2009 to 2017.  The survey also inquired whether

participants attended graduate school.  Participants were almost split down the middle,

with 11 participants saying yes and 8 saying no.  Half of the participants were employed

in the criminal justice field (n=10) and half were employed in some other field (n=9).

**Table 2.2 Participant Educational Demographics.**

| Participant Educational Demographics | N |
|---|---|
| GPA | |
| Mean | 3.4 |
| Range | 2.8-4.0 |
| Year Graduated | |
| Mode | 2011 |
| Range | 2009/2017 |
| | |
| Attended Graduate School | |
| Yes | 11(57.89%) |
| No | 8(42.11%) |
| Employed in Criminal Justice Field | |
| Yes | 10(52.63%) |
| No | 9(47.37%) |

Participants were asked to disclose what service learning course they participated in while attending Bridgewater State University.  The majority of students were enrolled in Behind the Walls (n=13).  The participants who were not enrolled in Behind the Walls, were enrolled in Restorative Justice (n=6).

**Table 2.3 Service Learning Demographics**

| Service Learning Demographics | N |
|---|---|
| Service Learning Course | |
| Behind the Walls | 13(68.42%) |
| Restorative Justice | 6(31.58%) |
| Service Learning Component (RJ only) | |
| AVP | 11(87.49%) |
| Lifers Group | 2(12.51%) |

**Participant Surveys**

Electronic surveys were sent out to each of the 88 initial participants.  Of the 88

initial emails, nineteen participants consented, and took part in the survey. Prior to the

start of the survey, all participants were provided with a consent form to read via email.

Participants were invited to contact myself or Dr. Della Giustina with any general

questions and concerns or any specific aspects of their participation.  Once participants

were clear on the purpose of the study and what they were asked to do, they were asked

to continue to the survey link provided in the email.  Continuing onto the survey meant

they consented to participate in the study as a participant.  Those who did not continue on

to the survey either simply did not want to participate, or did not consent.  The survey

contained twenty- eight questions and took approximately ten to fifteen minutes to

complete. (A copy of the survey questions can be found in Appendix C)

The survey consisted of both closed and open ended questions.  The closed- ended

questions took the form of multiple choice and Likert scale questions. The closed-ended,

multiple choice questions made up the beginning of the survey and were all

demographically driven. The general demographic questions covered gender, age, race,

religion.  These types of demographic questions help to understand the characteristics of

the population being surveyed.  This is beneficial to get a sense of the larger sample that

these participants represent.  Beyond this, there was a set of educationally demographic

questions that covered things like grade point average, year of graduation, master's

degree and occupation.  These questions help us to further understand the characteristics

of the population we are surveying.  Due to the study being one that is looking at an

academic course in a college setting, it is interesting to note the educational level of the

participants.  Finally, there was a final set of demographic questions that focused on the

service learning course that the participant took and the component completed (if

applicable).

After the section of demographic questions, the survey changed in format.  The

rest of the survey followed a format that was set up as a Likert scale question, followed

by an open response question. A Likert scale is an ordinal scale used in survey research

to measure participant responses (McLeod, 2008; Wuensch, 2005). Due to its qualitative

nature, it is extremely easy to gather data and then analyze it (McLeod, 2008).  The

questions are designed in a way that helps to accurately measure a respondent's attitudes

or opinions towards a given statement or sentiment (Bowling, 1997; Burns & Grove,

1997).  The respondents are offered a choice of five to seven pre-coded responses, with a

neutral point.  The approach of a Likert Scale is to offer the respondent degrees of

opinion to choose from, rather than simply yes or no answers (McLeod, 2008).  The

degrees of opinion allow for the intensity of a feeling toward a given statement to be

captured (Burns & Burns, 2008).  Likert scale questions can be used to measure a range

of different emotions.  Respondents can express their agreement or disagreement to a

statement of situation, frequency of doing something, level of important placed on

something or even the likelihood of a respondent to do or say something (McLeod, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, Likert scale questions were used to gather

respondent's emotions and agreement level in relation to statements made about their

experience in a service learning course.  There was a level of emotion that the study

aimed to capture, that would not have been possible by simply using yes or no based

questions.  The Likert scale questions utilized five pre-coded responses that asked

participants to indicate if they 'strongly agreed' 'agreed' 'neutral' 'disagreed' or 'strong

disagreed' with the question.  These Likert scale questions prompted participants to think

about service learning and its impact on their personal and professional lives.  The

questions asked participants if their service learning course had an impact on them

personally and if this impact was lasting.  The questions then asked participants if they

reflected on their service learning course in their daily personal or professional lives.  The

final Likert scale question centered around service learning versus other types of courses,

and asked participants if their learning had increased more than in a traditional classroom

setting.

After every Likert scale question, respondents were asked an open-response style

question that simply prompted them to further elaborate about why they chose the option

they chose on the previous Likert scale question.  This was done to get a more thoughtful

and in depth look at how participants answered, versus simply just checking an option on

the Likert scale.  The open-ended question format also allows participants to offer any

insight or comments that they felt pertained to the question at hand.  This is beneficial

because it allows participants to express any particular feelings and emotions that the

question evoked.

### Qualtrics

The electronic survey was administered to participants via Qualtrics, an academic

management platform.  Qualtrics was utilized due to its easy to understand interface and

all its unique features, as well as its partnership with Bridgewater State University.

Qualtrics offers research services that assist with survey design, sample sourcing, data

analysis and data interpretation (Qualtrics, 2017). The survey was created using a

Qualtrics based template. By using this template, multiple different types of questions

were utilized with ease. Once the survey was complete, Qualtrics allows for the survey

to be administered in a few different forms. Surveys can be administered via an

anonymous link, email, personal link, social media, offline apps or by QR code. For the

purpose of this study, a master list of emails was used and emailed to all the respondents

via Qualtrics. This process was easy and all the recipient's emails were entered into the

contact list on the site. This feature made it easy to send the survey to multiple people at

once.

Once the surveys were completed by participants, the data was sent directly back

to Qualtrics and recorded. The service translated the data and recorded number of

respondents per question, the number of responses on each choice in a question and the

percentage that each choice was chosen. This was extremely helpful because it

eliminated the need to do the math out by hand to find the percentages.

## Chapter 3: Data Analysis

## A Grounded Theory Approach

I used a grounded theory approach for this study. This approach allows for data collection as well as data analysis to occur simultaneously (Charmaz, 2006). By using this approach, I was able to identify emerging topics through the open-ended questions utilized for data collection. This theory was appropriate because the study is interested in identifying the concepts, themes and relationships that emerge through coding the data. Based on existing literature, there was some expectation of themes, concepts and relationships that could possibly emerge. However, due to the minimal amount of research and published literature on the subject of personal and professional outcomes of service learning, I was able to analyze the data without a set of pre-established themes, concepts or relationships. Therefore, there is a lack of pre-established hypothesis or predictions. This allowed for a more thorough analysis of the concepts, themes and relationships from the study. Because of this, I was not focused on seeking out or omitting pre-established concepts, themes and relationships based on assumptions made or drawn from existing literature.

Although some general expectations for the data could be informed by existing literature, I decided to look past this. I chose to let the data collected through my survey inform the data collection process as well as the theories and findings that emerged instead of trying to fit responses into a pre-determined coding structure (Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Due to the small number of open-ended question responses, I was able to forgo using a data analysis and coding

software.  In place of this, I was able to utilize Microsoft Word to code and analyze the

open-response survey data.

## Analytical Strategy

As responses came in, I engaged in a round of initial coding.  This first round of

coding started very generally and became increasingly more specific the more coding was

done.  Due to this, the initial coding frame that was constantly revised as new responses

were coded and new concepts, themes and relationships emerged (Berg, 2007; Charmaz,

2006; Corbin & Strauss; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).  As rounds of coding occurred, I

reviewed the open responses line by line and coded for concepts, themes, relationships,

ideas, phrases and emotions. By doing so, I was able to identify patterns in the data

(Glaser, 1987; Charmaz, 1990).  Engaging in initial coding allows the data to provide the

codes, rather than having a pre-existing set of codes to look for (Charmaz, 2006).  Letting

the data provide the codes rather than using a pre-existing set of codes, follows a

grounded theory approach.

This initial coding resulted in the creation of a solid coding frame that I then used

to aid in the coding of the remaining open-response answers.  As I continued to code new

responses line by line, I began to find more themes and concepts.  Once these new themes

and concepts emerged, I went back to the earlier responses and reviewed them.  As I was

reviewing these earlier responses, the newly emerged themes and concepts that were

coded could be seen in some cases.  Due to this, I went back and re-coded previously

coded data to ensure the most up to date codes were being reflected.  Using this technique

of building a coding frame from the data ensures that any findings and relationships were

truly based on the data.  Once the general coding of all the responses was complete, the

general codes were reviewed to tease out more specific codes if need be.

Throughout the analytical process, I regularly engaged in validity checks.  This

was done to ensure that I was staying open to anything that could possibly contradict the

themes that emerged from the data collection and analysis process.  Also, I kept a

conscious eye on ensuring that the analysis was not being influenced by the minimal pre-

existing literature.  If the literature was influencing the data collection and analysis

process, it would be in violation of one of the main principles of the grounded theory

approach.  This proved to be challenging at many points, but ultimately did not affect the

outcome.  It is very easy to subscribe to assumptions about what you will find in your

data.  Keeping an open mind is extremely necessary when analyzing data in accordance

with the grounded theory approach.  When you allow yourself to remain neutral and

open, you are better able to understand concepts, themes and relationships that you may

have otherwise missed.

## A Note of Self- Reflection in the Research Process

Throughout this study, I was aware of the role that my own personal identity and

beliefs could possibly play through the research process.  As a Bridgewater State

University alumni who also participated in a criminal justice based service learning

course, I have formed my own beliefs on the course and service learning as a whole.  Due

to this, it is inevitable, but not problematic, that I approached this study with some form

of personal values, experiences and beliefs that were specific to myself.  This includes a

certain set of assumptions or beliefs about service learning and its perceived benefits.

This could have affected how I coded and interpreted the content of the participant's

responses, but it did not.  On another note, this did affect how I disclosed myself to respondents.  I self-identified that I was a master's level student from BSU who was interested in obtaining data on the personal and professional outcomes associated with service leaning.  I did not disclose that I had previously taken the course as an undergraduate as well.  This was done to avoid the possibility of respondents thinking I understood something due to being in the class, that ultimately I did not.  The goal was to get the most rich, emotional and detailed response from the respondents as possible.

I engaged in several different strategies throughout the research process to help minimize the misrepresentation of the information shared by participants.   First, I chose not to disclose that I too was an alumni of a criminal justice based service learning course at Bridgewater State University.  This was done in hopes that participants would be more in depth and thoughtful with their answers and not assume that the researcher was overly familiar with the course.  Additionally, the survey allowed participants to control what they did and did not disclose and also the direction of their answers.  By allowing participants to simply 'explain' their answers, they could include as much or as little as they felt necessary and did not force them into a choice of response.  Finally, I tried to incorporate open response answers or fragments of answers by participants into the write-up of the research findings.  This allows the reader to see actual quotes describing particular experiences or feelings from a participant, rather than my personal interpretation or reiteration of those answers.

It is inevitable that my own biases and assumptions influenced how I related to the participants and their answers.  This can be said for the way that the data was interpreted as well.  However, by actively engaging in reflexivity and being transparent

about the role I played during the data collection and analysis process, I was able to omit

much if not all of my personal biases.  I felt that I was able to actively engage in this

study and share the experiences of those who participated with an extreme sense of

authenticity and validity.

**Chapter 4: Results**

The study revealed three overarching themes regarding the experiences that BSU alumni had during their time in a criminal justice based service learning course. Identifying these key themes is necessary to fully understand the impacts and outcomes that service learning courses have on students. The research questions for this study looked specifically at the experiences of students in criminal justice based service learning courses, and the effect that they had on a student's personal and professional life. The data revealed that the experiences had positively impacted the students' personal and professional lives, even after they had graduated. This data helps to provide evidence that supports the claim that these transformative learning experiences have positive lasting effects on students. Specifically, this data also helps to add to the growing body of literature that discusses the positive impacts that service learning experiences can have on students.

The data also revealed how essential the service learning process is, and how much it can increase learning and build knowledge for students. A vast majority of the respondents discussed the process of how their learning occurred. 34.09% of respondents said that the most meaningful component of their service learning course was the overall experience, encompassing the course content, material, discussion and reflection. One respondent stated "It's not any particular piece that stands out, rather the experience taken as a whole, that is most meaningful". This response speaks to all the different facets that service learning courses have and just how important and meaningful they are when they all come together to facilitate learning.

**Personal Impact**

One of the key themes that emerged from the research centered around the personal impact of respondent's service learning experiences. Through Likert Scale and open response questions, respondents were able to expand and explain the types of impact that the experience had on them. Respondents discussed many different emotions that they felt during and after their experiences that contributed to their personal growth. Respondents felt not only impacted during their service learning experience but throughout their lives afterwards.

This Likert scale question (Table 4.1) asked respondents if they felt that their time in a service learning course had a positive impact on them as a person. This was asked in accordance with one of the research questions, which was interested in personal outcomes of service learning. The vast majority of respondents (n=16) stated that they strongly agreed with this statement. Those respondents who didn't strongly agree, simply agreed (n=3). These responses speak to the positive impact that the course had for all the participants, as the majority agreed strongly with the statement. To get a more emotional based response, respondents were asked to further explain how their service learning experience had a positive impact on them as a person. Through this, respondents were able to highlight the ways in which the experience positively impacted them. Respondents offered commentary that discussed changes in personal perception, perception of others, emotions such as empathy and compassion and personal transformation.

**Table 4.1:**
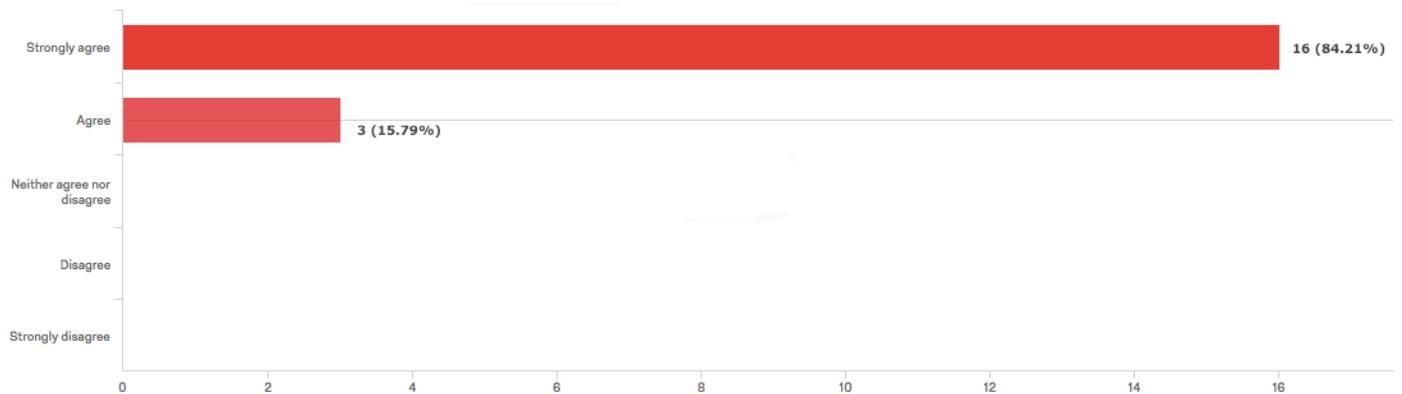


The next Likert Scale question (Table 4.2) asked respondents if their time in a service learning course had a lasting impact on them.  This question goes deeper, asking about the lasting impact that the course had on the respondent's life, not just simply the impact that it had while they were situated in it.  This requires the respondent to reflect on the course and how the experiences they had are integrated in their life today. The idea was to further narrow respondent's responses in terms of personal outcomes of service learning to better understand just how impactful the experience can be.  About half the respondents (n=13) strongly agreed with this statement.  The other half of the respondents agreed (n=5) or were neutral (n=1) on the statement.  Respondents were asked to answer an open response question, explaining what about their experience had a lasting impact on them.  This was done to better understand what about service learning experiences had a lasting impact on respondents.  Respondents highlighted their changes in perceptions, emotions such as sympathy, empathy and passion as well as increased learning throughout the course and after.

**Table 4.2**
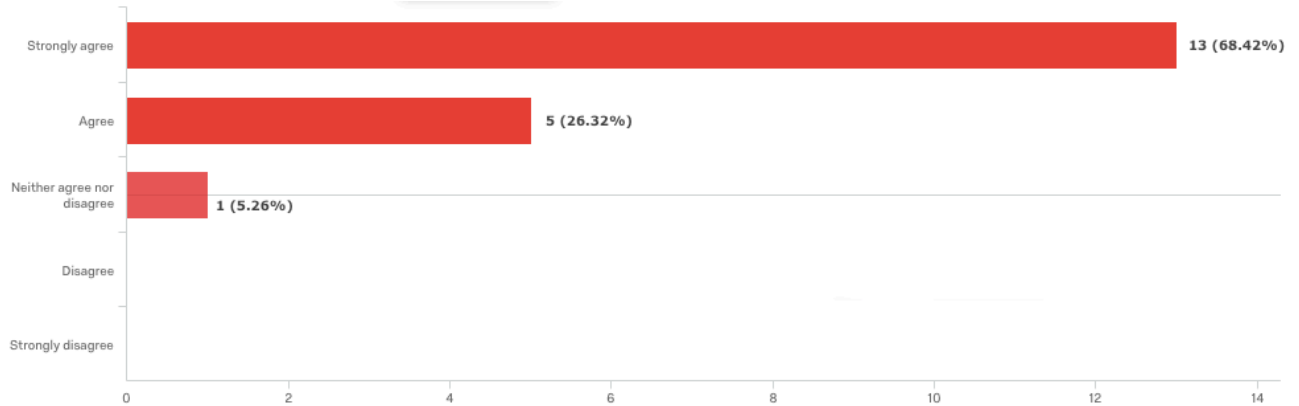


The next Likert Scale question (Table 4.3) asked respondents if they reflect on their experiences from their service learning course in their personal life.  This question is extremely straightforward and challenges respondents to think about the level to which they reflect on their service learning experience, and how this plays a role in their personal life.  The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed (n=9) or agreed (n=8). The remaining respondents (n=2) fell into the neutral category. Respondents were then asked to explain in detail when and how they reflect on their service learning experience in their personal life.  Respondents highlighted emotions such as empathy and compassion. Respondents also highlighted the concepts of consciousness, reflection and the influence that their experience had on them personally.

**Table 4.3**
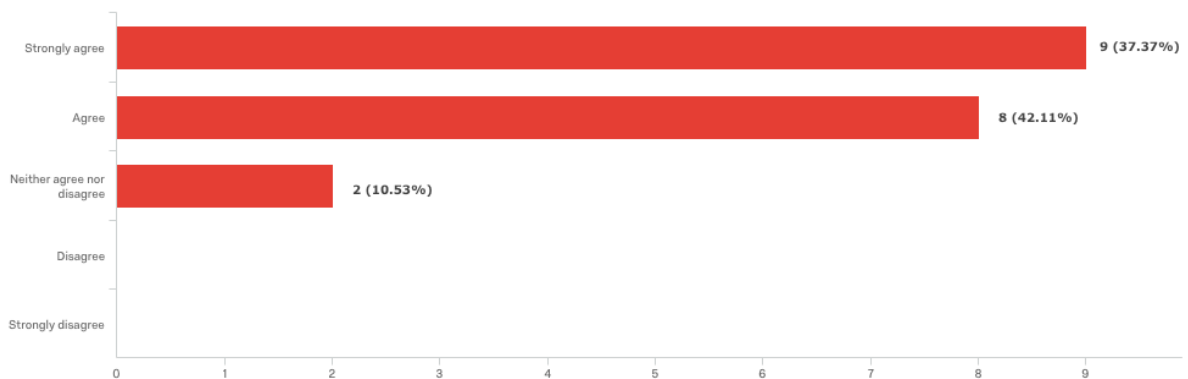
**Lasting Impact**

There is a strong body of literature that discusses the impacts that service learning experiences have on students. Lasting impact as a result of service learning experiences is framed in the context of occupations, civic engagement and personal transformation most often. The current study asked respondents to answer a Likert Scale question based around lasting impact. 68.42% of the respondents expressed, through the Likert Scale, that their service learning course had some form of a lasting impact on them. Respondents were then asked to go further in depth and discuss what parts of their service learning experience had a lasting impact on them. It is important to get an understanding of what students took away from their experience, and how it affected them in a long term manner when discussing the positive impacts of service learning.

One respondent discussed how their service learning experience had a lasting impact on their outlook on the death penalty. This respondent stated that "I went from someone who blindly believed in the death penalty to someone who now questions it". This student experienced the transformed views and perspectives that Jackson (1986) discusses. Through the service learning course, this respondent was able to deal directly with the population who has faced the death penalty. The respondent was able to hear first-hand accounts of the inmates and the crimes they committed. Beyond this, the respondent was able to understand the circumstances surrounding the crimes committed and the remorse that inmates have. The course also gives both inside and outside students the opportunity to learn from one another through discussion and the chance to voice their opinion on controversial topics, including the death penalty. Through this discussion, this respondent's views were transformed from a hard stance, to one that is

more questioning of the death penalty as a form of punishment.  It is important that students are exposed to other views and stances on topics, but even more important that they are able to discuss them with the exact people that the topics affect.

Another respondent stated that "Behind the Walls course gave me a new perspective on incarceration and was very impactful both emotionally and educationally". For this respondent, the course gave them a fresh and new way to look at incarceration from those incarcerated.  Many students do not get the opportunity see inside a prison, let alone sit down and learn with incarcerated individuals.  This experience is extremely selective to service leaning as prisons are extremely inaccessible to the general public.  It is important to note that through a traditional classroom teaching, students are only learning about those incarcerated from a book or a PowerPoint presentation.  Service learning bridges this gap of what is taught in a course, and puts it into real- world application, which can stick with a student for their lifetime.  This changed perspective on incarceration is important, as this student now has a reduced or even eliminated stereotype of those who are incarcerated (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Pompa, 2002; Vigorita, 2002).  It also allows these students to integrate new and more complex ways of looking at the world around them (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede, 1996; Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Kendall, 1991; Penn, 2003).  In the context of incarceration, it allows students to see this differently, but also understand how others view incarceration. Beyond this, the respondent is now equipped with the tools to help refute stereotypes about those in prison, or incarceration as a whole.  This is extremely beneficial, as many people who do not truly understand those incarcerated, may have these stereotypical ideas of inmates.

In terms of a lasting impact, another respondent discussed how what they learned through their service learning experience could not be learned through a traditional classroom setting.   In regards to the difference in learning, the respondent stated that "there is no classroom that will teach me what I learned inside the prison or during AVP. I heard unique stories and was able to see first -hand how quickly things can evolve and change your life". This is in line with the literature in which Pugh et al, (2009) discusses that service learning courses transcend beyond traditional classroom courses, filling a gap of deep engagement for students.  The learning is increased and the impact is lasting due to engagement.  Through service learning, students are engaging with the environment in which the course is taken, the material in the course, and also other students.  The relationships created and the information gained can stick with students for their lifetime and affect them in everything they do.

**Emotions**

Emotions are extremely prevalent throughout service learning.  Felten, Gilchrist & Darby (2006) discuss that there is a connection between emotions and learning. Beyond this, Coles (1993) states that there is an intricate role that emotions play throughout service learning.  This is reflected through the responses gained, in which respondents highlight lasting impact on an emotional level.  According to Noyes, Darby & Leupold (2015), the setting of a service learning course has more power to provide the student with an emotional experience than a traditional classroom setting would.  For the purpose of this study, respondents took their service learning component or course within the confines of a correctional facility.  This setting produces a large amount of emotion for students, as they learn alongside their inside participants.  Respondents highlighted a

prominent feeling of empathy throughout their responses.  Empathy is the ability of one

to be able to understand another person's feelings, emotions and experiences (Merriam-

Webster, 2018).  Due to the fact that students are getting an inside look behind the walls

of a correctional facility and hearing stories first hand from those inside, it is expected

that there would be a prominent emotional response.

One respondent explained that "my experience "behind the walls" probably

contributed to my own capacity for empathy".  For many, understanding things from

another person's point of view can prove to be difficult, especially when there is a

disconnection between the two people.  Many people in our society are unable to

empathize with those in prison, as they look at the incarcerated as criminals and nothing

more.  Media portrayals and incorrect assumptions can contribute to this lack of empathy

towards those in prison.  Another respondent also discussed how the course contributed

to a lasting emotional response.  Much like the prior respondent, this respondent

highlighted the course and the way it allowed for a transformation of emotions. For this

respondent, the emotional response was both empathetic and compassionate.  The

respondent stated "it [the course] encouraged my empathy and compassion for other

people who may have followed a less fortunate path in life".  This encouraged a sense of

empathy and compassion that comes as a result of hearing the inside students' stories,

and also from the topics covered in the course overall.

Behind the Walls offers students this chance to go beyond the media portrayals

and stereotypes and get a true look at these individuals for who they are and the events

that happened in their life that brought them to prison.   These two respondents are

highlighting this aspect of the course and how it contributed to their capacity for empathy

as well as compassion.  When in the course, outside students are truly given a platform to

better understand their inside classmates.  Inside students are given a platform to talk

about themselves, their upbringing, the things that got them in trouble and the things that

ultimately landed them in prison.  These stories can be related back to the course content,

as a way to make the information more tangible for both inside and outside students.

Together, the two can learn from one another in an extremely effective and intimate way.

The stories told by the inside students are extremely important and need to be

heard.  Students are able to make connections with the course material through these

stories.  Beyond this, when students are hearing these things first hand, and putting a face

to a story, it makes it very personal.  It also gives students the opportunity to understand

these inside student's feelings, emotions and experiences, which is the heart of

developing empathy.  It allows students' to be able to apply what they see and hear in

class, to the larger picture of those incarcerated.  With this newfound understanding,

students can use what they learned to combat negative stereotypes in society.

The next overarching theme that emerged from the responses was professional

impact.  Within this, respondent's highlighted changes in career goals and also utilizing

their service learning experience in their current occupation.

### Professional Impact

Another overarching and key theme that emerged from the research centered

around the professional impact of the respondent's service learning experiences.  Some

respondents discussed how their experiences in service learning helped to shape their

occupational goals or change them completely.  Other respondents discussed how they've

used their service learning experience in their current profession and how impactful that has been for them.

This Likert Scale question (Table 4.4) asked respondents if they reflect on their experiences from their service learning course when they do their job. This was asked in accordance with one of the research questions, which was interested in professional outcomes of service learning.  This question was used to evoke thoughts on where the respondent is situated in the professional world, and if their service learning experience played a part in where they are at.  The majority of respondents were split between strongly agree (n=7) and neutral (n=7).  The remaining respondents simply agreed (n=5). This outcome, although vastly different from the previous two questions, is understandable.  Respondents who selected neutral may be those individuals who went on to work in professions outside the realm of criminal justice, where those who agree and strongly agree may be those working in some realm of criminal justice, who found a passion out of their experiences in their service learning course. Respondents were then asked to explain in detail when and how they reflect on their experiences from their service learning course when they do their job.  Respondents highlighted emotions such as empathy, the concepts of consciousness and reflection and the influence that their experience had on their career goals.

**Table 4.4**

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 7 (36.84%) |
| Agree | 5 (26.32%) |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7 (36.84%) |
| Disagree | |
| Strongly disagree | |
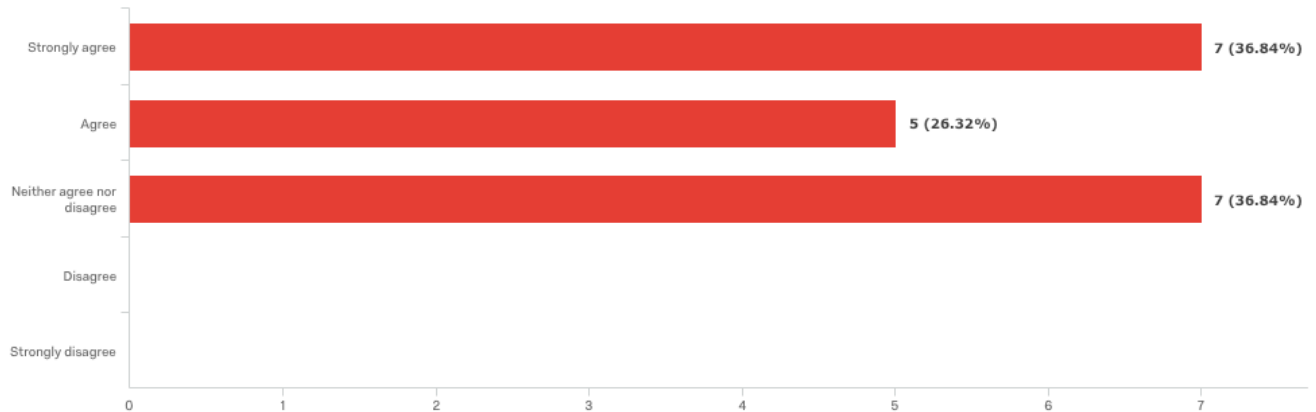
Currently, there is a large body of literature that discusses the relationship between service learning and occupation.  The responses from this study are in line with the current literature.  Beyond this, the responses help to further add to the consistency of the literature.

**Changing of Career Goals**

For some students, their service learning experience was so impactful that it made them want to change their career goals.  Students often have in their mind, a goal of where they want to end up professionally.  Respondents in this study discussed how their career goals were changed as a result of the positive experience that they had throughout the service learning course.  The change in career goals could be as simple as changing the population with whom they wanted to work with or even the way that they wanted to help this population.  Due to the emotional responses that the service learning course evoked, students felt very passionately and wanted to make a difference.  This could be one way to explain the sudden change in career goals.

These changes may also be due in part to the fact that respondents had the opportunity to critically examine the different facets of the workforce while going through their service learning course (Gutierrez et al, 2012).   This offered students the chance to see where things were really working and also areas that needed improvement and situated themselves in a way that could be most impactful. Throughout the service learning experience, respondents were able to critically examine the prison system itself, the way the prison is run and maintained and also the resources that inmates have on hand.  By critically examining these facets, students were able to find out their passion, and where they wanted to position themselves within the professional world.

Interestingly enough, several respondents highlighted a jump from criminal justice to social work in their changed career goals.  This could be due in part to the fact that social work is a field of study that promotes social change and social development. It equips students with knowledge about public policy and regulations, counseling and interventions, case work and   certain specialized services (Bridgewater State University, 2018).  Criminal justice, on the other hand, is a field of study that helps students to understand crime, delinquency and criminal behavior (Bridgewater State University, 2018).  Many students find a passion for wanting to change the system and help those stuck in it.  A goal to help those in prisons is more attainable with a degree in social work, than with a degree in criminal justice.

One respondent explained that the course changed their professional goals.  The respondent was extremely blunt, stating that Behind the Walls "was a class that changed my professional goals from CJ [criminal justice] to SW [social work]".   The respondent did not go in depth about what part of the course inspired them to change their career

goals.  It can be inferred that it was the concept of being better equipped to help those in

the system with a social work degree played a part in the change.

Another respondent explained a little more in depth why they changed from

criminal justice to social work at the master's level.  The respondent stated that "it [the

course] empowered me to want to make a difference. Restorative Justice opened my eyes

and I am now doing my Graduate Degree in Social Work, to be able to further help

people in the system…".

Here it can be seen that restorative justice was the catalyst that helped them to realize

what it was they wanted to do.  This is reflective of just how important course content in

service learning can be and how much of an effect it can have on students.  Unfortunately

for this student restorative justice is still a fairly new practice and finds itself situated into

criminal justice in a minimal way. For this student, the principles of restorative justice hit

home and opened them up to a new way to look at justice.  However, for this student,

taking a social work approach to help those in the system was the right path to take.

**Using Experience in Current Occupation**

The current literature discusses how students in service learning courses are given

the opportunity to gain real world experience that could help them throughout a career in

the field desired (Overall, 2010). The responses received accurately reflect this and add

further consistency to this section of the literature.  Many respondents discussed how they

use their experience within their occupation and how that helps them be more productive

or impactful.   One respondent stated "I knew that my passion was to fight for

incarcerated individual's rights, respect and raise awareness to broader society about their

unique struggles. Seven years later, I am aggressively pursuing this passion".  For this

respondent, they knew that their passion in life was to advocate for inmates. Their service learning experience equipped them with real world experience in the form of hearing and understanding inmates struggles first hand. With this understanding and sense of empathy, this respondent is now able to better advocate for incarcerated individuals and their struggles. This is extremely important, as these incarcerated individuals need people in society who understand them and can adequately covey those to the larger society.

Another respondent stated that "this [course] was more applicable to my everyday job than most of the courses I was enrolled in". This respondent highlights that the course was applicable to the current job they are in, but did not reveal what job it is that they do. It is hard to pinpoint what part of the course is most applicable to the respondent's occupation. However, it is still relevant and reveals how respondents equated what they learned with their current occupation.

### Knowledge Building

The third prominent theme that emerged from the research was the concept of knowledge building and increased learning. Respondents were asked to respond to a Likert Scale question and then expand through open response to get a better understanding on the ways that their learning increased. Respondents discussed how their knowledge on the subjects and content covered emerged. However, this content knowledge was secondary to the interpersonal knowledge that respondents discussed through their open response answers. This interpersonal knowledge came in the form of empathy and an overall connection to others, amongst other concepts.

      This Likert Scale question (Table 4.5) asked respondents if they felt that their

learning increased more in their service learning course than it would in a traditional

classroom setting.  This question was asked based on the heavy body of literature that

explains the ways in which learning increases greatly through service learning

experiences.  The vast majority of respondents (n=15) strongly agreed that their learning

increased more.  The remaining respondents agreed (n=3) or were neutral (n=1).

Respondents were then asked to explain in detail how their learning increased more

through their service learning course.  Respondents highlighted concepts of real world

experience, personal transformation, active learning and change in perception.

Respondents also discussed emotions such as empathy and compassion that were evoked

through their experience.

**Table 4.5**
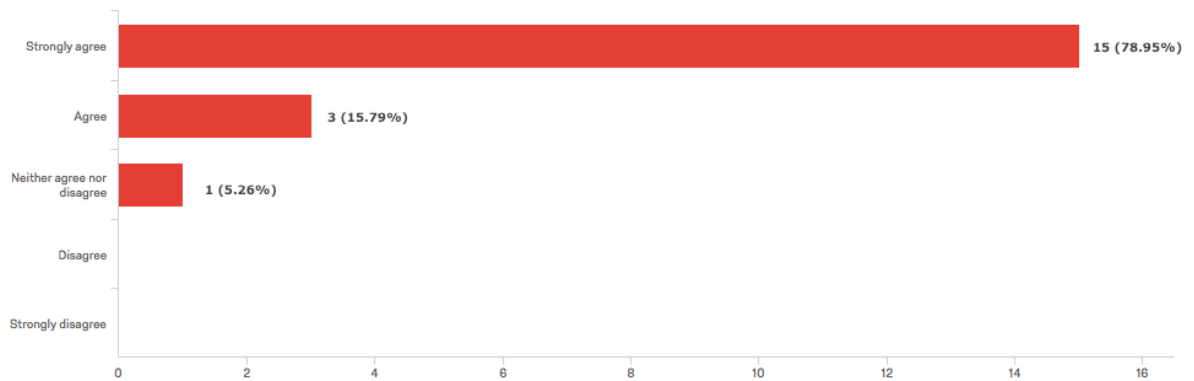


**Increased Subject Knowledge**

      When elaborating on how their learning increased and how knowledge was built,

respondents highlighted two very distinct categories of knowledge building.  First,

respondent's discussed the process of increasing their subject knowledge.  This is done

not only through course material and discussion of the course content but also through the

process of going into the prison for class.   These responses were extremely in line and

consistent with the current literature that discuses increased learning through theory and practice and also hands-on experience.

In regards to increased subject knowledge, some respondents discussed the concept of taking theory and putting it into practice to get a better understanding. One respondent stated that "Most of the theories we discussed regarding toxic masculinity were a lot easier to see when the inmate students spoke of their own experiences". On an individual level, it is so important because toxic masculinity is a concept that is so prevalent in today's society. Toxic masculinity is a concept that discusses the adherence to male gender roles that perpetuate the idea that men can't show emotion and must constantly be dominant. Outside students are getting a more in depth and knowledgeable look at toxic masculinity as inside students share their own experiences on the topic. Students in traditional classroom settings do not get this in depth look from someone who understands first-hand. On a larger level, understanding toxic masculinity is so beneficial especially in today's society. Toxic masculinity tends to be a key factor in many of the recent school shootings. Unfortunately, many people confuse toxic masculinity and mental illness which is reflected in our current policies. As people begin to better understand the concept of toxic masculinity, proper and effective policies can be put in place.

Another respondent alluded to the concept of putting theory into practice and stated that "the reading and assignments helped to engage us in the information we needed to complete our service requirements". This respondent is highlighting how the service component of the course was carried out better due to the course readings. In many instances, in traditional classroom settings, students do not read the coursework as

thoroughly as expected.  Students in traditional classroom courses are able to pick out the

most important concepts and focus on those to write papers and take tests to earn a good

grade.  In order to be prepared and effective in discussion, students need to read

thoroughly and understand the concepts they will be discussing.

     Another respondent discussed the concept of hands on experiences.  The

respondent stated that "the hands-on experience of going into a prison, taking a course

with incarcerated individuals and completing coursework, especially increased my

learning".  This respondent is highlighting the process of the course and the different

facets that helped to increase their subject knowledge.  Marvell et al (2015) discusses this

concept of first-hand experience and explains that it enables students to have a more rich

and relevant learning experience.  Students in a traditional classroom course would not

get the type of hands- on learning that service learning provides to students.  Week after

week students are not only discussing concepts with their inside classmates, but they are

being exposed to the interworking of a prison.  Another respondent highlighted this

hands-on experience situated in discussion with inside students.  The respondent stated

that "we [the students] were able to learn and experience right from the sources mouth of

someone who lived that life. There is nothing more valuable than those experience and

being able to just talk to the guys".

    These responses are in line with the idea that transformative learning experiences

occur when students actively use curricular concepts in everyday life to better understand

the world around them (Pugh, 2011).  For students, being able to see first-hand how these

theories can be applied to everyday life is a piece of knowledge that cannot be gained

through traditional classroom teachings.

**Increased Interpersonal Knowledge**

This concept of increased subject knowledge although prevalent in responses, was truly secondary to the process of increasing interpersonal knowledge for respondents. Many respondents discussed how they were able to better see the world around them and how their perspectives changed throughout the service learning experience. The responses were in line with the growing body of literature that discusses interpersonal growth. The literature currently discusses how transformative learning experiences, such as service learning, focus on transforming values, attitudes and perspectives for students (Jackson, 1986). Through the process of transforming these values, attitudes and perspectives, students were better able to view the world around them in a more relevant and rich way. Respondents highlighted throughout their responses how their perspectives were changed and transformed. Respondents were able to foster rich relationships with inside and outside students through class discussion and conversation.

One respondent discussed how "it [the course] increased my learning of the "inmates" experiences…". Oftentimes in traditional classroom settings, students do not interact much outside of the normal classroom discussion. This makes it difficult for any interpersonal relationships to be developed. In the respondent's service learning course, there was not only much class discussion but ample opportunities for interpersonal relationships to be developed through small group and one on one discussion. Much of the course is based on students offering real and raw emotional responses to not only the class content but also other students talking points. Through these forms of discussion, the respondent was able to increase their understanding of their inside classmates. This is extremely important for both inside and outside students. For inside students it is

important because they are not often given the opportunity to open up and create these interpersonal relationships. While in prison, you are expected to keep to yourself to a certain degree and only reveal what is necessary. This makes it hard for those incarcerated to form any sort of interpersonal relationships. When in the course, they are able to create these interpersonal relationships with other inside students and also outside students. It is refreshing as these inside students are able to create these relationships that are built on respect, compassion and understanding, something that is severely lacking on a day to day basis. For inside students, they are able to create interpersonal relationships with inside students, a chance they would not get outside of the course. It is an extremely meaningful experience to be able to listen and learn about these classmates in such a way. These interpersonal relationships, although not fostered once the class is finished, last a lifetime.

Another respondent highlighted how the course helped to foster a changed view and also interpersonal growth. The respondent stated that "it [the course] changed my view and perspective on how situations can evolve and how easily life can change". For many students it takes creating these interpersonal relationships to help realize that they aren't so different from one another. Through traditional classroom courses, students are exposed to information about incarcerated individual's through statistics, videos and PowerPoints. Because of this, when people think of those incarcerated, their mind goes directly to the crime committed and the statistics related. There is a lack of focus on the fact that these incarcerated individuals started off just the same as anyone else. Through service learning, students are exposed to information about incarcerated induvials through readings and discussions done with incarcerated individuals. This creates an

interpersonal relationship in which students are learning about the person incarcerated,

and what led them to prison, straight from the source.  This allows for a raw and real

experience, one that is not edited and compiled.  For students, this is extremely impactful

and holds more weight in terms of lasting impact of changed views and perspectives

about those incarcerated.

**Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to better understand the impact that service learning experiences have on criminal justice students at Bridgewater State University.  For the purpose of this study, the research questions focused on students' personal and professional outcomes post- service learning experience.  The results of the study indicate that students felt their service learning experience had a lasting impact on them during and after the course was completed.  Personally and professionally, students were impacted in a positive manner.  The results of the study greatly contribute to the current and growing body of literature that surrounds the pedagogy of service learning.  In particular the results of the study further the consistency of literature surrounding students transformed views, attitudes and perspectives (Jackson, 1986), more complex ways to view the world (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede, 1996; Hartmus, Cauthen & Levine, 2006; Penn, 2003; Pompa, 2002; Pugh et al, 2011; Vigorita, 2002) and reduced or eliminated stereotypes (Hirschinger- Blank & Markowitz, 2006; Pompa, 2002; Vigorita, 2002).  Beyond this, the study also adds to the literature that discusses the ways in which service learning aids students in critically examining the workforce (Gutierrez et al, 2012), gaining real world experience (Overall, 2010), engaging in hands on learning (Marvell et al., 2015) and having a rich emotional response to the experience (Coles, 1993; Felten, Gilchrist & Darby, 2006; Noyes, Darby & Leupold, 2015).

One of the most interesting findings to emerge from this study surrounded the concept of changed career goals.  Respondents discussed a change from criminal justice to social work in continued education.  For respondents, changing to social work from criminal justice gave them the tools to be able to better help the populations they found a

passion for helping through their criminal justice service learning experience.  Social

Work is focused on social change and social development and helping those stuck in

unfavorable environments.  Through criminal justice courses, students find a passion for

wanting to help people.  In the case of this service learning course, its most often those in

prison.  Through social work education, students can become equip with information and

tools necessary to help these marginalized populations to the best of their ability.

### Policy Implications

From the research, there are implications for policy concerning service learning

at Bridgewater State University that are evident.  These implications focus on service

learning and how it is housed, promoted and assessed throughout the Bridgewater State

University campus.

### University Office for Service Learning

The most prominent of these implications focuses on the need for a more

recognizable and stand-alone service learning office on campus.  Currently, service

learning is promoted by the Service Learning Faculty Associates and an advisory board.

These faculty associates also work in coordination with the Community Service Center to

promote service learning.  As it stands now, there is no specific office devoted to service

learning and service learning opportunities.  As the findings of the study indicate, service

learning experiences stick with students long after the completion of their service

learning course.  This highlights the importance of service learning in education and the

positive impacts that the experience can have on students. The creation of a university

office specifically centered around service learning is necessary to aid both faculty and

students and further the lasting positive impact that service learning creates.

For faculty, a service learning office could offer aid in a multitude of ways. Many faculty members are unaware of the benefits that service learning can offer and an office dedicated to service learning can bring these benefits to light. The most time consuming step for faculty is finding motivated and willing community partners. A service learning office could bridge this gap between faculty and community partners, making it easier to create and maintain a partnership for the purpose of offering service learning experiences. A service learning office could also aid in identifying motivated students who fit the parameters of the service learning course. This takes some pressure off of the faculty member, allowing them to more adequately devote time to the creation of the course.

For students, a service learning office could help to adequately explain what service learning is and what a service learning course entails. There is a current disconnection between students being extremely interested in a course that sounds cool and is located off campus, and truly understanding what service learning is. The office could highlight the benefits of engaging in service learning courses, using previous students' experiences. This allows interested students the opportunity to see what other students enjoyed and the impacts that their experience had on them as not only students, but as individuals. The office could also help students to understand the complexity of off campus community partners and the added time component that service learning courses can present. Through this, students can actively gauge their interest and the feasibility of fitting into a service learning course. Through this, it may spark a deeper and more prominent dialogue between students and create more knowledge on service learning, something that is currently lacking.

**Check on Reciprocity**

A service learning office at Bridgewater State University could also act as a third party to provide a check on reciprocity in service learning courses. When reciprocity is lacking, service learning can falter from its core goals and values, and become paternalistic in nature. What this means, is that instead of seeing themselves as equals, one party sees themselves as better or more important. This creates a power differential that needs to be addressed immediately, if the situation were to arise. However, it is hard for a faculty member, student or community partner to provide a check on this, as they are all actively engaging in the service learning experience. An office dedicated to service learning could provide a check on reciprocity to ensure that service learning courses are not faltering from their goals and are providing the richest experience for all involved.

## Limitations to this Study

Although the research reached its aim, there are some limitations that need to be noted as they provide a check on the conclusions drawn from the study. First, the findings of the study came from only 19 participants. Because of this, there is a clear lack of full and total generalizability to the larger population. Beyond this, simple random sampling was not utilized and instead sample of convenience was used. Due to this, there may be some respondent bias which can be attributed to motivated students who were pleased with their service learning experience.

As an online survey that was distributed by email, responses may have been bias toward individuals who regularly check email. Responses may be further bias towards those individuals who are comfortable taking online surveys. Those who do not regularly

check email and or those who do not feel comfortable taking online surveys, would not be motivated to partake in the study.

In addition, the study aimed to compare quantitative (Likert Scale) and qualitative (open response) data. The quantitative and qualitative data collected was only comparable to a limited degree. Utilizing face-to- face interviews rather than open response survey questions could have made the data comparable to a higher degree. It may even be possible that respondents did not answer all the survey items consistently. Some respondents may have taken questions at face value differently, and answered them accordingly. Face to face interviews could have been utilized in place of the open response survey questions. This would have allowed for explanation of the questions.

One limitation emerged from the use of Qualtrics. When users responded to the survey, their answers were not tracked longitudinally. All the answers were recorded for each question, without a defining marker of what respondent said what. This proved to be difficult, as there was no way to compare demographic questions with Likert Scale or open response questions.

## Suggestions for Future Research

In spite of these limitations, the current study represents an important step toward documenting how impactful service learning is for students during and post- service learning experience at Bridgewater State University. Overall, the results indicate that students' experiences had a lasting impact in a number of different ways both personally and professionally. Beyond this, the results indicate an interesting shift from criminal justice education to social work education post- service learning experience.

In the future, researchers may want to consider shifting the focus to the inside students that have taken Behind the Walls at OCCC. Looking at this population of students is extremely important as they make up half of the course and it is extremely in line with the current study. As of now, there is no body of literature on the impacts that Behind the Walls has had on inside students from OCCC. It is necessary to get a view of the whole class, and not just those that attend Bridgewater State University. There may be different emotions that are evoked or even different personal and professional impacts for these students. Due to rich emotional responses, researchers may want to conduct a study with a more rigorous qualitative component.

In addition, researchers may want to widen the focus of the current study to look at service learning across disciplines at Bridgewater State University. This study focused solely on service learning in the criminal justice department and was the first to do so. Across the university, there is a lack of research and literature being produced on the impact of service learning. Literature has been produced on international service trips at Bridgewater State University, however there is no concrete literature on the designated courses, or individual course assignments on service learning. It is important that as a university, students are all offered the same opportunities and experiences, no matter the area of study.

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**Appendix A**

Hello!

My name is Hannah Carpenter and I am a graduate student at Bridgewater State University.  I am working with Dr. Jo- Ann Della Giustina to complete my master's thesis.  For my master's thesis I am examining personal and professional outcomes of students who participated in service learning based courses in the discipline of criminal justice while enrolled at Bridgewater State University. Because you participated in a service learning based criminal justice course while enrolled at Bridgewater State University, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey.

The following survey is IRB approved and will require approximately 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk.  All responses to the survey questions will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes. If you choose to participate in this project, please click on the link below to continue to the survey.  Please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed survey promptly. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time throughout.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.  The data collected will help provide useful information regarding the personal and professional outcomes and influences of service learning courses in the discipline of criminal justice. Completion and return of the survey will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions about this study, please feel free to call Dr. Jo-Ann Della Giustina at (508-531-2582) or Hannah Carpenter at (774-274-2237)

Sincerely,

Hannah Carpenter

**Appendix B**

BRIDGEWATER
STATE UNIVERSITY

October 13, 2017

Dr. Jo-Ann Della Giustina
Criminal Justice
Maxwell Library, Room 312A

Re:    IRB Application – Case #2018027

Dear Jo-Ann:

Your proposal, *Service learning: A look into the real world for criminal justice students,* is approved *(exempt)* by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Exempt protocols do not require additional review unless there are substantial changes to the project.

We wish you every success in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Spievak
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Cc:  Hannah Carpenter

**Appendix C**

**What is your gender?**

○ Male

○ Female

**What is your current age?**

**What is your race? ( Click all the apply)**

○ White

○ Black or African American

○ American Indian or Alaska Native

○ Asian

○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

○ Cape Verdean

○ Other

**What is your religion?**

○ Catholic

○ Buddhist

○ Mormon

○ Protestant

○ Jewish

○ Quaker

○ Muslim

○ None

○ Other

**What year did you graduate with your bachelors degree from Bridgewater State University?**

**What was your GPA at the time of graduation?**

[                                                                    ]

**Did you attend graduate school after graduation?**

○ Yes

○ No

**Are you currently employed in the criminal justice system?**

○ Yes

○ No

**If you answered 'Yes' to question 8, what is your current occupation?**

[                                                                    ]

**If you answered 'No' to question 8, what is your current occupation?**

[                                                                    ]

**What semester/ year did you participate in a service learning course at Bridgewater State University? (Example: Fall 2017)**

[                                                                    ]

**Which course was your service learning course?**

○ Behind the Walls

○ Restorative Justice

**If your service learning course was Restorative Justice, what service did you participate in?**

○ Alternatives to Violence Project ( AVP)

○ Lifers Group

○ Other

**Do you feel that your time in a service learning course had a positive impact on you as a person?**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

**Please explain your answer to question 14, why do you feel that your time in a service learning course had a positive/ negative impact on you as a person?**

**Did your experiences in a service learning course has a lasting impact on you?**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

**Please explain your answer to question 16, what experiences left a lasting impact on you, if any?**

**Do you reflect on your experiences in a service learning course when you do your job?**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

**Please explain your answer to question 18, what do you reflect on, if anything? and when do you reflect?**

**Do you reflect on your expiernces in a service learning course in your personal life?**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

**What was the most meaningful part of your service learning course to you? ( Select all that apply)**

☐ The course content/ material

☐ The in- class disussion

☐ The reflection

☐ The overall expereince

☐ Other

[            ]

**Please explain your answer to question 22, what about these things made the course meaningful to you?**

[                                                            ]

**Did you feel more connected to your community while partaking in a service learning course?**

○ Yes

○ No

**If you answered 'Yes' to question 24, do you still feel this way presently? (please explain)**

○ Yes

[            ]

○ No

[            ]

**Please explain what parts of the service learning course made you feel more connected to your community**

[                                                            ]

**Do you feel that your learning increased more in a service learning course than it did in a traditional classroom course?**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

**Please explain your answer to question 27, what increased your learning, if anything?**