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HIGHLIGHTS FROM

SERVICE-LEARNING IN CALIFORNIA'S TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A WHITE PAPER

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this white paper is to provide a set of recommendations for advancing service-learning in California's Teacher Education programs. The recommendations are based on the findings from a three-year study conducted by UC Berkeley's Service-Learning Research & Development Center (SLRDC). This paper reports on the viability of various approaches for advancing K-12 service-learning in teacher education, identifies institutional barriers that hinder the advancement of service-learning in teacher education, and describes successful approaches that institutions have used to advance service-learning in teacher education. The recommendations provided in this paper are intended to inform the California Department of Education and other state departments of education about best practices for advancing the incorporation of service-learning in teacher education.

Background
The development of this white paper is the last component of three-phase project that began in January 1997. Phase I (January 1997 - December 1997) of the project sought to assess the status of service-learning in California's Teacher Education programs. To do this, SLRDC developed a survey that measured the degree to which

teacher education faculty members and administrators incorporated service-learning activities in their programs (see Appendix). The findings from the first phase of the project were highlighted in *Service-Learning in Teacher Education: A Status Report,* which was presented to the California Service-Learning in Teacher Education Advisory Board in January 1998.

The second phase of the project (January 1998 - June 1999), involved the awarding of 17 minigrants to teacher education programs to explore various approaches for incorporating service-learning into teacher education programs. The staff at SLRDC conducted phone interviews and site visits of the minigrant recipients as a means to gather in-depth data about the challenges, barriers, and successes of each program's efforts. These site visits, along with data collected from the statewide survey administered during phase one, individual final progress reports submitted by the minigrant recipients, and an ongoing literature review on teacher education conducted by SLRDC, form the basis for this white paper (phase III).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings from the first two phases of the project (survey and minigrants) provided valuable insights on service-learning in teacher education. These findings produced emerging themes that lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the critical elements for incorporating service-learning in teacher education.

The Status of Service-Learning in Teacher Education

In order to assess the status of service-learning in California's teacher education programs, SLRDC developed a four-part survey (pedagogy, methods, philosophy, and service-learning) of 32 items, which was designed to measure the degree to which teacher education faculty members and administrators incorporated service-learning activities in their programs (See Appendix A). SLRDC compiled a list of 193 faculty members and deans at the 74 institutions of higher education in the state that grant teaching credentials and mailed the survey to the individuals on that list.

Preliminary findings of returned surveys (n=38) were tabulated and presented in a written report that was submitted to the California Service-Learning in Teacher

Education Advisory Committee in early summer 1997. To increase the representativeness of the sample, the same survey was again sent to the same institutions in September 1997. The data from an additional set of completed surveys were analyzed and aggregated with the previous data (N=71). The results of this enhanced analysis were summarized in a written report that was presented at a meeting of the California Service-Learning in Teacher Education Advisory Committee in January 1998. This Phase II report highlighted three primary findings.

First, the findings from the survey revealed that service-learning is not a widely recognized concept among teacher educators. The survey found that faculty from the University of California campuses (the state's research institutions) are less aware of service-learning than their colleagues in the California State University system (teaching institutions) or private institutions of higher education.

When asked about the pedagogy that is emphasized in teacher education programs, service-learning received the lowest rating, with 65% of the respondents indicating that their teacher education program emphasizes service-learning. This low rating resulted despite the fact that almost all of the respondents indicated that other pedagogies that are complementary to service-learning — active learning (97.2%), experiential education (94.4%), constructivist teaching (98.5%), and project-based learning (94.3%) — are emphasized in their program. Similarly, when asked about the methods in which students in the teacher education programs are engaged, service-learning also ranked the lowest. Whereas almost everyone indicated that small group discussion (100%), reflection (98.6%), analysis of field work (98.6%), integration of field work and course work (98.6%), and journal writing (97.2%) are all methods in which student in their programs are engaged, only 62.5% of the respondents indicated that service-learning was a method. Even though the methods used are very complementary to service-learning, service-learning itself was not used very often as a method. These results seems to suggest that teacher educators do not incorporate service-learning as much, not because they are adverse to service-learning, but rather because they are unsure or do not know what service-learning is.

This suggestion is supported by the fact that the highest volume of missing data (survey questions which the respondents left blank) was among the survey questions related directly to service-learning. Every survey question in section four of the survey, which focused exclusively on service-learning, had one or more respondents who did not respond to the questions. Moreover, the other three sections of the survey (pedagogy, methods, & philosophy) had significant missing data only for those questions that referred directly to service-learning. Most data for the other questions in these sections was relatively complete. This findings suggests that there needs to be greater awareness among teacher educators about what service-learning is, and how service-learning is closely related to what they are already doing philosophically, pedagogically, and methodologically.

Second, the survey findings suggest that existing service-learning activities in teacher education appear to occur as a result of efforts by individual faculty members, rather than through programmatic or institutional initiatives. When service-learning does exist in teacher education, it appears to be the work of one or two faculty members in the teacher education program. The existing data provides no evidence that entire teacher education programs or their institutions ascribe to service-learning specifically for K-12 teacher preparation. In some cases, respondents from the same institution did not agree to what the extent service-learning was part of their teacher education program (i.e., while one respondent would say it was a strong part, another would say it was non-existent). Such responses suggest that it is not likely that a formal programmatic structure for teacher education at the institutions surveyed. This findings suggests that there needs to be greater emphasis on working with teacher education program coordinators in order that service-learning is well understood by all those involved in the program, and that it becomes clear how service-learning fits into the program's overarching philosophy and structure.

Third, the findings suggest that faculty in teacher education programs utilize a variety of approaches to promote service-learning activities in their programs. While comments from respondents indicate that there is no one way that service-learning operates in teacher education programs, there do appear to be four recurring approaches to incorporating service-learning in teacher education programs:

- the topic of service-learning is introduced and discussed as a teaching strategy (among other strategies) in preservice courses on pedagogy;

- teacher educators utilize service-learning as a teaching strategy with their students;

- a course on the topic of service-learning or experiential education is offered by the teacher education program; and

- student teachers are placed with K-12 teachers who utilize service-learning as a teaching strategy.

These four approaches formed the criteria around which the Phase II component of the project was designed. More specifically, minigrant awards were provided to sites that could explore the implement of service-learning in teacher education using one of these four approaches.

Implementation Study of Service-Learning in Teacher Education

As part of the second phase of the project, SLRDC established a minigrant program inviting applications from teacher educators who were interested in developing a particular strategy for introducing and/or advancing service-learning in teacher education. SLRDC developed a call for proposals, formed a proposal review committee, and developed a proposal review process. Two rounds of minigrant competitions were held. Round I minigrants (eight awards of up to $4,000) were awarded in January 1998 and Round II minigrants (six new awards and three continuing awards of up to $4,000) were awarded in September 1998. Each minigrant recipient explored a particular approach for advancing service-learning in teacher education. For each round of awards, SLRDC developed individualized institutional

grant provisions and sent out awards packets that highlighted various expectations and schedules.

Data Collection

For the first round of awards, six of the grantees were interviewed by phone by a member of the SLRDC staff assigned to this project. To conduct these interviews, SLRDC developed an interview protocol of open-ended questions designed to gain insights on faculty members' use of service-learning. These phone interviews were transcribed and the data from these interviews were analyzed by the SLRDC staff. In addition, SLRDC conducted a preliminary site visit for one grantee and full site visits for all but two of the Round I awardees. The goal of the site visits was to gain a better understanding of the challenges of and successful strategies for advancing service-learning in individual teacher education contexts. All site visits included interviews with a variety of individuals associated with the teacher education program including coordinators, faculty members, students, community representatives, and department chairs and deans, allowing for a variety of program perspectives to be represented. The findings from the phone interviews and site visits were compared with the findings from written reports on other materials submitted by the minigrant recipients.

For the second round of awards, a similar application and review process was employed. However, the call for proposal and selection process for Round II emphasized strategies in which the focus was teacher education's advancement of "K-12 service-learning" programs (as opposed to service-learning in general). The decision to emphasize service-learning in K-12 was based on preliminary data from Round I minigrant recipients which suggested that some teacher education programs were engaging students in service-learning activities, but were not providing overt attention to preparing them to implement service-learning in K-12 education. Since the FASL grant is focused on advancing K-12 service-learning, SLRDC saw the underscoring of the K-12 piece in the Round II minigrant process as an important element for gaining a true understanding of the issues most germane to the FASL goals.

A full-day site visit was conducted by staff members at SLRDC at all but one of the minigrant recipient sites. The purpose of these site visits was to gather information the following issues:
- background information about the genesis and evolution of the program;

- the site's philosophy of and definition for service-learning;
- the program's successes, challenges, and viability;
- the structure and function of the program's partnerships and collaborative units; and
- sustainability and institutionalization prospects of the program

Data Analysis

For both rounds of minigrant awards, the phone and site visit interviews were taped and transcribed. The data from the interviews were analyzed by the staff of SLRDC. The analysis involved a qualitative, inductive approach whereby recurring themes among the data were noted and categories of findings were developed. The data were analyzed with an eye toward address the following questions:

- What are the essential ingredients for the successful incorporation of service-learning in teacher education programs?
- What are the common barriers that hinder the inclusion of service-learning in teacher education?
- What are the critical issues that need to be addressed to further advance the inclusion of service-learning in teacher education?

The answers to these questions, as they emerged from the data, formed the basis for the set of recommendations included at the end of this report.

Findings

Based on an analysis of the interview data (phone and site visits), minigrant recipients' funding proposals and final progress reports, and institutional materials submitted by the various minigrant recipients, twelve key findings emerged. Each of these findings is detailed below.

1) There is no one best approach for advancing service-learning in teacher education. Each teacher education program is highly dependent on the culture, context, and history that exist on their campus.

2) A strong campus-wide initiative for service-learning on the campus enhances the likelihood that service-learning will be incorporated and valued in the teacher education programs.

3) Administrative understanding and support for service-learning is key. For K-12 service-learning to be advanced in teacher education programs, administrators of teacher education programs must understand what service-learning is, understand how service-learning is employed in K-12 education, and wholeheartedly support service-learning.

4) The involvement of regular faculty members is essential. It is more difficult to advance K-12 service-learning in teacher education programs when there is not a regular faculty member who participates and who has a central role in promoting its advancement.

5) Focusing the effort on one faculty member may not sustain the initiative. The campuses that have effectively advanced service-learning appear to have only one resident champion who leads the effort. This situation has serious implications for sustaining the inclusion of service-learning in teacher education.

6) Student voice is likely to increase student satisfaction. Teacher education programs that personalize service-learning for students — e.g., students' interests are taken into account when setting up service-learning activities — tend to have students who are more satisfied with the service-learning experiences and the overall teacher education program.

7) Utilizing community partners can increase the effectiveness of the effort. The teacher education programs that engaged students in more interesting and challenging service-learning experiences were those programs that worked with one or more individuals who were connected directly with the community or the K-12 schools (e.g., a volunteer coordinator, a school district officer, etc.)

8) Moving from the margin to the mainstream is essential for legitimization and institutionalization. To be accepted and institutionalized, the service-learning effort must be part of the core teacher education program as opposed to it having an adjunct or peripheral role.

9) It is important to discuss service-learning as a pedagogy. Having students in the teacher education program only "do" service-learning appears to be a weaker approach than when service-learning is discussed overtly as a teaching strategy or when teacher education students have an opportunity to practice teaching using service-learning as a strategy.

10) It is not enough to focus on service-learning in higher education. Because the essential elements of service-learning in K-12 education differ from the elements germane to conducting quality service-learning in higher education, it is essential that the pedagogical issues surrounding the engagement of K-12 students in service-learning activities be emphasized and discussed.

11) Testimonies can be a powerful way to help faculty understand and accept service-learning. In selling service-learning to teacher education (and other) faculty, talking about service-learning appears to be less effective than having students come in to discuss their service-learning experiences or showing a video of service-learning in action.

12) The likelihood for a teacher education program to embrace service-learning rises when local K-12 schools have school-wide or district-wide service-learning initiatives in place. Teacher education sites that worked in K-12 schools that both knew about service-learning and had official policies for service-learning were influenced by the work at the K-12 level. A number of individuals in teacher education programs commented that the service-learning activity at the K-12 level made them take service-learning more seriously.

OTHER FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed some important essential elements, barriers, and issues for incorporating service-learning in teacher education.

Essential Elements

While a number of items and activities were identified by sites to be crucial to the successful incorporation of service-learning in their teacher education programs, several items appear to be essential elements that are common across sites. These common, essential elements are highlighted below.

1) The teacher education faculty and students both must support service-learning. Service-learning was more firmly institutionalized in teacher education programs when there was broad faculty support for service-learning and when students (preservice teacher candidates) supported and expressed interest in service-learning. The value of service-learning as part of the teacher education appeared to be tenuous when the students did not view service-learning to be an important or effective teaching strategy.

2) The program's field work and courses must both provide exposure to service-learning. A combination of a field work experience in which students are working in a K-12 classroom that uses service-learning and coursework in which service-learning is discussed as a pedagogy appears to be more effective in enhancing students' awareness and appreciation of service-learning than having only one of the components.

3) A campus champion for service-learning is essential for ensuring the effort to incorporate service-learning in teacher education stays on track. Service-learning is more likely to take hold in a teacher education program when there is a regular faculty member who takes it upon himself/herself to advance the service-learning/teacher education agenda. To be most effective, this champion must be a highly respected faculty member, must have the support of the administrative, and must be able to cultivate interest for service-learning among other regular faculty members.

4) Rewards to and recognition of faculty who advance service-learning in the teacher education program are powerful incentives. These rewards and recognition, which can be internally or externally driven, validate the work of the faculty members. They also send the message to the larger campus that the work of these faculty members is part of their scholarly activities in remaining abreast of current K-12 education issues.

5) The involvement and support of the school district is key for ensuring that service-learning is viewed by the teacher education program as an important part of the preservice teachers' education. K-12 school districts can influence their local teacher

education programs by requesting that newly certificated teachers have an understanding of service-learning.

6) The reciprocal nature of service-learning must be cultivated in order that student teachers learn from their K-12 students and K-12 students learn from their student teachers. This allows strong bonds to be formed between the student teachers and students. A number of sites reported that the formation of these bonds taps into the deep emotional levels of the student teachers. Some believe that this emotional tie is what hooks individuals into teaching and into service-learning.

7) It is not enough to have the student teacher and the master teacher support service-learning. The K-12 students must also be willing to buy into the notion of service-learning. If a student teacher's first attempt to use service-learning is with a classroom of K-12 students who are opposed to doing service in the community, the student teacher is more likely to have an unfavorable experience with service-learning and appears to be less likely to use service-learning after completing the teacher education program.

8) When student teachers are able to reflect on their service-learning experiences with practicing teachers who are doing service-learning, student teachers are more likely to feel comfortable with service-learning and in turn, more likely to use it when they assume full-time teaching duties. The formal and informal exchanges that a master teacher has with his/her student teacher are influential in shaping the student teacher's attitudes about various aspects of teaching and schooling.

9) Service-learning in teacher education must be tied to broader campus-wide efforts. Service-learning in teacher education programs was strongest at institutions that had campus-wide service-learning initiatives. As a higher education effort, service-learning in teacher education must incorporate the best practices for institutionalizing service-learning in higher education, not just the ideals for incorporating service-learning in K-12 schools. These best practices encompass many of the issues mentioned above: support and involvement of regular faculty; incentives and rewards for faculty participation; campus and departmental administrative support; campus-wide understanding of service-learning; campus-wide standards for high quality service-learning activities; among others.

<u>Other Issues</u>

In addition to these specific programmatic issues, several general issues emerged.

1) There are many definitions of service-learning, which tends to lead to confusion both among the teacher education faculty and the K-12 educators. In describing how service-learning was being incorporated into their teacher education program, individual teacher educators participating in this study had different definitions for service-learning. In some cases, this was true even among teacher educators within the same teacher education program. Some teacher educators described service-learning in ways that resembled internships or student teaching; in other words, the service the preservice teachers provided as student teachers was considered service-learning. Other teacher educators described service-learning purely in terms of "projects" (community-based assignments that K-12 students would complete) without any mention of pedagogy or instructional practice. Only a few teacher educators viewed service-learning as a teaching strategy for teaching the academic curriculum in K-12 schools. Although the varying definitions for service-learning make it difficult to develop a streamlined approach for incorporating service-learning in teacher education, it does allow for teacher education programs to entertain or initiate a discussion on service-learning based on an interpretation with which they are most comfortable. However, guidance must be provided to teacher education programs to ensure that the service-learning initiatives that they advance are truly "service-learning".

2) Many teacher educators see credential programs as being crammed with no room to "add something new". At almost every site visited, teacher educators were concerned about new educational reforms and strategies that were being touted as important for teacher education. Many saw service-learning as an add-on to their already overloaded curriculum. Therefore, service-learning needs to be presented as a means for teacher education faculty to facilitate and achieve their intended goals and the goals of the state.

3) In general, service-learning in teacher education tends to be viewed through a higher education perspective rather than from a K-12 service-learning perspective. In many cases where service-learning is part of the teacher education program, the focus tends to be on the credential candidates' (college students') experiences of service-learning and not on the experience of K-12 students who engage in service-learning. There is concern

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among some teacher educators that the emphasis on higher education service-learning will hinder a preservice candidate's ability to translate the practice of service-learning to K-12 students.

4) The incorporation of service-learning in teacher education is often made difficult by the differences in cultures, schedules, and philosophies that exist between K-12 school and the college campus. Many of individuals in higher education who participate in this study recounted how it was difficult to coordinate service-learning activities with K-12 schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the approach for incorporating service-learning in teacher education, there are three overarching recommendations that need to be considered.

1) Faculty in teacher education programs should be encouraged to use service-learning as part of their research scholarship. Faculty should be encouraged to tie their intellectual interests to issues related to service-learning through research and publication. This will ensure that service-learning becomes part of the teacher education faculty members' regular work and will not be viewed as an extra activity that a faculty member takes on. To accomplish this, the broader campus needs to see service-learning as a legitimate intellectual pursuit. At the very least, the campus needs to view service-learning as being important to the work of teacher educators. To this end, K-12 school districts and the state Department of Education can play a role in convincing colleges and universities that service-learning is important for K-12 schools and that their teacher education programs will be judged on their ability to produce teachers who know, understand, and have experience with service-learning.

2) The Commission on Teaching Credentialing needs to recognize service-learning as a component of teacher education. This will raise the status of service-learning in teacher education. Knowledge and understanding of service-learning (and other experiential education approaches) should be one of the standards to which all teacher education programs must ascribe.

3) Service-learning should be used to achieve other more well-established aspects of the credential program. In particular, ways in which service-learning can be used as a means to an end should be considered. For example, in studying mainstreaming, preservice teachers could engage in a service-learning project on special education. Along with discussing issues related to special education and mainstreaming, the preservice teachers would also discuss the pedagogy of service-learning and how they could use a similar teaching approach with their K-12 students (regular or special education students).