

Civics and Service: A Model for Partnerships with Latino Communities

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This paper describes a model for designing intentional, cross-cultural service-learning partnerships with K-8th grade elementary school students and their surrounding Latino communities. It builds from a local to a global context, working with immigrant populations in Idaho and extending to sister-school partnerships in Jalisco, Mexico. Student voices illustrate the model's ability increase global awareness and intercultural understanding when intentionally applied to a given culture.

The cross-cultural competence needed to succeed both educationally and professionally in the world's increasingly diverse societies requires a combination of foreign language skills, international knowledge, and experience. Meeting these challenges requires an educational system that, from kindergarten through the postsecondary level, prepares future citizens and employees to act and lead in a global context. In order to achieve this goal we need to strengthen the curriculum of the K-12 educational system as well as that of our colleges, universities, and professional schools (Committee for Economic Development 25).

This paper presents a model for integrating service-learning into the K-8th grade curriculum so that students become locally aware of diverse cultures in their neighboring vicinities, as well as globally aware of the origins of their non-native neighbors and reasons for their immigration to the United States. The model was designed with intentionality to increase students' awareness, beginning locally and expanding internationally.

From Theory to Praxis

Innovative teaching pedagogies being used to prepare students to live and work in an increasing global environment include constructivism and critical pedagogy.

Constructivism is a pedagogy founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in (Fosnot 29-30). Critical pedagogy is a praxis of working with students to achieve critical consciousness by questioning and challenging domination and the beliefs and practices that support it (Freire 53-58; Wink 17). Service-learning, which incorporates elements of both constructivism and critical pedagogy, is increasingly gaining distinction as an effective means to foster civic and social responsibility. An area less well researched is the extent to which service-learning may enable and further greater global awareness for our future citizens (Baldwin, Diaz-Greenberg, and Keating 77).

Richard Slimbach, Dean of the Global Studies Program at Azusa Pacific University, has identified several key globally focused objectives for such a service learning program:

1. Enable students to learn from a different segment of society than that which he or she would normally interact with;
2. Break down racial and cultural barriers through the process of students' reaching out and building bridges between different demographic groups;
3. Further the acquisition of a foreign language, when working in or with another culture. (10)

In a cross-cultural setting, many of these linguistic and cross-cultural practices essential to global awareness transpire naturally as students develop relationships in a community different from their own. The desire for deeper and more effective communication with community members naturally provokes students to ask linguistic and cultural questions, seek answers, and apply newly acquired knowledge in a real world context. For example, in interacting with Latinos in Idaho who have emigrated from Mexico, Anglo students begin to inquire about and gain understanding of the deeper issues driving immigration to the United States. This type of education goes beyond the traditional acquisition of a predetermined body of knowledge or set of skills (Freire 53) by inviting a critical analysis of societal and educational issues through dialogue with the community, reflective thought, and construction of new ideas to facilitate social transformation.

Service-learning partnerships are often described as taking students across different kinds of borders (Slimbach 10). For example, a student serving a homeless population crosses a socio-economic as well as a cultural border. The model I describe here was

intentionally designed to cross the cultural and linguistic borders which have long divided Latino and Anglo communities in the United States.

Partnering St. Joseph's Elementary School with the Latino Community

St. Joseph's Parish School is a K-8th grade inner city Catholic school in downtown Boise, Idaho. Surrounded by several low-income K-6th grade schools which receive federal funding, St. Joseph's school has approximately 300 students currently enrolled: 284 Caucasian; 16 Latino; 7 Asian; and 2 African-American. St. Joseph's School is the parish school of St. John's Cathedral, which hosts both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking congregations. The Spanish-speaking Mass is completely separate from the English-speaking Mass, however, and there has traditionally been very little interaction or understanding between these two communities. Over the years, however, both communities have expressed interest in gaining proficiency in the other's language and deepening their understanding of the other's culture. Thus, the model for this project grew out of expressed wishes voiced by both the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking communities.

The Latino community of St. John's parish consists of approximately 180 families, 90% of whom are of Mexican descent, and a majority of whom are first or second generation immigrants from the states of Jalisco, Michoacan, and Oaxaca, Mexico. This community extends to the Nampa and Wilder school districts, which are within a 45 mile radius of Boise and include approximately 10,000 K-12 Latino students, nearly 20% of the total public school enrollment. The parents of these students are generally employed in low wage earning jobs, such as farming, construction, or other types of manual labor.

The academic achievement gap between Latino students and their peers has been well documented nation-wide. Among the leading factors contributing to this gap are language barriers, a lack of adequate resources, cultural differences, and the low economic status of many Latino families (Hispanic Profile 50). In Boise and its extended districts, the literacy and math scores for Latino students are similarly significantly lower than those of the same grades at St. Joseph's school.

This service-learning initiative was designed to focus on literacy, with the hope of positively affecting these differentials as well as addressing the underlying linguistic and cultural factors contributing this academic gap. Increased reading and writing

proficiency in English, as well as Spanish, has positive effects on self-esteem and confidence, necessary for academic success. The additional validation of students' home cultures and languages is vital to effective school-community partnerships (Nieto 367).

Learn and Serve Grant: Moving from Community Service to Service-Learning

St. Joseph's School has long held a strong tradition of service, but wished to move beyond community service to a comprehensive service-learning program. As a Bilingual Education Professor at Boise State University and a parent of two children at St. Joseph's School, I applied for and was awarded a federal Learn and Serve grant in 2005 that provided funding for a service-learning coordinator to train St. Joseph's teachers, parents, and students in the pedagogy and methodology of service-learning.

Three components were critical in the design and actualization of the model: 1) Involvement of parents; 2) development of a youth advisory council; and 3) frequent structured opportunities for reflection.

The Learn and Serve model was designed to involve children at every grade level in linguistic and cultural exchanges in an effort to break down misperceptions between the two communities and as a beginning of a

new conscientiousness (Freire 55), which, it was hoped, would lead to greater global understanding for both communities. The model was also based on the collaborative identification of needs and design of projects, giving authentic voice to all stakeholders. Three components were critical in the design and actualization of the model: 1) involvement of parents; 2) development of a youth advisory council; and 3) frequent structured opportunities for reflection.

Parent Involvement

The newly designated service-learning coordinator position was shared by myself and several other active parents. Our work began in August 2005 with a comprehensive service-learning training for teachers, parents and the principal that launched teachers' development of grade-level projects that would both connect with the Latino community and meet academic state standards. The training also emphasized the importance of reflection as a critical component to successful learning within the service.

The importance of including parent voice as stakeholders in the process was evident from the beginning. The inclusion of their voices generated contagious energy which

made a difference locally and globally and culminated in a bilingual Mass as well as a *baile folklórico* (Mexican dance) fiesta. The parent “buy in” also contributed significantly to the level of reflection which took place beyond school. Parents were strongly encouraged to reflect with their children on the meaning of each service project at home, which enabled a deeper level of oral discussion and written reflections at school.

Youth Advisory Council

A component of school-wide model included the development of a youth advisory council, designed to enrich the overall model by including student voices, developing youth leadership, and incorporating student assessment of projects. An 8th grade teacher agreed to facilitate this council, which was formed from a self-selected group of eighth graders. The 8th graders in turn served as models for the seventh graders, who were being prepared to lead the following year’s incoming class.

During the first half of the school year, the 8th grade teacher led the group through orientation and training in service-learning. Students researched and discussed existing community needs and resources, fulfilling language arts curriculum requirements of developing research, reading, writing, critical analysis, and thinking skills. Once the students completed their research, they discussed various means of addressing identified needs with their community partners, prioritized the needs, and worked with individual classes to further design grade-appropriate projects. For example, the advisory council consciously developed listening and speaking skills while working with the Columbian Priest who serves the St. Joseph Latino Parish, a Sister who teaches Spanish at the school, and resident Latino seminarians, to collaboratively determine needs of the Latino community. Out of this collaboration came ideas such as developing a bilingual Mass for integration of Anglo and Latino communities. Through these experiences, students gained insights into the value of giving authentic voice to all community members.

The advisory council additionally worked with each grade in implementing and evaluating their class projects. Council members were taught assessment techniques for ensuring that evaluation incorporates perspectives from students, teachers, and community members and used a rubric to assess the value of each class project to student learning and to the community. This evaluative process furthered the youth advisors’ analysis and synthesis skills, which are critical components of their 8th grade curriculum.

The youth council facilitated a culminating open house for presentation of class projects to the entire student body, parents, and community members. In presenting, council members gained greater public speaking skills, another critical component of their 8th grade curriculum. They also gained analysis and synthesis skills through evaluating community feedback to determine which projects should be continued or modified. The inclusion of a youth advisory council enhanced the entire model by encouraging much greater student involvement, as this cohort assumed a heightened leadership role in their school community as well as in the broader Latino community.

Reflection

Reflection, a key component of this model, took place at many different levels. In the initial training institute for teachers and parents, Catherine Kaye, author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, highlighted the importance of incorporating a reflection cycle (Cress, Collier, and Reitenauer 85). The *pre-service reflection* plays a critical role in identifying, planning, and preparing meaningful service experiences involving students, teachers, parents, and community members. The *reflection during* service includes consideration of how the service projects connect with the academic curriculum at each grade level and is used to deepen understanding of the service while in progress. The *post-service reflection* is designed to deepen analysis of current community issues and move students toward new applications of their knowledge. Teachers commented on the deeper and more critical level of reflection they observed thanks to the inclusion of the Toole and Toole reflection cycle.

Description of individual projects

Table 1 displays the unique grade-level projects that together formed St. Josephs' integrated, school wide approach to service learning and community outreach. In this paper, I focus on the individual projects of three of the eight grades.

Table 1: Service-Learning Class Projects

Grade	SL Project	Community Need	Curricular Connection
K	Tortilla-making fund-raiser for ELL Tutor	ELL tutor for public school with Latino Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food pyramid Connection of food groups to Latino culture Math fractions with food
1	Tortilla-making fund-raiser for ELL tutor	ELL tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of staple food groups Graphs Geography of Mexico
2	Piñata-making fund-raiser for ELL tutor	ELL tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art: constructing piñatas Language Arts: learning Spanish vocabulary History: learning about piñatas across the world Ethics: helping those less fortunate
3	Rosaries/bilingual Mass	Increased understanding between Spanish and English-speaking children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art: creating necklaces Ethics: gift giving Language Arts: designing bilingual Mass
4	Oral histories of Latino immigrants; Art project	Need for elementary level Mexican historical time-line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art: constructing Latino history time-line; painted mural History: Hispanic immigration to Idaho
5	History supplement	Planter boxes for families; Greater understanding of Hispanic culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art: building boxes Math: measuring Science: Planting life Language Arts: designing bilingual Mass
6	Library and Pen pals	Organize after school library for Latino-migrant program Pen Pals with a 6th grade Latino ESL class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language arts: improving English and Spanish literacy skills Technology: Improving Internet skills
7	Researching Latino culture and creating a Latino cultural resource center in library	Lack on knowledge of Latino culture; Education for Anglo students of Latino history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral: presentation skills Language Arts: researching and writing History: research Latino history and document
8	Documentation of projects for community	Evaluation of K-7th grade projects and demonstration for community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral: presentation skills Language Arts: creation of posters demonstrating class projects

The first and second graders participated in the making of tortillas and piñatas. A Mexican parent assisted in teaching both grades about the significance of the tortilla and piñata to Latino culture through books and personal stories and taught the teachers and students the entire process of making both tortillas and piñatas. Together they then sold their tortillas and piñatas in a fundraising fiesta, hosted by a neighboring school. The fundraiser was being held to assist in the hiring of an English tutor for

Five main themes emerged from the research: 1) Confidence to contribute to community; 2) Increased knowledge of language and culture; 3) Change in preconceived perceptions/attitude; 4) Respect and appreciation of others; and 5) Increased incentive for learning about other cultural/linguistic community.

the school's Latino students. After the fundraiser, both classes wrote pre- and post-activity reflections about their tortilla and piñata making experiences. As a class, they discussed how the proceeds from their sales contributed to supporting second language learners' acquisition of English.

The fifth grade project was designed around the religious festival celebrating St. Joseph's Day with the Latino Parish of St. John's Cathedral. In honor of St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters, Anglo and Latino students participated in building planter boxes. Over twenty parents supported their children in various parts of the building and planting of boxes, a subsequent bilingual Mass, and a post-celebration party.

The fifth grade students wrote extensive reflections about how their projects made a difference in the community and what they would change for future projects to have an even greater community impact. They completed pre- and post-project written reflections in response to such questions: Pre: *Do I have any reservations about this project? What do I know about the Latino culture? What do I hope to gain and give from this experience?* Post: *What deeper understanding do I have about the Latino community based on this project? What did I give/gain? How will this experience change the way I act or think about Latinos?*

Preliminary Results Discovered through Thematic Research

In order to assess the impact of the service-learning program, I undertook a pilot qualitative thematic research study (Wiersma 267) in which reflection papers from two classes at each grade level were synthesized and analyzed for generative themes. Generative themes—as defined by Freire (84) and elaborated on by McCaleb (63)—are recurring threads of thought which document a pervasive

sentiment expressed by the majority of participants in a study. My intent was to highlight the perspectives students came away with regarding the purpose and value of their Learn and Serve projects as well as their overall perceptions and understanding of Latino communities. My analysis focused on the first, second, and fifth grade projects.

Five main themes emerged from the research: 1) Confidence to contribute to a community; 2) Increased knowledge of language and culture; 3) Change in preconceived perceptions/attitude; 4) Respect and appreciation of others; and 5) Increased incentive for learning about another cultural/linguistic community. Each of these themes serves as an early indicator of meeting and building upon objectives of the project (Slimbach 10). Although this pilot study primarily analyzes class reflections written by Anglo students, where possible Latino perspectives have also been included.

Confidence to contribute to a community

St. John's Cathedral holds four English-speaking masses per week and one Spanish-speaking mass on Sunday afternoons. Until the service-learning projects began at St. Joseph's school, there was minimal contact between the Anglo and Latino congregants. The service-learning projects opened avenues for awareness, interaction, and reciprocal contributions.

Thus, the first theme which emerged was students' sense of being able to genuinely contribute to a community. Having participated in some kind of service work prior to this experience, the majority of students had a certain degree of confidence in their abilities to contribute to a given community. Language and cultural barriers often inhibit people from wanting to work with an unknown or foreign community, however, causing people to doubt their ability to make a difference. This finding is most significant because students expressed confidence in being able to connect with and contribute to a community about which they had very little linguistic or cultural understanding.

First and second graders, who initially wondered what they could possibly contribute at their age, engaged in a pre-service discussion in preparation for learning about and creating their own tortillas and piñatas to support an English language tutor for Latino students. The process of discussing the need gave them an awareness of cultural and linguistic issues they had not previously considered and to which they were eventually able to provide assistance. Most St. Joseph's students spoke very little

Spanish and had very little prior interaction with Latinos in Idaho. Thus their perception of being able to contribute to a group culturally and linguistically different from themselves proved to be significant. A fifth grader's comment exemplified a pervasive sense of confidence gained and expressed throughout the grades: "Even if we don't speak much Spanish, we can make a difference in life by helping others different from ourselves."

With this new confidence came an openness not only to give but also to receive. It is a gift to allow someone, who *seemingly* has less than you, to realize that they also have something to give you (Nouwen 21). As St. Joseph's students served the Latino community, many recognized what they could learn from the community with whom they were serving.

Through the 5th grade service-learning project of designing and implementing a bilingual Mass, the Latino community of St. John's parish also realized they had much to contribute to the Anglo understanding of conducting a Mass with another cultural and linguistic group, and the Latino parents involved were especially supportive of this opportunity to share traditions with the Anglo community. The Columbian priest at St. John's also observed both communities breaking down cultural and linguistic barriers through this experience. He emphasized how the Anglo and Latino kids impressed him by working side-by-side. As they worked together, Latino children and parents expressed their pride in being able to teach English-speaking children some Spanish. Additionally, a Mexican dance teacher and a group of her Mexican students came to St. Joseph's school to teach *baile folklórico* (a traditional Mexican dance) and afterwards reflected on the satisfaction of being able to share something of value with the Anglo community.

Increased knowledge of language and culture

The vast majority of St. Joseph's students reported at the beginning of the study that they had very little or no knowledge of Latino culture. A second theme that emerged from the study was an overall increase in knowledge of the Latino community, manifested through greater linguistic and cultural awareness. Nearly all students gained greater knowledge of the Spanish language, no matter what their original base.

Students also learned more about Mexican culture from engaging in *baile folklórico* dances when the Mexican dance instructor visited each physical education class and taught the dances. Overall, students across the grades were very enthusiastic

about the experience of learning Mexican music and dance and asked when they could learn more.

First and second grade students learned about Mexican food and customs through their tortilla and piñata projects as well as through Mexican stories in both Spanish and English. Through pre- and post-project reflections and drawings, students from both classes demonstrated their deeper understanding of the Mexican culture. The oral and written reflections made a significant difference in student connections between making their projects and selling them at a fundraiser for an English tutor.

The K-3rd grade state mandated curriculum includes very little in the way of Mexican history. Thus, when the 4th graders created a historical timeline of Mexican immigration to Idaho, they gained a heightened consciousness of how little they knew and how little was written about Mexican history. As they researched, they recognized a the silencing of the history of the community with whom they were serving. This discovery led to questioning *why* the absence of information about this cultural group existed. It further led them to *act* through the creation of a historical timeline.

Older students from the advisory council who participated in evaluating all school projects also gained cultural awareness. Many expressed their increased knowledge through comments such as Jane's, "I learned why so many Mexicans immigrate to the United States and how hard they work." The fifth grade students who participated in translating materials for the bilingual Mass project came away with a much deeper appreciation for the challenges of second language learners, as exemplified by a fifth grader: "I have a better understanding of what the Latino kids had to go through learning another language." This theme demonstrated the model's ability to meet Slimbach's first and third objectives: 1) learning from a different segment of society, and 2) furthering the acquisition of a foreign language (10). This newly acquired understanding of another language and culture—combined with an appreciation of the challenges language learners face—resulted in changes to students' preconceived attitudes toward Latinos.

Change in preconceived perceptions/attitude

As a result of participating in hands-on collaborative projects, St. Joseph students' overall perceptions of Latinos changed. Students shifted from a "them" versus "us" mentality to a more inclusive attitude. A pervasive sentiment was expressed through-

out different grade levels, such as this one by Mike: “I learned that we are all brothers and sisters, no matter what culture we are.” Working side-by-side on projects enabled students to experience their commonalities as children, breaking down barriers and building bridges between different cultural groups.

Many of the St. Joseph’s students, particularly in the upper grades, had preconceived notions that Latinos had limited English proficiency. These attitudes changed rapidly as St. Joseph’s students realized how much English their Latino counterparts knew, especially when compared to how little Spanish they themselves knew. With this change in attitude came a newly discovered appreciation of and respect for their Latino counterparts. This theme represents the fulfillment of an objective that extends beyond Slimbach’s original three (10).

Respect and appreciation of one another

The combination of increased knowledge of the Latino community and a change in preconceived perceptions gave many St. Joseph students a greater respect for and appreciation for Latinos’ ability to learn English and accommodate to cultural differences. After receiving a myriad of letters from their counterparts in Mexico, St. Joseph students were surprised by how much Mexicans knew about them compared to what they knew about Mexicans. One student expressed this succinctly by stating, “I appreciate how much they know about us, our language and culture.” The deeper respect and appreciation for Latinos gave St. Joseph students a greater desire to continue to learn more about the Latino community.

As students began to learn more, they realized they were just at the “tip of the iceberg” in terms of understanding their Latino neighbors and expressed a wish to go beneath the surface. The older students who assessed the school projects in particular recognized the limitations of their knowledge of the Latino community. While seeing the value of the younger children learning about Mexican food, dress, and dance, they recognized Latinos’ much greater understanding of Anglo culture. In turn, this gave them a healthy perspective and desire to learn more about aspects of Latino culture such as the nature of family life and friendships.

Increased incentive for learning about one another’s communities

The motivation for learning came primarily from the relationships students built with their counterparts during their class service projects. Indeed, relationships are the foundation for breaking down barriers. Students at all levels expressed an interest

in forming cross-cultural friendships. The desire for such friendships, in turn, led to an understanding of the need to learn more Spanish, particularly reflected in the fifth grade bilingual Mass project. Numerous students made comments about their newly-acquired desire to learn Spanish and more about Mexican culture. As children and their parents across both communities bonded, Anglos gained increased incentive for acquiring a greater depth of understanding of Latinos in Idaho, as well as of the social, economic, and educational issues migrant families face.

Moving from a local to a global context

The states of Idaho and Jalisco, Mexico have had economic relations as sister-states for a number of years. Thus when an opportunity was presented by the State Department of Education to establish a sister-school partnership between St. Joseph's school and a K-8 school in Jalisco, the school personnel enthusiastically chose to participate. The State Department of Education facilitated the partnership by providing the opportunity for a St. Joseph's delegation to participate in an exchange. The purpose of the delegation was to strengthen the existing economic partnerships between Jalisco and Idaho through the establishment of educational partnerships.

The establishment of the sister-school partnership extended our original service-learning model to a global context. It also provided an increased incentive and a tangible opportunity for the community of St. Joseph's students, teachers, and parents to learn more about their Mexican neighbors, both locally and internationally.

While in Jalisco in March 2006, state superintendents and teachers representing their respective partner schools signed formal "sister-school" agreements. The establishment of the sister-school partnership extended our original service-learning model to a global context. It also provided an increased incentive and a tangible opportunity for the community of St. Joseph's students, teachers, and parents to learn more about their Mexican neighbors, both locally and internationally.

Implications of the Pilot Study

One clear result of this pilot study was the finding that many of the key objectives of the project were achieved, as voiced through the themes elaborated by St. Joseph students. The process of discovering these themes made me, as a researcher, very aware of the need to document other voices, as well, especially of those of individuals or groups impacted through the collaborative projects. Building on this pilot project, I intend to actively explore the effects of service-learning projects on

parents and Latino community members. Although I was only able to include a small number of Latino voices in this pilot study, their perspectives reveal additional important themes. Several participants voiced the perception that Anglo students sometimes reinforced stereotypes.

For example, the intent of the pen pal writing project between 6th grade students from St. Joseph's school and 6th grade Latino students was to encourage increased literacy in Spanish and English, respectively. A secondary goal of the project was to build bridges between the communities through facilitating relationships. Some of the letters from St. Joseph's students seemed to only reaffirm Latinos' stereotypes of Anglos and visa versa. For example, when the Latina English teacher reflected on the experience of her students, she stated that some of the letters received from St. Joseph's students expressed offensive—and erroneous—assumptions about their Mexican counterparts. She reported that St Joseph's students assumed that the Latino students lived in poverty and never traveled, and seemed to brag about their own possessions.

This was a disappointing commentary on the intentions of the experience. Yet, it proved to be a very useful learning moment from which teachers could reflect on how to improve the experience to facilitate greater understanding. Teachers from both schools intend to include initial, midway, and end-of-term student exchanges in which they would visit one another's school. They also plan to facilitate a collaborative project in which both groups of students would write narratives about their lives, which students would then translate. When the two groups come together, they would share their narratives and have a question and answer time to learn more about one another. Within this process, teachers plan to facilitate dialogues around stereotypes—how they are perpetuated and how they can be broken down.

Additional ways St. Joseph's School intends to build on this model are through: 1) the continuation and expansion of successful projects from the prior year; 2) the integration of more Spanish-speaking families into the school; 3) the continuation and expansion of school partnerships and exchanges, in both Idaho and Mexico; 4) the incorporation of more Spanish throughout the K-8 curriculum; 5) the extension of the current collaboration to improve literacy skills for both populations of children through pen pals and other literacy projects; and 6) the continued deepening of reflections in and out of school, so as to go beyond a surface understanding of linguistic and cultural issues.

Moving from community service (where there was minimal reflection) to service-learning revealed to teachers and students the depth of reflection possible. Future plans will also include the addition of reflection exercises to be completed at home with parents and in collaboration with community members, so as to further promote greater local and global consciousness.

Recommendations for further praxis

Our experience yields several recommendations for others hoping to emulate a similar project. These recommendations take into account not only our successes, but also our plans for revising, enhancing and extending the model to foster the development of global citizens who actively engage in cross-cultural partnerships both locally and globally.

Provide teacher and parent in-services prior to the initiation of school year, as well as throughout the year. It proved very advantageous to hold training sessions prior to the initiation of the school year to give teachers and parents adequate time to envision possibilities, prepare, and build connections with potential community partners. Once the school year begins, it becomes substantially more difficult to gain support for a program which is already underway. Ongoing in-service trainings throughout the year are helpful to keep everyone abreast of each other's projects, collaboratively problem-solve any issues which arise, and reinforce the importance of pre-, mid-, and post-project reflections, which can easily be overlooked if no one is overseeing the process.

Provide in-services on service-learning to parents and teachers, simultaneously. We primarily provided teacher in-services and conducted a very modified training for parent volunteers. If parents received a similar training, they would have a deeper understanding of the theory and vision for service-learning and thus be stronger advocates for the program, generating even greater school support.

Ensure parent "buy-in" to the conceptual model. The level of parent involvement in our program was critical to its success. Through the process of piloting this project, we learned the value of inviting parent participation as early as possible, which includes the envisioning stage of projects. The more parents take "ownership" with their children, the more inclined they will be to reflect collaboratively and more deeply on projects. This process helps solidify the value of the service to the student. From our experience, we recommend spending at least three months establishing community relationships, determining needs, and gaining parental support to assist in the

implementation of projects.

Incorporate Spanish (or the corresponding language) into the existing educational curriculum for each grade level. The importance of incorporating the language of the culture one is engaging with cannot be overemphasized, as culture and language are inextricably intertwined. Service projects which cross cultural and linguistic borders should make intentional efforts to include language learning, so as to more effectively and authentically engage with community partners. Here, too, parent involvement is critical, since parents are the ones who will ultimately support a language program at a school.

Deepen reflections in and out of school, so as to go beneath a surface understanding of linguistic and cultural issues. The evolution from community service to service-learning revealed to teachers and students the previously untapped depths of reflection that are possible even for young children. Reflecting with parents and community members intensifies the learning possible.

For Each Border There Exists a Bridge

*Hay tantísimas fronteras
que dividen a la gente,
pero por cada frontera
existe también un puente
There are so many borders
That divide people,
But for each border
There also exists a bridge*

(Gina Valdés 2, trans. Chris Carger).

The ability to positively affect global awareness and foster greater cross-cultural competency for this and future generations can be realized through many forms, including study abroad and international internships. Student voices expressed during the implementation of this school wide model substantiate the value of service-learning as an additional way to foster both local and global awareness, leading to cross cultural competency. Service-learning, when intentionally designed to facilitate cross-cultural partnerships, can serve not only as a bridge between borders, but also as a reflective means of breaking down the global divides amongst peoples and nations of the world. This school-wide model serves to advance our field's thinking about

ways of partnering with Latino communities to build similar bridges. It is one key element in educating future generations not only on the value of global awareness, but also on the value of global citizenship.

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