REFLECTIVE ARTMAKING COUPLED WITH SERVICE-LEARNING:

MAKING COMMUNITY VISIBLE

by

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MAKING COMMUNITY VISIBLE

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Practitioners have agreed that service-learning programs or curricula guide students into developing a more robust connection to the community in which they live as well as amongst other members of that community (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). However, what isn't known extensively is *how* these outcomes have been generated (Kiely, 2005a). Based upon Milne's (2000) *reflective artmaking,* this arts-based ethnographic study introduces the terminology *reflective artmaking service-learning,* demonstrating how the coupled learning processes of reflective artmaking and service-learning respond to the call for research. The Capacities for Imaginative Learning (Holzer, 2009) facilitated my ethnographic analysis, providing specificity towards deconstructing the underlying mechanisms of processing and filtering. Conducted in Texas among Christian homeschool students, this study inquires, how does reflective artmaking coupled with service-learning help to make the underlying concept of "community" visible? This ethnographic study focuses on the educative (Dewey, 1938) value of an arts-infused program with Christian homeschooled youth (ages 11-17) in Texas. Significant findings include the ways in which experiential learning based on a constructivist epistemology and a focus on the self was a suitable, but yet limiting, theoretical framework. Suggestions

include ways to use reflective artmaking coupled with service-learning to enhance the authenticity and applicability of projects and thus to enhance student interest and ownership. This study provides a broad set practitioners in educational programs and public, private, and home schools with practical, innovative, substantive, and customizable methods of incorporating arts-based reflection on civic engagement within their teaching practices.

Keywords: Reflection, reflective, artmaking, arts-based learning, experiential learning, community service-learning, community development, civic engagement, Capacities for Imaginative Learning, homeschool, faith-based, visual literacy.

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PREFACE

I am grateful that God has allowed me to engage in and complete the process of writing a dissertation. I join many who look to Jesus Christ in humility and say, "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20). The ability to study and undertake this project is a gift that was given to me according to His abundant grace, and I thank Him.

I dedicate my paper to my husband and three children. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, and love. You fill my life with a vibrant collage of inspiration and joy. Each page of this paper exudes it. In many ways, this dissertation is yours, too.

I thank my parents, siblings, grandparents, and other family members. You inspired me at an early age to look beyond my horizons and dream of the adventures I might find there. You helped me to make these discoveries, and we have been fellow explorers *together*.

I have been greatly encouraged by my husband's family. Your excitement regarding my undertaking of this project brings wind to my sails. Your pride in my accomplishments and your confidence in me compel me to feel renewed. Thank you.

I thank Dr. Porter, who is much more than my academic advisor. Wearing many hats, you are or have been my professor, dissertation committee chairperson, fellow Peru-traveling enthusiast, conference roommate and co-panelist, co-author, Duplo blocks-lender, baby quilt-creator, and friend. Thank you for your support and unwavering confidence in me these many years.

Each participant in my study blessed me greatly, and I thank you immensely. I am honored for having the opportunity to walk through each stage of this project with you and to share your stories. Together, this is *our* project, and in the pages that follow, I step aside and shine the spotlight upon you and your unique contributions to the team. Be proud that your efforts will inspire and inform many teachers, students, parents, and researchers.

The support of the family members of each participant was crucial, as well. You carved out time in your busy schedules for the study, drove to the meetings each week, remained flexible when necessary, engaged in the projects at home or at the site of the service project as needed, provided significant feedback, and followed through with your commitment to complete the study. Thank you.

Also, I am exceedingly grateful for the family who generously cared for my young children during the meeting times each week. Thank you for your willingness to assist without hesitation, and your graciousness when the meeting time extended longer than expected because the conversations and projects were going so well.

Finally, my church must be duly recognized, as well. Thank you for your prayers, support, and encouragement. You have been a distinct expression of God's kindness, compassion, and faithfulness towards my family and me during this endeavor.

I express my gratitude to all of those whom God has placed in my life to encourage, support, and partner with me during my process of conducting my study and completing my dissertation. Each of you are a gift and a blessing. Thank you for joining my adventure.

1.0   INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE: AN EXHIBITION

In education, exemplary teachers strive to provide opportunities for their students to learn, especially through *engaging with* the material that is being brought forth for instruction. Their desire is to deepen the level of understanding of the material amongst their students by bringing the lesson to life, portraying its value, and magnifying its relevance. The most skilled teachers do this seamlessly, weaving academic material with the real-life contexts where that material is found. This interwoven tapestry fosters more learning than the students might realize.

For my dissertation study, I gathered together a group of young students that I knew for the purpose of attempting such artistry. However, I did so in uniquely challenging aesthetic directions from being both the facilitator of the educative practices, as well as a participant observer conducting research procedures. As a result, instead of weaving a tapestry, our overall experience was rather a multi-media collage of refreshing ideas and playful bursts of discovery. My group of students was unique because it represented a specialized community of Christian homeschooling families in Texas. Furthermore, my sample represented the population of the specific Baptist church in which they were members or regular attenders. These home-schooled students were between the ages of eleven and seventeen.

Their supportive parents, who are their primary teachers, allowed me to guide their children towards new, experientially *educative* (Dewey, 1938) "collaged" compositions in community service-learning and *reflective artmaking* (Milne, 2000). The incentive for both the

students and their parents was the opportunity to participate in civic engagement and learn about issues therein, such as individual motivation, sustained interest, anticipated community impact, actual community impact, public recognition of their service, and reciprocity. This was important to both the students and parents because, as both have informed me, civic engagement tends to be a subject difficult to accomplish comprehensively, especially among rural schools. The issue is not that of priority but rather best practices. Consequently, participating in this program was of particular interest to these students and parents.

Thus, as the facilitator of the educational practices of my study, providing opportunity for civic engagement and considering best practices were areas of intervention in their learning. This study's collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and researcher allowed me to have the flexibility to collect particularly interesting data. Furthermore, it introduced the students and parents to a distinctive academic experience that built upon their previous experiences in civic engagement, as well as to introduce innovative ideas for those in the future. They enjoyed considering these new ways of learning while serving our community through local service-learning.

The group was situated in rural East Texas, deep within a spindly pinewood forest that was ablaze with a devastating wildfire only a few years prior. Spanning almost 22,000 acres, the catastrophic wildfire touched the lives of each member of the group, some quite precariously, and it was an event that unified the group almost instantly during the first meeting. In a way, a new internal community emerged from the charred trees and consumed homes within the town, and the students discovered that they shared the desire to reach out to the neighborhood in service related to the wildfire. Multiple outcomes emerged, however these inner workings and outer workings of community building and civic engagement were the primary focus of my

study. I describe this process as the development of the students' sense of community. I investigated it within the processes of arts-based community service-learning, which contains within itself inward and outward expressions of what Milne (2000) refers to as *reflective artmaking*. According to her terminology, this study is therefore an *exhibition* of a *gallery* of service-learning *portrayals*.

Service-learning is designed to engage students with their community through engaging with, and experiencing "hands-on," the academic material presented by their instructors. It is one method of what Dewey (1938) defined as *experiential education* and Kolb (1984) further defined as *experiential learning.* Service-learning can foster civic engagement with the students' community (local, national, or international) through academically facilitated service projects that are executed in reciprocity with the community (Flecky, 2010; Kolb, 1984). Service-learning programs or curricula are intended to guide the students into developing a host of learning outcomes, such as a more robust connection to the community in which they live (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001), as well as amongst other members of that community (Eyler, et al., 2001). In fact, much research has found that service-learning can personally, civically, and cognitively impact students in a positive way (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Eyler, 2000; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001).

What isn't known extensively is *how* these outcomes have been generated (Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005a). Kiely (2002, 2005a) suggests that we know little regarding the process mechanisms that drive service-learning and have generated outcomes (such as the development of sense of community). Because the outcomes themselves have received much of the attention, there has been a need to shift our focus on the mechanisms behind those outcomes. As a response, arts-based reflection can provide a way to make visible the occurring learning

processes among service-learning students (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; McNiff, 2008; Russell & Hutzel, 2007). However, there is little research regarding *how* these processes contribute to the students' development of their sense of community.

Additionally, the students within my study constructed meaning-making through exploring topics of community and sense of place through their shared Christian worldview as homeschoolers in rural East Texas. For them, experiential learning through constructivist methodologies was a suitable, yet limiting, theoretical framework. Civic engagement innovatively coupled with the arts-based paradigm provided a high level of educative interest for the students and consequently a robust data set. However, student interest and authenticity could have been improved through a different theoretical approach. As a result of these findings, I provide innovative contributions and recommendations for further research.

1.1   TIMEFRAME AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The timeframe for data collection in this study was October of 2014 to March of 2015. The preparation period was greater than this timeframe suggests due to finding a site (losing two established sites before finding this successful third site), observing the site to determine its viability for the purpose of the study, making arrangements with the partnering parent/teachers, ethnographically gaining access to the data by becoming a perceived member of the group, data collection, and follow-up procedures. Having gone through the process halfway on two prior attempts in differing contexts, and then losing the sites due to programmatic complications (specifically organizational financial support), this study was the successful third attempt in a completely different context. Overall, the total duration of research was about three years.

The factors of ethnicity, gender, and economic status of the sample were not delimitations. This study included only those students who matched the selection criteria established for the study, which included students who have been or currently are civically engaged. Furthermore, I altered my selection criteria for the third site by selecting students who were being home schooled, lived in the same surrounding community, and attended the same church. Though not delimitations in the original design, these factors ultimately became part of the study. I knew the participants and their parents because we were part of the same community and attended the same church, and this not only provided accessibility to the data and increased the feasibility of the study, but it also increased my own personal interest in the study.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY

Dewey's (1938) Theory of Experiential Education and Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory describe and argue for opportunities for students to physically touch, smell, see, taste, or hear the academic material. Furthermore, they propose that students who engage the lesson with multiple senses can reach deeper levels of understandings (Kolb, 1984). Consequently, *service-learning* was developed as a rigorous manifestation of experiential education/learning. It takes the students out of the classroom and into their surrounding community to pedagogically cultivate educatively *transformative* (Mezirow, 1990) experiences. It fosters civic engagement through facilitated service projects that are executed in reciprocity with the community (Flecky, 2010; Kolb, 1984).

Advancing these concepts further, my study investigates the inward and outward roles of *arts-based learning* within service-learning. *Arts-based learning* is described as the

incorporation of art-making explorations into the classroom and teaching skills in the service of creating an art product (Eisner, 2005; Noppe-Brandon & Holzer, 2007). As such, it can be used as a means of deciphering what is happening in an individual's thought process and way of knowing the world around them (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 2007) through reflection. In past studies where arts-based education overall has been coupled with reflection, researchers found that the practice of reflection was enriched by the arts (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; Jeffers, 2000; Roy & Cho, 2006). Consequently, in my study I demonstrate that *reflective artmaking* (Milne, 2000) is both a suitable inward method of reflection within service-learning, as well as a suitable outward expression towards surrounding communities. Thus, reflective artmaking service-learning provides insight regarding *how* service-learning impact students, or *how* the outcomes have been generated (Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005a).

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Previous studies have illuminated experiential education's success in increasing student apprehension of the material (Bitgood, 1989; Holzer, 2009; Kayes, Kayes & Kolb, 2005). More specifically, research has indicated that service-learning is a form of experiential education that can successfully increase student learning (Flecky, 2010; Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001; Jacoby, 1996). Additionally, empirical studies have been conducted on learning in service-learning, and the focus often times has been on measuring the impact that service-learning has had on the development of the students personally, civically, and cognitively (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Eyler, 2000; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001).

What remains unclear is *how* these outcomes have been generated. In Kiely's (2005a) longitudinal case study regarding a transformative model for service-learning, he describes research voids that exist regarding what has led to the empirically reported outcomes. He writes, "The focus on the 'what' of student learning rather than the 'how' leaves us with a theoretical 'black box' regarding the contextual and process mechanisms in service-learning that enhance certain cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes- particularly those that are transformative" (p. 5). Such areas that are neglected include institutional impacts (Jacoby & Associates, 2003; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003), learning processes (Kiely, 2002, 2005b), theory development (Bringle, 2003) and values unique to service-learning contexts (Harkavy, 2004; Hecht, 2003).

Therefore, the purpose of my innovative arts-based, descriptive study was to respond to this call by presenting Milne's (2000) reflective artmaking as one mechanism for understanding *how* these outcomes have been generated. Arts-based learning, or the arts in general, enrich reflection practices in the classroom (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; Jeffers, 2000; Roy & Cho, 2006). Thus, reflective artmaking incorporates arts-based experiential learning methodologies into the classroom. The practices of arts-based service-learning programs include (a) art as the mode of service, and/or (b) service-learning with some aspect of arts-based reflection embedded within. My study incorporated both. It illuminated how reflective artmaking drove service-learning from *within,* as an enmeshment of learning processes. It simultaneously *outwardly* expressed the outcomes of the enmeshed learning processes. Reflective artmaking makes visible the equally enmeshed learning processes of itself and service-learning.

Consequently, what predominately interested me about this complex relationship was the development of sense of community among my study's students. This was an additional

learning process that presented the students with contemplations regarding the aforementioned issues of civic engagement, such as individual motivation, sustained interest, etc. Being civically engaged is a subject stereotypically overlooked by home schooled youth and/or their parents; some parents have indeed expressed difficulty in this endeavor. However, this study reveals that this stereotype, though true in some cases, can easily be misapplied. In fact, the five subjects that homeschools are required to teach in the state of Texas include "good citizenship" (Texas Home School Coalition, 2017, n.p.). Texas parent-teachers are not overlooking citizenship. On the contrary, they experience difficulty in applying citizenship principles in their classrooms to the high standard that they desire. Therefore, as the facilitator of the educational practices of my study, an area of intervention in their learning was to teach students citizenship through a higher standard of civic engagement and offer insight regarding best practices. My findings are especially unique because I was both the facilitator and researcher, the students are homeschoolers, and they are all members of homes that teach from a Christian worldview.

The purpose of my study is to investigate how reflective artmaking service-learning experiences are making community visible. The analysis of this investigation is based upon the Capacities for Imaginative Learning developed by the Lincoln Institute for the Arts in Education. Service-learning experiences provided the inspirational context for the aesthetic expression of my study that investigated development of sense of community. Data collection included generated art, verbal and textual reflection on that art, audio/video recorded conversations, interviews, and ethnographic observation, each through arts-infused service-learning experiences and arts-based reflective practices. Additionally, the prior work I completed through my supervised research project, article, and conference presentations (Porter, Fahrenwald, Eschenbacher, & Donald, 2014) provided supporting analysis.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

According to Foss and Waters (2007), a good research question that is structurally sound meets six criteria. These criteria include (1) identifying the theoretical construct of the study, (2) containing some suggestion of recognizability of the theoretical construct, (3) transcending the data, (4) identifying the study's contribution to an understanding of the theoretical construct, (5) having the capacity to surprise, and (6) its ability to produce robust results (p. 41). My research question inquires:

> How does reflective artmaking coupled with service-learning help to make the underlying concept of "community" visible?

In the following, I expound upon how this question meets these six criteria.

First, a good research question "clearly identifies the theoretical construct [I am] studying. […] The theoretical construct is the phenomenon, event, or experience [I] want to learn more about" (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 37). In my study, the theoretical constructs are the learning processes of service-learning, reflective artmaking, and development of sense of community. The term *community* is used in multi-faceted ways, including familial community, community of faith, immediate internal community as a group, the surrounding local, national or global communities with which the group engages through service-learning, etc. Thus, service-learning, reflective artmaking, and development of sense of community are the theoretical constructs identified in my research question.

Second, a good research question "should contain some suggestion of recognizability of the theoretical construct" (p. 37). "It supplies a clear unit of analysis that allows [me] to tell the difference between that construct and other constructs relatively easily." My unit of analysis is the arts-based *Capacities for Imaginative Learning*, a list of guidelines used for infusing,

integrating, and assessing the arts in education (Holzer, 2007), as developed by the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education. Although it is situated in an arts-based theoretical background, a capacities-based analysis lends itself simultaneously useful in the experiential learning theoretical backgrounds of service-learning and development of sense of community. In particular, I examine the stages of service-learning and the project life cycle, or the occurrence and suitability of specific arts-based service-learning projects within the overall project design.

Third, a good research question transcends the data of one study and has larger significance for the field. My research question "should not include mention of the specific data [I] am using to investigate [my] question" (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 38). I do not mention in my research question that the students must be of a particular age group, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, or from a particular academic institution, such as public, private, or home school. My research design encompasses students in general, and thus "contributes to a significant theoretical conversation in [my] field" because it is not "tied to one particular kind of data" (p. 38).

The fourth criterion for a good research question is identifying my study's "contribution to an understanding of the theoretical construct" (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 39). By conducting this study, I will be able to contribute to the field in a way that not only supports the research that is currently available, but to simultaneously provide to the field research that is innovative. My research question can name what I am doing with my theoretical construct in my study and what interests me about it (p. 38). The new contribution I am making is to respond to the aforementioned calls to research by presenting Milne's (2000) reflective artmaking as one appropriate mechanism for understanding *how* the service-learning outcomes regarding civic engagement and development if community have been generated. Thus, my interest lies in how

service-learning experiences provide the inspirational context for the aesthetic expression of my study that investigates development of sense of community.

This is a valid new contribution to refining all three theoretical constructs because a void exists in the field regarding this robust topic. Building off of the aforementioned calls for research within service-learning, *reflective artmaking* within service-learning appears to be welcomed in the field of arts-based research (Bagnoli, 2009; Barry, 1996; Butler-Kisber, 2008; Eisner, 2005). For example, Eisner (2005) makes a call for more arts-based research by those who are knowledgeable in creating at least one of a diverse set of artistic expressions, stating, "We need to broaden the array of forms of representation that can be used in the conduct of educational research" (p. 17). Furthermore, Butler-Kisber (2008) makes a call for research through *multimedia* artmaking that is reflective, stating "What is needed [...] is an integration of the criteria for evaluating arts-informed research with those for evaluating visual images, with a particular focus on collage. Although this is no easy task, it would be a worthwhile endeavor, and one that would be well received in the field" (p. 273). She continues, "More public accounts of researchers' explorations with the medium, more opportunities for exchanges between researchers and artists, and efforts to make available lists of exemplary work are needed" (p. 274). Such forms of representation would include Milne's (2000) reflective artmaking within the context of service-learning.

Fifth, my research question has the "capacity to surprise" (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 40). In other words, I do not already know the answer to my research question, and I do not suggest that I know the answer. I am not validating a hypothesis. Instead, as an ethnographer, my investigation has been through "the process of discovering and describing culture" (McCurdy,

Spradley, & Shandy, 2005, p. 9), and this methodology maintained the capacity to surprise throughout the duration of the study.

Finally, my research question is "robust" because it has the "capacity to generate complex results" (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 40). It has the "capacity to produce multiple insights about various aspects of the theoretical construct[s] [I am] exploring," specifically by framing the question with the phrase "How … are." There could be various types of findings with this type of research question. This study is created for a broad set of practitioners in varying academic contexts, including teachers, program leaders, and parent-teachers in public, private, or homeschool. In my study, I provide ideas that have proven to enhance the teaching methodologies among others within these groups and myself. I do so by suggesting practical, innovative, substantive, and customizable methods of incorporating civic engagement within their teaching practices. Thus, educators and other researchers in the field will find the results of this study to be useful in their field of practice.

1.5   SUMMARY

Based upon Milne's (2000) *reflective artmaking,* this study continues her work and introduces my terminology *reflective artmaking service-learning* that describes the enmeshment of reflective artmaking about and during service-learning, illuminating the capability of the combined learning processes to meet the need for research called by Kiely's (2005a). As the participant observer, I gathered together a group of civically engaged homeschool students to both intervene in their learning, as well as learn from them, through reflective artmaking service-learning. My group of students was unique because it represented a specialized community of

Christian homeschooling families in Texas. The combined practice of facilitating and observing the group yielded an interesting set of findings that contribute to the void of research regarding mechanisms behind service-learning outcomes.

By conducting this study, I contribute to the field in a way that not only supports the research that is currently available, but to simultaneously provide original research that is innovative. Reflective artmaking about and during service-learning has the capacity to serve as a model for others who desire to incorporate civic engagement into their curricula through service-learning. The subsequent chapters of my dissertation study reveal how I have come to these realizations by examining my primary research question in the context extant literature and my original methods and insights.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELEVANT DISCOURSES: EXHIBITING THE LITERATURE

Although service-learning positively impacts students, what isn't known extensively is *how* these outcomes have been generated. Reflective artmaking makes visible the concerted learning processes of itself and service-learning. In this chapter, I situate my study amongst the current and relevant discourses in the field, setting the stage to show how Milne's (2000) reflective artmaking is one appropriate mechanism for responding to the call for research.

Through an examination of the theoretical construct of Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) and its predecessor the Theory of Experiential Education (Dewey, 1938), I describe how experiential learning scholars define service-learning, explain the development of sense of community, and describe the importance of reflection. Next is an examination regarding how arts-based learning defines reflective artmaking and explains *The Capacities for Imaginative Learning* as my method of analysis. Within each discussion is a further investigation into the focal construct's relationship with service-learning and sense of community. This chapter concludes with a summary.

2.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The inspiration for Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) began with Dewey's (1938) Theory of Experiential Education (Giles & Eyler, 1994), an instructional approach that draws

upon experiential methods of active learning designed to engage students in hands-on, interactive, and intentional styles of learning. Dewey (1938) contends "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of *actual experience* and education" (p. 7) [emphasis added]. For example, instead of being instructed to go *learn* something, students were told to go and *do* something and learn from it, specifically through reflection and discussion (Dewey, 1938). Philosophers today would argue that some of his greatest contributions to the field came from the springboard of this famous theory (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Jacoby, 1996).

However, in some cases experiences are *mis-educative* if they have "the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" among students (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Dewey warns, "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative" (p. 25). Furthermore, the effectiveness of the experience hinges upon the "quality of the experience," as not all experiences have the proper quality (p. 27). This quality can be determined through two aspects: 1) the "immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness," and 2) the "influence upon later experiences." For Dewey, when these factors are properly in place, clearly defined and facilitated experience is and/or should be the foundation for education itself.

The value of experiential education for practitioners is most evident in its capacity to encourage critical thinking, a foundation for self-learning, taking ownership of one's own learning, and developing the motivations necessary for equipping life-long learners. Experiential education encourages considerations of all possibilities, seeing multiple views, and taking ownership of one's own views. Of critical thinking in general, Pearcey (2015) explains, "Today, the need for critical thinking is greater than ever. […] There is no 'safe' place where young

people can avoid the challenge of contrary worldviews" (p. 254). Experiential learning exposes students to contrary worldviews through critical thinking.

However, through critical thinking, even the benefits of *experiential learning* have limits. As the author of Proverbs expounds, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17). The constructivist design of experiential learning, or *knowledge as the meaning that emerges* from our engagement and experience with reality (Schwandt, 1994) is in and of itself *reductionist*. As Pearcey (2004) explains, "One of the ways we can check out a truth claim is to submit it to the practical test. But pragmatic success does not *make* a claim true. As with all 'isms,' pragmatism fastens upon one aspect of reality and elevates it into a system that reduces everything else to a single dimension" (p. 232). Thus, constructivism reduces knowledge to individual perspective. Because "John Dewey did more to shape educational methodology than anyone else in the twentieth century" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 238), his constructivist design has significantly impacted the field of education at large into reductionist practices.

As important as individual perspective is, it cannot logically determine objective Truth (capital *T*). Just because it is true for the individual does not mean that it is True for all, or True according to its designed properties. Just because I see the barn as red, does not mean that it is red. I need to take my red-tinted sunglasses off and see that it in fact is white, its True color regardless of how I *choose* to view it. To fully behold the designed essence of the barn I must remove my sunglasses, because they reduce the essence of the barn to my own view of what the barn should look like. I forfeit the essence of the barn because of my reductionism.

Furthermore, significantly influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theories, "constructivism is based on the assumption that we are merely organisms adapting to the

environment, so that the only test of an idea is whether it works" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 242). In the case of my sunglasses, the test worked for me. So, does that mean that it is True? Can objective Truth change so effortlessly by removing and replacing my sunglasses? As true as it may seem, on the contrary, the experience is and must be determined by reality. My sunglasses contribute to my personal perspective of reality, but they do not determine *the* Truth that the barn is actually white. It is my *perception* of the barn. Among Darwin's first proponents in the field of education, Dewey concluded that education must explore the possibility that knowledge is experientially constructed individually by one's perception of the world (Thirteen Ed Online, 2004). Objectivism, or knowledge that exists independent of experience and consciousness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), "comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17).

Interestingly, the dilemma I face within my study is that my findings make the case for certain aspects of constructivism, while simultaneously countering others. The primary theoretical framework of this study was originally constructivist because of the value of critical thinking. However, my findings have revealed that counter arguments were indeed a significant (not only) factor within my study. Thus, the findings of my study were a mix of both: constructivist, but not by the pragmatist definition of constructing *knowledge,* where knowledge is defined by the experience. Rather, the students constructed *experience,* where experience is defined by the knowledge. With the study being originally situated among constructivist discourses according to the original definition, the findings provide insight regarding limitations therein. Beyond the scope of my study, another extensive literature review is necessary for a duly comprehensive investigation of this dilemma.

2.1.1 Service-Learning.

Expanding upon the central features of critical thinking, among the central practices to Dewey's (1938) partnership between "the processes of actual experience and education" are interaction, observation, reflection, and action (p. 7). Kolb and Fry (1975) and Kolb (1984) expanded upon Dewey's (1938) theoretical process, which led to the development of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. This theoretical construct began to take shape with a conceptual map of a cyclical learning process, which was designed to hypothetically conceptualize and modernize Dewey's (1938) theoretical principles. Kolb and Fry developed a diagram titled *Experiential Learning Cycle*, through which they depict the cyclical, continuous, and interactive processes of learning that take place in experiential education. In this four-stage learning cycle, the student 1) participates in a *concrete experience*, 2) *observes and reflects* upon that concrete experience, 3) forms *abstract concepts* from these observations and reflections, and 4) tests the newly formed abstract concepts *in new situations.* Below is a diagram of this model of the experiential learning process (Figure 1):
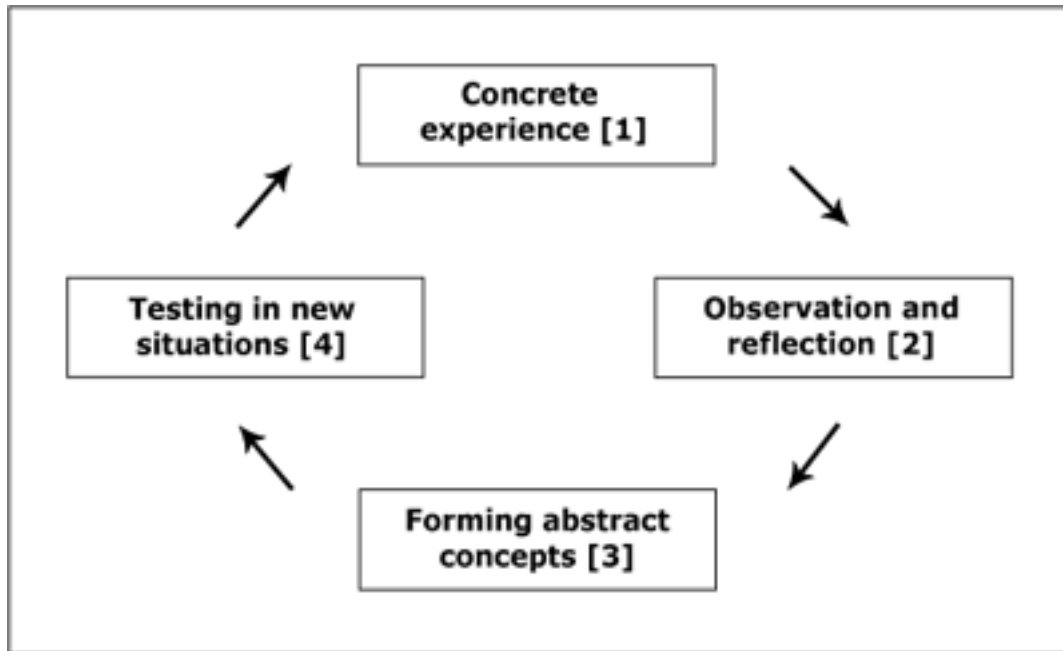
Figure 1: Experiential Learning Cycle (Coffey, 2009)

The cycle continues as the student takes the results from the tests (4) and applies them to a new concrete experience (1), which can be directly or indirectly related to the previous concrete experience, or can be an entirely novel concrete experience.

An example of experiential learning is *service-learning* programs or curricula which take students as a classroom unit out of the classroom's walls to engage with their community (local, national, or international) through facilitated service projects that are executed in reciprocity with the community (Bringle, 2003; Flecky, 2010). Service-learning students then reflect on their experiences and engage in activities that publicly disseminate the service that was conducted and the lessons learned therein (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996). Service-learning is uniquely distinguished from community service, co-curricular service-learning, and internships. For example, according to Howard (2001), authentic service-learning is distinguished because it is comprised of relevant and meaningful community service in reciprocity with the community, the

civic learning is purposeful, and academic learning is enhanced. This construct allows the students to physically experience the lessons they perhaps read about in their textbook (such as a folk festival) or even speak directly to the individuals represented in their textbook (such as a Native American tribe) by engaging with that particular part of the community through intentional acts of service. Thus, service-learning can bring the classroom's lesson to life in intensely experiential ways, serving as a means to develop active and informed citizens (Wade, 1997). Suddenly, the lesson is living, breathing, or even dancing before them, helping the students to see their world in new ways to facilitate the broadening of their horizons into new directions (Bitgood, 1989), stimulating learning and social development (Conrad & Hedin, 1991).

This cohesion of *service* through civic engagement and *learning* through facilitated and intentional pedagogies and praxis are bound by the hyphen between the words themselves. The hyphen denotes "a balance between the service and learning outcomes resulting from the partnership experience" (Flecky, 2010, p. 2). Tice and Jagla (2014) explain that "Service-Learning, a form of experiential education, is a teaching method which integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good" (n.p.). According to the Commission on National and Community Service (1990), the essential elements of authentic service-learning programs or curricula are outlined in many ways. For my study, I refer to the Tennessee Arts Commission's outline, which uses the National Learn and Serve model as a foundation, because it outlines *arts-based* service-learning distinctions (I introduce these in the next section: Arts-Based Learning). I adapt this outline to

define only service-learning, as opposed to *arts-based* service-learning. These five stages succinctly summarize the widely agreed upon hallmarks of service-learning:

> 1) Explore a community need […]: Students define the community and investigate needs through research and documentation.
>
> 2) Prepare to address the need […]: During the preparation stage, a plan of action is proposed, and details regarding school and community policies are arranged.
>
> 3) Create the change through service: During this stage, students act upon the established plan.
>
> 4) Learn through reflection: […] Demonstrations of learning include multiple forms of documentation, layers of analysis, processes of individual and collaborative assessment, and varied reviewers.
>
> 5) Share the […] service-learning project with the community through presentation, performance, and/or exhibition. (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, pp. 17-19)

Summarizing each stage through single terms, the stages include explore, prepare, create, learn, and share. Thus, "intentionally used as an instructional tool to meet learning goals and/or content standards" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 12), service-learning enhances student learning through meeting the partnering community's needs as the students and community work together in reciprocity (Keith, 2005).

Kolb's (1984) cycle begins with a *concrete experience*, which is drawn upon by the first three stages of service-learning: exploring a community need, preparing to address the need, and creating the change through service. For example, The Center for Community Engagement (2014) poses to students, such as mine, the questions, "How will the community be consulted?" and "Reciprocity: How will your students and the community teach and learn from one another?"

Similarly, according to the Tennessee Arts Commission's (Brown & Leavitt, 2009) outline, my students not only "explored" (researched) the community need, but also "prepared to address the need." Then, as a result of these preparatory investigations, my students "acted upon the established plan" by actively participating in civically engaged acts of service that were intentional and authentic. In these examples, the principles/stages are designed to cultivate a *concrete experience* in my students' experiential service-learning activity.

Observation and reflection is the second stage in the cycle, and it is drawn upon by the fourth stage of service-learning: learning through reflection. For example, according to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, service-learning "Provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on the service experience" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002). The Center for Community Engagement's (2014) Principle 2 is titled "Reflection" and asks, "Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?" As defined in both examples, "observation and reflection" occur in the beginning, throughout, and after my students' service-learning experience.

Kolb's third stage is *forming abstract concepts*, and the fourth stage of service-learning draws upon this. In fact, stages 2 and 3 in the cycle occur simultaneously, yet need still to be mentioned explicitly. The Center for Community Engagement asks for a "mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important." In the context of my study, we worked together in a "holistic space" (Jeffers, 2005, p. 123) with "constant reflection" (Taylor, 2002, p. 138). The collaboration between my students, myself as the facilitator and researcher, and members of the external community joining in the service experience facilitated the forming of abstract concepts while

meeting "the needs of all parties involved" (p. 138). According to Brown and Leavitt's (2009) outline, the students demonstrated their learning through reflection and forming abstract concepts, namely through "multiple forms of documentation, layers of analysis, processes of individual and collaborative assessment, and varied reviewers." Thus, in my study, *forming abstract concepts* was part of a flexible and collaboratively created interdisciplinary process that required constant reflection (Taylor, 2002).

Drawing upon the cycle's fourth stage of *testing in new situations*, the students applied and tested what they have learned in the fifth stage of service-learning (sharing the service-learning project), as well as the first stages once again (engaging in more "concrete experiences" through exploring more service-learning opportunities that meet our community needs). Such opportunities may be an extension of the previous one, such as part of a set, or they may be entirely new situations. Regardless, my students were placed in a new service-learning situation and applied what they have learned from the previous one. Thus, the "students learn[ed] and develop[ed] through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that [was] conducted in and [met] the needs of [their community]" (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002). In this manner, the cycle continued.

2.1.2 Sense of community.

Service-learning fosters the development of students' sense of community, or the ability to recognize their *community* in its multiple layers through *civic engagement* and *service*. In my study, this learning process was clearly evidenced. To untangle the complexities of the development of sense of community, it is most beneficial to begin with defining the fundamental

terms found therein. The terms I expound upon in this section include *community*, *community building*, *civic engagement*, and *citizenship*.

An appropriate springboard for understanding sense of community is defining *community* and *community building,* and experiential learning explains these terms. Communit*y* is defined in a variety of ways, commonly as a group with common values, beliefs, interests, or other characteristics. Consider the following broad definitions found through an Internet search:

- "A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals" (Google.com).

- "A social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists: such as, the business community, or the community of scholars" (Dictionary.com).

- "A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage" (Dictionary.com).

Within these broad definitions, there is an emphasis upon social commonalities. However, in experiential learning, community is considered with regard to the transformation of a group. As the members of the group share common learning practices that are experientially based, such as through service-learning, differences between group members are addressed and borders between members are considered.

For example, Keith (1998) argues that the very definition of community*,* when in the context of experientially based community service, must be reassessed entirely. She asserts that the definition of community ought to be provided in light of democratic responsibilities "in the

context of difference and borders that must be crossed," as opposed to a social group with a common culture and value system (p. 86). The nature of community service is to move beyond one's own personal community by crossing the borders into the greater community around oneself, whether that community is marginally or drastically different. She describes community building as:

> […] developing local capacities, creating networks of support, and building relationships across borders […] At its best, service may promote ways of relating to the social polity that emphasize social responsibility and the obligation to contribute to the community. It may bring together people whose paths may otherwise not cross, since they belong to different social worlds. (p. 86)

Community building, according to Keith (1998), experientially brings together individuals from *differing* sides of socio-cultural borders.

However, in service-learning, another level of community and community building is constructed because the academically facilitated service activities occur in a group setting. Though it is true that service-learning facilitates the border-crossing described by Keith (1998), service-learning goes further by considering the importance of *teamwork* as well (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; King, 2004). Constructing external community building simultaneously facilitates the construction of internal community building and teamwork within the group of students itself (King, 2004; Wade, 1997). This is a distinguishing factor between service-learning and community service. Service-learning involves the use of group participation and encourages the practice of teamwork. Thus, in service-learning, educators foster community building both within the group of students, as well as between the group and the surrounding community (Schensul & Berg, 2004). The group as a whole become border-crossers with the members of

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the group perhaps belonging to "different social worlds," being "separated by class, race, language, age, and other such social divides" (Keith, 1998, p. 86), as they venture into crossing the borders of their external community together as a unified group (Schensul & Berg, 2004). The processes of defining and building community are complex as each process intertwines and reverberates with the next.

This dynamic interaction is facilitated by the principles of experiential learning as service-learning educators guide their students through the processes of defining and building community according to the four stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle. While the students consider the details of the service activity through 1) concrete experience, 2) observation and reflection, 3) forming abstract concepts, and 4) testing in new situations, service-learning students find that they are simultaneously being constructed as a team in the same approach. The projects of each stage are meant to draw students from "different social worlds" together, to cross borders, and to become a more unified team as they engage in each stage (Keith, 1998, p. 86).

Illustrated by the diagram below (Figure 2), experiential learning and service-learning work together to generate the process of learning. The gears of service-learning rotate the cycle of experiential learning. As the mechanisms of a clock work together in tandem, dependent upon each other for functionality, the components of service-learning work together as a complete unit to generate the learning process. Each component may not be *occurring* at the same time, as the gears of a clock are constantly rotating simultaneously. However, the *essences* of both experiential learning and service-learning indeed occur simultaneously in the design. Each component must be present for the process to function as designed, because service-learning depends upon the placement of each component in the design as stages. The same is true for the

stages of Kolb's cycle. Students practice one or more stages (present) amidst reference to the other stages in reflection (afterwards) or in planning (beforehand). In essence, the stages of service-learning and experiential learning are indeed functioning simultaneously in and of themselves, as well as together. It is only the *attention* of the students and facilitator that may focus upon one or more stages as they (co-)occur.
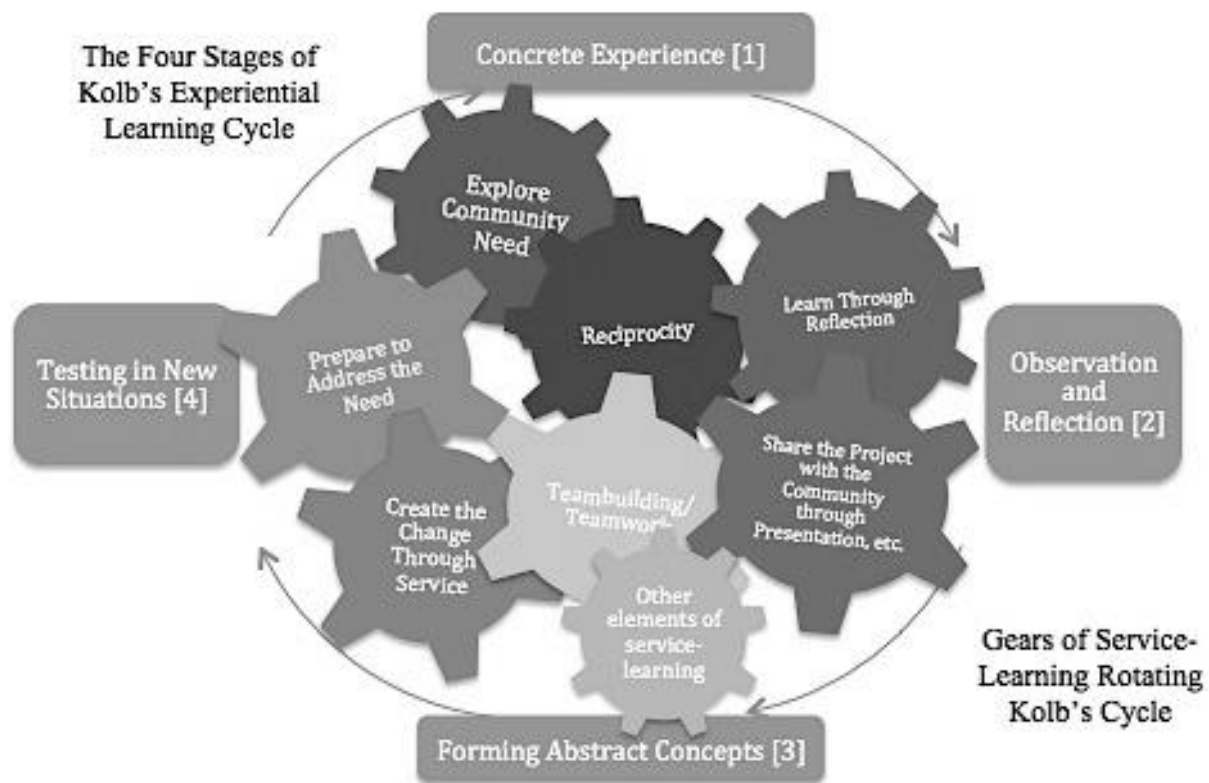
Figure 2: Initial theoretical framework of the relationships between experiential learning and service-learning

Thus, experiential learning driven by the gears of service-learning inspire the development of sense of community. Through the processes of defining and building community according to the four stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle, for example, students experience community and community building throughout the service-learning process

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illustrated in Figure 2. Developing as a result is a sense of community that contributes to the process and product of civic engagement.

2.1.2.1 Civic engagement.

Civic engagement is an active and experientially learned process of engaging in one's community. It is a process that requires participation. According to McTighe Musil (2009), civic engagement is:

> […] acting on a heightened sense of responsibility to one's communities that encompasses the notions of global citizenship and interdependence, participation in building civil society, and empowering individuals as agents of positive social change to promote social justice locally and globally. (p. 59)

The *product* that this participation is meant to yield is further experiential learning, further participation, and further action through "building civil society" and "empowering individuals as agents of positive social change." As Ehrlich (2000) states, "Civic engagement is working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes" (p. vi). Thus, civic engagement is considered to be a self-perpetuating cycle of the *process* and *product* of experiential learning.

Additionally, the gears that drive this process are experientially based as well. Bringle and Hatcher (2009, p. 39) explain, "Civic engagement can occur through teaching, research, or service that is done *in and with* the community." As Hatcher (2010) notes, this is "a definition that includes service-learning classes, community-based research, and faculty professional service" (p. 96). Thus, the experiential gears that turn the cyclical process of experientially-

based civic engagement includes the stages of service-learning. I created Figure 3 below to illustrate this relationship between Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, service-learning, and civic engagement.

The Four Stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Concrete Experience [1]

Explore Community Need

Reciprocity

Learn Through Reflection

Testing in New Situations [4]

Prepare to Address the Need

Observation and Reflection [2]

Create the Change Through Service

Teambuilding/ Teamwork

Share the Project with the Community through Presentation, etc.

Other elements of service-learning

Gears of Service-Learning Rotating Kolb's Cycle

Forming Abstract Concepts [3]

Development of sense of community

Process → Civic Engagement ← Product

Figure 3: Initial theoretical framework of how experiential learning and service-learning contribute to the process and product of civic engagement

As facilitators guide students through these stages intentionally, actively, and thoughtfully, service-learning facilitators expect that students experientially learn civic engagement. Civic engagement is both a process (found within the gears of service-learning) and a product (a result of the relationship between the Experiential Learning Cycle and service-learning). Whether or not civic engagement actually takes place as a process and/or product, or if this takes place in all of the students involved, is determined case-by-case by the educators involved and is contingent upon multiple factors, such as thorough preparedness, active involvement of the partnering community, and proper funding. Regardless, service-learning educators use the basic components of service-learning as the gears to drive the Experiential Learning Cycle towards civic engagement, and Bringle, Hatcher, Hamilton, and Young (2001) argue that service-learning is a "necessary component of effective civic engagement" (p. 93). Moreover, as aforementioned, these service-learning gears are designed by the principles of Experiential Learning Theory.

2.1.2.2 Citizenship.

Citizenship is usually considered to mean *civics*, according to the Texas Home School Coalition (THSC). It includes "teaching U.S. and [state] history, government (theoretical and practical), the Pledge of Allegiance, and similar activities" (THSC, 2017, n.p.). Civics activities can include volunteering to work in voter registration, the campaign process, the political party process, or the legislative process.

Experiential learning explains the feelings of *citizenship*, "the feelings of empathy and efficacy necessary to true understanding and absolutely essential to the development of a sense of civic commitment" (Upton, 2013, p. 3). Citizenship begins with *civic engagement* with its emphasis on the ability one obtains to "empathize, collaborate, compromise, and integrate suddenly" in one's community through acts of civic engagement (Spiezio, in Jacoby &

Associates, 2009, p. 85). Consequently, *citizenship education* is a form of learning that intends to foster "a concern for the social good," a goal that is "at the heart of the educational experience" (Rhoads, 1998, p. 277).

However, the approach to citizenship education is often problematic and promotes apathy among students as opposed to vibrant civic engagement. As Mendel-Reyes (1998) notes,

> For the masses, citizenship education is boring; dry textbooks, with endless charts of the three branches of government and 'how a bill becomes a law,' and rote assignments to memorize the Constitution and the Amendments are effective lessons in passivity. Despite the occasional mobility of individuals, active citizenship and economic security have become the privileges of a few rather than the rights of all. (p. 31)

In response to this form of citizenship education, experiential learning has brought the vibrancy of practical application to citizenship education. As students engage in the four stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle, citizenship education and active citizenship take on new shape and students can consider its values in a new light.

More specifically, experientially based service-learning fosters citizenship and engages students in civic engagement. Students are encouraged to participate with the lesson and the other citizens within their community through needed service projects. Wade and Yarbrough (1997) observe, "As a growing educational movement in the United States, community service learning is a needed response to youth's increasing alienation from and apathy toward civic involvement" (p. 42). As pedagogy for citizenship education, Mendel-Reyes (1998) observes, "Service learning offers students the opportunity to experience and reflect on how citizens organize to bring their communities and their country closer to democracy" (p. 31). While Mendel-Reyes argues for the utilization of service-learning as pedagogy for citizenship

education for the purposes of bringing "communities and […] country closer to democracy," these purposes are beyond those outlined in my study. Instead, service-learning is one pedagogy that can be utilized to bring the vibrancy of practical application to citizenship education because it is based on the foundations of experiential learning. Therefore, citizenship education is explained by experiential learning through the vibrant practical application and pedagogy of service-learning's civic engagement. Citizenship is inspired by civic engagement, which is a process and product of the Experiential Learning Cycle as driven by the gears of service-learning, as I have illustrated in Figure 3 above.

Thus, *sense of community* is a phrase that coalesces the aforementioned definitions. Developing a sense of community begins with *who* community is, meaning how participants define community and how membership in community is understood. The very definition of the term references commonalities, but it also refers to differences, especially in the context of "border-crossing" community service (Keith, 1998, p. 86) and service-learning (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; Kiely, 2005a; King, 2004). The nature of community service is to move beyond one's own personal community by crossing the borders into the greater community around oneself, whether that community is marginally or drastically different from one's frame of reference. Moreover, service-learning refers to the border-crossing that occurs *within* the internal group itself as it coalesces into a team (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; Kiely, 2005; King, 2004) and then goes forth into the surrounding community through service-learning (Schensul & Berg, 2004). This multi-faceted set of interactions is referred to as *community building*, and it brings together individuals from differing sides of socio-cultural borders through the dynamic process of learning individually, collectively, internally (as an internal team of students), and externally (as the students engage with the outside community).

Students' development of sense of community will continue as they civically engage in service-learning and become more aware of what *civic engagement* and *citizenship* mean. Through the process of experiential learning via the mode of service-learning, this "sense" moves forward and beyond awareness of who composes *their* community. Then students are able to define it, at least in a general sense, as they develop a concern for their internal and external communities in tandem. They take ownership; the community becomes *theirs*. It progresses into their awareness of what their *role* is in their community as they obtain the ability to "empathize, collaborate, compromise, and integrate suddenly" in the context of their community through act of participating in *civic engagement* (Spiezio, in Jacoby & Associates, 2009, p. 85). It develops further still as they consider *citizenship* according to "the feelings of empathy and efficacy necessary to true understanding and absolutely essential to the development of a sense of civic commitment" (Upton, 2013, p. 3). "At the heart of the educational experience" of this *citizenship education* is a form of learning that intends to foster "a concern for the social good" (Rhoads, 1998, p. 277), and this entire process is what I refer to as the development of sense of community.

2.1.3 Reflection.

Experiential learning describes *reflection*, an inquiry approach to the critical analysis of one's actions, decisions, or products, questioning what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach a certain set of goals (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996). Experiential learning draws upon the importance of reflection in the student's learning process during the second stage of the cycle, *observation and reflection*. It is considered in the context of the other stages of the cycle, as opposed to being singled out and defined separately. Kolb and

Kolb (2010) explain "When a concrete experience is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking and transformed by action, the new experience created becomes richer, broader, and deeper. Further, iterations of the cycle further deepen learning and its transfer to experiences in other contexts" (p. 27). Moreover, Kayes, Kayes, and Kolb (2005) explain, "These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts, from which new implications for action can be drawn" (p. 334). Thus, reflection has an important role in the cycle in that it functions in collaboration with the others elements of concrete experience, observation (which is placed with reflection), forming abstract concepts, and testing new situations.

One of the central practices of experientially based service-learning is reflection (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996; Jacoby, 1996). Service-learning students reflect on their experiences and engage in activities that publicly disseminate the service that was conducted and the lessons learned therein (The Center for Community Engagement, 2014). Service-learning teachers guide their students through academically facilitated reflection sessions (Kiely, 2005a) individually or collectively, textually or orally. Jacoby (1996) explains, "As a form of experiential education, service-learning is based on the pedagogical principle that learning and development do not necessarily occur as a result of experience itself but as a result of a reflective component explicitly designed to foster learning and development" (p. 6). Thus, reflection sessions are designed to cultivate among students a thorough awareness of nuances experienced in service-learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Therefore, in my study the students experientially engaged in service-learning *with* their community while practicing observation and constant reflection, forming abstract concepts, testing what they had learned in new situations, and engaging in concrete experiences. As the facilitator and participant observer of service-learning practices within my focus group, I have

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brought together "youth and the wider society through a process of service to the 'common good,'" thus stimulating "both learning and social development" (Krensky & Steffen, 2008, p. 15). In addition to the objectives of service-learning, I infused the objectives of experientially defined arts-based learning within my study as well. In the next section, I explain how arts-based learning defines the central components of my study.

2.2   ARTS-BASED LEARNING

Arts-based learning is an arts-infused method of experiential education that investigates ways of knowing oneself, one's world, others in the world, and one's role in the world (Eisner, in Knowles & Cole, 2008). As an experientially based method of education, "Arts-based learning [ABL] is a creative strategy with the potential to engage learners, foster understanding of multiple perspectives, and simultaneously connect cognitive and affective domains of learning" (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013, p. 53). Educational objectives include proficiency with discipline-specific criteria and creative self-expression (Krensky & Steffen, 2008). ABL creates a discursive space to meet these objectives. Such a space contains inherent ambiguity in artistic processes, and the cognitive dissonance therein "often sparks growth and learning" (Higgs, 2008, 554). Thus, students engaged in ABL are aesthetically investigating their world and their place in the world.

Therefore, *arts-based service-learning* is the integration of arts education and service-learning, bringing "together the power of the arts with the essential components of service-learning in a mutually empowering way" (Krensky & Steffen, 2008, p. 14). It is manifested as the focus of the community service itself that places art in the community, and/or the "teaching

method to fulfill arts-based educational objectives" (p. 15), such as an embedded method of reflection. As the former, arts-based service-learning engages "students as active participants in service-learning initiatives by researching and identifying community needs and social justice issues that become the focus of the classroom art projects, performances, and/or exhibitions" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 4). As the latter, arts-based service-learning "incorporates multiple challenging [arts-based] reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself, one's relationship to society, [and] one's relationship to the arts" (p. 12). My study incorporates both methodologies. Thus, service-learning experiences provide the inspirational context for the aesthetic expression of my study that investigated development of sense of community.

As previously mentioned, the Tennessee Arts Commission outlines *arts-based* service-learning. Below is the un-altered outline they provide that defines the distinguishing arts-based features:

1) Explore a community need *through the arts*.

2) Prepare to address the need *through the arts*.

3) Create the change through service.

4) Learn through reflection.

5) Share the *arts-based* service-learning project with the community through presentation, performance, and/or exhibition. (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, pp. 17-19) [Emphasis added]

Each stage is performed through the arts, and includes instruction on arts skills. Practices of reflection "incorporate assessment of art skills and vocabulary" and "document and highlight the process of reflection through creation" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 19). Thus, according to this

outline, arts-based service-learning "actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant arts *and* service activities" (p. 12).

2.2.1   Reflective artmaking.

Arts-based learning defines *reflective artmaking* (Milne, 2000), an intentional and engaging method of arts-based inquiry and reflection on a set of experiences or pedagogical practices. Thus, it is a process and a symbiotic relationship of arts-based education and reflection. As a theoretical construct created and investigated by Milne (2000) in her dissertation study, she focuses on art educators and the benefits of reflective artmaking whilst teaching art. In past studies where arts-based education overall has been coupled with reflection, researchers found that the practice of reflection was enriched by the arts (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; Jeffers, 2000; Roy & Cho, 2006). Milne takes this concept of reflective artmaking further by investigating the nuances of the relationships between reflection and artmaking.

Milne's (2000) study provides substantial insight into my study on what I am referring to as *reflective artmaking service-learning*. Her terminology and set of concepts are appropriate for my study. Therefore, I have borrowed Milne's terminology and set some of the framework of my experientially and aesthetically-based study in service-learning upon the research she has previously conducted. While my study is not focused primarily upon the concept of reflective artmaking, it stands rather as one of three central theoretical constructs under my review.

In Milne's study, the process of reflective artmaking was considered in its relationship to art educators and their search for meaning in their pedagogical practices, and in my study, I consider its efficacy for students engaged in reflective artistic practices within a service-learning environment. It is used as a method for guiding the process of eliciting thoughtful understanding

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and meaning-making among my sample of students. It has proven itself useful for my study because, as Milne (2000) charges, "others who decide to engage in reflective artmaking will be able to develop yet another form of reflective artmaking in their personal classrooms and studios" (p. 215). I drew upon Milne's findings and integrated the process of reflective artmaking into the essence of my study.

Also valuable for my study, the findings revealed by Milne (2000) suggest that reflective artmaking considers the variations in modality for engaging in the process of reflective artmaking. She suggests "that instructors provide their students with opportunities to express their understandings in the modality in which they feel most comfortable" (p. 214). As Brown and Leavitt (2009) observe, during arts integrated reflection activities, students can demonstrate their learning through "multiple forms of documentation, layers of analysis, processes of individual and collaborative assessment, and varied reviewers" (p. 17). Milne (2000), in fact, describes that her personal development of reflective artmaking occurred in layers with multiple artifacts and modalities, thus taking on "many forms" (p. 205). Michelli, Holzer, and Beven (2011) of the Lincoln Center Institute would agree, arguing that creativity and imagination naturally materialize from such aesthetic experiences in education. The arts are appropriately employed in reflective processes, because such aesthetic experiences allow learners to reflect in diverse ways and draw out from within themselves new ways of knowing (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; Michelli, et al., 2011; Milne, 2000). Moreover, art allows the artist to express what they have come to understand about their experience for others to understand and appreciate, as "art informs us about things that we didn't have the opportunity to experience directly" (Eisner, 1990, p. 34).

Reflective artmaking is especially appropriate in service-learning. The process is a continual cycle of reflection and action (Kolb, 1984) as service-learning students engage in activities that publicly disseminate the service that was conducted and the lessons learned therein while engaging in the continuous act of reflection and action (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996). Therefore, when the arts are enmeshed in the strategically facilitated practice of reflection, such as Milne's (2000) reflective artmaking, Price, Cassella, and Pigza (2006) contend,

> The process of artistic reflection challenges students to think metaphorically, conceptually, visually, and through color and line about their service-learning experiences. While artistic expression may be challenging for some students, it does allow different learning styles a place in intellectual pursuit. Students may be asked to write a poem, select a song or photo, or draw something that reflects their response to service-learning. (p. 28)

Reid (1983) explains that while the artist knows perhaps "dimly and schematically" what he wants to create, he does not know entirely "what he is going to create before he creates. He comes to know in the occurrent act of creating" (p. 38). Thus, reflective artmaking can be used as a means of deciphering what is happening in an individual art-maker's thought process and way of knowing the world around him or her.

2.2.2 Capacities-based analysis.

Arts-based learning explains *The Capacities for Imaginative Learning*, which are a list of guidelines developed by The Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education for infusing, integrating, and assessing the arts in education. Dewey's (1934) work with *Art as Experience* has served the Lincoln Center Institute by providing foundational concepts regarding the artist,

his/her art, and experience. He states that "a beholder must create his own experience," a process that requires ordering and organization, creating, recreating, and perceiving a work of art and the experiences related therein (p. 54). "The artist selected, simplified, clarified, abridged and condensed according to his interest," and, furthermore, "the beholder must go through these operations according to his point of view and interest." The Lincoln Center Institute uses Dewey's approaches to *perception* as groundwork for their practices (Holzer, 2007).

From this Dewey-based foundation, the Lincoln Center Institute advocates and redefines the value of *imagination* and *creativity* among learners. Holzer (2007) explains that the Lincoln Center Institute does so through exploring art-making skills, rather than "teaching skills in the service of creating an art product (as in traditional arts education)" (p. 1). The Lincoln Center Institute's desire is to see the "cognitive capacity" of imagination be "nurtured in elementary education as a way to set the foundation for later imaginative growth though middle school, high school, and college" (Holzer, 2009, p. 2). The Lincoln Center Institute contends that the most effective method of fostering this cognitive capacity of imagination is through "studying complex works of art through experiences with the art form and its context," a practice that goes beyond the traditional structure of lessons in the arts.

Imagination and *creativity* have an intimate relationship within aesthetic education, sharing similar, yet distinct, definitions. Robinson (2001), an advocate for creativity in education, defines *imaginative thought* as "envisaging new possibilities" (p. 115). Linking creativity directly to imagination, he defines *creativity* as being "imaginative processes with outcomes in the public world." Lincoln Center Institute has built its foundations upon this relationship, describing aesthetic education according to this relationship between creativity and imagination. However, they go further by contending that imagination is a process in and of

itself that warrants its own in-depth exploration as a precursor to investigating its relationship with creativity, an argument that is shared by others, such as the Imaginative Education Research Group in British Columbia (Egan, 1992).

Curiosity and *wonder* are important attributes to, if not the starting points of, *imagination* and *creativity.* According to Holzer (2009), arts infused aesthetic education within the Lincoln Center Institute explores and promotes the notion that creativity can emerge from imagination, and "if you want to discover new possibilities, you must wonder about things and be curious about them" (p. 2). Then, to create a new possibility and to "bring it into the world, you must have an image of it in your mind. This is a form of imagination. You make your inward image manifest in the outer world through creativity." The Lincoln Center Institute contends, "You must learn to imagine before you can create."

Based upon these understandings of imagination, creativity, curiosity, and wonder, the Lincoln Center Institute has devised a set of core concepts that are central for their educational practices, and they are referred to as Capacities for Imaginative Learning. The core components of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning are noticing deeply, embodying, questioning, identifying patterns, making connections, exhibiting empathy, living with ambiguity, creating meaning, taking action, and reflecting/assessing. Holzer (2009) describes the ten "capacities" in aesthetic education as follows:

> **Noticing Deeply:** To identify and articulate layers of detail in a work of art or other object of study through continuous interaction with it over time.
>
> **Embodying:** To experience a work of art or other object of study through your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that experience.
>
> **Questioning:** To ask questions throughout your explorations that further your own

learning; to ask the question, "What if?"

Identifying Patterns: To find relationships among the details that you notice, group them, and recognize patterns.

Making Connections: To connect what you notice and the patterns you see to your prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to text and multimedia resources.

Exhibiting Empathy: To respect the diverse perspectives of others in the community; to understand the experiences of others emotionally, as well as intellectually.

Living with Ambiguity: To understand that issues have more than one interpretation, that not all problems have immediate or clear-cut solutions, and to be patient while a resolution becomes clear.

Creating Meaning: To create your own interpretations based on the previous capacities, see these in the light of others in the community, create a synthesis, and express it in your own voice.

Taking Action: To try out new ideas, behaviors or situations in ways that are neither too easy nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what you have learned in your explorations.

Reflecting/Assessing: To look back on your learning, continually assess what you have learned, assess/identify what challenges remain, and assess/identify what further learning needs to happen. This occurs not only at the end of a learning experience, but is part of what happens throughout that experience. It is also not

the end of your learning; it is part of beginning to learn something else. (pp. 11-12)

These ten capacities within aesthetic education aid in the analysis my arts-based research, because they provide concepts that can guide my analysis of experiences. For example, the Lincoln Center Institute has found that "connections between the capacities and cultivating the imagination are, at their core, complex, and that they occur on many levels in non-linear ways" (Holzer, 2009, p. 13). My inquiry is explored from multiple angles through the multi-modal (Gardner, 2009) method of multi-media art production. My students engaged in multiple modes of artmaking as they reflectively considered the topics that I presented, and these multiple modes concertedly constructed a robust narrative regarding their experiences. Furthermore, the capacities' "possible relationship to different developmental learning patterns" can shed light on education research regarding learning styles, because students with different learning styles "benefited from the Institute's emphasis on using different entry points (aural, visual, and kinesthetic) to explorations of works of art" (Holzer, 2009, p. 17). Particular modes of artmaking were more useful to some of my students, while other modes were more encumbering. It was beneficial for my students to have opportunities to engage with multiple media and consider the reflective topics through multiple modes. Thus, a capacities-based analysis has enabled my insight into the nuances of my data, and it has yielded a diverse set of possibilities in my research.

2.3   SUMMARY

As both the facilitator and participant observer, I approached instruction that drew upon experiential methods of active learning designed to engage students in hands-on, interactive, and intentional styles of learning. Among the central practices to the partnership between "the processes of actual experience and education" were interaction, observation, reflection, and action (Dewey, 1938, p. 7) through service-learning. There was "a balance between the service and learning outcomes resulting from the partnership experience" (Flecky, 2010, p. 2), and because the arts had an important role in this process, the experiences are more precisely defined as *arts-based service-learning*.

By fostering imaginative learning through aesthetic education among my students as described within the capacities, the development of a greater sense of possibility in their lives and the lives of others inspired them towards developing sense of community. Greene (1995) asks, "If we can link imagination to our sense of possibility and our ability to respond to other human beings, can we link it to the making of community as well? Can we encourage the ability of young persons to interpret their experiences in a world they come together to name?" (p. 38). She further contends that a greater sense of possibility in their lives and the lives of others could even spring forth as a result of empathy for others over time. Thus, imaginative learning through aesthetic education in my study created opportunities for my students to consider the concepts of community in its multiple layers, including internal community (as an internal team of students), external community (as the students engaged with the external community), community building, civic engagement, citizenship, and the development of sense of community. Therefore, the capacities are an appropriate method of analysis for my study.

Furthermore, reflective artmaking coupled with service-learning elicited deeper ways of knowing. The findings of my study were constructivist, but not only by the pragmatist definition of constructing *knowledge,* where knowledge is defined by the experience. Rather, the students constructed *experience,* where experience is defined by the knowledge. The study was originally situated among constructivist discourses according to the original definition, so the findings provide insight regarding epistemological limitations therein. This was evidenced in the development of my students' sense of community. Swick (1999) explains,

> Service offers many opportunities for reflection: feedback about one's goodness, learning to improve one's helping skills, ways of seeing others as helpers, and experiences for renewing our sense of identity (Noddings, 1992). We validate our significance on the community (Kinsley, 1997) and come to realize that with our support other people can become skilled helpers in the community (Wuthnow, 1995). (p. 30)

Similarly, Eisner (1993) confides, "I came to believe then, as I believe now, that the process of image-making could help children discover a part of themselves that mostly resides beneath their consciousness. Art was a way of displaying to the children and adolescents with whom I worked dimensions of themselves that I desperately wanted them to discover" (p. 5). This would include the development of the sense of community that I observed among my service-learning students. The challenge, then, has become to decipher this process of meaning-making, to accurately recognize authentic discovery and understanding, and to evaluate each of these occurrences.

From the theoretical discussions presented in this review, I have illuminated the three primary theoretical constructs of my study: service-learning, reflective artmaking, and the development of sense of community. I have described how the nuances within these constructs

have coalesced and further explain the background to my inquiry. I have also described the constructivist dilemma between the theoretical framework of my study and its findings. In the next chapter, I describe the manifestation of this review into the methodology.

3.0   METHODOLOGY: EXHIBITING THE STUDY

Colored pencils clink against each other in the plastic box, Solomon puts a sliding paper cutter to work, and Lisa is pounding a stamp to better imprint its ink onto a page (at least, that is her goal). In between these sounds is that of Hanna flipping through a magazine to find the perfect image for her piece and laughing with Petin about the images she finds on the way. Questions speckle the sounds of creativity: "What color should I use for this?" "I like my horse photo here, but what do you think about it going here instead?" "Where is the fine point pen? Can I borrow it for a minute?" "How do you spell 'awkward'?" It is a workday for my group of rural, civically engaged homeschooling students and, with the inspiration of gentle fall breezes bending the sun kissed trees on the other side of the windows, the students are aesthetically exploring how to best express themselves through reflective artmaking.

In this chapter and those that follow, I begin with an anecdotal exemplar through a vignette, which gives the outside audience access to the narratives within the group. For example, I include the brief narrative above to exhibit the methodological design of this study, for it included many such days, and in this chapter, I portray these inspirational daytime workshops further. Beginning with an illustration of the kind of research that I conducted, I define the central descriptors that categorize the study. Next, I define the sample and population, I explain my selection rationale, and I describe my recruitment methods. Then, I explain the

instrumentation, process, and procedures that I used in data collection and my method of qualitative data analysis. Finally, I consider the limitations of the study.

3.1   KIND OF RESEARCH

This study is an arts-based ethnographic study. As defined extensively in the literature review, this study utilizes arts-based methods of research in data collection and analysis, specifically through *reflective artmaking* (Milne, 2000) coupled with service-learning. Students voluntarily engaged in arts-based practices through which I elicited reflective responses regarding previous and current civic engagement. The arts-based practices were multi-modal (Gardner, 2009) through the use of multi-media projects, including photography, drawing, creative writing, and collage. As arts-based research, this study involved the primary investigator (me) and the participants "in some form of direct art-making as a primary mode of systematic inquiry" (McNiff, 2011, p. 385). Consequently, this holistic practice is termed *arts-based research* (Eisner, 2005) because it is used as an aesthetic means of expressing what is happening in an individual's thought process and way of knowing the world around them (Dewey, 1934; Finley, 2008; Greene, 2007). It is *reflective* because it is an inquiry approach to the critical analysis of the students' actions, decisions, or products, questioning what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach a certain set of goals (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996). As such, reflection was experientially embedded and ongoing because I facilitated arts-based practices among my students throughout the duration of my study.

Ethnography is an anthropological method of inquiry in qualitative research. It is the study of the behavior, culture, and practices of natives in their own environment. Spindler and

Spindler (1987) explain, "Ethnographers attempt to record, in an orderly manner, how natives behave and how they explain their behavior. And ethnography, strictly speaking, is an orderly report of this recording" (p. 17). More simply stated by McCurdy, Spradley and Shandy (2005), ethnography is "the process of discovering and describing a culture" (p. 9). In my study, I ethnographically studied the culture of Christian homeschooling students in rural East Texas.

Ethnography places the researcher amongst the group being studied as either a member of the group, or an informed outsider, positioning the researcher with a perspective from inside the group. For example, I was the facilitator of the program and I have known each of the students for years. I was a member of the group through being both the facilitator and an adult friend. Furthermore, we share geographic and faith-based communities because we live in the same rural municipality and attend the same church. Therefore, as a member of the group, my role as researcher was uniquely positioned. Through ethnographic research, the researcher is not viewing the data as an *outsider* from the outside in, or *etic* perspective, where "meanings and categories […] are imposed on the data from the outside, usually from a theory or model, i.e. the researcher's viewpoint" (Jacob, 1982, p. 125). Rather, the researcher is an *insider*, translating key cultural themes from the inside out, or *emic* perspective (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, 2002), offering "meanings and categories that are recognized by members of the culture being studied, i.e. the native's viewpoint," (Jacob, 1982, p. 125). From an emic perspective, the researcher gains a unique understanding of the workings of the natives in their own environment by witnessing them first hand, speaking with the participants personally, observing the nuances that may be undetectable by outsiders, and drawing conclusions that are highly reliable. For example, as Kroeber (1948) states, the participant observer is that person who is uniquely positioned to "envisage his problems or objectives holistically" and make "his documents as he

works. He knows their occasion and context, he can more or less judge their bias, he can extend or reduce the scope of his inquiry, he can return with fresh insight to recommence it" (pp. 193-194). Reliability is therefore determined by the uniquely emic positionality of the researcher to observe the nuances of the data that only an insider could perceive.

Typically, ethnographers conduct prolonged fieldwork through the use of participant observation as an insider for an extended period of time (Savage, 2000). For example, the programmatic proceedings of this study were accomplished from October of 2014 to March of 2015. Although this was a short period of time, they were preceded by at least three years of personal interactions and observations of the group members beforehand. In most cases, I knew the students closer to five years. These years were enriching as an observational period during which I gained access to the members of the group by naturally becoming a member of the group. As an ethnographer, this unique proximity and sustained access to the data situated me to explore complex issues and the nuances therein (Pink, 2011; Savage, 2000). Pink (2011) describes the "culturally" focused and "observable" approach of ethnography: "It is the analysis of things (e.g., objects, discourses, social actions and performances) that can be seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled, and their characteristics, and the aim is at least in part, to reveal their cultural meanings – that is, the meanings that are thought to *reside in them*" (p. 269). Such ethnographic approaches to qualitative research allowed me to observe the deeply rooted cultural nuances and engage with the participants in multiple, diverse, and meaningful contexts that cultivated our relationships. Determining the length of the study is based upon the researcher's ability to collect robust data according to the purpose and goals of the study through what Savage (2000) describes as re-casting "what might be familiar and apparently irrelevant as strange and interesting" (p. 1402). I determined that five months would be appropriate because in asking the

parents and students about their interests and feasibilities, I learned detailed information regarding other academic and extracurricular commitments. After collecting the information, I began recognizing a meeting time and an overall study duration that were agreeable for each family. Thus, I determined that two months of meeting once a week for a couple of hours was within the range of feasibility for each family. Three months of follow-up procedures was within their range of feasibility, as well. A time frame beyond that which I selected for each of these categories would be overly demanding. This was the most that I could ask of these particular families at the particular timeframe of the study. After considering the goals of the study, I determined that I could meet my goals within the boundaries of each category defined by the families. The frequency and duration of the meetings, as well as the length of the study overall, would allow me to re-cast "what might be familiar and apparently irrelevant as strange and interesting" (Savage, 2000, p. 1402) and provide rich and robust data to collect and analyze.

As one feature of ethnographic research, *descriptive research methodology* presents the findings through considering data in relationship to the surrounding context in which they are situated (Polin & Keene, 2010). Consequentially, descriptive research is interpretative. As Sandelowski (2000) states, "All inquiry entails description, and all description entails interpretation. Descriptions always depend on the perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities, and sensibilities of the describer" (p. 335). Qualitative description research resides within a prescribed set of standards. For example, descriptions of data "must always accurately convey events in their proper sequence, or have descriptive validity, and the meanings participants attributed to those events, or have interpretive validity" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 336). As evidence of my descriptive validity, I provide my study's project sequence in Appendix B. To provide my interpretive validity, I provide my rational for deciding upon my project sequence in

Appendix B, as well as within the remaining chapters of my dissertation. In Appendix C, I provide further information regarding the sequence and rationale of my strategically selected conversation starters.

Ethnography is also an *iterative research design*, which is flexible, but "not random or happenstance" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 16). "Rather, it adapts as circumstances change." The *recursive* or *iterative* research design permits qualitative researchers to revise original formations, raise different questions, and come to different conclusions than anticipated (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). If qualitative researchers are not willing to refine their approach and reformulate what they observe in the field, they may not be able to fully analyze and interpret what they have observed. Thus, having prolonged access to the data provides the researcher with the opportunity to consider the study from new angles. Then, he or she may revise the methodology in the midst of data collection accordingly. Behar (2008) observes, "The beauty and mystery of the ethnographer's quest is to find the unexpected stories, the stories that challenge our theories" (p. 530). I collected such unexpected stories ethnographically within my study, and I offer some of them as opening vignettes at the start of each remaining chapter within my dissertation, as well as through further exploration and analysis throughout. I selected the stories to illuminate and illustrate the themes of the chapter, as well as demonstrate my study's descriptive and interpretive validity. As perceptions change, variables shift, and as situations change, the ethnographer can change with them and revise methodological practices in tandem to yield the most reliable results and conclusions. Through displaying my collection of unexpected stories, I demonstrate my ability to adapt to the changing variables that I experienced within my study. Additionally, I describe particularly interesting situations in which I found it necessary to revise my methodological practices towards improved reliability.

3.2   SAMPLE AND POPULATION

This sample of students is unique because they are homeschoolers between the ages of eleven and seventeen who are situated in rural East Texas. They have previously practiced civic engagement, and they actively engaged further in the service-learning project that I designed. The group, consisting of eight members, is small enough to be feasible yet large enough to provide substantial data. Therefore, the entire population of the group is included as the sample. Most members of the group were friends prior to the study. Each member of the group was at least acquainted with the other members prior to the study because their families are friends. Additionally, each member participated fully and completed the study.

These students represent the overall population at multiple levels. First, they represent a specialized community of Christian home schooling families in Texas. Parents from this population choose to educate their children privately according to Christian worldviews and family values, and I selected the students from this group. Second, the sample particularly represented the population of youth who attend the specific Baptist church in which they/we are members or regular attenders. It is a natural occurrence, not by design, that the majority of this church's population is comprised of home schooling families. Thus, the sample included eight children out of a church network population of about one hundred and fifty members and regular attenders (from the ages of middle school children to adults). Due to my prior experience in conducting similar arts-based ethnographic research in a service-learning context (Porter, Fahrenwald, Eschenbacher, & Donald, 2014), I determined that a sample of eight students was feasible while still maintaining satisfactory generalizability. Third, with further specificity, the sample represented a population of Christian home schooling families in rural East Texas.

The primary site for general meetings was one of the homes within the local home school network, and the sites for the service activities are local to the participants. The site was well suited for the needs of the study (i.e., space, supplies, safety, cleanliness, minimal distractions, and central location within the network). Because the students are from the homeschool sector, they are accustomed to meeting in homes for lessons, extracurricular activities, or other academic meetings. Therefore, a site that is home-based was a natural, appropriate, and comfortable setting for the general meetings for this sample population. From this locality, they reached out to the surrounding neighborhood through civic engagement.

My ability to engage in ethnographic research through emic fieldwork was facilitated by the access I gained to the group, which was in large part due to years of friendship and shared church membership. Additionally, they were immediately available, and I anticipated that they would be willing to participate voluntarily. Furthermore, I made initial contact with these students and their parents verbally and with the aid of a letter of introduction approved by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix D). In this handout, items I presented to the potential participants of the study included: 1) the aforementioned description of the project to parents that highlighted the service-learning and multi-media art aspect of the study, and 2) informed consent signature forms to be signed by both the students and parents if the students were under 18 years of age. If they were over 18, only the student was required to sign. I orally presented the study while I dispersed the document, which allowed me to clearly define the voluntary nature of the study and answer questions. The initial sample of students remained the ultimate sample, with each student participating fully throughout the duration of the study.

One incentive for both the students and their parents was the opportunity to participate in civic engagement and learn about issues therein, such as individual motivation, sustained

interest, anticipated community impact, actual community impact, public recognition of their service, and reciprocity. Civic engagement tends to be a subject difficult to accomplish comprehensively among rural schools. The issue is not that of priority, but rather best practices. In the case of this study, I learned that typical hindrances were related to awareness of substantive civic engagement programs (i.e., more rigorous than community service), local accessibility to such programs, or accessibility due to other academic/extracurricular commitments or responsibilities related to family (e.g., infants or small children). Consequently, participating in this program was of particular interest to this particular group of students and parents. The collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and researcher allowed me to introduce the students and parents to a distinctive academic experience that built upon any previous experiences in civic engagement, as well as introduce innovative ideas for those in the future.

3.3   INSTRUMENTATION

The instrumentation of this study was the arts-based (Eisner, 1991) method of multi-media reflective artmaking (Milne, 2000). *Arts-based learning* is the incorporation of art-making explorations into the classroom and teaching skills in the service of creating an art product (Eisner, 2005; Noppe-Brandon & Holzer, 2007). It can be used as a means of deciphering what is happening in individuals' thought processes and way of knowing the world around them (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 2007) through reflection. In past studies in which arts-based education overall has been coupled with reflection, researchers found that the practice of reflection was enriched by the arts (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; Jeffers, 2000; Roy & Cho, 2006). Consequently,

reflective artmaking (Milne, 2000) is both a suitable intra-group method of reflection within service-learning, as well as a suitable outward expression for external audiences.

I designed portions of the study according to peer-reviewed and scholarly reports regarding successful, verifiable, and reliable arts-based reflection projects that were conducted by other researchers, such as Porter, et al. (2014) and Foster, et al. (2016). If these ideas seemed appropriate for this study and I anticipated them to be interesting for my particular group of students, I considered them further and selected the most appropriate projects. Due to my education and experience in the arts, service-learning, research design, and educational practice and praxis (see Appendix A), I am qualified to have undertaken these decisions. In this manner, I constructed the course plan for the group's reflective artmaking service-learning experiences. I engaged the students in facilitated discourses related to service-learning topics, such as reciprocity, sustainability, teamwork, and responsibility (Jacoby, 1996) through the enmeshment of reflective artmaking and service-learning.

3.4   DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURES

Following best methodologies of ethnographic research, I collected data as a participant observer of a group of students that I brought together for nine sessions between October 2014 and March 2015. In other words, I was a member of the group by serving as the leader and facilitator of each meeting's proceedings, and I simultaneously observed the group and collected data for my study. Based on the experiential learning and arts-based learning theoretical foundations of the study, the design and the proceedings needed to be facilitated by an expert in both fields who

was capable of eliciting authentic and substantive responses. My academic credentials and experiences in both fields qualified me for meeting these requirements (see Appendix A).

Obtaining this positionality occurred naturally, because I had already ethnographically gained emic access to the members of the group. As aforementioned, I was considered one of them, an *insider*, and I had already gained their trust and confidence. This is an essential step in the method of ethnographic research (Spindler & Spindler,1987; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2002). By gaining the trust and confidence of the students and their parent-teachers, I positioned myself to collect more illustrative and substantive data, such as honest and authentic reflective responses, because the students are likely to be willing to participate in the project and to share their opinions with a facilitator that they knew and could trust (Frank, 1999). Thus, the first goal of becoming a member of the group was achieved at the start of the data collection stage.

From this position, my pedagogical practices that were designed for both academic intervention (as the *facilitator*) and generating data (as the *researcher*) included reflective artmaking practices. There was symbiotic duality in my roles. As the *facilitator* of the meeting, I briefly introduced particular service-learning topics and guided the students towards a better understanding of the selected topics through group discussions during each session. As the *researcher* of my study, these introductions were geared towards generating data according to the overall themes of the session. Such topics or themes included community, community service, definitions of service-learning, reflection, reciprocity, and teamwork. Following these introductions, I guided the students through arts-based practices that included multimedia art production, such as photography, layout and design, drawing, journaling, and collage work. The students conducted the practices individually or collectively according to my direction. I determined the appropriateness and individual or collective implementation of the practices

based upon their intrinsic nature, my pedagogical goals, perceived student interest, and practical availabilities of time, resources, and space.

My pedagogical practices that were geared to both academic intervention (as the facilitator) and generating data (as the researcher) also included orally based practices. I conducted systematic inquiry orally through discussions and deliberations. Worksheets, diagrams, and exemplars were visual aids. As the researcher, I was unable to take field notes during the sessions, because I was leading them as the facilitator. To navigate this challenge, I audio recorded each session with two digital recorders in differing positions in the room. I then took field notes after the session through both listening to the recording and personally reflecting upon the session. Additionally, I conducted audio-recorded interviews once per student at the end of the study. I transcribed all recordings.

I used pseudonyms on each piece of data to protect the identity of the participants. Originally, the students themselves chose the names according to their personal interests, a person that they knew and respected, a character from a movie, a term that described them, or a name they wished that they had been given. I adjusted some of the names, such as names that were related to fantasy or mythology, to reflect the themes within this study. Fictitious characters are not compatible with the objective truth discourses exhibited throughout my dissertation. Conversely, I selected historical names, such as Thomas (Edison) for the inventor in the group, or Solomon (a significant king in ancient Israel who constructed the Temple of the Lord) for the builder in the group. Ultimately, the selected pseudonym still reflected the personality, interest, or desired identity of each individual student. Parents and towns are not named in this study; thus, they were not given a pseudonym. Community members were given a

pseudonym. For further information regarding my adherence to the requirements of the Institutional Review Board, refer to Appendix D.

3.4.1 Course plan.

The process of constructing my course plan consisted of several steps. First, I considered the overall timeframe of on-site, local service-learning projects and their relationship to reflective artmaking projects. General meetings were needed prior to on-site local service-learning project meetings to allow for the students to observe a need and prepare to meet the need. Reflection occurred throughout and following each on-site, local service-learning project meeting. I therefore designed the course plan in this manner, with two weeks at the general meeting site to begin the overall project, several weeks of alternating general meetings and on-site local service-learning project meetings, and at least one week to conclude the entire project. I decided the number of weeks that should be allotted to each stage based upon the availabilities of time frame, resources, meeting spaces, field trips, etc.

Next, I considered the on-site local service-learning projects as I simultaneously considered the reflective artmaking projects. At the start of creating my ideas, it was important to present to the students an idea that was explicitly service-learning, as opposed to simply community service, so that the students could better understand the framework and rationale of the basic course plan. As the researcher, the purpose was to study service-learning. As the facilitator, the purpose was to show the students what service-learning looked like. This involved a delicate balance that required careful consideration.

The process began through reflection upon what I knew about the students and shared community. Together, we *observed a need* and then began *preparing to meet that need.* I

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initiated this process to guide the students towards service-learning, and the group built upon and took ownership of the process. For example, the shared local community had recently been devastated by wildfires, and this event affected each member of the group. I suggested that a project that could demonstrate their personal and community gratitude towards the fire department could be suitable and meaningful for the students.   Therefore, I developed ideas related to the wildfire according to the interests of the students and suggested them as a springboard for their own generation of ideas. I imagined the ideas based upon previous conversations with the students, their common locality, shared faith-based convictions, previous civic engagement, and individual personalities. Consequently, they approved of the ideas and decided to adopt and take ownership of them, building upon and making plans for the ideas according to their desires and interests as a group.

As a result, the group expressed their gratitude to the local fire department through handcrafted Thank You Cards and homemade cookies. They created these cards with elderly members of the community who may have desired to thank the fire department as well, yet whose gratitude might not have been explicitly expressed. With broadly defined ideas within a service-learning frame of reference, the students considered and discussed the ideas through *observing a need*, or sharing other observations of needs that they had perceived, and collectively making decisions regarding the needs upon which they would *take action*. This process provided the students the opportunity to *take ownership* of the ideas by selecting and/or refining them (or deciding upon entirely different ideas).

I developed the reflective artmaking projects while considering my on-site local service-learning ideas before the first meeting. As the researcher, it was important to incorporate customized reflective artmaking projects that would elicit responses according to the research

goals. As the facilitator, the reflective artmaking projects needed to enhance the students' existing understanding of civic engagement by being educative (Dewey, 1938). It was essential for the projects to sustain the interest of the students by being fun and engaging. Considering the strengths, weaknesses, and ages of the students was important as well, so the projects needed to be diverse and multi-modal to provide a wide-range of options to engage and to help them feel comfortable expressing themselves. The projects also needed to occur within the boundaries of the available timeframe, resources, meeting space, etc.

With a broad set of service ideas as a starting point, I was able to integrate the reflective artmaking projects that I had investigated and collected prior to the first meeting. With each reflective artmaking project, I considered its placement in the overall sequence according to what I determined to be most reasonable (for the description, sequence, dates, participants, and intentionalitities of the projects, see Appendix B: Project Sequence and Rationale, and Appendix C: Conversation Starters). I developed the sequence to provide structure and planning feasibility, yet maintain flexibility to provide adaptations (improvements, additions, or omissions) according to changing needs and desires. One challenge was to provide substantial planning for a project so that it was readily available for utilization, yet maintain a willingness to omit the project from the sequence if it no longer suited the needs of the overall scheme. Another challenge was developing an appropriate sequence, considering each project and relating it to the others on a timeline, designing a method of guiding the students along the experientially educative path of service-learning. Inspiring and sustaining the elements of interest and fun needed to be at the forefront of project development alongside the educative elements.

For example, students practiced *observing a need* in the community by considering and defining first *who* their community was through a collectively generated Poster Project adapted from Foster, et al. (2016) in which students drew their community according to its proximity to the group. They visually and orally considered which aspects and members of their community were most important and influential to themselves as a group and placed them within concentric circles that encircled the group in the middle of the drawing. It was a collectively constructed reflective artmaking project that simultaneously served as a *teambuilding* activity. Therefore, this project belonged at the start of the first meeting. I placed projects that facilitated reflections upon service-learning itself immediately following the service, such as reflective portfolio page construction specifically regarding the recent service within this study. I placed reflective artmaking projects that considered the entire project as a whole at the end of the entire project, such as culminating reflective portfolio page construction or the video.

After determining the overall structure and sequence of the project timeframe, as well as my initial ideas for service and arts-based projects, I drafted an overall outline of what I hoped to accomplish. This overall plan broadly addressed the primary goals of the study. For example, one goal was to meet during a particular time frame each week for at least eight weeks, and within this time frame certain components needed to be consistently present each week, for both the general meetings at the home-based site, as well as the local service-learning project site. Such components included an introduction to the meeting, a team building activity, at least one reflective artmaking project, and closing remarks that reflected upon what the group accomplished. The finer details fell into place as I considered the broad scheme in tandem with the specific project planning (Appendix B).

3.4.2 General meeting project design.

The general meetings were the primary method of conducting the arts-based reflections and collecting the data. During these meetings, all students gathered at the same time and stayed for the duration of the 1 ½ hour meeting. I shared information with the students, and I conducted the primary set of practices. I opened each meeting with a group discussion (typically reflective) or ice-breaker activity to help the participants warm up to the day's activities and to foster development of community. Next, I typically moved the group into an activity that explored and/or developed their understanding of the focal topic (e.g., reciprocity, community, metaphor, or storytelling), such as a group constructed comparison chart or an individually constructed bubble chart. Sometimes, it was academic in nature, such as a chart that mapped the similarities and differences between community, community service, and service-learning. Other times, it was more aesthetic, such as a workshop in which I defined and introduced the basic components of photography. At times, the students conducted the activity as a large group, including all eight students, and other times, the group of eight was broken up into arbitrarily selected smaller groups of two or three. I then moved the students into a reflective artmaking project that built upon the former activities.

The productions generated in these activities had the potential to be included in the students' Final Portfolios (DeZure 2002), which provided a culmination of, documentation of, and reflection upon the work they completed in this project. Beyond the study's purposes, these Final Portfolios could serve the students' personal purposes as well. As they engage with service work in the future, further their education, and/or consider potential employment opportunities, they could demonstrate their experience in civic engagement to other audiences by displaying their Final Portfolios and recalling the stories told therein. Their Final Portfolios could aid in the

practice of *sharing with their community* their experiences, contemplations, and transformative (Mezirow, 2000) interactions with community members. They could demonstrate their *process* of learning through sharing with others the *product* of the Final Portfolio itself (which is yet another part of the *process* of learning).

3.4.3   Service-project design.

The components of the service projects were inter-related. First, there was a general consensus that students wanted to work with the elderly members of the community at a local assisted living facility, specifically to offer friendship and conversation. There was also a general consensus to give back to the community's fire department by thanking them for the services they provided in combating the wildfires during the Summer of 2011. As a result, the group combined these desires by collectively making Thank You Cards for the fire department with the elderly residents at the local assisted living center. We brought our own art supplies, and the students prepared beforehand the messages that they wanted to write on the cards. Students did other activities while at the assisted living center, such as decorating cookies, playing games, and visiting with the residents. Following this part of the service-learning project, the students reflected on their experiences individually, collectively, and through multiple innovatively aesthetic practices.

Two weeks later, the students personally delivered the cards to the fire department on their own behalf, as well as on the behalf of the residents who were unable to make and deliver the cards themselves. They also delivered cookies that they had made prior to the visit as another expression of gratitude. They baked cookies for the fire fighters as a culinary aesthetic method of reflection prior to the service of delivery and during the service of baking. In return,

the fire department gave the group a personal tour of their fire station; as the largest station in the area, the tour was impressive. The group took photos, asked questions, touched the trucks and tools, and learned much more about the catastrophic wildfires that had devastated the community in 2011.

Following the service project, students practiced reflective artmaking regarding their experience. For example, they created portfolio pages that contained photos from the experience, text regarding their thoughts and information (journaling), and supporting aesthetic elements, such as drawings, stickers, and stamps. Reflection occurred during the process of creating the pages through the pages themselves, as well as through engaging with the others in the group in conversation and inquiry.

Afterwards, the group decided to create a video for the assisted living center (an idea I had suggested) to thank them for their time and the group's experience there, and also, to share about the group's experience in giving the cards and cookies to the fire department. Individual students created short videos describing their gratitude and what they learned from their experiences at the assisted living center and the fire department. According to the group's suggestions, I compiled the videos and photos into one video, and the group edited and made further contributions. I then finalized the video and delivered it to the assisted living center.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Data in qualitative research tends to be unstructured, or comprised of both formal and informal information (Jacob, 1982). In social research, data is characterized as a form of expression or communication that is, spoken, written, and/or image-based (Bauer, Gaskell, and Allum, 2000).

Accordingly, the data within this study was complex. Due to my prior experience with LINCS (Porter, et al., 2014), I knew that there would be a large quantity of complex data, so I decided at the start of the study to narrow the main concentration to the manageable number of eight participants. Having a manageable number of participants and a narrowed focus of types of data helped me to navigate the challenges of sorting, processing, and analyzing a large set of complex data. Furthermore, having a manageable number of students positioned me to comprehensively analyze each student's contribution over time and media.

Furthermore, I used the qualitative data management software NVivo 10 for Mac to aid in my analysis. NVivo allowed me to categorize my information and to discern patterns and relationships within the data. NVivo facilitated the organizing and coding of art productions, artifacts from the meetings, transcriptions from interviews, meetings, and the video project, and photos from the meetings. Different types of information were uploaded differently. For example, information in the form of Microsoft Word documents could be uploaded and coded in its original form.

However, image-based information was not as simple to upload in a codeable form because of the version of NVIvo I used. First, I scanned image-based information into PDF documents, if it could be scanned. I could then upload these PDFs into NVivo and code them as an entire document. Next, I processed differently the other image-based information that could not be scanned, such as digital photos and sculptures. Because my Mac version of NVivo 10 does not upload JPEGs (a core function of other versions of NVivo), I embedded my photos in a Microsoft Word document and uploaded that document, as per the suggestion of QSR International, the producer of NVivo. For example, I photographed sculptures, placed the JPEGs of the sculptures into a table within a Microsoft Word document, and gave descriptive textual

support in the column next to the column containing the photo. Similarly, I placed all other digital photos into a table within a Microsoft Word document and gave descriptive textual support next to each photo.

At this stage I encountered a coding dilemma, because PDFs could only be coded as an entire document within my version of NVivo. I needed to code specific selections of the image for more precise analysis of the data. To navigate this challenge, I relied heavily upon the use of *memos,* "a type of document that enables [me] to record the ideas, insights, interpretations or growing understanding of the material in [my] project" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). Linked to each PDF, I created a memo that systematically described information about the document, such as type, theme, title, page number (if part of the Final Portfolio), images, text, layout design, and notes regarding ideas, insights, interpretations, or my growing understanding of the material. Memos allowed me to code information that was un-codable in its original form. Once uploaded, I sorted the information into organized folders within NVivo and began coding.

In NVivo, coding begins with categories or containers that are referred to as *nodes*, and multiple subcategories can exist as subordinate nodes attached to each node. This is called a *hierarchical node tree*, and it is used in NVivo for organizing the data into more manageable structures that enabled my analysis of the data. It is a method of branching key elements of data from other key elements and then relating them to other key elements. The formation is similar to a tree with branches that relate to each other. A hierarchical tree node consists of containers for a "theme or topic within your data" (QSR International, 2008, p. 109) that are organized, "moving from a general category at the top (parent node) to more specific categories (child nodes)" (p.111). Large amounts of qualitative data, such as mine, can be very difficult to

manually organize and analyze in a methodical way for easy access and manipulation. NVivo facilitated this process in my study.

The coding scheme contained codes that I generated deductively. Aspects of the study were logically identifiable and were coded accordingly. For example, I coded data according to author or artist through case labeling. I also coded data according to type of practice, such as the modes of artmaking, including photography, drawing, creative writing, etc. I objectively determined such coding schemes deductively, because they logically belonged to particular categories without subjective determinations. This process was facilitated by the construction of *classification sheets*, a method of organizing that allows me to "see all the items assigned to a particular classification and see the attribute values set for each item" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). I used classification sheets to see how specific data were linked to specific students in my study. First, I created classifications for each participant by entering attributes in order to create a classification sheet. Next, I coded the data, such as art productions, transcriptions, and memos, according to the student to whom they belonged. This approach allowed me to store relevant data in a specific place for easy access. It further enabled me to analyze data by determining whether particular data was idiosyncratic, or part of larger patterns.

Deductively-generated coding was the predecessor to *inductively*-generated coding, wand it provided clarity. For example, the modes of artmaking were *deductively* coded according to the mode of the piece, such as a Final Portfolio page. The capacities that were exhibited in the page were determined *inductively* through my positionality, understanding the artist, the purpose of the page, the on-site service experience behind the photos and journaling on the page, the available materials for page construction, and also by observing the artist as he or she created the page. Through the combination of my expertise on the topic and my positionality as participant

observer, I was able to recognize the categories within the data. For example, the Capacities for Imaginative Learning (Holzer, 2009) describe attributes that define arts-based learning, such as embodying, creating meaning, living with ambiguity, noticing deeply, and identifying patterns. Recognizing these attributes among my students required a keen understanding of each one, as well as careful consideration of the students' personalities, interests, expressions, personal backgrounds, home life, school life, strengths, and weaknesses. This was a benefit to having a sample size of eight students. It simultaneously required careful consideration of the learning processes under review. Thus, as the participant observer, I was uniquely positioned to take into consideration the primary aspects of the entire study and the nuances therein, which allowed me to inductively generate codes.

Integration of deductive and inductive coding through *matrices* was a method of "cross-tabulating coding intersections" to aid in making "comparisons and see patterns" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). Figure 4 below is an example of a matrix:

Capacities and Modes of Artmaking (2)	A : Aesth. Em…	B : Baking…	C : Box 3D…	D : Collage	E : Creative Writing	F : Drawing…	G : Final P…	H : Journa…	I : Photography	J : Video
1 : Creating Meaning	188	72	42	194	50	193	179	369	142	15
2 : Embodying	192	65	48	209	54	183	211	391	160	13
3 : Exhibiting Empathy	95	45	34	72	32	91	83	166	68	6
4 : Identifying Patterns	43	21	9	42	20	50	61	107	29	0
5 : Living with Ambiguity	99	24	40	50	0	63	43	115	54	4
6 : Making Connections	170	55	12	185	44	189	190	347	137	7
7 : Noticing Deeply	164	50	23	178	33	144	146	323	116	4
8 : Questioning	35	14	12	29	2	45	27	59	16	0
9 : Reflecting Assessing	193	89	49	203	46	191	194	386	152	16
10 : Taking Action	188	56	25	179	21	146	137	321	117	15

Figure 4: Example of matrix query from NVivo 10 for Mac

In the following chapter (of which this matrix is exhibited), I use a matrix to compare the capacities with the modes of artmaking, which facilitates my understanding regarding which

kinds of capacities the students gained in arts-based learning. In chapter five, I use another matrix is to compare the capacities with the service-learning, specifically the projects and components that became a mapped-out sequence of stages that students experienced. The stages were an amalgamation of the common stages in the literature, specifically Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle and Brown and Leavitt's (2009) stages of service-learning. This matrix helps me to analyze what kinds of skills, awareness, or capacities the students gained in service-learning. In chapter six, I use a third matrix to compare the modes of artmaking with the meta-categories that I constructed. Here, I consider the project life cycle more intensely, and analyze how these relationships (i.e., these three matrices) illuminate the development of sense of community. Thus, my coding scheme allowed me to see which types of attributes co-occurred with which sets of outcomes.

I also investigate with the use of coding stripes, "colored bars in the margin of NVivo sources" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). See Figure 5 below:

Meeting 11-24-14 Transcription ☐ Edit

ME: Let's go backwards now, tell me one thing that you like most about the past service projects that we've done so far, a highlight.

GINGER: Any service project? Probably the Old Folk's House, they were really friendly.

SOLOMON: Mine was the Fire Department. To hear the different stories, it was pretty neat.

HANNA: Mine was making boxes. I loved making boxes.

PETIN: I was like, what do I do!

PETIN: Mine was probably the same as yours, going to the assisted living center. It was interesting and fun at the same time, to learn how to work with people who don't have the same mental capacities as they used to.

LISA: Sigh, probably making all the cookies and bringing them to to the fire department, because I know they liked them, they work hard and I feel sorry for them.

ME: I liked best seeing you guys enjoying your time. And I know that there are some different challenges especially as the assisted living center, but I liked seeing you guys navigating through those challenges in spite of the difficulty. I liked that a lot, it was fun to see. I was like "I hope that everybody will enjoy themselves, this is going to be really difficult!" And when I saw everyone working it out, I had a sigh of relief.

ME: Okay! Everyone take your seats, and we are going to work on an art project next. So do you guys remember what reflection was? What the word means?

Figure node/coding stripe labels (right margin): Coding Density; General Meetings; Sense of Community; 4- Reflection and Forming Abstract Concepts; Capacities--Based Analysis; Community or Community Building; Reflecting Assessing; Modes of Artmaking; Reflective Art-Making; External Internal MG (Them, We Outside); Box 3D Multi-Media; Reciprocity; Creating Meaning; Exhibiting Empathy; Taking Action; Embodying; Local Service-Learning; Civic Engagement; My Categories

Figure 5: Example of coding stripes in NVivo 10 for Mac

Likened to highlighting, coding stripes allow researchers to manage the data through viewing how they were categorized and to ensure that they were indeed categorized accurately. Coding stripes show the overlapping presence of coding for each conceptual node. Through the ability to readily see what sections of data were coded within which categories, I was better equipped to practice coding consistency.

Qualitative data analysis computer programs allow researchers to structure large amounts of qualitative research data "in meaningful and systematic ways, code that data with an extensive concept and variable scheme, and retrieve the data in ways that allow the user to evaluate patterns in the data" (Abramson, 2009, p. 71). The purpose of using a program such as NVivo was not to turn my qualitative data into quantifiable data to be used for statistical analysis.

Instead, NVivo allowed me to "reference and cross-reference occurrences in ways that make the analysis of patterns more systematic and less anecdotal" (Abramson, 2009, p. 71). Coding stripes helped to visualize patterns. For example, I could see how themes overlapped and related to one another. Upon reviews of the meeting transcripts, interview transcripts, art productions, and field notes, I analyzed the data further to determine if my themes and patterns were consistent with the data.

I was better able to make that determination through *queries*, analytical tests that "provide a flexible way to gather and explore subsets of [...] data" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). More specifically, I created queries that can "find and analyze the words or phrases in [the] sources, annotations and nodes," "find specific words or those that occur most frequently," or "ask questions and find patterns based on [the] coding and check for coding consistency among team members." In this manner, I selected, set up, and ran queries.

3.6   LIMITATIONS

I identify a few limitations in my study, predominantly in the duration of the study. It would be advantageous to increase the duration of the study to about nine months or more. The primary benefit of extending the study would be to collect more data. First, there would be more opportunity for an increased number of service projects. Second, the participants of the group would have more time to become acquainted with one another, perhaps yielding a stronger bond as a team. Third, there would be more time to consider and introduce other forms of reflective artmaking, thus providing a greater diversity of options in which the students may reflect upon their experiences. Fourth, there would be more time to revisit the student's preferred forms of

reflective artmaking, which would allow the students more opportunities to reflect upon their experiences in a manner that they have found to be most comfortable. These four benefits would enable researchers a clearer vantage point from which to analyze the data.

Another limitation is the ethnographic method of observation with regards to observer bias. It has been argued by some researchers that observer bias can be a negative factor in conducting research through ethnography (Jacob, 1982; Kroeber, 1948; Sutton-Smith, 1982). For example, Bauman (1982) states,

> One of the most fundamental commitments of ethnography, really a basic ideological principle, is to the necessity of accounting for the realities of a culture in its own terms, free of the bias inherent in the imposition of frames of reference, or functional imperatives, or a priori moral judgments from without. Anthropologists have a name for the violation of this principle, namely, ethnocentrism, and they view it as a cardinal sin. (p. 173).

However, Kroeber (1948) counters this and points to the benefit of the participant observer as that person who is uniquely positioned to "envisage his problems or objectives holistically" and make "his documents as he works. He knows their occasion and context, he can more or less judge their bias, he can extend or reduce the scope of his inquiry, he can return with fresh insight to recommence it" (pp. 193-194). My unique positionality allowed me to engage in such practices and collect robust and focused data. For example, I was able to recognize the students' desires and/or dissatisfactions regarding specific projects and directly make adjustments to the design in response. I was positioned to do so before, during, and/or after meetings. By closely tailoring the project design to the needs or desires of the group, I could collect focused data and maintain student interest in the study.

In a broader view of the study, the constructivist design itself can be biased as well. Despite its value, focusing upon *self* and reducing experience according to one's view of *self* is reductionist. By design, it is elevated "into a system that reduces everything else to a single dimension" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 232). Furthermore, it can be self-deterministic. The design itself determined the results in part. Elaborating upon Jacoby's (1996) explanation through inserting my own commentary within, learning and development did not "necessarily occur as a result of the experience itself but as a result of a [self-focused] reflective component explicitly designed to foster [self-focused] learning and development" (p. 6) according to the self-focused goals of the constructivist theoretical framework. The methodology of this study was *designed* to elicit responses regarding one's self regarding one's view of and place within community. Consequently, the projects supported this valuable focus by maintaining *self* as the central feature of questions and project prompts. While other levels of community became present in the findings, *self* was dominant. Presented further in subsequent chapters, this weakness is easily strengthened through the simultaneous implementation of other theoretical constructs, those that begin elsewhere or have a broader field of vision congruent with the Christian homeschooling sample, namely a Christo-centric focus upon *others* more than *self* (Acts 20:35; Luke 10: 25-37).

3.7   SUMMARY

Many scholars, researchers, and practitioners have argued that arts-based research can be a viable method of research, because it can be used as a means of deciphering what is happening in an individual's thought process and way of knowing the world around them (Dewey, 1934; Finley, 2008; Greene, 2007; Knowles & Cole, 2008). Art is able to reveal what is unspoken in

ways that science typically cannot gain access to easily (Bagnoli, 2009; Barry, 1996; Butler-Kisber, 2008). As McNiff (2011) observes, "Using art as a means of psychological inquiry grew from practical experiences in therapy and education where the core premise was that artistic expression could further understanding and resolve difficulties in ways not accessible to spoken language" (p. 389). It is from these basic positions (among others) that art has found its place in the practice of research, thus yielding the terms Art(s)-Based Research or Arts-Based Inquiry.

Research, in a general sense, is typically described according to its scientific attributes of inquiry, conducting an examination, and creating knowledge. McNiff (2008), a researcher in the arts-based movement in research, describes research in general as being "a process of disciplined and systematic inquiry where modes of investigation are determined by the nature of the issues being examined" (p. 388). Eisner (2005), a forerunner in the movement to incorporate the arts in research, offers his definition of the term by stating, "Research is a broad 'umbrella' process intended to enlarge human experience and promote understanding. It is a process that is concerned mainly with the creation of knowledge, or more modestly, with the process of knowing" (p. 9). It is an investigation into the processes and outcomes of knowledge.

But what is *knowledge*? How is it defined, created, experienced, and who determines what is categorized as knowledge? Does it explain one's experience, or does one's experience explain knowledge? Or can both be simultaneously *true*? These questions began to pull like a tidal current, steering me towards another course while I collected and analyzed the data. My findings revealed deeper issues between my constructivist theoretical framework and selected sample of Christian homeschooling students. The students exhibited subtle undercurrents of discontent below the seas of satisfaction with the overall project, and this alarmed me.

In the following chapters, I first display the seas of satisfaction, what the students predominately made visible to me. I consider the findings between three intersecting themes: 1) capacities and modes of artmaking, 2) capacities and service-learning, and 3) service-learning and modes of artmaking. The overwhelming responses from the students harken to the educative benefits and personal enjoyments of the project. Students appreciated the study, demonstrated learning, and expressed that they would like to participate in this "class" again in the future, if I offered it with credits.

Lying beneath these waters and making themselves visible to me at the end of the study were disconcerting responses, allusions to an unforeseen issue. Being an adult leader of the group and not a youth peer, I cannot determine precisely how swift or strong these undercurrents moved. However, from my vantage point, they seemed to be faint among three students, somewhat strong among one, and not at all present among the remaining students. What happened here? What could cause such an undertow? The answer lies in the theoretical framework of the study itself, and in the final chapters of my dissertation, I share my methodological insights upon this area of my investigation.

4.0 CAPACITIES AND MODES OF ARTMAKING: EXHIBITING SENSE OF SELF WITHININ COMMUNITY

The mid-afternoon light fills the large kitchen/dining room where Jo and I are meeting to discuss his portfolio and overall experience with the project. Both of our families are in the background somewhere making tea, taking care of the dogs outside, or popping in the Cars movie in the other room. On this day, his home has been the site of a marathon of creativity, a catch-up session to make up for a couple of meetings he had missed due to varsity-level basketball tournaments (which his team won second place at Nationals). We sit down with hot tea and begin to flip slowly through the newly assembled portfolio, a product in which he has expressed sincere pride.

Jo shares with me the meaning behind the pages and stories behind their photos, and he opens up when asked about what he had learned during our overall time together. Naturally, as a basketball player, his responses refer to the teamwork and teambuilding that he noticed and appreciated. "I learned a lot about the other people we were working with. Having them there, I hadn't really talked to them much before. I learned quite a bit about them." After more discussion regarding the teamwork involved in the service projects, he adds, "It was really fun to go out with friends and go support the community." Both of us taking sips of tea, I turn the conversation to the modes of artmaking within the project and their impact on his learning through civic engagement. I ask, "How did the art activities facilitate your learning in these

ways?" He responds with bright eyes and a smile, "It was interesting learning how to put everything together and it was mind-boggling just trying to grasp different ideas and put them together. Stuff like that. It was a fun experience today, doing that." I offer, "Mind-boggling how to represent everything you wanted to say in a way that was fun?" He replies, "Yes, it was hard to do. Challenging." Coming from a basketball tournament champion, I knew that "challenges" to him meant something thrilling, something that authentically engaged him in the process of learning. As he reflected about his basketball team in one of his portfolio pages, "We finally pulled it all together right before State… We fought hard and overcame what nobody thought we could and ended up winning third place at State and going on to Nationals and placing second!" He supports his reflection with the stamped embellishment, "the challenges of today." For Jo, challenges are thrilling and rewarding. The process of "pulling it all together" demonstrates that challenges for him are also educative. Therefore, the challenge of this project was an intervention in his learning.

For Jo, the learning processes of reflective artmaking and service-learning were inseparable in the overall project. His responses consisted of the "mind-boggling" enmeshment of both. Among the most striking examples are his portfolio pages that display his photographic "Who is *my* community?" project.

For example, on one page of the four-page series, Jo uses a stamp that was popular among this group, two hands clasping at the wrists, to express helping one another. Unlike others in the group, he angles his aesthetic embellishment *upward*, as opposed from side-to-side, symbolizing lifting another upward. Those to whom he reaches out are represented photographically on the page. His first photo is his family standing together, which could be interpreted as a symbol of familial unity, and he journals below the photo "Outreaching to

friends and family… [sic]” (Figure 6). His second photo is of his basketball team praying before

the final championship game, a symbol of camaraderie and/or spiritual unity, and he journals

below the photo, “Faith is my Rock” (Figure 6). Included next to this second photo is his drawn

image of a rock, an arrow pointing the text to the rock, the label “rock” beside it, an image of the

Christian cross, and an opened Bible.
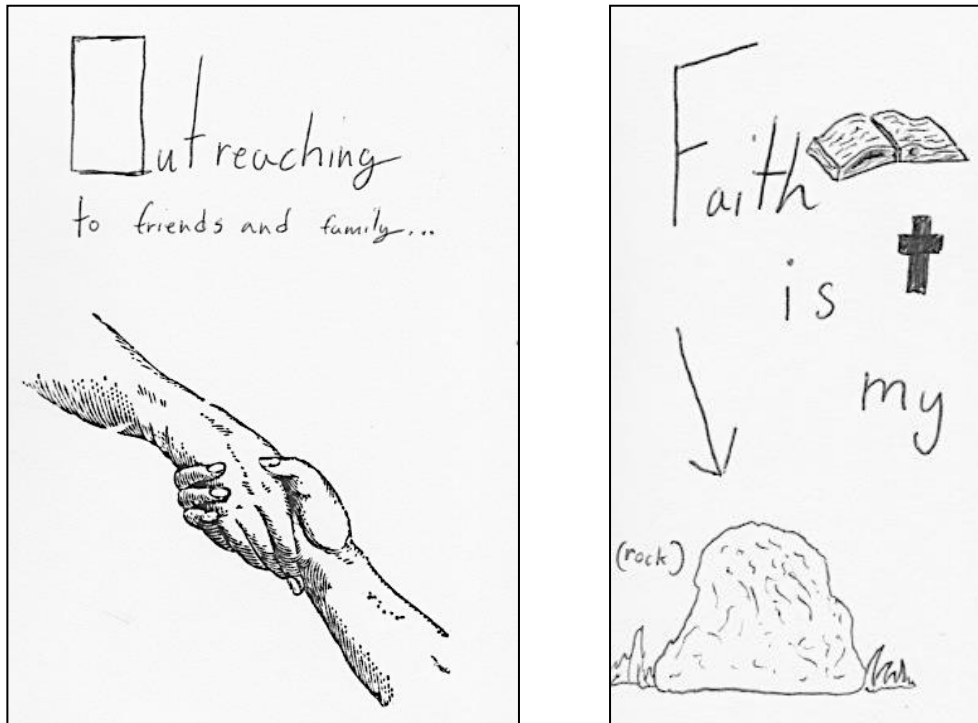
Figure 6: Jo's Final Portfolio page about "Outreaching to friends and family"

Displaying his community aesthetically was an exercise in symbolic representation of his

role in his community. He is the “maintainer,” he told me in my interview with him, “someone

who keeps everything in working order.” Such a person is the one who takes care of others,

keeps them on track. He helps them along by lifting them up when they are down (clasping

hands stamp). Referring to his Christian faith, Christ is the solid rock upon which he stands

when he is caring for others as the "maintainer." Consequently, he sees himself as *maintaining* an important role within his closest realms of community.

He expanded his explanation of the pages verbally during my interview with him. As we flipped through and lingered upon each page, it was evident to me that "trying to grasp the ideas and put them together" fostered meaning-making, problem solving, and a host of other learning interventions. I expound on his story and present the culmination of his symbolic representation in Chapter 8 through his textually imaged Self-Portrait of himself in his community.

In this chapter, I present my findings within the "mind-boggling" enmeshment of themes by exhibiting recognized patterns and the nuances therein. My initial findings surprised me, and as I continued to work with the data, more layers of understanding became visible to me. Like a large, showy heirloom rose continues to blossom in the sun, more themes related to the development of sense of community emerged with diligent systematic documentation through my capacities-based analysis of the reflective artmaking service-learning experiences within my study.

This chapter's exhibition of findings regards the two intersecting themes of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning and the modes of artmaking. This focus illuminates what kinds of capacities the students gained in arts-based learning as it was coupled with service-learning. Although the learning processes exist as a cohesive, inseparable unit, I am able to hold a magnifying glass to the modes of artmaking to display its unique relationship with both processes.

4.1   INITIAL QUERY RESULTS

NVivo 10 for Mac's *query* function is "a flexible way to gather and explore subsets of [my] data" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). Beginning with an exploration of the *matrices query* function allows me to "ask questions and find patterns based on [my] coding" (QSR International, 2016, n.p.). It provides an initial insight into how the components exist in *correlation* to one another, or "a relation existing between phenomena or things" (Merriam-Webster, 2016, n.p.). Figure 7 below displays NVivo's cross tabulation between the capacities and the modes of artmaking.

Capacities and Modes of Artmaking (2)	A : Aesth. Em...	B : Baking...	C : Box 3D...	D : Collage	E : Creative Writing	F : Drawing...	G : Final P...	H : Journa...	I : Photography	J : Video
1 : Creating Meaning	188	72	42	194	50	193	179	369	142	15
2 : Embodying	192	65	48	209	54	183	211	391	160	13
3 : Exhibiting Empathy	95	45	34	72	32	91	83	166	68	6
4 : Identifying Patterns	43	21	9	42	20	50	61	107	29	0
5 : Living with Ambiguity	99	24	40	50	0	63	43	115	54	4
6 : Making Connections	170	55	12	185	44	189	190	347	137	7
7 : Noticing Deeply	164	50	23	178	33	144	146	323	116	4
8 : Questioning	35	14	12	29	2	45	27	59	16	0
9 : Reflecting Assessing	193	89	49	203	46	191	194	386	152	16
10 : Taking Action	188	56	25	179	21	146	137	321	117	15

Figure 7: Number of mentions of each capacity by different modes of artmaking

The columns outline the specific modes of artmaking in alphabetical order. The name and description of each mode are below (see Appendix B for more information):

A: Aesthetic embellishments: Textual or image-based embellishments incorporated into art productions, including stickers, stamps, and artifacts, are referred to as aesthetic embellishments.

B: Baking or Decorating Cookies: A component of two on-site service projects, the art of baking or decorating cookies facilitated reflection among the students at home while they made the cookies to express their gratitude and concern for the residents of their community. As Hanna observed, "It's like art on a cookie!"

C: Box 3D: Inspired by Colucci (2007), the Box 3D Project was a multi-media assemblage upon and within a box in which the students reflected upon how they viewed themselves individually at the assisted living center service project, both inside and outside. They considered the questions, "What did we see on the outside of you? What was actually going on inside of you?" They presented their responses through pictures, colors, or text. Responses regarding the outside of the individual student were expressed on the outside of the box, and likewise those regarding the inside of the individual were expressed on the inside of the box.

D: Collage: Butler-Kisber (2008) defines collage as, "The process of cutting and sticking found images and image fragments from popular print/magazines onto cardstock" (p. 265). The assemblage of clippings of magazines, newspapers, photos, or other text and images together to express an idea or concept. The mode of collage was practiced through constructions of metaphor (entirely collage), and

image and textual mixed-media assembled on Final Portfolio pages or a box (Box 3D Project) as a collage.

E: Creative Writing: Inspired by Colucci (2007) and Krueger (1998), the Creative Writing Project refers to the selected mode of creative writing, such as poetry, prose, short story, cartoon, acrostic, speech, etc., in which students expressed a compelling story (similar to a campaign or advertisement) to show others why they should want to participate in service-learning projects.

F: Drawing or Painting: The practice of applying pen, pencil, marker, or paint brush to an object to create an image is referred to as drawing or painting.

G: Final Portfolio: Inspired by my participation with the Learning Integrated with Needed Construction and Service (LINCS) program (Porter, et al. 2014), the Final Portfolio Project resembles a scrapbook. It is the collection of textual or image-based, student generated art productions contained in a hardback bound book that documented and exhibited the entire reflective artmaking service-learning project as the students perceived it from their perspective and expressed in their own voice.

H: Journaling: The practice or product of textually documenting and/or reflecting upon themes, art projects, or on-site service projects is referred to as journaling. The students *journaled*, and the product was referred to as *journal* or *the journaling*.

I: Photography: The practice of taking photos in this study is called Photography. Students used photos among the collages, which they constructed upon portfolio pages and boxes. Students also practiced photography through the specific

Photography Project that expressed who/what influenced their individual understanding of their community.

J: Video: The Video Project is a video montage of photos from the on-site service projects and video recordings of the students (and myself) sharing what we did, what we liked, what we learned, and our gratitude towards the members of our community. I delivered this video to the assisted living center (one of the two service project sites).

The rows outline the Capacities for Imaginative Learning. The name and description of each capacity (Holzer, 2009, pp. 11-12) is listed alphabetically (by NVivo) as follows:

1: Creating Meaning: "To create your own interpretations based on the previous capacities, see these in the light of others in the community, create a synthesis, and express it in your own voice."

2: Embodying: "To experience a work of art or other object of study through your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that experience."

3: Exhibiting Empathy: "To respect the diverse perspectives of others in the community; to understand the experiences of others emotionally, as well as intellectually."

4: Identifying Patterns: "To find relationships among the details that you notice, group them, and recognize patterns."

5: Living with Ambiguity: "To understand that issues have more than one interpretation, that not all problems have immediate or clear-cut solutions, and to be patient while a resolution becomes clear."

6: Making Connections: "To connect what you notice and the patterns you see to

your prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to text and multimedia resources."

7: Noticing Deeply: "To identify and articulate layers of detail in a work of art or other object of study through continuous interaction with it over time."

8: Questioning: "To ask questions throughout your explorations that further your own learning; to ask the question, 'What if?'"

9: Reflecting/Assessing: "To look back on your learning, continually assess what you have learned, assess/identify what challenges remain, and assess/identify what further learning needs to happen. This occurs not only at the end of a learning experience, but is part of what happens throughout that experience. It is also not the end of your learning; it is part of beginning to learn something else."

10: Taking Action: "To try out new ideas, behaviors or situations in ways that are neither too easy nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what you have learned in your explorations."

In reviewing this list, I was interested in further investigating the Final Portfolio Project, for I was surprised that it was *not* frequently correlated to the capacities. Because it was a central feature of the entire reflective artmaking service-learning project, it should have shown more of a correlation. To better understand the dilemma, I further analyzed the Final Portfolio Project category.

4.2   FURTHER ANALYSIS: FINAL PORTFOLIO PROJECT

Through the Final Portfolios, the students documented and exhibited the entire reflective artmaking service-learning project as they perceived it from their perspectives and expressed in their own voices. Therefore, I expected more of a correlation between the capacities and Final Portfolios. Each student created his or her own book, the contents were created according to his or her individual perspective, and each student kept the book that he or she created. These books, which I provided, were 8 1/2"x11" and contained clear sleeves into which art productions could be inserted. The book closely resembled a well-developed *scrapbook*, "an album in which pictures, newspaper clippings, etc., may be pasted or mounted" (Dictionary.com, 2016, n.p.). For this study, I referred to them as Final Portfolios.

The scrapbook-like Final Portfolio Project was inspired by my prior participation with the international service-learning program Learning Integrated with Needed Construction and Service (LINCS), and the idea was an adaptation from the academically reflective scrapbooks we created therein (Porter, et al., 2014). From 2006 to 2008, I participated in the two-semester set of courses designed and led by Dr. Maureen Porter at the University of Pittsburgh in partnership with ProWorld. I was an undergraduate student participant in 2006 and the graduate student facilitator in 2008. In both "cohorts," I gained insight into the design of arts-based preparation and reflection exercises that Dr. Porter pioneered in through the LINCS program. Among many other features of the program, I was particularly impressed by the scrapbook projects, and I adapted the concept for this study, referring to the final product as Final Portfolios. Within the pages of the Final Portfolio, the students aesthetically expressed their reflections through multiple modes of artmaking, including photography, creative writing, drawing, layout design, and collage.

Thus, with the last page of the Final Portfolios containing a copy of the video we created, the portfolios were comprised of every mode of artmaking, or at least they were guided in that direction. Although some students decided to omit a project, such as the 3D Box Project, the remaining modes of artmaking were still represented in the Final Portfolios. Consequently, I expected the Final Portfolios to have more of a correlation in the matrix query. On the contrary, it appears that the Final Portfolio Project did not elicit a strong set of capacities-based responses among my students, because the number of references coded was fewer than other categories.

However, a further investigation reveals a different understanding. First, the mode of artmaking titled *Final Portfolio* is defined by and coded according to data references that contained explicit mention of the Final Portfolio Project itself. One example flows from Hanna, a pseudonym that I shortened from her chosen pseudonym *Susquehanna,* the river in the Appalachian Mountains that was named after a group of Native Americans in that region. Hanna provided a river of reflections that flowed onto her pages, her enjoyment in creating her portfolio "kind of ran out over the pages," as she shared with me in during my interview with her. When I further asked Hanna in her cheery bedroom, the two of us sitting within the glow of her desk lamp and under multiple pictures of horses mounted on the wall, "Was there one project that helped you most? A certain art activity?" she responded, "Overall the book itself. The page making itself. I really enjoyed it. I had a great time. Every Monday, I was looking forward to it, to every Monday, working on everything. I wish it was still going on." Thus, one purpose of coding under the Final Portfolio node was to capture data such as Hanna's that exhibited reflections regarding the Final Portfolio category specifically.

Data references were also coded as *Final Portfolio* as a whole if the contents of the data reference were included in the students' Final Portfolios. As a result, I did not code every

section of every page contained in the Final Portfolios as small sections of individual contributions to the Final Portfolio category. This would have been an unnecessary and redundant practice. Because the specific contents of each page of each student's Final Portfolio were coded in detail elsewhere under the categories to which they belonged more specifically, the purpose of the Final Portfolio category was instead to exhibit data's overall placement into the Final Portfolio. Thus, the references coded in the column were less than expected because they were coded differently.

4.2.1 Petin exemplar.

Among other capacities, Embodying was strongly represented, as exhibited by Petin's final presentation of her Final Portfolio. Most of the students participated in a final presentation, *sharing the service with the community* (Holzer, 2009) through *reflecting and assessing* in front of a mixed audience of insiders (group members) and outsiders (parents, grandparents, siblings) to our group. In her presentation, Petin summed up her entire reflective artmaking service-learning experience by presenting two specific art projects. What intrigued me was that her selection of art projects was based upon what most clearly expressed, in her opinion, who/what her community was and her sense of self among her community. First, she selected her Self-Portrait because her sense of self was important to her. The second was a photomontage or collage that metaphorically represented her coming-to-know herself in her community and her place within it while participating in my study, which she refers to as a "class" (Figures 8 & 9). The audio transcription of the video recorded segment of her presentation is below:

"I am just going to [present] three pages that were really important to me.

So, the first one was my Self-Portrait Project. I didn't draw a picture of myself. But I drew things that reminded me of myself, like, I love to laugh and I love horses. Those were just a few things I thought would describe me.

These were pictures of four of our six pets that I lined up to symbolize importance to me. This is Silver Streak, our half-wild horse. He is my favorite pet. He represents how the places like the assisted living center or places like cancer wards, where I can go and I can minister to them. Those places are very important to me.

This is Rosebud, our naughty Great Pyrenees. She is not naughty. She is still a puppy. She represents the class we just went through, which is very important to me as well.

This is Love. She was our first pet. She is next in line. She represents our community now, because community used to not mean very much to me. But now that I have gone through the class it means a lot more.

Smokey is my least favorite pet. She to me is only good for knocking off the porch. She is what community used to represent.

These are the pages that meant most to me."

A friend *hears* the song in my heart and *sings* it to me when my MEMORY fails.

READERS DIGEST

Silver Streak, my horse represents Places like Nursing homes, and hospitals like priority. He is my favorite pet and one of my best friends, thus these places are important to me.

FRIEND
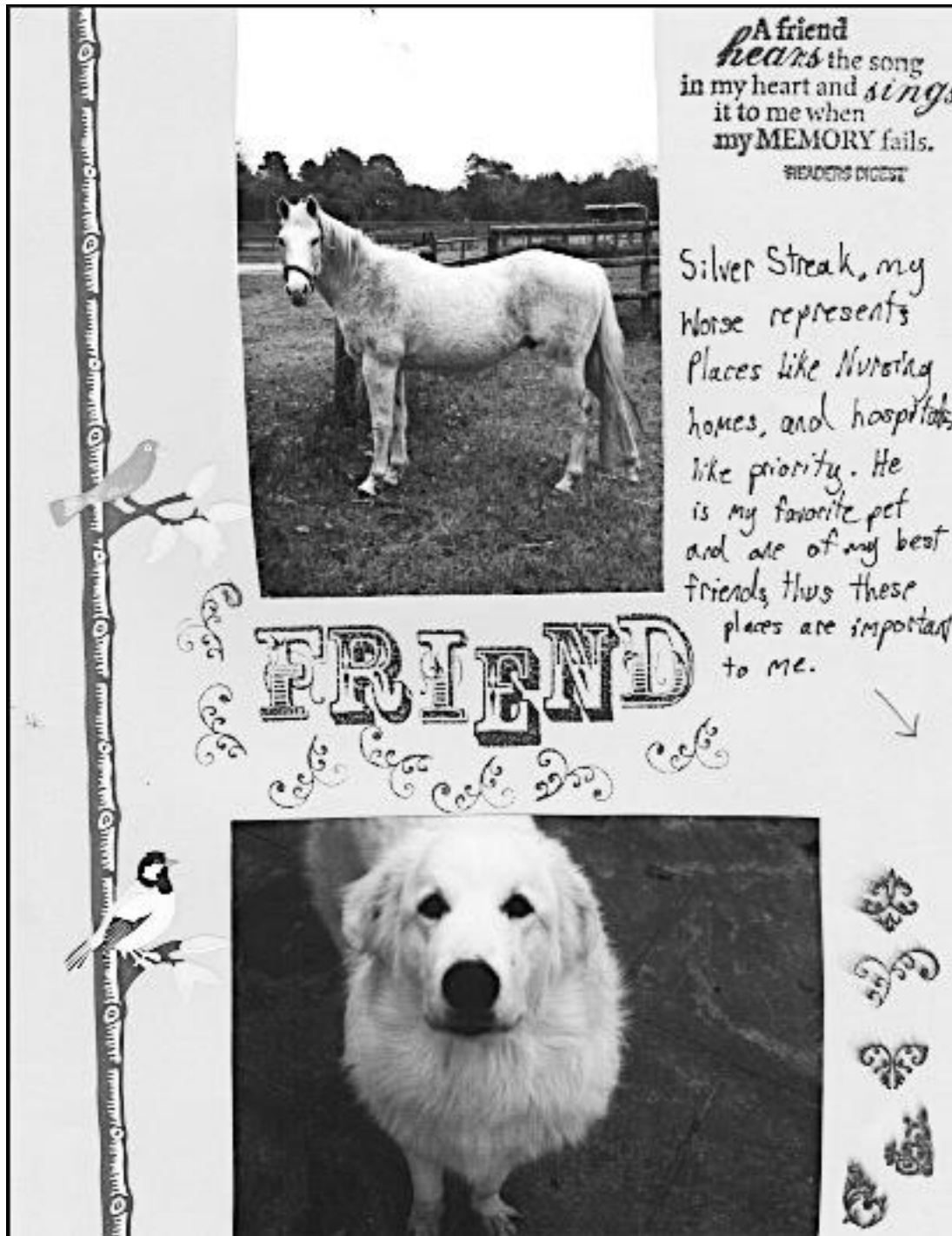
**Figure 8:** Petin's first page of her two-page set about her community via Photography Project

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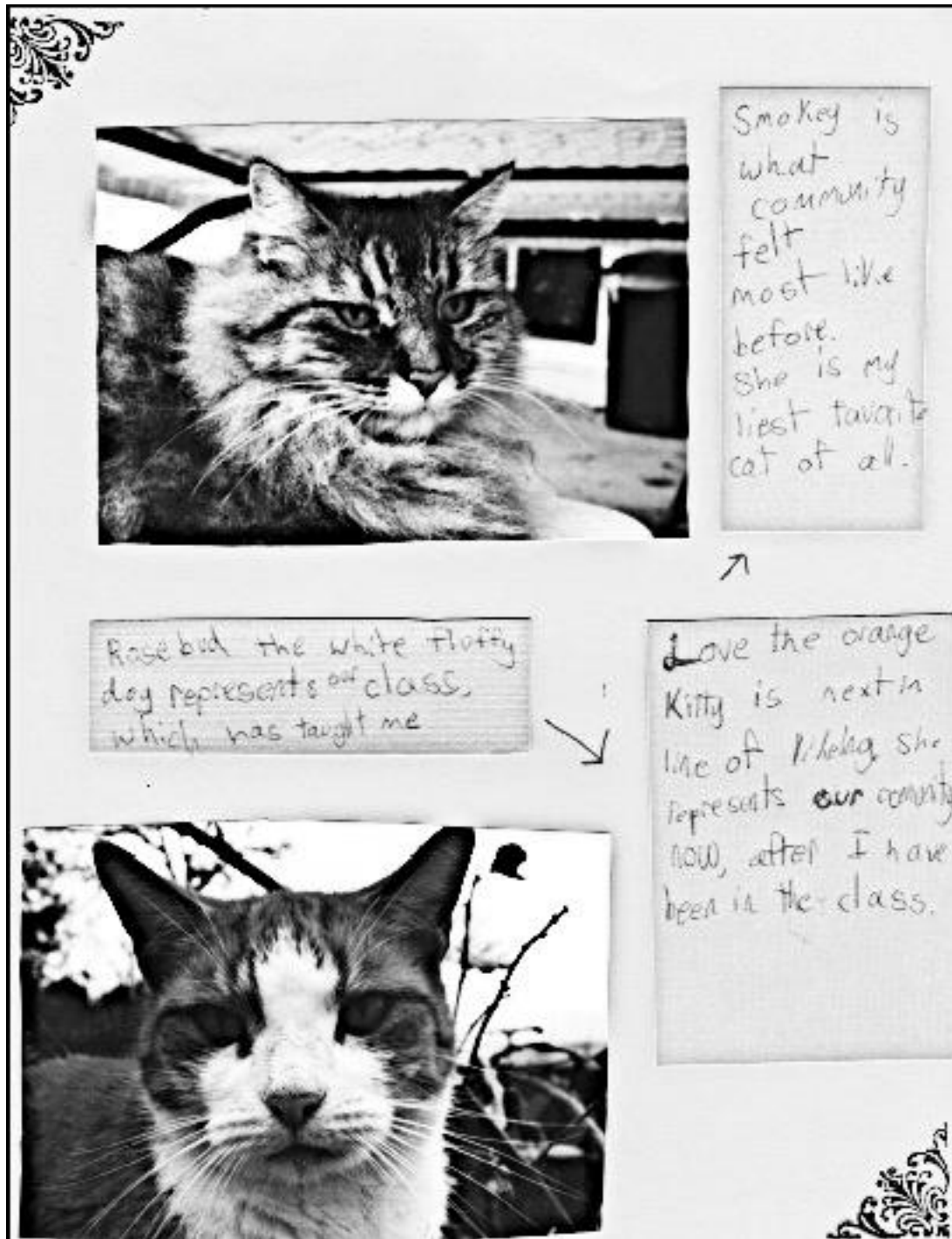
Figure 9: Petin's second page of her two-page set about her community via Photography Project

Here, Petin illuminates how her Final Portfolio construction enabled her to practice Embodying through and for the purpose of describing her sense of self. This process is what helped her

identify and see "the pages that meant most to [her]." She shows her audience how she views herself in her community and the transformation within, and that process as represented metaphorically by the photos of her pets at home. She began by expressing places that are very important to her metaphorically as her favorite horse. *Shikam petin* [sic]*,* the pseudonym she chose for herself, is what she heard to be a Native American term for *lover of horses*; the tribe or region from whence the term originated is unknown to her. She continued down the line of favorite and least favorite pets as a summary of her experience through these two projects. And she chose to share it with the audience with transparency. It is a difficult project to explain to someone who has no previous understanding of her aesthetically conceptual synthesis. But she was bravely willing to try to explain, and she worked through it as best she could. This effort further exhibits Embodying. The project helped her synthesize her experience as she explained it to the uninformed audience. The photos helped her organize her thoughts, her new experiences, and her sense of self, including how she views herself in her community and her role within her new understanding of her community.

4.3   FURTHER ANALYSIS: BOX 3D PROJECT

The Box 3D Project, a multi-media assemblage upon and within a box, provides an informative exemplar to further a capacities-based analysis. The students reflected upon how they viewed themselves individually at the assisted living center service project, both inside and outside. This project was especially appropriate because the on-site service project was not at all what they had expected. They had prepared for this project by discussing their desires and expectations; however, those expectations were dashed when the challenges of the service literally met them at

the door. First, they had a few residents with whom to interact, and these residents were not entirely coherent or mentally present. Next, the space was smaller than anticipated and the students did not have enough chairs. Furthermore, the activities they had prepared, such as games and conversation starters, seemed inappropriate, if not impossible. This service project was especially difficult for the students from the start.

These difficulties presented a unique opportunity to consider how they would *Live with Ambiguity* and *Take Action* individually and collectively as a team. Kiely (2005a) refers to this as *dissonance,* one category (of five) that describes "how students experienced transformational service-learning" (p. 9). "Dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience" (p. 8). The "high-intensity dissonance" that the students experienced while serving at the assisted living center "catalyz[ed] ongoing learning" (p. 8), which was exhibited through the process of *reflecting* upon and *assessing* their service experience through the Box 3D Project. The Box 3D Project was a presentation of how their expectations were challenged when they visited the assisted living center.

For "homework," students created a multi-media assemblage upon and within a box. Inspired by Colucci (2007), the instructions for creating this project were first, to select a box equal in size or smaller than a shoebox yet larger than a jewelry box (because anything outside these parameters would be difficult to work with). Next, the students were to think about how they viewed themselves individually at the assisted living center service project, both inside and outside. They were to consider the questions, "What did we see on the outside of you? What was actually going on inside of you?" With collaged pictures, colors, or text, the students answered the questions aesthetically. Students aesthetically expressed on the outside of the box

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how they thought others viewed them while dealing with the challenges at the assisted living center. They aesthetically expressed on the inside of the box how they actually felt while dealing with the challenges. I asked them to cover the box as much as possible. Students had two weeks to create this project. (The original design took one week. However, illnesses prevented us from meeting as planned.)

Therefore, two weeks after the service project, the students presented their Box 3D Projects to the group, and I facilitated further discussion about them and the service project. Through open discussion, students had the opportunity to verbally share how they *actually* viewed others. They could verify that a student's perception was accurate, or provide insight by clarifying misconceptions. I heard students say, "That is not at *all* how I viewed you!" "Yes, you did look aloof, but I did not know that you were so deeply concerned about the residents." "I needed time alone, too. I just needed to think." "You looked so comfortable. I had no idea that you felt as awkward as I did." Thus, the Box 3D Project provided ample opportunities for students to consider deeper levels of their civic identity, including how they felt others viewed them, how others *actually* viewed them, and how they viewed them*selves*. Aesthetically engaging with concepts regarding *perception* or *perspective* in this study allowed the students to clarify their civic identities. Engaging with the concepts further in the group context opened up deeper levels of consideration through group discussion.

From the rich and robust discussion regarding internal community, I then moved the discussion towards the direction of the external community. I further asked, "Did you feel inside like you were a part of the community, an outsider, or something in between? What community did you feel like you were a part of: our own little group, the assisted living center, the town at large, or the greater Texas community?" Solomon said, "I feel like I am more a part of the town,

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but not the state." Petin agreed with enthusiasm that she has been "wanting to feel more like a part of the local town community." Lisa also agreed and said that she has wanted to feel this way "ever since I moved here a few years ago." Others agreed as well, and the group found a common level or sense of community, i.e., a desire to be more a part of the local town community. Thus, the foundations of internal community building and the consequential team building were clearly expressed through the Box 3D Project. Sharing their lamentations, internal struggles, and/or excitements regarding the service project at the assisted living center, I simultaneously observed students exploring the topic of external community building from the sense of community that was developing internally. In other words, their external explorations were practiced as a group, demonstrating the beginnings of a team. I expand upon this development extensively in Chapter 5. At this time, I conclude that the Box 3D Project changed the direction of the study dramatically.

4.3.1 Lisa exemplar.

Through her Box 3D Project (Figures 10-12 below), Lisa exemplifies the *dissonance* (Kiely, 2005a) similarly experienced by the other students. Symbolized by a large, drawn question mark and textual self-conscious statements, Lisa's reflection on the top outside of her box expresses uncertainty regarding how to respond to the challenges she was facing. Lisa was not alone in her uncertainty. Ginger represented the dissonance between her mixed emotions through a magazine image of a mixer on the inside of her box. Hanna, too, felt the mix of "a little scared, awkward, loving, sorry, disappointed, sad, prayerful, and happy," expressed through text inside an envelope glued on the bottom inside of her box. The envelope was titled "Open this for a revealance [sic] of personality," or an aspect of her personality that she decided to reveal to an

audience member who physically opens the envelope. Similar to Lisa, Petin also included

question marks on her box inside and outside, one in particular created from beads glued onto

colorful paper. She journaled under her photo of herself creating a card with a resident, "I felt a

little surprised by her, and unsure about how to interact with her." And again, she reflected, "I

felt slightly awkward in trying to engage with her." Solomon, Hanna, and Jo included the text

"awkward" on the inside and/or outside of their boxes. Violet, Hanna, and Thomas included a

face that resembled feeling unsure, self-conscious, or "awkward." Ubiquitously evidenced

through the Box 3D Project, dissonance was a shared experience between each student.

Lisa spent more time on the inside, creating an elaborate image with intense colors unlike

anywhere else on the box. It seems that she was intensely contemplating the images and phrases

on the bottom of the box as she created them (Figures 11 & 12). She explained to the group that

the residents of the assisted living center were likened to large candles that are burning out, so

much so that the candles are very short, symbolizing that the residents' days left on this Earth are

short. The surrounding phrases read, "I wish I could fix you… but you're not made of Legos,"

"The shortest candles burn the saddest," and "But you won't even remember anything...." For

Lisa, the residents had had robust and full lives, with the large mound of melted wax to show

evidence of this vibrancy of stories, experiences, and wisdom. There is much that they have

offered, many years that they have lived, and, for Lisa, it is sad to see them come to an end.

Even though she had never met these individuals prior, it meant a lot to her to visit the assisted

living center, as well as to create the Box 3D Project. It made her very sad and contemplative. It

made her question the purpose, validity, true impact, and consequences or outcomes of the

service project.
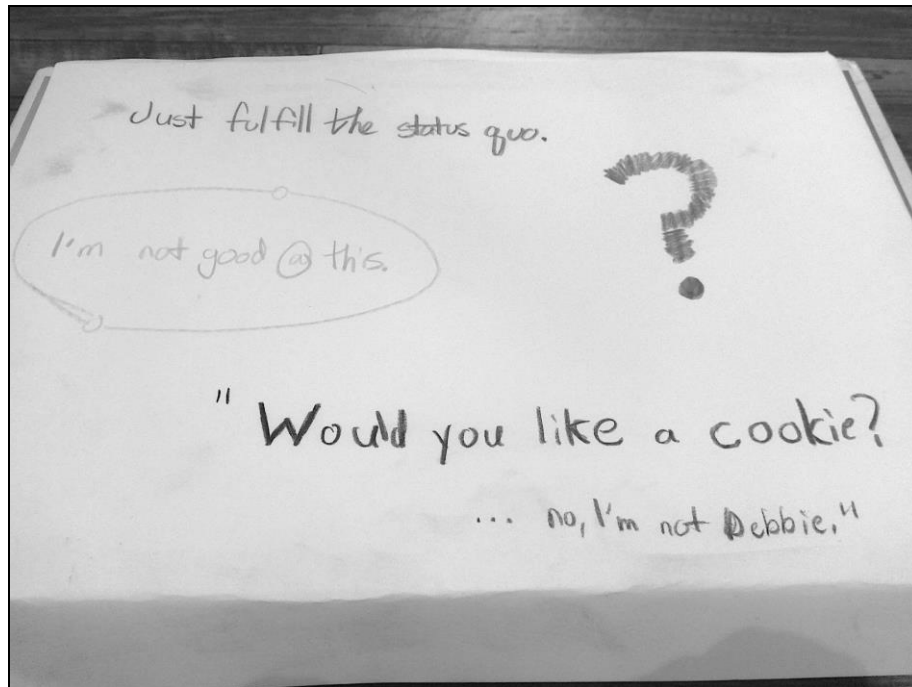
Figure 10: Lisa's Box 3D Project (outside, top)
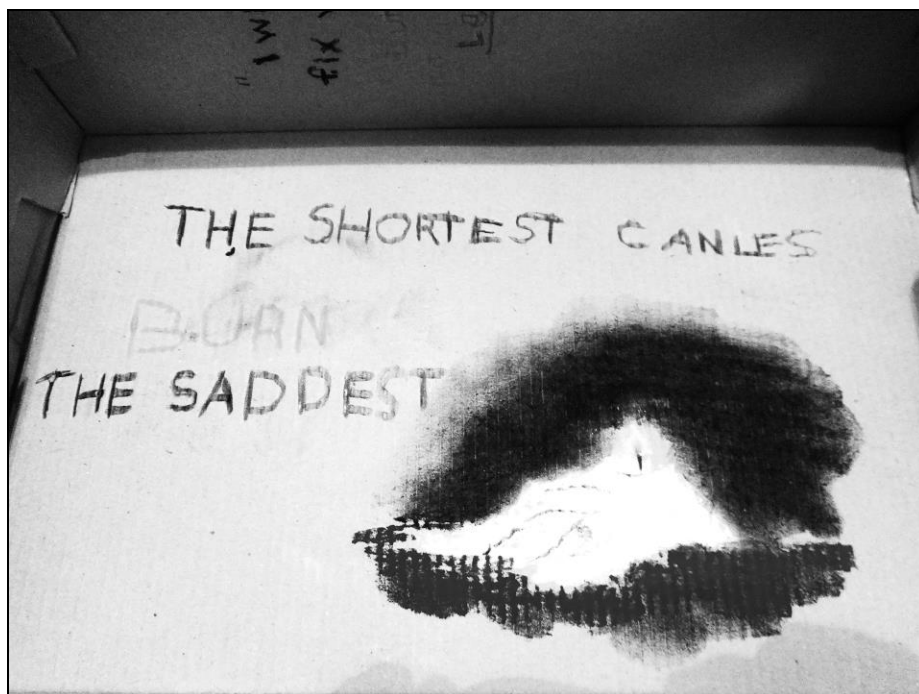
Figure 11: Lisa's Box 3D Project (inside, bottom)
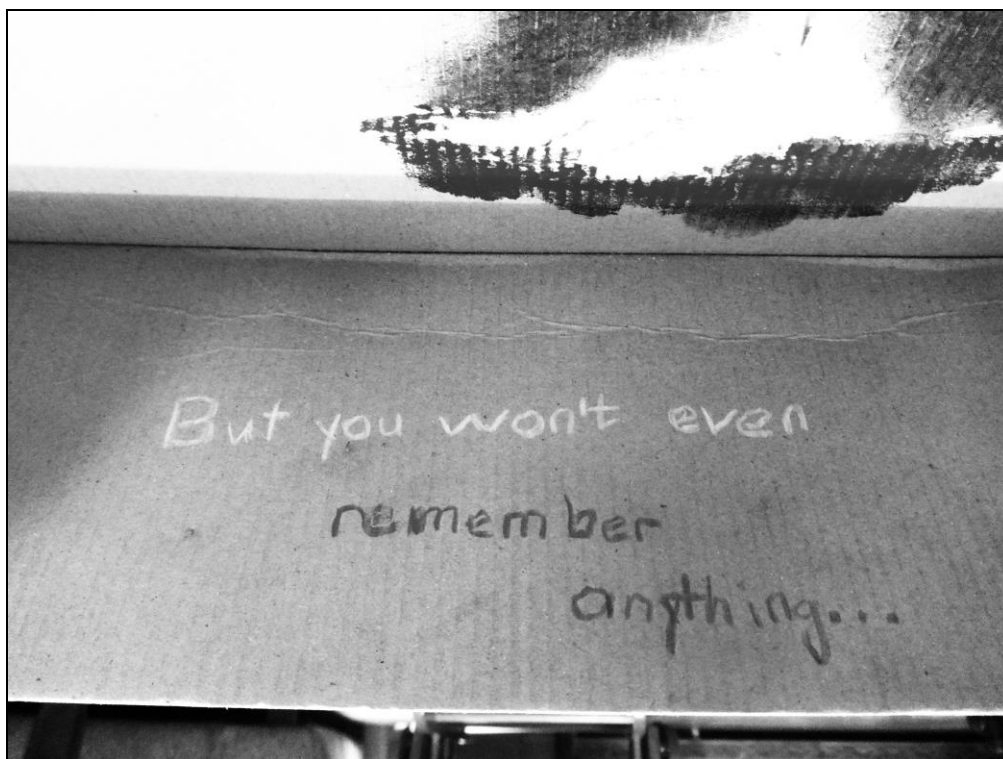
Figure 12: Lisa's Box 3D Project (inside, side)

According to her presentation of her Box 3D Project to the group (note: not outsiders), the hardest part for her was to see them come to an end in a sad state of incognizance away from the daily love and care of family. She wanted the family to take care of them, not staff persons, because of the depth of love that she expected the family to have. Her perception of life is from her own frame of reference. In her Christian life, family is loving and caring in accordance with the teachings found in the Bible. To her, family members *want* to care for each other, especially during the end of one's days.

However, Lisa was faced with the reality that there are others in this world who do not share this love and concern for their family, and that there are others who may desire to care for their elderly family members but cannot be caregivers due to life circumstances. Perhaps they live too far away and cannot move closer to the family member, or because of the inability to

meet the medical needs, which can be extensive and labor intensive, requiring full-time attention and great strength of mind, body, and spirit. This was a "disorienting dilemma" for her (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22), as she was situated in a real-life situation, the curricula were framed around addressing the social problem, and "the service-learning context presented her with this problematic situation" (Kiely, 2005a, p. 15). According to Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory, Lisa's disorienting dilemma introduced new avenues of perspective by which she could traverse the process of experiential learning. She assessed previously taken-for-granted assumptions and transformed her frame of reference, at least in part. The situation also provided a real-life context to practice the capacity *Living with Ambiguity* and Kiely's (2005a) *dissonance.* To everyone's surprise, including her own, she later reflected to the group that she was glad to have experienced this dilemma and share the difficulties therein with the group.

Therefore, I was surprised by the matrix query results of the Box 3D Project, because the correlation between the Box 3D Project and the capacities was not represented as much as I had anticipated. An initial analysis suggests that it was among the least correlated modes of artmaking. However, a deeper analysis reveals, among other factors, an outlier that misconstrues the results of the matrix query. The outlier was one student who did not complete the activity, and because my group of students had only eight members, one non-participating member of the group can significantly affect the results of the matrix query. I perceive that he did not complete the Box 3D Project because he did not want to. He had the smallest box of the group and the least amount of information on the box, one image of a crossed-out face and another somewhat smiling face drawn with a marker with simplicity. It is clearly apparent that he did not engage with this activity. What is not clear is whether he did not engage with it because he did not care, did not have time, or it was uncomfortable. Based on my observations, I am inclined to believe

that he did not engage with the Box 3D Project because he refrained from engaging with the on-site service-learning project itself in the first place. Therefore, doing a reflection on the service would be challenging. Thus, the Box 3D Project was not interesting to him, and it made him uncomfortable to try to muster up something to talk about at our meeting. I wondered if this was a strong reflection upon his views of engaging with his community overall. Regardless, this outlier within the data reduces the presence for the potential to code more capacities.

To work through this dilemma and to deal with the data accurately in relation to the other modes of artmaking, what might be most explanatory is the personal nature of the project. Digging deeper into the scenario, students were provided the opportunity to include the Box 3D Project in their Final Portfolio through photos of the Box 3D Project from all sides, inside and outside. With the photos being readily available (I printed them out at the local store), the students could then place the photos onto a Final Portfolio page and provide journaling on the page with the photos. As with all projects, students were not required to include the photos in the Final Portfolio. Six out of eight students did not include the Box 3D Project in their Final Portfolio, indicating that they did not feel comfortable sharing such personal information within their public Final Portfolio. Avoidance of presenting the project indicates that it was too personal and too impactful to share with the public. The personal nature of the project, contributing to the limited representation of it in the Final Portfolio, reduced its coding potential and yielded a lesser correlation in the matrix.

Consequently, a more intensive analysis of the capacities was further useful in this case by demonstrating that the Box 3D Project was valuable despite limited coding potential. Reflecting/Assessing and Embodying were highly correlated. Further considering the coding

stripes, as in the case of Lisa, the most prominent capacities that motivated her synthesis of her community and her place in her community were indeed Reflecting/Assessing and Embodying. Students reflected and assessed their experience through engaging in the Embodying practice of the Box 3D Project. Lisa assembled paper, drew, and journaled on her box. Petin included photography, journaling, glued objects, bits of paper, and other embellishments. Others included mostly written text or mostly images, such as magazine clippings. Overall, the various combinations of works of art that they experienced in this project included some or all of collage, journaling, photography, and drawing on a 3D object, thus describing the work of art as a sculpture. Thus, they experienced the works of art through physically creating them as their reflective artmaking service-learning experiences, specifically in response to their experience at the assisted living center.

4.3.2 Hanna exemplar.

In comparison to the other projects, the Box 3D Project was a multifaceted and distinct project. Hanna provides an exceptional example of multiple dimensions of reflection through the Box 3D Project (Figures 13 & 14 below). First, the outside of her box is covered with blue paint gradated into green. Next, on the inside and outside, she includes drawings, text, and aesthetic embellishments. One of the drawings, a heart, is through the media of puff-paint, so it is partly drawing and partly painting. The glittery silver stars on both the inside and outside represent the "sparkle in [the residents'] eyes when they saw us come in." Third, she includes two small greeting cards with 3D images on the front, and the inside, once blank, is filled with images and text. Angled slightly, they frame the centered blue envelope that contains a card inside. The outside of the envelope on the flap reads, "Open for revealance [sic] of personality…" and below

the flap on the outside of the envelope is journaling. Inside the envelope is a square of paper with textual reflection on both sides. When the audience member opens the box and peers inside, glued and centered on the bottom of the inside of the box is another envelope much like the former, though with different text. It is surrounded by other text, images, and aesthetic embellishments on the bottom and sides of the inside of the box.
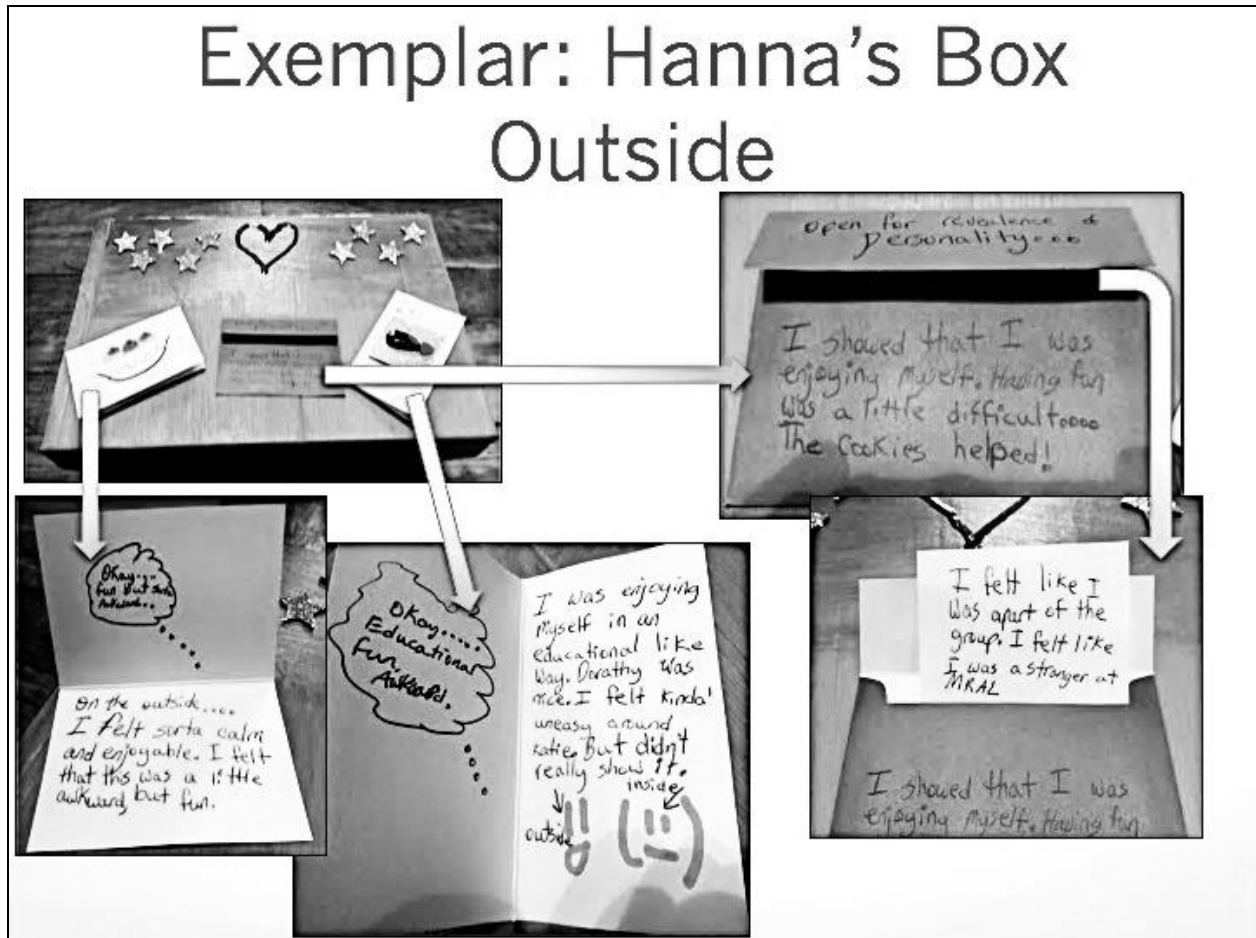
Figure 13: Hanna's Box 3D Project (outside)

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Figure 14: Hanna's Box 3D Project (inside)

Working within more levels than only inside and outside of the box, she incorporates a further dimension of private reflection. Such access is granted to the audience member who engages with her Box 3D Project by opening the cards and envelope on the outside, and even more so the envelope on the inside because the audience member must open the box lid first. The reflection within this second envelope requires the doubled efforts of the inquirer because he or she must open two items to view it. In one sense, she beckons the inquirer closer to her personal thoughts by intriguing him or her with curiosity. The mystery is irresistible. In another

sense, she seems hesitant to share, through hiding her reflections behind cards, envelopes, and, most especially, the envelope under the closed lid of a box.

Hanna's Box 3D Project is an exceptional example of how students grant the audience access to their reflections regarding their assisted living center experience according to the audience member's desired level of inquiry. Each student shared some reflections on the outside, allowing the inquirer insight into selected reflections. Images and text on the outside are available to the public. Then, each student included reflections inside for the inquirer who desired to learn more, a reward for taking the time to engage with the student by *opening* the box. Hanna did so in an impressively multifaceted manner. She required significant engagement from the audience member who wanted to know more than what is made available to the public, or what was viewed openly without barriers.

Hanna exemplifies how the analysis of the Box 3D Project is embedded in the other modes of artmaking, as opposed to being in comparison. The presences of the other modes are contained in the Box 3D Project, allowing the individual modes to be coded more numerously than the overall Box 3D Project itself. Therefore, considering the other modes of artmaking in the matrix, coding stripes and other methods of data analysis also provided insight because the Box 3D Project contained multiple aesthetic elements.

My advice to researchers desiring to parse this dilemma within the data analysis is to consider carefully how the Box 3D Project, and the Final Portfolio Project as well, are coded and categorized. I recommend that they not be considered as the mode of artmaking, but rather as modes of artmaking contained within them. They ought to be an overarching category instead of a micro category. Using NVivo terminology, they ought to be a type of parent node instead of a child node.

4.4   SUMMARY

Through the modes of artmaking experienced in the project overall, and most especially through the cohesive Final Portfolio Project, my students experienced works of art through physically creating them as representations of their reflective artmaking service-learning experience. Among the central methods, of course, is Reflecting/Assessing: "To look back on your learning, continually assess what you have learned, assess/identify what challenges remain, and assess/identify what further learning needs to happen. This occurs not only at the end of a learning experience, but is part of what happens throughout that experience. It is also not the end of your learning; it is part of beginning to learn something else" (Holzer, 2009, p. 12). As Eisner (1993) writes, "I came to believe then, as I believe now, that the process of image-making could help children discover a part of themselves that mostly resides beneath their consciousness. Art was a way of displaying to the children and adolescents with whom I worked dimensions of themselves that I desperately wanted them to discover" (p. 5). By focusing upon the intersecting themes of capacities and modes of artmaking, I have illuminated the specific capacities that the

students gained in arts-based learning through reflective artmaking as it enmeshed equally with service-learning.

The majority of modes of artmaking the students experienced were not mutually exclusive. Photography was accompanied by supporting journaling. Collage pieces often included drawn images. Most creative writing pieces included an accompanying drawn image, as well. Journaling and collage were practiced most predominantly, especially within almost every portfolio page. Therefore, coding and categorizing the modes of artmaking required careful consideration.

The Final Portfolio and Box 3D Projects presented distinct complications that required further analysis. As Jo had said, the process of "trying to grasp the ideas and put them together" was "interesting" and "challenging." The process created *dissonance* (Kiely, 2005a) that fostered meaning-making, problem solving, and catalyzed continued learning. Petin's Final Portfolio pages illuminated dissonance, for example, as well as complications in my analysis. Jo and Petin constructed their Final Portfolio pages at each general meeting, a practice of Embodying and Reflecting/Assessing. They also included for their Final Portfolios their experiences, insights, photos, and artifacts during the on-site service project meetings. Consequently, the Final Portfolio Project served as the most cohesive mode throughout the entire project experience, and the multiple components of the pages had a high frequency of references coded. As with all of the students, the Final Portfolios thus pulled together the collage of the group's experiences, documenting detailed information regarding what took place, as well as the students reflections, assessments, and syntheses upon those experiences. As Hanna observed on more than one occasion, "It's like a timeline!" Despite the depth of insight provided by the

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process of Final Portfolio page construction, the Final Portfolios themselves were poorly correlated to the capacities. Why? And why is further inquiry important?

The Box 3D Project likewise exemplifies another unique mode of artmaking that was perplexingly poorly correlated, yet clearly captured deeper levels of dissonance in students' learning. For example, Lisa and Hanna demonstrated the personal value of the project through their creative modes of sharing openly and honestly to the inquirer who is willing to open the box lid, or, as in the case of Hanna, the cards and envelopes, as well. Aesthetically expressed on the box and orally during reflections upon the creation of the Box 3D Project, the dissonance between their mixture of emotions while at the assisted living center and afterwards reverberated deep within them. As with most of the students, the project caused them to pause and consider how to reconcile the tensions therein. The process of creatively constructing the Box 3D Project facilitated the process of deconstructing their experiences. So why was this process also poorly correlated to the capacities?

Reconsidering how projects are categorized and coded is significant to understanding the project overall and its relationship to the capacities. Also significant (arguably more so) to data analysis is an emphasis on the ethnographic positionality of the participant observer. Relying solely upon the figures generated in qualitative software hinders a comprehensive analysis. While NVivo helps the data become less anecdotal, it remains that in qualitative research the anecdotes provide the most illustrative method of data analysis. Qualitative data management software, such as NVivo, can be *aids* to data analysis and should not be depended upon too heavily. Therefore, I conclude that categorizing the Final Portfolio and the Box 3D Projects differently from the elements within them would help solve the dilemma of the otherwise poorly represented correlation between the Final Portfolio Project and the Box 3D Project with the

capacities. I further conclude that my emic positionality provides the most comprehensive analysis of the dilemma and the necessary insight regarding the dissonance that catalyzed ongoing learning.

By integrating each mode of artmaking into the identity of the service-learning project, and vice versa, as the facilitator I provided an intervention in their learning. Creating the opportunity for the students to participate in civic engagement and learn about issues therein was "challenging" and "mind-boggling," as Jo expressed. Such opportunities included individual motivation, sustained interest, anticipated community impact, actual community impact, public recognition of their service, and reciprocity.

Practitioners desiring to intervene in students' development of sense of community will find it helpful to consider a primarily anecdotal capacities-based analysis because it is well suited for the arts-based learning process. As the *researcher*, I created the opportunity to aesthetically capture and document the "timeline" of this development. As the *participant observer*, I contributed to the students' aesthetic process of validating the significance of the community (Kinsley, 1997) and coming to realize that they can become skilled helpers in the community (Wuthnow, 1995) with the support of their parents, the group, and myself.

Also helpful for practitioners interested in a particular mode of artmaking or a multi-modal methodology, the results of this investigation revealed strengths and weaknesses of the modes of artmaking through a capacities-based analysis. For example, where some students found their "voice" through journaling, others found it through collage construction instead. Although the Box 3D Project contributed much to the students' synthesis of the reflective artmaking service-learning project at the local assisted living center, it was too personal to include in the Final Portfolios. To permit the incorporation of such personal responses, perhaps

another type of portfolio should be considered, one that is more like a personal scrapbook than a quasi-formal or quasi-public documentation meant to be exhibited to others. Swick (1999) writes, "Strengthening our voices is key to our continuing growth and helps us realize that experiences are meaningful and worthy of further attention" (p. 29). Overall, the results of my queries showcased in this chapter have provided inspiration for alternative methodologies.

In the meantime, what else is meaningful from the students' experiences? What is worthy of my further attention in this study? What else lies on the surface waters of the seas of satisfaction? Having considered the intersection of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning and the modes of artmaking selected for this study, I have traversed and studied themes regarding what kinds of capacities the students gained in arts-based learning as it was coupled with service-learning. Reviewing the seas again, what happens when I use the capacities to study the role of *service-learning*? What I have found is a greater understanding of what kinds of skills and capacities the students gained in (reflective artmaking) service-learning. Launching into the next chapter, Solomon's story orients this next leg in my expedition by demonstrating the significance of *teamwork* and *teambuilding*. His being a member of a team or group represents his involvement with something bigger, an activism beyond himself.

5.0   CAPACITIES AND SERVICE-LEARNING: EXHIBITING COMMUNITY BUILDING, THE BEGINNING OF TEAMBUILDING

The living room, packed with family members of all ages, falls quiet, and the students decide who will present their Final Portfolio first. Parents help their children to find their quiet spot on the floor, and the children's eager eyes begin to wait expectantly. Hanna volunteers to go first, as I had expected from her readiness to go first in most other activities. She finds her spot in front of the majority of the group who are seated on the couches, chairs, and floor. Others students present after her in turn, with applause and smiles escorting them back to their seats. Their presentations are unique, each student deciding which aspects of the overall project to share with the present community.

When Solomon's turn comes, he begins by telling us that he will illuminate the two aspects he most enjoyed. He first opens up his Final Portfolio to his reflections upon the visit to the local fire department, to which he expressed gratitude through handcrafted Thank You Cards and homemade cookies (Figure 15). Reading from his page, he tells the audience, "What I learned when we went to the fire station was that they always have to work together." He continues, "My favorite thing about going to the fire station was seeing all of the tools that they use [and seeing the] guy dress up in the gear that they use to fight fires." The pages he shows us contain photos from the tour, his personal and informational journaling, as well as tool-themed aesthetic embellishments.
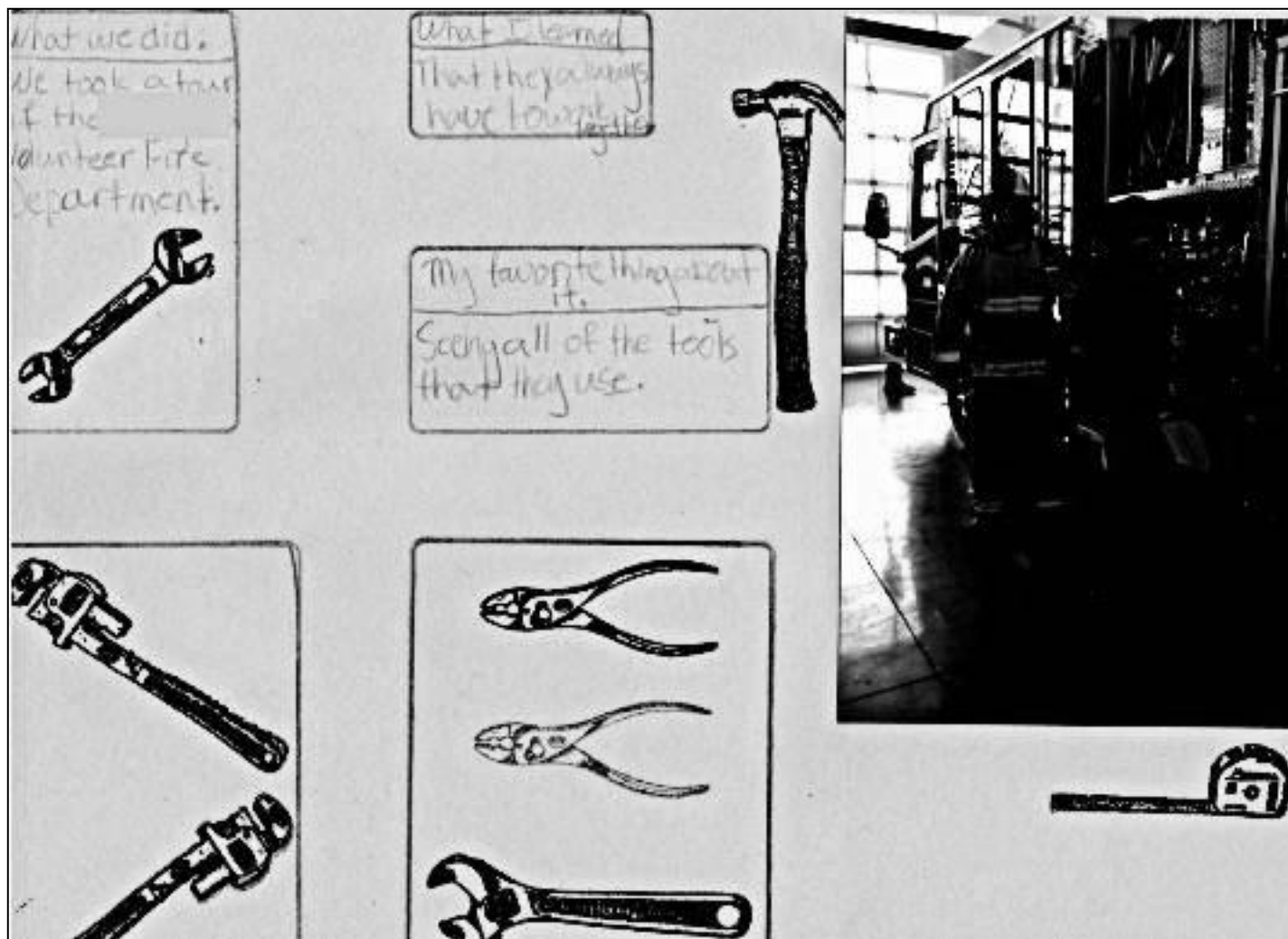
Figure 15: Solomon's Final Portfolio page about the fire department

After a few more comments regarding his experience at the fire department, he continues

to flip through his pages until he finds his Photography Project (Figure 16). In this project,

students used a camera to capture aspects of their community that meant most to them, aspects

that have been influential in their understanding of civic engagement. I had observed over the

years that they had a pre-existing interest in caring for their community. In the period of time of

this project, I had asked them more questions, listened to their conversations during workdays,

and learned more still from their aesthetic productions. Using my understanding of their interest in their community as a springboard, I had asked the students to respond to the questions, "Why do you care about serving others? What has been your motivation to care?" From this prompt, the students aesthetically considered how they would represent their response through photography and symbolism.

Therefore, in his formal presentation of his Final Portfolio, Solomon explains, "My school books, my family, our house, my Alert group, and my dog. These things are to me ways in which I can see how my community is important to me." Almost effortlessly, he expounds:

> *Our schoolbooks symbolize how we learn through books, which helps us be a better part of our community. Families are an important part of our community. Being in groups is an important part of our community, because we can interact with other people and make new friends. Music as well; we can go to nursing homes, or other places and play music for them. Dogs are a big part of the community, because they can help people with mental issues. Plus, I just like dogs. And, that's it!*

Solomon thanks the audience with a slight bow and we return his gratitude with cheerful applause. After my closing reflections regarding my appreciation of the students' and parents' sincere and sustained participation, as well as praise for a job well done, we continue to celebrate on this crisp autumn afternoon with bring-your-own-sandwiches and chips, and the reflections are far from ceasing.
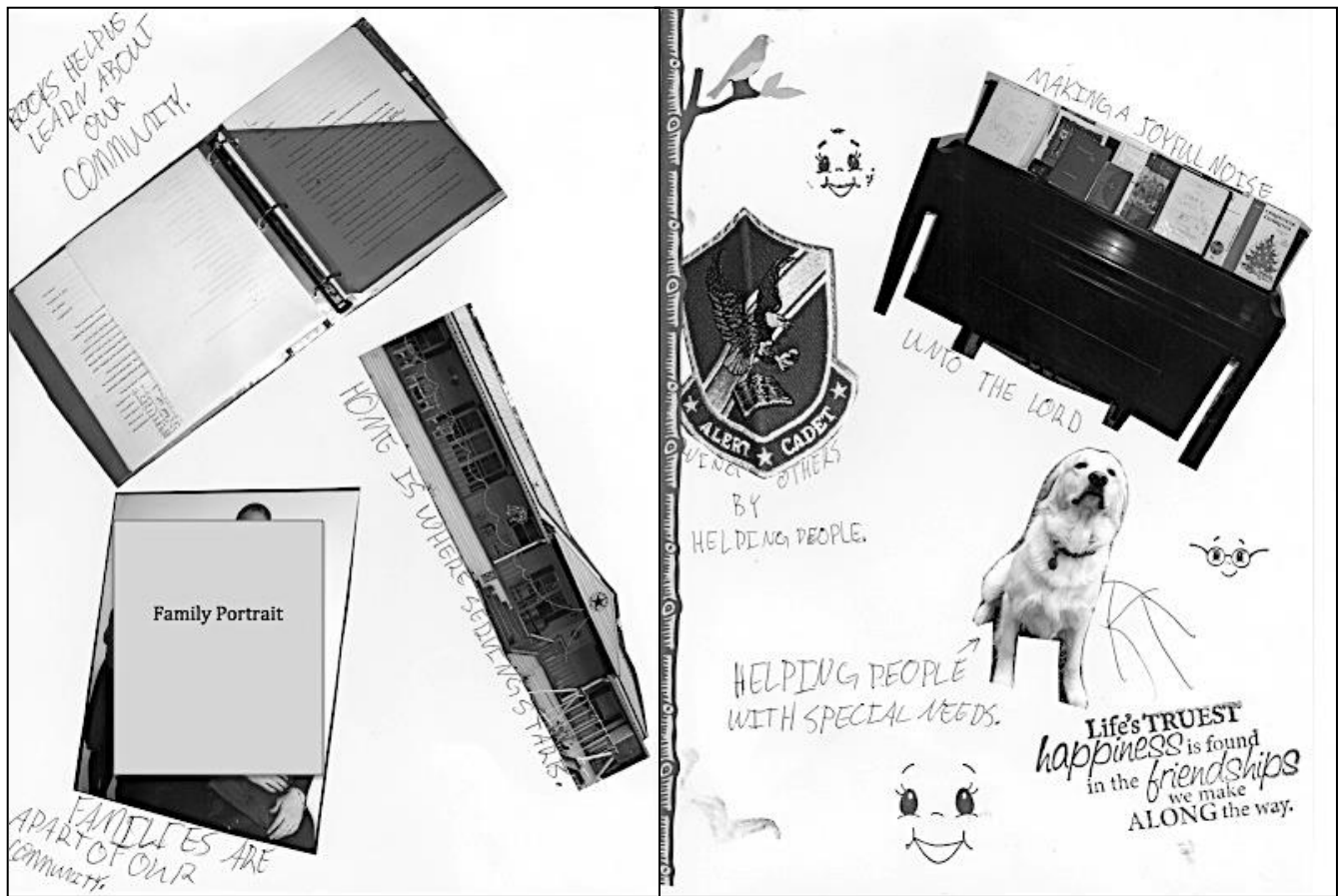
Figure 16: Solomon's two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding his community via Photography Project

Solomon was not the first to introduce themes regarding teamwork and teambuilding; however, his contribution was outstanding. While being civically engaged, his sense of self within his community was directly related to the others with whom he is working. "Being in groups is an important part of our community because we can interact with other people and make new friends," he shares with the audience during his formal presentation of his Final Portfolio. His being a member of a team represents his active desire to be involved with a community, an endeavor that engages him in a world beyond him*self*.

Exploring these themes of teamwork, my study demonstrates the usefulness of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning beyond arts-based learning. Holzer (2009) explains,

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Similarly, when teaching literacy, students can be asked to look carefully (or notice deeply), ask questions, make connections to themselves, to other texts, or to the world, and to infer (or create) meaning. […] While not all the Capacities might come into play in a particular class or unit, there seem to be enough connections to concepts necessary for success in all content areas that teachers can use the language of the Capacities no matter what subject area is being taught. (pp. 13-14)

My study presents a unique opportunity to present its usefulness in the field of service-learning because of its uniquely "mind-boggling" enmeshment of reflective artmaking and service-learning.

A capacities-based analysis has enabled my exploration of the *service-learning* stages of my study. In this chapter, I therefore present my findings regarding the two intersecting themes of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning and service-learning. My view of the distinctive service-learning aspects within illuminate the essence of the enmeshed learning processes. This stage in my analysis revealed the kinds of skills and capacities the students gained in (reflective artmaking) service-learning. Teamwork and teambuilding came to the fore in this exhibition.

5.1   INITIAL QUERY RESULTS

NVivo's matrix query function facilitates viewing the data with a high level of precision. It allows me to "reference and cross-reference occurrences in ways that make the analysis of patterns more systematic and less anecdotal" (Abramson, 2009, p. 71). In my first query, I cross tabulate the capacities and service-learning. The matrix columns outline the components of service-learning that were represented. These categories describe the components that mapped-

out a sequence of stages that the students experienced. The stages are an amalgamation of the

common stages in the literature, specifically Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle and

Brown and Leavitt's (2009) synthesized stages of service-learning. I created this list according

to what constituted the central components of service-learning in the context of my study.

Additionally, I add numerical notations to further describe where each stage typically occurred in

relation to the others. While the components are not mutually exclusive, at times occurring

simultaneously or out of the order that I have described in the stages, this notation describes the

typical sequence I facilitated (as the leader) and observed (as the researcher) within my study

(see Appendix B).   The results of this query are seen in Figure 17 below:

Capacities and Service-Learning (2)						
	A : 1– Explore...	B : 2– Planning Preparing	C : 3– Taking Action...	D : 4– Reflection...	E : 5– Share...	F : Reciprocity	G : Team
1 : Creating Meaning	45	52	80	268	82	58	136
2 : Embodying	4	3	85	288	85	29	152
3 : Exhibiting Empathy	32	41	41	146	31	41	76
4 : Identifying Patterns	30	30	16	87	12	26	68
5 : Living with Ambi...	6	6	29	105	17	13	67
6 : Making Connections	51	56	74	235	71	45	132
7 : Noticing Deeply	13	11	66	191	65	22	81
8 : Questioning	25	34	8	49	7	17	41
9 : Reflecting Asses...	48	45	94	348	96	59	138
10 : Taking Action	22	21	80	199	72	31	87

Figure 17: Number of mentions of each capacity by different components of service-learning

The names and descriptions of each stage represented in the matrix columns are as follows:

A: Exploring or Observing a Need: "Students define the community and investigate needs through research and documentation" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 17).

B: Planning and Preparing: "During the preparation stage, a plan of action is proposed, and details regarding school and community policies are arranged" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 18).

C: Taking Action or Testing in New Situations: "During this stage, students act upon the established plan" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 18) for the first time or in a subsequent new situation to create the change previously explored, planned, and prepared.

D: Reflecting and Forming Abstract Concepts: "Demonstrations of learning include multiple forms of documentation, layers of analysis, processes of individual and collaborative assessment, and varied reviewers" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 19).

E: Sharing with the Community: After the service and reflection, students share the "service-learning project with the community through presentation, performance, and/or exhibition" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 19).

F: Exhibiting Reciprocity: In this study, reciprocity is the mutual exchange of collaboration between my students and the communities they served.

G: Exhibiting Teambuilding or Teamwork: Teamwork or teambuilding occurs as a result of students engaging in community building practices that foster cohesion between: 1) the members of the group internally, as well as 2) externally between the members of the group and members of the community outside of the group. Teambuilding or teamwork is when the students, who have practiced community

building, work together to accomplish a goal or set of goals, such as in taking

action or planning/preparing. *Teamwork* is the product of a group of people

working together, and *teambuilding* is the process of this development.

Parallel to the matrix in the previous chapter, capacities and modes of artmaking, the rows of this

matrix outline the Capacities for Imaginative Learning. Considered through an experiential

learning lens, Holzer (2009, pp. 11-12) unknowingly describes a method of analyzing service-

learning.

1: Creating Meaning: "To create your own interpretations based on the previous

capacities, see these in the light of others in the community, create a synthesis,

and express it in your own voice [each through service-learning]."

2: Embodying: "To experience a work of art [and/or service-learning] study through

your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that

experience [through service-learning]."

3: Exhibiting Empathy: "To respect the diverse perspectives of others in the

community [while engaged in service-learning]; to understand the [service-

learning] experiences of others emotionally, as well as intellectually."

4: Identifying Patterns: "To find relationships among the details that you notice,

group them, and recognize patterns [through service-learning]."

5: Living with Ambiguity: "To understand [through service-learning] that issues

have more than one interpretation, that not all problems have immediate or clear-

cut solutions, and to be patient while a resolution becomes clear."

6: Making Connections: "To connect what you notice and the patterns you see to

your prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and

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to text and multimedia resources [through service-learning]."

7: Noticing Deeply: "To identify and articulate layers of detail in a work of art [and/or service-learning] study through continuous interaction with it over time."

8: Questioning: "To ask questions throughout your [service-learning] explorations that further your own learning; to ask the question, 'What if?'"

9: Reflecting/Assessing: "To look back on your [service-learning], continually assess what you have learned, assess/identify what challenges remain, and assess/identify what further learning needs to happen. This occurs not only at the end of a [service-] learning experience, but is part of what happens throughout that experience. It is also not the end of your learning; it is part of beginning to learn something else."

10: Taking Action: "To try out new ideas, behaviors or situations in ways that are neither too easy nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what you have learned in your [service-learning] explorations."

Particular capacities were consistently correlated to service-learning throughout each stage of the reflective artmaking service-learning project overall. These include Creating Meaning, Making Connections, and Reflecting/Assessing. Their greatest correlation was during the reflecting and forming abstract concepts stage.

However, Teamwork and Teambuilding also has a strong correlation to service-learning. *Teamwork* is the product of a group of people working together, and *teambuilding* is the process of this development. The component is not exclusive, but occurs throughout each stage of service-learning. The design of the study incorporated both throughout, and the result confirmed my expectations. Through engaging in service-learning, the students constructed community, or

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practiced *community building,* because the academically facilitated service activities occurred in a group setting (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; King, 2004). External community building simultaneously facilitated the construction of teamwork and internal community building within the group of students itself (King, 2004; Wade, 1997). This is one factor that distinguishes service-learning from community service. Service-learning involves the use of group participation and encourages the practice of teamwork. Thus, in service-learning, community building developed both within the group of students, as well as between the group and the surrounding community (Schensul & Berg, 2004). I facilitated this dynamic interaction according to the principles of experiential learning as the students experienced the processes of defining and building community according to the categories listed in the matrix above (Figure 17). The activities of each stage were meant to draw students from "different social worlds" together, to cross borders, and to become a more unified team as they engaged in each stage (Keith, 1998, p. 86). Thus, the Capacities for Imaginative Learning provided a means of analyzing the community and community building in this study.

5.2 TEAMBUILDING AND BORDER CROSSING

Keith (1998) argues that the very definition of *community,* when in the context of community service, must be reassessed entirely. Contrary to definitions that emphasize social commonalities, she offers that the definition of community ought to be in light of democratic responsibilities "in the context of difference and borders that must be crossed" as opposed to a social group with a common culture and value system (p. 86). The nature of community service

is to move beyond one's own personal community by crossing the borders into the greater community around oneself, whether it is marginally or drastically different.

Consequently, Keith (1998) offers a definition of *community building* according to the context of border-crossing community service. Community service facilitates the process of "[d]eveloping local capacities, creating networks of support, and building relationships across borders […] At its best, service may promote ways of relating to the social polity that emphasize social responsibility and the obligation to contribute to the community. It may bring together people whose paths may otherwise not cross, since they belong to different social worlds" (p. 86). Community building, according to Keith, brings together individuals from differing sides of socio-cultural borders, such as the borders between the students in my study and the residents of the local assisted living center, which includes differences between age, health, mental ability, and availability to familial care. Other borders include those between the students and the first responders who protected their homes from the wildfires in 2011, including differences between age, experience, responsibility, and skill. The students had borders between *themselves* as members of a team, including differences in age, gender, philosophical stance, personality type, academic and extracurricular interests, and background.

However, the students' experiences with this project do not end upon discovering the socio-cultural borders described by Keith (1998) because they engaged in *service-learning*. Moving beyond *service*, service-learning facilitators guide students towards considering the importance of working through differences and crossing borders. The learning process is for an extended period of time and with greater intentionality than community service. While building external connections with the surrounding community, service-learning students simultaneously engage in *internal community building* within the group of students itself. While they traverse

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internal borders, service-learning students learn how to move forward as a *team* in accomplishing their service-oriented goals. In service-learning, educators foster community building both within the group of students, as well as between the group and the surrounding communities. Members of the group, perhaps belonging to "different social worlds," being "separated by class, race, language, age, and other such social divides" (Keith, 1998, p. 86), venture into crossing the borders of their external community together as a unified group. The students in this study did not vary in language, class, geographical residency, or central theological convictions within the Christian faith. However, as previously described, they did vary in age, gender, philosophical stance, personality type, academic and extracurricular interests, and background. Furthermore, the differences represented between the students and their surrounding communities were of a more diverse variety.

5.2.1   Exploring or observing a need.

Border-crossing, community building, and teamwork began at the initial stage of the project at the first general meeting: *exploring or observing a need* through a group drawing experience. I adapted the first project from Foster, Deafenbaugh, and Miller (2016) prior to their publication, and I refer to it as the *Poster Project*. As a method of "group-based metaphor map making" (Foster, et al., 2016, p. 6), I provided a poster board with concentric circles orbiting around the phrase "Our Group," placed it on the floor, and the students drew who or what defined their shared communities on the board with crayons (Figure 18 below). This was the first step in the development of the overall reflective artmaking service-learning experience in which the students defined their shared communities (Brown & Leavitt, 2009) through an aesthetic practice of reflection.
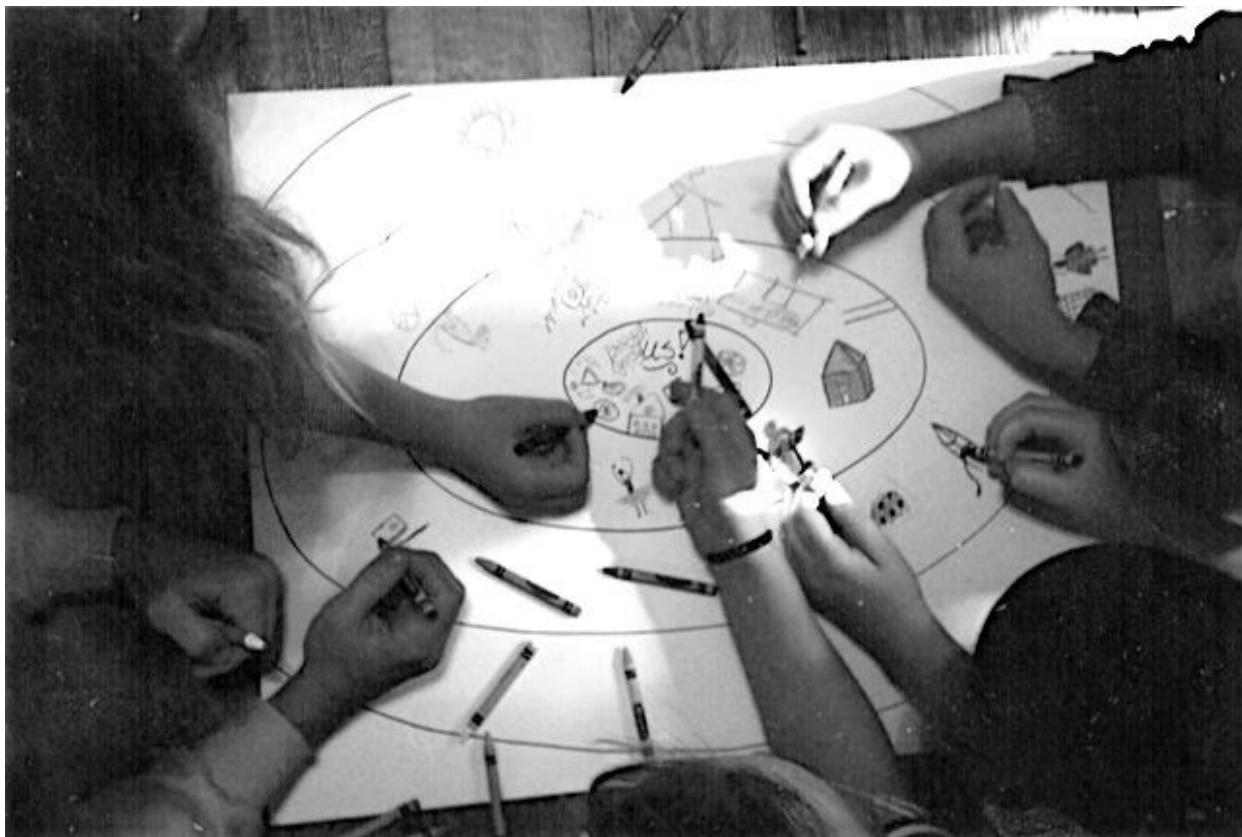
Figure 18: Students creating the Poster Project on the floor

This activity was difficult for Lisa, who commented, "Well, my family doesn't really do much of anything, except stay home, and do speech. So, I didn't really have much of a community experience to build off of." Lisa is in her mid-teens and lives with her family on more than twenty acres of beautifully forested property not far from our meeting site. In fact, she voluntarily walked to nearly every general meeting through paths and fields, across a bridgeless and active creek, and over a barbed-wire fence. While enjoying her deep-country home, Lisa stays intensely connected to the academic and social settings of speech and debate programs. With her pseudonym referring to the public speaker Condoleezza Rice, Lisa decided to include on her poster contribution a drawing of a podium as a symbol of public speaking because "we need to articulate." She explained to the group who was drawing with her,

When I was working in the corporate office with my internship I noticed over and over again there were people who had no idea how to give a speech. There was all sorts of awful. It was really interesting. There were many young people who were not confident. So, I think learning to articulate is an important skill to have, in the work place and off of it. It should be more a part of our community than it is.

After about ten minutes of drawing, discussing, laughing, and learning more about each other's interests and backgrounds, I noticed that reservations started to melt away, students began to recognize differences and borders, and I began to recognize the beginnings of border crossing. The group started to resemble a team as they discussed their contributions, lying on their bellies or sitting, radiating from the poster like the rays of the sun shining on them, and colorful crayons everywhere. Most of the students, including Lisa, opened up and added more personal contributions to the poster, such as family members, pets, church, and God.

The students then explained their contributions in turn, practicing Embodying and Making Connections, connecting what they noticed and the patterns they saw to their own prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to the poster before them (Holzer, 2009). For example, Jo decided that the jail should be included and placed on the outermost circle. In response, Solomon quipped, "What is this, Monopoly?" In another case, Lisa announced to the group, "There. I drew the White House in white. The White House in on there, guys." Hanna suggested, "Draw the President in front." Lisa laughingly, yet passionately, responded that she would draw the President getting impeached, adding, "That is a topic for the middle." The group laughed and some continued with their political views on the topic.

Following these informal presentations, the students then Identified Patterns by commenting upon other's contributions. The students placed small sticky notes on three

drawings that they felt accurately represented the group's shared communities, and three drawings that did not. Then, in turn, the students shared their selections and rationales. The process cultivated an awareness of socio-cultural borders, which some students found hard to cross. For example, Petin was not convinced of Thomas's inclusion of Toothless, a dragon from the popular animated film *How to Train a Dragon*. She objected, "Toothless, it is a figment of the imagination. It doesn't belong in the community" to which Thomas responded "Exactly!" Lisa offered her rationale, an argument that I doubt Thomas had developed or owned completely, if at all (knowing Thomas, I wonder if he included the dragon only because he enjoyed it). "I think the thing about Toothless is that it is a cultural icon that is a figment of imagination that is being symbolized as imagination overall. So, think less literal and more metaphorical." Petin was neither impressed nor convinced, concluding the conversation with "Whatever." Identifying Patterns through the Poster Project clarified the starting place for community building by making visible particular borders that existed between group members. "A major strength of the [group-based metaphor map making] method is the realness- or accuracy- of the images (as opposed to their aesthetic quality), which was the catalyst for deep emotional sharing and bonding" (Foster, et al., 2016, p. 15). It was at times confrontational and emotional, as in the case of Petin and Thomas, exhibiting the emotional aspect of Embodying. It represented how some borders are harder to cross than others, requiring greater effort from the students to practice teambuilding as the overall project progressed. This stage of exploring and observing through defining the community (Brown & Leavitt, 2009) characterized the reflective artmaking experience.

The processes of community building, as well as defining their internal and external communities, were complex because each process level intertwined and reverberated with the next. The dynamic interaction was facilitated by the principles of experiential learning. The

process followed Kolb's (1984) circular model of Experiential Learning as well, because I guided the students through the process of community building and community defining by way of Kolb's concrete stages. While the students considered the details of the service activity through 1) concrete experience, 2) observation and reflection, 3) forming abstract concepts, and 4) testing in new situations, they were simultaneously constructing a team in much the same manner. The activities of each stage drew people from "different social worlds" together to cross borders and to become a more unified team as they engaged in each stage (Keith, 1998, p. 86). Some students were only marginally familiar with other members of the group, such as Petin and Thomas. Their social worlds merged at church on Sundays and special events; however, they did not interact because their interests, personalities, and philosophical convictions differed. Although the social worlds between the students overall did not diverge exceptionally, they diverged enough to introduce socio-cultural tensions when the students converged (as exemplified by Petin and Thomas), a dynamic made visible by the Poster Project. Thus, I was able to observe a recognizable starting point for the dissonance that catalyzed ongoing learning (Kiely, 2005a) within the group itself.

The following diagram highlights the initial dynamics found within the internal community of the group and the process of building an internal team, or community building (Figure 19). The diagram focuses on three types of persons, for example:

> Type A: Thomas, who included Toothless more than likely because he simply enjoyed it.
>
> Type B: Lisa, who argued that Toothless was a metaphorical representation of imagination within the group's shared communities.

Type C: Petin, who was not convinced that either Thomas or Lisa authentically

wanted Toothless on the poster as a group-shared representation of imagination.

These three students began the project being marginally familiar with each other, they differed in interests and personalities, and they diverged in their view of Toothless on the poster. This number is arbitrary, as there were more types of persons within the group (at least eight); however, I chose three to generically symbolize that there were different types of persons within the group. Furthermore, to visualize the social boundaries that existed between the differing types of persons, each type is separated from one another in the diagram and contain different shades of gray. The shades are solid, as opposed to gradated, because their differences on the topic of Toothless were rigid at the start of their internal community building experience. Thomas (Type A) is represented as dark gray, Lisa (Type B) as light gray, and Petin (Type C) as white. Figure 19 is below:
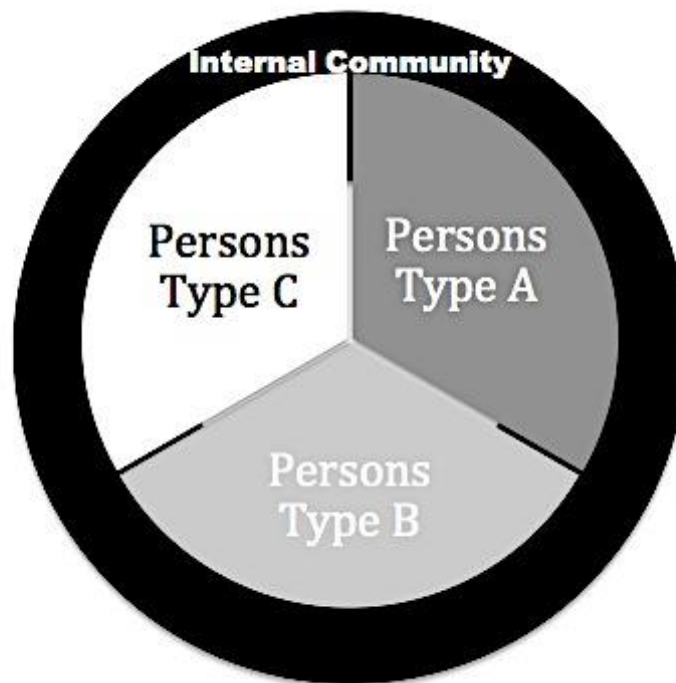
Figure 19: Stage one: internal community building

As the service-learning facilitator, I cultivated teambuilding through leading discussions regarding *exploring and observing a need*. The group discussed the observed overall community needs, sharing ideas and deciding which needs to meet. When the students considered the assisted living center, they imagined the needs therein based upon their understanding of the center, observations of others like it, and observations of nursing homes. They did not previously visit the assisted living center to observe it in person. Consequently, the focus of Petin's idea, for example, was upon the needs of the residents: "The goal is to make them feel like someone cares about what they have accomplished in life." Needs and reciprocity were the foci of Solomon's idea: "Playing games [such as checkers or chess] is the main idea, we can get to know one another, we can interact, we can have fun, we can bond." Desiring to build

relationships, Solomon thus reflects the meaning behind his pseudonym, the famous builder of the God's Holy Temple in the Old Testament of the Bible.

5.2.2   Planning and preparing to meet the need.

In the next stage, the students asked questions that furthered their own learning, particularly by asking the question, "What if?" (Holzer, 2009).   Questioning through Exhibiting Empathy, the students respectfully made decisions regarding *how* they would meet the community need. *Planning and preparing to meet the need* helped to cultivate teambuilding because, despite differences in type and in desired activity, students decided upon the activity, delegated tasks, confirmed meeting times, and prepared lists of what they would bring.   Students offered to bake cookies, buy cookies, bring games, etc.

Although most students worked together to establish the plans, two disinterested students were silent.   Their lack of participation made visible the progression of the process of teambuilding. The group was not fully a team yet, but they were moving in that direction during this second stage.

Thus, as the process of *internal* community building continued, the students learned more about each other and considered their differences in new ways. Reflecting upon her experience with the group's Poster Project, Violet shared, "I never had that idea before of the circle thing; it seemed like the universe to me. How to learn how to work with other people. To figure them out and know how to talk better with them, to understand how they think." For her, as well as the other students, components of Kolb's (1984) cycle acted as a bridge between each type of person, allowing students to recognize differences, become border-crossers, and become collectively unified (such as internal group goals), yet still remain individually distinct in other

aspects (such as personal interests and skills). Violet's pseudonym reflects her love of art shared by one of the painters of the U.S. Capitol Building in 1902, Violet Oakley. The student artist continued, "It was fun to be able to draw in front of other people with other people. It was fun to share ideas." Not more than an acquaintance with most of the members of the group, she enjoyed aesthetically expressing herself within a group of other teenagers because it allowed her to cultivate relationships with them. For her, teambuilding with this group began with something closer to an empty slate and she enjoyed making new friends.

Therefore, the next stage of internal community building is illustrated below by the gradated shades of gray within the three types of persons. The original shades of gray remain, but they merge with and are complemented by the new gradated black shade in the center, representing unification with the black of the outer circle of the group overall. Borders still remained, but some were bridged and crossed over, and others shifted entirely. As Thomas, Lisa, and Petin agreed upon which activities to pursue at the assisted living center, and Violet made new friends, I was able to observe a community building that seemed to progress towards unification. Figure 20 below is the illustration of the transitional period, stage two, in the process of internal community building.
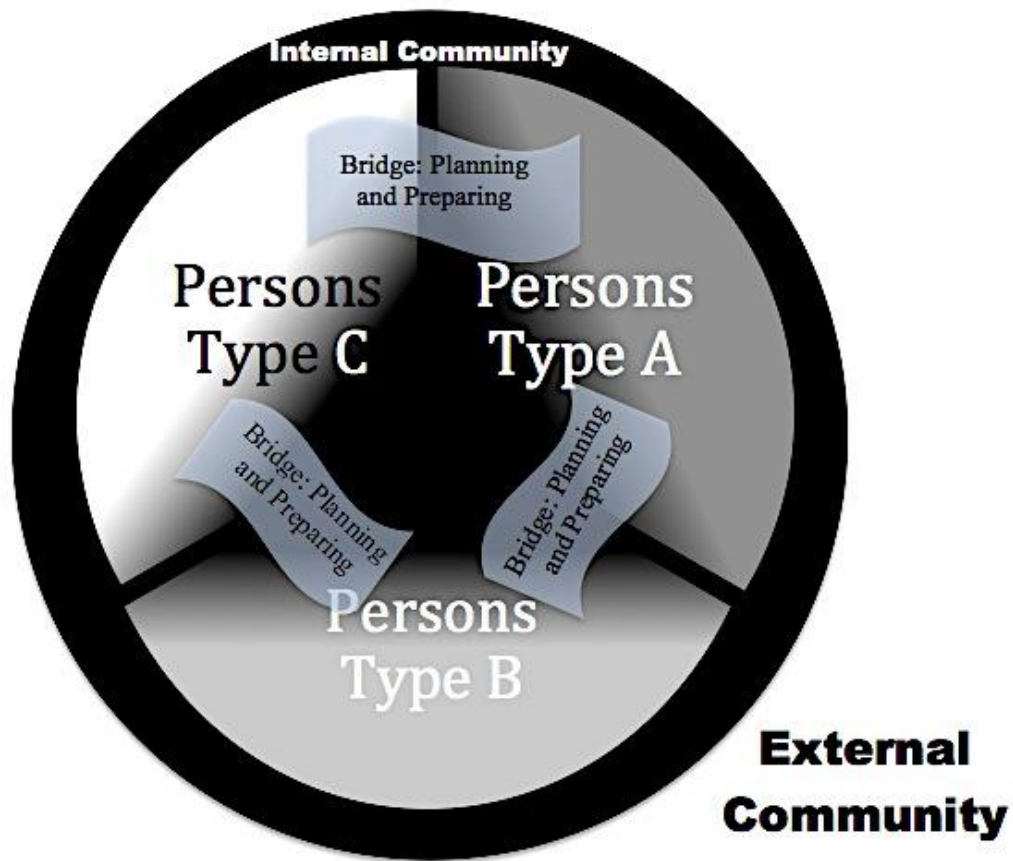
Figure 20: Stage two: crossing borders in internal community building

The process of community building was a dynamic interaction illustrated in Figure 20 through the use of "bridges" between differing types of persons. Titled "Bridge: Planning and Preparing," in this phase the students interacted with each other and crossed borders through the principles of experiential learning through service-learning, i.e., 1) concrete experience, 2) observation and reflection, 3) forming abstract concepts, and 4) testing in new situations. Experiencing each stage through service-learning, the students became border crossers (some more than others) within their internal community.

5.2.3 Taking action or testing in new situations.

Taking Action at the assisted living center was the most formative experience that cultivated the student's sense of internal team. They tried out "new ideas, behaviors or situations in ways that [were] neither too easy nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what [they] have learned in [their] explorations" (Holzer, 2009, p. 12). Although dismayed by the challenges at the start, four of the eight students began to work as a team in a collective effort to engage the residents in the activities. The other four students experienced the service-project quietly, thoughtfully watching, engaging with the group when they felt comfortable to do so. Together, the first four students tried out a variety of new ideas to encourage community participation based upon their synthesis of previous experiences with the elderly, especially those residing in assisted living centers or nursing homes, and their explorations in the previous stages of service-learning.

Their first attempt was to begin making cards individually and invite the residents to join them. They hoped that this method would inspire the residents and generate an interest in creating together. They asked, "Would you like to color?" "Which stamp would you like to use?" "What did you think of the big wildfire a few years ago?" These four students shared ideas back and forth across the table, offering suggestions and talking to multiple residents. Then, they took the ideas and tested them in the situation, which was new to them. Thus, constructing the cards with the residents help to make visible this next stage in team building. Through the aesthetic service-learning experience, the students demonstrated the desire and interest to collaborate and work through their shared challenges.

While collaboratively creating Thank You Cards *for* the fire department *with* the residents, the students also tried to engage the residents by sharing about their encounters with the wildfires. At the start of the gathering, Lisa remembered,

> I was thinking about how the Fire Department helped us during the wildfires. They came really close to our house and our house was saved. Areas around were ravaged by it actually. We were driving home and saw a big fire behind our house. We wondered if it was close to our house. That night the [neighbors] called us and said that we had to evacuate. We watched the news all day. It was always on. They kept saying the wildfire was coming down [our road], and we were like, "Wow...!"

In response to her reflection, she constructed two cards with the residents. In the first card, she included the stamped quote, "Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things" (Figure 21 below). She also expressed on her first card through stamps and writing, "Thank you for saving my family's house." In the second card were more stamped quotes regarding memory. She wrote alongside them, "We will always remember and thank you for your fine service" (Figure 22 below). Stamped images of trees and a photo of anonymous firefighters that I printed and provided for the students to use emphasize her reflections regarding the wildfire. (I provided the image for students to reference if they desired to draw a firefighter, and Lisa desired to include the image itself in her card.)
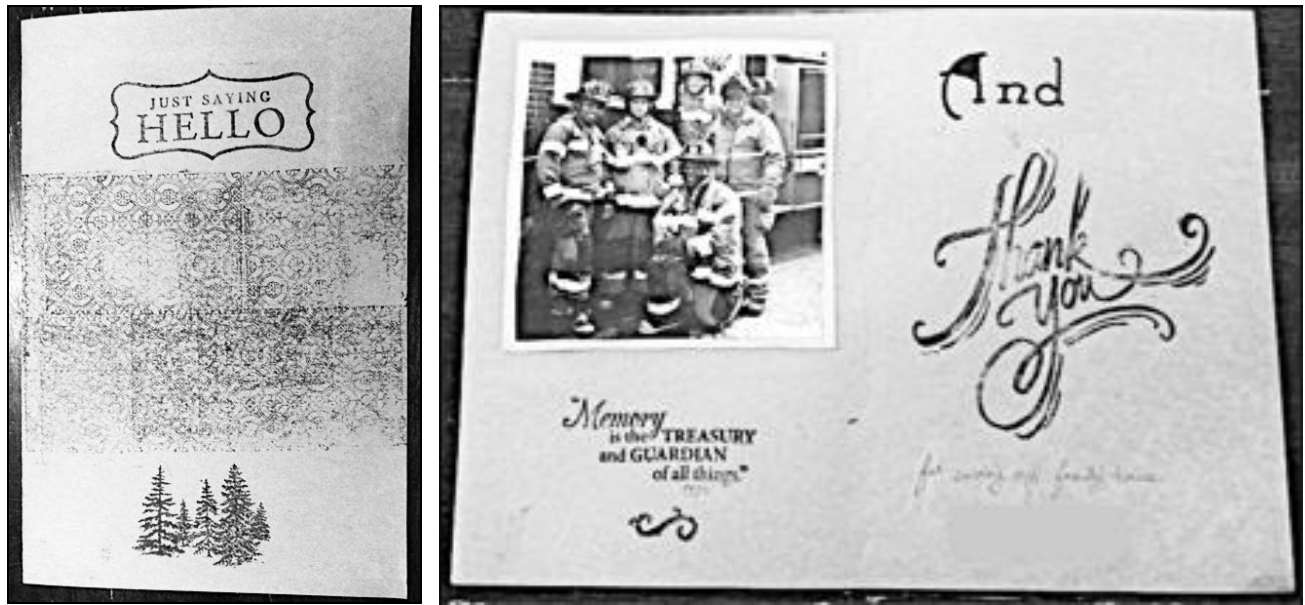
Figure 21: Lisa's first Thank You Card (cover; inside)
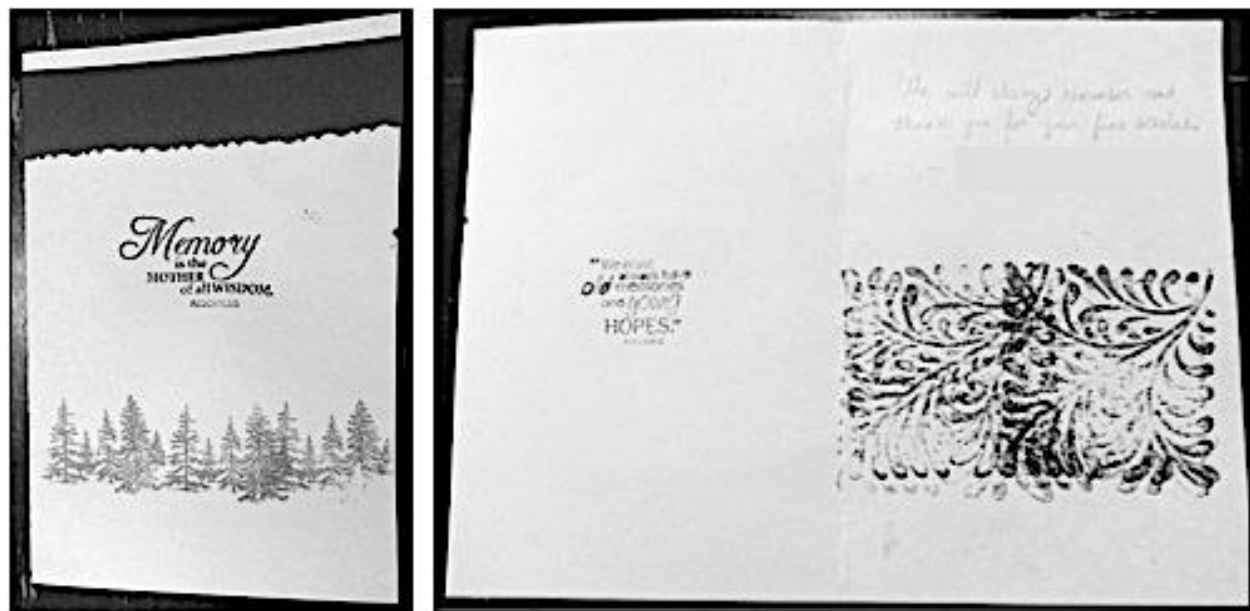
Figure 22: Lisa's second Thank You Card (cover; inside)

Clearly, Lisa was significantly impacted by the theme of *memory*, and creating the cards accordingly facilitated her ability to express her contemplations. Sharing her thoughts and

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memories with the group was her method of attempting to take action amidst the challenging situation. She was testing her method in a new situation. Her efforts were outwardly expressed as she talked to the *group,* which included peers, parents and siblings (not her own), the residents, and the staff.

Two weeks later, The Box 3D Project further helped to make visible the students' desire and interest to collaborate and press through their shared challenges. Immediately upon their arrival to the subsequent general meeting, the students began discussing the experience and their reflections upon it. (The week in between was rescheduled due to illnesses, so the students had two weeks to allow their thoughts develop.) Opening their Box 3D Projects for the group to see, the students launched into further reaches of discussions before the last student arrived and the meeting formally began. While presenting her Box 3D Project with the group, Hanna reflected, "I felt like I was a part of the group. I felt like I was a stranger at the nursing home. But I felt like I was part of the group. I told my mom, I wouldn't have felt comfortable if I was there by myself. So, I wouldn't have felt like I was a part of them, but I felt that I was more a part of *this* group." The ease with which the students disclosed their private reflections demonstrated to me that they were becoming more comfortable with each other. They resembled more of a team, and Hanna's reflection articulated my observation.

Taking action also enabled the students to feel like they were more a part of other levels of community as well. Extending beyond how she felt at the internal group level, Petin offered, "I always felt that I am not a huge part of the community because, first of all, I don't have much reach into the community. I have always felt like I am kind of just a resident, not helper." When I asked if her feeling about her role in her community changed because of taking action at the assisted living center specifically, she concluded, "Yes, to some degree. It made me feel happy

that I was going to go and spend some time with people who probably were not appreciated, maybe don't get enough visitors, and might be forgotten there. I was blessed to know what we were doing. It felt wonderful to have an impact on my community in this way, a community that is sort of forgotten." Solomon felt similarly, sharing that he felt a little more like he was a part of the local town community, but not levels of community extending beyond that, such as the city or national levels. Thus, I observed that teambuilding at this stage was more present at the internal level than it had been prior to taking action, but was being considered at external levels.

The teambuilding process continued as the internal community, demonstrating aspects of teamwork, worked together with the external community in reciprocity. The internal community coalesced with the external community as they took action through effecting the project's goals, plans, and challenges *with the external community*. Taking Action and Testing in New Situations formed a bridge between the internal community and the external community, in reciprocity allowing the exchanges of experiential learning to flow between the communities. They facilitate the next border-crossing stage in the process of internal and external community building (Figure 23).
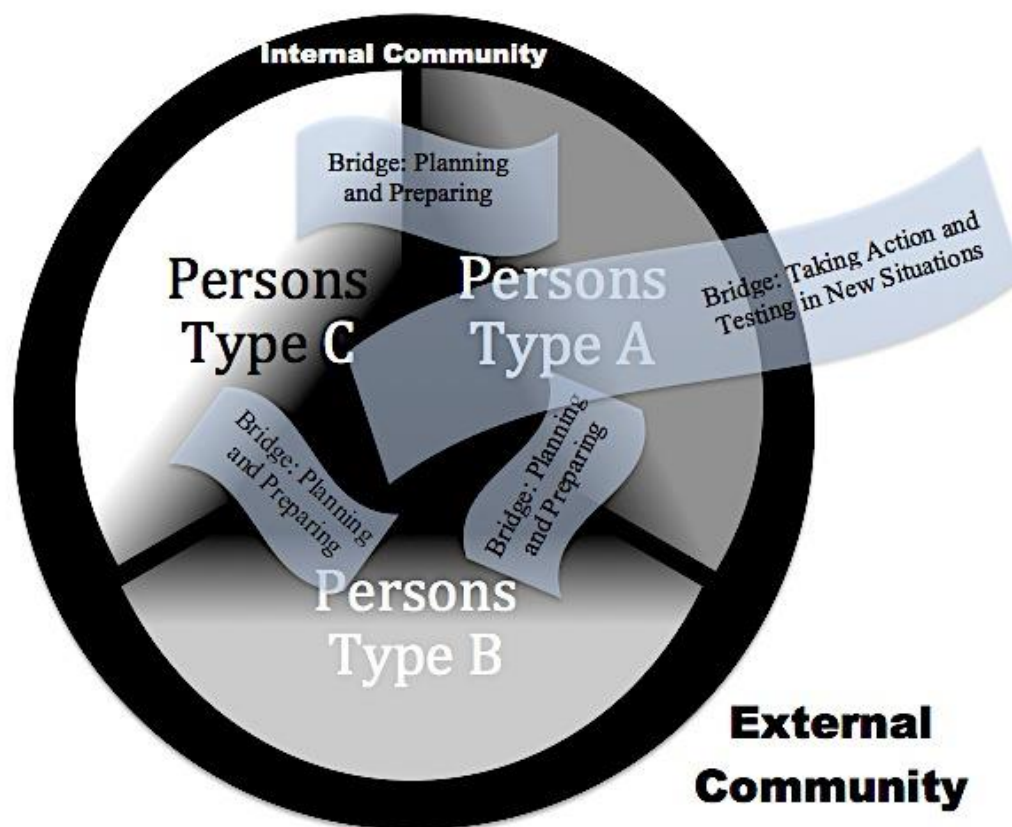
Figure 23: Stage three: crossing borders in internal and external community building

5.2.4   Reflecting and forming abstract concepts.

Large portions of our general meetings were characterized by group discussions. Students collaborated with each other through small group discussions, various activities, and large group discussions. Through peer-to-peer critique and dialogue, "the participants were shifted into the same playing field" (Milne, 2000, p. 204). During these deliberations and discussions, students posed investigative and challenging questions, wondering with each other about reasons behind

aspects of the situation. In Living with Ambiguity, asking questions that others may or may not know the answers to, they understood that not all problems have immediate or clear-cut solutions or explanations. They tried to be patient while asking such questions, including,

"Will they even remember that we came? Did it even matter to them? Does that mean it mattered at all?"

"How could we share the Gospel with them, since their minds are failing? What, if anything, would make sense to them?"

"Why don't their family members take care of them? How could they leave them in a place like this?! I could never do that!"

When I asked them if they wanted to go back again, they asked logistical questions, such as, if they should go at the same hour, since the residents were hungry, or if they should do the cards again since they had such a hard time with that project. They wondered if their group should go to another type of facility instead, such as a nursing home, where residents might be more lucid and the students could do more *with* them in reciprocity.

Sharing their questions, wonderings, positions, and possibilities cultivated community building. They let down their guard a little more, allowing the others to cross the borders of their minds and hearts as they openly shared their personal struggles in processing the service experience. In doing so, they "shifted into the same playing field" (Milne, 2000, p. 204) and began cultivating a team. Furthermore, the sense of team grew through considering ideas from multiple perspectives, such as their own and others in the group, and what they could gather regarding those of the residents, the staff, and the residents' family members. Engaging in another cycle of internal community building, as illustrated in Figure 20 above, the students retained some of their own positions while accepting some positions of others, coalescing as

individuals within a team, while deciding how to make sense of the shared service experience and how to move forward.

Trying to make sense of the experience through individual reflection for two weeks and then group reflection during the subsequent general meeting allowed the students the opportunity to practice *forming abstract concepts*, as Kolb (1984) describes it. This was part of a flexible and collaboratively created interdisciplinary process that required constant reflection (Taylor, 2002). Regarding this stage within the Experiential Learning Cycle, Kolb and Kolb (2008) explain, "Immediate or *concrete experiences* are the basis for observations and *reflections.* These reflections are assimilated and distilled into *abstract concepts* from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be *actively tested* and serve as guides in creating new experiences" (pp. 298-299). Kolb and Kolb use *forming abstract concepts* to describe constructing *knowledge* through the meta-cognitive learning model of experiential learning.

However, I have found that *forming abstract concepts* must be considered differently within this study. The students' fundamental concept of *knowledge* challenges that of Kolb (1984): "Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Using Kolb's paradigm within a study of Christian students created a tension between the theoretical framework and selected sample. Being Christians, believing that God created knowledge and people discover what he has already created, the students in this study used *knowledge* to construct their understanding of their learning experience.

Thus, *forming abstract concepts* was more akin to Questioning within the Capacities for Imaginative Learning. Here, students "ask questions throughout [their] explorations that further [their] own learning; to ask the question, 'What if?'" For example, reflecting after the assisted

living center, students imagined ideas for future service projects. Ginger asked, "What if we worked with the local community garden? Is there a way that we could work *with* the community, that it could be service-learning?" Lisa asked, "What if instead of a pregnancy center, we went to Planned Parenthood and still gave out baby supplies there to try and help people choose life instead?" Hanna wondered about "making cards for the police officers, cards that described how blessed we are by their service, and how their children are blessed in the same way." Based upon their individual previous experiences and the recent shared concrete experience at the assisted living center, they formed abstract ideas that could potentially be made into concrete experiences (future projects). Although this study diverged from Kolb's paradigm regarding how knowledge is constructed versus discovered, other aspects remained applicable and analytically useful, such as the cycle of action-reflection-action (Kolb, 1894), and "the two dialectically related modes of grasping experience - Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization [according to the use of the phrase within this study]" (Kolb & Kolb, 2008, p. 298). Forming abstract concepts was an intermediary stage of reflecting, synthesizing, and considering, "What if we did this idea next?"

Beyond ideas for service projects, students also asked "What if?" regarding the residents at the assisted living center. One anonymous student asked, "I was wondering if they were believers. I wonder if you could even share the Gospel with them now because their minds are so far gone." Another anonymous student asked, "What if they already were Christians and now their minds are gone? What does that make them now? How does that affect their walk with the Lord?" While reorienting the source of *knowledge*, aspects of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle remain applicable, such as, "When [concrete experience] is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking and transformed by action, the new experience created becomes richer,

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broader, and deeper. Further, iterations of the cycle further deepen learning and its transfer to experience in other contexts" (Kolb, 2010, p. 27). Their reflections moved into deeper realms of salvation and their role in it through evangelism. They wanted to impact the residents in significantly meaningful ways and began questioning "How?" And "What if I did this? Would it help? Would it even matter?"

The process of sharing reflections and forming abstract concepts furthered the process of teambuilding. Many of the examples above occurred while the students were having group discussions during Final Portfolio "workdays." Creating Final Portfolios freely in a group setting at a long table covered with aesthetic tools inspired the students to share their thoughts, musings, conundrums, and suggestions for future service projects. For example, regarding the Poster Project, Jo's pages expressed that the experience to him was like an experiment. He later commented, "I learned a lot about the other people we were working with. Having them there, I hadn't really talked to them much before. I learned quite a bit about them." Reflection through reflective artmaking enabled the students to experience service-learning's teambuilding as the object of study through their senses, as well as emotionally, and physically represent that experience (Holzer, 2009) through the Final Portfolio pages.

5.2.5   Sharing with the community.

After the service and reflection, students shared the service-learning project with the community through another service and presentation. The students, accompanied by their mothers and siblings, first visited the fire department to present the Thank You Cards that they made with the residents at the assisted living center, as well as the cookies they made as a reflective practice at home. Regarding the cookies, Lisa shared, "I probably enjoyed most making all the cookies and

bringing them to the fire department, because I know they liked them, they work hard, and I feel sorry for them." Indeed, the fire chief was surprised by this presentation and thanked them for their gifts. He also expressed that he was pleased to see such a large group of visitors (there were twenty six visitors). After exhibiting their gratitude, the students learned more about the people and inner workings of the fire department through a guided tour. Ginger observed, "The fire department enjoyed the cookies and the cards, and showing us what do they do for the community. They liked showing us what they do for the community." The group experience of sharing with the fire department community fostered the development of team.

Secondly, the students returned to the assisted living center virtually through a video in which they presented their gratitude and reflections upon their experience. Here, the students exhibited photos of the cards and cookies being delivered to the fire department, as well as the tour afterwards. Subtitles and background music accompanied these photos. The students also included video recordings of themselves sharing what they did, enjoyed, and learned, as well as their gratitude. The video then incorporated photos of the cards that the students created with the residents. The end of the video displays 1 Peter 4:10-11 from the Bible, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." The students wanted this verse because it exemplified their desire to continue impacting the community according to their Christian desire to serve, glorify, and enjoy God through civic engagement. As Hanna expressed in her section of the video, "I learned that […] older people can be really sweet. I had a great-grandmother, who was older, and I was able to minister with her. She taught me to minister with other older people in

her neighborhood. I have had many experiences with older people, and I know that they mean a lot to me and to others. Thank you." Thus, the video was the final method of *sharing with the community* within this project. They worked together as a team to create the video, traversing the bridges within themselves and with the community once again, further clearing the way for future border crossing experiences.

5.3   SUMMARY

In guiding the students through multiple cycles of reflection, I observed how service-learning inspired internal community building. I next observed how the application of this process through taking action in service provided the opportunity for team building. Group discussions and aesthetic practices made these stages of development visible. Although the Capacities for Imaginative Learning are aesthetically founded, they transcended into the area *service* within service-learning, facilitating my analysis of the community building and teambuilding that resulted from service-learning.

Practitioners desiring to incorporate civic engagement into their classrooms will find this capacities-based analysis of service-learning beneficial. This study provides insight as an exhibition of the learning processes of community building, teambuilding, and the mechanisms through which the students crossed borders while maintaining their sense of self within their community. As Solomon offered, "Being in groups is an important part of our community, because we can interact with other people and make new friends." The enmeshment of learning processes provides a potent context for these learning processes to occur, and the methodologies within this study can be practiced by various types of schools, at least in part.

Practitioners should carefully consider that I found limitations between the theoretical framework and the selected sample. In this study, foundational conceptualizations of people creating knowledge, versus discovering knowledge, limited the methodology because the students were Christian and the study's theoretical framework was founded in a different worldview. The framework magnified the importance of one's personal experience as constructing *knowledge*, so the questions were consistently directed toward *self*. Although it was fine with the students at the beginning of the project to talk about them*selves*, the students did not want to keep talking about *self* but rather *God*, because it is their understanding of *God* that facilitates their understanding of the world, their experience in the world, others in the world, and *self*. Their focus was more outward than inward. The framework's focus was more inward than outward. I explain this conflict further in subsequent chapters, but here it demonstrates the necessity of practicing a methodology that is appropriate for the selected sample.

However, I maintain that overall the findings in this study demonstrate practical application for practitioners desiring to learn the mechanisms behind service-learning outcomes, or *how* the learning takes place. While these service-learning students delved deeper into their understanding of the dimensions of their sense of community, perhaps the most iterative and revealing capacity is *Reflecting/Assessing* because it was continually present within the study. Reflecting/Assessing contained two symbiotic parts that were applicable throughout the imaginative process (Holzer, 2009). According to the Lincoln Center Institute, this particular capacity finds a constant role as the student practices Noticing Deeply, Questioning, Embodying, and repeating the process (Holzer, 2009). This can also be said for Making Connections, Identifying Patterns, and Exhibiting Empathy, because "one is always looking back, asking, revising" (Holzer, 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, "In order to create meaning and take appropriate

action, one should reflect, assess, and do so again, to make sure 'appropriate' is what the action will be." By reflecting upon their experience, the students had the opportunity to consider what had happened and then use their reflections as a springboard for identifying what needed to happen next. Thus, the learning mechanisms behind service-learning were made visible in large part due to reflection (aesthetically through reflective artmaking, orally in group discussions, and/or textually through written reflection), and the capacity Reflecting/Assessing provided greater insight for my analysis.

By fostering imaginative learning through aesthetic education among these young people, the generation of a greater sense of possibility in their lives and the lives of others (Greene, 1995) has helped to inspire the learners towards the realms of *community* via generating and developing sense of community. "My school books, my family, our house, my Alert group, and my dog," Solomon explained, "These things are to me ways in which I can see how my community is important to me." Imagining possibilities through creative expression allowed Solomon to consider his community in new ways. Reflecting upon his favorite mode of aesthetic expression, Solomon pointed to his Photography Project. Aesthetically considering his most influential aspects of community that motivated his understanding of community generated "a greater sense of possibility in [his life] and the lives of others" (Greene, 1995, p. 38). He gave others some access across his mental and emotional borders (Keith, 1998) by openly sharing some of his reflections, which promoted the border crossing necessary for community building, which then allowed opportunity for teambuilding.

The students had the opportunity to consider the concepts of community at its multiple levels. The levels of community elicited from this particular study included internal community (as an internal team of students), external community (town, state, country, and world), faith or

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church, family or home, school, and self within community. Greene (1995) asks, "If we can link imagination to our sense of possibility and our ability to respond to other human beings, can we link it to the making of community as well?" (p. 38). The students approached Greene's inquiry by reflecting upon their previously conceived concepts of community individually while generating their concept of community as a group, thus determining how to "name" their community. This process began with the group drawing project on the poster board on which they named (ideintified) their shared communities through creating images and text *together*. The process of naming continued with greater specificity throughout each stage of service-learning as they became border-crossers (Keith, 1998), the internal community developed, and they shared ideas. They then worked together as a team, moving forward with their ideas through taking action. Each component and stage was made visible aesthetically, orally, and/or textually.

Consequently, the coupling of modes of artmaking and stages of service-learning came into question. How does the timeline of the progression of service-learning through its relationship with reflective artmaking further clarify the findings? How appropriate were the modes in relation to the stages? How does this project's life cycle illuminate the development of sense of community? One of Ginger's contributions introduces the answers to these questions in the next chapter, where I explore the relationships between the service-learning and modes of artmaking within my study.

6.0 SERVICE-LEARNING AND MODES OF ARTMAKING: EXHIBITING SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

The long dining room table is loaded with piles of magazines, the scissors in an adjacent box nearly bursting with the anticipation of what is to come and the glue sticks standing at attention. Students return to their seats after completing the previous art project elsewhere and begin deciding which color of paper to choose. "What is a metaphor?" I ask. Jo immediately tries to respond but suddenly realizes that he can't find the right words, "Something that describes something without using the actual… thing." With amused smiles, a few others provide needed clarity, and Lisa asks, "How are we going to use the metaphor?" I explain, "What does community service or civic engagement mean to you? Think of a picture you would use to describe what it means to you, in your eyes. Pick an image that carries with it a neat definition of what community service is." After a handful of creative ideas, Ginger, a dancer whose pseudonym was inspired by Ginger Rogers, insightfully adds, "Building families together." The students select a magazine that might contain the image they pontificated, scissors burst from their box, and tiny bits of unwanted paper begin to silently decorate the floor.

Ginger's idea crystalizes onto her page, a display of her sense of community (Figures 24 & 25). Amidst conversations regarding prior experiences with civic engagement, other general conversations, and collective merriment, she fills her white page with carefully selected images of families doing activities together, a wood glue bottle, and smiling people. Underlined several

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times for emphasis, she titles the collage <u>Gluing Families Together</u>. The piece cascades onto another page, an explanation of her metaphor containing more images, this time of recipients of service projects. She adds blocks of color and text:

- *Helping families grow closer together by doing things together. Doing things for others in need, and by doing things as a community.*

- *The glue equals fun and helpful things that bond families closer together.*

- *The more you help in the family (and community) the more you understand and appreciate community service and the community.*

In her presentation of her piece to the group afterward, she further explains, "Mine is about gluing families together. (I do a class about metaphors and tropes, so I've got this down.) They grow closer, they bond closer together, a bonding agent that keeps us close." I concur, "Community service builds us closer together because the experience is intimate, relational, and special."

Figure 24: Ginger's collaged Metaphor of Service Project (page one of two-page set)

Glueing Families together

handwritten text on collage:

- Helping families grow closer together by doing things together, doing things for others in need, and by doing things as a community.

- The glue equals fun and helpful things that bond families closer together.

- The more you help in the family (and community) the more you understand and appricated community serves and the community.

Figure 25: Ginger's collaged Metaphor of Service Project (page two of two-page set)

I titled this collage-making project as "Metaphor of Service," and it was inspired by Krueger (1998). Ginger's collage is an aesthetic expression of her synthesis of what is meant by *community* and *community service*, the basis of her *sense of community*. She considered her community in new ways through metaphor. Butler-Kisber (2008) observes in her study, "The ambiguity that remains present in collage provides a way of expressing the said and the unsaid, and allows for multiple avenues of interpretation and greater accessibility" (p. 268). Irwin (2003) explains, "The collage-making process inherently uses metaphor (similarity or

comparison) metonymy (contiguity or connectedness) and [. . .] challenges the dichotomy of the intellect and the senses" (p. 9). They had just aesthetically reflected upon who/what was their community, expressing responses to this inquiry through the collectively constructed Poster Project on the floor. They had also just shared their experiences with civic engagement. Ginger had a fresh awareness of how she and the others in the group defined *community*, as well as her own personal reflections upon her experience with civic engagement. Consequently, for her collage, *family* came to Ginger's mind first. She responded immediately that community service builds and bonds families together. More specifically, *families taking action together* identified community service as they work together, bonding through the experience, and bonding with the community whom they are serving. This is why her family joined her for the service projects at the assisted living center and fire department. For Ginger, community service has been and should be a family affair, providing the basis for her sense of community.

Ginger's metaphorical collage opens the door to the findings within this section of analysis; the sense of community revealed through particular stages of service-learning and modes of artmaking in the project. This chapter is an examination of the specific events that elicited responses regarding sense of community. The intersection of service-learning and modes of artmaking illuminates the life cycle of the overall project, as well as the appropriateness of the modes of artmaking within each stage in the project's life cycle. I consider the project life cycle more intensely and analyze how these relationships illuminate the development of sense of community.

6.1   INITIAL QUERY RESULTS

NVivo's matrix query function provides helpful insight into this next section of data analysis. Having previously cross-tabulated the capacities and modes of artmaking, as well as the capacities and service-learning, I now display the intersections of service-learning and modes of artmaking (Figure 26). The rows outline the stages of service-learning that were represented within my study. These meta-categories are the central stages of service-learning in the context of my study. The columns outline the ten modes of artmaking the students experienced during reflective artmaking service-learning. In this manner, the life cycle of the project begins to take shape.

Modes of Artmaking and Service-Learning	A : Aesth. Embell...	B : Baking Decorating...	C : Box 3D...	D : Collage	E : Creative Writing	F : Drawing Painting	G : Final Portfolio...	H : Journaling...	I : Photography	J : Video
1 : 1- Explore Observe a Need	1	18	0	0	0	25	6	16	0	0
2 : 2- Planning Preparing	0	21	0	0	0	34	8	16	2	2
3 : 3- Taking Action Create the Change and Test...	72	66	2	61	0	75	60	101	50	3
4 : 4- Reflection and Forming Abstract Concepts	194	88	28	158	67	219	196	321	188	16
5 : 5- Share with the Community	66	55	2	63	1	77	59	115	58	11
6 : Reciprocity	4	18	12	5	13	22	14	11	4	0
7 : Team	59	54	30	41	9	121	100	123	103	7

Figure 26: Number of representations of each component of service-learning by different modes of artmaking

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The matrix represents the number of references coded throughout the data in each category. This particular matrix displays which modes of artmaking were correlated to which stages of service-learning.

Viewed another way, the insight from the matrix in Figure 26 above could be interpreted and expressed as an extension to the diagram I presented in Chapter 2 as Figure 2. Through Figure 2, I created an initial theoretical framework of the relationship between experiential learning and service-learning. The overall cycle provides a basic framework from which I designed the study. Simultaneously, the service-learning stages mechanized the cycle, putting it into action through the seven components made visible within this study. In Figure 27 below, five components comprised the stages according to my study-specific description, and they were not in the typical sequence of service-learning. Two components were the overall themes of reciprocity and team, and they were visible throughout the study. I expand upon reciprocity in Chapter 7 and themes regarding team in Chapter 5.
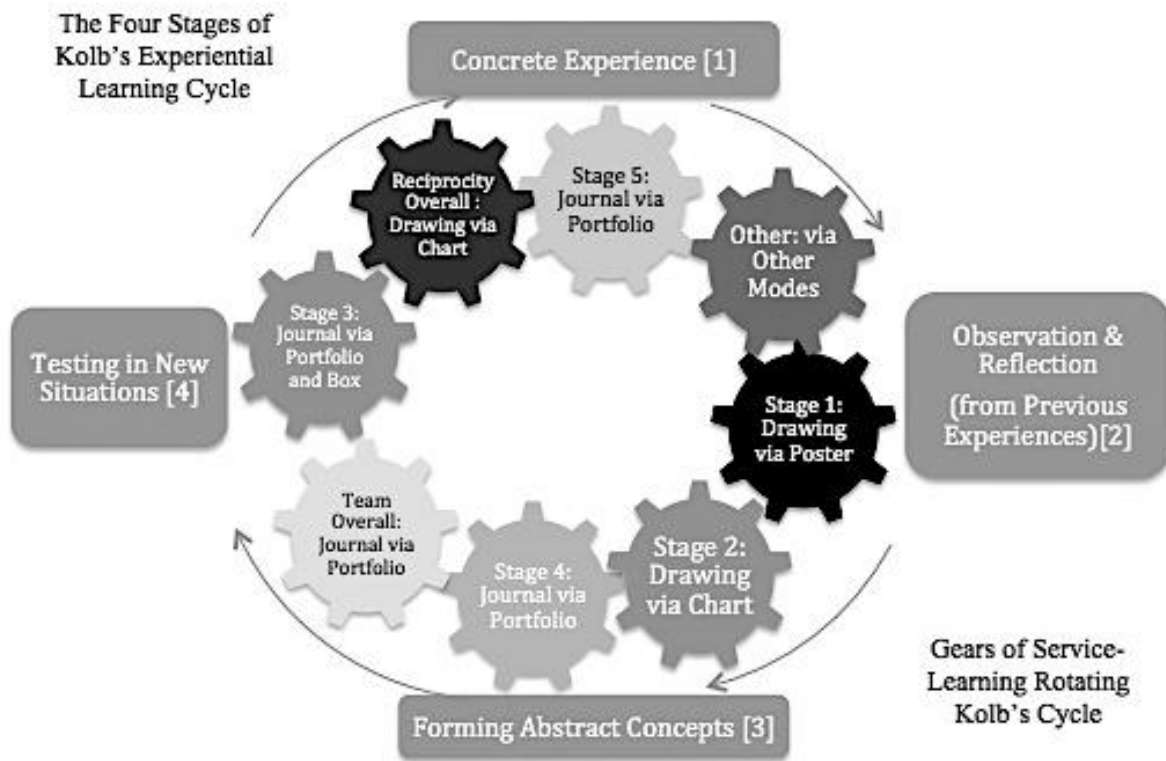
Figure 27: Continuation of the initial theoretical framework of the relationship between experiential learning and service-learning

6.1.1 Stage 1: Drawing vis Poster Project.

I defined stage 1 of service-learning in this study as exploring and/or observing a need. It occurred predominately within the Experiential Learning Cycle at stage 2 by observing and reflecting upon their previous concrete experiences prior to the study. Students began their service-learning experience in this study through participating in multiple modes. My initial query results illuminated the role of drawing at the start of the study. Drawing was the most correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 1. Drawing at the start of the project occurred during the Poster Project, aforementioned in Chapter 5. Therefore, the Poster Project (Figure 28

below) begins what I am referring to as the *project life cycle*, the sequence of service-learning stages within experiential learning, and the correlation between the stages, modes of artmaking, and specific projects throughout the sequence.

Figure 28: Completed Poster Project

The Poster Project provided the most correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 1 and Kolb's (1984) stage 2, because it generated much student participation, aesthetic representation, and diversity in responses. The poster was large and there were eight students

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volunteering their contributions. I also observed much enthusiasm with the project. For example, Ginger said, "I feel like a kid again!" Lisa concurred, "Kindergarten all over." Filling the poster with images and text using crayons, students laughed about their own contributions and those of others. "This looks like a…" "That is a horrible ballerina." "It didn't quite turn out." "This is supposed to be a house, but it kind of looks…." Students did not struggle with imagining their ideas, evidenced by the discursive whirlwind throughout. Instead, they struggled with representing their ideas on the board. Lisa said, "I never draw anything, so this is really hard." Therefore, this communal project was a helpful starting point for the students, because it provided an opportunity for the students to collaborate somewhat equally and too see that the other members of the group shared in their experience. Their individual observations and explorations during stage 1 of service-learning were shared with the group, the beginning of internal community building (Chapter 5). Drawing within the Poster Project at stage 1 contributed to coalescence of the group.

6.1.2   Stage 2: Drawing via Chart Project.

I defined stage 2 of service-learning in this study as planning or preparing to meet the need(s) that the students observed or explored in service-learning's stage 1. Stage 2 of service-learning occurred predominately within the Experiential Learning Cycle at stages 2 and 3. Here, the students practiced observing and reflecting further upon their previous experiences, and they simultaneously formed abstract concepts.   The most correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 2 at Kolb's (1984) stages 2 and 3 was drawing. The drawing that occurred at this stage was an exercise in which the students individually created a chart to imagine ideas for a service project for the group.

During the first meeting, I presented the initial stage of the Chart Project to the students as homework. The "assignment" was to imagine three potential service project ideas that the group could undertake together at the assisted living center. We had already decided to do the Thank You Card Project, so these ideas were to be imagined either preceding or proceeding it. At the next general meeting, I divided the students into three small groups of two or three people. Within their group, they individually presented their ideas. The group members asked questions to each other, and having previously discussed *reciprocity*, one question that I directed the students to ask each other was, "What is the reciprocity in your idea?" The group then helped each other decide which idea was the best (i.e., most feasible, most interesting, and/or had the most reciprocity.)

Returning to the main table for a follow-up, large group discussion, I asked the students to individually consider the idea's details, such as who, what, when, why, etc. through the visual representation of a bubble chart. For example, Hanna imagined that the group should decorate cookies (Figure 29). Placing her project idea in the center and encircling it, she drew the details of her project within bubbles that radiated from the central project title. She wrote, "It will leave a memory," "Everybody loves cookies," "It's easy," "They will be eating cookies," "We like cookies," "It is fun," "It is like art on a cookie!" and "It is edible." Once the Chart Projects were completed, each student presented their Charts to the large group in turn. We then discussed each idea, voted on the best idea (decorating cookies), and started planning the implementation of that idea.
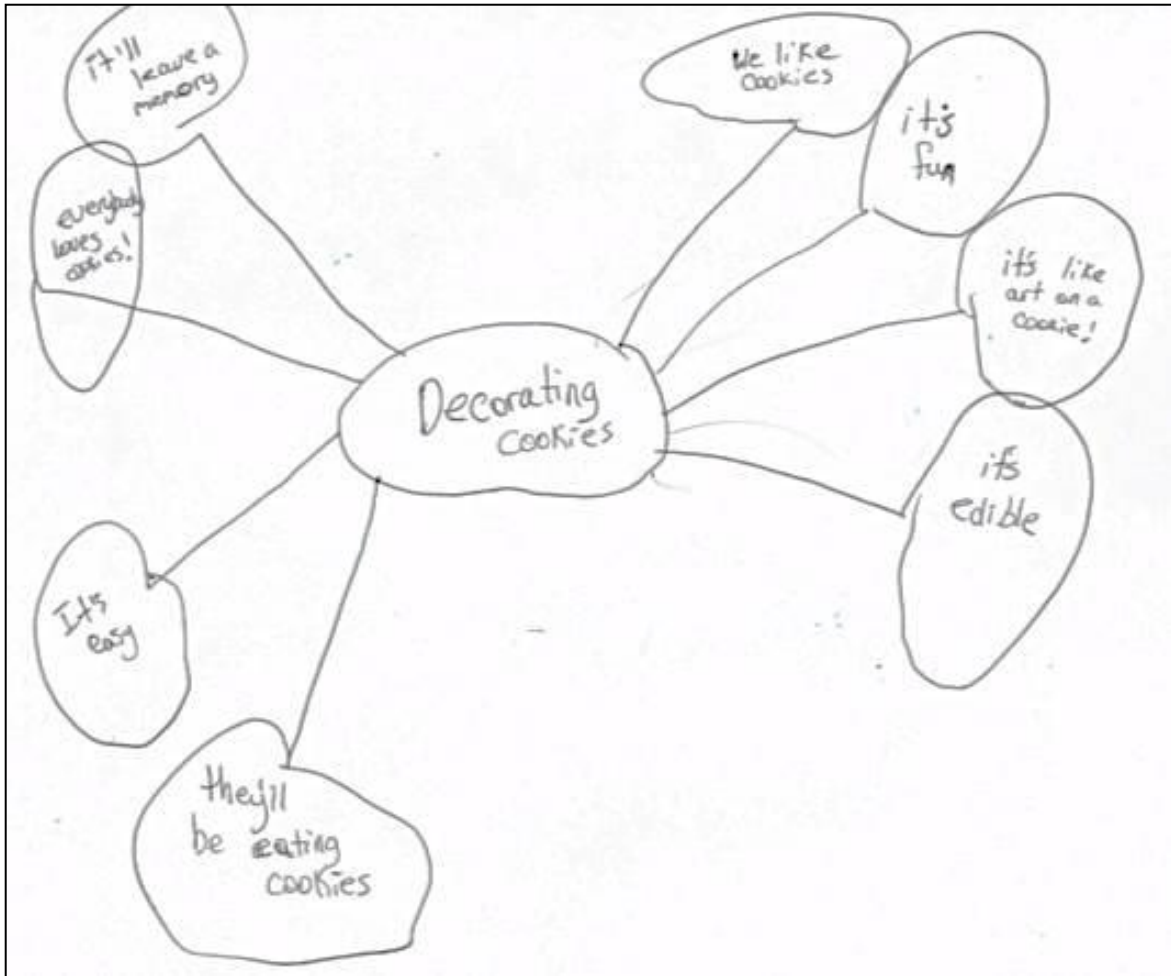
Figure 29: Hanna's bubble chart of her service project idea

The Chart Project visually exhibited the individual's desires and imagination. Their oral presentation of their idea provided more clarity. Therefore, the Chart Project made visible important information regarding the students' sense of community and conceptualization of reciprocity. For example, Hanna explained that her primary desire was to do a project in which the residents could feasibly participate and genuinely enjoy. Her concern was regarding the reciprocity towards the residents, what they would gain from the experience. She determined that the project would leave a memory, it would be fun, and the residents would get to eat a

special treat. Through this activity, I observed that her concern for reciprocity was consistent with each idea that the others presented, because the feedback she contributed typically was in asking questions or providing clarity about the reciprocity in the suggested ideas. Through hearing students present their ideas and observe the feedback from the other students, I could recognize how students were experiencing stage 2 of service-learning. Thus, drawing through the Chart Project facilitated the continuation of the project's life cycle through stage 2 of service-learning.

6.1.3   Stage 3: Journaling via Final Portfolio and Box 3D Projects.

After the students observed a need and planned their agreed upon service project, they then took action at the assisted living center. I define stage 3 of service-learning in this study as taking action to create the change that was discussed in the previous stages. This definition includes Kolb's (1984) stage 4 Testing in New Situations, because each situation in my study was new to the group. Thus, taking action during stage 3 of service-learning occurred predominately within the Experiential Learning Cycle at stage 4, Testing in New Situations. Here, students visited the assisted living center as a group, created Thank You Cards with the residents for the local fire department (of which they delivered two weeks later), and decorated cookies with the residents.

Although the Thank You Card and decorating cookies projects were correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 3, students built off of these projects through journaling. Consequently, the most correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 3 was journaling. Journaling in my study does not refer to keeping a journal, but rather journaling through the Final Portfolio and Box 3D Projects.

In Figure 30 below, Petin exhibits the details of the service project through journaling on her portfolio pages. Viewed as a set, she provides on her pages journaling about and next to photos of the service project and the cards themselves.

Figure 30: Petin's two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding the service project at the assisted living center

Coupled with stamped frames, she writes the title of the information above the stamp and the details inside the stamp:

Who: [Name of assisted living center] residents

What: Decorating cookies and cards

When: 11/3/14

Why: For a service project

Where: [Name of site]

How: Spending time with the residents

Her journaling represented on the set of pages provided supporting textual information next to her photos, tying each element of the pages together. The design of her journaling was consistent between the two pages, so journaling was one of Petin's methods of tying the set together and creating a recognizable theme (the service project). Building off of her written text, she adds support with other aesthetic embellishments, such as stickers, stamped images, stamped quotes, and stamped titles ("Together") on both pages. The quotes supported her journaling because they were predominately about smiling and laughing, portraying her enjoyment with the service project. Therefore, Petin's set of pages demonstrates how students intentionally included journaling to contribute to the collaged story they wanted to convey about and/or during stage 3 of service-learning, taking action (I revisit these two pages and expand Petin's collaged story in Chapter 7).

6.1.4 Stage 4: Journaling via Final Portfolio Project.

After taking action, the students then proceeded to service-learning's stage 4 according to my definition for this study, reflection and forming abstract concepts. As the definition suggests, the students at this stage practiced Kolb's (1984) stages 2 and 3, Observation/Reflection and Forming Abstract Concepts. The most correlated evidence of service-learning's stage 4 was

journaling. Again, students practiced journaling at this stage predominately through the Final Portfolio Project (and the Box 3D Project).

Jo's page in Figure 31 below is one example of *both* reflective journaling *and* forming abstract concepts during stage 4 of service-learning. Again, *forming abstract concepts* is more akin to Questioning within the Capacities for Imaginative Learning. Here, students "ask questions throughout [their] explorations that further [their] own learning; to ask the question, 'What if?'" While creating his Thank You Card for the fire fighters, Jo seemed to ask, "What if I represent my gratitude with a landscape scene?" On his Final Portfolio page about his Thank You Card and experience at the assisted living center, he focuses upon his portrayal of the card-making process. He represents his reflections regarding his experience at the assisted living center through the inclusion of a photo of his card, another photo of himself creating his card, journaled information about the card-making component of the project, a stamped quote, a stamped title, and journaling about his personal reflections about the specific project and/or overall project. As seen in Figure 31 below, journaling was both informational and personally reflective, tying together the elements of the page.
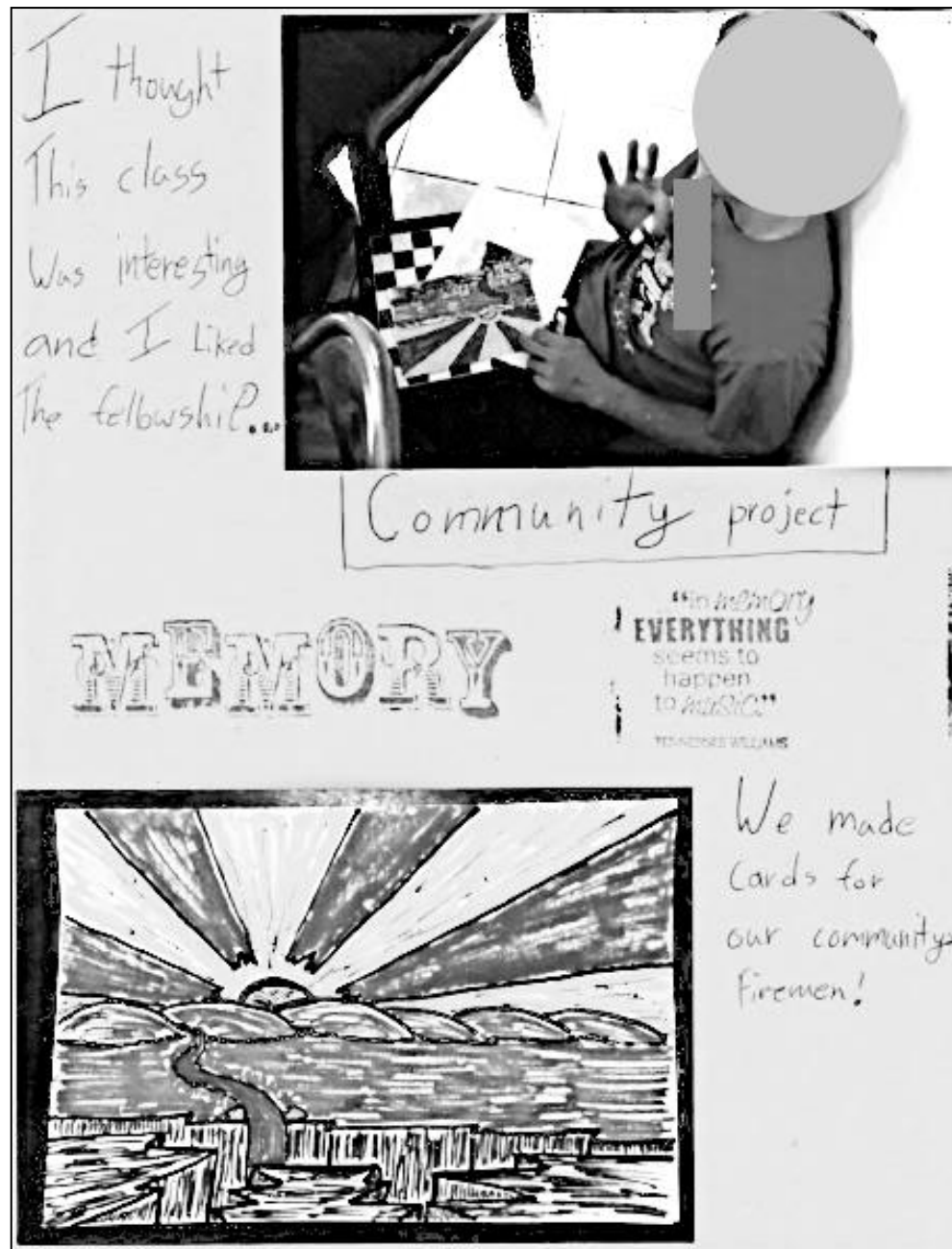
Figure 31: Jo's Final Portfolio page regarding the service project at the assisted living center

Jo's page made visible the abstract concepts that he was silently forming while creating

his card at the assisted living center. Slightly isolating himself from the group, he decided to sit

on the floor, in part because there were not enough chairs (I offered him mine but he kindly

insisted that I have it), and in part because he needed some time alone to process the situation, he

later told me. While on the floor, next to and somewhat under the table where the others were

creating cards, Jo silently drew an intriguing cover on his card using markers. In thinking about

his gratitude for the local fire department, Jo drew the sun beaming orange and yellow patterned

light over a landscape of softly rounded hills, vibrantly green plains, and a smooth, blue river

that cascaded into a desolately brown and jagged chasm. While at the assisted living center, I

asked him about this dramatic and detailed scene. He shyly told me that he just wanted to draw

it. However, in knowing him for five years, I was not convinced. He is a deep thinker and he

cares about his community.

Therefore, I interpret his drawing as possibly being an illustration of the life that was

given to the parched and scorched land of our local community through the fire fighters' service.

Maybe the sun offers its life-giving beams of light and the river pours forth life-giving water.

Next to the photo of his card, he writes, "We made cards for our community firemen!"

Therefore, maybe the life that is given is directly related to the service of the firemen. Referring

to his journaling in other pieces for more insight, I interpret the sun to potentially represent God

metaphorically. In another piece (his Self-Portrait, of which I exhibit in Chapter 8), the life-

giving sun metaphorically represents God through the text "God is good," which formed the

outline of the sun. The sun's beams in his Self-Portrait included text about God and Jo's

spiritual self. Therefore, in his card's scene, Jo might be showing that God's beaming light

offers the hope of restoration to the community that was previously destroyed by drought and

wildfire. Maybe God's restoration is expressed through the fire fighter's service. I further interpret his card to potentially represent more than the hope of physical restoration, but spiritual restoration, as well. Expressed throughout the overall project (most especially in his Self-Portrait in Chapter 8), Jo is spiritually concerned about his community's need for the life that God offers to those who are spiritually parched and scorched by life's trials. Jo's makes this most clearly evident through the mode of journaling during stage 4 of service-learning.

My interpretations are ethnographically determined speculations based on my observations, Jo's aesthetic expressions, and his oral explanations. They illuminate Jo's process and product of forming abstract concepts through reflective artmaking during and after taking action. His journaled text facilitates my understanding because it makes his thoughts visible in textual form. Therefore, Jo's page exhibits how forming abstract concepts was part of a flexible and collaboratively created interdisciplinary process that required constant reflection (Taylor, 2002), and how journaling, the most correlated mode in stage 4 of service-learning, made this visible.

6.1.5 Stage 5: Journaling via Final Portfolio Project.

The next service-learning stage in the project's life cycle is stage 5, sharing with the community. Stage 5 of service-learning included multiple stages of Kolb's cycle (e.g., students took action *and* shared with their community through the fire station service project and Video Project). However, sharing with the community was most representative of Kolb's (1984) stage 1, Concrete Experience, because students demonstrated ownership with distinction through the concrete experience of sharing with the community. Service-learning's stage 5 corresponded

predominantly with the aesthetic mode of journaling. The most correlated representation of journaling at stage 5 is the culminating Final Portfolio Project.

At the end of the overall project, the students formally shared about their overall project experiences with their community in two ways. First, throughout the overall project, they created Final Portfolios to be viewed by and shared with public audiences. Second, as punctuation to their Final Portfolios, I asked the students to publicly share their Final Portfolio in a brief, formal presentation to a live audience of familial community members. Through the journaling within the pages of the Final Portfolio and the students' oral expansion upon their pages during their presentations, I observed evidence of student ownership of the overall project.

For example, Petin decided to show to the audience a selected sample of her pages regarding her view of herself in her community. As I exhibited in Chapter 4, her summation of the entire project was her *oral presentation* of her aesthetically represented *self* in her community within the Final Portfolio pages. She read from her pages *and* expanded upon her reflections. Her journaling overall, but about her*self* specifically, contained the information she desired to share with the community, and that became the springboard for her practice of sharing with the community. Altogether, during her engagement with service-learning's stage 5, she demonstrated ownership; a portrayal of what Kolb (1984) refers to as Concrete Experience. Thus, journaling was the mode that most clearly portrayed how students demonstrated their ownership of sharing with the community through the Final Portfolio Project.

6.2   A COLLAGE OF STAGES

Throughout each stage in the project's life cycle, aesthetic discovery framed the students' experiences in considering their role in their communities, or *civic identity*. The dominant mode of artmaking that I guided the students through was Final Portfolio construction, which was a synthesis of each mode of artmaking with an emphasis on collage. Each mode of artmaking was not mutually exclusive because they worked together, like a collage. They were assembled into a portfolio like a collage of pages. The pages *themselves* were a collaged assembling of images, text, found objects, etc.

Similarly, the stages of service-learning were not mutually exclusive. They worked together like a collage, as well, each stage containing elements of others. For example, while planning and preparing, they practiced reflection upon their previous experiences to shed light on the choices they ought to make next. Taking action through the fire station service project and Video Project were simultaneously their practice of sharing with the community. Service-learning itself was a collage of experiences, each stage working together and enmeshed in some ways to create and portray stories.

Therefore, I chose the method of collage as a contribution to the field regarding how to document and analyze the students' products and processes. Through collage, the students integrated of each mode of artmaking. As portrayed by Ginger in the introduction to this chapter, students synthesized their understanding of community, community service, and their sense of community through their expressions of collage. They considered their community in new ways through collage primarily on Final Portfolio pages that they created as a collage containing images (e.g., photography, drawings, paintings, magazine clippings), text (e.g., written journaling, magazine clippings, stampings), and/or other aesthetic embellishments (such

as stickers, stamps, found objects). Students practiced their primarily collaged aesthetic expressions throughout the duration of the overall project through the Final Portfolio construction. Regarding value of collage in education, Butler-Kisber (2008) explains,

> These forms of collage, as well as others, can be used in the final representational product to enhance understanding, show poignancy, open avenues for discussion and further reflection, and contribute to persuasiveness, as shown in the doctoral dissertations of Finley (1998), Promislow (2005), and Steeves (2000). These three approaches are collage as a memoing/reflective process (Butler-Kisber, 2007; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; McDermott, 2002), collage as a conceptualizing approach (Butler-Kisber, et al., 2005), and collage as an elicitation for writing or discussion (Butler-Kisber, Rudd, & Stewart, 2007; Williams, 2000). (p. 269)

Referring to Butler-Kisber's description, the students in my study created a collaged final product that represented their experiences, enhanced their understanding, showed poignancy, and opened avenues for discussion and further reflection. It was a means to support persuasive arguments, such as the formal presentation of the Final Portfolios with the supporting community during the final meeting and the informal presentation to others in their community beyond the study. In this study, the Final Portfolios encompassed the three approaches to collage described by Butler-Kisber (2008): a memoing/reflective process, a conceptualizing approach, and an elicitation for writing or discussion.

Students practiced memoing through what I described as journaling. Students practiced the reflective process of memoing/journaling during Final Portfolio page construction by providing supporting text on the page, such as next to photos or tying sets of photos together. The text contributed to the collaged story that was conveyed by the students. Students also

practiced memoing/journaling while completing "in-class" worksheets that were designed to guide the students through the process of reflection. Through the worksheets, students considered specific question regarding specific projects. For example, through the worksheet at the start of the Video Project, I asked the students to reflect upon what they enjoyed and learned about the assisted living center experience. They then used this worksheet as a reference during their video recorded message to the assisted living center.

Collage making was also a conceptualizing approach. While reflecting, the students found that they had a story to tell. Portraying the story verbally differs from aesthetically. In my interview with Ginger outside of her house in the woods, she shared with me that collage was her favored mode of reflective artmaking because "it makes the most sense to me." In discussing her Box 3D Project, she expressed that collage was her preferred method of telling her story, because she enjoyed it so much and it came easily to her. As a conceptualizing approach, collage making upon and within her Box 3D Project helped her to process her thoughts regarding the assisted living center (Figures 32 & 33). On the outside, she felt that she expressed being "cheery and bright," having "peace, love, joy, faith," and showing a desire to "give." She used text and images from magazine clippings to explicitly portray her feelings. Her text was coupled with images of smiling, laughing, and posing girls/woman portraying the message of the text. However, on the inside, she felt a tension between how she wanted to respond (with peacefulness) and how she actually felt (confused and awkward). "I have the word 'mix' inside because I had a whole bunch of mixed emotions. Peace, love, and [confusion]." She chose images to symbolically represent other feelings: "The food represents how I was feeling hungry." Thus, through her Box 3D Project, Ginger expressed dissonance, as well as enjoyment, with the

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process of creating the collages in her Final Portfolio pages.   Collage as a conceptualizing

approach made the most sense to her.

Figure 32: Ginger's Box 3D Project (outside, top)

Figure 33: Ginger's Box 3D Project (inside, bottom)

For each student, creating the pages allowed them the opportunity to cohesively assemble the elements of their story. Such elements included the subjects, main characters, actions, key points, titles, images, timeframe, their voice, and their thoughts regarding the story. Collage making provided the opportunity for the students to take the pieces of their story, represent them aesthetically onto the Final Portfolio page, and to think more deeply about the elements in the process.

The key to the practice was considering the clarity with which they represented their story to an audience of outsiders who did not know the information regarding the project. To "read" the page affectively, or *visual literacy*, the audience would want to know, "Who are these people on the page? What are they doing? What are *you* doing? What did you learn from the experience? Why should I care?" Therefore, creating the Final Portfolio pages was a conceptual

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approach to deciding how to share the project with others in the community. It was a means of providing clarity to their reflections within themselves by considering how they would tell their thoughts to others as they "read" their Final Portfolio.

Students practiced writing on the page itself and then separately about the page. Some students wrote stories within their collaged work, and other preferred to write pieces separately to coincide with the page. As in Ginger's example at the introduction to this chapter, students created metaphors of service through collage, and to support the collection of images and text that they selected from magazines (some drew images as well), students wrote about their creation, providing a textual explanation of the piece. The pair of pages was then added to the Final Portfolio.

The entire process of collage making inspired group discussions and questions throughout. The students were inspired in part because "The collage-making process […] challenges the dichotomy of the intellect and the senses," (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 9) and they wanted to verbally engage with the challenges they were internally experiencing. Beyond topics regarding the page creation itself, students were inspired to discuss a wide variety of topics, including politics, religion, family, desires for civic engagement, questions regarding the value and impact of the projects within the study, and related personal dilemmas with which they had been struggling. The group of students also engaged in presentations and discussions regarding their creations. Thus, discussion was central to the practice of collage making.

Butler-Kisber (2008) makes a call for research through *multimedia* artmaking that is reflective, especially collage. She states, "What is needed [...] is an integration of the criteria for evaluating arts-informed research with those for evaluating visual images, with a particular focus on collage. Although this is no easy task, it would be a worthwhile endeavor, and one that would

be well received in the field" (p. 273). In my study, I infuse arts-based research with experiential learning practices, specifically reflective artmaking about and during service-learning. I evaluate visual images with a particular focus on the collage of Final Portfolio construction through visual literacy practices and a capacities-based analysis. Butler-Kisber (2008) continues, "More public accounts of researchers' explorations with the medium, more opportunities for exchanges between researchers and artists, and efforts to make available lists of exemplary works are needed" (p. 274). This study provides my exploration with collage through working with the students to create the Final Portfolio.

Collage as reflective artmaking within *service-learning* appears to be welcomed in the field of arts-based research, as well (Bagnoli, 2009; Barry, 1996; Eisner, 2005; Butler-Kisber, 2008). For example, Eisner (2005) makes a call for more arts-based research by those who are knowledgeable in creating at least one of a diverse set of artistic expressions, including collage, stating, "We need to broaden the array of forms of representation that can be used in the conduct of educational research" (p. 17). Being knowledgeable in a diverse set of artistic expressions, I provide evidence for broadening the array of forms of representation to collage making within educational research through the reflective artmaking about and during service-learning within this study.

6.3   LIFE CYCLE AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Ginger's metaphorical collage provides insight regarding her sense of community and the role of collage in the stages of service-learning. *Family* was at the forefront of her reflections, and more specifically, *families taking action together.* What of the other students? What about the group

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all together? Throughout the study, predominantly within the Final Portfolio Project, collage likewise made visible the other levels of community that were important to the students. Considering the relationships between the stages and the evidence exhibited through collage, I found illuminated aspects of sense of community.

Throughout the project, students had opportunities to consider the concepts of community at its multiple levels. Within this study, at least nine levels of community emerged from the students' reflective artmaking service-learning experience. In order of most correlated to least, the levels include:

1) Self within community

2) External/Internal community: Town

3) Internal community (as an internal team of students)

4) Family, home, and/or close friends

5) Faith, and/or church

6) External community: State

7) External community: Country

8) External community: World

9) School

Placing their personal identity at the top of the list exhibits the importance of the topic. Although the structure of the study emphasized the construction of the student's personal interpretation of their sense of community, the students had choices regarding what to include as important to them, or what to not share because it was "too personal," as one student had said. The subsequent levels were important to them in the order listed above. Although each level was not mutually exclusive, clearly sense of self was their starting point.

However, this aligns to the theoretical construction that inspired the methodology, the constructivist design that raises one's sense of self above all other senses, as a means of deciphering the world in which the student lives. I expect that implementing a different theoretical framework and restructuring the starting point would yield a different set of results. For example, beginning from a Christian worldview paradigm would place Faith, and/or Church at the start. Therefore, I recommend that conducting this study from a different theoretical framework would contribute to the analysis of these results. Cross-referencing the most beneficial and affective methods for developing the students' sense of community between the differing paradigms would provide clearer insight into the findings than the findings that this study provides.

The students' development of sense of community was represented throughout each stage of service-learning. Each level of community (except for external/internal community: town) was most evident at stage 4, reflecting and forming abstract concepts. This demonstrates that the highly emphasized reflective methodology was consistent throughout each stage.

External/internal community at the town level was most evident during teamwork and teambuilding, a component of service-learning that occurred throughout. For example, Solomon observed, "Being in groups is an important part of our community because we can interact with other people and make new friends." This is consistent with the findings in the previous chapters, where teamwork and teambuilding was significantly evidenced in this service-learning project according to a capacities-based analysis. The most correlated capacity in this relationship was Embodying, expressed predominantly through journaling within the Final Portfolio.

Conclusions to this set of findings suggest that this study most effectively cultivated a greater sense of self and teamwork in the students' development of sense of community. This

conclusion is congruent with a self-focused theoretical framework and methodological procedures. Students considered their personal sense of self as well as the sense of self of the group as a whole, others within their group, or teambuilding. Consequently, data regarding community at the remaining levels were marginally present. The intention of this practice was to start with self, and then subsequently observe what/who the students naturally determined as their community. For example, I did not actively facilitate discussions at the level of faith, and/ or church level as the starting point because of the constructivist design. Instead, I was interested in determining how the students would refer to this level without my promptings. It was intentionally not the focus of this study and therefore received less attention. Consistent with Dewey's (1938) constructivist design, I facilitated discussions regarding personal values and sense of self.

One complication with this design is the authenticity of the data and findings. Facilitating a focus elsewhere would yield results according to that focus. It was self-determining. Other results may occur, but based on my findings, I would expect them to be marginally present. One method of circumventing this outcome would be balancing the focus upon each level of community equally, from the starting point and throughout.

For example, considering only the constructivist explanation for the substantial representation of teamwork within the findings does not explain the full story. I observed that the students valued teamwork beyond self-focused investigation, but also, if not more so, for the enhancement and support of others. The students maintained Christian values of service for the good of others as self-sacrificing as opposed to self-promoting. Thomas explained in my interview with him, "Worshiping the Lord inspires me to help my community, because, if I did not believe in the Lord, I would not care about the community. I would only care about myself.

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That is the base for why I would care about anything besides myself." Sitting at the kitchen table in his home, he referred to his drawn Self-Portrait of an inventor working "Throughout the night," which was the title of the piece written above the window in the drawing (Figure 34). Thomas shared, "I like to invent things that bring joy to those in my community. I want to make their lives fuller so that they have more joy." Thus, his pseudonym refers to the great inventor Thomas Edison for his shared desire to enrich communities with helpful inventions. Student Thomas desired to help others for the sake of the fulfillment of the other, not himself. Figure 34 is below:
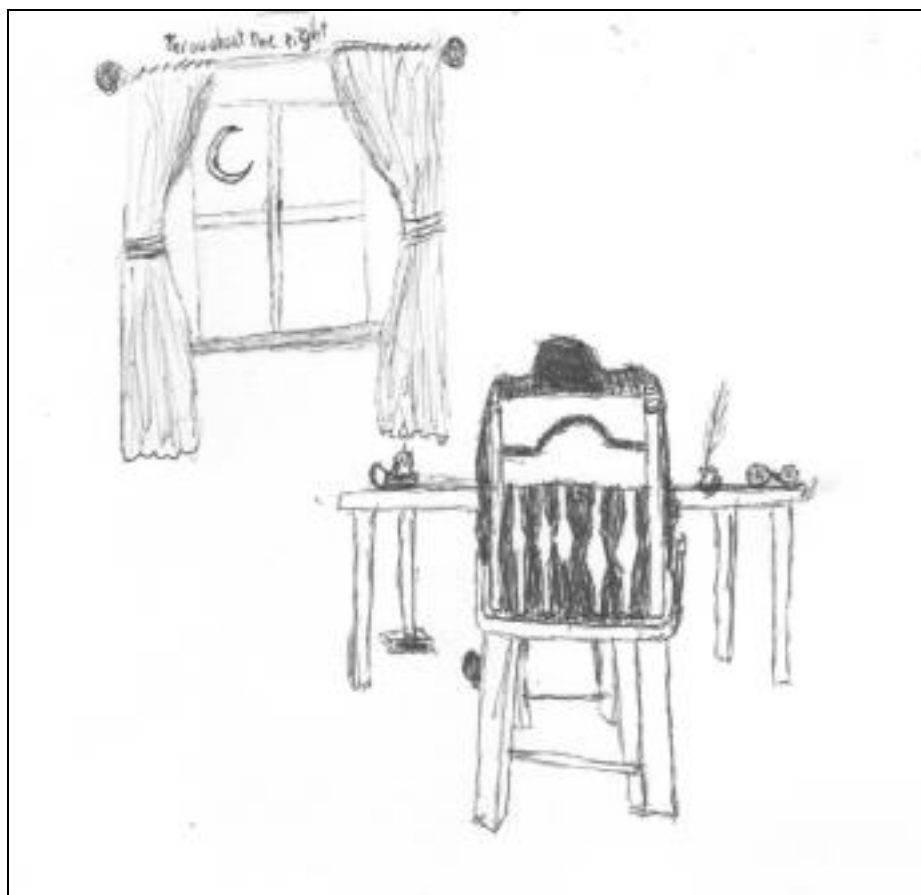
Figure 34: Drawn Self-Portrait of Thomas, the inventor

Hanna expressed the importance of her Christian faith in her community through journaling about her Photography Project on her Final Portfolio pages (Figure 35 below). She chose to photograph a plaque in her home with the Bible verse found in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Above her photo, she explains, "Bible verses always come in handy when witnessing the gospel, which I love to do! This one is great!" Surrounding the photo and text are supporting aesthetic embellishments of birds with the embedded text, "Truth, Strength, Grateful, Blessed, Forever," further descriptions of her faith. Felt butterflies float nearby, and although I did not ask her about the purpose for their inclusion, I surmise from the

rest of the page that they symbolize how her faith in Christ makes her feel spiritually lighthearted and free. Hanna's page reflects her spiritual desire to witness the gospel, or share with her external communities the love of Christ and His gospel message. She desires for her communities to know the power and freedom of salvation that she has found in Jesus Christ.
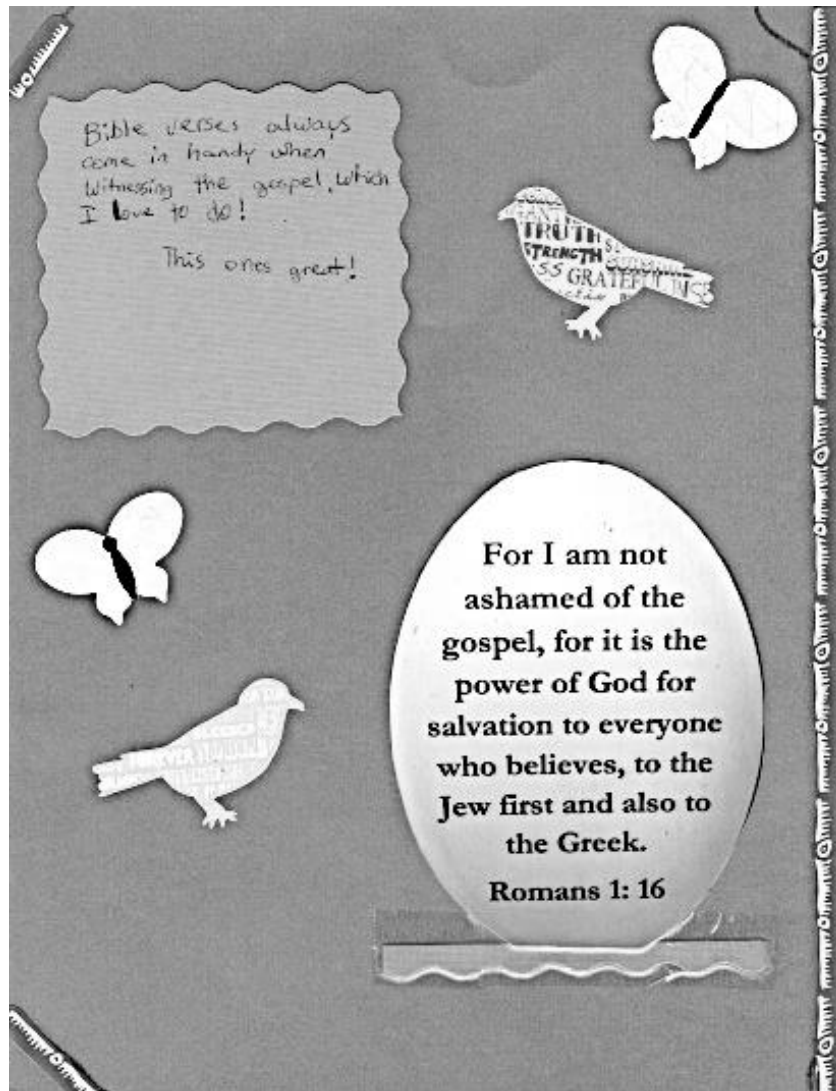
Figure 35: Hanna's Final Portfolio page regarding her Christian faith as part of her community via Photography Project

For each student, teamwork and teambuilding was a religious expression of faith-based convictions. In my interview with Violet, she explained that the motivations for her contribution

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to the project were based upon her Christian faith. Sitting in the peacefulness of her home, with classical music playing gently in the background, she pointed to a photo in her portfolio of her family overlooking the city (Figure 36) and continued, "In the Bible, it says to help the weak and those in trouble, widows and those in distress. In certain passages, you see the different things in it. It kind of opens up your eyes. You say 'Wow, that is really what I should be doing.' It helps you along the way to learning and to help those in need." In this case, the photo was symbolic of the *family team* with whom she was standing, together ready to "help the weak and those in trouble, widows and those in distress."

Figure 36: Photo from Violet's Final Portfolio page regarding her community via Photography Project

Furthermore, allowing more time for a broader survey of the study would prospectively permit a more comprehensive outcome. It would be challenging to accomplish in a short period of time. In this study, a broader survey was not feasible because of the limitations of time. Therefore, I recommend conducting these practices through a broader, all-inclusive paradigm (specifically Christianity) that incorporates all levels equally, beginning at any level as long as the other levels receive the same attention, and within an extended period of time, such as a full semester.

6.4   SUMMARY

By investigating the intersections of service-learning and modes of artmaking, my findings demonstrate this study's capability to elicit responses regarding students' perception of community. The enmeshment of learning processes has the capability to familiarize students with their perceived levels of community and to recognize sense of community, especially through collage. Ginger recognized her group's shared levels of community, as well as her own personal set, through the aesthetically embodying group Poster Project. To continue this practice of observing a community need and preparing to meet that need, she reflected upon her previous civic engagement. Next, as Ginger illustrated metaphorically through collage, she recognized that community service glues families together, "helping families grow closer together by doing things together […] for others in need" as a community. This progression of methodological practices allowed Ginger to express her synthesis of sense of community, as demonstrated by her collage. Thus, it is helpful for practitioners to observe that considering levels of community and collage-making initiated students' investigation into sense of community.

Practitioners will also find it helpful to recognize that the specific practices of reflective artmaking coupled with service-learning in this study, as described through the analysis of the project life cycle, encouraged students to interpret their experiences. Referring to Greene (1995) once more, "If we can link imagination to our sense of possibility and our ability to respond to other human beings, can we link it to the making of community as well? Can we encourage the ability of young persons to interpret their experiences in a world they come together to name?" (p. 38). As the development of sense of community occurred through the project life cycle, the enmeshed educational processes were documented through multiple modes of artmaking and a capacities-based analysis.

However, practitioners should be aware that "naming the world" ought not to be the intention of the enmeshed learning processes. The outcomes of my study indicate complications with authenticity when the focus is misplaced. When the focus is upon a reductionist view of the world, such as an elevated sense of self over other levels of community, the outcomes are self-determining. Naturally, the outcomes would reflect the emphasized focus of the practitioner, or in my case, the ethnographer. Because the outcomes of data analysis demonstrated a correlation between sense of self and teamwork and teambuilding, I conclude that the constructivist theoretical and methodological design of this study was beneficial, yet misdirected and shortsighted.

If the constructivist design hindered my analysis, how could a Christian faith-based design meet the need for greater insight? Why was the Christian faith so important to the students during their contemplations regarding sense of community? Investigating *reciprocity* opens a comprehensive discussion regarding the secular dyadic worldview versus the students' triadic worldview that includes God. Petin's compelling story introduces the answers to this line

of inquiry in the next chapter. Taking a broader approach to her contributions, I take some artistic license to infuse her reflections from her Box 3D Project, Final Portfolio Project, and final presentation, as well as my observations of the assisted living center service project, her quotes from my interview with her, and my personal observations of her family life. Through her story, I begin to provide methodological insights of the goals and design of the study that would contribute to a more authentic and comprehensive analysis of development of sense of community.

7.0   METHODOLOGICAL INSIGHTS: EXHIBITING EPISTEMOLOGY

"Children, come get in the car! We don't want to make your big sister late!" Petin's mother calls up the stairwell. Finishing up the flurry of hair combing, diaper bag packing, and anything else that arises, Petin lovingly helps the younger members of her family to the car. Today she is going to "class" at the assisted living center and the anticipation of it makes her slightly uneasy. Civic engagement is difficult for her, a country girl who is not yet old enough to drive into the distant town, and the "chaos" (as she later called it) of the morning further reminds her why she is not more frequently involved.

After meeting up with other members of the group and traveling with them to the site, Petin arrives at the ranch-like assisted living center. Horses greet her from behind their cedar fences and this shikam petin [sic] (horse lover) is thrilled. However, when she enters the front door with the group, confusion replaces the thrill. The room is small, the residents are few, and they seem not as mentally coherent as she had anticipated. This service project is flipped upside down and she wonders how she will follow through with her plans. She draws comfort from the mirrored faces of her group, and they look to their leader (me) for direction.   "Solomon, please find some chairs. Ginger, please put these supplies on the table. Who would like to volunteer to spend time with shy 'Miss Edith' in the other room? Thank you, Hanna. Okay, team, let's start making our cards!"

The service project is bumpy, the residents being unable to hold coherent conversations beyond a few words, but Petin is determined to get 'Miss Josephine' involved. She tries to make a card with her, but Miss Josephine, a former school principal, is confused and tells her, "Pack up your things, now, and go on home." Living with Ambiguity (capacities), Petin smiles somewhat awkwardly and persists understandingly. When the cards are completed, she begins decorating cookies, hopefully with Miss Josephine. Shortly before the group begins packing up, Miss Josephine concedes and decorates a cookie with Petin. The thrill that met her at the gate returns, but in a new form called success, and Petin celebrates the strength and patience she found during the challenge through her faith in God.

A few weeks pass, the group gathered again for a few more meetings, and Petin is now sitting at her desk in her room reflecting upon her service experiences overall. Miss Josephine and that trophy cookie are on her mind. "I think out of the whole group she liked me the least!" she laughs to herself. "I think it is really special to go to nursing homes, investing in their lives, plus it is just interesting. It is sad that their minds aren't working in the same way, but it is fun to invest in people who have needs now." In her farmhouse filled with the "chaos" of family and love, she considers her perspective of and role within her community. "It is harder for me to put my thoughts down on paper," she thinks to herself. "Girls' brains are like a freeway. So, direct the freeway to paper! Sometimes it can be harder for me to get it out on paper." Consequently, she turns her attention to the familiar, that of "representation" as she calls it, or metaphors.

The resulting Final Portfolio pages are void of superficiality. In Figure 37 below, surrounding the sticker with the text "Wonder," she journals, "Community has always felt distant and cold. Like the trees in the picture above, community has had little concern for me. It has only been after the class that I have felt more connected." Next to this page of photo of

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leafless trees within a gray sky is another photo: the neighbors' mysterious construction vehicle sitting in the driveway. Surrounding the text "Ideas," Petin journals, "I wonder where my place is," "I sometimes wonder how I can do things for my community," "I have ideas about what I can do," and "Even though I can't do much, I still feel curious like I do about the truck. Wondering about these things pop small ideas into my head."
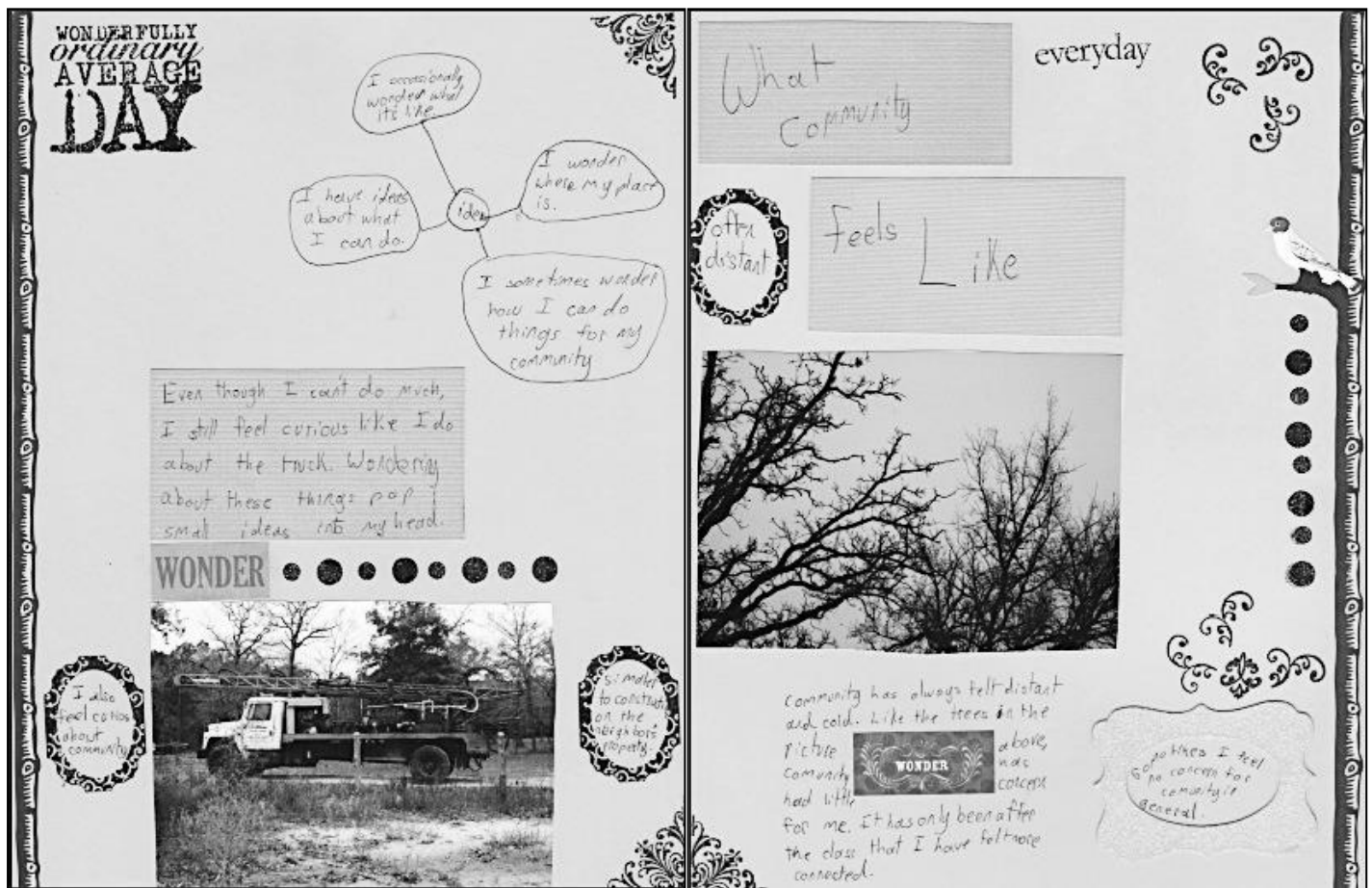
Figure 37: Petin's two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding her community via Photography Project

Based on Petin's interview responses and actual events, this partially fictive story describes her experience with civic engagement. I do not know that her mother called up the stairs, but by my observations and Petin's description of her family life, the daily interactions, and support fostered within the walls of her home, the entire scene is more than conceivable. To travel, as a family, is difficult because "every single day is chaotic, as you can hear," she explained in my interview with her while in her home. She continued, "Just going to church takes so much work, like doing hair, the toys, [the younger siblings] are spunky." Additionally, my artistic license in describing the service at the assisted living center was based upon my on-site observations, interactions, and reflections, as well as those from Petin. I engaged in the on-site service projects along with the students and observed and participated in the experiences as they unfolded. The section of narrative in her home afterward is a synthesis of what she shared with me, my observations there, and her portfolio pages.

This story describes how her experience with civic engagement was framed by her view of community. Her community is unique and complex, and Petin's perspective framed her synthesis of her experiences within the study. Her placement of the pages within the Final Portfolio reflects this further as she inadvertently places the assisted living center (Figure 38 below) and fire station pages (Figures 39 below) between her pages regarding "Who is My Community?" (Figure 37 above, and Figures 8 & 9 in Chapter 4). When I asked her, "I was wondering if your experience was framed by how you viewed your community, based on the layout?" she responded, "I must have done that subconsciously, ha-ha, I didn't mean to do that but that is really cool." Her view of community is multi-facedly "represented" thus within her pages.

Figure 38: Petin's two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding the service project at the assisted living center

Petin represents her experience at the assisted living center through multiple photos of students and residents *together* (the title of the pages), as well as stamped embellishments that support the "smiles" shared during the experience. Stamped quotes read, "Smile, it is the key that fits the lock of everybody's heart," "You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing," "There are hundreds of languages in the world, but a smile

speaks them all," and "A laugh is a smile that bursts." Petin provides information regarding the service itself, specifically where, why, how, what, when, and with whom the experience occurred, each distinctly bordered with a stamp frame. Other aesthetic embellishments, such as stickers and stamps, fill the remaining spaces.

Figure 39: Petin's two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding the fire station

The assisted living center and the fire station pages constitute a set, according to Petin, and are grouped together. The majority of the students grouped them together as well. Oftentimes students mixed together the elements of the on-site service projects on the page itself (e.g., assisted living center, baking cookies, and fire department/station), representing the

intertwining elements of the projects, as demonstrated in Petin's fire station pages. She included the element of creating cards with the residents through the inclusion of a photo of her card, which exhibits her personal message inside. She was unable to bake cookies for the fire station because her family was traveling that weekend, so she included a photo of herself purchasing the cookies instead, jokingly titling the photo "Family Recipe." The remaining photos represent the experience at fire station. Aesthetic embellishments surround the photos, adding clarity and personal perspective.

Though not explicitly represented in the above pages, central to its overall message is Petin's faith. As she reflected during the group's Poster Project, "God is the most important part of our community." This stance inundates her subsequent reflections throughout the project, predominately through her desire to "minister" to her community, to "bless them" through meeting their needs voluntarily. For example, within her explanation of her Metaphor of Service Project, ministering means, "We can help with community celebrations and fund raisers. We can help prevent and stop unexpected danger or accidents. We can assure and reach out to assault victims, providing physical and emotional care. We can minister to sick or hurt people in the hospital or at home. We can help or defend or take in people with financial problems." She gives a creative example of this in her short story about a girl who becomes a victim of a crime and is then saved by unsung heroes: (1) the woman who saw the crime in the parking lot and called the police, (2) the fire fighters who become the first responders, and (3) the police. The illustration that corresponds to this story depicts the surviving girl being wheeled into the safety of the ambulance by the unsung medical caregiver, who is figuratively portrayed as faceless because his face is turned away from the viewer and towards the ambulance.

She is compelled to serve because of her desire to share her faith, because "God is the most important part of the community" and she wants His love must be expressed through her service. Her contributions to discussions and generated art productions return to this desire to minister. During her final presentation of her Final Portfolio, specifically her Photography Project, she refers to ministering by stating, "This was pictures of four of our six pets that I lined up to symbolize importance to me. This is Silver Streak, our half-wild horse. He is my favorite pet. He represents how the places like the assisted living center or places like cancer wards, where I can go and I can minister to them. Those places are very important to me." Standing to the side as part of the audience, I listened as she explained these pages thus.

Petin's Box 3D Project revealed another level to her desire to minister. One of her reflections, placed *inside* the box, was written on stationary paper that she had at home (I did not provide) that read, "Do not fear for I am with you: do not be dismayed, for I am your God. Isaiah 4:10." Although the specific reflection read "Making the cookies was really fun. I really enjoyed that part," Petin applied that verse to the overall experience with the assisted living center (Figure 40).
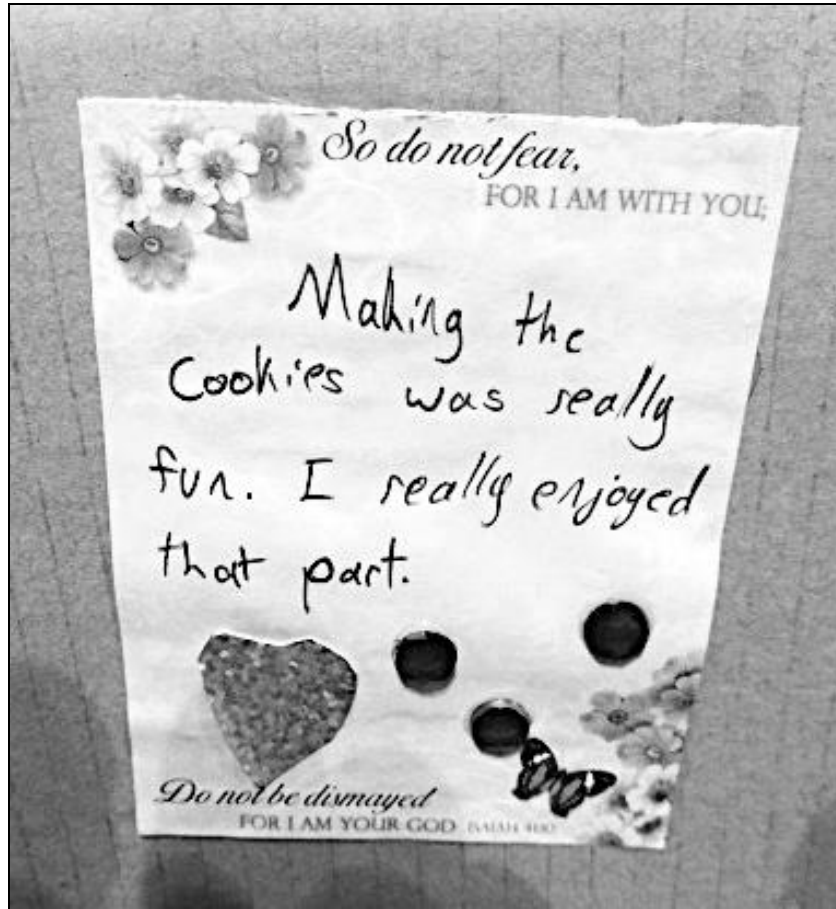
Figure 40: Petin's Box 3D Project (inside, side)

When she was faced with the on-site challenges, her faith provided a source of strength and patience. She demonstrated how she Lived with Ambiguity. This same source allowed her to struggle through and make sense of her sense of self, sense of community, and sense of place within her community. Exploring and "representing" what these senses metaphorically "feel like" to her was her method of directing her "freeway" of thoughts and conclusions "down on paper" (as she explained it to me). As Isaiah in the Old Testament of the Bible implored his audience of a different context, she was not *afraid* to explore this unknown and challenging

aesthetic synthesis and expose her private thoughts, for God was with her, as she understood the principle behind the passage to demonstrate.

7.1   PERSPECTIVE

Perspective is one of the most significant findings within this study, specifically in considering the data from the perspective through which the results were generated, that of the students' Christian worldview.   Petin exemplified how this perspective inspired reflection, service, artmaking, and comprehension of the enmeshment of learning processes. Her desire to minister as service to those in need was based upon her Christian perspective, the source of motivations, concerns, expectations, complications, and successes.

This was the case for each of the students. For example, Thomas explained to me while interviewing him at his dining room table, "Worshiping the Lord inspires me to help my community, because if I did not believe in the Lord, I would not care about the community. I would only care about myself. That is the base for why I would care about anything besides myself." He further reflects upon his faith in his Final Portfolio pages, most predominately in his Photography Project. Spanning across a two-page spread, Thomas places a photo of a man with his arm raised towards a silhouetting sky. The photo is cut in half to accomplish the purpose of spanning two pages to create a set. He titles the photos "Worshiping the Lord."   Above the photo and likewise spanning across the spread is the handwritten Bible verse, "A man can do nothing better than eat, drink, and find satisfaction in his work. This too I see if from the hand of God" (Ecclesiastes, 2:24). Between the verse and its citation is a stamped image of two hands clasping. The verse and stamped hands span across the pages in the center with the other

symbolically represented photos of his community surrounding the verse and stamped hands. His selection of photo, verse, and stamped hands exemplify his reflection, "Worshiping the Lord inspires me to care about my community," and their placement upon the page symbolize the centrality of his Christian faith within the other surrounding elements of the page (Figure 41), and the pages within the series evenly placed before and after. Thomas's Christian perspective was central to his contributions to the project overall, or "the base for why I would care about anything besides myself."
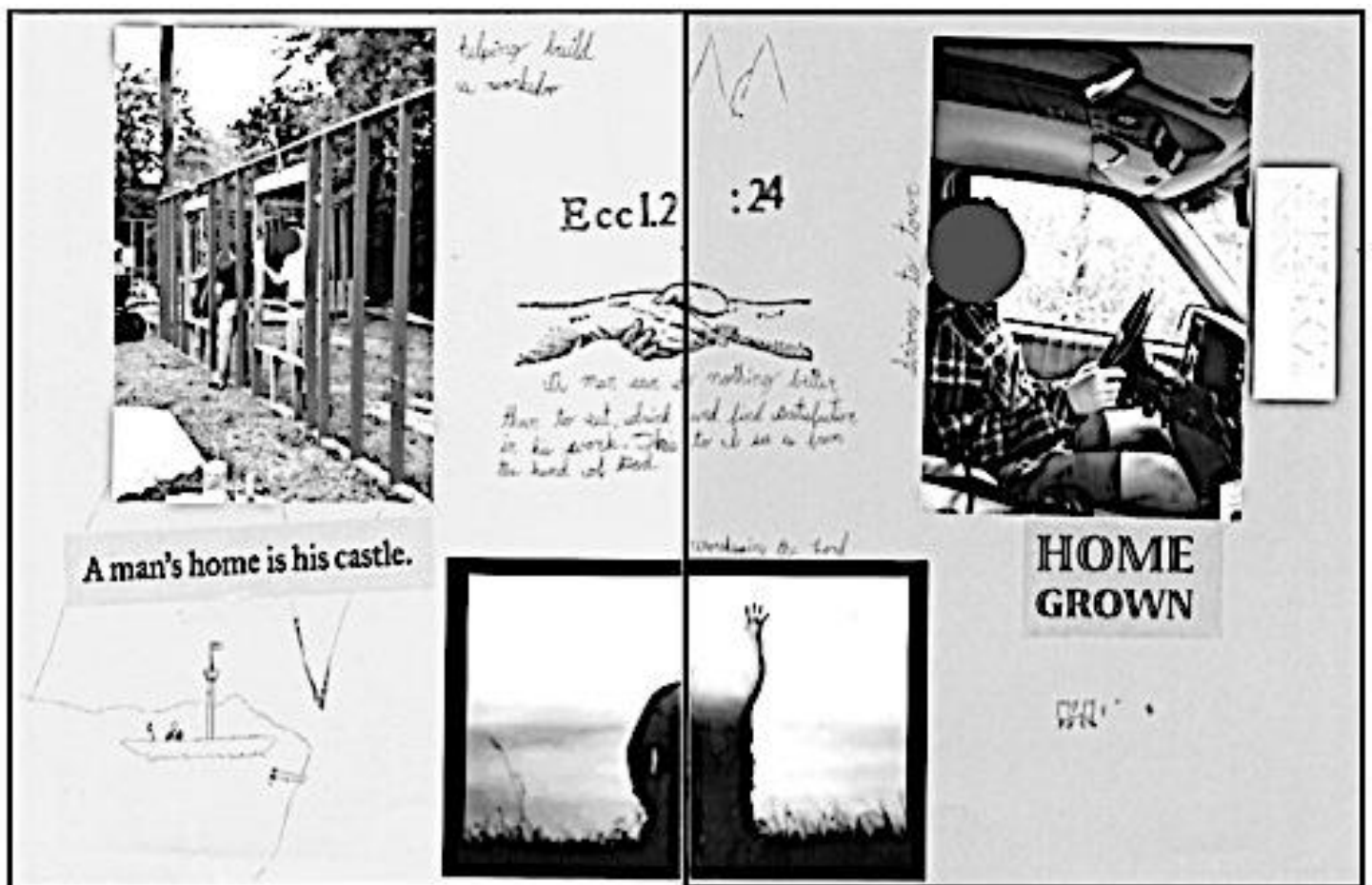
Figure 41: Thomas' two-page set of Final Portfolio pages regarding his community via Photography Project

Ginger also explained in my interview with her that her desire to serve was based upon her Christian perspective. Standing near her porch outside her house nestled in the woods, she shared, "This is what God has given us so we want to take care of it, to be good stewards and do what we can." Like Thomas, this was "the base for why [she] would care about anything besides [her]self," such as the service that glues families together (Figures 24 & 25 in Chapter 6):

- Helping families grow closer together by doing things together. Doing things for others in need, and by doing things as a community.

- The glue equals fun and helpful things that bond families closer together.

- The more you help in the family (and community) the more you understand and appreciate community service and the community.

While we all sat around the table during the first general meeting, she explained, "They grow closer, they bond closer together, a bonding agent that keeps us close." Because of her Christian perspective and desire to "minister" as an act of service, *families taking action together* identified community service as they work together, bonding through the experience, and bonding with the community whom they are serving. Ginger has a special affinity for bonding with disabled children of the community "Because they are always happy, and it inspires me. [The disabled little girl] loves with all her heart. She is able to do other things that I can't." According to Ginger's reflections and aesthetic productions, bonding with her community (especially the disabled children) through ministering to their needs, impacted her, inspired her, and helped her to "see life as [she] should." Her Christian perspective is the basis for her concern and action.

The constructivist frame of reference provided important insight. For example, I facilitated the process of orienting the students to the overall project through *naming* (Greene,

1995) their individual understanding of them*selves* in the context of the *group* through the group Poster Project. They considered their individual perception of their individual communities and role within their communities as the basis for identifying their group's shared communities. Their process of naming their shared communities began at the individual level, and I found that this was a necessary starting point.

However, the overall shared Christian perspective of the students provided a more comprehensive understanding of their contributions to the study. I began the overall project with facilitated discussions that consistently focused upon *self*, and I observed that their basis of understanding themselves began with their understanding of God. For example, considering Violet's Final Portfolio page in Figure 42 below, it initially appears that she loves to work with animals because she simply wants to help them. She journals, "I enjoy helping with animals and I do it all the time. That is how I wish to be viewed in my community." Her journaling at face value appears to be self-focused. However, when viewed with her page explicitly titled "Faith," her purpose for helping animals is shifted entirely. In this second page, Violet aesthetically portrays her recent baptism by her father and also one of her pastors at her church during a Sunday morning church service. Her faith is important to her, and she aesthetically expresses in her Photography Project that her faith significantly influences her understanding of service. Her desire to serve is founded upon her love for and *faith* in Christ. The two pages are not viewed as a set, nor are they viewed within a page of each other, so her message is identifiable with further analysis through a broader (Christian) frame of reference. Her desire to help animals, though not explicitly described on that first page, is based upon Biblical scriptures that call Christians to "help the weak and those in trouble, widows and those in distress," as she said in my interview with her. It is what God calls her to do, and it "opens up [her] eyes," she told me.

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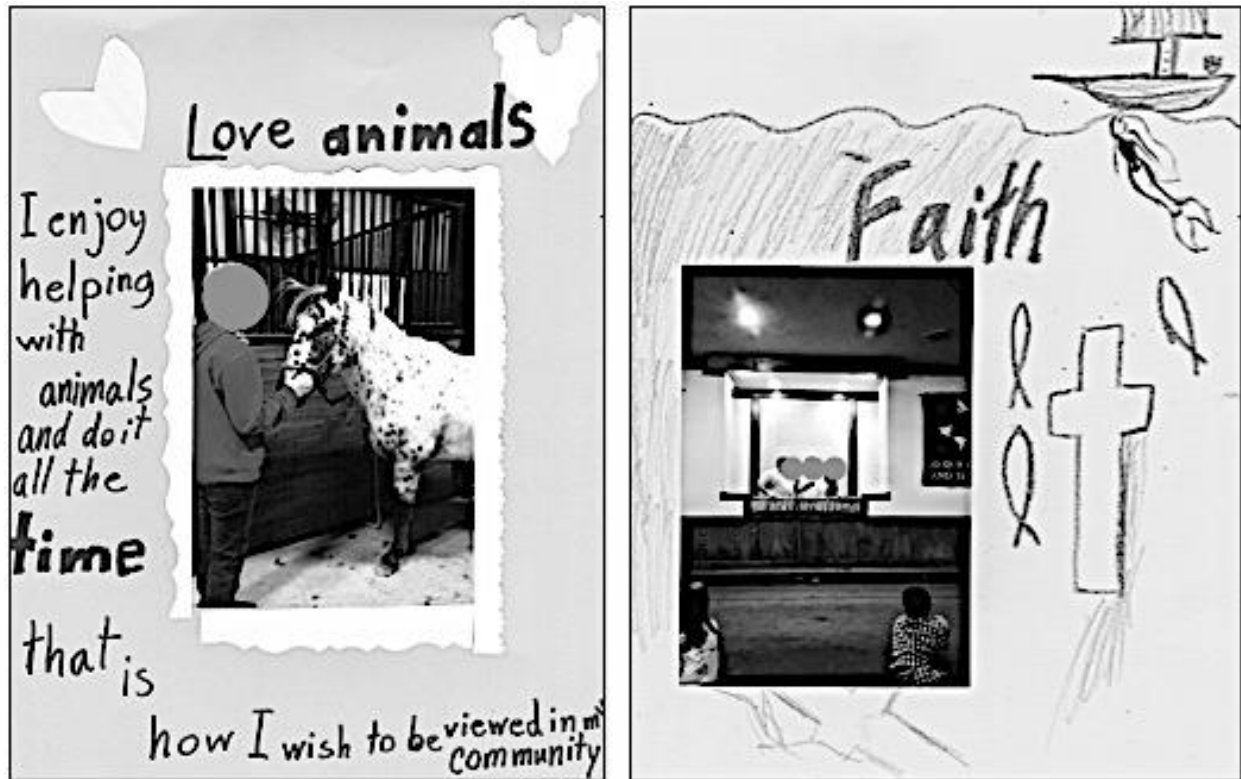
Figure 42: Violet's separate Final Portfolio pages regarding how she wants to be viewed in her community and her

Christian faith

In large part, due to being Christian, much of what the students saw, felt, touched, heard, and participated in was somewhat "new and incongruent with their frame of reference or world-view" (Kiely, 2005a, p. 10). Exemplified by their experience with the assisted living center, *dissonance* was the "trigger for learning" and "catalyz[ed] ongoing learning" (p. 8). As in Petin's case, Kiely (2005a) would describe the assisted living center experience as "shocking and overwhelming" exemplifying *high-intensity dissonance* that caused "powerful emotions and confusion" regarding "disparities that cannot be reconciled through reflection or participation in service work alone and remains with students long after returning" (p. 11).

Their Christian worldview was incongruent with the self-focused constructivist epistemology. Consequently, more was required to capture the essence of the findings, such as

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the students' inclusive Christian paradigm that widens the field of vision. Through analyzing the data according to the Christian perspective, I recognized that a comprehensive analysis of perspective in this study was in danger of misrepresentation from the start. Considering the data exclusively from the perspective of its constructivist deign was insightful but not conclusive.

The Christian worldview was strongly represented in this study, and as the shared perspective of each member of the group, it undeniably revealed the essence of the data. As exhibited by her contributions to the service project at the assisted living center described above, Petin's experience was shocking and overwhelming for her according to a theoretical framework or worldview beyond her individual *self*. As Petin explained, "God is the most important part of our community," and according to Kiely (2005a), this worldview was the basis of her "trigger for learning" and the catalyst "for ongoing learning" (p. 8).

7.2   AN INCLUSIVE FIELD OF VISION

The findings of my study were constructivist, but not by the pragmatist definition of constructing *knowledge,* where knowledge is defined by the experience. Rather, the students constructed *experience,* where experience is defined by the knowledge. My findings revealed that Dewey's (1938) constructivist epistemology and methodological paradigm was suited for this particular sample of students in certain ways, as demonstrated by the capacities-based analysis in the previous chapters, but only to an extent. Because they are students of classical methods of Christian-based education, a different theoretical framework is necessary to construct a comprehensive analysis. Their perspective is grounded in objective truth, where knowledge was

created by an all-knowing (omniscient) God and is discovered by the students, not vice versa. As God corrected Job in the Bible (Job 38:2-6, 36-37),

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements- surely you know!

Or who stretched a line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone?

Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?

Who can number the clouds by wisdom?

Or who can tilt the water skins of the heavens…?

God's rebuke continues through chapter 42 with a barrage of questions that clearly make the point: God made all things, including time itself, and God likewise gave to us any wisdom or understanding that we have. Investigating the Christ-centered paradigm within my study is beyond my study's current scope and requires extensive analysis. Therefore, I present an introductory analysis of its role in the findings within this study as it relates directly to the purpose. I emphasize that further analysis beyond the scope of this study is necessary to fully appreciate the insight it provides.

The themes found within *reciprocity* are best suited for an introductory analysis of both the constructivist and Christian worldview paradigms. Within service-learning, reciprocity is defined by mutual exchange: "How will your students and the community teach and learn from

one another?" (Brown & Leavitt, 2009, p. 17). The constructivist underpinnings suggest that the exchange is of each person's creation of knowledge, "a world they come together to name" (Greene, 1995, p. 38). Perspectives are exchanged, learned, and perhaps accepted by both individuals. Students are exposed to contrary worldviews and challenged to think critically upon the exchanged perspectives. This secular view of reciprocity is *dyadic*, between two persons or groups.

The Christian worldview defines reciprocity as *triadic,* between two persons/groups and with the third real actor of God. Reciprocity is defined according to the values expressed in scripture as a three-way giving and receiving. In the New Testament, Peter writes,

> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

The verse refers to serving one another according to the abilities given by God. One purpose is to express love to others and meet their needs through using the abilities, or *gifts*, given by God. Simultaneously, another purpose is to use the abilities given by God in obedience to God's design and command to serve one another. The ultimate purpose throughout His design and command to serve one another is for the glory of God. This means honoring Him and giving Him pleasure. Thus, the individual serving according to his or her given abilities is rewarded with (1) the satisfaction of serving another, (2) enjoying God's gifts, and (3) glorifying God. The reciprocity exists as the one who gives, the one who receives, and God are all three blessed in a triadic structure. In *sharing with the community*, the students selected 1 Peter 4:10-11 as the

final portion of the Video Project for the assisted living center. The verse expressed their desire to continue crossing borders through ongoing civic engagement that included reciprocity on a spiritual level by practicing and honoring values within their Christian worldview. The spiritual practice of serving one another is an expression of and practical outworking of God's love towards others. It directly blesses the individual receiving the service, and indirectly blesses the servant, or the individual practicing voluntary service. Furthermore, the servant practices the service as a gift without further expectation for reward.

During the initial stages of service-learning, the students *explored a community need* and *prepared to meet that need* through discussion regarding reciprocity. Because of Hanna's Christian worldview, her synthesis of the primary goals of service-learning were most directly represented within the context of reciprocity. Each time we discussed ideas for subsequent service projects, she described the mutual benefits, or "blessings," to both of the participating parties according to her triadic worldview. In one such exchange, Hanna recognized the potential for reciprocity within Lisa's idea for service *for* the pregnancy crisis center. Hanna offered, "I was thinking about making cards *with* clients at the pregnancy crisis center for the police officers. They would be saying how blessed they are, and how their children will be blessed in the same way." In this example, the practice of reciprocity was expressed through collaboratively creating cards of gratitude, the *mutual exchanges* and *blessings* being their time, creativity, and personal interactions. This was both a practical and spiritual expression of reciprocity.

In another example, Solomon expressed dissatisfaction with his overall lack of civic engagement, because he desires to engage mutually and foster relationships. According to his Christian worldview, he values the building of relationships because of the learning that takes

place between one another. Also, building relationships provides opportunities to evangelically share the hope of Christ's work on the cross within his Christian worldview. He literally and metaphorically expresses the values of building relationships through the mode of collage during reflective artmaking. Solomon uses images of house construction sites and writes, "Workers helping people in the community build houses. I chose this [metaphorical theme] because I like to work, build, and also serve." He explained to the group that, through physical service, he can have the opportunity to practice the spiritual service of presenting to others the hope that he has found in the Bible through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The physical service is both the expression and outworking of his spiritual service.

Students unfamiliar with reciprocity within civic engagement began their synthesis of the themes therein according to previous experiences and sense of self, which was well suited to the project's constructivist design. These students made connections to previous experiences and stories heard in their families. In *Making Connections,* the students exhibited the capacity to "connect what [they] notice and the patterns [they] see to [their] prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to text and multimedia resources" (Holzer, 2009, p. 11). They considered their role in their community according to personal passions, family, faith, and view of self. Ginger, the dancer, reflected, "We would always go to nursing homes and do our Christmas music recitals there. They always love it when children come because they are [otherwise] just there by themselves with other older people. And I know that they love children, so it was always nice for us younger people to go." Familiarity was the springboard from which the students learned about the unfamiliar. Students desired to give their time and love, as well as to receive the satisfaction of helping where they recognized a need, through remembering their previous experiences and that which was familiar.

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This was the key to revealing the broader vision of the student's gain in reciprocity. The benefit to the residents was readily identifiable; however, the benefit to the students required emic insight. Regarding nursing home recitals, Ginger continued, "It is nice to do that, because you are part of something important and you *want* to be working with them. It is what God has given us, so we *want* to take care of that, to be good stewards of what we have been given, to do what we can." The benefit for the students was developing perspective of their community in relation to their Christian worldview, as well as an accomplished sense of self within their community.

Some students identified a weak sense of self within community. When asked if the artmaking facilitated her synthesis by allowing her to see things differently, Violet shared, "Yes, to think more in different ways. Because I thought *community* meant more like people in the city. It makes more sense now. And the art was helpful, to actually visually see it instead of hearing about it." The passion behind this reflection refers to her Christian worldview. "You go to different places and you can see different things that God has created. In the city, like when we went Downtown and we stayed in a really nice hotel, looking over everything, you could see the really nice houses and the not so nice ones that were torn down. It made you see the different ways you can help people. The different needs" (Figure 36 in Chapter 6). So, spiritual reciprocity was the key to broadening their field of vision of their sense of community by allowing them the opportunity to find their place, a mutually meaningful place, therein.

Perspective becomes crucial when considering the reflective artmaking service-learning practices within the entirety of the study. Eyler (2000) explains,

> While we lack longitudinal studies that show a link between academic service-learning
> and later civic involvement, there is evidence in the youth development literature

(Youniss, McLeelan & Yates, 1997), as well as the work of Astin, Sax and Avalos (1999) in higher education, that volunteer service leads to subsequent community involvement. The mediating factor appears to be the development of civic identity, i.e. the personal efficacy and social responsibility that are the outcomes of both community service and service-learning. (p. 11)

Each response is synthesized in the mind of the student through their perspective regarding civic identity. Consequently, the student's perspective filters their outward response. What become visible through reflective artmaking service-learning are the multiple stages of processing and filtering outlined in previous chapters.

7.3   CHALLENGES WITHIN CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivist education is founded upon subjective pragmatism. "Constructivism does not assume the presence of an outside objective reality that is revealed to the learner, but rather that learners actively construct their own reality" (Fosnot, 1996, in Pearcey, 2004, p. 241). However, among the most remarkable findings from my study casts doubt upon the comprehensive accuracy this paradigm. This study exposed the students to contrary worldviews and how to practice critical thinking through reflective artmaking service-learning. For example, they aesthetically gained hands-on ownership of their own first-hand experience (Pearcey, 2004). However, the theoretical "box" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 103) of experiential learning was limiting. The students did not *experience* the full potential of the project because the theoretical paradigm restricted part of the learning intervention. This dyadic structure hindered considerations regarding God and their relationship with Him.

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For example, I recognized hints of dissatisfaction with the project due to, what appeared to be, a desire for more. During the final presentation, two students slightly expressed a cynical attitude towards the presentation itself, the project overall, or both. Their expressions were few and nearly unrecognizable, but through reviewing video and audio recording of the event, I saw flashes of these expressions in a look or a phrase. While I was standing to the side of the audience recording the final presentations, one student smiled at the audience then promptly removed her smile and frowned when she turned around and glanced at my camera. This may have indicated that the project did not fully meet her expectations in some way. Perhaps the structure of the course was uncomfortable. Perhaps she felt that it was somewhat nebulous, the structure being different than the classes and programs that she is used to. Some students and parents expressed that did not know what to call it (i.e., a class, program, or both), so maybe she felt the same way and it contributed to her dissatisfaction. Perhaps her dissatisfaction was with the presentation itself, something she felt forced into performing for an audience she had to impress. No other hints of her dissatisfaction were detected elsewhere in the study, so maybe the presentation was the only source of discontent.

Also, the design of the course emphasized deconstructing the experience, not the objective truth behind the experience, and this permitted *potentially* dis-genuine responses. The students could share how they felt about the experience, but the authenticity of their response was not questioned. The group assumed that the information being shared was true; because it was how they felt and why would anyone doubt their feelings.

However, when the students engaged in objective discourses regarding theological principles, the dialogic environment shifted. Reverence and a keener awareness directed the course of discussion, not feelings, laughter, off-handed comments, or emotional truth claims that

may or may not be genuine. Other factors may have motivated such behavior, such as the desire to impress adults or others in authority (such as *me*). However, based on the work by Pearcey (2015), as well as my long-term relationships with the students *and* their parents, I expect that it was not the primary motivator for student responses. Their peers were capable of challenging an incorrect, incomplete, or misrepresented theological truth claim and confronted any issues openly and respectfully. Because the students knew each other, as well as each other's parents, accountability (and at least some *authority*) cultivated a reverence that was applied to theological conversations.

A shockingly candid conversation between three students during the final meeting alerted me to the potential for dis-genuine responses. The event occurred at the end of the study, and is likewise presented in this chapter at the end of my dissertation. While I stepped out of the house to record a student's video presentation outside, at least two of the remaining students clearly forgot that I had audio recorders in the room, for the exchange of information was distinctly different from the data I was collecting. Realizing her mistake in forgetting to bring an "assignment" to "class" in preparation for the Video Project, one student asks the others to explain what information and handout she was missing. The assignment was to answer a set of four questions as a script to reference during the video shoot. After a second student explains the assignment, the first student begins to complete it. A third student then jests about her video script. The first student then jests about fooling me into believing that she prepared her video script beforehand, not on the day of the video shoot while others were recording their video outside. After the two students share a few more jokes about the Video Project, the first student opens up to share her thoughts regarding *self-focused* questions asked during the overall project. She states in a mocking voice, "What did you learn about yourself?" She then remarks, "That is

a really personal question… I used a lot of highbrow vocabulary to make it sound nice. 'I put a lot of thought into this, I am very touched.' I was like, what do you want me to do here?" Shortly following this exchange, I re-entered the room and she resumed her previous disposition. She continued to prepare her script while others were outside, stating that the reason for her delay in recording her video was because of her desire to finish her Final Portfolio pages.

This first student (the anonymity an attempt to further protect her identity) demonstrated surprising insight in to the potential authenticity of her contributions to the overall project. Knowing the student (and her parents) in other contexts contributed to the analysis of her comments above. At the start of the project, I knew there was *potential* for somewhat dishonest responses from *any* student, especially because of their ages and their desire to impress others. However, such a strong outcome from this first student was unexpected.

The above event revealed dissatisfaction with the self-focused aspect of the project, of which I was otherwise suspect. My finding jeopardizes the authenticity of *all* responses of this student, if not other students as well, at least in part. What did I *not* hear, see, or capture on a video or audio recording? What information was being discussed outside of the group context? These are the limitations of any research. A researcher cannot collect all of the information because it is never *completely* available to her. The ethnographer responds to this limitation by emic observation, becoming a member of the group as much and for as long as possible. Emic postionality allows her to practice informed intuition and recognize the subtlest patterns or nuances. Consequently, I present my findings with both assurance and doubt. I share what I have experientially observed, yet still question that which remains unrevealed.

7.4   SUMMARY

For Petin, exploration into sense of community began with discovering her perspective of and place within her community, as exemplified by her Final Portfolio pages. Her experience was famed by this aesthetic discovery, Creating Meaning through exploring topics of community and sense of place in it. Perspective inspired each student's reflection, service, artmaking, and synthesis of the learning processes. Perspective was the source of their motivations, concerns, expectations, complications, and successes. Considering the perspective provides a more comprehensive basis from which to appreciate to data.

Practitioners and researchers will find it useful to know that the perspective of the students in this study demonstrate a crucial set of findings regarding the authenticity of the data. By understanding the limitations of self-focused data collection and procedures, according to self-focused constructivist paradigms, others can be aware of the intrinsic complications. Constructivist educators expect the constructivist paradigm to have a "cash value." They claim that truth is the "cash value" of an idea, as William James concluded: If it pays off, then we call it true (Menand, 2001, p. 361). But the theoretical paradigm did not entirely pay off; therefore, it is not entirely true, according to the logic of the paradigm. There is a discontinuity between aspects of Dewey's (1938) constructivist pragmatism and certain findings of this study. My findings suggest that a broader theoretical framework would provide a more accurate analysis.

Conclusions regarding which paradigm to consider are beyond the scope of my study. However, I recommend the use of the Christian worldview, not only because the data was generated through it, but also because of the all-inclusive framework it provides. It is not reductionist, reducing knowledge to a finite human perspective at the expense of disagreeable information that does not fit into the theoretical "box" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 103). "When a

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worldview is too 'small,' there will always be some element in human nature that fails to fit the paradigm," Pearcey (2004, p. 110) explains. "That ought to tell them something. After all, the purpose of a worldview is to explain the *world* – and if it fails to explain some part of the world, then there's something wrong with that worldview" (pp. 110-111). She presents the Christian worldview as a comprehensive framework that provides an explanation for any set of data. "It's not just religious truth but total truth" (p. 111). Understanding *worldview* is crucial to the process of analyzing my study, as exemplified by my methodological insights. However, because it is beyond the scope of my study, I recommend further research in this area.

Students pervasively report how the project allowed them to feel more aware and capable of participating in civic engagement, and they attribute that to their Christian faith. How have the students continued to gain depth and meaning of their worldview through engaging in related practices since the completion of this study? How have they have been working with their parents to find more opportunities for civic engagement in the areas that interest them most and that utilize their giftings and desires (1 Peter 4:10-11; Pearcey 2015)? I return to Jo's story in the next chapter to summarize the student's epistemological civic identity within and beyond my study. Through Jo's story, I also provide a succinct set of conclusions and recommendations for practitioners while offering areas for further research.

8.0   CONCLUSION: EXHIBITING THE COLLAGE OF SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Back at the site of my interview with Jo, taking another sip of hot tea, Jo turns to his Self-Portrait page within his Final Portfolio. Completed as the final individual project for the Final Portfolio, the Self-Portrait is an expressive sum of how Jo feels and sees himself in his community, what roles he has in serving his community, since the overall project began (Figure 43). "I wanted to write a bunch of words to make a picture," he explained. "I wanted to describe someone who keeps everything in working order." Through cohesion of drawn images and text, he chose to represent the importance of his Christian faith in this expression of himself. How his faith influences his perspective is embedded in the images themselves, both within the image and the text forming a framework or outline. The outline symbolizes the framework from which he exists, how he understands his existence, and why he serves others in his community while still existing.

The central image is a figure of a person with spikey hair and a sun shining down on him from the upper left corner of the page. Tiny stick figures form the eyes of the main figure and a smiley face in part of the chin. A symbolically placed rock occupies the lower right corner with the supporting text, "God is my Rock." Text forms the outline of the images, and the text is an aesthetic expression of his faith, outlined below.
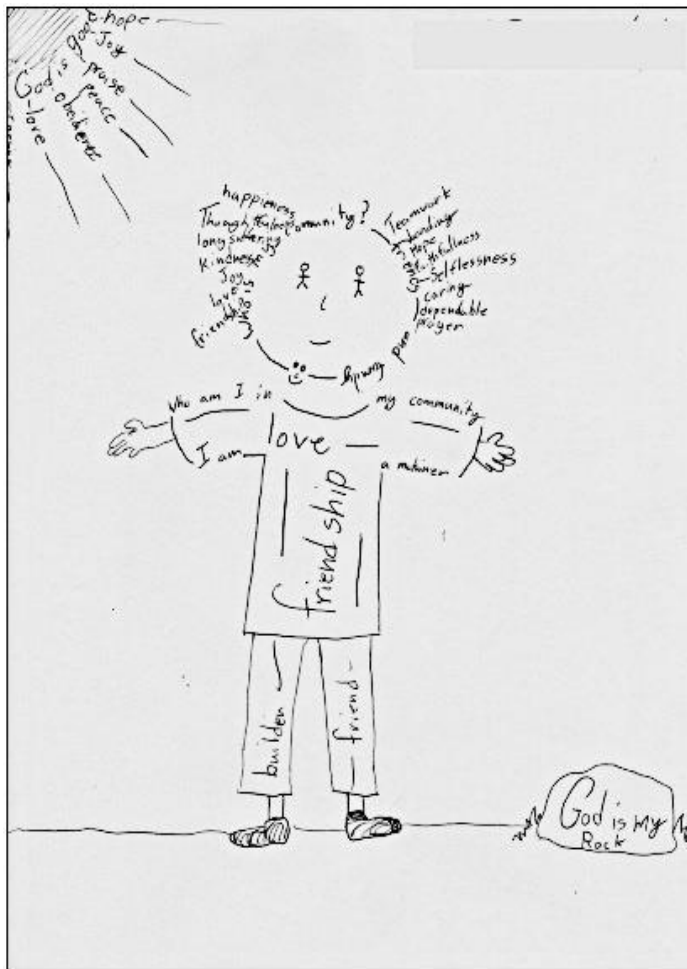
	Textual Content of Jo's Page
	Sun: God is Good; Hope, Joy, Praise, Peace, Obedience, Love, Caring
	Head: Who is My Community? Friends and Family, (a smiley face is the chin)
	Hair: Happiness, Thoughtfulness, Longsuffering, Kindness, Joy, Love, Friendship, Teamwork, Bonding, Hope, Faithfulness, Selflessness, Caring, Dependable, Prayer
	Shirt: Who am I in my community, I am a maintainer; Love Friendship
	Pants: Builder, Friend
	Rock: God is my rock

Figure 43: Jo's drawn Self-Portrait regarding his perceived role in his community

Jo's Self-Portrait demonstrates his newfound ability to synthesize the "mind-boggling" enmeshment of reflective artmaking and service-learning. He was not familiar with it before this project, and since his time working with both learning processes together, he came to new understandings about his community and his role therein. To work through the challenges that he faced in this project, Jo turns to the familiarity of *God's goodness* (which refers to His moral perfection, holiness, benevolence, and justice) which radiates as "Hope, Joy, Praise, Peace,

Obedience, Love, and Caring." His triadic perspective enables him to work through the challenges of the dyadic design of the project overall. Through his foundational Christian worldview, he sorts through the complexities, working through the challenges of Living with Ambiguity. His process of learning involves *dissonance* that triggers his learning and catalyzes ongoing learning. Engaging with the triadic model of perspective enables this reflective artmaking project to reveal the underlying complexities within his learning during service-learning. The depth of insight I gain from Jo's experience, and that of each student, allows me to create a comprehensive analysis of underlying complexities that could be applied more broadly. I begin presenting how Jo's work aesthetically portrays key points in my concluding synthesis by highlighting phrases from his piece, each phrase coupled with the main section titles in this chapter. Thus, I present the primary theoretical and methodological insights, value, and applications of my study.

This concluding chapter summarizes my analysis by revisiting my major findings from the overall project and each student. First, I restate my study's primary goals and research questions, summarizing how my findings in each chapter meet my goals and answer my questions. I then apply these answers to practitioners of varying contexts, portraying the value of my answers in the field through revisiting my theoretical and methodological contributions. Next, I provide practical and customizable suggestions for the field of practice, for teachers and researchers alike. In conclusion, I provide suggestions for future research through sharing my final thoughts and further questions.

8.1 *WHO IS MY COMMUNITY?*: MEETING THE NEED IN RESEARCH

The central questions I frequently asked my students were, "Who is your community?" and "Who are *you* in your community?" The Self-Portrait Project was a culminating aesthetic expression of these two questions, and I asked more specifically, "What is *your role* in *your* community?" Jo represented the central components of his response through single words, groupings of words, and sentenced phrases, and these became the elements that composed his visible, image-based *community* and *self* in his community. They shape the objects on the page much like they shape how he views his community and role therein. The piece becomes a portrayal of *how* Jo makes visible his community and his self within his community, exhibiting important information regarding the process mechanisms behind Jo's learning.

The purpose of my study is to investigate how reflective artmaking about and during service-learning experiences can make *community* visible. The field's prior focus on "the 'what' of student learning rather than the 'how' leaves us with a theoretical 'black box' regarding the contextual and process mechanisms in service-learning that enhance certain cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes- particularly those that are transformative" (Kiely, 2005a, p. 5). Such neglected areas include learning processes (Kiely, 2002, 2005a). Based upon Milne's (2000) dissertation work regarding *reflective artmaking,* this study continues her work by introducing the concepts behind what I am calling *reflective artmaking service-learning*. Referring to her terminology, my study is an *exhibition* of a *gallery* of *portrayals* of students engaged in arts-based service-learning. As an extension of her idea, my term describes the enmeshment or coupling of reflective artmaking about and during service-learning, illuminating the capability of the combined learning processes to meet the need for research called by Kiely (2005a).

Thus, *reflective artmaking service-learning* within this study was a mechanism for making community visible, contributing to the theoretical black box regarding the contextual and process mechanisms in service-learning. Through reflective artmaking service-learning, I found that the aesthetic expressions selected for this study were, for the most part, helpful and interesting to the students. The design of the art projects "spoke to" the students according to their strengths, while also guiding them towards "mind-boggling" challenges among projects that were not as comfortable. The dissonance (Kiely, 2005a) between the students and the challenges of the study triggered their learning and "catalyz[ed] ongoing learning" (p. 8). Consequently, the responses that the projects elicited from the students were robust and complex and yielded an interesting assortment of generated art.

Additionally, I found that considering the data exclusively from the perspective of its constructivist design was insightful, but not conclusive. The Christian worldview of the students was incongruent with the study's self-focused constructivist epistemology. Although the dissonance therein triggered learning as well, the selected theoretical framework limited learning among this particular sample of students, as demonstrated by the students' discontent. The Christian worldview was the shared perspective of each member of the group, so conducting my analysis through the Christian worldview undeniably revealed greater essence of the data.

I began this study with the desire to contribute to the theoretical gap described by Kiely (2005a). I asked,

> How does reflective artmaking about and during service-learning experiences make community visible? How does a capacities-based analysis provide a valuable frame for analysis?

The theoretical constructs I reviewed in the literature were the learning processes of service-learning, reflective artmaking, and development of sense of community. The term *community* included familial community, community of faith, immediate internal community as a group, the surrounding local, national or global communities with which the group engages through service-learning, etc. The unit of analysis I specified in my research question was the arts-based Capacities for Imaginative Learning, a list of guidelines used for infusing, integrating, and assessing the arts in education (Holzer, 2007). Coupled with the analytical tools within the data management software NVivo 10 for Mac, I was able to make visible the coded and cross-referenced categories, patterns, and nuances. This combined method of data analysis allowed me to "reference and cross-reference occurrences in ways that make the analysis of patterns more systematic and less anecdotal" (Abramson, 2009, p. 71). By opening each chapter with an anecdotal exemplar through a vignette, I gave outside audience access to the narratives within the group. Through the use of NVivo, I then provided an initial analysis of the narratives. Next, I continued the analysis ethnographically by giving my account of how the narratives and the initial analysis *together* gave me a comprehensive understanding of the data. Thus, the analysis became more systematic and somewhat less anecdotal.

In Chapter 4, a narrative from my interview with Jo introduced my exhibition of the first set of findings at the two intersecting themes of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning and the modes of artmaking. This stage in my analysis illuminated what kinds of capacities the students gained in arts-based learning as it was coupled with service-learning. The Capacities for Imaginative Learning facilitated the analysis of the experiential learning of reflective artmaking service-learning. A capacities-based analysis provided specificity towards deconstructing the mechanisms behind the learning processes. Demonstrating Embodying, for example, my

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students experienced works of art through physically creating them as representations of their reflective artmaking service-learning experience. Jo expressed that aesthetically representing his reflections about and during service-learning was "hard to do" and "challenging."

I also learned that the Final Portfolio must be correctly categorized for analytical clarity. The students experienced a variety of modes of artmaking, and the Final Portfolio Project was a cohesive practice of each mode of artmaking. However, despite the depth of insight provided by the process of Final Portfolio page construction, as seen in Petin's pages, I encountered complications in my analysis by categorizing the Final Portfolio and Box 3D Projects incorrectly as modes of artmaking themselves *as well as* the cohesive practice of each mode. The Final Portfolios themselves were poorly correlated to the capacities in NVivo 10 for Mac, because I incorrectly categorized them as a mode of artmaking *and* a larger category that encompassed every mode of artmaking instead of exclusively the latter.

I also found that a primarily anecdotal capacities-based analysis is well suited for the arts-based learning process. As the *researcher*, I created the opportunity to aesthetically capture and document the "timeline" of development of sense of community. As the *participant observer*, I contributed to the students' aesthetic process of validating the significance of the community (Kinsley, 1997) and coming to realize that they can become skilled helpers in the community (Wuthnow, 1995) with the support of their parents, the group, and myself. The Capacities for Imaginative Learning facilitated my recognition of how each conclusion was made visible aesthetically.

In Chapter 5, a narrative from Solomon's final presentation introduced my presentation the findings regarding the two intersecting themes of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning and service-learning. This stage in my analysis revealed the kinds of skills and capacities the

students gained in (reflective artmaking) service-learning. I showed the usefulness of the Capacities for Imaginative Learning in determining how Teamwork and Teambuilding also had a strong correlation to service-learning. While being civically engaged, Solomon's sense of self within his community, for example, was directly related to the others with whom he was working.

Exploring themes of teamwork, I diagramed the *service-learning* stages of my study. Developing a sense of community began with the group aesthetically and collectively defining their *community*. The group experienced commonalities and differences, especially in the context of "border-crossing" (Keith, 1998, p. 86) and service-learning (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; Kiely, 2005a; King, 2004). They moved beyond their own personal communities by crossing the borders into the surrounding community. First, students experienced border-crossing *within* the internal group. During the practice of internal community building, the students then took action through service and coalesced into a team (Hayes & Cuban, 1996; Kiely, 2005a; King, 2004). Taking action and working together as a team, they crossed the borders of their surrounding community through service-learning (Schensul & Berg, 2004). This multi-faceted set of interactions, or *community building*, brought together individuals from differing sides of socio-cultural borders through the dynamic process of learning individually, collectively, internally (as an internal team of students), and externally (as the students engaged with the outside community). Students' development of sense of community continued as they civically engaged in service-learning and became more aware of *civic engagement* and *citizenship*. This "sense" moved forward and beyond awareness of who composes *their* community as they developed a concern for their internal and external communities in tandem. They took ownership; the community became *theirs*. They then worked together as a team, moving forward with their

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ideas through Taking Action and subsequent Reflecting and Assessing. A capacities-based analysis helped to make visible the entire process of development of sense of community, and each service-learning stage was made visible aesthetically, orally, and/or textually.

In Chapter 6, a narrative from Ginger's presentation to the group of her collaged Metaphor of Service introduced how the intersection of service-learning and modes of artmaking illuminated the life cycle of the overall project, the sense of community that was revealed through particular stages of service-learning and modes of artmaking in the project. I examined the specific events that elicited responses regarding sense of community. I found that the enmeshment or coupling of learning processes had the capability to familiarize students with their levels of community and recognize sense of community. I also analyzed the appropriateness of the modes of artmaking within each stage in the project's life cycle. Ginger's collage was an example of the students' aesthetic expressions of their synthesis of what is meant by *community* and *community service*, the basis of their *sense of community*. Students placed personal identity at the beginning of their synthesis, which aligned to the theoretical construction that inspired the methodology. The constructivist design raised the individual's sense of self above all other senses as an orientation for deciphering the world in which the individual lives.

For each student, teamwork and teambuilding was a religious expression of faith-based convictions, and this study most effectively cultivated a greater sense of self and teamwork in the students' development of sense of community. As exemplified by Violet, students considered their personal sense of self individually and communally. Considering others in the group in relationship to her*self* moved her towards teambuilding. Furthermore, other levels of community were intentionally not the focus of the original constructivist design, and therefore received less attention. Consequently, data regarding community at the remaining levels were present, but

marginally. The intention of this practice was to start with self, and subsequently observe what/who the students naturally determined as their community. I facilitated discussions regarding personal values and sense of self.

One complication with the constructivist design was the authenticity of the data and findings. Facilitating a focus elsewhere would yield results according to that focus. I therefore conclude that the design was somewhat self-determining. Balancing the focus upon each level of community equally, from the start and throughout, would have yielded a more authentic representation of the students' learning processes. The community that reflective artmaking about and during service-learning made visible was insightful, especially in how the authenticity of what I saw became somewhat convoluted by the design I used.

In Chapter 7, a set of narratives about Petin woven together as one story introduced my exhibition of the methodological insights regarding *perspective,* one of the most significant findings within this study. Accurately portraying Petin's perspective required the cohesion of multiple narratives, demonstrating how constructing a comprehensive analysis of the students' perspective in this study was complex. Considering the data from the perspective through which the results were generated, that of the students' Christian worldview, provided a more comprehensive basis from which to appreciate to data. As Petin reflected during the group's Poster Project, "God is the most important part of our community." Her comment was representational for how the students' experiences with civic engagement were framed by their view of community.

Considering the perspective of the students provided further insight regarding the authenticity of the data analyzed in Chapter 6. There is a discontinuity between aspects of Dewey's (1938) constructivist pragmatism and certain findings of this study. The broader, all-

inclusive theoretical framework of the Christian worldview provides a more accurate analysis. Christian worldview defines reciprocity as *triadic,* between two persons/groups and with the third real actor of God. Reciprocity is defined according to the values expressed in scripture as a three-way giving and receiving. It is not reductionist, reducing knowledge to a finite human perspective at the expense of disagreeable information that does not fit into the theoretical "box" (Pearcey, 2004, p. 103). Understanding *worldview* is crucial to the process of analyzing my study because the students are from classical methods of Christian-based education. Their perspective is grounded in objective truth, where knowledge was created by an all-knowing (omniscient) God and is discovered by the students, not vice versa. I therefore recommend further research in this area that is beyond the scope of my study.

8.2   *GOD IS MY ROCK*: BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS TO CONSTRUCTIVISM

In each chapter, I provided evidence that both enhance and challenge the primacy of the constructivist approach to knowledge production. In summary, my data show that the constructivist design determined (at least in part) the self-focused methodology throughout the study. One benefit of beginning the project with reflections upon one's self is the orientation of the student to their awareness of sense of community. Here, sense of community began with sense of self *within* community. Eyler (2000) explains,

> While we lack longitudinal studies that show a link between academic service-learning and later civic involvement, there is evidence in the youth development literature (Youniss, McLeelan & Yates, 1997), as well as the work of Astin, Sax and Avalos (1999) in higher education, that volunteer service leads to subsequent community involvement.

> The mediating factor appears to be the development of civic identity, i.e. the personal efficacy and social responsibility that are the outcomes of both community service and service-learning. (p. 11)

Students explored their sense of community through their perspective regarding civic identity. Consequently, the student's perspective filtered their outward response. What became visible through reflective artmaking service-learning were multiple stages of processing and filtering. Therefore, being the participant observer provided an especially unique and crucial positionality for understanding their responses, and the nuances therein that would be unperceived by an outsider.

Explorations into civic identity were transformative for Jo, specifically in the context of his Christian faith. As he made visible on his Self-Portrait, God was his Rock when he considered his community and role therein. Although the rock in the drawing is off to the side, it is also the matter beneath his feet, for in my interview with him he clarified that God is the Rock upon which he stands. He is referring to God as the most solid source of perspective, an inerrant worldview that will not wash away like sand from under his feet with the waves of life's trials (Matthew 7:24-27). His triadic perspective enabled him to work through the challenges of the dyadic design of the project overall.

From their shared Christian worldview, the students explored topics of community and sense of place in it, and from the evidence I observed in this study, Jo's stance was representative of the group. I expounded upon this in Chapter 7 through Petin's contributions. Students constructed *experience,* where experience is defined by the knowledge. Their perspective is grounded in objective truth claims, where knowledge was created by an all-knowing (omniscient) God and is discovered by the students, not vice versa. The implication of this

finding provides greater insight into the completeness and authenticity of the previous findings due to the theoretical framework of constructivism.

Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this study and requires extensive analysis. Therefore, I presented an introductory analysis of this paradigm's role in the findings within this study as it relates directly to the purpose. "To be fully effective," Lowery, et al. (2006) conclude, "service-learning must […] reflect a sound theoretical foundation" (pp. 49-50). Thus, further analysis beyond the scope of this study is necessary to fully appreciate the insight it provides. These findings return to Kiely's (2005a) call for research, in which he also observed a research void concerning theory development (Bringle, 2003) regarding the process mechanisms behind service-learning outcomes. Lowery, et al. (2006) agree, "Unfortunately, few articles […] articulated their underlying theories. Although a dearth of 'intellectually rigorous' analyses has been noted, this finding can be attributed to the newness of the field. As service-learning evolves, we anticipate that authors will be challenged to articulate more clearly the theoretical foundations of their work" (p. 52). Recognizing a gap in research, they further suggest the employment of social constructivism. Although valuable in various capacities, my study revealed that constructivism that centered on the individuated self first proved to be limiting. Students were limited to reflecting upon themselves more than others, so the fullness of the data was restricted. More significantly, data was limited by students' discontent with continually focusing upon themselves, which introduced an area for further research in response to Lowery, et al.'s (2006) call. Considering alternative approaches would provide greater insight, either in tandem as a cross-reference or as an improved method.

8.3 *I AM A MAINTAINER*: VALUE AND APPLICATION FOR PRACTITIONERS

Jo's Self-Portrait is a symbolic representation of his role in his community, and as the text that forms the outline of his shirt explains, "Who am I in my community? I am a maintainer." He is "someone who keeps everything in working order," he told me in my interview with him. Such a person is the one who takes care of others, keeps them on track, helping them along by lifting them up when they are down. He portrays representations of his role elsewhere, such as the clasping hands stamp angled upwards between his basketball teammates and himself on his Photography Project pages in his Final Portfolio (Figure 6 in Chapter 4). He refers to his Christian faith here, as well, through an image of a rock and the supporting text beside it, "Faith is my Rock." In his community, Christ is the solid rock upon which he stands when he is caring for others as the "maintainer." Consequently, he sees himself as *maintaining* an important role within his closest realms of community.

The findings within this study demonstrated a successful approach to determining the mechanisms behind service-learning outcomes, especially for practitioners desiring to focus upon the development of *self,* at least during the start of their project. Through aesthetic practices of self-examination, Jo identifies his civic identity according to his perceived role in his community. His self-examination culminates in the textually image-based Self-Portrait at the end of the study. His synthesis provides valuable insight for a broad set of practitioners in varying academic contexts, including teachers, program leaders, and parent-teachers in public, private, or homeschool. Other students represent a synthesis similar to Jo's by their responses, their indication of an intervention in their learning, and their enthusiasm throughout and following the project. My study "contributes to a significant theoretical conversation in [my] field" because my insights have the potential to extend beyond "one particular kind of data"

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(Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 38). In each chapter, I suggested practical, innovative, substantive, and customizable methods of incorporating service-learning within their teaching practices.

In Chapter 4, I suggested that practitioners would find it helpful to consider a primarily anecdotal capacities-based analysis because it is well suited for the arts-based learning process. Through the capacities, I was better able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the modes of artmaking that I chose for the study. For example, the Creative Writing Project was the least beneficial for the academic intervention of the students and the goals of my study, so I do not recommend utilizing it in its current form. However, the Box 3D Project contributed much to the students' synthesis of the reflective artmaking service-learning project at the local assisted living center. However, it was "too personal" for the students to include in the publicly viewed Final Portfolios. To permit the incorporation of such personal responses, perhaps another type of portfolio should be considered, one that is more like a personal scrapbook rather than a quasi-formal or quasi-public documentation meant to be exhibited to others.

I also showed how the inclusion of various types of modes was helpful for the various types of students. Where some students found their "voice" through journaling, others found it through collage construction instead. For this reason, I highly recommend the use of the Final Portfolio Project because it significantly contributed to and demonstrated the students' academic intervention. Students utilized the incorporation and synthesis of each mode of artmaking during the process of its construction, and the product was an impressive display of the students' learning.

Consequently, I recommended that the Final Portfolio Project not be considered as the mode of artmaking. Instead, the Final Portfolio Project ought to be an overarching category that

contains the modes of artmaking. Using NVivo terminology, they ought to be a type of parent node instead of a child node.

In Chapter 5, I outlined each stage of the service-learning process, providing an insightful model for practitioners to consider in their own academic contexts. I showed how each service and art project worked in concert, providing my rationale, results, findings, conclusions, and suggestions. For example, the service projects were inspired by the students' shared context of their rural town in East Texas. They desired to thank the local fire department because their shared local community was ablaze with a devastating wildfire a few years prior. Therefore, an overall project containing consistent thematic projects related to the wildfire inspired purposefulness and personal interest among the students. To inspire student participation, investment, and sustained interest, practitioners must likewise consider the desires of the students and their specific context. My project can serve as a model for those desiring to build an arts-infused service-learning project, but practitioners must adapt the concepts to meet the needs and desires of their students' shared context.

I also displayed for practitioners that, at each stage of service-learning, the capacity *Reflecting/Assessing* should be continually present and contain both symbiotic parts of reflecting and assessing that are applicable throughout the imaginative process (Holzer, 2009). According to the Lincoln Center Institute, this particular capacity finds a constant role as the student practices Noticing Deeply, Questioning, Embodying, and repeating the process (Holzer, 2009). This can also be said for Making Connections, Identifying Patterns, and Exhibiting Empathy, because "one is always looking back, asking, revising" (Holzer, 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, "In order to create meaning and take appropriate action, one should reflect, assess, and do so again, to make sure 'appropriate' is what the action will be." Therefore, I suggest that practitioners

incorporate in the design of their projects the practice of constant reflection, specifically through the combined use of arts-based methodologies, group discussions, and written reflections.

In Chapter 6, I suggested that practitioners guide their students through investigations of their community by first *naming* (Greene, 1995) their levels of communities. Practitioners must begin the overall project by familiarizing their students with how they individually view their community, how others view their community, and how the group views their community *together*. Practitioners can then guide the students forward into further development of sense of community. The group Poster Project proved to be an appropriate choice at the stage in the overall project and I recommend that practitioners consider its usefulness in their classrooms.

I also cautioned practitioners that "naming the world" ought not to be the primary intention of the enmeshed learning processes. The outcomes of my study indicate complications with authenticity when the focus is misplaced. For example, my study focused upon *self*, and the outcomes represented *self* more than other areas of life. This was not an authentic representation of their thoughts regarding others areas of life because it was primarily focused upon one. They did not share as much about other areas, because I did not specifically ask them to share about other areas and kept directing them back to *self*. Therefore, I suggest a balance of multiple foci within a project's design so that students are given the opportunity to authentically express themselves regarding all areas of life.

Furthermore, allowing more *time* for a broader survey would prospectively permit a more comprehensive outcome. My study was restricted to a total of five months (the majority of the data was collected in two months) because of the availability of the students. I recommend that practitioners consider an extended period of time, because the outcomes would likely be more comprehensive and increase in authenticity. More specifically, I suggest that future projects be

at *least* one semester. One example of semester-long study is found in the public-school system in Texas. Citizenship education through civics is at least one semester in Texas (The Texas Home School Coalition, 2017, n.p.).

In Chapter 7, I advised practitioners regarding the authenticity of *student responses,* as well. There is great value in beginning their projects by guiding the students towards reflecting upon their own convictions, stances, and desires. Considering *self* provides a place of orientation in their explorations of the world in which they live and the God who made it. Doing so in a group setting enhances the experience by providing an inspiring space for reflection. Therefore, I suggest maintaining elements of a constructivist approach at the start of the overall project, such as the group Poster Project in which students reflect upon their individual perspective of community next to others who are doing the same. In my study, Violet exemplified how most (if not all) students had not ever considered their levels of community in concentric circles, and the experience of doing it with others was inspiring. Violet said that she enjoyed sharing her ideas with others. Furthermore, expressing her thoughts through the Embodying practice of drawing *next to others* was also inspiring. The aesthetic practice and communal space encouraged authentic practices of reflective artmaking.

However, I recommend that practitioners diverge from the significant use self-focused methodologies two or three weeks after their project begins. Providing a balance of multiple foci within a project's design *from the start* so that students are given the opportunity to authentically express themselves regarding all areas of life would likely prevent the issues of discontent evidenced in my study. Being permitted or given the opportunity to express themselves through well rounded reflection would foster among the students sustained interest, pleasure, purposefulness, and the sense that they are part of something greater than themselves.

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Introducing this concept at the start would adequately set up the proper environment for authentic reflection.

8.4   *WHO AM I IN MY COMMUNITY?*: REFLECTIVE ARTMAKING THROUGH COLLAGE

Aesthetic discovery framed the students' experiences in asking, "Who am I in my community?" Students discovered and Created Meaning about their communities and their sense of place in it through aesthetic exploration and Embodying. The dominant mode of artmaking that I guided the students through was Final Portfolio construction, which was a synthesis of each mode of artmaking with an emphasis on collage.

Butler-Kisber (2008) makes a call for research through *multimedia* artmaking that is reflective, especially collage. She states, "What is needed [...] is an integration of the criteria for evaluating arts-informed research with those for evaluating visual images, with a particular focus on collage. Although this is no easy task, it would be a worthwhile endeavor, and one that would be well received in the field" (p. 273). Collage as reflective artmaking within *service-learning* appears to be welcomed in the field of arts-based research, as well (Bagnoli, 2009; Barry, 1996; Butler-Kisber, 2008; Eisner, 2005). For example, Eisner (2005) makes a call for more arts-based research by those who are knowledgeable in creating at least one of a diverse set of artistic expressions (including collage) stating, "We need to broaden the array of forms of representation that can be used in the conduct of educational research" (p. 17). Being knowledgeable in a diverse set of artistic expressions, collage in my study contributes to the field regarding how to document and analyze the students' products and processes. Through collage, the students

integrated each mode of artmaking. They synthesized their expressions on Final Portfolio pages that they created as a collage. In this study, the Final Portfolios encompassed the three approaches to collage described by Butler-Kisber (2008): "a memoing/reflective process," "a conceptualizing approach," and "an elicitation for writing or discussion" (p. 269).

The entire process of collage making inspired group discussions and questions throughout. At the table covered with art supplies, students discussed their selection of magazine clippings, stamped text, aesthetic tools, and placement of the images and text onto the page, for example. Beyond topics regarding the page creation itself, students discussed a wide variety of topics, including politics, religion, family, desires for civic engagement, questions regarding the value and impact of the projects within the study, and related personal dilemmas with which they had been struggling. Some discussions were lighthearted, while others were emotionally driven. After the students completed their page(s) during the day's session, the group of students engaged in presentations and discussions regarding their creations. Thus, collage making was central to the practice of discussion.

8.4.1 *Builder and friend*: Collaged dissertation.

When considering his role in his community, Jo chooses the words *builder* and *friend* to compose his legs, the parts of the body that move a person towards the goals they seek. For Jo, his goals are to care for his community as the maintainer. Standing upon the Rock of God (Isaiah 44:8), he builds others up or builds his community by serving as a friend.

According to ethnographic methodologies, I "built" my project's design as the *researcher* and I was the students' "friend" as the *observer*. In my ethnographic collage, I made aesthetic decisions and considered how to use "the final representational product to enhance

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understanding, show poignancy, open avenues for discussion and further reflection, and contribute to persuasiveness" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 269). As stated in my introduction, the overall experience of the students and myself was a multi-media collage of refreshing ideas and playful bursts of discovery. Thus, I worked with the medium of collage on my own account, as this dissertation is my "collage" of students and my experiences.

I have used the "three approaches of collage as a memoing/reflective process (Butler-Kisber, 2007; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; McDermott, 2002), collage as a conceptualizing approach (Butler-Kisber et a1., 2005), and collage as an elicitation for writing or discussion (Butler-Kisber, Rudd, & Stewart, 2007; Williams, 2000)" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 269). I practiced memoing through journaling my own field notes, providing supporting text as memos in NVivo for each Final Portfolio page, and creating summaries of the students that became the vignettes at the start of and within each chapter. As a conceptualizing approach, while reflecting, I found that I had a story to tell. I found clarity in my previous research questions, as well as more research questions, and being able to tell my story *aesthetically* in response to these questions was a skill that I developed through this dissertation. The entire process of collage making through writing inspired much discussion with others and questioning throughout. Some discussions were lighthearted, others were emotionally driven, and collage making was central to it all.

8.4.2 *God is good*: Collaged spirituality.

As the primary form of representation, collage making made visible deeper levels of thinking within the students. It led to and resulted in the product and process of representing their triadic frame of reference and faith-based stances regarding *knowledge*. The findings of this study may

cause the reader to conclude that the personal nature of the design was unfamiliar because it challenged the students' understanding of Truth or reality. Were some students dissatisfied because it challenged their presuppositions? The Christian worldview teaches that everything already exists, God created all things, and we discover their existence and meaning as He reveals them to us. Our experiences do not define reality, but rather reality defines our experience. The experiential, constructivist design indeed challenged the students, but I argue that the students were inspired towards a greater conviction of their previous stances, taking ownership of them, as exemplified by Jo in his Self-Portrait.

The study's design was "mind-boggling" for Jo, yet in his culminating Self-Portrait, he frames his understanding of his experience through the Christian worldview, as portrayed by the sun that is shaped by the text "God is good." Jo turns to God's goodness, or moral perfection, holiness, benevolence, and justice. The words he selects to represent the literal and metaphorical life-giving sun above him are hope, joy, praise, peace, obedience, love, and caring. He also selects spiritual text to frame the outline of his body and the solid rock of God upon which he stands (Isaiah 44:8). His entire piece is a collage of text and images that is robust with metaphors. I describe it literally as *collaged spirituality* because of the collaged method of portraying reflections about his spirituality. Metaphorically, his spirituality is a collage of hope, joy, praise, peace, obedience, love, and caring from, about, or towards God. His collaged spirituality is not evidence of a disjoining of the student and his presumptions, nor of "parroting" the teachings given by his Christian parent-teachers. Rather, it is evidence of the strengthening of convictions and of taking ownership of the overall experience of the project.

During the first general meeting session, Petin expressed that God is the most important part of the community. From this spiritual frame of reference, her community pages

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intentionally and overtly express her discontent with her view of self within her community, as well as her progression towards satisfaction. Evidenced by her Final Portfolio, this emic perspective came to her aid in taking ownership at the challenging assisted living center. At the end of the study, she expresses in her community pages the satisfaction of having a greater awareness of her community and place in it. After the study, Petin's parents found avenues for civic engagement that would be spiritually satisfying, given her reflections shared in the Final Portfolio and her ideas for service. They had desires and plans prior to the study, but the study inspired this pursuit into expedited fruition. Since the end of the project, she has been ministering to women and children through supporting a local pregnancy crisis center. Petin's smile was particularly warm when she shared this news with me in her front yard, her family casually picking summer squash from the garden not far off. Her parents organized the opportunity for continued voluntary service predominately for Petin with the aid of increased awareness of her inner thoughts through the overall project. Thus, Petin's Final Portfolio and continued service also provides evidence of strengthened convictions and ownership, as well as the satisfying application of enhanced sense of contribution that she could make in her larger community, as an individual or part of a team.

8.4.3 *God is my Rock*: Collaged ownership.

When I further considered the collage of the students' expressed spirituality, I wondered about the authenticity of their responses. The tendency of children to repeat for adults what they know they want to hear, to repeat the correct answers to questions, is a real factor in any study of youth. How can we be sure that they believed what they said? The age group represented by these students struggles with critical thinking and taking ownership of their beliefs. A

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developmental characteristic common to the age group, it also tends to be an issue in modern Christian homes (Kinnaman, 2011; Pearcey, 2015). Students in such homes are instructed in *what* to think and not given the tools for learning *how* to think. When student experiences challenge the essentialist foundations of their learning, they ask questions. If their parent-teachers dismiss their questions, others philosophies will fill the void of answers.

However, this is not the case in *all* Christian homeschooling homes, and it *is* prevalent in *any* circle, secular or religious. Students today are often taught explicitly or subliminally not to think, but just believe, just accept what the instructor is telling them (Pearcey, 2015). Kinnaman (2011) expounds upon this dilemma primarily in the context of religious circles in *Five Myths About Young Adult Church Dropouts.* He writes, "The significant spiritual and technological changes over the last 50 years make the dropout problem more urgent. Young people are dropping out earlier, staying away longer, and if they come back are less likely to see the church as a long-term part of their life" (Kinnaman, 2011, n.p.). Pearcey (2015) responds to the underlying issues within this concern in her book *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes*. She states, "My own years of searching and struggling as an agnostic left me with an intense conviction that Christians need to take questions seriously. They need to be prepared to help people 'study their way back to God'" (Pearcey, 2015, p. 23). She makes the call for parent-teachers to respond to the growing issue of young adult Christian dropouts. Equipping their students with the tools necessary for critical thinking, as well as guiding them through their experiences, provides the opportunity for students to take ownership of their convictions. She continues,

> The task can seem daunting. At every turn- from the classroom to the workplace to the internet- ideas contrary to Christianity are clamoring for our allegiance. Learning how to

respond thoughtfully to every competing worldview would take a lifetime of study. And

what happens when we encounter a *new* idea? Do we have to come up with a new

argument every time? Or it is possible to find a single line of inquiry that we can apply

universally to all ideas? (p. 23)

Such a daunting task begins with the Bible, she explains, for "What I have discovered is that the

Bible itself offers a powerful strategy for critical thinking" (p. 23), specifically, Romans chapter

1 as written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Rome.

According to the principles within Romans 1, in response to questions regarding religious

authority within this study, students are conversely *encouraged* to challenge authority. In

Pearcey's (2015) book, the author of the Forward (who shares the same last name) describes her

work as a "vibrant mind-set" in which "people are expected to think for themselves, question

authority, examine evidence, and push for answers that make sense of our world" (J. R. Pearcey,

in Pearcey, 2015, p. 13). He continues, *faith, belief,* or *trust* describes the biblical attitude "of

persuasion, a will to verify and know what is true and to respond accordingly" (J. R. Pearcey, in

Pearcey, 2015, p. 18). As the Apostle Paul encourages, we are to test everything and hold fast to

what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Misconceptions regarding religious authority may be

misapplied to the particular cases in this study, and practitioners should be aware of these issues.

Therefore, I recommend that practitioners investigate the issue further, and Pearcey (2015) points

to others who provide insight regarding developing ownership of the Christian mind, such as

Schaeffer's (1979) *True Spirituality* and Stott's (1973) *Your Mind Matters*.

The aesthetic practices in this study provided opportunities for the students to express

their own minds, personal convictions, and otherwise demonstrated ownership of the overall

project (from discussions, interviews, my observations, for example). Jo's Self-Portrait

exemplifies my conclusion. Enmeshing image-based and textual information, he tells his story of how his faith-based convictions shape his perspective of communities and self within communities. As the final contribution to the Final Portfolio, his piece exhibits how and why he has taken ownership of the overall project. Standing on the Solid Rock of God, Jo is the maintainer in his communities, caring about others as the expression of how God has and is taking care of His (God's) created world. Literally, his Self-Portrait is a collage evidencing his ownership of the overall project. Metaphorically, Jo's *collaged ownership* is how he owns his role and practices it because "God is good" and God gives the life-giving light of "Hope, Joy, Praise, Peace, Obedience, Love, Caring."

The Capacities for Imaginative Learning provided a means of analyzing students' expressions of ownership, such as Jo's, because I was able to recognize the Embodying of the students' thoughts through the aesthetic process. I could provide clarity regarding their Noticing Deeply, Exhibiting Empathy, and each of the other capacities. Their process and product of *knowing* was made visible aesthetically and the capacities aided in my analysis of this visualized evidence.

Therefore, in response to concerns regarding student ownership in service-learning, I recommend that practitioners explore the potential for infusing aesthetic methodologies, specifically the collaged Self-Portrait Project, into their practices. My study provides evidence for how learning was triggered among students through dissonance, and how dissonance catalyzed ongoing learning. In this process of learning, the students turned to their religious convictions to find the answers to their questions, a way to navigate through the challenging waters, and the triadic framework became a source of strength. Consequently, they took ownership of the project and the aesthetic methodologies facilitated the process. While students

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navigated through the process of taking ownership, I was also able to see the varying strengths and weaknesses of the aesthetic projects in that regard. Two strengths of the Box 3D Project, for example, were that it inspired Noticing Deeply and Exhibiting Empathy more than the other projects; yet one weakness was that it was too personal for most students. I recommend that practitioners consider my findings regarding arts-based learning, emphasizing and cultivating among their students the importance of taking ownership through aesthetic practices.

8.5   *LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, TEAMWORK, AND BONDING*: BEYOND CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLERS IN RURAL EAST TEXAS

Like the spiked hair on his head, Jo, the maintainer in his community, carries with him the aspirations and/or realizations of love, friendship, teamwork, and bonding. Being uncovered hair on his head, they are readily visible to others. Similarly, his Self-Portrait made visible to me that the four words (among eleven others) are important to him. They grow from his head, which is shaped by the words, "Who is my community? Friends and family." Love, friendship, teamwork, and bonding spring forth from his aesthetic reflections regarding his community. They are part of his civic experience and civic identity. He then lightheartedly punctuates his message with a smiley face as his chin.

Although this study of specialized group of students requires further analysis into the paradigms to apply *because* of their special representation of Christian homeschoolers in rural East Texas, their contributions offer insight for the general community of practitioners. Each of Jo's fifteen words applies to how my study extends beyond this sampled population, but in this section I highlight four. First, the students found satisfaction in this project in part because they

were given the opportunity to express their *love* for others in their community. They also enjoyed building *friendships* within the group. Consequently, the *bonding* therein cultivated the environment for *teamwork* and vice versa. These four aspirations and/or realizations were visible aspects of their civic identity. Like the continually growing hair on their head, they desired to "grow" them through continued participation.

For example, in my interview with Hanna, she said of the overall experience, "I really enjoyed it. [...] I was looking forward to it, to every Monday, working on everything. I wish it was still going on." All but one of the other students agreed, such as Petin and Ginger, who both said, "I really enjoyed it." Petin desired to continue to do service according to her newly enhanced capacity for a civic identity, feeling a sense of satisfaction that she is more engaged than before. Growing their civic identities, Hanna and Petin made plans for continued service at the local pregnancy crisis center. Similarly, Ginger continued growing her civic identity through regularly scheduled service with special needs children at the dance studio. The love, friendship, teamwork, and bonding that they experienced inspired their desire for more, and responses regarding continued participation showed that the students enjoyed working with art and service together. Students elsewhere in varying contexts can experience the joy of growing civic identity through reflective artmaking service-learning, as well. It is not contingent upon this particular sample.

To further cultivate the students' incentive, I recommend that practitioners (especially those from home schools) consider the possibility of offering a reflective artmaking service-learning course for official academic recognition through credits. Lisa shared, "If I got credits I would do it again." In my interview with Ginger, she concurred she would prefer that it offered credit towards the academic requirements because of the time it required. Ginger shared, "I

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enjoyed it. I think it was helpful. Just because you remembered it and you had to think a little more deeply of what this resembled, and how you viewed this on your art, or what this art meant to you. So, I think it was helpful. I think it was really helpful." Ginger, who did not consider herself to be an artist, valued infusing arts-based methodologies in large part because it inspired new ways of thinking about service, civic engagement, and citizenship. I suggest that, by offering a course or program similar to this project for credit, practitioners would enhance the students' perceived value of it. Consequently, it would cultivate a more sustainable interest among the students because their work would be officially acknowledged. The lack of official credit may have contributed to the lack of interest among one student in my study, the outlier who did not actively participate in multiple projects, such as the assisted living center and the subsequent Box 3D Project. Beyond the goal of inspiring uninspired students such as him, civic engagement and/or citizenship are sought after among many academic institutions nationwide, improving the possibility for practitioners to offer credit.

In Texas, for example, *good citizenship* is among the central five subjects required for homeschools (e.g., reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and good citizenship). The Texas Home School Coalition's (THSC) Good Citizenship Program was designed "to recognize home school students who participate in good citizenship activities" (Texas Home School Coalition, 2017, n.p.). Good citizenship is usually considered to mean *civics*, according to THSC, which includes "teaching U.S. and Texas history, government (theoretical and practical), the Pledge of Allegiance, and similar activities." Civics activities can include volunteering to work in voter registration, the campaign process, the political party process, or the legislative process.

A course or program similar to my project would certainly meet the civic engagement and/or citizenship requirements of many academic institutions and homeschools. Authentic

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service-learning is *distinguished* because it is comprised of relevant and meaningful community service in reciprocity with the community, the civic learning is purposeful, and academic learning is enhanced (Howard, 2001). For example, students engaged in reflective artmaking service-learning could include the civics practices described by THSC into their service projects through volunteering in political affairs or outreaching according to the desires of the particular political affair. Students could also serve with members of the community on local projects according to the thematic units being explored in U.S. and Texas history courses.

Expanding the required study of U.S. and Texas history, students could serve with the war veterans in nursing homes and local families of deployed fathers or mothers through methodologies similar to my project. They could begin by adapting the Thank You Card Project. Students could spend time visiting and helping war veterans, and then they could create cards with the veterans to thank those who are currently serving in the armed forces. Then students could visit families of deployed parents, deliver the cards, share their stories about how they created the cards, spend time with the families, and create cards thanking those who have served many years ago, the war veterans in the local nursing home. Through returning to the sites on multiple occasions, students could cross borders and build relationships with these members of the community, foster relationships between the two types of community members, observe/recognize other needs, plan to meet those needs, take action, reflect/assess upon that action, and return to continue the cycle once again.

Thus, practitioners could enhance their history lessons by making them "come alive." As I stated in Chapter 1, exemplary teachers strive to provide opportunities for their students to learn, especially through *engaging with* the material that is being brought forth for instruction. The civics instructor, for example, can deepen the level of understanding of U.S. and Texas

history amongst their students by bringing the lesson to life through civic engagement, aesthetically portraying its value and magnifying its relevance through reflective artmaking about and during service-learning. Teachers at home or in a formal academic institution, novice or seasoned, could do this seamlessly, weaving history lessons with the real-life contexts found in their local nursing home or neighborhood.

Offering officially recognized credit is only one idea for future reflective artmaking service-learning, and I recommend that practitioners and researchers explore and report about others. "More public accounts of researchers' explorations with the medium, more opportunities for exchanges between researchers and artists, and efforts to make available lists of exemplary works are needed" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 274). There is a need for more reflective artmaking service-learning projects that would allow the students to physically experience the lessons they read about in textbook by engaging with that particular part of the community through intentional and aesthetic acts of service. It could bring the classroom's lesson to life in intensely experiential ways, serving as a means to develop active and informed citizens (Wade, 1997) through *good citizenship* (THSC). The lesson would be living, breathing, or even dancing before them, helping the students to see their world in new ways to facilitate the broadening of their horizons into new directions (Bitgood, 1989), stimulating learning and social development (Conrad & Hedin, 1991).

8.6   *THOUGHTFULNESS AND HOPE*: FINAL THOUGHTS AND FURTHER

QUESTIONS

Jo's growing aspirations and/or realizations also included *thoughtfulness* and *hope*, and I, too, grow them as part of my civic identity. I continue thinking about possibilities for future projects with the hope that subsequent experiences will demonstrate improvements to the former design. To prepare for and enhance the potential benefits of a course or program similar to this project, it is crucial for practitioners to join me in in thoughtfulness and hope.

Among many questions, I wonder about my role in the process of improving weaknesses and cultivating benefits. For the sake of their own projects, practitioners should consider with me: Were the expectations of the overall project nebulous? Did it push them to cross borders and go places different from typical (homeschool) academic settings where learning takes place? Did they expect the project to resemble predictable learning methodologies, such as knowing correct answers and simply offering them when asked? Were their expectations dashed? I wonder if I was unclear. Did I misrepresent the project and set the wrong expectations? Resolving these questions requires further investigation worthy of another project. In this case, I expect that the dilemmas were a mixture of these issues, not entirely one or another. For the practitioner considering this project, a lesson I learned is to present the project to the students clearly and transparently, and to elaborate the reasons for the selected framework. For the homeschooling practitioner (of one's home, co-op, or other group setting) who teaches within the Christian worldview, the lesson learned is to layout the design of the course to the Christian parents and students prior to the first meeting and offer an honest set of expectations, even taking into consideration the religious expectations shared by the parents and students. For any academic setting, the design cultivates risky discussions regarding one's thoughts, emotions, and

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stances. The students may see the design as "too personal." Or they will simply not favor one of the activities. One student made me aware of this inquiry when she faked a smile during her final presentation because maybe she did not enjoy the activity, felt that the overall project was unclear and had coercive structure, or simply "had a bad day."

Regarding issues of discontent, what about parental authority? Were students dissatisfied because of issues regarding authority? Were the students dissatisfied with aspects of the project that included gaining parental approval, such as the final presentation? Did they feel pressured to impress their parent-teachers, siblings, or other family members? This may have been a factor to some degree, and further investigation is necessary before drawing this conclusion. A potential misunderstanding regarding the role of Christian parents and the students' view of parental roles might be applied to this group of students. From my discussions with the students and parents, my long-term relationships with them, and my observations, these students have a strong relationship with their parents. Their view of parents is not hyper-authoritarian, nor anti-authoritarian. Instead, they view parents as having authority according to God's designed order, and with authority comes responsibility, love, care, provision, concern, and when necessary, correction, rebuke, and entreaty. They come from homes in which they are instructed through the Christian worldview that is balanced by critical thinking, taking ownership of their stances, and practicing their learning experientially. Therefore, I would suggest further research on issues of authority through explicit questions to the students regarding this issue and prolonged ethnographic observation. I would also expand the study towards parents through encouraging parental involvement during particular projects, observing students' responses during and in the absence of parental involvement, and conducting interviews with the parents.

This study limited parental involvement overall because the focus was upon the students, and I suggest that future studies do not take the same approach. Parents were excited to be a part of this project at the start because of its potential impact on student's interest and engagement in their communities. Although I thought the parents and I had clearly communicated our expectations, I soon found that I was in error. There was a slight waning in parental approval by a few parents. Although they were not overly explicit about their concerns, I deduced that they became slightly unsure about the constructivist design, wondering if the project was going to move forward into triadic directions, into what they might call more *meaningful* areas of study. Providing greater clarity to the parents at the start of the study, utilizing a different theoretical framework, and clarifying expectations would have eased their concerns. However, in this study, recognizing parental discontent and increasing communication with the parents was my approach to the issue. By the end of this study, the parents expressed satisfaction and desire to engage in a similar project again in the future.

Regarding religious or parental authority, in Chapter 7, I argued that when the students engaged in discourses regarding theological principles, the dialogic environment shifted. Reverence and a keener awareness directed the course of discussion, not feelings, laughter, off-handed comments, or emotional truth claims that may or may not have been genuine. The argument could be made that the awareness was inspired by *my* adult presence, or the potential of *another* adult presence later when parents learned of each student's contributions to the project. Perhaps the students wanted to impress adults by giving the "correct" answers to questions, or other responses, such as ideas for service projects. This may be a factor, but the data in this study prohibits my ability to definitively draw such conclusions. I did not ask them questions regarding the issue, and I did not observe clear representations of the issue. The

anonymous student who candidly shared surprising reflections while I was out of the room expressed a clear representation of the issue, but I did not gain enough evidence to claim that *all* of her responses were oriented toward authorities. I can only conclude that I have doubts regarding the authenticity of at least some of her responses. Although my emic positionality allowed me to have access to the data, I was yet limited because I was not a young person, a peer of the same age group.

However, I would expect that orientation toward authorities is indeed present to at least a marginal degree among all of the students because of the developmental tendencies of this age group, as well as the Christian worldview from which they are instructed at home. Based on the work by Pearcey (2004, 2015), as well as my long-term relationships with the students *and* their parents, I would likewise expect that it was not the primary motivator for student responses. Furthermore, the depth of theological conversations among students during the project (interestingly predominately during aesthetic productions), the passion behind those and other responses, and the immediacy of the responses cause me to refrain from making such a claim.

Reflective artmaking service-learning contains educative value beyond this specialized community of Christian homeschooling families in Texas. Service-learning programs or curricula are intended to guide all types of students into developing a host of learning outcomes, such as a more robust connection to the community in which they live as well as amongst other members of that community (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). Arts-based reflection can provide a way to make visible the occurring learning processes among all types of service-learning students (Brown & Leavitt, 2009; McNiff, 2008; Russell & Hutzel, 2007). From my conclusions regarding reflective artmaking service-learning, I offer the field of education a new definition of *community* that incorporates the central concepts within this study. I therefore

define *community* as a collage of border-crossers who are consistently discovering and cultivating *self* and one another both internally and externally through dissonance, ownership, and spiritual awareness. Like Jo, I desire to be a *maintainer,* someone who maintains among my *community* of practitioners the thoughtfulness and hope that they will find the collaged methodologies and findings within this reflective artmaking service-learning study to be useful in their contexts.

APPENDIX A

MY EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

I have education and experience in the arts, service-learning, research design, and educational practice and praxis, and I am qualified to have undertaken this study. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education. I have completed doctoral level coursework in research methods, qualitative research, ethnographic field methodology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy in education, qualitative data management, and qualitative data analysis.

Regarding service-learning and the arts, I was the facilitator/teacher's assistant for the graduate level international service-learning program L.I.N.C.S. (Learning Integrated in Needed Construction and Service) after participating as a student in the prior cohort. Multi-media reflective artmaking, which was referred to as "scholarly scrapbooking," was a key feature of this set of courses, and I designed the rubric that provided a method of measurement of this arts-based course material. Additionally, I have attained a minor degree in the area of Studio Arts. Furthermore, I have participated in several other service-learning programs, including a YMCA international service-learning program in South Africa. I have also collaborated with other facilitators of a service-learning workshop. As a result of my education and experience, I co-authored a peer-reviewed article that was presented at a symposium at the International Transformative Learning Conference at Columbia University in New York City. The title of the

published article was "Facilitating Transformative Learning in Educational Organizations through Service-Learning: A Cross-Cultural Approach." The subsection of the article that I composed was entitled "Constructing Narratives and School: Scholarly Scrapbooking in LINCS."

Regarding the age group of the students in my dissertation study specifically, I have approximately seven years of experience with the YMCA non-governmental organization, including after-school programs, day camp counseling, and day camp directing. Many of the YMCA programs I have engaged in involved children of ages four through eighteen. Also, I have taught Spanish to children between the ages six through eighteen for five years, including YMCA organized classrooms and entrepreneurially organized homeschool classrooms.

The selected site for the context of the study has a high concentration of Latin Americans, especially those of Mexican decent. While my sample population happened to not be comprised of Latin Americans, the context significantly influences them in both overtly and subliminally recognizable ways. I am an expert in the field of Latin American studies because I have earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish in the department of Hispanic Languages and Literature, a Certificate in Latin American Studies at the undergraduate level, and a Certificate in Latin American Studies at the graduate level. Furthermore, I have been living in the geographical region of study for over six years and have gained extensive experience of the region's unique history and culture.

APPENDIX B

PROJECT SEQUENCE AND RATIONALE

Below is a detailed outline of the projects within my study, including the date, session number, location when applicable, and type of meeting. Within each description, I provide my rationale for the inclusion of that particular project within my study. This project sequence is organized sequentially by session and order of occurrence within the session.

PROJECT SEQUENCE

Session 1: General Meeting
Poster Project, Metaphor of Service Project

Session 2: General Meeting
Final Portfolio Project, Community Service-Learning Table, Reciprocity Cards, Ideas for Service, Bubble Chart Project

Session 3: Service Project at the Assisted Living Center
Thank You Cards (creation of), Decorating Cookies

Session 4: Service Project at the Fire Station/Department
Thank You Cards (delivery of), Giving Baked Cookies

Session 5: General Meeting
Final Portfolio Workshop and Workday, Box 3D Project Presentations, Creative Writing Project

Session 6: General Meeting
Creative Writing Project continued, Photography Workshop, Final Portfolio Workday, Photography Project introduced

Session 7: General Meeting
Photography Project continued, Final Portfolio Workday

Session 8: General Meeting
Final Portfolio Workday, Self-Portrait Project, Video Project, Revisiting the Poster Project, Final Presentations

Session 9: Special Catch-Up Day
All-day session for one family

| 10/20/14 | 10/27/14 | 11/03/14 | 11/17/14 | 11/24/14 | 12/01/14 | 12/08/14 | 12/15/14 | 03/18/15 |

Figure 44: Project Sequence

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PROJECT RATIONALE

Session 1: General Meeting 10/20/14
Poster Project: **I adapted the first project, what I refer to as the *Poster Project,* from Foster, Deafenbaugh, and Miller (2016) prior to their publication. As a method of "group-based metaphor map making" (Foster, et al., 1026, p. 6), I provided a poster board with concentric circles orbiting around the phrase "Our Group," placed it on the floor, and the students drew who or what defined their shared communities on the board with crayons. The students defined their shared communities (Brown & Leavitt, 2009) through an aesthetic practice of reflection.** **The students then explained their contributions in turn connecting what they noticed and the patterns they saw to their own prior knowledge and experiences, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to the poster before them.** **Following these informal presentations, the students then commented upon other's contributions. The students placed small sticky notes on three drawings that they felt accurately represented the group's shared communities, and three drawings that did not. Then, in turn, the students shared their selections and rationales.** **This activity provided an opportunity for students to experience another level of ownership**

in the project, learn about others in the group, and begin the process of internal community development.

Metaphor of Service Project:

I asked the students "What is a metaphor?" After I facilitated the group's shared practice of defining *metaphor*, I explained how we would be using metaphor here. I asked, "What does community service or civic engagement mean to you?" I directed them to think of a picture that they would use to describe what service means to them, a metaphor.

Then, students individually created a metaphor using magazine clippings and/or drawing. I then asked the students to provide a brief written explanation of their collage on a separate piece of paper. Once completed, they then shared their collages with the group. Others could then comment or ask questions during this time.

Inspired by Krueger (1998), this project allowed the students to aesthetically explore the theme of service. Through constructing a collaged metaphor, students could "enhance understanding, show poignancy, open avenues for discussion and further reflection, and contribute to persuasiveness" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 269).

During the following week's session, the students inserted the final collage into their Final Portfolio.

Final Portfolio:

Through the portfolios, the students documented and exhibited the entire reflective artmaking service-learning project as they perceived it from their perspective and expressed in their own voice. Each student created his or her own book, the contents were created according to his or her individual perspective, and each student got to keep the book that he or she created. These books, which I provided, were 81/2"x11", and contained clear sleeves into which art productions could be inserted. The book closely resembled a well-developed *scrapbook*, "an album in which pictures, newspaper clippings, etc., may be pasted or mounted" (Dictionary.com, 2016, n.p.).

During this first Final Portfolio workday, the students created their first page(s) regarding the Poster Project. The workday enabled the students to gain a clearer understanding of the goals of the Final Portfolio Project, and consequently, of the overall project as a whole.

I first provided and distributed to students their portfolios. (They chose the color that they wanted.) I also provided photos from the Poster Project for the students to use. Each student was given the same three photos: the group working, the overall completed poster, and the center of the poster that was concentrated with images. They were not required to use a certain number of photos, or any of the photos. I provided the photos to facilitate the process of reflective artmaking and to provide the option of using the photos if that was

their desire. I also provided a wide variety of aesthetic supplies, tools, and embellishments.

I then introduced basic portfolio layout design concepts to facilitate the process of reflective artmaking.

Next, the students reflected upon the Poster Project through portfolio page construction. They constructed their own individual pages while together as a group.

Community Service-Learning (CSL) Table:

Inspired by the LINCS program (see Appendix C), I asked the students to draw on blank white paper a chart consisting of three columns and two rows. The top row consisted of the title for each column: *Community*, *Community Service*, and *Service-Learning*. The large space in the next row under the title was left open.

I gave multiple students a strip of paper containing a typed definition of *community*. Each of these students had a different definition. In turn, the students read these aloud. Each person read his or her definition twice in a row. After each turn, I asked the group, "What are some words that you heard to help us define community?" As students shared their answers, I wrote these on my chart drawn on a large board in front of the group while the students wrote on their individual charts drawn on paper.

The process was repeated for *community service,* and then *service-learning*.

Having the columns of the chart now containing lists of words or phrases, I then asked the students to notice similarities and differences. To assist in their recognition of similarities and differences among all three columns, I asked the students to underline similarities with blue crayons and differences with green crayons.

I then facilitated a discussion regarding students' expectations and surprises about the results of the activity.

This activity clarified important definitions for the study. Students were better prepared to build subsequent projects upon the foundations of these clarified definitions.

Reciprocity Cards:

To clarify, emphasize, and practice the importance of *reciprocity* in this study, as specific preparation for the next service project, I guided students through the next LINCS-inspired activity.

First, I read five definitions of *reciprocity*. Then, I asked the students to share words and phrases that they noticed or that were of interest.

Next, I asked the students to imagine themselves at the assisted living center the following week, making cards and visiting with the residents. I asked them to consider what they

hoped to give and what they hoped to receive, both being parts of the action of reciprocity.

Then, I asked the students to individually and silently write their responses on index cards. Using a green crayon on one index card, the students wrote what they hoped to give (*green* and *give* both begin with "G"). On the second index card, they wrote what they hoped to receive with a red crayon (*receive* and *red* both begin with "R").

After each person completed the two cards, I asked the students to share their cards with the group in turn.

Ideas for Service:

During the first meeting, I presented the initial stage of the Chart Project to the students as homework. The "assignment" was to imagine three potential service project ideas that the group could undertake together at the assisted living center. We had already decided to do the Thank You Card Project, so these ideas were to be imagined either preceding or proceeding that activity.

During this subsequent general meeting, I divided the students into three small groups of two or three people. Within their groups, they individually presented their ideas. The group members asked questions, and, having previously discussed *reciprocity*, one question that I had the students answer to their small group was, "What is the reciprocity in your idea?" The group then helped each other decide which idea was the best (i.e., most feasible,

most interesting, and/or had the most reciprocity.)

This activity gave the students the opportunity to practice working with the concept of *reciprocity,* **to practice further conceptualization of their ideas, and to build relationships with other members of the group. It also provided an opportunity for the development of** *ownership* **of the project.**

Bubble Chart Project:

Returning to the table after talking with their small groups about their ideas for service, the students were asked to individually consider the idea's details, such as who, what, when, why, etc. through the visual representation of a bubble chart. Placing their project idea in the center and encircling it, they drew the details of their project within bubbles that radiated from the central project title.

While each student presented his or her bubble chart, the student to the right wrote on an index card the reciprocity that he or she recognized. This allowed students to practice recognizing the concept of *reciprocity.*

Session 3: Service Project at the Assisted Living Center 11/03/14
Thank You Cards: The group expressed their gratitude to the local fire department through handcrafted Thank You Cards and homemade cookies. They created these cards with elderly members of the community who may have desired to thank the fire department as well, yet whose gratitude might not have been explicitly expressed. We brought our own art supplies, and the students prepared the messages that they wanted to write on the cards.
Decorating Cookies: After the Thank You Cards Project, the students then decorated cookies with the residents. Three students agreed to bring cookies (baked and/or store-bought). Others brought the decorating supplies, including icing, icing applicators, sprinkles, and plates.

Session 4: Service Project at the Fire Station/Department 11/17/14
Thank You Cards: Two sessions after the visit to the assisted living center, students made and personally delivered the cards to the fire department on their own behalf, as well as on the behalf of the residents who were unable to make and deliver the cards themselves. We formally thanked the fire department while presenting the cards to them.

Giving Baked Cookies:

While they gave the cards to the fire fighters, they also gave them the cookies that they had made prior to the visit. Expressing their gratitude, they baked cookies for the fire fighters as a culinary aesthetic method of reflection prior to the service of delivery and during the service of baking.

In return, the fire department gave the group a personal tour of their fire station; as the largest station in this area, the tour was impressive. The group took photos, asked questions, touched the trucks and tools, and learned much more about the catastrophic wildfires that had devastated the community. Through the tour, the students could personally and directly engage with the fire fighters, learn more about them, and show them that they care about the firefighters' active role in the community.

Session 5: General Meeting 11/24/14

Final Portfolio Workshop and Workday:

After the Question Web, per Appendix C, I began the workshop by re-introducing the purpose of the Final Portfolio Project and asking, "What is *reflection?*" The purpose of this specific workday was to reflect upon and create pages regarding the service project at the assisted living center. I asked, "What did you like? What do you think could have been done differently? What could have been better? What do think was the best success about

the activity itself?"

While creating their pages, I facilitated discussion regarding subsequent service project ideas. I asked them, "Would you like to go back to the assisted living center? Would you like to go elsewhere? What ideas and desires do you have for our next project?" In asking the students to consider the next project, I guided them towards considering the reciprocity within their ideas. This discussion provided the opportunity for students to develop and practice using concepts of reciprocity as well as ownership of the overall project. It also cultivated internal community development.

Box 3D Project Presentations:

For "homework," students created a multi-media assemblage upon and within a box. Inspired by Colucci (2007), the instructions for creating this project were to first select a box equal in size or smaller than a shoebox yet larger than a jewelry box (anything outside these parameters would be difficult to work with). Next, the students were to think about how they viewed themselves individually at the assisted living center service project, both inside and outside. They were to consider the questions, "What did we see on the outside of you? What was actually going on inside of you?" With collaged pictures, colors, or text, the students answered the questions aesthetically. Students aesthetically expressed on the outside of the box how they thought others viewed them while dealing with the challenges at the assisted living center. They aesthetically expressed on the inside of the box how they actually felt while dealing with the challenges. I asked them to cover the box as much as

possible.

Students had three weeks to create this project. The original design was for one week. However, illnesses prevented us from meeting as planned. Therefore, three weeks after the service project, the students presented their boxes to the group, and I facilitated further discussion about them and the service project. Through open discussion, students had the opportunity to share how they *actually* viewed each other. They could verify that the student's perception was accurate, or provide insight by clarifying misconceptions. I further asked, "Did you feel inside like you were a part of the community, an outsider, or something in between? What community did you feel like you were a part of, our own little group, the assisted living center, the town at large, or the greater Texas community?"

Thus, the Box 3D Project provided the opportunity for students to consider deeper levels of their civic identities, including how they felt others viewed them, how others *actually* viewed them, and how they viewed them*selves*. Aesthetically engaging with concepts regarding *perception* or *perspective* in this study allowed the students to clarify their civic identities. Engaging with the concepts further in the group context opened up deeper levels of consideration through group discussion.

Creative Writing Project:

At the end of the meeting, I introduced the next "homework assignment." (Student participation was voluntary; I used the terminology familiar to the students.) I asked the

students to reflect upon specific aspects of community service-learning, such as reciprocity or teamwork, through a creative writing piece. Inspired by Colucci (2007) and Krueger (1998), I asked the students to create a short story, speech, poem, prose, cartoon, or other form of creative writing of their choice that was persuasive, similar to a campaign or advertisement. The purpose of the piece was to convey to others why they should participate in community service-learning projects, to convince them that it is a good idea. The piece was meant to express why the student cares about serving and what he or she enjoys most about serving. I asked them to have this piece completed at the next general meeting.

Session 6: General Meeting 12/01/14

Creative Writing Project Continued:

At the start of the meeting, each student presented his or her creative writing piece. We then briefly discussed the pieces.

Photography Workshop:

I facilitated a workshop regarding *visual literacy* and the art of photography, defining the terms and asking questions such as, "What makes a photo 'great'? (Answers: clarity of images, lighting, facial expressions, posture, background, extraneous and convoluting information, etc.) How can we *read* the photo?"

Then, I facilitated a discussion regarding supporting text next to the photo or elsewhere on the page, such as the title. We discussed journaling, titles, informative text (who, what, when, etc.), and other textual support to guide the audience towards how to "read" the photo. I said, "Tell us about your experience, what you did, what you thought about it, if you liked it, names you remembered, what we did altogether. Tell the person who is looking at your book, who has no idea what you did, tell them what you did so that they can understand fully."

Then, we looked at examples from books and magazines that I had collected and bookmarked beforehand and discussed them.

Final Portfolio Workday:

For this workday, I had asked the students to bring at least three photos from each service project (six total) so that they could construct their pages. I created a Flickr.com account through which we could share our photos. I shared the login information with the group and uploaded my photos, while others uploaded theirs. On this account, the students could easily print their favorite photos at a local photo-processing store or at home.

For the meeting, half of the group did not bring their photos because they forgot. Therefore, two students shared surplus photos, and I also paired up students who had photos with those who had forgotten them, according to their desire to do so. In this

manner, the students could work together as teams to create pages if they chose, or they could work on their own pages without photos for the time being, with the intention of inserting the photos later. For example, they could create a space for the photo by drawing a square on the page and complete the other image-based or textual information on the page that would support the photo.

During the meeting, students practiced reflective artmaking regarding their experience. They created portfolio pages that contained photos from the experiences, journaling regarding thoughts and information, and supporting aesthetic elements such as drawing or selected stickers and stamps. Many students created pages that were inspired by the examples from the workshop. Reflection occurred during the process of creating the pages themselves, as well as through engaging the others in conversation and inquiry.

Photography Project Introduced:

As "homework" due the following week, I asked the students to consider how they would photographically represent their community.

Then, I described the project that I "assigned for homework." The project was not a group project; rather it was individually completed and focused on each person's interpretation. The title of this project was "Who is *Your* Community?" They were to specifically photograph at least six aspects/people/animals of their personal community that have been especially meaningful to them or have been most influential. The representations could

have been literal or figurative. Then, I asked the students to print their photos and bring them to the following meeting.

Session 7: General Meeting 12/08/14

Photography Project Continued:

For this Session 7 meeting, I created a handout for the students to textually clarify their representations and rationale for selecting them. On this handout, the students described each photo and then completed the following two sentences:

1. This photo represents…
2. This helped me to learn about my community and why I should be involved in my community because…

Through textually describing their photo representations, the students could practice working with the concept of *visual literacy*. After the students briefly showed the group their photos, they completed the handout silently during the meeting.

Once completed, the students began assembling their photos onto paper for their Final Portfolio. I discussed how to tell the story of the photo onto the page through layout, title, textual support/journaling, and supporting aesthetic elements.   The purpose of the page was to convey to an audience the story in such a way that they interpret the message

accurately, or *read* the page(s). During this session, the students could discuss their ideas freely with one another, ask questions, and participate in general discussions.

Final Portfolio Workday:

After completing the Photography Project pages, the students worked on their other pages. Students practiced reflective artmaking regarding their experiences. They created portfolio pages that contained photos from the experience, journaling regarding thoughts and information, and supporting aesthetic elements such as drawing or selected stickers and stamps. Reflection occurred during the process of creating the pages themselves, as well as through engaging the others in the group in conversation and inquiry.

Session 8: General Meeting 12/15/14

Final Portfolio Workday:

The primary focus of this meeting was the completion or semi-completion of the Final Portfolios. Students worked on the pages that had yet to be completed.

Self-Portrait Project:

Upon completion of their other pages, students reflected upon their roles in their community through a collaged Self-Portrait. In this project, I asked students to select images from magazines or draw images (or both) that metaphorically represented aspects of how they viewed their own *selves* within their community. As Butler-Kisber (2008, p. 269) states, "These forms of collage, as well as others, can be used in the final representational product to enhance understanding, show poignancy, open avenues for discussion and further reflection, and contribute to persuasiveness, as shown in the doctoral dissertations of Finley (1998), Promislow (2005), and Steeves (2000)." When students completed their Self-Portraits, I asked them to briefly clarify textually what the photos or drawing symbolized. If students did not complete their Self-Portraits during the session, they had the option of completing them at home.

Video Project:

At the end of the overall project, the group decided to create a video for the assisted living center to thank them for their time and the group's experience there, and also to share the group's experience giving the cards and cookies to the fire department. Individual students created short videos describing their gratitude and what they learned from their experiences at the assisted living center and the fire department. Most of the students recorded their videos during Session 7 outside while the others were completing their pages inside. Two students who were unable to attend the meeting recorded their videos

elsewhere.

Per the group's suggestions, I compiled the videos and photos into one video, and the group edited and made further contributions. I then finalized the video and delivered it to the assisted living center. I gave each student a copy of the video. The last page of the students' portfolios housed their copy of the video.

Revisiting the Poster Project:

During a brief activity at the end of the session, I asked the students to convene once again around the Poster Project that they created at the start of the overall project. During this activity, I asked the students "In light of what we have done, what items on the poster would you change, what would you keep the same? With these sticky notes, mark three of each." Revisiting the Poster Project allowed the students to reflect upon the initial aesthetic reflections they had at the start of the study and what aesthetic reflections they have now. Engaging in the Poster Project again allowed them to consider how perhaps their view of community has changed in some ways and remained in other ways. The sticky notes helped to make this set of reflections visible to the students individually, the other students as a group, and to me.

Final Presentations:

At the end of the last session at the general meeting site, I asked the students to share with their community by the presenting their Final Portfolios. This was one means of bringing formal closure to the project, providing the opportunity for the students to reflect upon the project as a whole at the end, and providing the opportunity for them to support their persuasive arguments regarding the value of service. They could present according to their own desired content and length of time.   The audience consisted of their and my family members. The audience sat in the living room and the students, one by one, stood up in front of them such that everyone could see and hear the presentations.

After the presentations, the entire group celebrated the closing of the overall project with a party at which everyone brought their own lunches, mingled, asked the students questions about the overall project, and reviewed the Final Portfolios.

Session 9: Special Catch-Up Day 03/18/15

All-Day Session for One Family:

One family, which included three of my students, missed two sessions due to basketball tournaments. They and I desired for them to catch up on the reflective artmaking projects, complete their portfolios, and complete the study. Therefore, I facilitated these projects at their home for several hours one day. The length of the session was determined by the guidelines of each remaining project and the availability of the family.

APPENDIX C

CONVERSATION STARTERS

During each session, I incorporated strategically selected conversation starters. The purposes of initiating conversations within the group were multifaceted. First, conversation starters provided opportunities for the students to practice internal community building both in sharing and listening. Also, they allowed me to learn more about each member of the group ethnographically. Through them, I could share my own thoughts to build relationships and rapport with the members of the group. Strategically selected conversation starters allowed me to collect data regarding the purpose of my study. Some were directly part of organized activities, or *ice breakers*, while others were placed in the midst of other activities to enrich the project.

From 2006 to 2008, I participated in the international service-learning program Learning Integrated with Needed Construction and Service (LINCS). Designed and led by Dr. Maureen Porter at the University of Pittsburgh in partnership with ProWorld, LINCS was a two-semester set of courses situated on campus and in the Sacred Valley of Peru. I was a student participant in 2006 and the graduate student facilitator in 2008. In both capacities, I gained insight into the design of arts-based preparation and reflection exercises that Dr. Porter pioneered in through the LINCS program. Among many other features of the program, I was impressed by the scrapbook

projects, of which I adapted for this dissertation. I was also impressed with the community-building activities, specifically the "Getting to Know You" activity, as well as the reflection-based "Global Village" activity in which the group considers their role in a typical village (both activities are described below). These activities have stayed with me and contributed to my own research. By adapting these to the context of my dissertation study, I was able to see the transferability of the phrasing and content to a new setting and age group.

Session 1: General Meeting 10/20/14
Nametag: **On nametags, students wrote their names. Then, after their names, students each wrote an adjective that described themselves. The adjective began with the first letter of the name (e.g., Humorous Hanna). Students then shared their nametags and explanations in turn. The activity provided an opportunity for the students (and me) to learn more about one another, as well as to become more comfortable with the meeting itself.**
Getting to Know You: **Adapted from LINCS, I gave students a handout containing a list of questions. The prompt for the students was to walk around the room and find someone who knew the answer to one question, and this second student signed his or her name beside the question.** **This activity was conducted before the Poster Project as a means of mixing up the group**

and providing an opportunity for them (and me) to learn more about one another, as well as to become more comfortable with the meeting itself.

Previous Community Service Experience:

I asked the students to share with the group their previous experiences in serving their communities. It was a means of helping the students to actively remember their experiences in service, or Kolb's (1984) *Concrete Experiences*. It also provided the opportunity for each person to hear about the interests and activities of others. I asked this question during the Metaphor of Service Project.

Session 2: General Meeting 10/27/14

Pseudonyms:

I explained to the students that I would be using pseudonyms in my dissertation. After I explained what pseudonyms are and why I would be using them, I asked the students to consider what pseudonyms they would like me to use. I handed out a paper for them to write their ideas. This paper floated around during the activities for the day as they decided what their pseudonyms should be. It popped up in conversation intermittently throughout the meeting.

Session 3: Service Project at the Assisted Living Center 11/03/14

Index Cards:

In case students felt unsure about how to begin conversations with the residents at the assisted living center and wanted my help, I created an index card containing ideas for conversation starters:

> **Would you please teach me about the Volunteer Fire Department and what it does for us?**

> **Do you have any happy memories of the Fire Department? Have they ever served you in a way that has made you very grateful or that makes you smile when you think about it?**

> **Where are you from originally? How long did you live there?**

> **What did you like about living there?**

> **Have you lived elsewhere?**

> **Where does your family live?**

> **What do you enjoy doing?**

> **Please tell me a story about where you grew up, a favorite memory, or a special day that you will never forget.**

Session 4: Service Project at the Fire Station/Department 11/17/14

Tour:

For "homework," I asked the students to prepare one question each to ask the fire fighters while on the tour. During the tour, the chief of the fire department, who was leading the tour, stopped in the common area to provide ample time for questions from the group. Students and parents asked questions at this time.

Session 5: General Meeting 11/24/14

Question Web:

Adapted from 40 Ice Breakers for Small Groups (www.insight.typepad.co.uk), I asked the students to stand with me in a circle. Holding a ball of yarn in my hand, I picked a student in the circle, and while holding the end of the yarn in the other hand I tossed the ball of yarn to them for them to catch. With a strand of yarn connecting the two of us, I then asked them a question from my prepared list of questions.

After the student answered the question, they held onto the strand of the yarn with one hand and tossed the ball of yarn to another student of their choice. At this point, I had a strand of yarn connecting me to the first student, and the first student also had a strand of the yarn connecting them to the next student. I then asked the second student another question from my list.

After answering that question, the second student held onto their strand of yarn and tossed the ball of yarn to another student who did not yet answer a question. The process continued until each student had answered a question and the yarn connected the entire group strand-by-strand, from the same uncut ball of yarn.

The questions I asked included:

1. If you had a time machine that could go anywhere in history, either forwards or backwards, where would you like to go and what would you like to see?

2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

3. What is a gift that you will never forget?

4. What is your favorite thing to do in the summer?

5. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

6. If you were in a restaurant, and you found an insect in your soup, what would you do?

7. What is the best thing that happened to you this week?

    (The remaining student arrived late and missed this activity, so there were only seven questions.)

I explained that the strands of yarn between each person in the circle resembled a spider's web. I conveyed in different words that this was visually symbolic of how the group was interconnecting through internal community development by sharing more about themselves to the group. By opening up to the members of the group, they were allowing the group to coalesce. They were taking ownership of internal community development. This activity was designed to foster the foundations of teambuilding.

I continued the activity by having the students reverse the direction of the ball of yarn. Going backwards from student to student and then to me, each person answered the same question: What was one thing that you liked most about the past service projects that we've done so far, something like a highlight? By answering the same question, the students, although disconnecting physically from the ball of yarn, remained connected experientially because they were part of the same group in this study and shared in the same set of experiences.   Furthermore, the question allowed students to share with the group specifically about their satisfaction with the project, which allowed the group to hear and respond to how each person (including myself) was enjoying the project. By sharing about their satisfaction, the students learned more about each other and further coalesced as a group, the foundations of teambuilding.

Final Portfolio Workshop and Workday:

I began the workshop by introducing the project as per Appendix B. While creating their pages, I facilitated discussion regarding subsequent service project ideas.   I asked them, "Would you like to go back to the assisted living center? Would you like to go elsewhere? What ideas and desires do you have for our next project?" In asking the students to consider the next project, I guided them towards considering the reciprocity within their ideas. This discussion provided the opportunity for students to develop and practice using concepts of reciprocity, as well as ownership of the overall project. It also cultivated internal community development.

Session 6: General Meeting 12/01/14

Photography Workshop:

"What makes a photo good? How can you 'read' a photo?"

"What text could be on the page to help explain these photos?"

Session 7: General Meeting 12/08/14

Final Portfolio Workday:

While students worked on their pages, I asked them questions such as, "Did you enjoy doing the Photography Project?"

"If you could do any service project in the world, with any money that you could need, what would you do?"

"Think about a typical village, a generic village. There is the sheriff, the baker, the doctor, and so on. So, metaphorically speaking, what role would you play in this village? Here are some ideas: sheriff, doctor, mechanic, baker, farmer, restaurant cook, store owner, the village trouble-maker, the village know-it-all, or the village-idiot."

Session 8: General Meeting 12/15/14
Final Portfolio Workshop: During their page construction, I asked: "What service project was your favorite?" "What art projects were your favorites?" "Would you like to do this overall project again in the future? If it was offered for credit, would you take the class?"
Poster Project: While revisiting the Poster Project from the start of the study, I asked, "In light of what we have done, what items on the poster would you change, what would you keep the same? With these sticky notes, mark three of each."

Session 9: Special Catch-Up Day 03/18/15
All-Day Session for One Family: During this special session, I asked the same conversation starters from the other missed sessions.

APPENDIX D

REQUIREMENTS FROM THE INSITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Confidentiality was one of my priorities, so I have conducted this study and composed this paper with great care in that regard. My study adheres to the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for child research. *Child* or *children* are defined as "Persons who have not attained the legal age of consent. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the legal age of consent is recognized as age 18, with some exceptions" (Institutional Review Board, 2016, n.p.). Because the participants in my study were children, my study required parental permission, or the "agreement of parent or legal guardian to allow the child to participate in the research" (Institutional Review Board, 2016, n.p.). My study also required *child assent,* or "the affirmative agreement of the child to participate in the research" (Institutional Review Board, 2016, n.p.). Informed consent signature forms were to be signed by both the students and parents if the students were under 18 years of age. If they were over 18, only the student was required to sign. Consequently, I created an informed consent form for both the parents and the students to sign, as each student was under the age of 18, and this form was approved by the IRB. A copy of the informed consent form is included here in Appendix D.

I made initial contact with these students and their parents verbally and with the aid of a letter of introduction and informed consent form, both of which were approved by the

Institutional Review Board. In the letter of introduction, items I presented to the potential study participants included the description of the project to parents that highlighted the service-learning and multi-media art aspect of the study. I have included a copy of the letter of introduction here in Appendix D. At the recruitment stage of the study, I orally presented my study while I dispersed the documents and I could clearly define the voluntary nature of the study. The initial sample of students remained the ultimate sample, with each participant continuing full participation throughout the duration of the study.

Approved on July 29th, 2013 and renewed on May 5th, 2014, my study qualified for the category of child research, "Research not involving greater than minimal risk (45 CFR 46.404, 21 CFR 50.51)" (Institutional Review Board, 2016, n.p.)." *Minimal risk* is defined as "The probability and magnitude of hard or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests" (Institutional Review Board, 2016, n.p.). Because I planned to conduct child research, I was required to obtain all child clearances. Those that I was required to complete were the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance, Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check, and FBI Criminal Background Check. Because I conducted the study in Texas, I was also required to complete the same background checks and clearances for Texas. For a full list of requirements from the IRB, refer to: http://www.irb.pitt.edu/.

According to the requirements by the IRB, I used pseudonyms on each piece of data to protect the identity of the participants, including those of the external community, such as residents of the assisted living center. Originally, the students themselves chose the names according to their personal interests, a person that they knew and respected, a character from a

movie, a term that described them, or a name they wished that they had been given. I adjusted

some of the names to reflect the themes within this study, such as names that were related to

fantasy or mythology.   Fictitious characters are not compatible with the objective truth

discourses presented throughout my dissertation. Conversely, I selected historical names, such

as Thomas (Edison) for the inventor in the group, or Solomon (a significant king in ancient Israel

who constructed the Temple of the Lord) for the builder in the group.   In each case, the selected

pseudonym reflected the personality, interest, or desired identity of each individual student.

Parents and towns are not named in this study; thus, they were not given pseudonyms.

To further protect the identity of each student in my study, I refrained from providing

more descriptors than necessary. First, I did not include the name of our town or church because

that would introduce the risk of identity recognition by others in our religious circle. Second, I

did not describe the age, height, hair color, skin color, or number of siblings of each student, and

any images within the data that contained identifying information was covered or removed.

Because the students and I attend the same church, the most risk for identity recognition is at our

church. To protect the identity of each student specifically at our church, I was particularly

judicious in the information that I disclosed.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Introducing the new "Reflective Art and Service Project" Research Study!

Your child is warmly invited to join in a new resea
project for students who participate in
service projects!

The Project
Mrs. Donald wants to know your child's thoughts regarding outreaches and service-learning. This new research project involves multi-media art activities. Students will be asked to share their thoughts about the service activities. In exchange for their voluntary participation, we hope that students will experience a greater understanding of their local community, global community, and themselves! Furthermore, they will come home with a professionally bound portfolio of their work to demonstrate to others how they engage their community in quality service!

Sessions will include:
Multi-media art activities
Art workshops
Interactive activities
A casual and comfortable space for students
to share their thoughts on their service projects

Next Steps
1. To participate, have your child read and sign the attached consent form.
2. Then, you sign the consent form as well.
3. Afterwards, have your child bring the signed form to Mrs. Donald.

Due Date for Signed Forms
Please submit the consent forms in two weeks.

Figure 45: Introduction Letter to Parents and Students

CONSENT FOR STUDENT TO ACT AS A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: Service-learning and reflective artmaking: how do students develop their sense of community through service-learning?

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Bridgett Donald, M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate
Graduate School of Education
Department of Administrative and Policy Studies
University of Pittsburgh
Telephone: (Removed for Publication Privacy)

What is the study, and how long will it last?
Mrs. Donald wants to know your thoughts regarding outreach (service-learning) experiences. The study will last at least eight weeks. "Data" will be multi-media art (photography, layered collages, drawing, creative writing, etc.), conversations about the art, and voluntary interviews. We will do activities, create several different types of art, learn in workshops, and learn from each other. Your participation is voluntary all along the way.

What activities would I be involved in?
The participants will be given brief introductions to service-learning topics (such as community, service-learning, reflection, storytelling, reciprocity, global citizenship, sustainability, and community ownership), and will be asked to engage in brief group discussions about these topics. This portion of our meeting sessions will vary between 10-20 minutes.

They will be asked to participate in multimedia art production (such as photography, layout and design, drawing, painting, and collage work, etc. lasting between 10-45 minutes), oral and written reflection exercises (lasting about 10 minutes), individual and group reflection exercises (lasting about 10 minutes), and 5-10 minute interviews (at least once).

To help reduce the risk of embarrassment or anxiety due to being recorded in video, the video recorder will stay in a stationary location on a stand in a corner of the room.   It is anticipated that this setup will help the students become accustomed to its presence, or perhaps forget about it altogether.   To help reduce the risk of embarrassment or anxiety due to being recorded in audio, the audio recorders will remain in a stationary location near the students, and another audio recorder will remain concealed in the shirt pocket of the principal investigator.

Is there a risk for me?
The risk of breaching confidentiality is minimized significantly. Your participation is completely voluntary and your participation will be anonymous (your true name will not be used). Art activities will have a special instruction to students to avoid including their name on the pieces of art they generate. Inclusion of identifying names will be on the back of the piece of art only. In this way, names will be hidden from view. Also, identifying names will be excluded from scanned images of the art generated.

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University Of Pittsburgh   Approval Date: 7/29/2013   IRB #: (Removed for Publication
Institutional Review Board   Renewal Date: 5/5/2014   Privacy)

Figure 46: Informed Consent Form, Page 1

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Further, video and audio recordings will be administered, but the devices will remain as background pieces. The recordings will be reviewed only by the principal investigator and by persons who provide official transcribing services (those who transfer oral information into written information under a contract of confidentiality). They will be downloaded into the software program after each session and deleted from the device. Therefore, at the start of each new session, the equipment will be cleared of previously recorded information. The information will also be stored in a secure server. The recordings will not be publicized beyond the final presentation to the academic supervisors of the project and a potential academic conference. Thus, the risk of breaching confidentiality is minimized significantly.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

The above information has been explained to me and all of my current questions have been answered. I understand that I am encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of this study, and that such future questions will be answered by Mrs. Donald at the telephone number given. I understand that I may always request that a listed investigator address my questions, concerns, or complaints.

I understand that I may contact the Human Subjects Protection Advocate of the IRB Office, University of Pittsburgh (1-866-212-2668) to discuss problems, concerns, and questions; obtain information; offer input; or discuss situations that have occurred during my participation.

By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research study. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature	Printed Name of Participant	Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature	Printed Name of Parent/Guardian	Date

Figure 47: Informed Consent Form, Page 2

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