Although efforts to connect real-world experiences and traditional academic learning have a long and varied history (e.g., Hepburn, 1997; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999), it is only in the last decade or so that such efforts have become widespread and firmly established in our educational institutions. Indeed, American society has embraced the notion of service learning and its cousin, experiential education, by establishing an increasing array of programs and policies. Most notable, perhaps, are the 1990 National and Community Service Act and 1993 National Service Trust Act, which funded President Clinton's AmeriCorps program and created the Corporation for National Service. State and local governments have also passed legislation to involve their student citizens in community service as a required part of education (e.g., Sobus, 1995). Maryland, for example, requires 75 hours of service for high school graduation (Finney, 1997); and the cities of St. Louis and Detroit require more than 200 hours (O'Keefe, 1997).

With this growth in programs has come a massive onslaught of educational research and discussion, seeking to define the "best practices" for service-learning programs and to document their effect (e.g., Giles & Eyler, 1998; Kendall & Associates, 1990; Kraft, 1996). Much of this research has been qualitative or nonexperimental, with anecdotal descriptions of programs and excerpts from student journals comprising the bulk. Also, in much of this research, self-selection into service programs may have played a role in determining the outcomes (e.g., Waterman, 1997). The self-selection problem undermines the validity of findings of beneficial outcomes from service learning. For example, in a recent study of high school students, apparent program effects on well-being, self-esteem, academic self-esteem, and grade-point average were nullified when preprogram factors that predict student volunteerism were taken into account (Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998). Thus, the best research on volunteerism uses experimental, or at least rigidly systematic, procedures. Fortunately, studies of this type seem to be on the rise, and we will synthesize the findings in this report. We note also that there are...
persuasive arguments favoring qualitative research, and qualitative researchers have made excellent contributions to the theoretical discussion of service learning (e.g., Dunlap, 1998; Rhoads, 1997; Serow, 1997; Yates, 1999). We nevertheless focus primarily on quantitative research here.

Any analysis of the effects of service learning needs to be attentive to the wide range of programs—and the many goals that programs seek to meet. For example, a summary of data from the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (containing information on 938 service-learning programs), showed that service-learning coordinators typically saw their programs as a way to enhance the personal growth of students, particularly their self-esteem and social responsibility (Shumer & Belbas, 1996). On average, coordinators viewed academic learning and achievement as only secondary functions of their programs. This may not be the view of instructors who include service-learning components in their academic courses, however, and one focus of research has been on whether service experiences can increase student grades and traditional academic performance. This single difference between service coordinators and instructors in thinking about the favored outcomes of service-learning programs highlights a very important point—not all service-learning programs are the same. Instead, programs vary considerably on many dimensions: type of service, length of service, population served, number of opportunities for reflection, coordinating organization, etc. (e.g., Furco, 1994, for a review of program typologies). Furthermore, programs may well vary in terms of the activities most appropriate to the students getting involved; for example, middle school students and college students may engage in and benefit from very different activities. One categorization of programs arranges them by type of intervention (ranging from direct to indirect interactions of students with the population served) and by the amount of commitment students must make (focusing on the frequency and duration of interactions). Variations along these dimensions may have significant implications for program outcomes (Delve, Mintz, & Stewart, 1990).

One major difference in service-learning programs is that some are "stand-alone" service courses that are not explicitly connected to a particular course's content and others are explicitly content-based, sometimes called "academic service-learning" programs (Howard, 1998). One observer (Alt, 1997) differentiates programs designed by "youth reformers," who seek to bolster students' values and ethics, from those designed by "education reformers," who seek to enhance students' motivation and learning. This distinction can be a useful heuristic for developing expectations about what service programs are able to accomplish. Indeed, it is suggested that individual service-learning programs cannot achieve the multitude of advertised benefits that are usually set forth for them by legislators and administrators. Most programs might achieve one or two chief goals (such as increasing academic achievement) by taking a more focused approach that includes careful design and implementation in pursuit of specific goals (Alt, 1997). Evaluation researchers must be careful not to generalize across programs (J. Miller, 1997), but instead should focus on those outcomes for which a program was designed or is most likely to produce (e.g., Kraft & Krug, 1994).

Although service-learning programs vary considerably in structure, from stand-alone courses designed to promote community involvement to narrowly focused courses that explicitly connect experiences and course content, they do share several structural features. Specifically, service-learning courses tend to involve both action and reflection on the part of students (e.g., Kendall & Associates, 1990). It is the reflection component, which often involves student journals and class discussions, that most differentiates service learning from other forms of volunteerism and community involvement (e.g., Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). And it is the reflection component and the surrounding edu-
cational context that serves to highlight the reciprocal nature of the community service activities at the center of service-learning programs (e.g., Greene, 1998). In other forms of service and helping, it may not be nearly as clear that both the recipient of help (or community partner) and the helper receive benefits from their partnership. That volunteers recognize that they too receive benefits has recently been shown to predict volunteer longevity (Omoto & Snyder, 1995), an important goal of some service-learning programs.

But students' commitment to volunteerism and prosocial activity, over time or even lifelong, may only be one goal of service-learning programs. In our review of the existing research, we examine the many goals that such programs seek to meet, that is, what functions service learning can serve for students, academic institutions, and the greater community.

**Functions of Service Learning**

**For the Student**

During their service-learning experience, students may engage in activities that resemble those often performed by "true" volunteers. Our own research, stimulated in part by the functional theories of beliefs and behaviors (e.g., Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956), has examined the needs and goals, plans, and motives that individuals may attempt to satisfy through volunteerism. We have adapted the major themes of the functional approach: people engage in volunteer work to satisfy important social and psychological goals; and individuals may be involved in similar volunteer activities but have different goals. Understanding these varied goals is key to volunteer recruitment and satisfaction; that is, recruitment messages targeted to particular goals will be more persuasive and successful, and, once recruited, individuals will be more satisfied when their volunteer tasks help them meet personal goals. In our work we have identified and explored six major goals, or functions, of volunteerism (Clary & Snyder, 1991, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Miene, & Haugen, 1994; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998; Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000; Snyder & Omoto, 1992) that may apply equally well to service learning. They are:

- self-enhancement
- understanding self and world
- value-expression
- career development
- social expectations
- protection

We use these six functions to organize the following discussion:

**Self-enhancement.** A recent study found that volunteers saw their activities as a way to boost their own self-esteem, to feel important and needed by others, and to form new friendships (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). There is already general consensus that service learning can impact students' personal development in areas such as personal efficacy, self-esteem, and confidence (e.g., Giles & Eyler, 1994a, 1998; Williams, 1991; Yates & Youniss, 1996). It has been found, for example, that cross-age tutoring increased participants' self-esteem (Yoge & Ronen, 1982). Similarly, in another study nearly 60% of youth in service programs agreed that the program showed them that it feels good to help others (Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, 1997).

Most studies, however, demonstrate enhancement-related benefits for only a subset of participants—in other words, student outcomes from service learning are often moderated by significant personal and situational factors. In a study of seventh-graders, for example, it was found that boys experienced increases in self-esteem and school involvement and decreases in depressive affect and problem behavior following a service program, whereas girls did not receive these benefits (Switzer, Simmons, Dew, Regalski, & Wang, 1995). Another study found
the greatest increases in self-esteem for students involved in outdoor programs compared to other experiential programs, suggesting that the intensity and uniqueness of the activities, i.e., their difference from the usual school environment, might account for the results (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982).

Although other program features have not been empirically tested (i.e., most often they are but one element of a complex intervention), certain factors offer perhaps the best avenues for new research on student self-enhancement. According to one researcher, the degree of responsibility given to students for selecting and performing tasks at their service site is key to ensuring beneficial outcomes (Shumer, 1997). Similarly, others suggest that the amount of choice students have in designing their service experiences is a prominent predictor of satisfaction with a program (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). It has also been demonstrated that students who reported the most personal benefit in service learning programs were those who indicated that their supervisors had given them autonomy (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982). Moreover, students who planned and carried out their service projects independently were more likely to report increases in self-efficacy (Blyth et al., 1997). Thus, while service learning can lead to enhancement of student self-esteem and efficacy, it may be those programs that allow students to construct important program features that lead to the greatest enhancement.

Understanding. Another major function of service learning may be to provide students with a greater understanding of the world; the diverse people with whom they work, and, ultimately, themselves. Volunteer activity is seen to highlight new skills and to bring new perspectives (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). This may be what students are referring to when they say that service learning has promoted their personal growth. In one investigation, for example, the duration of a community research project was related to self-reported personal growth, with longer-lasting programs leading to greater perceptions of growth (Ferrari & Jason, 1996). Enhanced understanding and personal growth as a result of service learning may owe to an increase in developmental opportunities such as making difficult judgments or being exposed to new ideas that such programs provide (Rutter & Newmann, 1989; see also Brandenberger, 1998; Yates & Youniss, 1996). Duration and intensity of service programs are held to be key variables in determining the benefits to students (Eyler & Giles, 1997). Indeed, many theorists (e.g., Delve et al., 1990) suggest that students may move through several developmental stages as they serve others en route to receiving social, psychological, and academic benefits—with longer-lasting programs more likely to provide such benefits (Eyler & Giles, 1997).

Students' skills have also been demonstrated to improve—in areas such as moral reasoning (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982), problem-solving (e.g., Eyler, Root, & Giles, 1998) and empathic understanding (Yoge & Ronen, 1982). Again, many of these improvements may be moderated by other personal and situational factors. In one study, for example, instructors who included service in their courses and were seen as allowing students more autonomy tended to better promote prosocial reasoning (a cognitive variable that includes self-reflective empathic and internalized reasoning components) in their students. And students' satisfaction with their relationships with their on-site supervisors and the quality of the supervision increased general complexity of thought about social issues (Batchelder & Root, 1994). Collegial attention from those at the service site can also result in the development of specific task-related skills as well as greater personal growth (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1997).

Service learning can also influence students' understanding of and attitudes toward diverse groups in society (Blyth et al., 1997; Yates & Youniss, 1996). For example, students who engaged in intergenerational service learning in the context of a course on aging developed more positive attitudes toward the elderly...
than students in a social psychology class (Bringle & Kremer, 1993). Service-learning students in another study increased in understanding of international affairs and decreased in racism, compared to students engaged in volunteerism without a learning component or in no service at all (Myers-Lipton, 1996a, 1996b). Still further, experiential education was demonstrated to positively influence adolescents’ attitudes toward adults (compared to the attitudes of adolescents in control groups). And attitudes toward the specific community members with whom students interact have been shown to improve positively (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982). Still, not all service-learning initiatives are equally successful. A single-semester social foundations course, designed to give preservice teachers exposure to students from diverse social groups, did not necessarily build democratic character in these teachers, who sometimes reacted against the egalitarian principles they were being led to learn (Vadeboncoeur, Rahm, Aguilera, & LeCompte, 1996).

A major focus of some service-learning programs, especially those that are course content–based, is to improve students’ understanding of course material—that is, to increase academic achievement. A handful of studies have found that students’ grades were higher when they engaged in service related to a course than when they did not (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Reeb, Sammon, & Isackson, 1999; Shumer, 1994). Unfortunately, these studies may present serious analysis problems. Students may self-select into service-learning sections of a course and some researchers argue that service-learning sections are graded more leniently because subjective materials, such as journal entries, are difficult to evaluate (e.g., Kendrick, 1996). Despite these concerns, however, many studies find that student course grades do not differ whether or not a service component is present (Kendrick, 1996; J. Miller, 1995).

Nevertheless, specific course content learning may be enhanced by specific types of programs. One study found, for example, that compared to a waiting-list control group, students who served as interns in political offices increased their knowledge about local government and their positive attitudes toward community participation (though not their positive attitudes toward the local government [Hamilton & Zeldin, 1987]). Students engaged in service may also spend more time interacting with faculty members compared to those not engaged in service (e.g., Sax & Astin, 1997; Shumer, 1994) and, perhaps as a result of reflection activities, they may be better able to connect academic concepts to new applied situations (Kendrick, 1996; J. Miller, 1995). It has been suggested that matching specific service activities to specific course content will also facilitate student learning (Eyler & Giles, 1997). In other words, it is unlikely that students will be able to integrate course content with their service experience if their service placement does not provide adequate opportunities to observe relevant principles in action. “Serving in a soup kitchen is relevant for a course on social issues but probably not for a course on civil engineering” (Howard, 1998, p. 22).

Learning through service experiences can also be influenced both by the learners’ expectations for the experience and whether these expectations are confirmed (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997). Learning of relevant rules, principles, theories, or content can be reinforced by experiences in the community. But learning can also occur as a result of disconfirmatory experiences, which can initiate a reflective process whereby students try to integrate and understand a new and unexpected experience. Such experiences can suggest revisions, expansions, and modifications of preexisting rules, principles, theories, or schemas. We stress that service learning operates through a dynamic, recursive process that includes confirmation and disconfirmation, expectations and reflection (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997).

Assessing the different expectations (and values) that students bring to a service experience and guiding them to explore these expectations in depth is thus a key task for program
coordinators and instructors. Many students may have misconceptions and faulty expectations about the recipients of service (reflecting perhaps a typical pattern of "blame the victim" [Bringle & Velo, 1998]). Disconfirmations of expectations can be managed through active reflection activities or cautions against misattributions (Bringle & Velo, 1998). Although disconfirmations of expectations and assumptions can be unpleasant for students, some research suggests that, despite overly positive expectations that were subsequently disconfirmed, volunteers can continue to be satisfied with their service (e.g., Omoto, Gunn, & Crain, 1998).

Some studies have demonstrated that service learning can enhance students' attitudes toward school in general (e.g., Williams, 1991). Improvements in academic performance and connectedness to school may be most significant for students labeled as "at-risk." In an evaluation of Florida Learn & Serve programs, at-risk students involved in service showed the greatest improvements in attendance, grade-point average, and discipline referrals (Follman & Muldoon, 1997). This finding was based, however, on self-reports from program coordinators—a possibly biased source—who attested to improvements for all students. It is not clear whether the special improvements for at-risk students resulted from their disproportionate deficits prior to the program or whether the program simply had a stronger impact on them. Further research will be necessary to find out.

At least with regard to students' self-report of learning in a service-learning course, one study found that amount learned was significantly affected by the presence of reflection activities in a course (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982). These reflection activities also significantly enhanced students' problem-solving skills. In addition, reflection has been identified as an essential factor in producing service-learning benefits (Eyler, 1993). Thus, the reflection component that was strongly integrated with course content may be one reason that course-based service (compared to service not course-based) provided a number of additional benefits to students in another study, including better career preparation, increased skill in conflict resolution, and a greater understanding of social and community problems (in addition to increased frequency of interaction with faculty members [Sax & Astin, 1997]). Similarly, compared to students in courses with service components that are only peripheral to the class, students in courses in which service is central obtained greater benefits in subject-matter learning, personal growth, interpersonal skill, and commitment to the community (Eyler & Giles, 1997).

Some research has shown, in contrast, that the presence of reflection activities, for ninth-grade students in mandatory service-learning programs, did not lead to increases in positive outcomes (Blyth et al., 1997). The absence of reflection activities, however, was related to increases in negative outcomes such as less socially responsible attitudes, lowered intentions to help in the future, and greater disengagement from school. This finding is difficult to evaluate, however, because the study lacked an adequate comparison group. We note that these negative findings may hold only for required programs wherein the absence of reflection may be particularly critical (e.g., Stukas, Snyder, et al., 1999).

Thus, research suggests that service learning promotes student understanding, but the nature of the understanding depends on the relationship between course content and experience, and the chance to reflect upon that relationship. Instructors' support of student autonomy and a collegial relationship between students and instructors seem to increase the likelihood that students will gain in understanding as a result of service learning.

**Value expression.** Most volunteers cite the ability to express their humanitarian and prosocial values through action as the predominant function served by volunteerism (e.g., Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). Although service-learning participants, especially those required to serve, may be less likely to have previously internalized prosocial values and socially
responsible attitudes than other volunteers (e.g., Olney & Grande, 1995), research suggests that students may increase in these capabilities (and in commitment to service) as a result of organized service-learning programs (e.g., Giles & Eyler, 1994a, 1998). Individuals who engage in service learning or experiential education programs have frequently been demonstrated to show increases in social and personal responsibility (e.g., Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982; Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Markus et al., 1993; Sax & Astin, 1997) and altruistic motivation (Yogeov & Ronen, 1982). Studies also show that students who engage in service learning indicate that they are likely to continue serving in the future and believe it an important thing to do (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982).

Again, research suggests that these outcomes may be the direct result of service, but such results are likely moderated by other factors. In one study, for example, after a required service-learning program, intentions to help in the future were higher for girls than students with parental helping models, suggesting that gender and parental role modeling may predispose students to benefit from these programs (Stukas, Switzer, Dew, Goycoolea, & Simmons, 1999). The important role of parental helping models in determining children’s altruistic motivation has been noted before (e.g., Clary & Miller, 1986; Staub, 1992) and may help to make some students, more than others, receptive to service-learning initiatives. Work on modeling finds a strong gender difference, with girls more responsive to the active socialization attempts of their parents than boys (Staub, 1992) and exhibiting more social responsibility after a service program, though this latter effect did not translate into greater intentions to seek out volunteer work (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988). These findings are in line with other studies of gender and helping that find (a) girls, more than boys, to have more positive attitudes toward mandatory community service programs (F. Miller, 1994); (b) women medical students participating in volunteer positions to have greater volunteer motivation (Switzer, Switzer, Stukas, & Baker, 1999); and (c) women to be more likely than men to engage in helpful work in general (e.g., Eagly, 1987; Rushton, 1976). Thus, some students (e.g., girls and students with parental helping models) may be more receptive to service programs and, in turn, more likely to demonstrate greater prosocial intentions.

Nevertheless, certain aspects of service-learning programs can enhance prosocial values and intentions for all participants. For example, collegial treatment from adults (as reported by students) has been related to increases in social responsibility (Conrad and Hedin, 1981, 1982). And, congruent with other findings on autonomy (Deci & Flaste, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1987), it has been found that required programs led to increased intentions to volunteer only for students who did not perceive that they were being controlled by the requirement (Stukas, Snyder, et al., 1999). This finding suggests that providing greater freedom to students to choose their service activities and related program features might attenuate some of the negative impact of requiring participation.

Children induced to make a private commitment to help others may be more likely to develop altruistic self-attributions than children induced to make a public commitment (Cialdini, Eisenberg, Shell, & McCreath, 1987). Thus, deciding to engage in prosocial behavior by oneself, without pressure to maintain a consistent public image, can lead to greater internalization of a prosocial self-image. This finding that a private commitment can be beneficial does not mean, however, that students must design and engage in service projects alone. In one study, students who worked in groups to plan and carry out required service projects were more likely to show increases in social responsibility and intentions to continue helping than students who were not involved in planning or who served alone (Blyth et al., 1997). This again suggests that some degree of responsibility for planning service, and especially, perhaps, when this involves working together with others, can
lead to greater benefits—with the absence of such responsibility possibly resulting in negative outcomes, particularly in required programs.

The failure of service learning to translate into increased intentions to serve in all students may also be explained by how we measure those intentions. New research suggests that in our attempt to predict commitment, it may be a mistake to try to predict general volunteer activity from more specific types of service. That is, students may develop a role identity (e.g., Red Cross volunteer) related to the organization for which they work rather than a more general altruistic self-conception (e.g., volunteer), and it is this specific role identity that may best predict other volunteer activities (Grube & Piliavin, in press). Such research is an extension of earlier studies demonstrating that repeated experiences as a blood donor could lead to a "role-person merger," in which a helpful role becomes a salient part of a person's identity and, thus, a good predictor of future behavior (e.g., Callero, Howard, & Piliavin, 1987; Charng, Piliavin, & Callero, 1988). It has been demonstrated that specific role identity, in turn, can be predicted by: (a) the importance of the role the volunteer feels they play for the organization; (b) the prestige of the organization; (c) congruence between the values of the organization and those of the volunteer, and (d) the social network the volunteer develops at the organization. To enhance commitment, those who create service programs may want to consider the match between student and the type of organization they serve (Grube & Piliavin, in press).

Quality of the service experience is thus an important predictor of students' increased sense of social responsibility. Its elements include "having important responsibilities, challenging tasks, varied tasks, acting rather than observing, and having one's opinions challenged" (Eyler & Giles, 1997, p. 70)—that is, giving students autonomy and the latitude to develop and control their own service activities (along with the kinds of developmental opportunities mentioned by Rutter & Newman, 1989). In addition, the specific type of activity is also an important determinant of outcomes. For example, adolescents engaged in community involvement projects increased in social responsibility and intentions to further volunteer more than adolescents engaged in child care programs, although participants rated both programs as equally satisfying (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988). Although the explanation for this result is unclear, the finding indicates that some activities may be more conducive than others.

Thus, service learning has been shown to enhance social responsibility and prosocial intentions. Best results are linked to student autonomy, close respectful relationships between students and instructors, and matching of tasks with student needs and interests.

**Career development.** Research has shown that volunteers, especially younger volunteers, were likely to see their good works as a way to explore career options and to increase the likelihood that they might be able to pursue the career they want (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). Service-learning activities tied to course curriculum provide the clearest example of how volunteerism can allow students to explore their career options and lead them to begin planning careers in earnest (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982; Sax & Astin, 1997). One study found that student volunteer work predicted intrinsic work values, importance of career, and importance of community involvement, even when factors related to self-selection into service were taken into account (Johnson et al., 1998). Moreover, the students who engaged in service actually became less concerned with their own career compared with the greater social and altruistic aspects of their potential work lives. Other studies have reported mixed results with regard to changing career goals and development as a function of service learning (e.g., Williams, 1991).

Clearly, although little work has explicitly examined student career development as an outcome of service learning, it appears that opportunities and activities offered by service that relate to students' career interests (and, presum-
ably, the course content at hand) would best allow students to determine how well a particular career suits them. Ideally, specific skills that advance students toward their career of choice could also be learned in this way. We should not expect, however, that service alone, if unrelated to student career interests, will advance career development.

**Social expectations.** It has also been found that individuals volunteer to satisfy the expectations of friends and close others (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). By volunteering, individuals may uphold the prosocial values of the social groups to which they belong. The very presence of curricular service-learning options and requirements, for example, can signal the importance of prosocial activity to the student's academic institution. Thus, students may feel that service learning allows them to meet the expectations of their institution as well as, perhaps, those of their family and friends. Volunteer activity and longevity have been shown to be influenced by the social expectations of those around the volunteer—if many others in your social network are volunteering, you are more likely to do so as well (Grube & Piliavin, in press). Adult graduates of a high school program that involved service were more likely to volunteer after graduation if they reported that friends and family members were also volunteers (Yates & Youniss, 1998). In addition, the finding that children with parental helping models were more likely to report increases in volunteer intentions after a service program is in line with the notion that those in our social networks, especially very close others, may influence us to volunteer (Stukas, Switzer, et al., 1999).

Thus, students may volunteer in order to uphold the values and expectations of their important reference groups (family, peers, community leaders, institutions), although, again, research on the effects of social expectations on the outcomes of service learning is sparse. The repeated finding that collegial relationships between students and instructors increases beneficial outcomes (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1997) may, in fact, be mediated by the increase in importance of the expectations of these instructors for students (an hypothesis that has yet to be tested). The closeness of the relationships between those served and those serving may also be an influence on positive outcomes for all concerned (e.g., Omoto et al., 1998).

**Protection.** Volunteer activity can provide individuals with a distraction from personal problems and perhaps an opportunity to work through problems in the context of their service (e.g., Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). As such, service-learning activities can "protect" students from stress in their lives. Consistent with this notion, engaging students in community service can reduce feelings of alienation and isolation (Calabrese & Schumer, 1986). Research has also shown that engaging in service can reduce disciplinary problems (Calabrese & Schumer, 1986; Follman & Muldoon, 1997). Similarly, community-based learning programs can increase student attendance rates (perhaps especially for students who initially have attendance problems [Shumer, 1994]). Many of the moderating variables that ensure positive student outcomes in other areas could also help to ensure these protective benefits. For example, it may be the amount of responsibility given to adolescents, and the related invitation to the world of adults, that reduces feelings of alienation (Calabrese & Schumer, 1986).

The fact that some benefits of service learning are most strongly achieved by students labeled "at risk" (e.g., Follman & Muldoon, 1997) may be testament to the protective effects of service experiences. Although there is little if any research that directly tests such notions, it seems likely that students with negative self-conceptions may see community service activities as a way to salvage their self-image through other-focused helpful activities. And such outcomes seem more likely to the extent that students themselves initiate or design them.

**Matching person and situation.** A central premise of the functional approach to volunteerism (e.g., Clary & Snyder, 1991, 1999;
Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998; Snyder et al., 2000) is that different volunteers may engage in the same activities for very different reasons. Understanding these reasons is the key to promoting commitment and satisfaction among volunteers. To that end, we designed and validated the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to assess six major functions that volunteerism can serve for individuals. This instrument has been used in several studies which found that students whose chief goals for service were met by their program activities were more likely to be satisfied with the program and more likely to intend to volunteer in the future (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). Thus, for example, students who sought a greater understanding of diverse peoples and situations—and who had that need met by their service—were more likely to intend to volunteer later on than students whose need went unmet. Another study showed that students who felt that their specific activities were interesting and that they provided personal benefits were likely to be satisfied by their service program (Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982). Although this finding may be unsurprising, it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that students enter service programs with a variety of backgrounds, interests, and personal characteristics and the fit between their characteristics and service experiences can significantly affect their subsequent satisfaction, activity, and other outcomes (Waterman, 1997). (A majority of students may concur, however, on which goals are most important; one recent study found that students were most likely to rate value expression and understanding as their primary goals [as rated on the VFI], whereas social and protective motives were rated as least important [Chapman & Morley, 1999]).

This focus on the goals and needs of students and their satisfaction through service helps enhance our understanding of who benefits from service learning. Indeed, a match between student and organizational values is important to predicting specific role identity (Grube & Piliavin, in press). This is a familiar point made by service-learning professionals: “It is the way in which the particular program interacts with the needs and experiences of each participant that determines the program’s impact” (Hamilton & Fenz, 1988, p. 79). This entire discussion may remind readers of earlier theorizing on the principle of interaction (Dewey, 1938), a theoretical basis for service learning (e.g., Carver, 1997; Giles & Eyler, 1994b), which suggests that educational and social development occurs as a result of both the student and his or her environment.

To summarize, service-learning benefits to students fall loosely into the six functions established by research on the Volunteer Functions Inventory: enhancement, understanding, values, career, social and protective functions (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, et al., 1998). And, as indicated by our review of the literature, such benefits may be moderated by factors that include the support of autonomy for students, the development of a collegial relationship between students and instructors, the presence of reflection activities, and the match between students’ (and instructors’) goals and the specific activities in which students engage.

**For the Institution**

Although service learning as a broadly defined concept has steadily gained acceptance on U.S. campuses, controversy persists surrounding its inclusion in the curriculum. Several potential weaknesses of the experiential approach have been identified. It may be less efficient in presenting information and risks the possibility that students will miss the connections between theory and experience (Conrad & Hedin, 1991). The new pedagogy of academic service learning may conflict with “traditional pedagogy” over what students should learn and how much control the instructor should wield (Howard, 1998). Clearly, an instructor who incorporates a service component in a course must make difficult decisions that cut to the heart of educational theory—and other educators may find such decisions unpalatable.
Indeed, with regard to required service programs in particular, concerns about exploitation of students and possible legal and political opposition can be added to the list of controversies (e.g., Furco, 1994; Sobus, 1995).

Nevertheless, one way to minimize confusion and controversy is to clarify the goals and motivations that a particular institution (or department, course, etc.) has for putting service into its curriculum (Cohen, 1994; see also Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Furco, 1994). For students, faculty, boards of trustees, legislatures, etc., this clarification may go a long way toward resolving concerns—or at least making clear where points of contention lie. Indeed, the goals that institutions have for including community service either as a requirement or as an elective may vary, hence the need for clarification.

In the following section we discuss some of the institutional motives and agendas for service learning. As psychologists we tend to focus on individual volunteer-related motives and agendas. But given that institutions reflect both individual and group agendas, we propose to apply this same framework to groups (and larger entities) by analogy. Unfortunately, empirical research and psychological theory on institutional motives is quite sparse.

Value expression. It has been suggested that the goals of an academic institution that incorporates service-learning programs should be “to be a responsible presence in the community, to educate its students to be good citizens, and to help solve the pressing social problems of our day” (Price & Martello, 1996, p. 15). It may be an inherent part of the contract between public academic institutions and the communities in which they reside that students be prepared for civic and social responsibilities (e.g., Lisman, 1998; Rhoads, 1993; Ward, 1997). In fact, society as a whole may have a vested interest in making certain that prosocial values are transmitted to the next generation (e.g., Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998). Service learning may be one way to assure that these goals are met.

Understanding. It is also suggested that the goals of internships and field experience programs are primarily to enhance student learning—certainly a central goal of academic institutions (Price & Martello, 1996). But such programs (and service-learning programs in general) may also help institutions themselves become better attuned to the needs of the community and their role in it. An important goal of institutions of higher education in the new millennium should be to teach “socially responsive knowledge,” with service-learning courses having three aims: “first, to educate students in the problems of society; second, have them experience and understand first-hand social issues in their community; and third, and most importantly, give students the experience and skills to act on social problems” (Altman, 1996, pp. 374-375). Naturally, such attention to teaching socially responsive knowledge will require institutions to gain a better understanding of social problems and how to address them. In this way, an institution’s dedication to scholarship is also advanced.

Career development. Institutional goals for co-operative education programs tend to center on fostering students’ career development and job readiness skills (Price & Martello, 1996). This may also be a central goal of many content-based service-learning courses, which allow students a chance to connect with discipline-based activities in the natural environment. Indeed, it may be the extent to which service-learning components lead to explicit discipline-related skills that make such components most appealing to academic administrators, rather than the “goodness” inherent in service-work alone (Cohen, 1994). Yet, if we think about an institution’s “career,” we can also see that introducing service into the curriculum has the potential to cement connections with the community. These connections may lead to increased enrollment, placement of graduating students into positions in the community, and possibly contributions or grants from supportive community organizations and individuals (e.g., Driscoll et al., 1996).
Certainly, such benefits stand to advance the "career" of the institution in question.

Enhancement and protection. Potential benefits to institutions that commit to service learning include both a higher profile in the community and a more positive image locally and perhaps in a broader community (Driscoll et al., 1996). Such a positive image can also advance and make more possible other important goals of the institution, such as fundraising, enrollment, grants, and contracts, etc. Incorporation of service learning can also serve to protect institutions from negative public impressions. In one study, for example, the service program was required only for business students, a group whose prosocial motivation is frequently questioned (Stukas, Snyder et al., 1999).

Social expectations. Without stretching the comparison of institutional and human motives too far, we point out, finally, that institutions may themselves feel pressed to put service learning into the curriculum—either by the immediate community or by organizations such as Campus Compact, accreditation boards, etc. Pressure comes also from state and federal governments through financial incentives offered to institutions that make such commitments.

We stress that different institutions, like individuals, may have different goals. But clarity of an institution's goals allows for assessment and, in turn, better program design and initiatives to reach those goals.

For the Community

Society at large, like individuals and institutions, also has needs and goals that can be met through the promotion of service-learning educational programs. Here we focus on the recipients of the helpfulness of service-learning participants, and, again, we take a psychological perspective.

Much of the research on service learning has focused on benefits to student participants—to the neglect of the "shared understanding" and "common good" that can come through dialogue between "service partners." Students and the community members whom they serve need to come together to reflect on the experience rather than having students engage in reflection independently. Only then can service improve the community and create positive change in student attitudes toward those served (Kraft, 1996). Emphasis is thus on empowerment of the community member as well as the student. This may be of even greater importance when student volunteers and community members come from different levels of social power or status in society (e.g., Ward, 1997). Programs that take such a perspective and studies that assess the recipient of help, in addition to the student helper, appear few and far between.

Research on the effects of helping on those who receive help typically focuses on recipient self-esteem and self-perceptions rather than on any objective measures of benefits (e.g., Lenrow, 1978; Nadler & Fisher, 1986; Stein, 1989). It could be, for instance, that recipients, reminded of their place in society and their "neediness," feel worse rather than better after their encounters with students engaged in service learning (e.g., Stein, 1989). And this could be intensified when those serving and those served occupy different social strata, as is the case of most "multicultural" service-learning programs (e.g., Dunlap, 1998; Ward, 1997); although it has been suggested that help from individuals of the same social level may be even more stressful for recipients because of the implied social comparison (Nadler & Fisher, 1986). One way to make receiving help more palatable for recipients may be to give them some control over the help they receive, for example, over when, where, and how it takes place (Nadler & Fisher, 1986). This suggestion echoes the findings we presented earlier on the importance of perceived control and autonomy-support (e.g., Conrad & Hedin, 1981, 1982) and fits well with the notion of community partner empowerment (Kraft, 1996). In the absence of such empowerment of the partners, students who expect to meet with expressions of gratitude may be disappointed,
and this quite natural state of affairs could instead reinforce preexisting stereotypes about those in need (e.g., Stein, 1989). Students in service-learning programs must be well prepared in advance for what to expect from their work in the community, including a range of responses from community members (Scheckley & Keeton, 1997).

It might seem ironic to ask whether students involved in community service learning do indeed provide valuable service—but it is not always the case that they do. Only by assessing community needs and satisfaction with service can we learn about the benefits to both students and recipients. Unfortunately, most studies of service learning focus on the former, whereas mention of recipient outcomes is usually only theoretical or anecdotal. Descriptions of services provided, from an analysis by one set of researchers (Price & Martello, 1996), include those of vital value (e.g., food, shelter, comfort, or protection), social value (e.g., support for relevant systems and organizations), cultural value (e.g., addressing artistic, ideological, and political concerns), and personal value (e.g., enhancing recipients' awareness and understanding).

Rarely do studies take account of the mutuality of benefits to students and community partners. Studies have shown, however, that tutoring increases recipient learning (Hedin, 1987), and peer-counseling reduces recipient drug use (Black, Tobler, & Sciaccia, 1998)—at the same time that the tutors and counselors benefit (Conrad & Hedin, 1991). And service-learning programs can also change the way community members view teenagers (Fertman, 1996). Both students and recipients can appreciate the reciprocal nature of their relationship and can identify benefits that accrue to helpers and recipients (Greene, 1998; Greene & Diehm, 1995). In a longitudinal study of the relationship between AIDS volunteers and Persons With AIDS (PWAs), the satisfaction of volunteers and the perceived quality of the relationship increased with the closeness of the relationship between the two "buddies" (Omoto et al., 1998).

Presumably, degree of closeness (that is, frequency and variety of activities performed together, and strength of mutual influence) also relates to the benefit and satisfaction of PWAs as well. Investigations of the reciprocal relationship between those who help and those who receive help are rare, but given these promising findings, more research is much needed (see Lenrow, 1978, for an analysis of the dilemmas faced by those in helping roles).

Neglect of community outcomes may be diminishing, however. A model has been proposed to account for the goals and benefits for four constituencies (Driscoll et al., 1996): students, faculty, institution, and community. Strikingly, researchers and members of each constituency have worked in collaboration—an exemplary process—to develop an assessment plan. Until such studies are completed, though, our understanding of service-learning effects on the community remains limited. The model predicts a range of community outcomes (Driscoll et al., 1996): improved health and welfare of all citizens (serving the functions of value expression and career development); new connections and networks among students, faculty, the institution, and community members (social, understanding); new insights into community and institutional organization and activities (understanding); creation of a pool of potential employees that are already knowledgeable about community concerns and structures (career, understanding, social, values); promotion of more positive relationships between community organizations, institutions, and their constituents (enhancement, social); and more (e.g., Driscoll et al., 1996).

Conclusions

Service-learning programs have the potential to serve diverse functions. They make possible, for all constituents—students, institutions, and recipients:
the enhancement of public and private images and self-concepts,

- a greater understanding of the world and its citizens,

- the expression and fulfillment of humanitarian and altruistic values,

- the strengthened purpose and skills that can lead to a career,

- the fulfillment of social expectations, and

- protection from negative life stresses.

But we maintain that none of these benefits is guaranteed, for to be effective, service-learning programs must embody certain characteristics. We conclude, based on the research evidence, the following:

(1) Programs should be autonomy-supportive. That is, they should allow students and community partners and other interested parties a voice in determining the details of service activities. Programs that limit choice, remove autonomy, or exert too much control may end in harming more than helping. Supporting autonomy aligns with research showing that an “authoritative” parenting style (as opposed to an overcontrolling “authoritarian” or too liberal “permissive” style) best fosters children’s competency. Authoritative parents provide limits within which children choose their own actions (e.g., Baumrind, 1968, 1989). Similarly, service programs that suggest, but do not dictate, opportunities may promote the most positive outcomes.

(2) Programs should be designed to accentuate the matching of goals and activities. To this end, student interests and needs should help shape activities, and institutional goals should be reflected in the types of activities offered. As suggested by the functional theories (e.g., Katz, 1960; Smith et al., 1956), such matching should assure the achievement of goals (both personal and institutional) and greater satisfaction of all concerned.

(3) Programs must attend to the relationships among all participants. Care must be taken to establish respectful, collegial, and mutually fulfilling relationships between instructors and students and between students and community partners. Research has suggested that such relationships with adult role models can lead children to greater commitment to helping behavior throughout life (e.g., Clary & Miller, 1986; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Rosenhan, 1970). Service programs that attend to and foster positive relationships between site supervisors and students may have far-reaching and long-lasting benefits.

(4) For optimal effectiveness, programs must provide opportunities for reflection—without which chances for learning are reduced. Reflection activities serve to cement the link between experience and theory—and without such activities, service may provide benefits (if the above conditions are met), but learning may not be among them. The logic here comes directly from Dewey (1933), who proposed that experience could be educative to the extent that reflective thinking is elicited from the student (e.g., Giles & Eyler, 1994b). We could argue, therefore, that without reflection none of the benefits discussed is possible—which is, of course, an empirical question.

Finally, we offer one more suggestion: that evaluations be carefully constructed to assess the effects of service learning for all involved—with an emphasis on rigorous experimental and survey methodology. More research is needed to determine the multiple factors that best predict the achievement of goals and satisfaction of all, the students, institutions, recipients and society at large.
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**About the Authors**

Arthur A. Stukas, Jr., Ph.D., is assistant professor of psychology at the University of Northern Colorado. His research interests include the personal and situational factors that underlie value-expression and goal-directed behavior, including such varied behaviors as volunteerism, organ and tissue donation, principled stands against prejudice, and active disconfirmation of erroneous interpersonal expectations.

E. Gil Clary, Ph.D., is professor of psychology at the College of St. Catherine. In addition to his research on volunteers' motivations for engaging in volunteer activities, he is exploring some of the questions and issues facing the larger nonprofit sector. Clary is also engaged in conceptual and empirical research on long-term helpers' orientations, models, or philosophies of helping, and their impact on helping interactions and outcomes.

Mark Snyder, Ph.D., is professor of psychology and director of the Social Psychology Program at the University of Minnesota, where he has been a member of the faculty since 1972. His research interests include theoretical and empirical issues associated with the motivational foundations of individual and collective behavior, and the applications of basic theory and research in personality and social psychology to addressing practical problems confronting society. He has served as president of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. He is also the author of the book, *Public Appearances/Private Realities: The Psychology of Self-Monitoring*.

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Federally Funded Community Service Programs

Editor

The federal government funds a wide array of community service and volunteer programs through two statutes: the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA). The authorization of NCSA and DVSA expired in 1996, but both continue to be funded through annual appropriations legislation.

The programs subsumed under NCSA and DVSA recruit and serve a broad range of participants, from school-age youth to the elderly. Most relevant to this Social Policy Report are those programs that involve students and youth in community service: the AmeriCorps Grants, the National Civilian Community Corps, Learn and Serve America, and VISTA.

**AmeriCorps Grants.** In 1996–97, 21,628 individuals participated in AmeriCorps; of these, some 15,000 were aged 17 to 30. AmeriCorps’s purpose is to directly address community needs in the areas of education, public safety, human services, and the environment, with emphasis on service to children and youth. Participants receive a living allowance and are eligible for education awards. The FY 2000 appropriation for AmeriCorps is $234 million.

**National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).** In 1996–97, 1,027 young adults, ages 18 to 24, took part in NCCC, a ten-month residential program which addresses local community needs. Campuses are located in five regions: Northeastern, Capital (near Washington, D.C.), Southeastern, Central, and Western. Participants receive an annual stipend of $4,000 and are eligible for educational awards. In FY 2000 the appropriation for NCCC is $18 million.

**Learn and Serve America.** This program, authorized since 1990, is designed to benefit both students and the community. Approximately 824,000 individuals participated in 1999. Grants are awarded in three areas, to (1) school-based programs to involve elementary and secondary school students in community service connected with school curriculum; (2) community groups to involve school children and youth in community projects; and (3) institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for college-age students to take part in community service that, again, is integrated with course curricula. The FY 2000 appropriation for Learn and Serve America is $43 million.

**Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).** VISTA, the longest-standing of these programs, was authorized in 1965 to encourage volunteers to reside in poverty areas and assist in poverty-related projects. The volunteer’s role is to help communities mobilize their own resources in the service of addressing community problems. In 1996–97, 4,248 individuals participated; of these nearly half were aged 18 to 27. The annual living allowance in 1999 was $8,730, and participants are eligible for an education award or a $1,200 stipend at the end of service. The FY 2000 appropriation is $81 million.

**National Service Trust.** This trust provides funding for the education awards received by individuals participating in AmeriCorps, NCCC, and VISTA. Awards of $4,725 per student are used to defray college costs or loans. Approximately 50,000 students received funds from this trust in 1999. In addition, $5 million of the Trust goes each year to the National Service Scholarship Program to reward outstanding service—by juniors and seniors in high schools. The FY 2000 appropriation to the National Service Trust is $69 million.