1-1-2012

How does the nonprofit workforce perceive college student service learners in their workplace?

Elisa M. Martin
University at Albany, State University of New York, emmartin@albany.edu

The University at Albany community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd
Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/legacy-etd/694

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Legacy Theses & Dissertations (2009 - 2024) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Archive. Please see Terms of Use. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.
HOW DOES THE NONPROFIT WORKFORCE PERCEIVE COLLEGE
STUDENT SERVICE LEARNERS IN THEIR WORKPLACE?

by

Elisa M. Martin

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Social Welfare
2012
How does the nonprofit workforce perceive college student service learners in their workplace?

by

Elisa M. Martin

© 2012
# Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................................... vii

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... viii

Chapter 1 – Overview ....................................................................................................................... 1

Problem Identification ....................................................................................................................... 1

Brief Background ............................................................................................................................... 1

Purpose of Research .......................................................................................................................... 5

Organization of Dissertation .......................................................................................................... 7

Chapter 2 – Review of Relevant Literature ....................................................................................... 8

Historical Background of Volunteers and Service-learning ............................................................... 8

  Social Work and Volunteers ........................................................................................................... 8
  Volunteers as a Solution to Solve Social Problems ....................................................................... 10
  Institutions of Higher Education and Society ............................................................................ 12
  The Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) ................................................................. 14

The Nonprofit Workplace – Environmental Context ........................................................................ 16

  Nonprofit Organization Defined .................................................................................................... 16
  Retrenchment of the 1980s and Recession of Today .................................................................... 17

Volunteers in the Workplace ............................................................................................................ 20

  Volunteer Management ................................................................................................................ 21
  Volunteer-Staff Relationships ....................................................................................................... 22
  Service-Learning Students in the Workplace .............................................................................. 26
  Service-Learning Partnerships .................................................................................................... 31

Summary .......................................................................................................................................... 33

Chapter 3 – Theory and Concepts .................................................................................................... 34

Social Cognitive Theory .................................................................................................................. 34

  Work Stress (Person) ................................................................................................................... 38
  Public Service Motivation (Behavior) ......................................................................................... 40
References ............................................................................................................................................. 115
Appendix A – Organization Demographics ......................................................................................... 130
Appendix B – Employee Demographics ............................................................................................. 131
Appendix C – Interview Guide – Employees ......................................................................................... 132
Appendix D – Interview Guide – Employee Focus Group ....................................................................... 134
Appendix E – Interview Guide – Students ............................................................................................ 137
Appendix F – Interview Guide – CPSP Personnel ............................................................................... 138
Appendix G – Codes and Themes ........................................................................................................ 139
Figure 1. Social Cognitive Theory ................................................................. 34
Table 1. Sample Size .................................................................................. 55
Table 2. Residential Units with Staffing and Client Breakdown .................. 64
Table 3. Age Distribution of Sample ........................................................ 65
Table 4. Ethnic Distribution of Sample ...................................................... 65
Table 5. Education Distribution of Sample .............................................. 66
Table 6. Professional Experience Distribution of Sample ......................... 67
Table 7. St. Mary’s Demographics Focused on Volunteer Experience ......... 72
Table 8. Education Distribution of Focus Group ...................................... 90
Abstract

This qualitative case study explores the perceptions that employees from one nonprofit workplace have of college students completing community service as part of an undergraduate class with the Community and Public Service Program (CPSP). Social cognitive theory was used to frame the research questions. Factors of work stress, public service motivation, and volunteer/service learner management practices were considered. In-person interviews and a focus group were conducted with fifteen employees. In addition, four personnel from the CPSP and two students taking a class with CPSP and performing service at the case study site were also interviewed. Findings show that employees appear to have manageable levels of work stress, a strong commitment to public service and a passion for working with the target population of the agency. The agency overall has minimal volunteer/service learner management practices; in its place is a structured residential program model where students volunteer and a culture supportive of volunteers/college students in the workplace. Employees unanimously reported an overall positive perception of college students performing service.

Implications and recommendations are discussed in light of these findings for nonprofit management, institutions of higher education and social work educators.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the ongoing support of my dissertation chair Dr. Loretta Pyles and committee members Dr. Eunju Lee and Dr. Yvonne Harrison. Their feedback and thoughtful questions challenged me to reframe, rethink, and work through all of the stumbling blocks that were part of my dissertation journey.

Thank you to all of my friends who assisted with idea exploration, proof reading, and companionship. I feel very lucky to be part of such a close knit group.

I appreciate the support of the case study site, my primary contact at the site and all those willing to participate in this research project.

Special thanks to my husband, who I met on this journey for a Ph.D. and who had no problem lending a hand, and being understanding when writing needed to come first.

My research was supported in part by funding from Initiatives for Women Endowment Award, University at Albany, State University of New York, 2012.
Chapter 1 – Overview

Problem Identification

Volunteers, including college students participating in service-learning activities, are seen by many as a way to help address pressing social problems (Brudney, 1993; Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993). Increasing numbers of the general population, including college students, are finding their way to nonprofit organizations to serve the greater good by contributing their time in charitable endeavors (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010). Nonprofit organizations are reluctant to turn away assistance, especially given the recent economic troubles forcing ever tighter fiscal restraints and growing demand for services.

Within organizational settings nonprofit employees are asked to do more as vacancies remain unfilled and/or layoffs occur due to downsizing (Malekoff, 2010). One task that might be added to an employee’s job duties is to supervise or interact with college students who are performing service. The question needs to be asked: How does the nonprofit workforce perceive college student service learners in their workplace?

Brief Background

Nonprofit organizations do more with less, as evidenced by cuts to state and federal funds and an increased demand for services (Malekoff, 2010; Packard, Patti, Daly, Tucker-Tatlow, & Farrell, 2007). When needs increase, funding to support increased demand on service systems does not always follow. The recent recession provides a current example with the proposed and actual cuts in government budgets during a time when many United States citizens are struggling (Malekoff, 2010). Malekoff (2010) wrote an article describing 2009 state funding cuts to youth outreach
programs and proposed Medicaid mental health insurance reimbursement restructuring for outpatient services. He provided a case example of what those changes would do to services provided by a nonprofit organization in New York State. Malekoff’s example illustrates that cuts in state and federal budgets result in reduction and/or elimination of contracts to nonprofit organizations. Organizations must restructure in order to accommodate the reduction in funds while trying to support increasing demand on services and increased stress on employees (Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar, & Strom, 1997; Packard et al., 2007).

The recent economic difficulties are a resurgence of the budget restructuring and cuts of the 1980s (Packard et al., 2007). Strategies were developed during that era to assist organizations navigate the lean years. Organizations of the 1980s were forced to downsize through the reduction of programs and/or staff, bring in volunteers to assist with program infrastructure and service delivery, or close all together (Angelica & Hyman, 1997; Jarman-Rohde et al., 1997). These strategies can be employed again to deal with the current economic crisis (Packard et al., 2007) in order to manage the increasing stress of day to day operations.

One of the suggestions to support organizations and their employees through difficult economic times is enlisting the help of volunteers. There is a long history of everyday citizens’ contributing their time to assist the betterment of the United States, and is rooted in the foundation of the country. This trait is used as a motivational tool by government leaders to get people to volunteer (“National and community service,” 1993; Obama, 2009). The 1980s highlighted the federal government’s stance that it could not/would not solve the most pressing needs of U.S. citizens evident by the financial
restructuring and cuts implemented by President Ronald Reagan and furthered by President George H. W. Bush (Sink, 1992). Volunteers’ time contribution is considered one of the available resources to plug holes in service systems for the most vulnerable citizens (Countryman & Sullivan, 1993; Lee, 2009; Sink, 1992). In addition, volunteer time is a justification for government to reduce or eliminate their fiscal responsibility for social service programs (Bloom & Kilgore, 2003).

Efforts of government to increase volunteerism in the United States continue to take root in the general population and nonprofit organizations are preferred sites for voluntary service (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010). In 2009, 63.4 million people volunteered, an increase of 1.6 million people from 2008 and the largest rise in volunteerism since 2003. The estimated time and time value for volunteers was 8.1 billion hours and $169 billion. The number of people volunteering in organizations focused on community and social services increased from 8.4 million in 2008, to 8.8 million in 2009 (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010).

Institutions of higher education (IHE) as a whole are increasingly recognizing their role in contributing to the resolution of social problems by connecting with their surrounding communities and educating their students on civic responsibility (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010; Jacoby, 1996; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). Students performing service through their educational curriculum, such as service-learning classes, is one way IHE are able to contribute resources (students’ time and faculty expertise) to community problems (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009). Service-learning is a pedagogy that involves partnerships between students, faculty and community organizations.
Data from a national survey from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that college students made up 3.2 million of those that performed service in 2009, contributing 307.3 million service hours representing 27% of the college student population (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2009). Campus Compact, a membership organization of U.S. colleges and universities dedicated to enhancing citizenship and community engagement of students through service-learning and other formal and informal service activities, estimated that in 2009 33% of college students from responding member institutions (n=731) contributed a portion of their time equating to $7.4 billion dollars. This was an increase from the 2008 rate of 31% (Campus Compact, 2009).

An important aspect of service-learning is to equally benefit all participants and meet the needs of community partners (frequently nonprofit organizations) (Lowe & Medina, 2010; Ward & Vernon, 2000). Research on the influences and benefits of service-learning has focused in varying degrees on the perspective of students, faculty, colleges/universities and communities. The literature on service-learning’s influences and outcomes for students is abundant (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006). Less abundant but growing is research on the community partners’ perspective (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Literature that includes the perspective of community partners often includes a discussion of what benefits students provide and associated costs for partners accommodating them at their site.

Key members of organizations hosting college students engaging in service-learning activities report that the students bring a unique blend of attributes to the workplace. They are full of energy and eager to make a positive contribution. They are also inexperienced in the world of work and have competing priorities for their attention
(school, service, working, vacations, social life). Their volunteer contribution is typically time limited and directly associated with the academic calendar (Lowe & Medina, 2010; Worrall, 2007). These factors create a unique labor pool that is incorporated into a diverse and challenging landscape of nonprofit organizations where 93% of service-learning and engagement activities take place (Campus Compact, 2007). In addition to the influences of college students on the organizations, the research has included discussion of the various outcomes which were a result of students’ service (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001).

What is missing from the research is the voice of nonprofit employees who are working and associating with students within their organizations. Nonprofit employees have not yet been asked about their perception of college students engaged in service-learning activities. To assist in understanding nonprofit employees’ perceptions in the context of their workplaces, personal beliefs and interactions, I will use social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory illustrates employee motivation through the ongoing interaction of cognition, behavior and environment as a way to explain how a person interacts with the world (Bandura, 1988; Latham, 2007; Pinder, 2008; Wood & Bandura, 1989). The theory provides a way to facilitate the understanding of the internal processes and external factors that contribute to an employee’s interpretation of and engagement with individuals like college students in the workplace (Bandura, 1988; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

**Purpose of Research**

The research that has been conducted on volunteer participation in organizations primarily focuses on volunteer contribution to organization outcomes, and the overall
advantages and disadvantages of volunteers in the workplace (Brudney, 1993; Brudney & Gazley, 2002; Brudney & Kellough, 2000). This outcome focus is further illustrated by the Corporation for National & Community Service (2010) partner survey that has questions focused on capacity building and value of student service. As stated above and explored further in this proposal, research on the perceptions of the general nonprofit workforce on the benefits of volunteers overall and college student service-learners (SLs) specifically is absent.

The practice of service-learning is prolific and gaining traction in a range of disciplines (Phillips, 2007). It is important to understand how SLs are accepted by the employees at the places they are asked or choose to perform service. In stressful times when service systems are already overburdened it is important to ensure that the addition of those willing to provide service, specifically SLs, is not yet one more thing an employee feels he/she needs to manage. If SLs are in the workplace they should be seen as an asset to help further the organization’s mission, support employees in their work and support service delivery. Examination of how SLs are perceived by employees will provide valuable information and will be an important contribution to the fields of administration, volunteer management, and service-learning.

The overarching research question I propose is: How does the nonprofit workforce perceive SLs in their workplace? This is a complex question due to the many factors that can influence employees such as behavioral practices, personal beliefs, environmental factors and interactions with SLs. This interplay of factors culminates into an overall employee perception of SL contribution to the nonprofit organization as a whole, and to the employee specifically. To answer this dynamic and exploratory
question I will implement a qualitative research design which uses a case study format. The case study will allow for a thorough examination of employee perception generated from a single site.

**Organization of Dissertation**

I have organized this dissertation to guide the reader through the contextual and conceptual elements associated with the research questions before outlining the research design and report the results. To this end, chapter two reviews the relevant literature associated with volunteers, SLs and the nonprofit workplace. Chapter three describes social cognitive theory as a lens to understand how employees may be filtering behavioral, environmental and cognitive experience into their perception of SLs. Chapter three also provides information on the concepts of work stress, public service motivation, and volunteer/SL management. These concepts are linked back to social cognitive theory to deepen the link to the workplace. Chapter four compiles and describes the sub-questions generated out of the broad research question and outlines the research design. I will provide details about the qualitative approach and case study design articulating the methods associated with data collection and analysis. I will also discuss the integrity of data collection and analysis. Chapter five details the results of the research, reporting the demographics of the case study participants and telling the story that emerged from the data. Chapter six concludes the dissertation by discussing the research findings overall and in context of the research questions along with summarizing the limitations, implications and areas for future research.
Chapter 2 – Review of Relevant Literature

This chapter will cover a review of the literature relevant to the proposal. First, I provide some historical background of social work and volunteers, as well as a discussion of volunteers and college students as a method for solving social problems. Second, I discuss the nonprofit workplace, providing a definition of nonprofit organizations and the influence of retrenchment and the current recession. Third, I weave together the two distinct bodies of volunteer and service-learning literature to provide a comprehensive picture of volunteers and SLs in the workplace. Finally, I conclude this chapter by summarizing the literature and the value of examining the influence of SLs on employees in the workplace.

Historical Background of Volunteers and Service-learning

Social Work and Volunteers

The social work profession has a unique link to volunteers. Before social work was established as a profession, the work that social workers now claim as their territory was performed by volunteers. The early days of charity organizations and settlement houses were staffed with predominantly affluent white women donating their time for the betterment of society (Brilliant, 2008; Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993). In the mid-1800s volunteers acted as pioneers and advocates helping to establish needed services for those who were poor and disfranchised (Schwartz, 1977). These women volunteers filled the role of “friendly visitor” which was created by the charity organizations. Their role was to befriend those less fortunate with the intent to improve their conditions through the application of their influence, sharing knowledge and imparting advice (Becker, 1964; Reisch & Wenocur, 1984). The paid employees of charity organizations were not
working directly with those in need. They were responsible for administration of social services such as coordinating and supervising the friendly visitors, raising funds, and developing programs (Reisch & Wenocur, 1984).

The needs of those living in poverty during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century increased, and the corresponding need for services exceeded the supply of volunteers. As the services provided to those who were poor became routine and included more people, paid employees filled the gap left by the limited pool of volunteers. The balance of volunteers versus staff shifted and roles changed. Paid staff eventually replaced volunteers in direct client interaction (Becker, 1964; Reisch & Wenocur, 1984; Schwartz, 1977). The timing of this shift of service provision, from volunteers to paid employees, also coincided with the advancement of social work as a recognized profession (Guzzetta, 1984; Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993). Volunteers were taken out of the field, no longer interacting directly with clients in supportive roles, and placed in the office performing simple administrative/clerical tasks, raising funds and/or acting as members of nonprofit governing boards (Reisch & Wenocur, 1984; Schwartz, 1977). This was a complete reversal of the volunteer/staff roles prior to social work professionalization.

Intermixed in the advancement of social work and diminishment of volunteer roles was a building conflict between the paid professional and unpaid volunteer workforce. This conflict was enhanced by the speech given by Abraham Flexner discrediting the ability of social work to be a standalone profession (Guzzetta, 1984). Guzzetta (1984) discussed how a change in language used to describe staff polarized volunteers and professionals (specifically social workers). As social work moved to
legitimize itself in the professional world, a shift in terminology was made from “paid” to “professional” staff, thus creating an image of skill and competence. When contrasted with the “unpaid” volunteer, a “professional” seemed to convey and create a clear distinction of ability. The fact that volunteers were once providers of direct service has been overlooked or ignored (Guzzetta, 1984).

Social work education does not emphasize or include the close ties of volunteerism in the review of the profession’s history. Consequently, social workers may adopt attitudes about volunteers that classify them as troublesome interlopers, or minimize their potential contribution seeing them as a pleasant bonus instead of a legitimate partner in service provision (Herington, 1984; Schwartz, 1984). The negative attitude toward volunteers seemed to become more pervasive among social workers as the profession became more established (Netting, Nelson, Jr., Borders, & Huber, 2004; Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993; Schwartz, 1984) peaking in the 1960s (Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993).

**Volunteers as a Solution to Solve Social Problems**

The retrenchment of social welfare support in the 1980s put organizations in a position to find new and/or creative ways to cope with the decrease in federal and state funds. The use of volunteers was one of the strategies put forth to meet increasing demands with limited resources (Brudney, 1993; Colon, 1988; Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993; Schilling, Schinke, & Weatherly, 1988; Turem & Born, 1983). The idea that volunteers could fill the gaps in services due to cuts was generated by nonprofits (Sink, 1992) and government leaders (Countryman & Sullivan, 1993; Sink, 1992).
Donating personal time to support the unmet needs of the U.S. is not a new or outdated concept. President Kennedy attempted to rally the citizens of the nation through his inaugural address with a quote that still resonates with people today. “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” (Kennedy, 1961). President Obama made a similar request to U.S. citizens when he publicly asked “every American to make an enduring commitment to serving your community and your country in whatever way you can” (Lee, 2009). The implications of these calls to service are based on the premise that if Americans unite and assist others through service they can begin to address the social ills of the nation (Countryman & Sullivan, 1993; Lee, 2009; “National and community service,” 1993).

The period of time from the 1960s through 1980s showed a revival of volunteerism. This was due in part to government efforts through the creation of national volunteer programs such as the Peace Corps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) (Reisch & Wenocur, 1984). Volunteer initiatives are not limited to specific political parties and continued to be established as new presidents took office. Gazley & Brudney (2005) provided an outline of volunteer program and initiatives of the 1990s such as President George H. W. Bush’s Points of Light Foundation and President William Clinton’s implementation of the Volunteer Protection Act. President George W. Bush focused his effort on increasing volunteering by creating the USA Freedom Corps (Gazley & Brudney, 2005). President Barak Obama signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act which expanded national service programs (Scott, 2009).
The expectation to integrate volunteers into the service system during the 1980s did not include funds for organizations to invest in the necessary infrastructure supports for effective volunteer programs (Schilling et al., 1988). Years later the discussion continues about poorly managed and underfunded volunteer programs which can influence the acceptance and perceived value of volunteers by employees (Netting et al., 2004). Nesbit & Brudney (2010) acknowledged that “volunteers can be no more effective than the programs in which they are placed” (p. S111).

**Institutions of Higher Education and Society**

Coinciding with the retrenchment of social welfare was a call for institutions of higher education (IHE) to “renew their [its] historic commitment to service” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 3) and better prepare students to become civically engaged citizens ready to be the U.S.’s future leaders (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010; Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). The overarching theme was that IHE could mobilize their vast resources to help address social problems, break down historic town-gown divides and enhance the educational experiences of students (Jacoby, 1996; Ostrander, 2004). However, a 2004 assessment on the progress IHE have made to become more civically engaged with their communities and students showed that the movement had stalled. The assessment concluded that the needs of society remain and IHE are still seen as essential players in the U.S.’s response to resolve the problems (Saltmarsh et al., 2009).

One of the options IHE has available to remediate social ills and enhance students’ educational experiences is the pedagogy of service-learning. This educational method has been a growing trend in higher education that incorporates varying degrees of community service and structured reflection for students in a credit bearing course. The
overreaching goal of service-learning is to deepen students’ understanding of course material, develop values of civic engagement and enhance critical thinking (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Hatcher & Bringle, 1997; King, 2003; Phillips, 2007). The definition of service-learning varies and can run on a continuum which on one extreme emphasizes service above learning and the other end where learning is of greater importance than service (Furco, 1996). Regardless of the extent of service and learning, there is always a reflective component that allows students to process their service experience in a meaningful way that furthers their personal development (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Furco, 1996).

Campus Compact is a national organization with a mission to “… advance the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact, n.d.). Over 1,100 universities and colleges are members of this organization and are dedicated to advancing civic engagement through various forms of service (Campus Compact, n.d.). As reported earlier, the percentage of students performing some type of volunteer activity through coursework or other activities has increased from past years (Campus Compact, 2009). The prevalence of service-learning can also be seen in the growing number of institutions seeking an engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation, which includes among other things, prevalence of service-learning courses and support for faculty to include this pedagogy in their curricula (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009).

Service-learning enhances the educational experiences of students and is one way for IHE to connect with their communities for mutual benefit. Schools provide an
opportunity to enhance the education of their students, and communities can tap into the intellectual resources of faculty and the “person power” resource of students (i.e. time and talent). Ideally service-learning activities would be generated by community partners, structured by faculty and executed by students (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; King, 2003; Lowe & Medina, 2010).

Community partners (typically nonprofit organizations) engaged in the service element of students’ experiences are vital in promoting a successful service-learning program. It is essential that all parties (community, student, faculty, and campus) benefit from the partnership (Gazley, Littlepage, & Myers, 2007; King, 2003; Nitschke-Shaw, 2003; Ward & Vernon, 2000). Despite the imperative of equitable partnerships, knowledge of the benefits of service-learning to community partner organizations is limited. The extent to which service-learning benefits extend beyond students’ educational growth remains unclear in the existing research (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Blouin & Perry, 2009).

**The Community and Public Service Program (CPSP)**

The Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) at the University at Albany, State University of New York was created in 1970 in response to the civic unrest of college students beginning in the late 1960s (Stevens & Pyles, 2009). The University administration designed the CPSP to provide students of the day a way to engage with public and nonprofit organizations in their communities in individual and meaningful ways by volunteering their time. The program was moved under the auspices of the School of Social Welfare one year after its creation. The foundation components of the
CPSP program remains, however the pedagogy has evolved into one of service-learning rather than volunteerism.

In the 2009-2010 academic year, the CPSP team underwent a strategic planning exercise. One of the outcomes was the creation of a program mission “…to engage the university and community in dynamic partnerships to educate students, develop community and produce knowledge” (Community and Public Service Program, 2010, p. 1). The primary method of this engagement is through three undergraduate courses that afford students opportunities to perform 60 or 100 hours of service during a semester and reflect on their experiences through written assignments for college credit. The structure of the CPSP courses fits within the broad definition of service-learning, emphasizing service to the community partner site while also asking students to establish learning objectives and reflect on their service to ground and integrate students’ experiences (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Furco, 1996). Enrollment for the CPSP grew more than 40% from the 2007-8 to the 2009-10 academic year, increasing from approximately 650 to 1100 registered students. This aligns with the increased rates of volunteering overall, and young adults specifically (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010) as well the increased number of students participating in service activities on university campuses across the nation (Campus Compact, 2009).

The CPSP is a prime example of a program that works to enhance the capacity of community partner organizations by providing them with students to perform duties most needed. In spring 2008, the CPSP conducted a survey of partner organizations in an effort to obtain baseline data on the perceived impact of the CPSP and its students in addition to demographic information on the organizations and their constituents. Of the
324 organizations invited to participate, 96 completed the survey. A group of questions addressed student roles and performance and included specific questions on the students’ impact on the organization. One question inquired about whether the student was viewed as an asset, and if his/her work benefited the people the organization served and/or furthered its mission. The responses were strongly positive, with 97 percent of organizations agreeing or strongly agreeing that students were assets, and 92 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing the students’ work made a positive contribution to the organization (Stevens & Pyles, 2009). It appears from these results that partners are satisfied with the structure of the program and service from students, yet the results are limited by the small response rate and self-selection bias of respondents. In addition, the questions were not asked of all employees, only people identified as the CPSP contact.

The Nonprofit Workplace – Environmental Context

Nonprofit Organization Defined

Nonprofit organizations can be diverse in their missions, purposes and makeup making them difficult to succinctly define. In general terms, like the name implies, nonprofit organizations are not designed for the purpose of generating a profit, nor are they government agencies or for-profit businesses (Anheier & List, 2005; Boris, 2006; Wolf, 1999). Nonprofits often (but not always) have a public service element associated with the mission and purpose of the organization (Wolf, 1999).

Further narrowing down the definition of a nonprofit organization for the purpose of this research I build off of Boris’s (2006) statement that “nonprofits play prominent social, economic, and political roles in society as service providers…” (p. 2). Nonprofits provide services to people with a goal of enhancing or maintaining their well being and
protecting them from harm. Examples of services can include, but are not limited to: treatment for mental health, behavioral and/or substance abuse issues, case management and/or counseling services, and provision of material goods (Hasenfeld, 1980; Mosley, 2008). Nonprofit human service organizations typically operate on a mixture of funds coming from a variety of state and federal sources, and are complemented with charitable donations. These revenue pools are relatively fixed providing little ability for organizations to buffer against difficult economic times (Hasenfeld, 1984).

Nonprofits, as they have now been clearly defined, are not governmental agencies, however similarities do exist. Because of these similarities, the literature review includes scholarship on public (i.e. governmental) organizations. To exclude such research would limit the breadth of understanding necessary for this proposal.

**Retrenchment of the 1980s and Recession of Today**

In the U.S. in the 1980s, a major shift in political power and public opinion on social welfare occurred, in part due to national budget deficits. DiNitto (2007) explained how President Reagan’s administration transformed the allocation of social services funds to states, replacing open streams of funding to limited pots of money known as block grants. States had the ability to use the funds in ways they saw best supported the needs of their residents. The combined Reagan-Bush era also saw a shift toward privatization of government. Many services that had been administered by state and federal programs were parceled out to private and nonprofit organizations through contracts. The argument for this change was that nongovernment providers could offer similar or better services for a reduced cost (DiNitto, 2007). Social workers of the day saw this retrenchment of service provision as a change that would last beyond President
Reagan’s elected term in office (Hasenfeld, 1984, 1985; Poole & Theilen, 1985; Schilling et al., 1988; Turem & Born, 1983). The predictions held true in that block grant funds remain today and have consistently decreased in amount since their creation in the 1980s. Additional programmatic changes to social welfare have been made over the years, further reducing the government’s responsibility to citizens most in need (DiNitto, 2007).

To cope with the budget cuts of the 1980s social service providers were forced to maintain and/or increase services with less funding. Beyond eliminating certain programs (Crawley, 1988; Jarman-Rohde et al., 1997; Packard et al., 2007), some services were simplified, placing the burden of work and responsibility on the client, with the expectation that the client had the ability to actively engage in the treatment/service process. Examples of these services were fostering self-help, social supports and implementing case management. In addition, volunteers were also included in the strategy as a way to increase staffing and shore up service delivery without increasing payroll costs (Angelica & Hyman, 1997; Schilling et al., 1988).

The political view of social welfare services did not swing back after the 1980s and Republicans no longer controlled the Presidential office. In fact, in the 1990s, Democratic President William Clinton made a point to change welfare policy replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistant to Needy Families (TANF) (Chernick & Reschovsky, 2003; Gais, 2009; Zedlewski, 2008). The revisions created time limits on payments to poor families where none existed previously (five year limit), imposed work requirements on adult participants, and required single parents to give their child support payments to the state to offset the costs of being part of the program. The overall changes to the program emphasized values of work more than
parenting, ending dependency on welfare payments, encouraging two-parent families, and reducing pregnancies to single women (DiNitto, 2007).

Chernick & Reschovsky (2003) hypothesized that in a recession federal and state support to welfare programs designed for individuals and families with low-income would be reduced, not enlarged. Fast forward to present day and their judgment does not seem to be unfounded. A 2009 New York Times article reported that 18 states had decreased the number enrolled in welfare despite the growing unemployment rates brought on by the present day recession (Deparle, 2009). The lack of government support is in stark contrast to the needs of families and increasing child poverty rates (Isaacs, 2009).

The nonprofit sector has felt the pinch of the most recent recession. Due to shrinking budgets (both public funds and charitable donations), nonprofits have been forced to reduce their workforces and ask existing staff to take on responsibilities that were once those of a now nonexistent coworker (Banjo & Kalita, 2010; Rawlins, 2010; The Editors, 2010). Nonprofits, typically in the position of helping others, are in need of assistance if they want to survive in the tough economy (Banjo & Kalita, 2010).

Packard and colleagues (2008) recognized the tough economic times as a reflection of the restructuring and cutbacks of the 1980s. The authors acknowledged the significant body of literature developed during the Reagan era that offered guidance for nonprofit and public organizations to manage the financial limitations. To examine what agencies were doing to navigate the budget cuts of the mid 2000s the authors conducted a study. They interviewed 59 executives and deputies of nine public human service programs asking about their efforts to reduce program costs. The findings identified a
broad range of approaches such as hiring freezes, layoffs, focusing funding on select programs, and reducing or eliminating funding to select programs altogether. In this instance, eliminating funding could also include terminating service contracts with nonprofit organizations (Packard et al., 2007). Difficult economic times create difficult choices in how organizations deliver services and evaluate which programs are essential and effective (Malekoff, 2010).

Volunteers in the Workplace

The volunteer literature rarely defines the term volunteer or when volunteer is defined the definitions provided are rarely uniform (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996). In addition, the literature rarely reports volunteer data in a way that identifies volunteer demographics. A reader cannot deduce from the articles if the volunteers were college students, retirees, working professionals, etc.

Macduff (1990, 2005) began a discussion to bring some distinction to volunteer types by defining volunteers based on their time commitment to service. Episodic volunteers are short term volunteers and applies to students participating in service-learning classes (Macduff, 1990, 2005; Macduff, Netting, & O’Connor, 2009). I argue that nonprofit organizations need to further develop their definitions of volunteers and I am not alone. In a recent online discussion of volunteer managers the subject of who is or is not a volunteer was addressed. Macduff (2011) contributed to this discussion stating: “Volunteer is no longer a monolithic term” (¶ 1). After summarizing the evolution of volunteers she concludes by stating: “Perhaps it is time for organizations or agencies with a corps of volunteers to review their definitions of volunteer” (Macduff,
This definition is yet to evolve leaving the volunteer literature without clear parameters.

**Volunteer Management**

The goal of the field of volunteer management is to create solid programs that can retain volunteers in roles that are useful and beneficial to organizations. It is apparent from the literature that incorporating volunteers into an organization is not a simple activity. Forethought and planning are required to ensure volunteer roles are clearly defined, structure is in place for training and supervision, and policies are developed to delineate volunteer responsibilities. It also requires preparation of existing employees, investing them in the concept of using volunteers, and providing them with training and guidance on how to work cooperatively with volunteers (Boyd, 2004; Bradner, 1995; Brudney, 1990, 1995; Ellis, 1996; Grossman & Furano, 1999; Hager & Brudney, 2008; Scheier, 1977, 2003; Sloan, 1985).

One key element in the foundation of a successful volunteer program is upper management. The tone that administrators set through policy development and overall support of the program influences the extent volunteers are welcomed and integrated into the structure of the organization (Ellis, 1996). Financial investment, such as funding staff hours and providing office space and equipment to volunteers, can also contribute to the success, or shortfall of volunteer programs (Ellis, 1996; Gazley & Brudney, 2005; Grossman & Furano, 1999). Smaller nonprofit organizations may not require the same extent of infrastructure for their volunteer programs (Brudney, 1994), however effective volunteer management practices are applicable to all organizations regardless of size (Hager & Brudney, 2004).
Successful volunteer programs are able to recruit volunteers into satisfying roles, leading to enhanced retention (Hager & Brudney, 2008). However, challenges to successful management are prevalent. For example, employees could take on or be put into positions of volunteer coordinator with no prior experience or knowledge of this area of practice. Administrators could also ask current employees to take on additional responsibilities without compensation or reduction in prior work duties (Boyd, 2004). A study conducted on charity organizations with volunteer programs revealed that many had “rudimentary and underdeveloped management structures for their volunteer workers” (Hager & Brudney, 2008, p. 9). Nonprofits overall have been criticized for not prioritizing volunteer management practices to make the most efficient and effective use of volunteers (Eisner, Grimm, Jr., Maynard, & Washburn, 2009; Nesbit & Brudney, 2010; Netting et al., 2004). As can be seen from the literature, there seems to be an overall lack of awareness or respect for the complexity and challenges involved in managing volunteers. A successful volunteer program would be housed in a well-run organization: an organization that had an effective and efficient system in place and staff unified behind the common goal of the organization. It would also have a designated employee responsible for volunteer management (Gazley & Littlepage, 2009; Hager & Brudney, 2004).

Volunteer-Staff Relationships

One challenge that has been documented in the literature is the conflict between volunteers and staff. Support from organization employees is an important component in creating and maintaining an effective volunteer program (Brudney, 1990; Ellis, 1996). One would think that gaining this support must be problematic since literature reports
that volunteers and employees are prone to negative relationships (Brilliant, 2008; Brudney, 1990, 1994; Haeuser & Schwartz, 1980; Macduff, 1995; Netting et al., 2004; Scheier, 1977, 2003) and improving these relationships is a common question of volunteer managers (Netting et al., 2004).

Scheier (2003) wrote the book *Building Staff/Volunteer Relations*, which discussed challenges and conflicts with volunteers and staff. Scheier stated in his second edition that “… it is clear that the relationships between volunteers and employees are still too often problematic” (p. 67), citing very little change from the first publication of the book ten years earlier. One area identified as contributing to this conflict had to do with overburdened employees being responsible for volunteers there to “assist” them. Rather than perceiving this as a benefit, employees saw it as an additional burden (Gazley & Brudney, 2005; Scheier, 2003), that the cost was greater than the volunteers’ potential contributions.

Brudney (1990, 1994, 1995), a prolific writer on the subject of volunteers and volunteer use, provided information and guidance on the topic of volunteer-staff relationships. He acknowledged that tension can exist between staff and volunteers and set forth strategies to reduce conflict. Included in his guidance was the importance of inviting existing staff to participate in the planning and preparation of volunteer program development, and/or the tasks volunteers would perform. One of Brudney’s strategic points was educating staff on the positive aspects of volunteers and the benefits of collaborative work. Brudney’s suggestions are not unique and similar themes can be found in the writing of others (Bradner, 2001; Macduff, 1995; McCurley, 1994).
Brudney’s more recent research and publications have in some instances included questions that have touched upon the staff-volunteer dynamic. The findings reported in these articles countered the seemingly pervasive stereotype that relationships were always negative (Brudney, 1993; Brudney & Gazley, 2002; Brudney & Kellough, 2000). His 1993 research examined the volunteer programs of state and local government agencies in Georgia (n=396). The findings showed that only three percent (3%) of state employees reported conflicts with volunteers (Brudney, 1993).

Brudney & Kellough (2000) conducted a national study mailing surveys to state agency personnel managers and received 189 responses. The authors had two goals: to gain a better understanding of how volunteers were used by states, and to see what benefits agencies gained from volunteer use. The results on staff-volunteer relationships showed a small number of respondents (3-8%) who identified problems between volunteers and employees. This is a slightly larger range from Brudney’s (1993) original study. Both studies relied on the person who potentially is the most knowledgeable about volunteers to gauge volunteer-staff relationships.

Brudney & Gazley (2002) investigated the dynamics between staff and volunteers through a mixed-methods research design of the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Service Corps of Retired Executives. Included in the data were existing financial and service documents dating back to the 1950s. The findings supported the positive benefits retired executives provided through their volunteer work by enabling the agency to increase services and support the overall mission. In addition, the incorporation of these volunteers into the program did not result in the elimination of staff positions. In the conclusion the authors stated that “… the evidence of this inquiry
undermines stereotypes of adversarial relationships between volunteers and paid staff” (Brudney & Gazley, 2002, p. 542). The volunteer population in this study is very specialized, and by the nature of the volunteers’ prior work (executive) it would be assumed that they would bring a high level of skill and professionalism to the service provided. Would this still be the case with other types of volunteers, especially those with less professional experience?

A more recent study by Rogelberg and colleagues (2010) focused specifically on experiences employees had with volunteers. They queried 270 employees of animal welfare organizations across the nation on their thoughts about their work and interactions with volunteers in the workplace through a mailed survey. The authors reported that 80% of employees perceived volunteers positively, associating them with descriptive words such as “friendly” and “hardworking.” The understanding and training volunteers have of their work tasks received an overall positive score (50-60%), though positive personal characteristics were perceived to be more important than volunteers’ skill and training. Factors that attributed to employees’ negative perceptions included work stress, work load and job satisfaction. The authors also found that greater levels of volunteer management structure resulted in more positive experiences (Rogelberg et al., 2010). The authors used a variety of measures to provide a comprehensive picture of employees and their perceptions of volunteers. The results continue to solidify that volunteer-staff relationships are often positive, with difficulties being more of the exception. However, like so many other studies of volunteers there is no distinction made between volunteer types so it is unclear if students or seniors were perceived differently by employees. In addition, while quantitative instruments do allow for the
reporting of general themes in the research, it fails to tell the story of the dynamics at play within a specific worksite.

**Service-Learning Students in the Workplace**

Service-learning literature is predominantly focused on student-related outcomes (Eyler, Giles Jr., Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Standing in stark contrast to the plethora of student focused service-learning research is the relative paucity of articles focused on the impacts and benefits of service-learning on the community partners (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Creighton, 2009; Gazley & Littlepage, 2009; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). The comprehensive literature review published by Learn and Serve America’s National Service-learning Clearinghouse in 2001 identified only three substantive areas of service-learning specific to community partners, filling only one page (versus almost seven pages on students). These three areas were student participation, service-learning providing a useful service in communities, and the enhancement of relationships between universities and communities. Only 15 scholarly works covered some aspect of these topics, with considerable overlap between categories (Eyler et al., 2001).

A deeper look at the annotations on the topic of community satisfaction with students showed that the literature had no uniformity in service-learning activities, research questions or research design. For instance, one article provided an assessment model but no data (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996). Four studies used case study as their research method that may or may not have included students, faculty and/or community partners. Four other studies used surveys to collect information, two surveyed students exclusively (Eyler et al., 2001), and two included community partners.
either as part of the overall study (Ferrari & Worrall, 2000) or exclusively (Ward & Vernon, 1999). Ferrari & Worrall (2000) surveyed 30 supervisors of SLs at community organizations asking questions about student performance. There were nine performance areas which included: attendance, punctuality, appearance, attitude, respectfulness, working relationships, dependability, work quality and importance of work. Ward & Vernon (1999) sought to understand the perceptions community partners had of universities and partnering with service-learning classes. They surveyed 65 directors of nonprofits with a relationship to a college or university. The researchers conducted 30 follow-up semi-structured interviews to gain a more accurate understanding of partner perceptions. Three key findings were reported. First, community partners’ perceptions of their local colleges and universities were positive. Second, SLs in the workplace was both challenging and beneficial. Finally, partners desired greater collaboration with campus personnel (Ward & Vernon, 1999).

In addition to examining the articles identified by Eyler et al. (2001), I gathered information from more recent publications that had a community focus to further examine the evolving research involving SLs and partner organizations. All of the articles reviewed provided an interesting glimpse into the perceived contributions of college students within the context of service-learning. One study participant provided an explanation of the different levels of students’ commitment and skills, which could also be tied to the benefits and limitations of student volunteers. To paraphrase the participant: a small portion is exceptional, the majority is average, and another small portion is made up of poor performers who are not engaged in the service experience (Worrall, 2007, p. 12).
Similar to the research summarized by Eyler and colleagues (2001), the methods, samples and focus of inquiry varied widely. One study focused specifically on the theoretical differences of student learning between partner organizations and faculty (Bacon, 2002). Another article reported on the results of in-depth interviews with 20 people in leadership or volunteer management positions centered on themes of costs, benefits and challenges of students performing service-learning activities (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Three others had a very narrow focus that was applicable to the specific class or service-learning activity being examined (Lowe & Medina, 2010; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Worrall, 2007).

Common themes can be found in the service-learning literature that includes data collection from community partners. Beyond the very basic benefit of students providing a valuable resource to allow organizations to get more work done (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Globerman & Bogo, 2003; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Netting, O’Connor, Thomas, & Yancey, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Ward & Vernon, 1999; Weinstein, Gibbs, & Middlestadt, 1979; Worrall, 2007), other more specific contributions were identified. Confirming the overall perceived benefit of student volunteers, one article reported unanimous findings from supervisors “… that they found the students helpful, sensitive, friendly, compassionate, and acting appropriately” (Ferrari & Worrall, 2000, p. 38). The students were credited with bringing new ideas, fresh perspectives, as well as energy and enthusiasm to the workplace (S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Globerman & Bogo, 2003; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Ward & Vernon, 1999; Weinstein et al., 1979; Worrall, 2007). Students reminded staff to look at the big picture rather
than just focusing on the immediate needs or problems (Globerman & Bogo, 2003; Lowe & Medina, 2010). Staff who did not hold a college degree credited students with providing them with motivation to return to school and further their own education (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006). The presence of students in the workplace increased the level of professionalism of employees (Globerman & Bogo, 2003; Weinstein et al., 1979) and in some instances students received credit for breaking down barriers between departments (Globerman & Bogo, 2003) and the town-gown divide (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett, 2009). Students were also perceived to be more reliable than other volunteers (Edwards et al., 2001; Gazley et al., 2009; Worrall, 2007) and performed work of equal or better quality than nonstudent volunteers (Gazley et al., 2009).

Literature on the general volunteer population echoes some of the same advantages credited to students. These included expanding available resources (Brudney & Kellough, 2000), easing workloads (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Gazley & Brudney, 2005), and bringing new ideas and positive attitudes that could help solve longstanding problems (Vizza, 1990). What all of these studies fail to examine is if these themes were generalizable to all of the employees at partner locations. Those asked to respond to surveys or interviews may not be the people who are interacting with students and/or volunteers during their service hours and therefore may not fully represent the voices of partner sites.

The literature addresses altruistic motivations of SLs’ supervisors. A significant factor that influenced the engagement (and/or desire to continue to engage) of supervisors in service-learning activities was the ability to educate and foster citizenship behavior in
students (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007). Altruistic motivators ranked higher than the basic desire for additional person-power in the office to help reduce overall workloads (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006). This research leads me to consider the potential link between supervisors’ commitment to students’ education and development as citizens, with supervisors’ own levels of compassion, commitment and self-sacrifice culminating in public service motivation, a concept that will be described in detail in chapter three.

Challenges associated with SLs often centered on the cost/benefit dynamic (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Martin, SeBlonka, & Tryon, 2009; Ward & Vernon, 1999). For instance, does the service performed by the student outweigh the cost of staff time spent training and supervising? Service requirements of less than 20 hours per semester raised concerns in organizations in part because the amount of organizational energy invested in the student did not balance out with the student’s contribution, thus reducing the reciprocity element of the service-learning experience (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Lack of skills and being unprepared for the workplace overall (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007) or general lack of investment in the assigned duties (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Martin et al., 2009) were other themes that emerged. Another recurring challenge was the difficulty of working around the academic schedule. Projects and service hours were tied to set semesters, including an ongoing cycle of mid-term and final projects/exams that competed for students’ time and attention (Droppa, 2007; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Martin et al., 2009; Netting et al., 2005; Ward & Vernon, 1999; Worrall,
2007). These findings lead one to ask whether such costs are universally perceived by all staff or is it heightened for some employees.

Again, the volunteer literature reports similar themes such as challenges with unreliable volunteers, poor work performance, and high turnover (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Gazley & Brudney, 2005). The volunteer literature associates some of these challenges with the management systems (or lack thereof) in place to support volunteers in their assigned roles (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Gazley & Brudney, 2005; Hager & Brudney, 2005). Effective volunteer programs require a significant amount of staff time which can be challenging if it is not seen as a priority and sufficient resources are not provided (Hager & Brudney, 2005). The service-learning literature overall does not include questions about the volunteer management infrastructure at partner organizations so it is unclear if this same distinction can be made regarding the quality of SLs performance as is made in the volunteer literature.

**Service-Learning Partnerships**

Universities and colleges are becoming more aware of the challenges associated with placing students in active work environments. There is a growing number of scholarly works that puts forth recommendations to build successful service-learning partnerships for all involved (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Stoecker & Tryon (2009) conducted a research project through a community based research class, with community partners of service-learning courses. Members of partner organizations with the most experience working with service-learning were identified and requested to participate in interviews, totaling 67 interviewees. Five themes were identified as most important to ensure successful and equally beneficial service-learning experiences for all involved.
These included: 1) communication, 2) developing positive relationships, 3) providing an infrastructure for service-learning, 4) managing SLs, and 5) promoting diversity in service-learning. The major emphasis of these themes is that service-learning should be well thought out with clear expectations for all involved (students, faculty, community partners and universities). Aspects of these five themes have been identified in other service-learning literature (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Underlying these five points is a message that effort needs to be taken to ensure the service-learning experience is beneficial and not burdensome to community partners. The reciprocity aspect of service needs to be honored by faculty and universities.

Stoecker & Tyron (2009) and others are working to make sure community partners are an equal part of the service-learning team. Their contribution will help ensure that the community service setting is not seen as a testing laboratory for student learning (Creighton, 2009) but rather a mutually beneficial partnership. Yet even these advocates have failed to dig deeper into the organizational setting to discover the influence SLs have on the employees through their on-site interactions. Those interviewed are arguably those most vested in the service-learning partnership and these individuals might not have a clear picture of the dynamics created by placing a student in a busy workplace. In addition, it is not clear from the research and suggestions if organization partners’ volunteer management programs should be included in the discussion of service-learning partnerships.
Summary

Literature suggests that volunteers and SLs are valuable resources for assisting nonprofits address pressing social problems. Volunteers were once the providers of direct service and the financial constraints of the current time call for additional resources that do not add expense for organizations. Overlaid on this need of nonprofits is literature illuminating the contributions of SLs. The research discusses the benefits and limitations of students from the perspective of those most involved with the students or project. The voice of the employees interacting with the students is silent. This lack of information is what I address with this research.
Chapter 3 – Theory and Concepts

This chapter reviews social cognitive theory and how the theory assists in the conceptualization of the research questions. Three concepts are introduced to deepen the connection of social cognitive theory and the workplace: work stress, public service motivation and SL management. Each topic is described in the context of the literature and relationship to social cognitive theory. The conclusion of the chapter summarizes the literature reviewed and supports the need for this research.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory was built on the foundation of social learning theory. Social learning theory explains people’s behavior based on internal thought processes and learning from the example of others (Payne, 2005). Social cognitive theory extends beyond how people learn. The theory’s founder, Albert Bandura, proposed that cognitive theory was a way of “…analyzing human motivation, thought, and action…” (Bandura, 1986, p. xi) to explain how a person interacts with the world. Bandura (1989) stated that people “…make causal contribution[s] to their own motivation and action within a system of triadic reciprocal causation” (p. 1175). The “triadic reciprocal causation” is the interconnection between three factors: behavior, person (cognition), and the environment (Figure 1) (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Figure 1. Social Cognitive Theory

Modified from: Wood & Bandura (1989, p. 362)
The bi-directionality of the relationships recognizes that people are both influenced by and influence their environment. The influences between factors are not symmetric, and can be weighted differently depending on the situation. Peoples’ actions are derived from underlying thoughts grounded in personal experience and feedback from the environment. Self-assessment is ever present as a person gauges future actions based on beliefs in his/her competency and skill from past outcomes. This becomes a cyclical process, which is built on a foundation of cognition that is moderated and mediated by self-efficacy, goal setting, and modeled behaviors (Figure 1) (Bandura, 1986, 1988; Wood & Bandura, 1989). For example, employees working with SLs might have expectations (goals) that they will have positive and beneficial relationships with SLs because they have been exposed to volunteer/SL management training, witnessed other volunteer-employee interactions (modeling) and believe that they can replicate the experience (self-efficacy).

These three concepts (modeling, self-efficacy and goal setting) have a direct relationship within the context of people and their work. Modeling has three parts and is especially beneficial when skill/knowledge is absent. First, a person would witness the skills that he/she needed to develop, such as a supervisor modeling the actions/reactions that are associated with the new activity being learned. Second, the person would practice the skills in a low/no risk setting while being supervised and given feedback in order to develop confidence and skill competence. Finally, the new skills are applied to real work situations while supports are in place to ensure successful implementation and outcomes. The supports also reinforce appropriate implementation. This level of support works to counter any negative perceptions generated from a lack of confidence or
experience by allowing an employee a safe place and support to practice skills while gaining confidence and comfort. Clear and prompt feedback reinforces positive accomplishments and growth (Bandura, 1986, 1988; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Solid volunteer management includes training and support for employees to provide them with foundational knowledge and opportunities to develop skills to work with SLs for the greatest mutual benefit. This support includes follow-up between volunteer managers and staff to ensure their knowledge and skills are sufficient to facilitate positive working relationships and offer feedback and guidance for continued improvement and/or to reinforce positive interactions.

*Self-efficacy* provides a way to understand how workers in similar settings perform differently. The effort and time committed to a project can vary based on the level of determination and belief a person has in his/her ability to accomplish the task. Self-efficacy has a direct influence on motivation and the capacity to problem-solve. If success feels unobtainable a person may try to avoid engaging in the associated activity (Bandura, 1986, 1988; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory presumes that employees most engaged in activities with SLs have a strong sense of self-efficacy generated from prior experience and/or confidence in their abilities to handle new challenges (Bandura, 1989; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Level of self-efficacy could affect employees’ willingness to take on responsibilities that involve supervising SLs. Perception may be positively influenced by employees’ personal values about service or negatively influenced by feelings of work related stress.

*Goal setting* is strongly associated with self-efficacy, motivation, and self-regulation. “Goals have strong motivational effects. They provide a sense of purpose
and direction” (Bandura, 1988, p. 290). Goals need to contain certain components in order to strengthen personal self-efficacy such as an element of challenge, feedback to measure progress, and successful completion. Self-regulation increases through positive goal setting experiences resulting in an enhanced ability to successfully accomplish complex and/or long range goals by creating sub-goals to act as milestones and motivators. Most importantly, successful goal obtainment requires motivation and commitment in achieving the established objective (Bandura, 1988; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Within an organization this plays out by the level of autonomy workers have in setting and accomplishing goals, which also interplays with workers personal feelings of self-efficacy outside of work (Latham, 2007). Employees with knowledge on how to interact and work with SLs and a belief that interactions would be beneficial could create sub-goals that could include and/or be delegated to a helper to assist with larger projects and work tasks. Conversely, if employees were uncertain of how SLs could be involved in their work, goals may be more challenging to establish thus increasing employees’ workload as they determine what tasks can be delegated and/or creating busy work for those offering their service.

Exploring the question of how the nonprofit workforce perceives college student service learners (SLs) in their workplace, within the context of social cognitive theory, leads to the following sub-questions: What behavioral practices of employees contribute to their perception of SLs? What personal beliefs and thoughts contribute to employees' perception of SLs? What environmental factors of the workplace contribute to employees' perceptions of SLs? What interactions with SLs contribute to employees' perceptions? To understand what could influence employees’ behaviors, beliefs and work
environment, three concepts (work stress, public service motivation, and management of SLs) will now be explored.

**Work Stress (Person)**

With stressful working conditions being reported more frequently it is no surprise that job/work stress is such a well researched phenomenon with thousands of articles found on the subject in various academic search engines such as PsychINFO, Social Work Abstracts, and Social Service Abstracts. The rise of the Industrial Revolution and the associated working conditions created the foundation for the discussion of work-related stress (Angerer, 2003). Stress can be attributed to “a disparity between the perceived demands made on an individual and their perceived ability to cope with these demands” (Collins, 2008, p. 1176).

The child welfare workforce is notorious for stressful working conditions and high worker turnover. In 2004, a study was conducted surveying administrators of public child welfare services in all states and the District of Columbia. Responses were received from 42 states. The reported average annual turnover rate ranged from 15.1% (in-home protective service workers) up to 22.1% (child protective service workers). The average vacancy rate for front line staff ranged from 8.5 – 9.9% (American Public Human Services Association, 2005).

Work stress is not limited to the public sector. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999) published the document *Stress at Work*. Included in this report are findings from three different studies conducted by Northwestern National Life, Families and Work Institute, and Yale University. All three focused on job stress and burnout in the general workforce (public, nonprofit and private), with statistics that ranged from
26% to 40%. A 2004 study by Families and Work Institute found that 44% of the 1,003 respondents to a national random sample of working adults reported being overworked in the last month. The study also stated that one-third of the U.S. working population “can be viewed as being chronically overworked” (Galinsky et al., 2005, p. 2).

Work stress can be connected to an array of factors associated with work which may be more or less present based on the perception of the employee or the workplace environment. Examples of these factors include autonomy in decision making (Collins, 2008; DePanfilis, 2006; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Stalker, Mandell, Frensch, Harvey, & Wright, 2007), the level of social support (Azar, 2000; Collins, 2008; DePanfilis & Zlotnik, 2008; Mor Barak et al., 2001), and the overall support created by the climate of the organization (Bednar, 2003; Collins, 2008; DePanfilis, 2006; Landsman, 2007; Mena & Bailey, 2007).

In the broader agency structure many additional factors can either support or undermine employees’ thoughts and feelings about work. As mentioned previously, perceived level of support and overall climate of the office are influential. More specifically these factors include, but are not limited to: (1) worker morale, (2) opportunities for professional challenge (either through promotion or lateral moves), (3) case load size, (4) feeling overworked, (5) long hours, and (6) salary (which is typically low) (Anderson, 2000; H. Bell, Kulkarni, & Dalton, 2003; S. Houston & Knox, 2004; Mor Barak et al., 2001; Stalker et al., 2007). To decrease workloads of employees, organizations enlist volunteers (Brudney, 1993; Colon, 1988; Turem & Born, 1983).

Work stress can be linked to the person/cognitive aspect of the social cognitive theory triad. Work stress affects the way an employee thinks about work and would
influence perceived self-efficacy, establishment of goals and how an employee interacts with work and colleagues (what is modeled to others) (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Work stress becomes a filter which influences interpretation of the environment, thoughts and behavior potentially altering how a person chooses to interact with the world.

**Public Service Motivation (Behavior)**

One would think that the high stress work environment of the public/nonprofit sector would not be a very attractive place to seek employment, yet people continue to step forward to fill these positions. Public service motivation (PSM) is a theory developed in the early 1990s as a way to explain the driving force behind people seeking and taking jobs in the public sector. It is believed that those who choose work that supports the public have different career and employment motivation than those who choose the private sector (Giauque & Ritz, 2010; Perry, 1996). Arguments have been made that the nonprofit human service sector has many of the same attributes that draw people to the public sector, such as serving the community and making a difference in the lives of others (Mann, 2006; Park & Word, 2009; Taylor, 2010). The alignment of public and nonprofit organizations extends PSM’s applicability to the nonprofit workforce. J. Taylor (2010) conducted a study using secondary data (n=2274) comparing the PSM levels of nonprofit, public and private employees. The author found that nonprofit employees had the highest PSM levels, followed by public employees, further supporting the relevance of PSM for the nonprofit workforce.

Definitions of PSM may vary based on a researcher’s discipline or field of study, but they all contain a common theme based on “motives and action in the public domain
that are intended to do good for others and shape the well-being of society” (J. Perry & Hondeghem, 2008, p. 3). Underlying PSM are several core beliefs about the motivation for public service that include self-sacrifice, commitment and compassion (Coursey, Perry, Brudney, & Littlepage, 2008). Perry’s PSM is built on the motivational framework of “higher-order needs” (Anderfuhrren-Biget, Varone, Giauque, & Ritz, 2010, p. 217). People are driven to this type of work based on a desire to serve and promote the public good, not for personal gain (Anderfuhrren-Biget et al., 2010; D. J. Houston, 2006; Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010). In short, people with high levels of PSM working in public or nonprofit settings are there because they chose a position that allows them to fulfill a need that extends beyond the personal, recognizing the importance of serving a cause greater than oneself.

PSM is a personal and individualized experience (D. J. Houston, 2006); however, research links PSM to elements within the organizational setting/system (Vandenabeele, 2008; Wright & Grant, 2010). Vandenabeele (2008) and B. Wright & Grant (2010) reviewed literature on PSM. They found that researchers have conducted studies examining levels of PSM in relation to employees’ levels of work performance, turnover, work incentives, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, organizational commitment, absenteeism and whistle-blowing. The summarized studies revealed that though higher PSM does provide a buffer to many of the challenges associated with the public and nonprofit workplace it does not guarantee these same employees are completely satisfied with their work; external factors within the organization still play a role.

Altruism, prosocial behavior and a strong sense of civic duty are also connected to PSM (D. J. Houston, 2006; Perry et al., 2010) prompting researchers to look at how PSM
influences people outside of the workplace. Numerous studies measured prosocial activities, such as volunteering and charitable giving, as well as civic engagement. Findings concluded that people with higher PSM are more likely to engage in various charitable and civic acts (Clerkin, Paynter, & Taylor, 2009; Coursey et al., 2008; D. J. Houston, 2006, 2008; Park & Word, 2009; Taylor, 2010).

Social cognitive theory recognizes that the internal motivators and thoughts (person) associated with PSM are expressed through action (behavior) (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Individuals who have volunteered are in the position to interact with employees, or other individuals with whom they volunteer. Interactional relationships are modeled by the employees or leaders at their volunteer site, providing these individuals with exposure to the skills needed when they are the recipients of volunteer assistance. In addition, they may have internalized the understanding of how goals are established for them and use this knowledge to assist with goal development for SLs. This combination of experiences would enhance perceived self-efficacy for employees, increasing confidence and the likelihood for positive experiences in their interactions with SLs.

**Management of College Student Volunteers & Interactions w/SLs (Environment)**

Aspects of general volunteer management (discussed in chapter two) are applicable to SLs such as a supportive organizational structure, enlisting the support of employees and ensuring employees are appropriately trained and guided on the best way to engage with volunteers/SLs, and having explicit expectations for volunteers/SLs that everyone is aware (Brudney, 1990; Ellis, 1996). However, SLs do not fit the standard volunteer mold.
Gazley & Littlepage (2009; Gazley, Littlepage & Bennett, 2009) examined the intricacies involved in managing SLs. Projects and tasks assigned to students are subject to a finite amount of service hours, competing priorities of students’ time and further constrained by the rhythms of academic calendars. This means employees might need to invest more time and energy into projects assigned to students so they conform to students’ schedules and can be completed during the students’ service commitment. In addition, a student’s needs and the organization’s expectations might not match (Gazley & Littlepage, 2009; Gazley et al., 2009) leaving both student and agency at a loss.

Gazley and colleagues (2009) conducted a study of volunteer management practices for students in service-learning experiences compared to general volunteers and students in formal internships. A random sample of 1,018 nonprofit and religious organizations from two counties with college students volunteering in some capacity participated in the survey. Those interviewed were senior staff (59%), volunteer coordinators (14%), or someone who worked in another role at the organization (27%). One part of their research focused on the challenges organizations had working with college students. The challenges identified included the management and operational capacity of the organization as well as meeting the outcome demands associated with structured service-learning courses. The authors described the benefits of students as: “improved client services, volunteer labor and capacity, town-gown links, networking, new expertise, technologies and research, resources and agency visibility” (Gazley et al., 2009, p. 5).

The other part of Gazley and colleagues’ (2009) research focused on volunteer management practices for different types of volunteers. They found that organizations
had a reduced level of managerial oversight of service-learning students compared with general volunteers and students engaged in formal internship experiences (Gazley et al., 2009). The study was clearly focused on volunteer management practices. Though it did ask about the respondent’s perception of student contribution to the organization, it did not ask about the interpersonal interactions of SLs and employees. The research raises the question of whether SLs require less volunteer management than other volunteers or if they are perceived differently by volunteer managers.

Management of volunteers and SLs resides within the environmental portion of the social cognitive theory triad. The extent of volunteer management practices, such as training for employees, job descriptions for SLs and support to employees all factor in to the input and feedback employees receives. The available information is interpreted through employees’ cognitive processes, which is exhibited through employees’ behaviors. A strong volunteer management program could provide employees with opportunities to learn effective practices through trainings and modeled behaviors of others, and assist with establishing appropriate and effective job tasks and goals when working with volunteers. This information assists in building a foundation for greater self-confidence and self-efficacy creating the opportunity for a beneficial and positive relationship with SLs (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Reviewing the literature it is clear that SLs and volunteers in general can make positive contributions to organizations by enhancing services and supporting staff. However, the extent of volunteer (and potentially SLs) contributions seems to be contingent on the structure in place to direct, supervise and support volunteers in their roles. Organizational structures, such as policies and volunteer managers provide the
ability to create an important framework to use volunteers productively as well as hold volunteers accountable when they are not performing assigned duties to established expectations (Gazley & Brudney, 2005). This leads to the question, does the same hold true for students engaged in service-learning activities?

SLs in the workplace create additional dynamics in an organization. Obviously, SLs who are not performing well are a burden, yet SLs who are credited as assets also require some level of support from organization employees, such as their time. Organizations that do not have formal volunteer structures in place may feel this burden more keenly as was evident in the study on volunteers by Rogelberg and colleagues (2010). Through a social cognitive theory lens, SLs’ reception by employees will be based on the actions of SLs on assigned tasks, their interactions with employees, the extent volunteer management practices are in place, and employees’ individual cognitive processes including their values of service exhibited through employees’ actions (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

**Limitations & Justification**

Critiques of social cognitive theory include a lack of evidence on the triangular relationship of behavior, cognition and the environment (Harrison, Rainer, Hochwarter, & Thompson, 1997). In addition, this theory focuses on an individual’s response to his/her environment based on perceptions of self-efficacy. The full range of personal factors that can contribute positively or negatively to organizational outcomes are difficult to capture and control for in any research design. This makes determination of causality based solely on organizational actions difficult (Wood & Bandura, 1989).
Social cognitive theory is used to describe and understand peoples’ motivations and actions in relationship to work (Bandura, 1988; Latham, 2007; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Authors in addition to Bandura believe that social cognitive theory is the most comprehensive theory to explain employee motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Pinder, 2008). Counter to Harrison and colleagues (1997), other authors stated that research conducted on social cognitive theory proves the interconnectedness of environment, behavior and cognition (Bandura, 1992; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Pinder, 2008; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Pinder (2008) stated that he “believes that social cognitive theory is the most intelligent model available at this time” (p. 473) to understand work motivation.

Social cognitive theory provides a holistic understanding of people, their actions, and responses to the environment. Using a social cognitive theory frame, employees evaluate and respond to SLs based on the filter of their past experiences, feelings of self-efficacy, environmental conditions, and projections of future outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Social cognitive theory can create a framework and facilitate understanding of employees dealing with complex work environments, personal thoughts and feelings, and actions. The use of theory in this way supports qualitative research allowing theory to act as a guide to the research design, development and implementation of research methods, and interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009).

Summary

Examination of the history of volunteers and the social work profession showed that volunteers of the past provided the services to those in need (Perlmutter & Cnaan, 1993). This has not been forgotten by the U.S. as a whole, with service being part of the
nation’s foundational roots and U.S. presidents from both parties calling citizens to action to assist in tackling persistent social problems (Countryman & Sullivan, 1993). The budget cuts of the 1980s necessitated a renewed investment in volunteers as a way to support organizations’ missions through their contribution of time in various activities (Schilling et al., 1988; Turem & Born, 1983). Institutions of higher education have also acknowledged they have a role in resolving social issues. Service-learning is one method employed by higher education to engage faculty, students and community partners in a common cause (Jacoby, 1996).

Despite the call to use the skills and “person power” of volunteers and SLs, the necessary level of infrastructure to support effective use of volunteers remains elusive (Hager & Brudney, 2008). Good volunteer management resides with strong volunteer coordination and programming, and requires organizations to recognize the importance of volunteers and investing in the structure necessary to successfully use them. Some believe that the extent of volunteer management structures influences the type and quality of volunteer service and commitment to the organization (Gazley & Brudney, 2005; Hager & Brudney, 2005).

Despite the inconsistencies of existing volunteer management programs (Hager & Brudney, 2004), the literature reports that volunteers overall and SLs specifically add value to organizations and credit volunteers with providing additional person power to organizations which positively contributes to the quality and/or range of provided services (Brudney, 1993; Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Lowe & Medina, 2010; Weinstein et al., 1979). SLs are credited with invigorating organizations with energy, fresh ideas, etc., which often leads to staff reinvesting themselves into their work (S. M. Bell &
Carlson, 2009; Globerman & Bogo, 2003). SLs as a whole are not perfect, and can be burdensome when they fail to bring a level of skill and/or professionalism to the organizations (Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Worrall, 2007), yet most agree that SLs benefit organizations where they serve (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Brudney & Kellough, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006).

Remiss in the research is a consideration of the employees’ thoughts about SLs (or any volunteer) in their workplace. For a resource that has such high expectations (solving social ills), it is important to understand the layers of relationships within a work setting between SLs and employees, not just those directly responsible for recruitment, management and/or supervision. Social cognitive theory provides a framework to examine the perceptions of employees while taking into consideration elements of stress, motivation, and volunteer management infrastructure.
Chapter 4 – Research Design

What do employees think about working alongside college student service learners (SLs)? This question requires an in-depth examination using a qualitative case study research design. In this chapter I outline my research questions and provide an explanation and details of the research design. First, I review the research questions. Next, I describe the research, the rationale behind the choice of methods, the sample, how data was generated and analyzed. Third, I describe the demographics of the case study site and characteristics of the sample.

Research Questions

I generated the research questions below from the literature and framed them within the context of social cognitive theory. This process was further influenced by factors of work stress, public service motivation (PSM) and volunteer/SL management structure. The research questions are also guided by the absence of any in-depth examinations of interpersonal interactions of SLs and employees. To date, those asked about SLs have been individuals within organizations who have the most involvement with students and/or service-learning activities. The voices of the general workforce have not yet been heard and they are the ones directly interacting with students in the course of performing their job duties. The examination of the literature leads me to the question: How does the nonprofit workforce perceive college student service learners in their workplace? Teasing out this question using social cognitive theory I have four additional questions:

1) What behavioral practices of employees contribute to their perception of SLs?
2) What personal beliefs and thoughts contribute to employees’ perception of SLs?

3) What environmental factors of the workplace contribute to employees’ perceptions of SLs?; and

4) What interactions with SLs contribute to employees’ perceptions?

**Research Methods**

The nature of the proposed questions requires an in-depth look at the interactions and dynamics at play within an organization that uses SLs. In order to fully understand what influences perceptions I used a qualitative case study design, focusing on an organization as the unit of analysis. Case studies are a qualitative research method that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Case studies rely on multiple data sources to facilitate a holistic understanding of the case being examined (Morgan, 2006; Yin, 2009). My research methods included four different data sources: (1) multiple in-depth one-on-one interviews with key informants within the case study site and stakeholders affiliated with the CPSP; (2) one focus group with five employees from the case study site; (3) participant observation of employees and SLs interacting; and (4) existing documentation on overall organizational services, mission and volunteer/SL management material. My intent using this multi-data source approach was to provide some elements of structure to contain the exploration of the issue while also allowing me to pursue lines of inquiry identified and/or developed through interviews and agency-related information.

The structural approach to the case study method is based on Rodwell’s (1998) constructivist framework which proposes gathering information from multiple
perspectives in order to fully understand the phenomenon under investigation. Some parameters and structure were put in place to support timely completion of the research while honoring the evolving and fluid nature of the constructivist approach.

Rodwell’s (1998) constructivist research design aligns with Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) naturalistic inquiry. The approach is best used for questions regarding complex issues that include multiple perspectives/realities and factors associated with a specific setting (such as an agency) or event. This approach honors the uniqueness of people and their individual realities. Data becomes a means to piece together a picture of the thought process people use specific to the issue under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998). Social cognitive theory also provides a way to understand the uniqueness of individual employees. A constructivist approach provides the flexibility to take into account the complexities of individual experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998).

Constructivist design is consistent with social work values, honoring a person in his/her environment (workplace) while striving for understanding that transcends preconceived biases and stereotypes (Rodwell, 1998). A constructivist approach also works on a premise supported by social cognitive theory. It recognizes that people are active participants in their lives and their interactions with others (Bandura, 1988). While the motivators behind individual actions are beyond the scope of this study, it is believed that “individuals actively create, modify, and interpret the world in which they live” (Rodwell, 1998, p. 17).

Rodwell (1998) and Lincoln & Guba (1995) emphasized the emergent design of constructivist research. Recognizing that realities are created individually, a researcher
could not presume to know the direction inquiry will take. This understanding does not preclude preparing in advance; it requires researching existing literature and coming to the project with a flexible framework of questions to serve as a guide and launch pad to delve into the issue under study. However, it does limit the amount of detail that can be affixed to the design. Flexibility must be ensured so the researcher can allow the inquiry to evolve through the data collection process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998).

**Sample**

This research used a purposeful sampling frame to select one CPSP partner organization as case study site, and employees who have interacted with or were knowledgeable about SLs in their organization. Purposeful sampling implies a deliberate choice in research participants ensuring that everyone in the sample has experience with the phenomenon being studied (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). In a constructivist approach, a purposive sample ensures a breadth of perspectives allowing for a full understanding and complete picture to emerge from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998). I was specifically interested in employees at a nonprofit human service organization that had at least one CPSP SLs during the Spring 2012 semester.

A query in the CPSP database was run to generate a list of organizations that had at least one student during the Spring 2012 semester. The list was narrowed using the following steps: first, remove all organizations that are not nonprofit human service agencies (i.e. government agencies, schools, humane societies, etc.); second, remove organizations that have a higher volunteer to employee ratio and hospitals (because of complex structures and vast size of the organizations); third, remove organizations that
do not provide direct supportive services such as case management, direct care, therapeutic treatment, etc. Less than ten organizations remained on the list.

St. Mary’s (pseudonym) was selected as the case study site based on the longevity as a CPSP partner (over 12 years), a consistent contact person with the agency and the provision of direct services. St. Mary’s serves children and families with a focus on improving all aspects of personal well-being (emotional, mental and spiritual). St. Mary’s offers an array of treatment and case management programs, including residential and day treatment to young women between 12 and 21 years old. The residential program is where the CPSP SLs are placed to perform their service hours acting as mentors and role models to the youth under the supervision of residential child care employees.

The research engaged employees of the site in one of two ways – in-person interviews or a focus group. Those requested and who agreed to participate included the CEO, an upper level administrator, the volunteer coordinator, and one or more people in one of the following roles: unit manager, senior child care worker staff, and child care worker. My primary contact was the upper level administrator. She was able to provide me with an introduction to the CEO who agreed to be interviewed. I contacted the volunteer coordinator directly, provided an overview of the research and requested an interview.

There are seven residential units at St. Mary’s. Each unit has a weekly team meeting that included child care workers, senior staff and the unit manager. My primary contact secured my invitation to attended two meetings, where I provided an overview of the research and requested participants. I distributed a flyer that employees could fill out
immediately, identifying their interest in participating in an interview or focus group, and providing contact information. Employees who did not identify their desire to participate during the meeting could keep the flyer which also had my contact information. For the in-person interviews I reached out to ten child care employees using email or phone as indicated on the contact sheet. After three attempts to reach an employee I discontinued my efforts to contact him/her. Two employees approached me directly when I was on site conducting an interview or engaged in observation.

Focus group recruitment proceeded differently. In collaboration with the administrator, a time was selected for me to conduct the focus group. When I arrived, staff who had not been interviewed were given the opportunity to participate. Five staff agreed to engage in the research. Of the childcare staff I secured interviews or focus group participation with three unit managers, three senior staff and six child care workers.

As described earlier, a constructivist approach values multiple viewpoints as a way of understanding the big picture. In order to develop a broader perspective employees’ perceptions of SLs I interviewed two CPSP SLs as well as key CPSP personnel, including leadership within the social welfare program, leadership within the CPSP, and the employees engaged in the day-to-day operations. Interviews with the CPSP SLs (registered students) were included in the protocol to provide a 360-degree perspective on perceptions and interactions within the organization. Specifically, what they observed or encountered with employees relative to the service they performed and time spent in the work environment? I requested permission from the Assistant Director of CPSP to obtain a list of students volunteering at St. Mary’s in the Spring 2012
semester. There were five students volunteering at this site. In an effort to gain diverse perspectives I contacted students with different ethnicity and experience with CPSP. I contacted the students by email using the script approved by the IRB. I initially emailed two students, one responded promptly and the second did not. I selected a third student from the list and sent the email script; she responded promptly to the interview request.

CPSP personnel are further removed from the workplace/service sites. The structure of the CPSP provides minimal expectations for organizational partners and does not require ongoing communication with a partner outside of supervisor evaluations submitted at the end of a semester for SLs. The CPSP personnel respondents had the ability to provide a very different perspective of the dynamics between SLs and employees. How well did their thoughts align with students and employees? Did they have an accurate understanding of what goes on in the service site and how SLs are received? Having worked with the CPSP as a graduate assistant for just over three years I was familiar with all of the CPSP personnel. I contacted each directly either in person or via email to request an interview. Table 1 illustrates the final sample size for each group and various aspects of the research.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>St. Mary’s Employees</th>
<th>CPSP Personnel</th>
<th>CPSP Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-One interviews</td>
<td>n= 10</td>
<td>n= 4</td>
<td>n= 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>n= 5</td>
<td>n= 0</td>
<td>n= 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data Collection**

Case studies are one approach to qualitative inquiry, providing a researcher with an opportunity to focus on a specific phenomenon and develop knowledge based on the experience gained conducting the research and tapping into the expertise of the case (members) (Rubin & Babbie, 2008; Stake, 2005). Case studies provide an opportunity to expand insight regarding an issue or problem. It allows for an existing generalization to be further validated or brought into question with the emphasis on the issue not the case (Stake, 2005). In this instance I obtained information from an organization (case) as well as CPSP SLs and CPSP personnel to obtain a greater depth of knowledge. My research questions delved into the relationships and perspectives employees have of SLs framed using social cognitive theory. I compared aspects of my findings to the literature determining if the reported benefits and challenges of students in the nonprofit workplace hold true in this research. This procedure is referred to as a reverse generalization (Stake, 2005).

**Informed Consent**

As a student at a public research university I submitted an application to the University at Albany, State University of New York’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) detailing my study, the formal data collection instruments and interview guides. Included in this application were the informed consents providing details of specific aspects of the study. Consent forms need to be consistent with the expectations of the participant for each part of the study and include information on the voluntary nature of participation in research. Five consent forms were used: (1) in-person interviews with employees, (2) focus group participation, (3) in-person interviews with CPSP SLs, (4) in-person
interviews with CPSP personnel, and (5) organization information not publicly available (i.e. volunteer policies and procedures) as well as participant observation. Consents were provided to each participant to read and acknowledge agreement by signing the document. The signed consents were kept in a lock box separate from the other data. A second copy of the consent form was provided to participants for their records. Consent forms or participant names were not attached to interviews or observation notes to protect the confidentiality of participants. Interview specific consent forms included a request for possible follow-up to ask additional questions and/or clarify responses if necessary.

A cash incentive of $10 was offered to all who participated in interviews or the focus group. Participants could choose to accept the $10 or have it donated to the charity of their choice. Some participants accepted the cash for their own use, some chose to use it for the residents of St. Mary’s and others asked that the funds go to St. Mary’s. The incentives were to recognize the contribution of participants without being at a coercive level placing employees in a position where they felt they had to participate.

**Personal Interviews**

Interviews provide access to participants’ thoughts and feelings and an overall perspective behind motives and actions. They also allow exploration of past events that may influence current beliefs (Maxwell, 2005). Lincoln & Guba (1985) believed a strength of interviewing “is that it permits the respondent to move back and forth in time – to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future, all without leaving a comfortable armchair” (p. 273). The interviews were initially structured using questions generated from the literature and my research questions. I asked interviewees if I could follow-up if I had more questions or required clarification. This overall design provided
a blend of structured and unstructured approaches to further explore what was known and delve deeper into the topic based on data from prior interviews.

**Focus Groups**

The focus group provided another way to gather employees’ thoughts and feelings on the topic of students in their workplace. Unlike individual interviews, focus groups expect that the interaction between participants will create an environment of sharing. The group dynamic has the potential to create a space for greater sharing, and build on the ideas of others, while also allowing for members to express consensus or disagreement with the statement of others (Liamputtong, 2011).

**Personal Interviews and Focus Groups**

Interviews and the focus group were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interview guides were initially constructed from my research questions and the literature. Questions were added/eliminated based on the responses of interviewees allowing for flexibility to follow emergent themes from the data rather than confining responses to my preconceived notions based on personal experience, expectations and reviewed literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Respondents were asked if follow-up contact could be made in the event further questions need to be asked or clarification to their initial responses were needed. Interview guides can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F. Questions that were added or removed have corresponding dates when changes were made.

**Observation**

I engaged in participant observations and documented my experiences and impressions interacting with and observing employees and SLs. These observations did
not serve as a direct data source, but in accordance with Lincoln & Guba (1985) were used to support and/or verify findings as they emerged from interviews and analysis.

**Existing Information**

The information collected on the organization included what was publicly available, such as information on their web sites, as well as internal documents such as an annual report detailing service provision. (There were no formal policies or procedures in place for management of volunteers or service learners.) The purpose of the documentation was to provide a comprehensive picture of the organization.

Existing information of the organizations was accessed from the public domain and through requests from the primary contact who is a program administrator, and the volunteer coordinator. Specific information obtained includes: mission statement, values, client population, services provided, volunteer management practices (reported orally, no manual or formal policies exist). A detailed listing of organizational demographic information requested can be found in Appendix A.

**Integrity of Data**

Data was collected in three different ways, and from different sources to support a thorough understanding and allow for triangulation of data. Triangulation assists in verification of the overall trustworthiness of the data collected. It helps reduce researcher bias, provides a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study and increases credibility of findings (Maxwell, 2005). Lincoln & Guba (1985) explained that trustworthiness has four parts in qualitative inquiry: “truth value”, applicability, consistency and neutrality. “Truth value” centers on the accurate interpretation of a respondent’s story. Does the meaning obtained from the person’s words reflect his/her
truth and understanding of the subject? Applicability aligns with generalizability, but rather than make claims about how the data could apply to another setting, data are presented in a way to let the reader determine if the information fits his/her situation. Consistency is grounded in the belief that there will be variation in the data and therefore steps are taken to understand why the variation might occur and how that might influence the data. Finally, neutrality is ensured by confirming that whatever findings are reported can be clearly linked to the data. These four parts are the qualitative equivalent to the reliability and validity of quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To support accuracy of data collection and elucidation of results two steps were taken. The first was providing interview transcriptions to interviewees to check for correctness. Participants were informed at the conclusion of the interview that a transcript of the interview would be emailed for review to confirm accuracy and request any changes if a discrepancy was identified. Only one participant requested changes be made to the transcript and those changes focused on her articulation of her commitment to work, work roles and work-life balance. The second was sharing the data and coding with a fellow researcher to assist in gauging accuracy of findings. She reviewed the data and agreed with the codes and themes that emerged. Both forms of member checking further support triangulation which enhances the validity of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2006). This particular step supports Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) “truth value” element of trustworthiness by ensuring that the interpretation of the information shared by the participant accurately reflects his/her reality.
Data Analysis

The data collected was reformatted in a way that would allow for analysis in NVIVO, a qualitative data analysis software designed to support qualitative analysis through layers of coding and queries to retrieve data in meaningful and useful ways. Audio recordings were transcribed into MS Word documents and uploaded into NVIVO for analysis. Agency documents were copied onto a word document from their website, while hard copies were scanned into a PDF document which then went through a text recognizer to be copied and pasted into a word document. In addition, I used NVIVO’s memo feature to document my thoughts, impressions, and questions to track the research process. This information was used as a reference to help with framing possible follow-up questions and data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An inductive approach was taken for data analysis to let themes emerge from the data. Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Rodwell (1998) discussed unitizing and categorizing as methods of inductive analysis. A unit of data can be described as “the smallest piece of information that can be understood by someone with minimal knowledge or experience with the phenomenon under investigation” (Rodwell, 1998, p. 155). The suggested method is that all units are identified and then comparisons are made to develop themes and categories allowing theory to emerge from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998). Thomas (2006) suggested a three-step framework based on a literature review of qualitative research analysis procedures. Step one is becoming familiar with the data by reading it through multiple times. Step two develops from the baseline knowledge with the creation of initial themes and categories and text units coded appropriately within. The units are not limited to one category or theme. Step three is the continuation of
coding as data is further categorized and themes are refined. Emerging from this refinement is a hierarchy of main themes with corresponding subthemes (Thomas, 2006). Identified themes were examined through the lens of social cognitive theory to evaluate if certain elements of person, behavior or environment influenced perception.

NVIVO does not constrict how data can be analyzed but provides a platform for coding and categorization. Each interview was uploaded and coded first as a case, which allowed for demographic information to be associated with the specific interviewee. The focus group transcript had a separate case for each participant. Tree nodes were created initially based on the interview questions allowing for large sections of data to be collected in one area. These nodes were refined and reorganized as additional interviews were uploaded and coded, and when deeper analysis was conducted. A final accounting of the nodes can be found in Appendix G.
Chapter 5 – Research Findings

This chapter presents the research findings based on data collected from interviews, a focus group, observations and existing documents. First, I provide the history and profile of the agency where research took place to provide a context for the background and experiences of those interviewed. Then I discuss the demographics of the sample, which includes the employees of St. Mary’s and the Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) personnel and students. Finally, I report the findings from responses to questions grouped by themes that emerged through analysis. I have provided visual representation of the data when possible for clarity.

The Study Site and Characteristics of the Sample

The Study Site: St. Mary’s

St. Mary’s was established in the late 1800s to serve the needs of women who were homeless and troubled. Today St. Mary’s offers a range of residential, clinical treatment, and community based services. The residential program (where students from CPSP are placed) serves young women from age 12 to 18 years, who have emotional and behavioral challenges. There are currently seven residential units which are illustrated in Table 2. Two provide regular residential care and when running at capacity can accommodate 48 girls and 14 staff. There are three intensive needs programs that care for 36 girls and employ 54 staff. There is one small intensive needs program with six girls and seven staff as well as a transitional program for older girls that has six residents and seven employees. In addition, the residential program also has an on-call desk that employs seven staff, and there are four administrators providing oversight. In total, St. Mary’s can accommodate 96 residents and employ 93 staff (St. Mary’s administrator,
personal communication, May 17, 2012). SLs are typically placed in the regular residential or intensive needs units. The LIFE program is not seen as a good fit for SLs because the residents are typically older and closer or similar in age to the college students.

Table 2

*Residential Units with Staffing and Client Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Program</th>
<th>Staffing (based on full capacity)</th>
<th>Clients (based on full capacity)</th>
<th>Participants Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Residential 1</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1 Senior Worker 2 Child Care Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Residential 2</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager 1 Senior Worker 1 Child Care Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Needs 1</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager 1 Senior Worker 2 Child Care Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Needs 2</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager 1 Child Care Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Needs 3</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Needs 4</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIFE</td>
<td>1 Unit Manager</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Senior Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Child Care Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Characteristics of the Sample*

A total of 21 people participated in this research: 15 employees of the case study site (Table 2), two students, and four personnel with the CPSP. All but one of the
participants was female. The age of the sample ranged from 21 – 74 which broke down into the following age groupings: seven between 20 – 29, two between 30 – 39, four between 40 – 49, five between 50 – 59, two between 60 – 69, and one over 70. The St. Mary’s employee group had six people below the age of 39, and nine people over 40. The CPSP personnel and student group had three people under the age of 29, and three over the age of 40 (Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Distribution of Sample</th>
<th>20 – 29</th>
<th>30 – 39</th>
<th>40 – 49</th>
<th>50 – 59</th>
<th>60 – 69</th>
<th>70+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were given the opportunity to identify their ethnicity. Eleven individuals identified as White or Caucasian, eight as Black or African American, one person identified as West Indian, and one person identified as Moorish American. The CPSP personnel and student group was more homogeneous with all but one person identifying as White or Caucasian. This distribution is represented in Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Distribution of Sample</th>
<th>White / Caucasian</th>
<th>Black / African American</th>
<th>West Indian</th>
<th>Moorish American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to age, the education covered a broad range from GED to Ph.D. One person had a GED, two completed high school, three had taken some college courses, three had Associate’s Degrees, six had (or were just about to complete) Bachelor’s
degrees, five had (or were just about to complete) Master’s degrees, and one person had a Ph.D. Those with a Master’s degree and above studied social work. All those with Bachelor’s degrees studied in social work or a social science (such as psychology and sociology). Those with Associate’s Degrees had studied either human services or chemical dependency. St. Mary’s was split on the education continuum with seven employees with Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees, and the remaining eight with Associates or lower. CPSP was split with half (3) holding a Master’s or greater and the other half Bachelor’s or below (Table 5).

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Distribution of Sample</th>
<th>GED / High School</th>
<th>Some college</th>
<th>Associate’s</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Ph.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates the breakdown of professional experience. The majority of all participants had more than five years of professional work experience (n=16). The CPSP students and one personnel had four or less years of work experience. The remainder of CPSP personnel were extremely experienced with one person having 10 – 19 years, one with 20 -29 years and one over 50 years. Of the CPSP personnel, two had been with the program less than four years; one person was going on her fifth year and one person had been with the program for more than ten years. One person’s experience working with volunteers was limited to the CPSP, while the other three had more extensive experience of ten or more years. Similarly, one person with the CPSP had volunteered less than two years, while the other three had ten or more years.
Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Experience Distribution of Sample</th>
<th>0 – 15 months</th>
<th>1.5 – 4 yrs</th>
<th>5 – 9 yrs</th>
<th>10 – 19 yrs</th>
<th>20 – 29 yrs</th>
<th>30+ yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. Mary’s had one employee with less than 15 months of professional experience, and St. Mary’s was her first full time position since graduating with her Bachelor’s degree. Similarly, another staff had less than four years with St. Mary’s being her first full time employer. Five employees had between 5 – 9 years of professional experience; three of these people had the similar range of years with St. Mary’s. Of the other two, one had worked for St. Mary’s less than 15 months and the other less than four years. Three employees had 10 – 19 years of professional experience and all three had been with St. Mary’s more than five years, one of those more than ten years. The remaining five employees had more than 20 years of experience; five of those had been with St. Mary’s more than ten years.

Findings

I built my research questions on the foundation of social cognitive theory identifying work stress in the person aspect, public service motivation in the behavior aspect, and volunteer/SL management as the environment (Figure 1). I organize the findings by the four components of the theory: behavior, person, environment and perceptions of SLs. Each theory component is further broken down in each section that aligns with the codes and themes of Appendix G. I provide support and comparison of these themes with quotes from St. Mary’s employees, CPSP personnel and students, as well as personal observations.
Social Cognitive Theory – Behavior

Behavior is expressed through action, and there are three coding themes that align with this component of the theory: St. Mary’s employees’ roles and responsibilities, volunteer activities, and their roles with SLs. I begin with a discussion of work roles and responsibilities to provide an understanding of what St. Mary’s employees are doing and an overall sense of job duties and expectations. I include volunteer activity because I believe it is one way people can express values around service, which could influence how people perceive volunteers and SLs. Finally I review the roles employees have with SLs to examine the interactions and relationships that are reported.

St. Mary’s Employees – Work Responsibilities

The employees at St. Mary’s who participated in this research can be broken down into two broad categories: residential and administrative. The administrative roles varied in their scope, but all had some level of involvement in the residential programs. The CEO provided a broad definition of the work responsibilities that are inherent in the CEO position. “I have program responsibilities for the overall agency to make sure it is sound and safe and in line with its mission.” The CEO was new to the agency and still learning the finer points of the day to day operations.

The volunteer coordinator (VC) described a broad range of responsibilities that included recruitment and coordination of college student groups and professional internships/field placements (counseling and social work majors specifically) from local colleges/universities. The VC also worked with community groups to create activities on site, for instance there is an ongoing relationship with a local law school providing annual educational programs, and a small private four-year college providing weekly
The VC works with other groups to secure tickets for local events (for instance the circus was just in town) or to bring speakers on site for the residents. The VC provides broad oversight for volunteers, which can include assigning other employees the duties of primary contact and supervision. In addition, the VC works in the development and community relations office, and work responsibilities also include assisting with fundraising, developing relationships with potential donors and assisting with various publications. All of this work is done on a part time (three days per week) schedule.

The administrator has many different responsibilities that include oversight of the residential program, hiring of new employees, running the on-campus “store” that supplies new residents with clothing, direct supervision of some child care staff and general management of the volunteer/internship programs with the UAlbany CPSP and a local community college (CC) human services program. She was responsible for the establishment of the partnerships with UAlbany and CC, and in the beginning was responsible for the supervision of all students. At this point in the administrator’s career she now coordinates the program and delegates the supervisory responsibilities to the unit managers. The coordination of college students is one small piece of a very large job. The administrator has a personal interest and investment in these programs and advocates keeping oversight as part of her job duties.

As mentioned earlier, of the child care employees interviewed, three were unit managers, three were senior workers and four were child care staff (Table 2). I grouped the unit managers with the residential category because of their close connection with the day-to-day operations of the residential unit for which they are responsible. Each unit
has one unit manager. Unit managers are accountable for the care of all the girls in their
unit, to ensure shifts are appropriately covered with trained staff who are following the
established guidelines and routine of the program model. There are three different
programs, regular residential, intensive needs, and LIFE. Each has specific rules and
expectations for the residents, and requires staff to respond in specific ways when
interacting with the youth. One additional responsibility is the supervision of SLs who
are assigned to their unit. Unit managers often work off the floor, completing necessary
administrative tasks that are essential for maintaining the program.

Each unit manager has two senior workers. Senior workers act as the
intermediary between the unit managers and child care staff. They are responsible for
communicating directives and delegating activities to the child care staff. They are also
responsible for ensuring routine is maintained and that all activities, such as walks,
laundry, etc. have been completed during the shift. Senior workers are on the floor,
working with staff and residents. In a way they serve as the eyes and ears for the unit
supervisor when she is not working on the floor. While the unit manager is tasked with
the supervision of SLs, the actual responsibility of this oversight is passed on to senior
staff.

The child care staff are responsible for carrying out the routines with the youth.
One aspect of this is making sure the girls are safe while meeting their needs. Child care
staff recognize the difficult backgrounds of the residents and believe their role is to
provide “love and support” which comes in part from providing a consistent structure that
can safely contain the girls when they are having difficulty. Child care staff also work
directly with the SLs who are present during their shift. How staff interacts with SLs will be discussed in further detail below.

**Volunteer Activities of Staff**

I asked about personal volunteer experience to examine if people’s perceptions of volunteers varies based on their own actions. The number of employees who have spent time volunteering is split, eight reported never volunteering, three reported volunteering 1.5 – 4 years, one reported between 5 – 9 years, and three reported over 20 years. Interestingly all of those with no volunteer experience are residential staff, and all but one identified themselves as an ethnic group other than Caucasian. Age seemed evenly distributed between those who had volunteered and those who had not. Education achievement was greater in the group who had volunteered with three holding MSW degrees, two with Bachelors’ degrees, and two with some or no college. Those who had not volunteered had two Bachelors’ degrees, three Associates’ degrees and three with some or no college (Table 7).

The volunteer activities reported can be broken down into four categories: advocacy, boards and/or committees, fundraising events, and service work. Each person provided multiple examples such as fundraising for health based charities, habitat for humanity, humane society, local church, etc. One of the staff reported that her motivation to volunteer came from family values: “I came from a family that volunteered for everything in the community. My father was very strict about that. You pay back.” The remainder did not attribute volunteer activity to any specific motivator but all appeared proud to share how they give back.
**Table 7**

*St. Mary’s Demographics Focused on Volunteer Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Position or Roll</th>
<th>Yrs Volunteered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>Senior Worker - CCS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>HS Graduate</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Moorish American</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>Senior Worker - CCS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>West Indian</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>Unit Manager</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>Unit Manager</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>HS Graduate</td>
<td>Senior Worker - CCS</td>
<td>1.5 - 4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>1.5 - 4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>Child Care Staff</td>
<td>1.5 - 4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>Unit Manager</td>
<td>5 - 9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>Volunteer Coordinator</td>
<td>20+ yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>20+ yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>20+ yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Employees’ Roles with SLs*

SLs are part of the fabric of St. Mary’s and therefore are likely to be present during shifts of residential employees. Because SLs are around, employees do not have a choice whether or not they want to work on the floor with a student. However, employees can express their personal autonomy by choosing how they interact with students. The majority reported actively engaging with SLs exhibited by answering SLs’ questions, showing them the ins and outs of the program, and being in the role of teacher.
One staff person shared that she based the quality and type of interactions with SLs on the level of commitment and interest they expressed. She summarized the distinction stating: “Some come in here with that attitude that they want to learn and they ask questions and some don’t.” For those who express this positive “attitude” (i.e. initiating communication and asking questions) the worker is more than happy to answer questions and connect with a SL. Another staff described her involvement with SLs as much more active. She makes an effort to create positive relationships seeing the value of their service: “I get to know them, I get to talk to them. I feel like not everybody really bothers to do that but I have always kind of made friends with them. Taken them in basically. I really like the interns.”

While observing, I witnessed SLs being greeted warmly by employees when they arrived on the unit for the first time that day. Employees answered SLs’ questions and provided updates on the residents and/or activities of the day. I saw SLs, child care staff and residents sitting together engaging in activities. From my observations and per their reports St. Mary’s employees are engaging with SLs as part of their job, either directly or indirectly. Their reported actions highlight a willingness to engage which extended throughout the employees interviewed. This investment was apparent in employees who did and did not volunteer and uniform across positions.

**Social Cognitive Theory – Person**

The person aspect of this research includes employees’ perceptions of and relationship with work. I asked about employees’ feelings about work, work-life balance and commitment. Because the person aspect of this theory represents what people think
and feel I included employees’ thoughts about volunteering. I wanted to recognize that people can value the concept of volunteering without participating in service activities.

**St. Mary’s Employees and their Work**

Employees who were interviewed were asked about their commitment and feelings about the work that they do. All reported that they were invested in their work and enjoyed what they did. Five people made a statement using the word “love” to describe their feelings toward their work. The focus of this emotional commitment is on the young women served in the residential program. One employee summarized the motivation of herself and her peers by stating: “I think in this field you have to have a lot of compassion and it comes from reading their [residents] intake and trying to make a difference in their lives, just that.” Another employee summarized employee commitment in this way: “Listen, nobody stays here unless they love it.”

This love and passion for the work is not without challenges. One unit manager expressed: “I love my job. I love this work. I know working with adolescents in general I think is difficult . . . it can be challenging at times, but it has been very rewarding.” One challenge is maintaining a balance between life at work and away from work. Most of the employees mentioned juggling multiple priorities such as work and motherhood, work and school, or work, motherhood and school. Due to the nature of the work, sometimes the “crazy hours,” or getting calls during off time to deal with work problems can make finding a balance difficult. One employee shared:

It is kind of hard to balance the life because I do a lot of crazy hours. I am a mother, I have kids at home. I’ve gotten better with it throughout the years. Right
now we don’t have a supervisor so here I am again a little unbalanced but it will pan out.

My requests for interviews for this research were met favorably by employees. They appeared interested in the topic and willing to share their experiences. Despite their expressed interest in being interviewed several employees missed or canceled appointments due to personal and work related conflicts, which could be a reflection of employees’ busy lives. During the interviews responses to questions about work were not forced, conversely, they were often infused with humor and enthusiasm for the role they have at St. Mary’s supporting the residents.

**St. Mary’s Employees and Volunteering**

St. Mary’s employees were almost universal in believing that volunteering is something important for people to do. Of the ten in-person interviews with St. Mary’s employees, nine had comments regarding the benefits of volunteering. Three of these individuals have no volunteer experience. One did not comment on the importance of volunteering but did state: “I would like to volunteer; I would have no problem volunteering.” The barriers for this employee were balancing multiple priorities thus limiting her ability to find time to volunteer. Another employee who didn’t report volunteering also mentioned a desire, yet was unable to follow through because she was too busy juggling other aspects of life (work, school, children).

The responses to the questions regarding thoughts about volunteering centered predominantly on the benefits to the people performing service. One employee stated: “I feel like volunteering people’s time is a good thing. It shows that you can be responsible, ... how much you have grown on your part as far as who you are helping and what the
cause is for.” Another staff referenced how volunteering was essential for ongoing learning and development: “I think you can only keep what you learn and what you have by giving back.” Finally, one employee commented on the feel good aspect of volunteering and how people are motivated by the positive feelings generated by giving back:

Though it is not always easy to explain I think there is a huge value there for anybody who is interested in volunteering. The best volunteers have kind of caught on to that secret and are benefiting from it. You often hear from them that they get more than they give. I think that is the reality that volunteers who kind of capture and exemplify the essence of volunteering, that is what they have learned.

The employees at St. Mary’s appear to value their work and see the benefit of people contributing time in the service of others. Work stress, though present, does not appear to lessen the commitment to the job and the compassion workers feel for the youth.

Social Cognitive Theory – Environment

Two coding themes were included in the environment portion of social cognitive theory: what SLs are doing in the workplace and what structures are in place to manage SLs. I have included comments from CPSP personnel on their overall expectations of SLs in the program’s classes, as well as my personal observations.

SLs – What they Do

CPSP personnel were asked what students did for service overall. All were in agreement that CPSP SLs perform a range of activities that vary based on the needs of the partner organization. Two of the prominent activities are tutoring and mentoring. One personnel summarized student activities as follows:
They do anything and everything an employee would do. The only thing I can think of that they don’t do is that they don’t use heavy machinery and they don’t do physical interventions. Other than that we have students doing anything you can imagine.

This flexibility in student roles and responsibilities is seen as one of the strengths of the CPSP because it allows partner organizations to use students to meet their needs and build capacity.

Maybe because of the flexibility, and the volume of hours students are required to complete, St. Mary’s has interpreted the service experience as an internship. St. Mary’s employees make no distinction in the performance expectations of UAlbany CPSP SLs and CC students taking a course that requires students complete 16 hours per week in a community organization.

The administrator who established the partnership with the CPSP and CC views students’ experiences as an opportunity to learn the intricacies of a residential program, get to know the population served and the roles and responsibilities of residential employees. The administrator wants students to have some freedom to be creative as well. “If they want to do activities we’ll help them with that, if they want to run groups we’ll help them with that. . . I want them to enjoy what they are doing and learn what they are doing.” Two of the unit managers echoed the administrator’s goal of having the students learn about the residential program at St. Mary’s. One employee believes it is important to: “help them [SLs] understand the purpose of such an agency and what we do, and how the youth come to our care.”
More broadly, though, there are no clearly specified expectations of SLs. There were four major activities performed by SLs cited by St. Mary’s residential staff: shadowing/observing staff, reading case files, interacting with the girls, and for those that proved competent – acting like staff. The initial activity, after meeting with the administrator and the unit manager is to shadow staff, observing, learning the routines and ways to engage with the girls. The residents are complex with traumatic histories so SLs are allowed to read case files to deepen their understanding of why the girls are placed at St. Mary’s, why certain structures are in place, and why girls may act out or respond negatively. Case files contain assessments and background information with details of any physical and/or sexual abuse and neglect a resident has experienced. One staff stated that it is important for SLs to “always read their intake because you don’t want to say the wrong thing to them to trigger them.” The intake allows staff and SLs to “get to know their background.”

The overall goal of shadowing and reading case files is to increase SLs comfort to be on the residential floor and interacting with the girls. The case files are a way for SLs to understand the difficulties the residents have experienced. The level and type of interaction between SLs and residents varies based on the expectations of staff and engagement of SLs. The universal goal is that SLs are engaging with youth through conversation, games, and structured group activities. Some SLs will take residents places on campus, such as the yard for a walk or down to the recreation department. One unit manager expects SLs to develop and implement a group activity during their service hours.
The SLs that are engaged, eager to learn and willing to step up and take on responsibilities are seen as true assets by the employees. “They are learning the job description of the child care workers” and “we have some that participate as much as if they were on the clock with us.” Granted, there are restrictions on what SLs can/cannot do, but within those parameters St. Mary’s make the most of SLs. For instances, one staff reported:

If we are sitting here we can allow them to open the door, we can give them the keys to open the door because we are in plain sight of them. We can’t leave them in the room with the girls but they can unlock the door. They are helpful in a lot of ways like going down the steps for dinner they can address and say, ‘Okay ladies, quiet down a little bit.’ We do encourage them, ‘address them a little bit, we’ve got your back.’ Don’t go overboard or anything just address them like, ‘time to line up,’ prompt them for a routine, or prompt them to be quite in the line because they can do that.

The students sense this responsibility as well. One SL reported that she steps in on occasion and maybe exceeds her role as a volunteer when staff are occupied elsewhere or a youth is acting out in front of her. She reported that staff have spoken with her: “They pull me aside and say, ‘thank you for today, we really appreciate your help even though you are really not supposed to help us, but thank you.’”

I spent time on several residential units in the final month of the spring 2012 semester to observe interactions between employees and SLs. One of the things I noticed was that SLs appeared to have developed a level of comfort in their roles, speaking with employees and residents and flowing with the residential routine. My observations
confirmed the reports of employees and students. This comfort could be attributed to the fact that SLs were nearing the completion of their service hours and had built relationships with the people in the unit and were familiar with the residential routine and employee expectations.

**Volunteer Management Infrastructure for CPSP and CC students**

The CPSP personnel were all in agreement that strong volunteer/SL management plays an important role in supporting students and facilitating positive employee perceptions about SLs. One person expressed it this way:

I think if they [organization] have a really good infrastructure and they have someone in the organization, like a volunteer coordinator or someone, who they [SLs] can go to, they [employees] really value them. I think if there is a really clear sets of responsibilities for the students and the students know what they are suppose to be doing, and everyone who works with them knows what they are supposed to be doing I think they are seen as very valuable. I think if that infrastructure isn’t in place they can be seen as getting in the way, or they just sit around, not do anything.

My initial research design included obtaining written guidelines or policies and procedures for the management of volunteers and or SLs, however St. Mary’s does not have anything written. What exists is a structure and process that appears to have become part of the routine and embedded in the culture of the residential programs. Two staff acknowledged that they look to the expectations set forth in the specific course the SL is in to guide assigned activities and responsibilities. Others (n=6) reported that the
structure and routine of the residential program provides the framework for SLs experiences.

The initial meeting or phone contact with the administrator is used as the only pre-screening for SLs. The administrator may rule students out and inform them they will not be volunteering at St. Mary’s if SLs do not show up for initial appointments or she feels they have an “entitlement attitude.” An entitlement attitude was described as SLs believing that volunteering at St. Mary’s I was a right, rather than a privilege and opportunity to learn. Once a SL starts there are no additional screenings or formal check-ins to assess quality of student performance until the conclusion of SLs service hours when supervisors complete an evaluation for the CPSP. This seems to miss out on an opportunity to intervene with SLs who are not engaging with the residents, or are performing poorly in other ways.

Orientation appears to be a two step process. First, SLs meet with the administrator. She explains: “I do the initial interview and try to figure out what unit they would go on.” She elaborates, sharing that the units have different personalities based on the residents and staff. Whenever possible she first tries to match based on her perceived goodness of fit, then on space availability in any given unit. The initial interview also is where the administrator reviews confidentiality. She has no formal presentation or documentation for students to read and sign, rather it is a conversation:

I just talk to them about when you leave here you will talk about St. Mary’s. If you go home with corn in your hair people are going to ask. Just leave the kids names out of it or anything that would indicate who the girl is. And I don’t even
know the Mayor of Troy, but I always say that if the Mayor of Troy’s daughter was here you couldn’t tell anybody.

Second, the SLs meet with the unit supervisor responsible for the unit they have been assigned. The unit supervisor explains expectations, which include the initial observation of staff and residents, then moving toward engaging with the residents in meaningful ways as well as taking time to read case files so they become familiar with the challenges and life circumstances of the residents. SLs are given a tour, introduced to residents and child care staff, and shown the routine. One role unit supervisors see as important is educating SLs about boundaries. One unit supervisor explained:

I go over boundaries with them, make sure that you keep a very tight boundary with these kids, a professional boundary. Don’t reveal too much personal information that is not for them to know. These are considered clients; they are not your friends.

The rules and expectations set forth for SLs is loose and in some ways open to interpretation, and in other ways set in stone by the structure of the residential program. One child care staff explained SLs behavioral expectations in this way: “The same rules that we have to follow. No horseplay with the kids, no cursing, being a role model.” A unit manager’s statement also illustrates this basic understanding: “Whatever expectations I set for the staff I expect my interns to follow those as well.” Another unit manager sets forth progressive expectations for SLs. As they gain knowledge about and comfort with interacting with the residents she expects the SLs to create and implement some type of group activity. This is no different than the expectations she has for her staff and builds into her goal that SLs “leave here with an understanding of what this kind
of setting is like and the kind of youth that we work with.” The one overarching rule of SLs that appears to be understood by everyone is that “they always have to be with another staff and they cannot be involved in crisis intervention.”

Once SLs start their hours the supervisory structure is open to interpretation and when in doubt childcare staff refers back to the familiar hierarchy of the residential program. If a problem arose with a SL one staff stated, “I would go to a senior worker,” something echoed by her colleagues. The unit supervisors may meet with SLs initially but recognize that their role does not have them on the residential floor as a primary duty, thus trusting their day to day oversight to senior staff. However, senior staff interviewed did not report this as one of their responsibilities with SLs.

A unit supervisor makes a point of connecting with her SLs routinely, preferably once a week. Another unit manager described setting up a formal meeting with the SLs initially and toward the end of their hours. The goal of the end visit was to check in about their experience, asking SLs to “tell me a summary, what did you think, what did you learn? Is this a job you would consider coming back and actually working in?”

Some staff view supervising SLs as part of every staff’s role stating: “It’s everybody’s responsibility as a staff here to watch after everybody.” This seems to imply a sense of community that the SLs are included within. Another staff responded as follows to a question about what she would do if she saw a SL doing something questionable/inappropriate: “I would pull them to the side and let them know… If I saw someone doing something I would tell them then and there…. I wouldn’t want them to play themselves.”
Staff for the most part are comfortable with the current structure that is in place. As one staff explained: “I guess for having them for so long we know the dos and don’ts.” This again speaks to the routinized nature of the residential program’s use of SLs. The CPSP SLs felt this structure as well, as one shared: “They think it is routine, it is standard for college students to come and intern there.”

Three staff spoke a little more about structures and expectations. A unit manager reflected on the expectations she communicates to SLs about their role and senior staff’s role with SLs, feeling it was sufficient. One spoke about a desire to have clearer expectations potentially linked to the learning process of SLs: “They could have a training and orientation process that could mimic the same process a staff was going through.” Her goal would be to create a more uniform objective experience: “this is what you should be doing, this is what you could do the first month you are here.” Maybe with something of this nature in place, it would reduce feelings of concern around SLs with less confidence that can leave one with a feeling of “the kindergarten parent, putting the kid on the bus and hope that they survive.”

It appears that the structure that is in place for SLs works because it is what everyone is used to but the results are a loose supervisory hierarchy for the student. There are expectations, but no form of accountability if students do not perform well, or need assistance to engage more actively with the youth. Given the population St. Mary’s serves, clear volunteer/SL management practices are important, and expressed as a need by the new leadership:

Sometimes people witness here situations and dynamics and behavioral concerns and problems that are not typical. Unless you have a nice structure in place for
that kind of experience to be processed then you could easily have volunteers that become disenchanted, that become overly concerned about stuff, that lose sight of what their role is and start overstepping their bounds or shrinking in terms of what they are doing. So the structure within the agency is really important.

**Social Cognitive Theory – Perceptions of SLs**

The intention of using social cognitive theory was to anchor different aspects of the personal thought, personal behavior and workplace environment to create a foundation to base employees’ perceptions of SLs. The analysis of these three dimensions already examined shows positive thoughts and actions of employees working in an environment supportive of SLs. Now I examine more perceptions of SLs. I discuss employees’ views of service-learning, the influence of SLs in the workplace, SLs characteristics and differences in SLs from different programs/educational institutions.

**Service-learning as part of a college class**

St. Mary’s employees were asked their thoughts about having a service component as part of a college class. The response was unanimously positive. Employees saw it as an opportunity for SLs to get hands on experience and training giving students a taste of the working world. One employee explained: “Doing the field work is good. You get that practice before you graduate. So you are not so scared. You are more comfortable, you know exactly what you are getting into.”

The SL experience puts college students in the human service workplace. One employee explained: “This is their first step into the professional world, as far as getting professional references, seeing what job opportunities are, even eliminating an option.” This is especially important with the population St. Mary’s serves. The young women in
the residential program have experienced some form of abuse and/or neglect in their life. In addition, many of the residents have co-occurring mental health conditions. Their ability to use positive coping skills with life stressors and emotions is compromised leading to negative responses such as verbal and/or physical aggressive behaviors toward others or inflicting injury on themselves. Staff recognize gaining experience and exposure to the residents, given their background, is important in deciding if you can handle the work. One staff shared: “I think that they learn because they probably come in here with expectations on how the place is. And then for them to get in here and see that it is totally different.” Another added that SLs often ask, “So this is how they behave?” And she affirms that it is in fact how the residents can behave.

The SLs that come through St. Mary’s are a source of future employees. Their time on the floor with staff and residents has provided them with a solid understanding of the program. As one employee explained:

Every intern that came on this floor has a good relationship with this staff and they, at least seven out of ten, come back either working here or just picking up hours because they have built a relationship with the staff and with the girls. Another staff put it this way:

My feeling is you train them well to start with and they will respond. They get hooked on it. One year here I had probably 12 people on staff who had interned under me at some point in time and they got hooked on the place and they stayed, and got paid jobs after they got out of school.
Influence of SLs on workers and youth

The literature is thick with references to the benefits of having SLs in the workplace. I asked questions about this influence in three different areas: employee performance, impact on youth and service quality. The responses both confirm and contradict the literature. The first area I address is whether SLs can be a positive influence on employee performance. Two articles spoke to SLs heightening employee professionalism (Globerman & Bogo, 2003; Weinstein, Gibbs, & Middlestadt, 1979). A person from the CPSP believes employees “have to be on their toes more and they have to worry more about what they say” when SLs are around. I interpret increased professionalism to mean that employees are more attentive to their job duties, and interactions with residents conform to the rules of the program and avoid unnecessary confrontation and negative banter with the residents. St. Mary’s employees go through specialized training about engaging with and supervising residents in order to provide a safe and therapeutic environment that minimizes triggering negative behavioral responses in the residents. This training is intended to prepare employees to work in a professional manner with residents, and if the reports from the literature about SLs increasing professional behavior it would indicate a positive change in employee performance.

Child care workers and CPSP SLs report does not support the idea of increased professionalism of employees when SLs are present. As one staff stated in response to a question on whether employees act differently when SLs are around: “No, I don’t think so… I think staff act exactly the way they always do.” Another reported: “No, it is the same. It is the same tone with or without the interns.” SLs picked up on this as well, with one reporting: “No, I don’t think so. I think they act the same whenever we are around.”
The unit managers want to believe that the presence of SLs would improve employee performance, however as one unit manager shared, the reality does not provide evidence to the claim:

I would like to say yes, [that the presence of SLs encourage employees to act professionally at all times,] at the same time some of the feedback I have gotten from my interns’ leads me to believe that no, because they have been able to report to me certain situations where it was obvious where certain staff would need extra training and self awareness.

One of the CPSP SLs spoke about, “catch[ing] staff slipping” and reporting back to her unit manager about these interactions. Examples could be an improper verbal exchange between staff and residents or not properly supervising the residents creating opportunities for them to act in ways that could harm themselves or others (attempting to run away, initiating a fight with peers, try to self-injure). From the reports it does not appear that the presence or absence of SLs changes employee behavior.

My time on the unit floor did not appear to influence the normal behavior of employees and their interactions with residents. I was acknowledged and asked questions about my purpose being in the unit. It appeared staff knew their routines and had certain styles of engagement that remained constant. Based on my observation, I would agree with the assessment of SLs and child care workers.

The literature also attributes SLs with inspiring employees to pursue higher education (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006). St. Mary’s CEO also believes in the influence SLs have on employees’ educational motivation: “I think there are lots of
benefits in encouraging staff who don’t have a higher education to consider it.” I asked those in the focus group if they had a desire to further their education because of their interactions with SLs. Of the five participants in the focus group, one had a Bachelor’s degree, two had Associate’s degrees, one had some college, and the other graduated high school (Table 8). The consensus among the five was no, interacting with SLs did not inspire them, or their colleagues to return to school. One staff stated: “I don’t think the people around here care.” Another responded with an associate’s degree stated:

When I see them doing it I say I am glad I am done with school, because all I heard them saying is that they have quite a few papers to write by this date and they have all this that they have to get done and I say I’m glad I am done.

Many of the employees spoke about juggling multiple priorities. It appears, given this statement, that this employee is not eager to add more obligations to her life such as formal education.

Though the literature discusses the influence of SLs enhancing professional presentation and encouraging others to return to school, in this instance it does not appear to be the case. SLs appear to be entrenched in the culture of St. Mary’s and therefore do not merit special attention or effort on the part of staff to present themselves to the best of their ability. Or staff are doing their best but require additional training as reflected in the comment by the unit manager. The lack of inspiration to further their formal education could reflect the longevity of employment at St. Mary’s in direct care roles, for instance in the focus group everyone had five or more years working with the organization. It could also reflect the contentment with the responsibilities of the job and the role they play in the lives of the residents.
The employees did agree that SLs have a positive influence on the youth being served. Overall, employees credited SLs with being good role models and getting youth to think about their future, which could include college. The fact that SLs are young and closer in age to the youth than many of the employees made it easier for SLs to relate with the residents. “They [youth] get to see a different face, a different person instead of just seeing the staff. They want to see somebody else. Another thing is their age, they can identify with them in some ways.” Another staff shared:

The kids are really interested when they see these interns going to school and talk about their papers, ask them what they got. ‘How did you get into this college?’ It is good to have that interaction with them and about their school life. If they take more from the interaction we don’t know but at least from that you see that they are interested.

Yet another reported: “Yeah, they’ll ask a lot of questions and some of them will go into talking about what they want to do. It helps. It gets them thinking in a positive direction.”

My questions about SLs’ influence on service quality circled back to statements related to SLs and their interactions with youth. “It’s helpful, it really is. It is an extra person who is engaging with a girl who maybe if they weren’t engaged in a conversation would be doing something negative.” As the CEO explained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Education Distribution of Focus Group*
I think it really takes a lot of skills and a lot of different people to connect with our kids. The more talent we bring in and expose them to and the more caring people we expose them to I think the healthier it is for them.

The CPSP personnel agree that SLs enhance the quality of services offered by partner agencies. As one person stated: “Organizations I believe get some valuable assistance that helps them provide the best services they can provide.” This same person went on to share: “I think most people would love it if each kid had a one-on-one volunteer. Someone who thought they were special.”

**SLs as Engaged Learners**

A theme that came up throughout the interviews was the characteristics of SLs. The love of interns and perceived positive effects of having them in the workplace is based on an engaged learner. Engaged learners are the SLs who are eager to be working with the staff and residents, ask questions, and are not afraid to step forward and interact with others. As quoted before one child care worker shared: “Some come in here with that attitude that they want to learn and they ask questions and some don’t.” Staff recognize that the work they do is challenging and requires certain characteristics, such as patience, consistency and being able to respond in a therapeutic manner when residents are in crisis. Another staff summarized it this way: “I guess personality [is important]. You know the fit with the job… Pretty much every job isn’t for everybody.” Another child care employee shared: “The girls have such dominating personalities, … they [SLs] are a little frightened to interact with them or something.”
SLs that are willing to engage are the ones who will have the more positive and beneficial experiences for themselves and the residents. A unit manager reflected on what traits help SLs create successful connections with the youth:

The interns that I have seen that to me have been more successful, are the ones that the youth actually notice when they are around. As opposed to the interns that have come in and have not been as engaged in the whole process/experience. They are like ‘who is this person again?’ The interns that come in, those ones who are willing to engage and are open minded about the whole experience tend to be the ones that the kids really attach to.

How SLs present themselves as they engage is equally important, especially when often times they are not much older than the residents. A senior worker described it this way:

It has to do with the approach that they use when coming toward the kids. The approach that they use is either welcoming or it is going to put them in some sort of trouble. The last intern we had, she was very professional. Even though she looked … the same age [as the residents] … she was still professional. And the kids respected her as a staff, so she came in as a professional.

Characteristics of students also came up as a theme with the CPSP personnel. Many of their statements hypothesizing how employees would respond to SLs had to do with the traits of the individual students. SLs who engaged and committed themselves to the service work would generate a more positive and supportive response from employees than those who did not take their assigned responsibilities seriously by not showing up, or just doing the bare minimum.
The natural attributes and behaviors of SLs are important. However, strategies implemented by staff can also contribute to positively engaging SLs in their service, especially those who may be less confident in new environments. Three examples emerged in this study: matching students with units based on personality, structure of the residential program, and intentionally engaging SLs. While observing I did notice that the units, with their respective staff, had different personalities. Some appeared to be relaxed and jovial, others a little more serious and matching SLs based on these qualities appears strategic. In addition, the structure of the residential program provides external support and clarity of expectations. For instance, when dinner time arrives and employees are cuing residents to line up, a SL would know where she/he is supposed to be going.

Another staff brought up the idea of using the residents as a way to reach out and engage with SLs. She described her approach this way:

We have a couple of them [less engaged SLs]. It didn’t last but a few times that they came because we always kept pulling them in slowly but surely. If it was just telling the girls, ‘we are going to talk about this today’ or ‘we are going to ask her these questions.’ Basic questions about their college course, their classes, just basic life stuff. It will pull them out. We spot them, we can tell the ones that are not going to engage with the girls the first time they come, because they are just sitting there. And we’re like, okay, we need to pull her out and we do.

Overall, the characteristics of SLs are influential in the quality and depth of their experience interacting with the residents and employees. Those that willingly engage with limited or no support appear to create the strongest impression and are perceived to be a positive addition to the unit. Strategies are employed to varying degrees to match
students with a unit that matches personalities to help facilitate engagement and in some instances staff take deliberate actions to ensure SLs participate with the residents and employees.

**Differences in SLs by University/College Affiliation**

Finally, I asked if there were differences between UAlbany CPSP SLs verses students from other colleges in the area. In addition to the CC program, the small private four year college has a mentor program that comes in weekly to engage with youth through homework assistance and playing games. St. Mary’s employees were split on their opinion if college students from the different institutions/programs were similar (eight) or different (seven).

Those believing college students were different did not uniformly agree on how they were different. One stated UAlbany students were younger and less experienced while another said UAlbany students were a little older with a greater sense of independence than the CC students. Another, in a way elaborating on the maturity of UAlbany students stated, “they are a little more motivated” and yet another staff stated that, “they look like they work here.”

Those reporting similarities focused on the attributes of positive engagement such as knowing the names of residents, playing games, talking about college, etc. A senior worker told me: “I don’t see any difference at all. They talk about the same thing, they talk about their papers, they know they have to meet with their professors, they are on their hours.”
Summary

St. Mary’s offers an array of services including residential care to young women age 12 to 18 years. The individual residential units have a clear hierarchy, with child care staff making up the bulk of the workforce, senior workers overseeing the implementation of the routine and care of the residents, and unit managers ensuring the unit is adhering to the guidelines established for the care and supervision of the residents. There are four administrators that monitor the residential units, one of which oversees SLs from the CPSP and local CC human service program.

St. Mary’s employees expressed a genuine commitment and compassion toward their work with the residents. While the work is demanding, and can spill over into other areas of their lives, they appear to recognize the value of their role in the lives of the young women at the agency. This love for the work appears to carry over into their relationship with SLs. Employees’ engagement with college students performing service is seen as an opportunity to mentor and foster the development of future colleagues.

The management structure for SLs is unwritten yet embedded in the culture and structure of the residential model. The administrator provides the initial screening, and a cursory overview of confidentiality, while also assessing the SLs to determine which unit would be the best fit. The assign unit manager is the next to meet with SLs, providing a greater overview of expectations, a tour and introduction to staff and residents, and imparting additional “training” on boundaries and confidentiality. Once on the unit floor, the oversight of SLs transitions to child care staff and senior workers, however there is no clear understanding of who is directly responsible for attending to SLs. It appears this
responsibility is seen as part of everyone’s job, with a fall back to residential hierarchy if problems were to arise.

SLs are expected to read the case files of the residents, shadow staff, and then transition into engagement with the residents. The overarching expectation is that residents will learn the job responsibilities of child care staff, and have a greater understanding of residential services/residential care. SLs who readily engage with residents and staff are highly respected by employees and are perceived as “almost staff” in that they do everything a child care staff would do except be alone with the residents and intervene in crisis.

Employees reported a high respect for those who volunteer regardless of their own volunteer experience. The inclusion of a service component in college classes was viewed as an opportunity for students to gain real world experience, and test out human service work. Employees have a choice in how they engage with SLs. Those interviewed reported that they enjoyed working with SLs who asked questions and expressed a desire to learn. Mentoring SLs can be interpreted as service because it is above and beyond established work expectations. This commitment to others, both through employees chosen profession, and personal service shows a motivation toward public services.

SLs were seen positively by all employees interviewed. Reasons given centered on the relationships SLs develop with the residents, providing access to a world that involves fulfilling dreams through college and hard work. SLs also provide residents with someone who they can relate to because of the closeness in age. SLs were not seen to benefit employees by increasing their professional work performance, or imparting a desire for higher education.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The research findings provide data allowing me to answer the questions established for this dissertation. In this chapter I first address the limitations of the research. Next I answer my research questions by linking them with the findings. Finally, I discuss the implications of this research in the context of service-learning, the nonprofit workplace, and social work education.

Limitations

There are several limitations with this study. First, case study research provides rich details but has limited ability to generalize beyond the individual case site. Qualitative inquiry makes generalizability or transferability difficult. I focused on one research site and am not in a position to claim that finding can be generalized. I can present the information from my research and allow others to determine how applicable the results are to their own settings and situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I did compare my findings to that reported in the literature. This reverse generalizability is seen as a strength of qualitative research (Stake, 2005).

Second, the sample for this research is specific to the CPSP organization partners and their experience with CPSP students, and even more specific to St. Mary’s. Service-learning is a broad educational paradigm with no uniform implementation. Students volunteering 60 or 100 hours in a semester will likely have a different influence on employees than students volunteering less time or working on a service-learning project for an organization. This limitation is not unique to my research. Service-learning literature has been critiqued for the lack of uniform research methods and research
questions limiting the ability to generalize findings across organizations and service-learning experiences (Furco & Root, 2010; Kezar, 2002).

Third, my goal was to interview employees who have a range of association with SLs to provide a comprehensive picture. Participating in research is voluntary and those who choose to participate may have extremely positive or negative experiences they want to share. However, there is a tendency for people to report what they think the researcher wants to hear rather than their actual thoughts and feelings (Rubin & Babbie, 2008) leaving a potential for respondents to be less honest about their opinions. The employees in this study were all positive about SLs in their workplace and reported a strong commitment to their work. The bulk of the employees interviewed had a substantial history with St. Mary’s, however there were several employees who indicated their willingness to participate in this research and then were unable to because they no longer worked for the agency when I attempted to follow up. I am presenting this study as a representation of St. Mary’s, yet I might still be missing the full picture of SLs in the workplace.

Fourth, elements of organizational settings can be unique and become difficult to generalize across systems (Harrison, Rainer, Hochwarter, & Thompson, 1997). Though I used social cognitive theory to frame the research, it is difficult to determine causality because of the range of personal and organizational factors that contribute to employees’ perceptions (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Of the three elements I choose to anchor the different aspect of the theory, one had little to no influence because it was practically non-existent. Based on my examination I substituted another element (workplace culture) as an explanation of the positive perception.
Discussion

I framed this research around social cognitive theory believing factors of work stress, public service motivation, and volunteer/SL management would influence perceptions of SLs. I asked the overarching question: How does the nonprofit workforce perceive college student service learners in their workplace? To tease out the answer to this question I developed four sub questions: a) What behavioral practices of employees contribute to their perception of SLs? b) What personal beliefs and thoughts contribute to employees’ perception of SLs? c) What environmental factors of the workplace contribute to employees’ perceptions of SLs? and d) What interactions with SLs contribute to employees’ perceptions? I examine each question in light of the findings that emerged from the research.

What behavioral practices of employees contribute to their perception of SLs?

There are three themes that I discuss related to this question: public service motivation, role of mentor and teacher, and employee characteristics. To begin, I linked behavior to public service motivation theory which explains people’s motivation to be employed in the public/nonprofit sector based on their commitment, compassion and self-sacrifice to make a difference in the lives of others (Anderfuhr-Biget et al., 2010; Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010). The staff uniformly expressed a strong commitment for the work, expressing their compassion for the youth they support and the dedication they have to being a positive influence on the residents. The combination of what employees shared in the interviews, such as having a “love” for their work, being able to be a positive influence and support in the lives of troubled youth, and the fact that they
may have been employed by St. Mary’s for many years in traditionally low paying roles speaks to a high level of motivation toward public service. This passion appears to link directly to the residents, not St. Mary’s. Employee comments regarding work did not reference the workplace, rather it was directed at the opportunity to make a difference in the life of the youth.

The second theme grows out of the dedication employees have toward their work that appears to translate into a willingness to engage with SLs, answer questions, act as role models and teachers as the SLs are introduced to residential work. Employees appear to recognize that SLs have the potential to be future colleagues, which further invests them in the relationship they choose to build with SLs. The combination of passion for the work and wanting to see SLs become St. Mary’s employees creates positive behavioral interactions by employees toward SLs. The desire to help students learn and teach them about the “real-world” of work was identified as motivators in the literature (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Ward & Vernon, 1999) as well as evaluating SLs potential to become future employees (Edwards, Mooney, & Heald, 2001).

Though many employees expressed a desire to interact in a positive way with SLs not all employees are created equal leading to my third theme, employee attributes. Just as the characteristics of SLs are important, so are the characteristics of employees. One senior worker believed most students are willing to engage and discussed how she deliberately takes steps to engage SLs who may be more hesitant or reluctant to participate in activities. This includes how she speaks with them as well as prompting residents to ask SLs questions in order to “draw them out.” SLs who are a little more hesitant to engage will not find many opportunities to avoid the persistent attention of this
staff. Conversely, another senior worker is not bothered by SLs who maintain the role of observer. Her response to my question about why students might sit back and observe rather than engage was: “I just think they might be uncomfortable. I am a quiet person too, so I’m probably thinking they don’t feel like just jumping in. They might not feel comfortable with that, and I understand that so I don’t push them.” This same worker believed that very few SLs actively engaged with residents, while the others interviewed believed the ones who did not participate were the exception, not the norm.

The interaction between employees and SLs can be examined in the context of the literature regarding conflict between employees and volunteers. The employees I interviewed reported no conflict supporting research conducted by Brudney & Gazley (2002) and Brudney & Kellough (2000). The more nuanced understanding of motivation and behavior of employees interacting with SLs has not been addressed in the literature.

What personal beliefs and thoughts contribute to employees’ perception of SLs?

I examine three areas which I believe could be associated with employees’ thoughts and beliefs that influence perception. First, I linked work stress to the person component of social cognitive theory to help frame my thinking about this question. Work stress has an ability to negatively influence work and is pervasive in the workplace. St. Mary’s is no different than other human service work with many similar attributes that have been cited to cause work stress such as long hours/extra shifts, low pay and a highly structured program limiting individual autonomy (Mor Barak et al., 2001; Stalker et al., 2007). St. Mary’s employees who were interviewed did not appear to be negatively influenced by the stressors of the workplace. Some reported challenges finding and maintaining a healthy work-life balance, however those same employees expressed a
genuine commitment to the work. As one employee stated, “Nobody stays here unless they love it,” and this appears to be the case with the people interviewed. From the information I gathered it does not appear that employees are negatively affected by work stress, and if they are, it is not creating a negative perception of SLs. This would appear to align with Rogelberg and colleagues’ (2010) findings that employees who had lower levels of work stress had more positive impressions of volunteers, or conversely greater work stress creates more negative perceptions.

Second, I examine volunteering actions and beliefs. As stated earlier I asked questions about volunteering to determine if personal volunteer service and beliefs about performing service influence perception. Though volunteering is a behavior, the motivation behind the action is generated on personal values and beliefs. Though I found slightly more than half (8 of 15) reported no volunteer experience, everyone believed it is an important and a valuable experience. Some even wished they could volunteer, or planned to volunteer in the future when work and life activities allowed.

The last theme is employees’ belief that service-learning provides an opportunity for college students to gain experience in the workplace. Employees recognize that the work they do can be difficult and is not for everyone. SLs have the opportunity to see what it is expected of residential employees and gain an understanding of the challenges and rewards inherent in the work. This desire to orient SLs to this reality seems to carry across in the way they engage and work with SLs.

The last two themes regarding volunteering and indoctrinating SLs into the working world can be connected to the concept of mentoring. The desire to impart knowledge for the benefit of others is often linked to an altruistic motivation. While not
all employees formally volunteer, their engagement with SLs could be classified as service. The literature has referenced the motivation of SL supervisors as educating college student to promote their profession and develop a dedication to serve the needs of others (Basinger & Bartholomew, 2006; Globerman & Bogo, 2003).

**What environmental factors of the workplace contribute to employees’ perceptions of SLs?**

I examined four factors related to the environment that could influence perception that are associated with St. Mary’s structure to support SLs: conformity of volunteer management practices to the literature, use of SLs, structure of residential program, and acculturation of SLs in the workplace.

First, the literature is clear that the infrastructure supporting volunteers is important and necessary to create a workplace supportive of volunteers (Bradner, 1995; Hager & Brudney, 2008). SLs do not conform to traditional expectations of volunteers and therefore some scholars have begun to discuss the differences between the two and what structures are required to support college students volunteering as part of a class (Gazley & Littlepage, 2009; Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennett, 2009). In the instance of this organization, formalized written policies and procedures do not exist for the management of volunteers or SLs. There is no handbook or guide to consult when an employee has a question about how to engage with or manage a problem related to SLs. The SLs support structure at St. Mary’s diverges from the recommended volunteer practices. With all of the requirements outlined in the literature it would lead me to believe that a lack of formal written structure would result in poor functioning volunteer programs. This
clearly is not the case at St. Mary’s, the support for SLs appears to be derived elsewhere, as described below.

Second, St. Mary’s incorporates SLs into the fabric of the organization, placing them on the floors of the residential units, learning from staff and engaging with residents. SLs are seen as an asset when they are present because they serve as that “extra set of eyes” and engage in meaningful interact with residents, potentially keeping residents from acting out in negative ways. Due to the nature of the program, a minimum number of staff always needs to be working. SLs are never part of that equation, so if a SL does not show up there is no hardship or additional burden placed on staff. With this type of structure there is very little reason for employees to resent SLs, and more of a reason to enjoy their company and assistance when they are present.

Third, the model used by St. Mary’s for SLs is deceptively simple: place SLs in very structured residential programs that have clear routines and set activities throughout the day. The program model has clear hierarchy with senior workers and unit managers making it easy for SLs and employees to figure out who to go to if there was a problem (which seems rare). The structure provides a very natural way to guide SLs toward actively engaging with residents with what could be minimal effort of employees. For instance, if everyone (staff and residents) are sitting together playing games or working on homework, it would be easy for a SL to find a seat to join in. SLs who chose not to participate would become obvious both in where they chose to position themselves (i.e. sitting away from everyone) and by not conversing with others. Employees could easily invite SLs to join with a resident, or group to draw them into the activity.
Fourth, there is a workplace culture that has been accommodating SLs as part of the residential routine for years. Staff with the CPSP see the positive perception of SLs by employees being generated by factors in addition to volunteer management structure. The CPSP staff with the most years of experience with service-learning shared: “Communication, structure, consensus, enthusiasm, all of those would be key, necessary conditions for success.” Another person from CPSP believes: “It has to do with organization culture, and how the culture looks at volunteers.” These comments seem to hit the mark with St. Mary’s.

In place of written volunteer/SL management policies and procedures is a structured residential model with SLs dispersed to various units. Employees believe that SLs will learn the role of residential staff through observation, reading files, and engaging with the residents. The strength of this culture seems to create a supportive environment for SLs who report feeling appreciated and valued by St. Mary’s employees. The structure of the program, with formalized, yet unwritten practices, seems to bypass many of the “required” elements suggested by the literature.

*What interactions with SLs contribute to employees’ perceptions of SLs?*

I asked this question to ascertain if different types of interactions could influence perception. Would a CEO who does not interact directly with a SL have a different perception than a child care worker who sees her/him every week? A CPSP personnel shared her belief that a CEO might see volunteers as a way to develop donors, increase public awareness, and/or showcase the organization, whereas direct care staff may view a SL as an additional burden when performing general work duties because it is another
person whose safety must be ensured. Though I did find that SLs may be viewed
differently, the overall consensus remained positive regardless of position.

The CEO, like the residential employees believed that SLs were gaining valuable
experience preparing them for the work world post graduation. The CEO does not
interact with SLs, but thinks of them as one piece of a complex organization serving a
specialized population. In addition to discussing the benefits for both the SLs and youth
that align with points made by residential staff, the CEO also shared thoughts about
volunteer structure and procedures to minimize risks to and misconceptions of SLs that
could occur while in a residential setting.

Of those interviewed, none of the employees reported that SLs were burdensome.
Though there is a lack of choice in whether a SL will be assigned to a unit, employees
exercise their free will by deciding how they will interact with SLs. Because there is no
mandate that employees must interact with SLs, they could choose to remain distant and
unengaged with SLs. Per the reports of the staff this does not appear to be the preferred
course of action, rather they offer support and welcome SLs as part of their team
supporting the youth. The level of employee investment may vary based on the
characteristics of the SLs, and their willingness to engage with the staff and youth.

**How does the nonprofit workforce perceive SLs in their workplace?**

The reports from St. Mary’s employees regarding their perceptions of SLs in their
workplace were unanimously positive. No one viewed students as a burden, or a
hindrance in providing services to the youth. Conversely, most saw the benefit for
having SLs in the workplace by providing extra support and positive role models for the
youth. This supports the literature that reports that SLs are seen as a benefit to services and the organization (S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Blouin & Perry, 2009).

Framing this perception in social cognitive theory, it would appear that manageable work stress, high public service motivation and workplace culture (not volunteer/SL management structure) are important conditions to generate a positive perception of SLs. The residential employees of St. Mary’s juggle multiple priorities of work and life (that can include family, school, and/or second jobs). They expressed a strong commitment to the work that they do and are eager to share their passion with SLs. The culture of St. Mary’s and the structure of the residential model provide a framework for SLs to learn through observation and direct interaction with residents and staff. Because the residential program requires a set staffing ratio and SLs cannot count as staff, the presence or absence of SLs does not change how the program runs. SLs who choose not to engage appear to stay on the fringes, but do not become a burden. SLs who do engage are seen as an asset, contributing to the future growth of the residents and potentially growing into a future colleague.

St. Mary’s model has removed the potential conflict between employees and SLs related to missed shifts, academic calendars and conflicting priorities of coursework, exams, and service hours. This is accomplished in part because SLs are not an essential component of the program, they enhance existing services. There is an effort made by the administrator to match SLs to residential units based on personality and overall goodness of fit. In addition, if college students do not actively engage they stick to the fringes, thus out of the way of staff and residents. SLs who are eager to learn provide
employees an opportunity to share their knowledge, passion for the work, and become a mentor for those who could become a future colleague.

SLs are also a benefit to residents. They are additional people with whom they can talk with, and because of the marginal age difference between SLs and the residents, residents feel that SLs understand their problems better than staff. SLs become a role model and mentor, providing a fresh insight into “adult” life, being in college, and how to appropriately interact with others. The academic schedule is prohibitive of long term relationships which could be seen as a detriment to the youth. However, the time limited nature of the semester provides immediate clarity to the duration of the relationship to the residents limiting expectations and potential feelings of abandonment.

In St. Mary’s model, SLs have an opportunity to learn about residential services, why young women are placed there, as well as the difficulties and hardships they have endured. SLs have an opportunity to learn about the nonprofit human service workplace, providing them with valuable information guiding career choices. In many instances, SLs find a job at St. Mary’s either full time or per diem, in the residential programs. The learning opportunity requires SLs to be active participants in their service experience, interacting with employees and residents to learn about the program and services. SLs who hang back, for whatever reason (shy, lack of motivation, etc.), will not have the same educational opportunities.

The volunteer management literature emphasizes the importance of clear policies and procedures with job descriptions, training and supervision of volunteers as well as training and support of employees. For the greatest success the importance of volunteer use and management structures need to be emphasized by upper management (Brudney,
Contrary to what the volunteer management literature would lead you to believe, St. Mary’s SLs program seems to be strong and vibrant without written policies and procedures, formal trainings, employee choice in working with volunteers and other factors that have been identified as vital to successful volunteer programs (Ellis, 1996; Grossman & Furano, 1999). The only “essential” pieces of volunteer infrastructure that St. Mary’s does have are the strong support of upper management and supportive staff. SLs are folded into an existing structure with dedicated employees who are passionate about their work and enjoy educating SLs about human services. It is possible that other agencies, with similar levels of structure, could easily include SLs to engage with clients in ways that benefit those being served and the agency overall.

**Implications**

The research findings and review of the literature lead to several implications for institutions of higher education, human service organizations, and social work education. Organizations that partner with college educators to be a service-learning site need to take into consideration how SLs will influence clients, employees and management practices. St. Mary’s has developed a model that uses the existing residential program structure to incorporate SLs into the daily routines of the residential units. The structure provides a way for SLs to learn about a residential program, work roles of employees, and get to personally know the young women who the agency serves.

Reciprocity is a prominent concern in service-learning (Ward & Vernon, 2000). Often the needs of the university and/or students take priority, and community partners are left negotiating academic calendars, students with multiple priorities (Droppa, 2007; Lowe & Medina, 2010), and investing time and energy into students who are only
involved for a limited duration (S. M. Bell & Carlson, 2009; Martin, SeBlonka, & Tryon, 2009). Similar to other service-learning activities, the CPSP frames student service within the academic calendar. The CPSP differs from many service-learning models by allowing organizational partners to use SLs in a way that best meets their needs. St. Mary’s chooses how many SLs they will accept in any given semester, can turn away SLs if they did not see them as a good fit, or terminate SLs service. The structure CPSP empowers partner organizations to use the CPSP SLs to their advantage, rather than other service-learning type arrangements that have been criticized for overburdening the partner for the greater benefit of the student (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). The reports from the employees also support the positive findings of the CPSP that SLs are assets to organizations (Stevens & Pyles, 2009).

The CPSP model requires students to serve 60 to 100 hours in a semester allowing partners to incorporate SLs for the greatest benefit of their agencies. St. Mary’s has incorporated CPSP SLs into their residential program in a way that is beneficial to residents and employees. St. Mary’s model has strengths to offer settings providing direct service such as residential programs, schools, after school programs, nursing homes, etc. Below is a summary of points that are transferable to other sites:

- Initial interview with SLs acts as a pre-screening and brief orientation to the program and general expectations of SLs service activities
- Second interview provides fuller introduction to the program, introduction to staff and residents (clients), brief training, and greater explanations of SLs expectations
• Frame SLs as part of the workplace culture and help employees understand that SLs are part of the culture and will likely be performing service on at least one of their shifts

• Goal for SLs:
  o Understanding the bigger picture of the program and services provided by reading agency (and as appropriate client) material, talking with employees, and understanding employees’ various job duties/responsibilities
  o Interact with clients, which takes place after appropriate level of orientation (site specific) and shadowing staff
  o Exposure to human service work and pre-training for potential future hires

Even with replicating these points St. Mary’s has some features that are not easily transferable. First, SLs have been woven into the culture of the agency and residential program. Having SLs on the floor during an employee’s shift is normal and to be expected. Second, employees interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about the work that they do, which appeared to translate into a willingness to share with passion with SLs. This dedication centers on the youth served by the agency, and the ability to be a positive influence on the girls are sent to St. Mary’s for services. Third, the residential programs are highly structured, requiring a minimum staffing ration. SLs are additional support, not a key component to program operations.

While the model St. Mary’s uses for SLs works, the fact that some college students can remain unengaged highlights that improvements could be made. For instance, a job description for SLs could outline expectations of the SL in a way that
showed the progression from shadowing to engagement providing reasonable time frames for levels of engagement based on hours of service. The levels of engagement could include SLs playing games or assisting with homework with individual residents building up to the creation and implementation of one or more group activities. The job description could then be shared with SLs, the CPSP, and employees creating uniform understanding and ways for employees to engage SLs in their service. Clearer expectations would enhance SLs experiences and better ensure that their presence on the residential floors has the greatest benefit for the youth. Furthermore, like the senior worker described earlier, if all staff viewed their role as encouraging youth to engage with SLs then maybe fewer SLs would remain shy wall flowers. This could be accomplished in a range of ways. Most simply workers could be educated on how to guide residents to ask questions of SLs. A more structured way could be creating an interactive game with questions for residents and SLs to ask each other. Though the second approach is more artificial, it would provide a framework for employees who might need the additional support to foster engagement between SLs and residents. These approaches, and any variation, serve the dual purpose of inviting SLs to engage, as well as modeling and practicing appropriate interpersonal interactions for the residents.

In addition to the job description, an outline of the SLs program model would be an asset. This outline could detail the hierarchy that is implemented in varying degrees by the various units. For instance, identifying the primary contact for the SL should she/he be unable to make a scheduled shift, or encounter a troubling situation while at St. Mary’s. This might include multiple people to ensure there will be a contact person on premises during the shifts when SLs might be on site. A written SLs program model
would become especially valuable if the key administrator were to leave. In addition, even with a solid structure in place, it cannot be assumed that employees are clear on their role with SLs. These small enhancements to the program structure would align with the vision of the CEO:

What I would like to have in place is more people on the agency side who are like the safety people for the volunteers, the connections for them. The person they would touch base with as they arrive and do their thing. Be kind of like a field supervisor who would field their concerns and listen to their whatever, their anxiety as well as their successes while they are here. Having a key person to go to I think helps minimize the problems and capitalize on the strengths associated with volunteers.

The recommended enhancements for the program, especially the job description, would also be of value for service-learning educators. Service-learning is built on the premise that it assists students gain a better understanding of course content, enhances their civic engagement and student service positively contributes to the community (Jacoby, 1996). While SLs are provided with an opportunity to engage in meaningful ways with the youth at St. Mary’s, this engagement is not guaranteed. If a SL does not engage, she/he could spend a semester on the fringes and miss out on a valuable learning opportunity. A job description would help provide structure and clarify expectations. The CPSP could require partners to provide a job description that would both require the partner to think through what they want SLs to be doing, and provide a tool for the partner to educate employees on SLs expectations and hold SLs accountable for their service.
Social work educators can view this information from multiple perspectives. Sherr (2008) wrote a book on the topic of how the social work profession can use volunteers. He reflected on Jane Addams and how she made the connection that “partnership between social workers and volunteers have the power to revitalize the profession’s efforts to fight poverty and advocate social and economic justice” (p. 93). He goes on to say: “Social work with volunteers is more than recruiting people to carry out routine direct services or mundane clerical tasks. It is an effective practice method for changing the social environment” (Sherr, 2008, p. 129). Within this context, maximizing the use of SLs in nonprofit agencies and community work is vital. Social work educators’ have a role in facilitating partnerships between the community and university resources, such as college students in service-learning courses (Martin & Pyles, in press).

In addition, social work educators can educate future social workers in the importance engaging with volunteers (SLs or others). Facilitating critical thinking in how SLs and volunteers can be used to meet identified needs of a community or agency. This training of social work students will transition into the workplace as students become practitioners.

St. Mary’s is just one model of how SLs are used in a residential program. Future research can look to see if the positive perceptions of employees are equally as prevalent at other worksites in the context of workplace culture, volunteer/SL management practices, work stress and public service motivation.
References


Community and Public Service Program. (2010). Draft five-year strategic plan. School of Social Welfare, University at Albany, SUNY.


Appendix A – Organization Demographics

1. Organization size (# staff, # sites, average # staff/site)
2. Population being served (who they are, and average # being served annually)
3. Services provided
4. Number of paid employees at this location Full time ___ Part time ___
5. Extent volunteers are used
   a. What are volunteer job roles
   b. # SL / semester
   c. # other volunteers ongoing
6. Responsibilities given to volunteers overall
   a. Direct service to clients
   b. Indirect service (services that do not include client contact)
   c. Internal administrative tasks (i.e., general office work)
   d. External administrative tasks (i.e., public relations)
      (Hager & Brudney, 2004, pg 9)
7. Do responsibilities vary based on the volunteer type (i.e. SL vs non; short term vs long term)?
8. Number of staff responsible for volunteer coordination Full time ___ Part time ___
   How much of their time is devoted to volunteer coordination
9. Volunteer Management

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My organization has mandatory structured volunteer trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My organization has ongoing volunteer/SL supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My organization has a volunteer performance evaluation system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My organization has a formal policy for handling volunteer problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My organization has clearly written volunteer job descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My organization has formal volunteer recruitment efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My organization has an interview process for the “hiring” of volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My organization has a screening process for the “hiring” of volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My organization has a process for documenting volunteer activity (e.g., hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My organization has a training for employees to work with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My organization has a survey administered to volunteers on a routine basis to assess how they are doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My organization has recognition events and/or social gatherings to promote volunteer-employee interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My organization allows employees a choice to work with volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My organization applies volunteer management structures to CPSP students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Employee Demographics

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Education: HS, some college, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.
5. College major
6. Graduate major/field
7. Professional License(s)
8. Years of professional experience
9. Years with this organizations
10. Years working with volunteers
    a. In what capacity
11. Years you have personally volunteered
    a. In what capacity
12. Position with organization: supervisor/administrator; program coordinator; front-line staff; admin support
Appendix C – Interview Guide – Employees

1. Tell me about your work role/responsibilities. (B)

2. How do you feel about your work? (P)

3. How would you describe your commitment to your work? (B/P)

4. How would you describe your work-life balance? (B)

5. Tell me about SLs in your workplace. What are they doing (work tasks, etc.)? (E)

6. How would you describe your relationship/role with SLs? (B/E)

7. What are your thoughts about college students being here to volunteer? (added 3/27/12)

8. Is there a difference between the students who are interning verses the student that come in for the weekly tutor-mentor program? (added 4/17/12)

9. How is it to have them in your unit during your shift? Benefits? Challenges? (added 3/27/12)

10. Do you think having students here influences the quality of services? Do the girls benefit from having the students there? (added 4/17/12)

11. Do you think the presence of students changes how staff act or engage with the youth? (added 4/17/12)

12. Do you have a choice in your role/interactions with SLs? (E)

13. What kind of support structures are in place to manage SLs? (E)

14. Do you feel it is enough? (P)

15. What could be different? (P/B/E)

16. You said you did/did not volunteer. What are your thoughts about volunteering and/or giving back? (P/B?)

17. What do you think of students performing service/volunteering as part of a college course? (P)

18. Are college students from the CPSP different than other college student volunteers? How? (P/E)
19. Are college students different than other volunteers? How? (P/E)

20. What factors do you think influence your perception? (P/B/E) (removed 4/21/12 – learn the information through the interview)
   (personal beliefs, values, workplace, student attributes, etc.)

21. If you were in my position, what questions would you ask that I didn’t?

22. Is there anything you would like to add? That I’ve missed? (removed 4/21/12 – too similar to the question above)

23. Is there anyone you think would be important to interview or include in a focus group? Would you be willing to provide his/her name and a contact email/phone number?

24. May I follow-up with you if I need additional clarification or information?
Appendix D – Interview Guide – Employee Focus Group

1. It seems from the people I have interviewed that staff are really committed to working here and working with the girls. Why do you think that is?

2. Tell me about what SLs do when they are here. (E)

3. What is your role with SLs? (E/B)

4. How do you interact with SLs? (like staff, like students, as little as possible) (B)

5. Do you think interns influence the quality of services provided?

6. Do the youth benefit? (added 4/21/12)

7. Do you think you or your coworkers act differently when interns are present? (added 4/21/12)

8. Some people have mentioned students learning TCI and being involved in restraints. What are your thoughts?

9. Do you think there is a difference between the interns and the tutor-mentor students?

10. How do student characteristics influence their presence/engagement?

11. What about employee characteristics and their engagement with students?

12. What do you think about students performing service as part of a college class? (P)

13. Are CPSP students different from students of other schools? (P)

14. Are CPSP students different from other volunteers? (P)

15. What kind of structures are in place to manage SLs? (E)

   a. Do you feel it is enough?

   b. What could change?

16. For those of you without a degree does interacting with college students motivate you to go back to school?

17. What are your thoughts about volunteering and giving back?
18. What else should I know or do you want to share with me about interns in your workplace?
Employee Demographics – Focus Group

1. Age: ________________________
2. Gender: ________________________
3. Ethnicity: _________________________________
4. Education: _______________________________
5. College major (if applicable) _______________________________
6. Graduate major/field (if applicable) _______________________________
7. Professional License(s) (if applicable) _______________________________
8. Years of professional experience: _______________________________
9. Years with this organization: _______________________________
10. Years working with volunteers/interns: _______________________________
   In what capacity

11. Years you have personally volunteered: _______________________________
    In what capacity

12. Position with organization:
    _______________________________
Appendix E – Interview Guide – Students

1. What are you doing for the organization where you are providing service?

2. Were you provided with a job description or any type of orientation to your assigned responsibilities? Explain. If not, how did you learn what your expectations were?

3. What are your thoughts on your overall contribution to the organization? (supporting mission, enhancing services)

4. How do you think you help – directly and indirectly – the employees you work with?

5. What kinds of interactions do you have with the employees of your organization?

6. How do you feel your contributions are accepted by staff? Does it differ based on the interactions you have with them?

7. Without giving names, do you think any of the employees you have interacted with are burnt out? Explain. Do you think they treat you differently than staff who are not burnt out? If yes, how?

8. Have any employees shared with you that they have volunteered? If yes, how is your interaction with them different than those who have not?

9. Is there anything else you want to add? That I’ve missed?

10. May I follow-up with you if I need additional clarification or information?

Student Demographics

1. Age

2. Gender

3. Ethnicity

4. Academic Standing: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

5. College major

6. Prior Volunteer Experience
   a. Number of years
   b. Describe service activities
Appendix F – Interview Guide – CPSP Personnel

1. What factors do you take into consideration when partnering with an organization?

2. Do you think there are any organization characteristics that make partnerships more successful for student’s service experience?

3. What are your students doing for partner organizations?

4. What role/position does your primary organization contact have?

5. What kinds of interactions do you have with organization employees overall?

6. What are your thoughts on students’ overall contribution to the organization?
   (supporting mission, enhancing services)

7. What about students’ contribution to the employees they are working with?

8. Do you think the level of involvement employees have with SLs changes how the student’s contribution is perceived? How?

9. Do you think employees who are burnt out respond/interact differently to students than those who are not? Explain.

10. Is there anything else you want to add? That I’ve missed?

11. May I follow-up with you if I need additional clarification or information?

Faculty & Staff Demographics

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Education: HS, some college, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.
5. College major
6. Graduate major/field
7. Professional License(s)
8. Years of professional experience
9. Years with CPSP, or overseeing CPSP?
10. Years working with volunteers
   a. In what capacity
11. Position with University and CPSP
12. Prior Volunteer Experience
   a. Number of years
   b. Describe service activities
Appendix G – Codes and Themes

Social Cognitive Theory – Behavior
Employee Roles with SLs
- Based on student engagement
- Minimal interaction
- Supportive

St. Mary’s Employee Roles & Responsibilities
- Administrators
- Unit Managers
- Senior Supervisors
- Child Care Workers

Volunteer Activity
- Advocacy
- Boards and/or Committees
- Fundraising events
- Service work

Social Cognitive Theory – Person
Employees and work
- Positive commitment to work
- Positive feelings toward work
- Work-life balance

Volunteering thoughts and feelings
- Important
- Wish I could but I can’t

Social Cognitive Theory – Environment
What SLs are doing
- Acting like staff
- Interacting/engaging with girls
- Reading files
- Shadow staff/observe

Volunteer/SL management
- Based on course expectations
- Employee choice in role or interaction
- Orientation & training
- Routine as structure for SLs
- Rules and expectations
- Supervision/hierarchy
- Sufficient?
- Vision of CEO
Social Cognitive Theory – Perceptions of SLs
Influence
- Employee performance
- Youth
- Services

Service-learning
- Students source of future employees
- Thought of them in the workplace
  - Sample of human services
  - Supportive – good idea

Student Characteristics
- Confidence
- Engaged
- Goodness of fit

UAlbany SLs vs other students
- Same
- Different