



# NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

School of Education and Social Policy

2008-2009

Senior Thesis Honors Abstracts

2008-2009

Service Learning Certificate Projects

Poster Session

June 5, 2009

2008-2009 Senior Thesis Honors Program

Program Director                      Penelope L. Peterson  
Dean, School of Education and Social Policy  
Eleanor R. Baldwin Professor of Education

Teaching Assistant and              Leigh Mesler  
Methodological Consultant          Human Development and Social Policy PhD Student

Program Coordinator                  Susan Olson  
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

**CARRYN CHRISTIANSON**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*  
Generativity Among Mid-Life Women Without Children

**JANE CORNELIUS**

*Secondary Teaching*  
Learner's Perception and the English as a Second Language Classroom

**KELLY KIRKPATRICK**

*Social Policy*  
Building Diverse Citizen Leadership: A Case Study in the How Demographic Characteristics, Education, and Attitudes Predict Civic Engagement

**LAURA MESA-MARTINEZ**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*  
Latino Girls: Adapting Through the Simultaneous Stress of Acculturation and Adolescence

**STACY PANCRATZ**

*Social Policy*  
Family and Parent Practices in Low-Income Households and Children's Early Academic Achievement

**MEREDITH SCHWARTZ**

*Social Policy*  
Identifying Consensus Among Experts: What Should the Average Citizen Know About the Supreme Court?

**KATIE WRIGHT**

*Social Policy*  
Use of American Values in the 2008 Presidential Campaign: Similarities and Differences between Democrats and Republicans

**NATASHA YURK**

*Social Policy*  
Not Your Grandma's Debate: Public Forum and its Role in the Forensics Community

**CARRYN CHRISTIANSON**

Human Development and Psychological Services

*Primary Advisor*      *Regina Lopata Logan, Ph.D.*  
*Human Development and Social Policy*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader*                      *Dan P. McAdams, Ph.D.*  
*Human Development and Social Policy, Psychology*  
*School of Education and Social Policy, Weinberg College of Arts*  
*& Sciences*

**Generativity Among Mid-Life Women Without Children**

*Generativity* is the psychological term for, essentially, benefitting the next generation and leaving a legacy for oneself. It is a critical psychosocial component of adulthood, as it benefits both self and society. To begin exploring generativity in adults without children, this study focused on generativity among mid-life women without children. The study involved 40 female participants aged 45-60. All participants completed five or six surveys, allowing for mostly quantitative analysis with illustrative qualitative findings. The three major findings of the study were as follows: (1) that neither child-rearing nor desire to rear a child seems to have a relation to higher levels of generativity among midlife women; (2) among child-free women, “parent-like” relationships with children correlate with higher generative concern; (3) there is a wide array of types of generative expressions within the most generative child-free women.

**JANE CORNELIUS**  
Secondary Education

*Advisor*      *Carol D. Lee, PhD*  
*Learning Sciences*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader*        *Julia Margaret Moore, PhD*  
*Department of Linguistics*  
*Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences*

### **Learner's Perception and the English as a Second Language Classroom**

My research focused on a homogenously grouped, English as a Second Language (ESL) American Literature high school classroom and how the English as a Second Language student learns the English language. The quality of English as a Second Language education has become more of an issue since the population in the United States is increasingly becoming more diverse, and the immigrant population of students who have limited knowledge of English continues to grow. Because of the growing population size in ESL classrooms, this research draws from 10 semi-structured interviews, 16 student surveys, and examines the effectiveness of the ESL homogenous classroom in helping ESL students learn the English language. The sample is from an ESL classroom at a Chicago Public High School. The participants varied in race and ranged in age from 14 to 18 years. The interviews focused on language arts activities used in the classroom and the classroom environment. Quantitative data was employed to measure the students' opinions about how practices in the ESL homogenous classroom and the classroom itself help the learner comprehend the English language. The results suggest that the communal environment of ESL learners' homogenous classroom may play an important role in assisting with language comprehension.

**KELLY KIRKPATRICK**

Social Policy

*Advisor*      *Jeannette Colyvas, Ph.D.*  
*Learning and Organizational Change*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader*      *Paul Arntson, Ph.D.*  
*Communication Studies*  
*School of Communication*

**Community Engagement Programs: do they work?**

A case study in how experiential citizenship education influences civic attitudes and behaviors

With the recent spike in Americans' civic engagement following the 2008 presidential election, there is a growing interest in how national service programs can translate that energy into effective citizenship development. I examined changes in participant civic engagement over the course of Public Allies' Signature AmeriCorps program, and considered the extent to which different engagement predictors (social demographic characteristics, educational background, and attitudinal predispositions) enhanced or mitigated those changes. This study analyzes pre- and post- program surveys from 227 participants for the 2007-2008 program year. I found that civic behaviors and personal efficacy increased during the program, with particularly strong increases for frequency of working on community projects and attendance at public meetings. The degree of these changes varied for different sub-groups based on specific outcome measures, but non-college graduates generally experienced the greatest positive outcomes. Higher formal educational attainment and high baseline levels of personal efficacy lost significance as positive predictors of civic behaviors over the course of the program. My findings suggest that the program has a positive influence on participant civic engagement, especially for individuals with less formal schooling, and with regard to behaviors that

take place in community-based, rather than institutionally-based, contexts for engagement. Further research is necessary to fully understand program influence on the relationship between civic and political behaviors and between attitudes and behavioral outcomes.

**LAURA MESA**

Human Development and Psychological Services

*Advisor*        *Jordan Jacobowitz, PhD*  
*The Family Institute*  
*Northwestern University*

*Reader*        *Emma Adam, PhD*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*  
*Northwestern University*

**Latino Girls:  
Adapting Through the Simultaneous Stress of Acculturation and Adolescence**

Adolescence and acculturation are both experiences of change that can be stressful. This study explores how Latina women, who migrated to the United States during adolescence, coped with the simultaneous stress of adolescence and acculturation. Twelve interviews with Latina women who moved to the United States between the ages of 11 and 18 were conducted. Stressors, social support and coping mechanisms were identified. Women reported experiencing stressors at school concerning the language barrier, social isolation, and the bilingual classroom. They mentioned that family, friends and teachers were the main sources of social support; and getting involved in extra curricular activities and putting an extra effort in school were efficient coping mechanisms. These findings showed ways in which schools could ease the stress that adolescent immigrant Latinas may go through.

**STACY PANCRAZ**  
Social Policy

*Adviser*      *P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, PhD*  
*Human Development and Social Policy*  
*Northwestern University*

*Reader*      *Greg Duncan, PhD*  
*Department of Education*  
*University of California-Irvine*

**Family and Parent Practices in Low-Income Households and  
Children's Early Academic Achievement**

Children from low-income households are less likely to succeed in school than their more affluent counterparts. However, the effects of poverty are not homogeneous and some poor children overcome socioeconomic risks to succeed academically. Using longitudinal data on low-income families from *Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three City Study*, this project examines the effects of mothers' education and family functioning on the academic achievement of poor children (age 2-4 years at wave 1). Increases in maternal education were related to increases in children's math achievement. Greater levels of family routines were related to increases in children's reading achievement.

## **MEREDITH SCHWARTZ**

Social Policy

*Advisor Cynthia Conlon, Ph.D.  
School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader Michelle Reininger, Ph.D.  
Human Development and Social Policy  
School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader David Renz, MAT  
MSED and Teacher Education  
School of Education and Social Policy*

### **Identifying Consensus Among Experts: What Should the Average Citizen Know About the Supreme Court?**

Recent analysis of the fifty state social studies standards reveals that such standards vary widely as to the guidelines they set for education relating to the Supreme Court. Such disparities raise concerns about how well and to what extent students in the United States are educated about the important government organizations, an issue that is of critical concern to research related to civic engagement. This study sought to identify an expert-formed consensus on what the average citizen should know about the Supreme Court in order to better instruct how the Supreme Court is represented in curriculum. Twenty in-depth interviews were completed for this study; ten with law-related education experts, five with Supreme Court scholars, and five with teachers identified as having strong law-related education experience. Analysis revealed that the average citizen should understand the structure of the judicial branch and its relationship to other branches, the appointment process and its relationship to life tenure and establishing an independent judiciary, and the appeals process. Participants further identified that citizens should be aware of certain fundamental constitutional principles including civil rights, criminal rights, freedom of speech and separation of church and state. Specific landmark cases that citizens should know include *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*,

*Miranda v. Arizona* and *Roe v. Wade*. These findings have important implications for the development of more meaningful state standards and the future of civics and law-related education.

**KATIE WRIGHT**  
Social Policy

*Advisor*      *Fay Lomax Cook, Ph.D.*  
*Human Development and Social Policy*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*

*Reader*        *James Rosenbaum, Ph.D.*  
*Human Development and Social Policy; Sociology*  
*School of Education and Social Policy*

**Use of American Values in the 2008 Presidential Campaign: Similarities and Differences between Democrats and Republicans**

The use of values in political rhetoric is crucial to both political candidates and voters. This study examines the similarities and differences in how American values were used by presidential candidates Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator John McCain (R-AZ) in the 2008 presidential campaign. After conducting a content analysis of the Democratic and Republican Party platforms and the three presidential debates, I found that the candidates retained some of the values emphasized in the party platforms while also adding others in the debates. The candidates focused on connecting their values, in both old and new ways, to non-polarizing, moderate issues related to the economy, most likely as a result of the growing economic crisis during that time. As Senator Obama invoked many more values than Senator McCain in the debates, as he more aggressively invoked values “owned” by the Republican Party, and as he relied more on concrete policy proposals rather than statements of belief as his primary value invocation strategy, there is clear evidence that Senator Obama was able to use the economic crisis to his advantage by taking ownership of the economic issues in question.

**NATASHA YURK**  
Social Policy

Advisor      *Eva Lam, Ph.D.*  
                  *Learning Sciences*  
                  *School of Education and Social Policy*

Reader        *Gary Alan Fine, Ph.D.*  
                  *Sociology*  
                  *Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences*

**Not Your Grandma's Debate:  
Public Forum and its Role in the Forensics Community**

A style of interscholastic debate called Policy Debate has long been a popular extracurricular activity, but participation has waned as it has become more fast-paced and laden with archaic terms. An alternative called Public Forum Debate was introduced in the early part of this decade, but some Policy enthusiasts are reluctant to support a more simplistic genre. Inspired by this bias, I sought to understand how high school students and coaches conceive of their experiences with Public Forum. I surveyed 50 Public Forum debaters and nearly 70 debate coaches about the benefits and drawbacks they attribute to the event. Among many responses there was a consensus that if Public Forum remains simple in practice, it can benefit competitors while democratizing the debate community simultaneously.

**2008-2009 Service Learning Certificate Program**

Program Director     Bruce Nelson  
   Service Learning Program Director

Faculty                     Paul Arnston  
   Professor, School of Communication  
   Jody Kretzmann  
   Co-Director, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute

**ANDIE XIN, SHARANYA JAIDEV and JANET BAEK**

*Social Policy, Economics and Human Development and Psychological Services*  
Microfinance Target Market Research in the Little Village Neighborhood

**MEIXING, PRIYANKA RUPANI and ANNE VALAURI**

*Social Policy, Economics and Theatre*  
Service- Learning: A tool for literacy, numeracy and well-being at Evanston Township  
High School

**SARAH THOMAS and RACHEL SUFFRIN**

*Human Development and Psychological Services and Human Development and  
Psychological Services*  
Age is Just a Number: Empowering Youth Through Civic Engagement

**KANA YOO**

*History, Radio/Television/Film*  
PEER Services Promotional Video

**LAUREN AXELROTH and ALIZA KRAVITZ**

*Learning and Organizational Change and Human Development and Psychological  
Services*  
Healthy living made easier: a first step down the road to recovery

**ANDIE XIN**

*Social Policy*

**SHARANYA JAIDEV**

*Economics*

**JANET BAEK**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*

**Sponsor: ACCION Chicago**

### **Microfinance Target Market Research in the Little Village Neighborhood**

This project was in collaboration with ACCION Chicago, a non-profit microfinance organization, to conduct target market research on the Little Village neighborhood. The research project aimed to help ACCION better understand the target neighborhood and expand its Hispanic client base. The team compiled descriptive statistics of the Little Village community and built an online bilingual survey to assess how recent the economic downturn has affected small business owners.

**MEIXI NG**

*Social Policy*

**PRIYANKA RUPANI**

*Economics*

**ANNE VALAURI**

*Theatre*

**Sponsor: Evanston Township High School, Community Service**

**Service- Learning: A tool for literacy, numeracy and well-being at Evanston  
Township High School**

This capstone project was conducted in collaboration with the Community Service office of Evanston Township High School. The team worked with both students and staff to increase community involvement and academic excellence in the classroom. A pamphlet and a binder resource for teachers was created to introduce concepts of service-learning and how they could implement a service-learning component and subject-specific ideas for teachers to use in the classroom.

**SARAH THOMAS**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*

**RACHEL SUFFRIN**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*

**Sponsor: PEER Services, Inc. and District 65**

### **Age is Just a Number: Empowering Youth Through Civic Engagement**

The purpose of this project is to incorporate Evanston middle school students into the world of community service. We worked with PEER Services and the District 65 middle school club they facilitate, “Students Making Healthy Choices (SMHC).” We created a categorized index of organizations in Evanston and the surrounding area eager to work with the students of SMHC. The second objective of our project is to sustain interest in community engagement as the middle school students transition to Evanston Township High School. We proposed a mentorship program to link SMHC and a similarly focused high school group, Student to Student. We addressed issues of sustainability, funding, supervision, goals and the appropriate matching of mentors and mentees.

**KANA YOO**

*History, Radio/Television/Film*

**Sponsor: PEER Services, Inc.**

**PEER Services Promotional Video**

PEER Services is a drug prevention and treatment organization in Evanston, IL. This project created a promotional video that will raise awareness of the many programs offered by PEER Services as a means to attract clients and potential donors. The film informs people of these different programs and the important contribution PEER Services makes to the community. It features interviews with staff members, clients, and students, and footage of various programs, including Student-to-Student, Group, Snowflake, and the Open Studio Project.

**LAUREN AXELROTH**

*Learning and Organizational Change*

**ALIZA KRAVITZ**

*Human Development and Psychological Services*

**Sponsor: Peer Services, Inc.**

**Healthy living made easier: a first step down the road to recovery**

This capstone project was in collaboration with Peer Services, Inc. to provide the clientele of its methadone recovery program with a comprehensive guide to healthy living. We created a comprehensive booklet for clients, comprised of twelve different topic sheets on various areas of health and a program guide to be used in conjunction with each