

An Investigation into the Organization, Challenges, and Impact of an Urban Apprentice Teacher Program

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Service learning programs are being advanced as effective vehicles for preparing young people for active citizenship and promoting growth in self-esteem, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and personal responsibility. Although there is a burgeoning literature addressing service learning programs in school subject areas such as language arts, math, science, and social studies, little consideration has been given to the potential of physical activity programs to provide meaningful service learning experiences for youngsters. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, this article describes an apprentice teacher program in which a group of urban youngsters taught basketball to young children attending a summer sports camp. The apprentice teacher program captured the interests and talents of this group of young people who, in their school career, had been characterized as behavior problems, poor attenders, and low achievers. The experience improved their self-confidence, concern for others, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and enthusiasm for learning. The apprentice teachers completed the program aware of the contributions they could make toward helping others and eager to continue the work the following year.

Recently, much attention has been paid to the importance of giving young people the opportunity to provide service to others. Conversations about this topic are occurring among schoolteachers and administrators, community leaders, politicians, and social agencies at local, state, regional, and national levels. Boyte and Farr (1996) challenge educators to think of young people as "citizens in the making who have serious public work to do" (p. 14) and provide them with service learning opportunities which involve active problem solving around issues of substance to their community so that they can develop the practice of public work.

While the various ideological, political, and social goals that can be pro-

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moted by service learning activities have yet to be clarified (Kahne and Westheimer, 1996), there is growing evidence that youth service can provide human qualities and learner outcomes associated with active citizenship, including the development of teamwork, critical thinking, rule making, negotiating, and deliberating (Witmer and Anderson, 1994). When young people engage in a meaningful service learning experience containing real-life purposes and consequences that address community concerns, they are afforded numerous opportunities for active participation in social and civic life. Young people have a natural desire to be helpful, but too often, youth is a period of emptiness and a time of waiting. Opportunities to engage in a service-oriented activity are limited, if they exist at all. However, if this desire to engage others is nurtured by teachers, such a disposition can develop into a fuller form of social and civic responsibility (Perrone, 1993; Wade, 1997).

This article describes the impact of a service learning experience on a group of urban youngsters, the adults with whom they collaborated, and the community in which they worked. The focus is an apprentice teacher program in which eleven 14-year-old students from a kindergarten through eighth-grade elementary school on Chicago's South Side taught basketball to young children attending a summer sports camp. First, we consider the potential of physical activity programs as a medium for service learning. Then, we describe our research approach and methods for gathering information about the program. Next we outline the origins and purpose of the program and summarize its daily organization. Then we turn to the performance of the apprentice teachers and the difficulties they faced in learning leadership and pedagogy skills while on the job. Finally we consider the value of the experience from the apprentice teachers' perspectives, including whether participation in the program influenced their view of their "possible futures" (McLaughlin and Heath, 1993), and whether it strengthened their resolve to stay in school and spawned aspirations to enter higher education.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A MEDIUM FOR SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a teaching method that provides opportunities for youth to acquire academic, career, social, and personal skills through community projects. The rationale for service learning is that youth learn best by doing, by serving, and by reflecting on the experience. Students become the "doers" and take on more responsibility for their own learning. The students, by becoming actively engaged in the needs of the community, bring back to the classroom content that becomes the basis for their classroom learning.

Service learning's emphasis on a more active pedagogy has its roots in Dewey's (1938) belief that there should be a connection between school and the world outside, and that children should be engaged in and connected to real-

world problems and issues. Federal legislation and some state actions have increased the prevalence of service learning in all levels of schooling, but there is considerable disagreement about whether service should be a modest requirement for graduation or a mere add-on (Institute for Justice, 1994; Perrone, 1993).

There is a burgeoning literature addressing methods of establishing and implementing service learning programs in school subject areas such as language arts, math, science, and social studies (see, for example, Wade, 1997; Witmer and Anderson, 1994). However, although organizations such as the Special Olympics and the YMCA often recruit young people as volunteer teachers, little consideration has been given to the potential of physical activity programs to provide meaningful service learning experiences for youngsters. Physical activity programs provide a practical setting in which young people with a primary motivation toward service can assume the advanced responsibility of teaching sports and recreational skills to younger children. However, little is known about how learning occurs as the youngsters reflect upon what happened during the experience and are required to work in a close, democratic way with each other and adult leaders in planning strategies for working with the young children. Even less attention has been given to the students' unique perceptions, which are specific to a particular set of experiences that each brings to the learning environment.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

This article draws on qualitative and quantitative data to describe and assess the apprentice teacher program. This combination of methodologies is increasingly being accepted as appropriate for educational evaluation (Fetterman, 1988; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). We utilized observation, document analysis, and interview methods during the five-week summer program. All the program staff, including the 11 apprentice teachers, 2 university student assistants, and program director agreed to participate.

We attended all program activities daily, observing teaching routines, group meetings, and informal conversations, clocking in over 60 hours of observations. We interviewed the apprentice teachers (eight males and three females) individually at the beginning and end of the program. These semistructured interviews, which ranged in length from 20 to 45 minutes, explored themes such as the apprentice teachers' reactions to events in the program, their perceptions of themselves as teachers, and the contribution of the program to their overall development. Also we interviewed the program director and two university student assistants to assess their perspectives on the emerging teaching competence of the apprentice teachers, the program's successes and struggles, and the possible impact of the program on the apprentice teachers' develop-

ment. In addition, at the completion of the program, the director shared his private journal with us. This contained quantitative criteria, including attendance and his ratings of apprentice teachers' teaching effectiveness, as well as qualitative criteria, including his daily reactions to events in the program. The validity of the findings was enhanced by the triangulation of methods, theoretical perspectives, and data.

As researchers, we came to this study with experiences that focused our attention in particular ways. All participants were familiar to us: We had taught the apprentice teachers when they were in elementary school, we were former and current students of the program director, and we knew the program assistants as fellow students. Although the first author is a White, English-born, middle-class male in his late 30s, he taught part time at the apprentice teachers' elementary school and conducted research there for his doctoral dissertation, and these roles provided him with deep insights into their lives inside and outside school (Cutforth, 1994). The second author is an African-American/ Native American graduate student in her early 20s, a former college athlete, and a preservice teacher who enjoys adolescent culture. The combination of these various facets of our identities engendered certain opportunities and communication with participants. For example, the teacher apprentices' familiarity with the first author as a teacher and as a researcher eliminated his need to build rapport with them prior to data collection, reduced the likelihood of their feeling uncomfortable while being observed and interviewed, and enhanced the quality of the data obtained. The second author's friendly and youthful personality led to the apprentice teachers' spending time with her outside the program, and to her gaining important insights into their perceptions of the program and their present and future lives.

ORIGINS AND PURPOSE OF THE APPRENTICE TEACHER PROGRAM

When these young people were sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders, they were members of a weekly before-school basketball program named the Coaching Club (Hellison, 1993). The Coaching Club uses basketball to teach participants to take responsibility for their own motivation and goals, their interaction with others, and the group's welfare (Hellison, 1993, 1995). The Coaching Club was conceived and is directed by a kinesiology professor from a local university, assisted by several undergraduate and graduate students who have been trained in the program model. Briefly, the Coaching Club uses "taking responsibility" as a framework for teaching basketball. Three broad goals provide direction for the club: self-responsibility for one's effort and self-direction, social responsibility for respecting the rights and feelings of others and for being sensitive and responsive to the needs of others, and group responsibility for

cooperation and group betterment. To make clear what participants are to take responsibility for, the goals are presented to program participants as five specific levels of responsibility:

I. Self-control (respect the rights and feelings of others, control of temper, solve conflicts peacefully)

II. Teamwork (willingly pass the ball, cooperate, listen in meetings, be coachable)

III. Self-coaching (work independently; develop, carry out, and evaluate a personal plan for skill improvement)

IV. Coaching (help others, assume a leadership role and responsibility for the group's welfare)

V. Outside the gym (try out the responsibilities in school, at home, and on the street).

Several strategies—including conflict resolution, required cooperation built into playing basketball, peer and cross-age coaching, group meetings to evaluate and improve the program, and keeping a self-reflective journal at the end of each lesson—are employed to help students take personal, social, and group responsibility.

Because of their race (African-American) and their home environment (Chicago's notorious South Side), the members of the Coaching Club are likely to be labeled "at-risk" and, if one considers statistics, are in danger of falling through society's cracks. One of them, Antavis, came to school too infrequently to learn what was necessary to know; another, Donald, had already failed one year in elementary school; others, such as Angie and Kameshio, had difficulty controlling their behavior in a traditional classroom setting; several faced problems at home which dwarfed their frustrations at school and for the future; and all struggled with basic skills too underdeveloped for their grade level. However, in the Coaching Club, all of these students improved dramatically in self-control and prosocial attitudes and behaviors (Hellison and Cutforth, 1997).

During these youngsters' final year in elementary school (in Chicago, this is eighth grade), the director asked whether any of them would be interested in being involved in the annual summer youth sports camp held at the local university. Their responsibilities would be to teach basketball to eight- and nine-year-olds from a nearby housing project for an hour a day, four days a week, over a five-week period. The director told them that a grant would cover the cost of the students' daily bus fare from the South Side. As an incentive, he also told them that they would each receive warm-ups and shoes if they successfully completed the program.

Their excitement about this opportunity was reflected by the speed with which the 11 youngsters returned forms signed by their parents or guardians permitting their involvement in the apprentice teacher program. Chris, one of the apprentice teachers, recalls:

We was always talking about what we were going to do in the summer because there's nothing to do in the neighborhood. When Don [the director] first suggested [the apprentice teacher program] everybody couldn't wait to go home and tell everybody. They were excited; it was something to do in the summer.

According to the director, the purpose of the apprentice teacher program was to extend the notion of responsibility that had been the focus of the Coaching Club during the previous three years. In the Coaching Club, the students had learned to coach themselves and each other, to resolve conflicts, and to evaluate their behavior and attitudes. The apprentice teacher program was a logical next step for these young people because it required them to assume responsibility not only for themselves by traveling to and from the university and being punctual each day, but also for others by providing basketball instruction to youngsters from the local housing project. These were positions of responsibility that they rarely saw within the confines of the school setting. At a more personal level, the director had grown attached to these young people in his three years with them. He hoped that they would stay in school against all the odds, and he envisioned that the program might be a way of maintaining contact with them during the summers of their high school years. From an academic perspective, he wondered whether the students' experience of teaching young children and their immersion in a university environment would improve their vision of their possible futures (McLaughlin and Heath, 1993). For example, would the service-oriented experiences and skills gained in the teacher apprentice program influence these young people's vocational and avocational possibilities (Gomez, 1996) and lead some of them to consider coaching a basketball team at their church or in a youth program, or would the experience lead to thoughts of becoming a teacher's aide or making plans to attend college?

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The grant enabled the director to hire two university students as assistants. These two students had assisted him in the Coaching Club and were well known to the apprentice teachers. Of the 11 eighth-graders who had committed to the apprentice teacher program, eight proved to be reliable participants. As Table 1 shows, the most dependable were Angie, Chris, and Phinehas, who each had perfect attendance, together with Darnell, James, and Chuckie, who missed one, two, and three days, respectively. Kameshio was absent on seven occasions, and Kecia missed eight times. The three remaining apprentices, Donald, Antavis, and Renada, were not reliable and attended on only a handful of occasions, although Antavis, who was involved in gangs and was out most nights until early morning, was a very responsible teacher when he did manage to get out of bed in time to attend.

TABLE 1.
Apprentice Teachers' Attendance (Out of a Possible 21 Days)

Names	Days Present	Days Late
Angie	21	0
Chris	21	0
Phinehas	21	4
Darnell	20	0
James	19	0
Chuckie	18	0
Kameshio	14	3
Kecia	13	3
Donald	4	1
Antavis	3	2
Renada	1	1
Average: 7.1		

Table 2 shows that attendance varied from day to day. However, on 18 of the 21 days, at least seven apprentice teachers were present and teaching in the program. Thus the core of the program staff comprised the eight most reliable teacher apprentices, the program director, and the two assistants. This group was responsible for providing basketball instruction to 40 eight- and nine-year-old boys and girls for an hour a day for 21 days over a five-week period.

On the first day of the camp, the 40 young children arrived at the university gymnasium and were met by the program staff. The temperature outside was close to 90 degrees, and it was considerably hotter in the gymnasium—a trend that continued throughout the next five weeks. After welcoming the children and introducing the staff, the program director divided the children into four groups of 10. He explained that every morning there would be four stations, each comprising half a basketball court and manned by a pair of apprentice teachers. Each group would visit each station for 15 minutes of basketball in-

TABLE 2.
Attendance Patterns

No. of Apprentice Teachers	No. of Days This Number Attended
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	10
8	7
9	1

struction. He added that the children would remain at their final station to participate in a brief reflection session in which the teacher apprentices would solicit the views of the children about what they were learning in the camp and the extent to which they were enjoying themselves.

Thus each pair of apprentice teachers provided four 15-minute sessions of basketball instruction each day for 21 days. Each university student assistant was responsible for managing two stations and providing support to the two pairs of apprentice teachers by giving advice about the content of sessions, dealing with discipline problems, and occasionally handling injuries to the children. The program director organized the apprentice teachers into pairs each day, ensured smooth transitions between stations, observed the apprentice teachers, and also dealt with discipline problems and other emergencies. After the children had been dismissed each day, the program director led a group meeting to discuss the previous hour's teaching and to plan for the next day. The purpose of the group meeting was to provide a structured opportunity for all the staff to critically reflect on their service experience and for the apprentice teachers in particular to consider their effectiveness and contribution to the program.

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE APPRENTICE TEACHERS: THE CHALLENGE OF LEARNING LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING SKILLS ON THE JOB

Prior to the program, the apprentice teachers did not receive any specific training in leadership and pedagogical skills. Although they had previous experience coaching peers during the Coaching Club, the transition into the role of a coach of young children was a difficult one for all the apprentice teachers, for some more than others. As we will see later, this presented quite a challenge and required that the director and his assistants take an individual approach to each apprentice teacher.

On the first day of the program, the apprentice teachers were given a clipboard on which to carry their teaching plans. Two lists were on the clipboard. One list, comprising "Their Responsibilities," consisted of the five levels of responsibility that the children would be working on: self-control, teamwork, self-coaching, coaching, and outside the gym. As we noted earlier in this article, these values had been the focus of the Coaching Club and were therefore familiar to the apprentice teachers, and the director hoped that they would teach them to the young people during the basketball instruction. As he said, "I told the apprentice teachers, 'That's what you've been working on; now the children have got to work on it.'" The other list, comprising "Your Responsibilities" reminded the apprentice teachers to be positive, to look for small improv-

TABLE 3.
Program Director's Daily Grades

Grade:	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C	C-	D	NG
Quality of lessons:	8	2	0	5	0	0	0	1	5
Combined performance of apprentice teachers:	11	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	4

ments, to help the children with their responsibilities, and to call time-out when necessary.

The director maintained a private journal throughout the program in which he recorded the apprentice teachers' attendance, his feelings about the performance of individual coaches, and ideas on how to improve the next day. Also, after most days, he entered grades for the quality of the lessons and the combined performance of the apprentice teachers. As Table 3 shows, grades varied but were skewed toward the upper end of the continuum.

The biggest challenge in the early stages of the program was making the apprentice teachers aware of their leadership role, particularly the need to take charge of their session. It was not unusual to see children standing at their station waiting to begin the activity while their teachers were shooting baskets or performing a trick with the basketball rather than immediately getting down to the business of teaching. Also, the effectiveness of the apprentice teachers varied considerably, some being considerably better than others at planning drills, being assertive, and motivating students. James and Darnell were the most effective teachers, and as the director said, "When they're on a station, I know that one's taken care of." However, the personality of other apprentice teachers meant that their performance varied from day to day and that they needed to be monitored more closely. For example, Angie's elementary-school career had been replete with discipline problems, and while she had learned how to be positive during her time in the Coaching Club, she was still prone to extremes in behavior and attitude. The director explained that this inconsistency affected her teaching and his approach to her in the program:

She was very good in the Coaching Club sometimes. In this program she is wonderful at times but not stable or reliable. One day she is superb; the next day is not very good. Her bad days are too bad. Angie's got a wide range, and when she's at her worst, she's very difficult to deal with.

The director's journal contains several references to Angie's unstable nature and poor interpersonal skills: "Angie got in shouting match with Chris"; "Angie was at it again, this time with Chuckie"; "Kecia doesn't want to work with her

anymore.” Consequently, several apprentice teachers were reluctant to work with her, while on one occasion, she politely suggested to the director, “You might not want to put me with Donald; we had an argument yesterday.” While Angie’s mood swings and fiery temper were an ever-present challenge to all the staff, she did not miss a day of the program.

The director and assistants adopted different approaches with each of the apprentice teachers to ensure that they would be at their best for the children in their care. For example, while it was necessary to confirm with Darnell and James only that they were prepared for the morning’s activities, it was necessary to “check in” with Angie on a daily basis to “see whether or not she is feeling like being a leader” and to ensure that she was mentally prepared to lead the session in a responsible, inclusive way.

From the outset of the program, the director gave the apprentice teachers a high degree of autonomy in planning their sessions, based on his strong commitment to democracy and community and a belief in empowering young people. However, this approach presented problems because all their teaching methods reflected their own experiences as students in an autocratic elementary physical education program (Cutforth, 1994). Our field notes contain numerous descriptions of stations dominated by drills which involved two or three students playing offense and defense against each other while other children waited patiently in line. Typical was the following scene on the first morning described by the program director:

Phinehas and Darnell were working with three kids and the other seven were standing in a line. I came over and said, “It’s not OK. You’ve got to get those kids moving.” I went away, but when I came back the seven kids were still standing there, and they didn’t do anything. That happened at every station.

On the first day, the program director entered grades of D and C— for lessons and apprentice teachers, respectively. The following vignette describes the events during the group meeting:

The apprentice teachers, university student assistants, and director are gathered in a circle. After thanking all of the apprentice teachers for showing up and saying how pleased he is to see them, the director expresses his concern about too many children standing around and explains the need to keep the children active rather than standing in long lines. “They don’t learn if they don’t have their hands on the ball,” he says, “They should have 10, 20 turns before they move on.”

As the apprentices listen intently, he continues, “First, you gotta know what you’re doing; second, you’ve gotta have leadership. That means that you don’t shoot baskets. Stop the game when things aren’t going well; tell them what’s going wrong.”

After pausing, he adds, “I almost fell asleep just looking. If I was those kids I would be thinking, ‘This sucks, I don’t want to be here.’ We’ve got 40 kids, and this

is for them as well as for you. They've got to come out of there feeling that they learned something."

Then the director invites the apprentice teachers to give their views. Chris describes his difficulty in teaching two children; Kameshio agrees that the apprentice teachers need to take charge; Chuckie admits that the drills were boring; Donald says that several of his group didn't want to listen. Angie is the only apprentice who felt that the morning had gone well. The director asks the apprentices whether they want to continue to plan their own drills in the future or whether they would like him to devise them. When they all declare that they want to continue planning their own sessions, the director says, "I don't mind you doing your own, but you have to have something that works and where the kids don't get bored."

He ends the meeting by saying, "I don't want you to come away feeling like you aren't doing any good. I've seen most of you doing some nice things, some of you taking charge, some good drills. But in the gym when everyone is standing around and looking bored, it's like a bad grade for the teacher. You've got to get some things going. Be positive. Come in mentally prepared, come in ready to be a teacher, not ready to be hanging out. All of you are capable; it's a matter of getting your head together."

The director did not give these admonishments lightly and afterward worried about how they would be taken by the apprentice teachers. At worst, he feared that his comments would result in some of them deciding to take no further part in the program. While he wanted to give them ownership of their coaching, he also wanted to ensure that learning activities would be provided which would make learning both fun and relevant for the children.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE APPRENTICE TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

As the grades in Table 3 indicate, there were fewer "bad days" and more "good days." While the director's journal comments reflect areas in need of improvement—for example: "Need to give positive feedback" (7/3), "lethargic leadership at some stations" (7/13), "Phinehas too negative" (7/21)—they also reflect the improvement made by the apprentice teachers—for example, "Darnell is wonderful" (7/5), "James, Phinehas, and Chris all did well" (7/5), "Games seemed marginally better" (7/7), "Best day so far" (7/17), "Chuckie more assertive" (7/17), "Kecia did well" (7/21), "Angie was all talkative and wonderful!" (7/31). However, although the degree of activity and involvement by the children increased, the tendency remained for several of the apprentices to draw on their memories of their own physical education experiences as opposed to Coaching Club training, and to teach as they had been taught.

The degrees of support provided by the director and his assistants ranged from gentle suggestions of how to "jazz up" a practice when not all children were as active as they could have been, to admonitions to take a different approach either to content or to individual children. Each day, the director grap-

pled with ways in which to improve these apprentice teachers. On the one hand, he wanted to offer constructive criticism to help them improve their pedagogical skills and relationships with children—as he put it, “To help these kids be better teachers.” Often all that was required was a gentle reminder about their responsibilities and what they were capable of, but occasionally, he would take charge of half of a group and model and affirm positive teaching behaviors “so that they can see how it ought to work.” On the other hand, as we said before, he was concerned about the possibility that too harsh criticism might result in certain apprentices becoming frustrated and leaving the program; as he said, “I don’t want it to be like school. How much can I get away with before they [the apprentices] don’t come? My goal is to survive the program!” Later the “Your Responsibilities” list on each apprentice’s clipboard was modified to include “Coaching: be positive, take charge, communicate, ask their names, no standing around.” In addition, on several occasions, the apprentice teachers completed the evaluation form shown in Figure 1, which was designed to prompt them to reflect on their daily performance and attitude.

During the remaining weeks of the program, the apprentice teachers continued to plan their own practices and became more aware of the need for activity and involvement. During group meetings, a sense of community emerged as the program staff identified and grappled with problems they confronted and made plans for the next day’s activity. Their comments reflected an increasingly mature attitude toward their role, for example, Kecia: “The kids are still struggling with defense”; Phinehas: “I’m not having any problems with the kids, but they got bored with the drill so I did something different”; Angie: “I’m pleased because they understand what I’m telling them.”

This reflection time proved to be an invaluable group activity. The apprentice teachers learned from one another by discussing their teaching experience and comparing their assumptions. Often group discussions focused on individual children who were presenting discipline problems and these led to the development of a common bond among program staff. In the following example, staff members compare approaches to dealing with a child who often exhibited some exasperating behavior:

Angie: It was good except for one little boy, Jeremy.

Director: I talked to him twice, Darnell had him, Angie had him.

Student Assistant 1: This is a good experience because now you know how we feel sometimes! [much laughter]

Darnell: He said he didn’t want to play; he just wanted to play with his cousin, so I told him that his cousin would be here in a couple of minutes so just wait right here. And he started playin’ and he didn’t want to leave. He just started playin’.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

1. WERE YOU ON TIME TODAY?

YES ____

NO ____

2. WHAT PERCENT OF THE TIME DID YOU PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR THE KIDS?

ALL OF THE TIME ____

MOST OF THE TIME ____

SOME OF THE TIME ____

NONE OF THE TIME ____

3. WHAT PERCENT OF THE TIME WERE THE KIDS AT YOUR STATION ACTIVE (DOING SOMETHING RELATED TO BASKETBALL)?

ALMOST ALL OF THE TIME ____ MOST OF THE TIME ____

LESS THAN HALF THE TIME ____

4. HOW POSITIVE WERE YOU WITH THE KIDS?

A LOT ____

SOME ____

NOT MUCH ____

5. HOW MANY KIDS' NAMES DO YOU KNOW? ____

FIG. 1. Apprentice teacher self-evaluation form.

Darnell was able to deal with the challenge of drawing Jeremy into the game in a competent, caring manner without the assistance of any adult staff member. His actions illustrate how service learning experiences can empower young people to succeed and, more particularly, the positive results that can occur when they are given opportunities to be responsible and participating members of a community.

The subject of pedagogy was also regularly discussed in the group meetings. For example:

Director: You've got a whole range of abilities among the children.

Student Assistant 1: To prevent some of the boredom and off-task problems, what do we need to do?

Darnell: We've got to make the game enthusiastic, make them feel good, get into it, make sure you be into the game so if you into it, they goin' to want to get into it, and if everythin' go right, they goin' to like it.

Student Assistant 2: That is an excellent point.

Kameshio: They are going to be as excited as we are about it.

Here we see Darnell and Kameshio using both moral reasoning (learning to think about why boredom occurs and why the young children act in certain ways) and ethical decision making (the "should" part of modeling enthusiasm).

Thus, in addition to providing a service for the children in the sports camp, the apprentice teachers were developing and learning analytical skills, moral acuity, and social sensitivity through their critical assessment of and collective response to authentic problems. During the group discussions, the program staff served as facilitators, guides, mentors, and friends with the apprentices in identifying issues, obtaining information, seeking alternative solutions, and determining the most effective and feasible course of action. The students implemented reflective thinking processes which enabled them to solve problems collaboratively and to make effective decisions. The apprentices' ability to listen to constructive criticism and to respond by improving their teaching was heartening to the director. He commented, "The first day I was afraid they'd all quit—that fear is long gone!" Contributing to this sense of community was the tendency of the apprentices to "hang out" in the program director's office after the meetings. These informal occasions were characterized by much laughter and gentle ribbing between the apprentices, program staff, and evaluation team as well as the sharing of food and coffee, and they illustrate how mutual respect and the involvement of all participants are key to service learning experiences.

The following vignette describes a typical lesson and illustrates the apprentice teachers' emerging teaching skills:

Donald and James have organized their students in three teams. James is wearing a red shirt, black shorts, and basketball shoes and plays defense as the first team tries to make a basket. He reminds the students of the rule that all team members must touch the ball before a shot can be made.

There is a sense of urgency to James's cries of "Come on! Come on!" The teams move through the drill in waves, but the play gets rather ragged, and Donald calls time out and consults his clipboard: "Move around, just don't all stand there." The drill resumes and both apprentice teachers are friendly yet businesslike. A missed shot is met with a reassuring hand on the shooter's shoulders and the comment, "Don't worry, you aren't going to hit every shot you shoot!" An arm is extended to pull a fallen student up from the floor.

After five minutes, the apprentice teachers organize the children into two teams. When one student reacts negatively to his placement, Donald declares, "You can't be negative. You gonna lose if you think like that. Think positive!"

The students play a game of four on four with James and Donald each playing on a team. During the next 10 minutes, each apprentice teacher tries to get his team members to pass to each other before putting up a shot. At the end, the group splits into two, and each apprentice teacher goes around his group. Donald asks them about their self-control, while James asks them what they need to get better at.

After the children are dismissed, the staff meet to discuss the day's proceedings. The program director is pleased, describing their performance as "virtually flawless," and jokes that he is ready to certify some people as apprentice teachers. The apprentice teachers talk animatedly as they take the elevator to the office, where they talk and joke with the program leaders and munch sunflower seeds.

James and Donald are effective teachers because their lesson content is sequential and challenging, their communication style is purposeful yet empathetic, they understand the nuances of their students, and perhaps above all, they are confident in their ability to make a difference in the skills and attitudes of the young children in their care.

THE APPRENTICE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE EXPERIENCE

As we said earlier, the apprentice teacher program was a logical extension of the philosophy of the Coaching Club that the apprentice teachers had attended during the previous three years. Their perceptions about the value of the experience clustered around three areas: teaching the values of the Coaching Club, the challenge of teaching and forming relationships with children, and their pleasure in being regular visitors in a university environment.

First, the apprentice teachers were generally successful in teaching the values they themselves had experienced and learned in the Coaching Club. Our field notes contain many references to numerous comments and instructions which indicate attempts to infuse the five levels of responsibility into their teaching; for example, teamwork: "Make sure all of your teammates touch the ball!", self-control: "Did you all respect each other?", self-coaching: "Do you think you need to work on your shooting?", coaching: "Who said something positive to someone when they did something good?", and outside the gym: "Do y'all use this stuff outside? If you got a chance to, would you?" However, on occasions the apprentice teachers resorted to their own memories of physical education class—two examples: Phinehas wanted his group to run laps as a punishment for misbehavior; and Angie regularly chose the best basketball players to be on her team without thinking of the consequences. Phinehas's and Angie's behavior illustrates the challenge involved in asking the apprentice teachers to shed their socialized view of the traditional physical education teacher and to replace it with a more humanistic approach.

Second, the apprentice teachers also experienced some of the joys and frus-

trations of teaching as they worked with the young children each day. In the early stages of the program, the challenge of teaching young children was a daunting one. Chris describes his feelings:

You start getting nervous as soon as they walk through the gym door. You worried about how they gonna act because sometimes you might have problems with some of them. Sometimes they come up in there acting like they're too good to do this and that, and they stand up there and wait for you to explain the lesson and they know this already.

However, by the end of the program, it was evident that the apprentice teachers had relished the opportunity to experience what David Hornbeck, former Maryland state superintendent, referred to as the "joy of reaching out to others" (Harrison, 1987). As Angie said, "They little kids. You can't get mad at the little things they do. You have to work with them to bring them along. If they don't know how to dribble, you can't get mad because they dribbling wrong. You got to take time to teach them how to dribble."

Third, and perhaps most significant, participation in the program and exposure to and an increasing degree of comfort in the university environment prompted these young people to gain an appreciation of the value of higher education. Visiting the university each day during the summer reinforced the apprentice teachers' emerging perceptions of what is possible beyond high school. University faculty and staff treated them "like adults, not like we at school." Having a pass to use the university recreation facilities underlined their growing sense of responsibility and maturity. The cumulative experience of taking a 10-mile bus trip each day to the university, interacting with university personnel, and assuming a leadership position taught them not to be intimidated by such surroundings. Referring to the role the program director played in their lives, Angie said, "He try to teach us to have a good education; we can do some things if we get an education."

CONCLUSION

An evaluation should try to answer three questions: Did the program work? What were the reasons for its successes and failures? How could it be made better? The first two questions have to do with outcomes and require one to clarify what the program was trying to accomplish. At the most basic level of responsibility, the apprentice teacher program required the young people to be reliable by traveling to and from the university and being on time each day. As we have seen, 8 of the 11 apprentices managed to contribute to the program on a regular basis, and while the other 3 were irregular attenders, they did maintain some contact with the program director, either by coming from time to time or by informing the program director of their whereabouts.

Earlier we mentioned that the program director had dangled warm-ups and shoes as a carrot to entice these young people to commit to the program. However, when they were asked about the degree to which this gesture attracted them to the program, all of them said that they would have participated without it. Phinehas's comment was typical: "I kept coming here so the kids would remember me." Clearly they did not need such external rewards, and the value of the experience itself was sufficient to maintain their interest and to ensure their regular attendance. In retrospect, the director realized that stressing the warm-ups and shoes was a mistake. "I played them up too much," he said. "They don't need it! I keep underestimating these kids."

At the next level of responsibility, the apprentices were required to provide basketball instruction to youngsters from the local housing project. As we have seen, after a shaky start their performance improved throughout the five weeks, and they began to take ownership when given the opportunity by the director and his assistants. The apprentices were appreciated by the young children whom they taught, and typical comments included, "They nice," "They help people," "They young," and "They be nice to people because they help you shoot; they show you how to do defense and stuff." Children who were enrolled in the overall summer sports camp but who were not the responsibility of the apprentice teachers would watch their more fortunate peers and ask how they could be part of the program. On the final day, the director of this larger youth sports camp complimented the apprentices by saying that their teaching was superior to that of many of her adult camp staff, and that she hoped that they would return the following year. Such comments only served to reinforce the awareness of the apprentice teachers that they had made a valuable contribution to the young children's summer vacation and to reinforce their satisfaction about the role they had played. They also illustrate the reciprocal nature of service—the lives of both parties are improved or empowered as a direct result of the experience.

When planning the program, the director had hoped that the program might be a way of maintaining contact with former members of the Coaching Club during the summers of their high school years. At the end of the program, when all the apprentices were asked whether they would like to repeat the experience the following year, all responded affirmatively. However, the director's hope that participation in the program might lead the apprentice teachers to pursue similar opportunities and even aspire to careers in recreation was not realized. None of the apprentice teachers saw themselves volunteering as coaches in their neighborhood sports programs or working as teacher aides. Aspirations such as being a lawyer or doctor or doing a job that makes "a lot of money" were more appealing than human services careers at this point in these youngsters' lives.

However, as the apprentices' earlier comments attest, there were strong indications that their immersion in the university environment had generated a vi-

sion of their possible futures. By the end of the program, they saw college education not in terms of a product which was beyond their reach (i.e., in relation to enhanced career opportunities), but in terms of being a process in which they could participate (i.e., that college is hard work but can also be fun if you act responsibly).

In regard to the third question, how could the program be made better?, there are two areas in which changes could be made to improve its effectiveness. First, if the apprentice teachers had been instructed in basic teaching skills during the Coaching Club, they would have adapted more quickly to their role as teachers. Their pedagogical training in the Coaching Club had been oriented toward learning coaching skills such as running drills, setting up offense and defense, and calling time-outs rather than teaching basketball skills and learning how to manage young children. Their teaching would have benefited from an understanding of, for example, why it is important to use two balls instead of one during practices, and how to give positive feedback and encouragement to children.

Second, while Chuckie, Kameshio, and Darnell were talented basketball players, the others possessed (at best) average skills. The low-ability apprentices seemed to be obsessed with the need to prove themselves during games with the children. They became intensely competitive and usually dominated the activity by scoring many baskets and defending aggressively, thereby losing sight of the purpose of the activity. In short, they were concerned more about their own basketball development than about the children in their care. On the other hand, the more able basketball players did not exhibit such behavior and focused more on the development of the young children rather than on their own performance. If low-ability members of the Coaching Club had possessed a higher self-image in terms of their basketball skills, this might not have occurred; ways to achieve this should be explored.

Clearly the apprentice teachers knew that the program director and his student assistants cared about them. They were generous in their praise of the program director's commitment to them, and Angie's comment is typical: "He wants us to learn. He wants us to have self-control, to be positive about ourselves, and to keep going and to pick up confidence as we go along. He always there when we need him."

Overall, participation in the program sparked an awareness in the apprentice teachers that they could contribute to the lives of other people. Also they knew that they had something good going for the summer, they began to see an alternative future for themselves, and they realized that their lives were not hopeless. For the director, the program generated a different kind of awareness. In facilitating the program, he recognized the importance of creating effective and empowering learning communities. The experience brought new life to

him, his ongoing thinking about serving young people, and a feeling that he had contributed in a meaningful way to the greater good. He said:

Whatever else has or hasn't happened, I feel that one thing has occurred. I've connected in a different way to the apprentice teachers as a result of the program. Maybe it's just that our working relationship has changed; they have a job to do. Maybe they don't feel this; whatever, it feels nice.

The apprentice teacher program captured the interests and talents of this group of young people who in their school career had been characterized in varying degrees as behavior problems, poor attenders, and low achievers. Rather than prolonging their dependence on adults, undermining their self-esteem, and crippling their capacity to care, the apprentice teacher program regarded them as competent, capable, and quite able to make a contribution to their world. The experience of teaching young children improved the apprentice teachers' self-confidence, concern for others, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and enthusiasm for learning. They also developed perceptions of personal significance and belonging, personal capability and mastery, and personal influence. The apprentice teachers completed the program aware of the contributions they could make toward helping others and eager to continue the work the following year.

One wonders whether these young people's behavior, attendance, and academic problems would be diminished and their motivation, growth, and achievement enhanced if service activities like the one described in this article were a more prominent feature of their daily school lives. In light of this question, the current emphasis on service learning in schools is encouraging and is likely to mean that more young people will have the opportunity to actively serve their community through such projects as building parks, working with the homeless, rehabilitating existing homes, and tutoring (Haas and Lambert, 1995). This article suggests that physical activity settings should be considered viable service learning environments because they have the potential to engage youngsters in responsible and challenging activities for the common good. However, as in all service learning programs, attention must be given to the articulation of clear responsibilities and service learning goals for everyone involved, as well as to the provision of structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experience. Educational programs which focus on the betterment of the community deserve the support they are now receiving, and they are likely to contribute to new visions of teaching and learning in the 21st century.

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