

Manuscript 1301

How a Christian Worldview Enhances and Interacts with Academic Service Learning

Paul Angel Flores

Mark Arvidson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/icctej>



Part of the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

How a Christian Worldview Enhances and Interacts with Academic Service Learning

Abstract

Abstract

This study assesses how a Christian worldview enhances and interacts with academic service learning. It explains the importance of a Christian worldview and development at the undergraduate level. Faith integration is a distinctive to Christian higher education as part of attaining course objectives and fulfilling the mission of the institution. It considers academic service learning as a tool for teaching and learning in pre-service teacher education with faith integration. Findings explain the interaction of Christian worldview and academic service learning informing university student's perceptions of teaching and understanding of students with special needs. Quantitative research methods demonstrate that academic service learning can inform pre-service teachers through interaction with Christian worldview. Qualitative research methods produce findings indicating that pre-service teachers understand Christian worldview and an enhanced view of students. Conclusions suggest utilizing academic service learning as a tool for faith integration positively influences undergraduate student's development of a Christian worldview.

Keywords: Christian Worldview, Service learning, Faith Integration

Keywords

Christian Worldview, Faith Integration, Academic Service learning

How a Christian Worldview Enhances and Interacts with Academic Service Learning

Paul Angel Flores, Azusa Pacific University

Mark Arvidson, Azusa Pacific University

Introduction

Worldview is the way humans view the world shaped by beliefs about life and the surrounding environment (Lawrence, 2003). Sire (2015) explained, "With a locus of a worldview in the heart, we will be careful to respect the depth of its roots in each person (p. 156). Dockery (2002) additionally stated, "A Christian worldview is not just one's personal faith expression, not just a theory, it is an all-consuming way of life, applicable to all spheres of life" (p. 2). Utilizing academic service learning as a tool for faith integration informs an undergraduate student's development of a Christian worldview. This paper seeks to understand the relationship of a Christian worldview and academic service learning for pre-service teachers leading to truthful perceptions of students and eventual effective teaching in the classroom.

Utilizing academic service learning as a tool for faith integration positively influences an undergraduate student's development of a Christian worldview. Institutions of higher learning have an important role in leading undergraduate students to proper perceptions of students that they may eventually teach or serve. Christian worldview and

academic service learning for pre-service teachers enhance truthful perceptions of students and eventually effective teaching in the classroom.

Academic service learning is a pedagogical tool that is effective in developing an understanding of course content while also providing experiences that influence the attainment of course objectives. At Christian colleges and universities, academic service learning with faith integration encourages the pursuit of truth and the development of a Christian worldview. Various methodologies seek to prepare pre-service teachers for learning environments while also integrating faith leading to a positive development of a Christian worldview. Christian worldview as a distinctive of Christian colleges generally articulated in the mission statement along with departmental purpose statements and in student learner outcomes.

A growing methodology in higher education, academic service learning, utilizes meaningful

Paul Angel Flores is a Professor in the School of Education at Azusa Pacific University.

Mark Arvidson is a Professor in the Department of Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics at Azusa Pacific University.

service to learn course objectives, develop a passion for teaching, and grow in understanding. Utilizing academic service learning as a tool for faith integration positively influences an undergraduate student's development of a Christian worldview. Institutions of higher learning have an important role in leading undergraduate students to proper perceptions of students that they may eventually teach or serve. Christian worldview and academic service learning for pre-service teachers enhance truthful perceptions of students and eventually effective teaching in the classroom.

Literature Review

The development of a Christian worldview encourages students to examine critical issues in education while seeking truth. Ryken (2013) explained that a worldview is the most important thing about humans, and that "the only worldview that fully corresponds to the world as God knows it is a completely and consistently Christian worldview" (p. 31). Worldview is the way humans view the world shaped by beliefs about life and the surrounding environment (Lawrence, 2003). The current challenges in education concern the development of each student and thus a faith that gives dignity and value to all should result in behavior that encourages growth including understanding and servicing students.

Christian Worldview

Sire (2015) explained, "Ontology must precede epistemology in worldview formulation" (p. 95). Sire (2015) also observed, "In the biblical worldview, everything is first and foremost determined by the nature and character of God" (p. 75). Sire (2015) further stated that knowledge about what first things are supposed to be comes from revelation. Thus, "There must be something to be revealed and someone or something to reveal it" (Sire, 2015, p. 88). Dockery (2002) further added that the beginning point is a confession from the Apostle's Creed that we believe in God the Father, maker of heaven and earth. Ryken (2013) stated, "Christianity begins with God who is really there and it's not about us; it's about him"

(p. 37). Ryken (2013) also noted that "Christian worldview is a matter of the soul and is concerned about the way things are (p. 151). This concern includes college students and perceptions of future students in the classroom.

Rosebrough (2002) explained how a teacher's worldview makes a difference in the classroom. It includes making a difference in perceptions and conceptions of the nature of human being that a student engages in. In addition, Rosebrough (2002) pointed out that "a teacher's worldview affects students' sense of right and wrong" (p. 293). A worldview, according to Holmes (1987), included aspects that are holistic, exploratory, pluralistic, and confessional. Sire (2015) stated, "There are questions that generate worldview presuppositions" (p. 153).

Lawrence (2003) stated, "A comprehensive Christian worldview creates the desire within ourselves to be co-laborers with God in transforming education all to reflect God's governing laws and thus restoring society to reflect God's truth, beauty, and justice" (p. 79). A Christian worldview considers each student not as something or someone in need of fixing, however, but as someone to understand, a student who is redeemable and in need of restoration leading to positive self-efficacy. From conception to the classroom, students are part of the divine creative work deserving of dignity and value with the opportunity to grow in a school setting.

Palmer (1998) wrote that we teach who we are. Academic subject matter brings understanding to who students are and informs faith. It enhances understanding of self as knowledge gained in the various subject areas encouraging the development of self-understanding in relationship to God. Van Zanten (2011) noted, "Christian education is concerned with proclaiming and assisting students to grow in an intellectually grounded embrace of the Christian worldview" (p. 116). Palmer (1998) connected this to teaching stating, "Good teachers who join self and subject and students in the fabric of life" (p. 11). Sire (2015) explained, "We think with our worldview and because of our worldview" (p. 143). That

understanding drives the pursuit of knowledge in order to know subject matter proficiently. Bain (2004) asserted that without exception, outstanding teachers know their subjects and students well. Faith integration can be the inspiration for the development of a Christian worldview.

Moreover, Palmer (1998) stated, “When I do not know myself, I cannot know my subject and I cannot know my students” (p. 2). The preparation of a teacher begins with the journey of self-knowledge and the understanding of what it means to be human. It is important to discover the motive behind engaging in the discipline as it pertains to the discovery of knowledge that will influence future students. Durka (2002) called it our soul’s life and work and further stated, “We grow to understand that teaching is a calling that makes claims on our souls” (p. 3). Service-learning is distinctly different from other forms of experiential learning. Academic service-learning, as a methodology, provides students with opportunities to serve in Faculty designed environments while engaging in reflection and study on the meaning of the service (Parkay, 2020). The consideration of Faith integration, combined with academic service-learning, serves as a unique opportunity for Christian colleges. In this context, many teacher preparation programs include the development of a Christian Worldview as it pertains to the vocation of teaching. The privilege to prepare future teachers for all students is an opportunity to reflect the kingdom of God.

The consideration of Faith integration, combined with academic service-learning, serves as a unique opportunity for Christian colleges. In this context, many teacher preparation programs include the development of a Christian Worldview as it pertains to the vocation of teaching. The privilege to prepare future teachers for all students is an

opportunity to reflect the kingdom of God.

Faith Integration

Academic service learning is a vehicle for faith integration. Education, public and private, has been an avenue to share knowledge and opinion expressed many times in an effort to seek truth. Higher education has historically been a place of searching for truth, not just asking the critical questions, but seeking the critical answers. Understanding the impact of faith in an academic discipline is critical to the development of truth and life in a pluralistic society, and in developing respect and appreciation for others. Faith and learning are necessary due to living in a fallen world and seeking meaning and purpose for living (Lewis, 1952).

Faith influences perspective, which influences education and relationship with students. Holmes (1987) stated, “The Christian College is distinctive in that Christian faith can touch the entire range of life and learning” (p. 45). Holmes (1987) suggested a Christian College distinctive, “Should be an education that cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning” (p. 6). Perhaps the most important issues concern humans, where they come from, interactions, and purpose for earthly life, explored and developed with a distinctively Christian perspective. This distinctive enables the formation of a Christian worldview through faith integration encouraging the exploration of truth in academic disciplines such as pre-service teacher education including those preparing for public and private school settings.

Because of a biblically based philosophy of education, Christian Colleges ground their vision and mission in Scripture. This foundation should extend to how Christian Colleges engage all students, including students with special needs, who are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), have unique gifts bestowed by God (Ephesians 2:10), and are invaluable members of Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) (Swaner, 2021, p. 5). Christian College settings provide

opportunities for students to grow in understanding of creation as it pertains to being human, including those with perceived disabilities.

Academic Service Learning

The role of the teacher in any classroom is the critical factor for an effective learning environment. The training of pre-service teachers to be successful in the classroom is a significant task for any school of education. Research seems to indicate that academic service learning is an effective instructional strategy for pre-service teacher training programs resulting in student's engagement in the learning process (Sileo et al., 1998). Many educators also see service learning as a strengthening effect for a liberal arts education (Barber, 1994; Checkoway, 2001). Academic service learning can be a powerful methodology for pre-service teachers as it is rooted in course objectives while providing experiences for learning the course subject matter.

Academic service learning is neither easily defined nor implemented (Kendall, 1990). In general, service learning can be described as "the pedagogy that combines three axes: learning (establishing clearly defined academic goals), serving (applying what one learns for the communal/societal benefit), and reflecting (thoughtful engagement about the service learning work's value)". Furco (1996) described academic service learning as distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by an academic context that ensures the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service. Academic service learning intentionally benefits both the university student who is providing the service along with the students served.

Faculty involvement, development, and integration is critical to this methodology. "Service-learning is learning-by-doing for others" (Dubinsky, 2002, p. 64). In sum, through service learning, university students gain a better understanding of others and the contexts in which they live. As these relationships deepen, students begin to care about the learning community, develop healthy perceptions, and seek to improve

it. The connection to the course objectives is important to the effectiveness as academic service-learning.

In contrast, Furco (1996) explained the struggle of defining academic service learning compared to other approaches of experiential education. Some approaches do not balance service with learning as both primary goals. Other approaches to experiential education include volunteerism, community service, internships, and field education utilized in many pre-service teacher education programs. In California and in many other states, pre-service teachers complete field education as co-curricular required service prior to student teaching with a primary focus on learning and not balanced with service. Furthermore, the service is in addition to courses and not connected to course objectives. In academic service learning, service integrates into the course and balances with learning.

Academic service learning as a pedagogical strategy not only gives students practical skills but also addresses the civic issues involved in using those skills. Specific activities and experiences develop key dispositions important for effective educators, such as caring attitudes, sensitivity to student differences, and habits of altruism. MacIntyre (1999) posited that we learn through "every day shared activities," not primarily through logical analysis or by theoretical reflection. Specifically, the process of schooling can help develop the virtues of separating ourselves from desires, developing proper self-knowledge, and our dependence on others. At its core, service learning intends to influence the beliefs and attitudes of students (pre-service teachers) in ways that cultivate or strengthen dispositions and inform practice. In the words of Palmer (1998), we need to produce students who have the "courage to teach."

Worldview, Students and Redemptive Learning Through Faith Integration

As a perspective, Colson and Warren (2006) spoke of redemption as to buy back. Lewis (1952) wrote, "The central Christian belief is that Christ's death

has somehow put us right with God and given us a fresh start” (p. 54). Anderson (2003) argued that Christian teacher preparation programs must encourage and exemplify an inclusive worldview in which all students are created in the image of God acknowledging abilities that each brings to the learning community.

Lewis (1952) implied that great moral absolutes have authority over educators. Colson (2005) indicated finding a life of significance develops from, “fulfilling our higher nature, shaping our lives and our circumstances to reflect the way we are hardwired” (p. 90). The many difficult issues in education are opportunities for faith to inform academic discipline. Colson (2005) concluded, “As we give away our lives in service, as we lose our lives in order to save them, we discover the true meaning of our lives in the midst of fellowship and community” (p. 154). A Christian worldview cultivates truthful perspectives on critical issues in education developed through faith integration utilizing academic service-learning.

Current classrooms have students with diverse cultural backgrounds and many including students with special needs. Teacher preparation programs need to consider preparing general education teachers for teaching students and students with special needs (Anderson, 2003). Research informs that disability affects every race and ethnicity, along with religion, age, gender, and socio-economic class (Wheaton Center for Faith and Disability, 2022). Boehm (2021) stated, “Inclusive Christian schools are open to serving students with disabilities because they are fellow image bearers of God” (p. 9).

Boehm (2021) presented, “A concise theology of disability, composed of nine ‘pillars’ of scriptural wisdom from Genesis to Revelation that offer a solid rationale and foundation” (p. 8). Pillar 1 is rooted in all people are created in the image of God. We image God as integrated persons of body and soul/spirit. We each bear God’s image individually. We also, however, bear the image of God collectively. As image bearers, our glorious task is to reflect God’s character into the world—through all our words and deeds—not only

individually, but also as families and as communities (p. 9).

Disability is experienced both functionally, through bodies that do not work as some might expect, and socially through relationships that do not respect, support, and affirm the image of God (Wheaton Center for Faith and Disability, 2022). Boehm (2021) observed that “Disability is simply a more noticeable form of the brokenness and difficulty that is common to the human condition” (p. 10). A proper consideration of the “*imago Dei*” for students with disabilities can influence the effectiveness of teaching. As Parkay (2020) noted, “Deficit thinking can lead a teacher to have lower expectations for students” (p. 105). Teachers use deficit thinking to lower value leading to lower effectiveness and outcomes.

For some the lack of interaction with students with special needs develops insecurity and misunderstanding. Boehm (2021) suggested, “While disability presents challenges to families and schools, they are not tragedies to be avoided but opportunities to embrace” (p. 11). Yet research continues to demonstrate that teachers and general students find positive interaction and the relationship rewarding (Parkay, 2020). This informative learning challenges the faith of students as they begin to interact with the heart of each student with disabilities.

Consequently, this helps pre-service teachers to consider opportunities of teaching with a Christian worldview and how corresponding actions can influence the classroom and the development of students. This particular aspect of the academic discipline seeks to inform faith by understanding that all people are equal and have equal worth and dignity (Colson, 2011, p. 49). DomNwachukwu (2010) stated, “The quest for the definition of what it means to be human has been the preoccupation of philosophers and scientists since the time of Socrates” (p. 2). The interaction with students who may have a disability will lead to improved teaching that reflects the values of a Christian worldview (Holmes, 1987). Effective teachers understand the importance of academic achievement and the factors that need

consideration including student's social and emotional areas (Rosebrough, 2002).

The utilization of service learning for faith integration leads to the development of a healthy Christian worldview. "Teachers must examine their worldview because students have to learn and keep learning how to live" (Rosebrough, 2002, p. 296). Teaching helps to shape the ultimate questions including human finitude, which could lead students to consider the reality of God (p. 82). It can further lead to looking at finitude and the finitude of others, which can additionally lead to religious discoveries (p. 83). Understanding individuals in a multicultural classroom as humans created in the image of God is paramount to an effective and efficient teacher. As Rosebrough (2002) suggested, "What we believe as teachers does make a difference in the lives of those with whom we interact" (p. 297). Christian worldview enhances academic service learning leading to truthful perceptions of students and effective teaching.

Methodology

This study involved 21 students participating in academic service learning involving a variety of classrooms of students with special needs in pre-school to fifth grade within a practicum experience of 12 weeks. This course experience met the requirements of Introduction to Special Populations. University students participated in the classroom in collaboration with the classroom teacher providing support during life skills lessons. University students focused on developing relationships, understanding student worth during meaningful service seeking to enhance academic service learning with a Christian worldview. Academic service learning in the context of pre-service education is an appreciation of multiple perspectives encountered through service reaching learning objectives. This is uniquely academic service learning separated from clinical experience and other requirements for state licensure.

Introduction to Special Populations seeks to provide an overview of educational practices that influence the identification, placement, and teaching of students with mild to moderate

disabilities. The course is part of the Liberal Studies Elementary Subject Matter Program and the Special Education concentration. This program equips future teachers and other professionals by integrating coursework and service learning experiences with the application of a Christian worldview as it relates to life vocation.

The program is in a School of Education within the United States, which at [institution name removed] equips teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, and administrators who make a difference as leaders and champions for students in diverse educational settings. Based upon Christian values and principles, the [institution name removed] School of Education prepares educators to be creative, collaborative, critical thinkers and scholars for diverse educational settings. Moreover, [institution name removed] as an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars seeks to advance the work of God in the world through academic liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Students complete the service while maintaining a weekly reflective journal based on prompts rooted in The Bible, Disability, and The Church (Yong, 2011). Students are to consider the three basic elements that inform the disability hermeneutic at work (Yong, 2011, p. 13). The project includes describing initial observations regarding the classroom environment and the students serving while explaining learning about students with disabilities. Yong (2011) noted, "People with disabilities are created in the image of God" (p. 13). In addition, Yong (2011) stated, "People with disabilities are people first who shouldn't be defined solely by their disabilities" (p. 13).

The service encourages reflection on how interaction with students with disabilities helps to improve understanding of the role of a professional in a special education environment. Yong (2011) stated, "Disabilities are not necessarily evil or blemishes to be eliminated" (p. 13). Service-learning requires students to consider Special Education environments in terms of learning disabilities and educational supports

for students leading to a proper understanding of students created in the image of God.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research design utilized quantitative methods to determine preliminary impact in terms of faith integration and perceptions of students with special needs. Pre- and post-assessments measuring students’ perspectives on service learning (SL) and faith integration (FI) were collected through the Academic Center for Service Learning (ACSL). Students were required to sign release forms approving that their de-identified responses were part of the study.

In addition, student reflections regarding experiential learning and contemplative reading with faith integration provided qualitative data through online platforms. Nineteen students participated in one service learning class session per week for twelve weeks. In addition, university students participated in briefing discussions prior to the experience, read literature pertaining to developing a worldview, and online reflective journals based on prompts connecting reading, faith, and service. Reflections and responses to survey questions produced emerging themes.

Findings of the Study

Eight of the 10 ACSL survey questions related directly to the study’s research questions. The pre-course survey questions were:

1. I anticipate that my learning in this specific course will be enhanced by the service learning experience.
2. I expect to gain an increased understanding of how the academic content of this course relates to the “real world.”

Table 1

	1- Strongly Disagree	2	3	4 – Strongly Agree
1.Pre-Course: Learning will be enhanced by SL.	0	0	2 = 10%	19 = 90%
1.Post-Course: Learning was enhanced by SL.	0	0	1 = 5%	18 = 95%

The post-course survey questions were similar, except instead of “anticipate and expect” included “was and did” (see Table 1). In addition, questions related specifically to the project and most with faith integration were included:

1. I have a better understanding of diverse perspectives and the worth of all people.
2. I am able to identify how this service-learning project affects my personal growth.
3. My desire to be involved in the community in the future has been deepened through this experience.
4. This project has strengthened my personal democratic values and sense of civic responsibility.
5. This service-learning experience provided me the opportunity to live out Christian values.
6. I am able to understand the connection between my service-learning experience and my personal faith.

The majority of students strongly agreed that the SL (service-learning) activity enhanced their learning (90%) and connected course content to “real world” experiences (95%). Furthermore, the majority of students strongly agreed that the SL activity gave them a better understanding of diverse perspectives and worth of all people (95%), affected personal growth (95%), provided opportunity to live out Christian values (74%), and made connections between SL and their personal faith (84%).

2. Will gain an understanding of connection between academic content and “real world.”	0	0	0	21 = 100%
2. Did gain an understanding of connection between academic content and “real world.”	0	0	1 = 5%	18 = 95%
Post-Course Only				
3. I have a better understanding of diverse perspectives and the worth of all people.	0	0	1 = 5%	18 = 95%
4. I am able to identify how this service-learning project affects my personal growth.	0	0	1 = 5%	18 = 95%
5. My desire to be involved in the community in the future has been deepened through this experience.	0	0	2 = 11%	17 = 89%
6. This project has strengthened my personal democratic values and sense of civic responsibility.	0	1 = 5%	4 = 21%	14 = 74%
7. This service-learning experience provided me the opportunity to live out Christian values.	0	1 = 5%	1 = 5%	17 = 74%
8. I am able to understand the connection between my service-learning experience and my personal faith.	0	0	3 = 16%	16 = 84%

Open-ended Questions in Post-survey

Academic: How was your learning supported by the service-learning project and/or the people you interacted with?

Twenty students responded to this question with a consensus indicating that learning was supported with many referring to the unique aspect of service learning. For example:

- This service learning project, the students, and the teachers taught me so many things that simply cannot be conveyed in a lecture setting. They taught me kindness, love for children, tactics for behavioral issues or tantrums, and different learning strategies. Overall, they taught me the beauty and diversity found

in classrooms for children with special needs.

- In this class, I learned how people with disabilities fit into God’s plan and why they are so important. In this learning I was able to one see my students through a new hopeful more complete light, which then allowed me to hold them accountable for achieving higher goals.
- Working hands on with different age levels of students with disabilities was really a powerful movement in my life, shaping my view on working in a class with students with special needs. I have grown tremendously.

Reciprocal: In what ways was your service beneficial to you and/or those you served? (Feel free to give a specific example).

Students gave indication of the benefit as a servant, as a learner, and to those served. Similarly, 20 students provided a response to the prompt:

- I was able to grow as an individual while also seeing the growth in the students I taught.
- I loved, loved, loved, the service learning aspect of this course. Working with the students always brought a smile to my face and confirmed my calling in life as a speech pathologist and special education educator. I hope that I brought the same joy to the students as they brought to me.
- I know I was able to help the teacher and aides in the classrooms. The students who would benefit from more one on one attention were able to receive direct instruction, even if it was just an hour. Typically, I was able to help students complete their in class assignment, when it would normally take them multiple attempts. Not only does this help the teacher, but also it directly helps the student. Additionally, I was helping that student's family by loving and caring for their child. I was also able to serve the teachers on a smaller scale by cutting things out, cleaning, or preparing the next activity. While it did not seem hard to me or take much time, I know I saved them stress of staying after school or in their classroom during lunch.

Making a Difference: How did this project encourage you to be a difference maker?

One of the goals of the project is that students would grow in understanding of positive influence. 19 students responded to the survey question as positive growth and development of influence.

- This project encouraged me to not be afraid of those who are different than me, and to jump into serving and loving them whole-heartedly. It showed me I can do all things with the love of Christ, and demonstrated that His love is for all!

- This project allowed me to serve teachers in the classroom, but mostly the students. I was encouraged by being able to be in the field now and using my classroom knowledge to apply it. I am truly encouraged to act as the hands and feet of Jesus and to share his love in my own classroom one day.
- Something my mom told me today was related to the deaf world but applies to this area of work too. She stated that people who have a disability are not called by God any different than we are; they just have less opportunity to use that calling. I think that this experience has continued to develop that belief and understanding in my life. Reminds me that there is more that I can do.

Class Reflection

An important part of service learning theory includes reflection. All students participate in self-reflection integrating course reading while responding to a prompt. Responses provide an understanding of faith integration, course concepts, and self-knowledge.

Consider the three basic elements that inform the disability hermeneutic at work in the book (Yong, 2011, p. 13), Describe initial observations regarding the classroom environment and the students you were able to serve, while explaining what was learned about students with disabilities?

All 19 students responded to the prompt reflecting on learning about students and faith integration.

- I feel that this may tie in with Yong's first point, that those with disabilities were created by God and God does not make mistakes. Their lives have value and purpose, this is Yong's third point, that value is not only experienced by them but by those that are around them.
- First is people with disabilities are created in God's image, and God does not make mistakes. Second is people with disabilities are more than just their disability; it should not define them. They are first human beings with souls,

thoughts and hearts. Third, disabilities should not be seen as things that must be eliminated. Disabilities do not have to be fixed but can be embraced and accepted.

- My student with special needs is made in the image of God. While I do not know the specifics behind the disability, I know God did not make a mistake when he created. My student is God's child who is individually and uniquely made.

"People with disabilities are created in the image of God" (Yong, 2011, p. 13). Describe what you did with the student you worked with and what you learned about yourself while working on life skills as part of the IEP.

- This experience brought life and a face to the belief that people with disabilities are created in the image of God—My student is created in the image of God, with unique talents and passions.
- I believe that God did not make any mistakes on His people and every person with special needs or without are created in the perfect image of God. Therefore, I will continue to try my best to understand each student and serve them in ways that they need.
- Seeing each child, those with or without a disability, as made in the image of God is empowering. These kids gave me hugs and did not want me to leave. They love in the way God intended for people to love one another without judgement or preconceived notion.

"People with disabilities are people first who shouldn't be defined solely by their disabilities" (Yong, 2011, p.13). Explain and reflect on how your interaction with students helps to improve the student's development given the specific disabilities and how has your understanding of the role of a professional in a special education environment developed.

- God calls us to love and care for people, and if we place their situation in front of who the person is, we risk not seeing them. Sometimes we even have an attitude of us being better than the other

person. This is a concept that we should have applied through our daily lives and the people we are interacting with.

- This statement is true because a person is not defined by their disability nor do they want to be defined by their disability. Working in the classroom one on one with a student allows us to spend a little time to get to know the student and assist them with their tasks.
- Today I worked with a kid who had Down syndrome and the whole time I thought about was this quote. This kid is capable of accomplishing anything I just needed to guide him on how to do the assignment.

Conclusion

University student responses indicate that academic service learning with faith integration informs the development of a Christian worldview while also challenging existing beliefs and understandings. Faith integration with service learning has a profound effect on pre-service students as indicated by responses and class discussions. The analysis of participants to questions integrating readings with experiential learning indicates that students think through concepts of faith seeking redemption for students who have limitations. In addition, responses suggest that university students develop a genuine compassion for students with special needs seeking redemption and restoration. Pre-service students can re-examine beliefs, Imago Dei, and consider the concept of students with special needs deserving teachers who are caring and competent with a proper understanding of their place in the world.

The research seems to indicate that service learning increases personal and social responsibility and sense of competence (Weiler, LaGoy, Grane & Rovner, 1998) and acceptance of responsibility (Stephens, 1995). Furthermore, this study along with other research studies undergird the premise that service learning can be a key factor in students' character development.

Institutions of higher education should consider the implications of worldview development occurring through service learning and the integration of faith. This methodology leads to student self-satisfaction with their growth and development, participation in higher education, and teaching while developing a Christian worldview. Furthermore, this service learning project seems to suggest that understanding ignites through interaction and reflective thought of students grounded in a Christian worldview. Further analysis of the data includes assessment

Institutions of higher education should consider the implications of worldview development occurring through service learning and the integration of faith. This methodology leads to student self-satisfaction with their growth and development, participation in higher education, and teaching while developing a Christian worldview. Furthermore, this service learning project seems to suggest that understanding ignites through interaction and reflective thought of students grounded in a Christian worldview.

of perceived attitudes about awareness and sensitivity toward students with special needs demonstrating that the road to understanding is an exceptional road. Faith integration is a model for teaching as we teach who we are (Palmer, 1998). Serving primarily pre-service teachers, the opportunity to connect faith with subject and faith through academic service learning with students is enormous. As faculty, we teach life, we teach students, and God uses the subject matter as a vehicle. The joy of serving God by serving others is a joy that passes to the next generation of teachers as they build the courage to teach through

Christian worldview enhancing and interacting with academic service learning.

The joy of serving God by serving others is a joy that passes to the next generation of teachers as they build the courage to teach through Christian worldview enhancing and interacting with academic service learning.

References

- Anderson, D.W. (2003). Special education as reconciliation. *Journal of Education and Belief*, 7(1), 23-36.
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjnrqvbb>
- Barber, B. (1994). A proposal for mandatory citizen education and community service. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning*, 1(1), 86-93.
- Boehm, T. L. (2021). A Biblical case for inclusive Christian schools. In *ACSI Leading insights: Special education and inclusion*, (pp. 8-20). Association of Christian Schools International.
- Checkoway, B. (2001). Renewing the civic mission of the American research university. *Journal of Higher Education*, 72, 125-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2001.11778875>
- Colson, C. (2011). *Doing the right thing: Participant's guide*. Zondervan.
- Colson, C. (2005). *The good life*. Tyndale House.
- Colson, C., & Warren, R. (2006). *Wide angle: Framing your worldview*. Prison Fellowship
- Dockery, D. S. (2002). *Shaping a Christian worldview*. In D.S. Dockery & G. A. Thornbury (Eds.), *Shaping a Christian worldview*, (pp. 280-297). B & H Academic.
- DomNwachukwu, C. S. (2010). *An*

- introduction to multicultural education: From theory to practice.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Dubinsky, J. (2002). Service-Learning as a path to virtue: The ideal orator in professional communication. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning*, 8(2), 61-74.
- Durka, G. (2002). *A teacher's calling.* Paulist Press.
- Furco, A. (1996). Service learning: A balanced approach to experiential learning. *Campus Compact*, 9-13.
- Holmes, A. F. (1987). *The idea of a Christian college* (revised ed.). Eerdmans.
- Kendall, J. C. (1990). Combining service and learning: An introduction. In J. C. Kendall & Associates (Eds.), *Combining service and learning: A resource book for community and public service.* NSEE.
- Lawrence, N. (2003). *Countercultural Christians: Exploring a Christian worldview with Charles Colson.* Group.
- Lewis, C. S. (1952). *Mere Christianity.* MacMillan.
- MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent rational animals: Why human beings need the virtues.* Open Court.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life.* Jossey-Bass.
- Parkay, F. W. (2020). *Becoming a teacher* (11th ed.). Pearson.
- Rosebrough, T. R. (2002). Christian worldview and teaching. In D.S. Dockery and G. A. Thornbury (Eds.), *Shaping a Christian worldview*, (pp. 280-297). B & H Academic.
- Ryken, P. G. (2013). *Christian worldview: A student's guide (Reclaiming the Christian intellectual tradition).* Crossway.
- Sileo, T. W., Prater, M. A., Luckner, J. L., Rhine, B., & Rude, H. A., (1998). Strategies to facilitate preservice teachers' active involvement in learning. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 21, 187- 204.
- Sire, J. W. (2015). *Naming the elephant: Worldview as a concept* (2nd ed.). InterVarsity Press.
- Stephens, L. (1995). *The complete guide to learning through community service, grades K-9.* Allyn and Bacon Publishers.
- Swaner, L.E. (2021). Introduction. In *ACSI Leading insights: Special education and inclusion*, (pp. 4-6). Association of Christian Schools International.
- VanZanten, S. (2011). *Joining the mission: A guide for (mainly) new college faculty.* Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Weiler, D., LaGoy, A., Grane, E., & Rovner, A. (1998). *An evaluation of K-12 service-learning in California: Phase II final report.* RPP International with the Search Institute.
- Wheaton Center for Faith and Disability. (n.d.), retrieved on May 26, 2022. <https://www.wheaton.edu/wheaton-center-for-faith-and-disability/>
- Yong, A. (2011). *The Bible, disability, and the church.* Eerdmans Publishing Co.