Project-Based Service Learning in Apparel Design and Merchandising

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences

By

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my parents, Janice and Robert and my husband, Bill.
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ABSTRACT

PROJECT-BASED SERVICE LEARNING IN APPAREL DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING CURRICULA

By

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Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences

Project-based service learning (PBSL) in Apparel Design and Merchandising and other fields has the potential to instill agency in students and contribute to their commitment to citizenship, social justice, and social responsibility. While the importance of these attributes as related to the Apparel Design and Merchandising industries have been expressed, a practical tool with theoretical support for educators looking to incorporate service-learning projects into their course offerings is needed. The goal of this project was to provide useful recommendations to educators looking to incorporate a service-learning project into their classrooms, providing suggestions and advice to those looking to begin new or refine existing project-based service learning projects in their particular learning environment. To reach to this goal, two objectives were proven. Two objectives were proven. The first objective was to refine, implement, and analyze a service-learning project for students in an experimental interdisciplinary sustainability course in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department at California State University, Northridge. In the Spring 2015 semester, students chose the collaborating community partner and created two sustainability proposals, one of which included Apparel Design and Merchandising as its focus. Students visited the community partner site, interviewed
the community partner, and presented their final proposals to the community partner harnessing course material and their experiences. The first objective was proven through the detailed description of the procedure of the experience. The second objective was to apply Carver’s *A Conceptual Framework for Experiential Education* (1997) to strengthen the theoretical grounding of the service-learning project. Four keywords as related to the applied framework were found in that the project was student-centered, participatory, engendered social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising fields, and having a real value to the community partner. Project criteria, a sample lecture, theoretical applications, student feedback, documentation, and the final proposals are included along with recommendations for future research and programs. Finally, suggestions for educators in any field to incorporate service learning into their curricula are offered.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project was to provide useful recommendations to educators looking to incorporate a service-learning project into their classrooms, providing suggestions and advice to those looking to begin new or refine existing project-based service learning projects in their particular learning environment. This goal was met by achieving two related objectives.

Social responsibility and an emphasis on serving the community are key tenets in the future of Apparel Design and Merchandising of the 21st century (Dickson & Eckman; Baugher et al., 2000). Project-based service learning in Apparel Design and Merchandising has the potential to instill agency in students and contribute to their commitment to citizenship, social justice, and social responsibility.

Problem Statement

While the importance of these attributes as related to the Apparel Design and Merchandising industries have been expressed, a practical tool or example for educators in Apparel Design and Merchandising programs is needed. Despite growing demand, there are no practical sources or guidelines of how to implement a service-learning project with community partner engagement in Apparel Design and Merchandising in authentic, meaningful, and realistic ways for students and community stakeholders. Studies show that sustainability coursework, global technology-based learning, and experiential learning models are well-established in Apparel Design and Merchandising curricula, but incorporating the hyper-local needs of a community partner and including teaching strategies and evaluation into the coursework is less so (Cao, Frey, & Farr,
At California State University, Northridge, the *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* course was lacking a truly student-centered service-learning component, a methodical procedure, and any grounded theory.

**Purpose**

This project was aimed at refining, implementing, and analyzing a service-learning project in a sustainability course that enhanced student learning, fostered agency in participants, and served the community partner. Also, the project used Carver’s *Conceptual Framework for Experiential Education* to assess the success of students’ learning outcomes after the implementation of the developed project and provide a framework for educators looking to incorporate service-learning projects into their curricula (Carver, 1997).

**Objectives**

1. The purpose of the project was to refine and implement an existing service-learning project while developing related lectures and other course materials.

2. A revised model of Carver’s (1997) *Conceptual Framework for Experiential Education* was applied to the project in both development strategies to provide a grounded theory for the project in the future.

**Limitations**

This project includes a step-by-step analysis of the project along with the sample introductory lecture, student reflections, community partner feedback, and examples of
student work to ascertain if student learning outcomes and community partner needs are met. This project is limited due to its site-specificity and lack of generalizability.

**Key Terms and Definitions**

*Project-based service learning (PBSL)* – “a credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, p. 222).

*Agency* – There are two definitions of agency at its most broad that are applicable in the study. Agency is “the action or intervention, especially such as to produce a particular effect,” or “a thing or person that acts to produce a particular result,” which places equal emphasis on the activity or action as well as the person or people needed to generate said action (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 2008). More specifically, agency “represents the developing of students’ personal agency – allowing students to become more powerful change agents in their lives and communities increasing students’ recognition and appreciation of the extent to which the locus of control for their lives is within themselves, and enabling them to use this as a source of power to generate activity” (Carver, 1997, p.146).

*Civic engagement* – Although there is no one definition of civic engagement, a broad understanding is: “how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future” (Adler & Goggin, p. 239, 2005). Behaviors related to civic engagement may include volunteering,
fundraising, active membership in an organization, boycotting, canvassing, petitioning, and community-based problem solving (Adler & Goggin, 2005).

Social justice – “justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges with in a society (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2008).” Wade describes a society “in which all members have their basic needs met and all individuals are physically safe and secure, able to develop to their full capacities and to participate as effective citizens of their communities and nation” (Wade, 2004, p. 65).

Significance

Although this study is limited in generalizability, there is a need in curricula for an example to follow, supporting the implementation of project-based service learning related to social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising industries. The outcomes provide educators a practical and useful guide to implementing and analyzing a service-learning project in their own communities that responds to the unique needs, assets, and stakeholders of a certain time and place. The purpose of the following project was to outline how a project that addresses social responsibility is advanced, executed, and analyzed by key stakeholders. A revised model of Carver’s (1997) Conceptual Framework for Experiential Education was utilized and applied to the current project to build the research model and consider the developed project.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This Literature Review analyzes how Project-based service learning (PBSL) is currently used in higher education, examines its benefits, and puts current practice in the framework of history of the movement. Then, the writing explores how this pedagogical strategy relates to the field of Family and Consumer Sciences, its nested field of Apparel Design and Merchandising, and the need to put the latter in the context of sustainability for the entire industry.

**PBSL in Higher Education: Examining Benefits and a Brief History**

**Benefits and Current Applications.**

Project-based service learning (PBSL) is a vital emerging pedagogical topic and powerful emerging teaching strategy within community college, college, and graduate education (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Academic rigor, serving real-life identified community needs, and emphases on reflective practice are key tenets of PBSL that harness community partnerships to increase student engagement and citizenship (Zaff & Lerner, 2010). With a shifting focus on developing 21st Century Skills at the high school level, students will be expected to utilize creativity, collaboration, and communication in their higher academic and professional careers (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.).

This shift in educational thinking can be harnessed to promote civic engagement, strive for an active approach to working toward social justice in diverse students, support the learning and later career success of at-risk and underserved populations, and encourage reflection in participants (West & Simmons, 2012). Social justice education – broadly, teaching students that we must work for a society where equity and opportunity
permit each citizen to reach his or her full potential – must be “student-centered, collaborative, experiential, intellectual, analytical, and multicultural” (Wade, 2004, p. 66). Through this approach, students possess the power to take on activist roles. They can go out into the field and make a positive difference in the lives of community members through securing strategic community partnerships and PBSL.

Any subject matter can be taught through the lens of social justice education as well as current socio-political issues because social justice education is tied to the desired curriculum and authentic perceived community needs (Wade, 2004). Successful PBSL initiatives can reinvigorate students, faculty, and the community (Lattimer & Riordan, 2011). The success of a PBSL program can be measured using six concepts, the six a’s: academic rigor, authenticity, applied learning, active exploration, adult connections, and assessment practices (Lattimer & Riordan, 2011). These successes can also be measured in four discrete stages: Preparation, Implementation – Performing the Service, Reflection, and Demonstration/Celebration (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2011).

Service learning directly supports fostering of 21st Century Skills, which is an educational initiative for K-12 students. However, the model can be applied at the college level because the model incorporates “innovative support systems to help students master the multi-dimensional abilities required of them in the 21st century and beyond,” indicating readiness for the workforce (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2015). These learning outcomes are: Life and Career Skills, Learning and Innovation Skills, and Information, Media, and Technology Skills. As shown, the first two are supported by PBSL.
A brief history of PBSL: putting the practice in context.

Service learning in American academic contexts emerged out of philosophical, pedagogical, and socio-historic contexts beginning in the early 20th century. Dewey (1938) made the connection between education and the lived experience, emphasizing that students’ understanding of and interactions with their surroundings inform the knowledge they acquire in school. The function of education, then, is to provide students opportunities to respond to and reflect upon the world around them with the aim of reinforcing democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality. In addition to Dewey, social welfare movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries acknowledged an institutional need to provide for underserved communities such as women, farmers, and urban laborers in both work and education (Flecky, 2011).

For example, land grant institutions offered extension courses for agricultural communities, the Works Project Administration (WPA) provided artists and artisans opportunities to work amid the Great Depression, and after World War II the GI Bill provided soldiers funding to get a college degree (Flecky, 2011; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). If Dewey and Freire provided the philosophical and pedagogical backbone of service learning and the Reform movement galvanized educational and civic opportunity, Civil Rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s promoted the urgency of social reform and the need for educational institutions to respond to political and social unrest (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999).

Philosophically, Freire (1970) reinforced and expounded upon Dewey:

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about
conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (p. 34).

The term service learning was coined in the 1970s and was codified in the 1990s with the National and Community Service Trust Act (Los Angeles County Office of Education, 2015). Up until this time, the practice of implementing service learning in university and college curricula was small, incorporated by very few educators (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Today, service learning is more common. According to Campus Contact, a nationwide consortium of over 1,000 colleges and universities dedicated to community service and civic engagement, in “the 2011-2012 academic year, 44% of students participated in some form of community engagement. These community engagement activities contributed to an estimated $9.7 billion in service to their communities,” which implies that service learning is impactful today in both social and economic ways (Campus Compact, 2012).

Intersections of PBSL and Family and Consumer Sciences

PBSL strategies suit the mission and pedagogy of the field of Family and Consumer Sciences. The mission of Family and Consumer Sciences education “empowers individuals and families across the lifespan to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse global society,” emphasizing finding solutions to real-life problems of individuals, families, and communities (Bowers, 1996). This focus on serving the individual and the community through the discrete disciplines within Family and Consumer Sciences is both historical and contemporary, reflecting the initial mission of the field and its current direction (Rolling & Johnson, 2002). Both pedagogies stress
the importance of verisimilitude and the urgency of civic engagement, which indicates that PBSL can be applied to Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum and teaching strategy.

Furthermore, these ideas were identified as crucial to the body of knowledge needed for successful Family and Consumer Sciences scholars, students, and graduates. Moving into the 21st century, scholars identified “focus on community,” “diversity,” “relationships and social leadership,” and “critical thinking” at a 1999 summit of Family and Consumer Sciences scholars to describe skills and goals for the future (Baugher, et. al, 2000, p. 32).

Although PBSL and Family and Consumer Sciences share similar goals and student outcomes, research shows that there is still a disconnect between theory and practice. In a 2009 study by Banerjee & Hausafus, the authors received surveys from 368 Family and Consumer Sciences university educators at institutions in the National Directory of the Family and Consumer Sciences Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education (2003-2004). They utilized existing scales based on Vaines (1997) and Ryu (1996) that essentially divided teaching practices into two categories: Technical-Rational and Reflective-Ethical (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2009). The study found that while most professors in Family and Consumer Sciences are inclined to present curriculum in a Reflective-Ethical way, that is, teaching methods that are student-centered and connected to ethical behaviors, not all have adopted PBSL as a strategy (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2009). Especially relevant to their findings is that Apparel Design and Merchandising professors were not in the top four categories within Family and Consumer Sciences educators implementing PBSL in their curricula although they
represented about a quarter of the data collected, which implies that more Apparel Design and Merchandising instructors would benefit from implementing service learning in their coursework (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2009).

**Harnessing PBSL to Engender Social Responsibility and Sustainability for Issues in Apparel Design and Merchandising**

*Family and Consumer Sciences and Apparel Design and Merchandising.*

The need for PBSL based on its benefits has been proven for social justice education related to Family and Consumer Sciences thus far. Finally, PBSL will be addressed as a method of design thinking suited to tackle the environmental and social impact of the apparel industry and subsequent efforts to promote sustainability.

According to policy generator the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences major themes central to the Family and Consumer Sciences mission include “public policy,” “global perspectives,” “community development,” and “technology” across all fields (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2015). These broad terms intersect with clothing and textiles, an identified “specialization thread” within the field as a whole (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2015). At the nexus of these conceptual “cross-cutting threads” and thematic disciplines, there are the connected ideas of social responsibility and sustainability, which both relate to the impact of the Apparel Design and Merchandising industries on humans and the environment (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2015). Therefore, there is great potential both theoretically and practically for the use and growth of PBSL related to concepts of sustainability and social responsibility for students.
in Apparel Design and Merchandising programs and in Family and Consumer Sciences as a whole (Dickson & Eckman, 2006).

Within the apparel industry, social responsibility can be defined as the following according to Dickson and Eckman (2006):

“An orientation encompassing the environment, its people, the apparel/textile products made and consumed, and the systematic impact that production, marketing, and consumption of these products and their component parts has on multiple stakeholders and the environment.

A philosophy that balances ethics/morality with profitability, which is achieved through accountability-based business decisions and strategies.

A desire for outcomes that positively affect, or do very little harm to, the world and its people” (p. 188).

This definition for industry was achieved through survey-based responses from Apparel Design and Merchandising educators, which links the pursuit of the scholarly with the practical elements of apparel design and merchandising professions (Dickson & Eckman, 2006). The definition overlaps with aims of service learning in its people-centered and moral-based approach.

**PBSL and Apparel Design and Merchandising Curricula: Great Opportunities, Challenging Resources**

While educators have recognized the need to apply community-based social responsibility related to apparel design and merchandising curriculum, relatively few illustrate expressly service-learning based projects. While authentic learning, experiential learning, or creating cross-cultural connections are vital components of social
responsibility and exist in the literature, few projects focus on PBSL as pedagogy related to 21st Century Skills or PBSL programs within Apparel Design and Merchandising curricula (Burgess, 2012; Hendricks & Kari, 1999; Ma & Lee, 2012). For example, urban California State University, Northridge Apparel Design and Merchandising students partnered with a senior center to investigate clothing desires and needs for an elderly population, resulting in garments created with the community partner in mind (Kim, 2013). Students gained real-life experience in making clothes for a client, ventured out into the community to better the quality of life for seniors, and in turn developed critical thinking and collaboration skills.

Examples of similar projects go beyond urban centers. In a rural setting, researchers found that partnering with rural retailers to give students hands-on experience in visual merchandising benefitted both the retailers and the students, supporting students’ professional and interpersonal development (Muske, Jin, & Yu, 2004). These two projects serve as examples of how service learning can benefit the Apparel Design and Merchandising curriculum across urban and rural settings. This project will help Apparel Design and Merchandising educators or those in related fields with a practical tool for beginning a service-learning project in their courses that serves to address the need for social responsibility in the apparel industry.

Service learning pedagogy within an Apparel Design and Merchandising curriculum would support 21st century skills learning and engender a positive attitude towards working with community partners as seen in the examples given (Kim, 2013; Muske, Jin, & Yu, 2004). A practical way in which educators in Apparel Design and Merchandising Programs can develop service-learning projects is lacking in the literature,
and while other institutions indeed have implemented PBSL in their apparel design and merchandise programs, a guide and ensuing successful example of how to execute them did not exist. Therefore, this project engendered a practical service-learning related class project in apparel design and merchandise programs in higher education to add to the body of knowledge in this subject area.

**Considering sustainability in the Apparel Design and Merchandising industry.**

**Sustainability as a theme in higher education.**

The benefits, pedagogical impetus, and usefulness of PBSL within many facets of education were identified, as well as why this approach is suitable and necessary for educators and students within Family and Consumer Sciences and apparel design and merchandise programs. As examined, social responsibility and a current response to global issues including sustainability are key tenets of Family and Consumer Sciences and within that, apparel design and merchandise education (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2015). More broadly, 77% of colleges in the United States offer a degree in sustainability, and departments and schools of Sustainability are becoming increasingly popular (Friedman, 2012). President Obama designated $500 million to environmental job training as well as $150 billion going towards sustainability-focused jobs in 2009 (Bhattari, 2009).

**An overview of the apparel industry and definition of sustainability.**

Sustainability is also becoming a focus of businesses in addition to generating profits (Kunz & Garner, 2011). Corporations as well as small businesses are responsible for conducting operations in ways that do not harm the future of natural resources, the viability of environments, human rights, or fair labor practices (Kunz & Garner, 2011).
The apparel industry is one of the most influential in terms of bringing issues of sustainability into sharp focus for consumers because of its size, environmental impact, and labor-related issues (Hill & Lee, 2012). The term sustainability more generally encompasses the actions of humans within the natural world. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sustainability is defined as:

“Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations” (EPA, 2014).

Within this context of sustainability and social responsibility, it is impossible to ignore the global apparel industry, which generates approximately 1.1 trillion dollars annually and is rapidly growing, expected to generate double-digit growth by the year 2020 (Keller et. al., 2014).

**Environmental impacts.**

The global Apparel Design and Merchandising industry negatively impacts the natural environment and the lives of those who produce clothing at all stages of the clothing lifecycle (Hill & Lee, 2012). The quickening clothing lifecycle adds to environmental pollution and engenders hazardous conditions for those who make clothes (Claudio, 2007) Furthermore, the apparel use cycle is quickening due to consumer demand for new fashions (Kunz & Garner, 2011). With more consumers desiring fashion faster, demand for fashion goods has doubled in the past 20 years, and therefore require large amounts of crude oil “releasing emissions including volatile organic compounds,
particulate matter, and acid gases such as hydrogen chloride, all of which can cause or aggravate respiratory diseases” (Claudio, 2007).

Both natural and synthetic fibers create pollution that is released into the air and wastewater (Claudio, 2007). For example, the cotton industry accounts for a quarter of pesticide use in the United States, but industry subsidies keep production high and costs low (Claudio, 2007). The synthetic fiber polyester is created from petroleum, which contributes to the problems associated with climate change, air pollution, and ground and water contamination (Kharaka & Dorsey, 2005). Certain dyes are considered dangerous when leached into groundwater and are connected to health concerns for garment workers (Keller et al., 2014).

Clothing is discarded regardless of its condition, and consumers do not always understand the environmental, economic, and social ramifications of their actions (Ferrant, Olsen, & Wangel 2012; Hill & Lee, 2012). The EPA estimated that in 2013 waste from clothing, textiles, and shoes accounted for 4.9% of total municipal solid waste, equaling 12.4 million tons (EPA, 2015). However, the recovery rate excluding reuse for all textiles was 14.8%, or 1.8 million tons, which calls to attention the gap between clothing manufacturing and disposal (EPA, 2015). Only 21% of clothing purchased stays in the home and the rest goes to waste (Claudio, 2007).

**Human rights and labor issues.**

Although firms are attempting to end the exploitation of workers through Corporate Social Responsibility efforts and wider fair labor organizations, ultimately workers in the global supply chain are exploited, especially if they are women, children, or poor (Kunz & Garner, 2011). Santillo (2007) emphasizes the importance of humans
within these systems, writing that “sustainability demands ways of living, working, and behaving that enable all people of the world to lead healthy, fulfilling, and economically secure lives without destroying the environment and without endangering the future welfare of people and the planet.”

**Changing perspectives and habits.**

However, increased awareness of the impacts of the apparel industry on the environment and people, government regulations, and a newly peaked interest in elongating the product lifecycle to reduce the demand for fast fashion are contributing to a new outlook sustainability and social responsibility in the Apparel Design and Merchandising industries (Dietz, 2014). For example, Ferrant, Olsen, & Wangel (2010) found that recycling and reusing clothes decreases negative impacts on the environment as well as laborers and others involved in the supply chain by considerable degrees. The EPA recommends that used clothing and textiles be further repurposed for rags, insulation, or paper (EPA, 2015). Within the high fashion world, known eco-friendly designer Stella McCartney ceased sourcing wool from a supplier in Argentina due to its poor treatment of sheep (Brannigan, 2015). Brands such as TOM’S or Warby Parker add a social justice component to their marketing and sales strategies, donating products to developing countries when consumers buy their goods in the developed ones. Internationally, governments are taking steps to ensure the protection of workers in the garment industry. For example, in Myanmar the government decided to raise the minimum wage of garment workers in August 2015 due to the extremely cheap labor available and poor working conditions for those in rapidly expanding factories (Butler, 2015).
Theoretical Framework

Existing model.

**Figure 1. A conceptual framework for experiential education.**

Carver (1997) developed a conceptual framework for experiential education and service learning in order to provide educators or program staff a useful tool from which to begin, reflect upon, and/or evaluate the quality of their project (Figure 1). In the tradition of previous researchers and thinkers Dewey (1938) or Freire (1970), Carver (1997) asserts that in order for knowledge to be useful to participants, it must be relevant and meaningful to their own lives and experiences rather than didactic. When students are conceptualized as valuable stakeholders in a learning environment, they are no longer passive learners and instead develop inquiry, respect for selves and others, and empowerment.
In order to utilize this model, Carver outlines three “ABC’s:” agency, belonging, and competence that are central to developing, implementing, and assessing project-based service learning programs or projects (p.147). These three ideas have been linked to students’ positive psychological and social development (Connell & Wellborn, 1991 in Carver, 1997). Within the model, student experience is at the center and also ever changing and responding to ongoing needs within a program or project; this state of flux is represented with double-vector arrows. Carver distinguishes between student processes and student outcomes, but notes that they are flexible, responsive, and developed over time.

First, agency refers to students seeing themselves as loci in changing their own lives and wider communities for the better. In order to develop agency, projects must be authentic, active, and connective. Next, belonging relates to all stakeholders sharing certain resources, behaviors, and values that create a common purpose or goal for the whole. Finally, competence – as measured by formal assessment and also reflective practice – gauges if the objectives and goals of the project or unit were met. Do students remember facts and ideas? Can they relate their learning to their own experience? Can they apply what they have learned to novel situations and subjects? Carver sees these three facets working together to engender a successful service-learning experience.

Revised model.

The current project focused on the relationship between the service-learning project, student experience, and engenderment of agency from an educational perspective. Through engagement with a community partner of their choosing, students will raise awareness in themselves and their surroundings regarding issues of social
justice related to Apparel Design and Merchandising. Social justice education can be taught through any lens, and its implementation has potential to ignite student activism, increase civic participation, and inform problem-solving strategies more broadly for students (Wade, 2004). What exactly is agency? What does it look like in an academic context?

According to Carver (1997), agency implies that through authentic experiences in the community, students gain knowledge and real-life skills that support personal development and self-worth, which is in turn reflected upon and put into practice in the community (pg. 146). Furthermore, students recognize that the potential for positive societal change in the future lies within them and does not arise solely from the conventional power structure.

Although Dickson and Eckman (2006) outline three tenets of what social responsibility might look like as it relates the apparel industry, they do not identify what actions through agency must be developed in order to assert these values in students (Dickson & Eckman, 2006).

To inspire future Apparel Design and Merchandising practitioners and future consumers of clothing and textiles to act on said ideas, current students must be provided with experiences that foster agency. Therefore, a revised model specific to fit the objectives of the project-based service-learning component of Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences with an emphasis on social responsibility must be created. The model was therefore applied to the developed project and guided the project to enhance the quality of the experience and provide a grounded theory from which to continue the project in the future.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This project had two objectives and one overarching goal. The first objective was to refine, implement, and analyze an existing service-learning project while developing related learning materials and a logical project procedure. The second objective was to apply Carver’s (1997) Conceptual Framework of Experiential Education to a service-learning project in the Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences course through guest lecturing and guiding students towards realistic proposals for a community partner. Carver’s (1997) model was used in the service-learning curriculum developed to include the community partner as an equal stakeholder and include specifications of the project (Figure 1). Each element of the concept of agency was applied to a project objective/outcome to determine if students are transformed by the experience and are ignited as change agents in their communities (Figure 3).

The Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences Course

The Sustainability in Family and Consumer Science course is offered to students of all options within the Family and Consumer Sciences Department, with distinct emphases within the major such as Apparel Design and Merchandising, Consumer Affairs, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Family Studies, Interior Design, and Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences. In the course, students are exposed to ideas related to the concept of sustainability in all Family and Consumer Sciences areas and asked to respond to the course material in written, verbal, and art making form.

Sustainability was incorporated into the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences mission, curriculum, and research agenda. This interdisciplinary course teaches students sustainability theories, concepts, and applications in the field (Appendix A).
Once the lecture/presentation period is over, students have five weeks to synthesize what they have learned to develop a sustainability proposal for a community partner collaborating in small groups. This research project was conducted based on a class project. Until this semester’s project, the lead professor has chosen the community partner and has not placed parameters on the theme of the proposals.

**Objective #1: Developing a Clear Procedure**

Students were asked to develop two small sustainability proposals with the focus of one being Apparel Design and Merchandising. The other needed to relate to one of the aforementioned areas of the Family and Consumer Sciences field. As mentioned, challenges of apparel production, consumption, and disposal and their potential solutions are connected to the concept of sustainability as a whole. While each student was not studying Apparel Design and Merchandising in an academic context, choosing a theme as broad as clothing and textiles afforded students a case study to apply to other fields.

Although this project focused on the role of clothing within sustainability, all students learned how to find and build a relationship with a relevant community partner, develop a service-learning project related to social responsibility, and implement the project of their design via a culminating experience at the end of the semester. The thematic content of clothing, textiles, and fabrics was chosen for diverse students given the prevalence and use of clothing and the humanistic approach to sustainability (Santillo, 2007).

**How to Find a Service Learning Site at CSUN**

California State University, Northridge provides faculty and students the opportunity to work within the community in various formats. The Center for Innovative
Engaged Learning Opportunities (CIELO) serves a variety of functions on campus such as creating and facilitating faculty professional development, supporting unique student-centered learning needs, coordinating collaborative experiences for students within the community, and investigating alternative educational strategies (CIELO, 2015). CSUN’s Community Engagement office, under which CIELO is housed, has connected 2,397 students with 357 sites in 87 neighborhoods and cities across the Greater Los Angeles area, so using relevant search criteria and editing is necessary. Faculty members may choose to utilize CIELO to find community partners in the courses they teach. Existing community partners within CIELO range from elementary schools to arts organizations to other advocacy groups. Previously, this course has had various community partners such as the Family and Consumer Sciences Child and Family Research Center, MEND, and the Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley. During this course, potential partners included the CSUN Veteran Resource Center, Sunrise Senior Center, the Alicia Broaduous Duncan Multipurpose Senior Center, along with many elementary, middle, and high schools, all of which are local and easy to access by car or public transportation.

**Project Procedure**

**Researcher preparation.**

The researcher has experience and preparation with both service learning and experiential education that informed and supported this project. Her professional experience in museum education has prepared her to develop, implement, and assess object-based curriculum, work collaboratively with varied scholars, and reach academic goals with diverse students. In Fall 2014, the researcher served as a Teaching Assistant.
on a distinct project to prepare for this work. Through this project, the researcher applied these hands-on, rigorous, and community-based practices in higher education.

**Project procedure overview.**

This research project focused on guiding the service-learning component of the course on five class dates, after students spent ten weeks with professors from different areas in Family and Consumer Sciences lecturing about sustainability from myriad perspectives. On the first date, the emphases were on the introduction to service learning and how to choose a community partner, the concept of how service learning applies to the theme of clothing and textile industries, and devoted class time to the brainstorming and discussion of potential projects. Then, students experienced a planning day, one to two site visits to the community partner, and a culminating experience and presentation to the partner for recommendations.

**Course objectives as related to the development of agency.**

In the *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* course, 40% of the students’ grade is based on the final project proposal, and an extra 10% is based on peer evaluations from the project. Each objective for the project correlated to an outcome Carver (1997) has established as vital for developing agency and guided the project (Figure 2). The four course objectives were also applied.

**Class Meetings: Planning Each Lesson**

**Opening class meeting: community partner selection.**

After an interactive lecture defining key terms and engaging with visual models, students in the class chose a community partner from the edited CIELO offerings to instill agency and connection to the project.
Class meeting two: developing a research topic.

An interactive lecture related to social responsibility and sustainability issues in Apparel Design and Merchandising industries focused on current issues faced by practitioners. Students reflected on this lecture in a written free-write and through dialogue. Students became familiar with the policies, practices, and needs of the partner organization through independent and collaborative research. They prepared interview questions for the partner and develop a framework for their small-group proposal. Based on the philosophy of social responsibility in the Apparel Design and Merchandising industry, they began to brainstorm how to apply this concept to the community partner’s needs and what tangible projects may be developed based on these needs.

Class meeting three: data collection and site visit.

A site visit was scheduled whereupon students observed activities and photographed the setting of the community partner site in order to gauge its practices, critical issues, and areas of improvement based on the project proposal. Students contacted the community partner stakeholders and worked to create a PowerPoint presentation proposal with a title, clearly outlined objectives, findings, and proposals. Each group had the option to consult with faculty members, community stakeholders, and representatives of the partner organization as it honed and refined the proposal.

Class meeting four: reporting the data, refining the project.

In small groups, students presented the proposal to the community partner, participating faculty, and any present community stakeholders. The ensuing presentation was a 15+ slide PowerPoint and a 3,000-word paper outlining the final objectives, findings, and proposals.
Class meeting five: presenting to the community partner.

The course objective success was analyzed through instructor evaluation, student evaluations, community partner evaluations, and peer-to-peer evaluations. The breadth and depth of students’ presentations was considered.

Applied Conceptual Model Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme from Carver (1997)</th>
<th>Project Theme Characteristics (Value)</th>
<th>Characteristics of Setting</th>
<th>Competence/Project Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students as focus: Active Learning</td>
<td>Student-driven</td>
<td>Inclusive learning environment</td>
<td>Students will be able to demonstrate how sustainability issues are connected to environmental, economic, and social equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students experience process and outcome: Authenticity</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Tasks completed with support (from instructors, each other)</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainability theories and concepts by participating in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a hands-on experience in a professional environment: Connection to the future</td>
<td>Value to community partner</td>
<td>Empathy for community members</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate how professional practices impact sustainability at the community level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students create sustainability proposals and projects based on research and visit: Drawing on experience</td>
<td>Engendering of social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising field</td>
<td>Accountability for decisions and actions related to clothing</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainable applications in areas of Family and Consumer Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2: Applied Conceptual Model Methodology*
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The objectives of this study were twofold: the first was to refine and implement an existing project-based service learning experience for a class, and the second was to use Carver’s (1997) theory to analyze if the theory is applicable to students’ learning outcomes and activities. Students should gain a sense of agency as stakeholders in the project and community within the confines of course learning outcomes. The process of how this five-week service-learning project within the context of *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* came into fruition is documented in this section, with the aim of providing educators within Family and Consumer Sciences, apparel design and merchandising, or other design-based programs a practical guide to utilizing PBSL through this example.

In the existing course of *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* there are four project objectives listed here and found in context in Appendix A. They were, students will be able to demonstrate how sustainability issues are connected to environmental, economic, and social equity, students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainability theories and concepts by participating in the project, students will demonstrate how professional practices impact sustainability at the community level, and students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainable applications in areas of Family and Consumer Sciences. The following section describes the sequence of the project.

**Objective #1 Findings: Developing and Implementing a Project Procedure**

**Partnership research: how to find a community partner.**

*Student-centered criteria.*
Unlike previous offerings of the *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* course, this year the students were instrumental in the process of choosing a community partner. Finding an intersection between student interest, course objectives, and community needs is key when choosing a community partner and influences the success of the project (Jenkins & Sheehy, 2011). Therefore, it was vital to find a few organizations to choose from that shared certain characteristics.

First, students had expressed through end-of-course evaluations in the previous semester that driving and traffic were obstacles to service learning because the stresses of locating the site, finding and/or paying for parking, and returning home in traffic affected their engagement with the project. The researcher and lead professor/instructor decided to narrow the search to Northridge and adjacent North Hills and Reseda with the intention of mitigating this potential barrier. Only sites located within these three neighborhoods could be candidates for the service-learning project. Within Northridge, 46 sites were identified, 19 were identified in Reseda, and within North Hills, 8 approved sites were identified.

*Relevance to coursework.*

Secondly, the project search criteria maintained key words and phrases to keep in line with course objectives and goals. For example, an animal shelter would be a worthy project but does not fit in with the aims of teaching social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising industries or the human socio-cultural aspects of sustainability (Santillo, 2007). The populations considered were women, children, and the disabled. Once the keywords and target populations were established along with the geographic
parameters, the researcher turned to the campus service-learning directory to identify and contact potential partners for the project.

**Campus requirements and resources.**

The third and vital criterion in choosing a community partner was that it is already approved by the Community Engagement Office in the Department of Undergraduate Studies. Since 2013, the California State University’s (CSU) Chancellor’s Office Center for Community Engagement has emphasized service learning and community service for all of the 23 campuses, having issued a mission of support for schools improving their commitment to bettering social and economic conditions in their communities. At CSUN, in order for a site to achieve approval status, representatives from both the site and the university sign a Service Learning Campus-Community Partnership form before students are permitted to visit a site (*Community Engagement through Service Learning*). Students must be given a tour of the site that includes locating the restrooms, break room, emergency exits, and a logbook for signing in or out. Emergency procedures and contact information must be on file with the community organization before student visits.

Once a partnership is established, it is the responsibility of the participating faculty member(s) to liaise with the site contact to ensure that course objectives, organization needs, and stakeholder goals are being met.

**Reaching out to potential partners.**

Once the criteria for finding a community partner were established, the researcher applied the search terms to the Community Engagement database to find potential candidates. Seven candidates fit the criteria, and after debate and discussion five
candidates were sent cold emails from the researcher. Two were ruled out due to the size of the organization and lack of information about the organization in the database, respectively. Two of the five chosen organizations were located on the CSUN campus, while the other three were off-site.

Email addresses for organization contacts were found on the organization websites. Each email address provided on the website was contacted. The five potential partner organizations were sent cold emails describing the nature of the project, the experimental nature of the course in which the project was offered, and the role of the community partner in the project. They were also sent syllabi from the Spring 2014 semester to provide the organizations with extra information about the course. Out of the five organizations contacted, three responded to the email. Information about the three candidate organizations and how interviews were conducted is included in the next section.

Developing Relationships: visiting, interviewing, and documenting the process

Site visits and interviews: the instructor screening process.

Each of the three organizations that responded to the cold email inquiries was supportive of the project. Once approval was expressed, the researcher scheduled either an in-person site visit or phone interview depending on availability and convenience to the organization. Two visits and one phone interview were scheduled. It was important to give the organization’s representative the flexibility to choose the timing of the visit or interview so as to not interfere with the scheduled operations of the organization. Questions for the interview were improvised and based on the information given by the organization’s representative related to organization mission, vision, primary populations
served, and future goals. More information about the Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences course was offered along with the necessary dates required of the chosen partner organization. Other clarification regarding the purpose of the project or its nature was also given as needed. Each site visit or phone conversation lasted about one hour.

**Documentation and following up post-visit.**

The researcher took notes during the interviews and phone conversations, documenting relevant information about the organization, concerns the representative had about entering a partnership, and previous experiences working with college students from CSUN. There was full disclosure on the behalf of the researcher and instructor that the students enrolled in the course would choose only one community partner, but each representative expressed the importance of being included in the process and the awareness that would be raised for their cause. After the interview, each representative was thanked for his or her time and was sent an email of recognition. Once all of the visits and interviews were completed, the researcher prepared a PowerPoint Presentation highlighting the discovered information to disseminate to students.

**Candidate Organizations: Who Are They? What Do They Do?**

**Homelessness and compassion: the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission.**

The first site visited was the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Part of the Christian based Rescue Mission Alliance, the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission was founded in 1998 to provide temporary housing and services to homeless families in the greater San Fernando Valley (*San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission*). The San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission offers a wide array of services ranging from mental health
referrals, job training, after school education for students, and post-shelter life skills (San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission). Their mission is as follows:

The program has been designed to provide homeless men, women, children and families an opportunity, not only to obtain food, shelter, and basic life necessities, but also provides a foundation for individual and family restoration by developing a personalized plan based on their needs for achieving personal growth, employment, and housing (San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission).

The organization also operates three thrift shops in the San Fernando Valley, which support job-training initiatives for participants as well as generates funds for the operating budget (San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission). Each family is provided individual case management to assist with transitioning out of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission as well. In 2015, the site is expanding to a new complex with improved facilities (Personal communication March 9, 2015).

**Job training and life skills for intellectually challenged older students:**

**Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center.**

The second candidate for the service-learning project was the Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center located in Reseda, California. Principal Wayne Fogelsong was interviewed via a phone conversation with the instructor and researcher. According to the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center:

“is the first career and transition center for special education students in L.A.U.S.D. history. We provide employment-based training for students with disabilities, aged 18-22 throughout the greater San Fernando Valley. We provide
on-the-job as well as on-site training preparing students to transition into a variety of employment opportunities. Prior to placement, students are assessed and screened for job readiness, interests and abilities. All placements are monitored by our job coordinator and supported by para-professionals familiar with the students. Participating employers provide work-based learning environments, and funding for student workers is generated by District and State Agencies (*Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center*).

Fogelsong is the first principal of the organization, which currently has 236 students and was founded in 1958 originally as an extension of Whitney High School. (Personal communication, March 10, 2015). It is now located adjacent to Cleveland High School, and 102 students from Cleveland attend each day, along with 60 for Physical Education from all over the expanse of the San Fernando Valley. The school has a six period day with two hours of work programs, ranging from automobile detailing, working at the on-campus bakery, or landscaping. Students referred to Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center have moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and are recommended to a non-diploma track, whereupon they receive a certificate of completion along with recommendations.

Like Trimmer at the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission, Fogelsong emphasized the importance of compassion and empathy from the general population that supports these moderate to severely intellectually challenged students to succeed. Students are trained in social skills, independence, life skills, and professional accountability to make them more viable for jobs in the outside world (Personal communication, March 10, 2015).
CSUN Women’s Research and Resource Center: striving for visibility while raising awareness of gender-related issues.

The third potential candidate for the project was the CSUN Women’s Research and Resource Center, whose mission is to “mission is to enhance campus and community understanding of women’s issues and concerns at CSUN,” along with other issues of gender equality (CSUN College of Humanities Women’s Research and Resource Center). The center is housed in the College of Humanities along with support from the Gender and Women’s Studies Department. It is the oldest center of its kind in the CSU system and is currently directed by Professor Shira Brown.

The center focuses on events, faculty lectures, and programs exploring the impact of gender, class, and race on students and the community. It houses a resource library along with literature aimed to educate students and the community about topics such as sexual assault, childcare resources, contraception, and gender (Personal communication, March 25, 2015). Events include Take Back the Night activities, screenings, self-defense classes, and a garage sale raising funds and toiletries for a domestic abuse shelter. With the exception of Brown, the center is entirely run by student volunteers who plan events and raise awareness.

Although the center produces over ten events per semester, its location at the northern edge of the CSUN campus along with its small facility have prevented the center from being as visible on campus as Brown believes it could be (Personal communication, March 25, 2015).
Introducing the Students to the Process and Beginning the Project

**Introductory session.**

Once the three partner organizations agreed to potentially participate in the service-learning project, the students in the course were introduced to the project within the context of the course, and the detailed procedure was developed (Figure 3). After ten weeks of learning about diverse facets of sustainability, students were asked to apply this knowledge to the apparel-based community project. Fundamental information about sustainability was given to the students in an interactive setting. The lecture was divided into four sections.
In the first section of the lecture, students were provided a definition of sustainability and introduced the concept of service learning as a vital pedagogical strategy within higher education. Then, students participated in a dialogue about their personal experiences with community service.

The second section of the lecture focused on how to choose a community partner and begin a project. Citing models from the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, school at Stanford University, and Otis College of Art and Design, visual examples from art and design education were utilized based on the researcher’s prior experience. In this student-centered learning experience, students were the key stakeholders in participating in community partner selection. The researcher then reiterated the purpose of the project, which was included in the syllabus:

Working in small groups (3-4 students per group), you will collaborate on a service-learning project with a community partner of the your group members’ choice. Service learning means that we will use what we have learned about sustainability in this course to help a partner organization better serve their target populations in real and meaningful ways. Since clothing encompasses many facets of sustainability, the project will revolve around clothing. You may choose to upcycle or repurpose old clothes or run a clothing drive for people in need, for example. You will be tasked with choosing a community partner based on CSUN’s existing collaborators, designing a project, divvying up tasks, and implementing an experience or creating tangible items for the community partner’s benefit. You will also be asked to write brief reflections after each class session.
Finalizing the community partner and reflecting on the voting process.

After the introductory lecture, students voted for the desired partner. The vote to collaborate with the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission (San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission) was unanimous. Students were asked to reflect upon the voting process, and the dialogue centered on how the issue of homelessness resonated with the students and their personal values.

Student grouping process: how to group students.

Students were placed in small groups of three to four in order to create an inclusive learning environment and promote collaboration. Due to the diversity of the Family and Consumer Sciences major, students were placed in mixed major groups: students did not choose their own groups. At least one Apparel Design or Merchandising major was placed in a group. Graduate students were mixed in with undergraduate students. Each group was responsible for maintaining tasks, independent communication, and collaborating on each assignment.

Exploring the Issues and Preparing the Pre-Research

Once the groups were set, the assignment for pre-research began. Pre-research included exploring similar organizations to the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission, gaining more knowledge about the issue of homelessness in Los Angeles, and preparing interview questions for Trimmer of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission so that the students would be better prepared for their visit to the site the next week.

Discovering organizations dedicated to ending homelessness.

Each group researched two organizations that seek to end homelessness or support the homeless population along with challenges the organization faces. The
purpose of this task was for students to understand how an organization tackles the multifaceted nature of homelessness in distinct ways. Organizations ranged in scope, location, and focus. Along with researching organizations with similar missions to the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission, students were also asked to research the issues related to homelessness in Los Angeles so that they would be prepared to engage in a thoughtful discussion with Trimmer during their visit. Examples of organizations researched include Meet Each Need with Dignity (MEND), The Homeless World Cup, the Lighthouse for Women and Children in Ventura County, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Midnight Mission, and Whittier First Lady. Students explained that generally limited funding, lack of resources, complicated enrollment processes, and lack of long-term casework were challenges the aforementioned organizations faced when serving the homeless population.

**Drafting relevant interview questions.**

The final component of pre-research was drafting interview questions for the site visit. The answers the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission director gave would serve as primary source material for the ensuing sustainability projects. Students were asked to draw on their explorations of the issue of homelessness, local organizations serving the homeless population, and their knowledge of the project to craft the questions. Students practiced their initial questions with the researcher and received feedback prior to their visit.
Visiting the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission

Touring the facility.

Students visited the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Students were given driving and public transportation directions to ensure prompt arrival. The director met the group and offered a site visit followed by a question and answer section. The site tour was comprehensive, and students were permitted to ask questions informally during the tour. Students photographed the spaces for their proposals.

Interview and Observations.

Once the walking tour was completed, students gathered in their small groups and began to ask the director the questions they had prepared. The researcher and instructor helped to moderate the conversation. Students generated all of the questions based on their existing knowledge about sustainability, pre-research of the site, the issue of homelessness, and what they had learned about the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Each group was asked to prepare 5-10 questions. Some of the answers that elicited responses from all of the groups were included.

Q 1. What is the future goal of the Valley Rescue Mission? How do you see people moving out of the facility succeeding out on their own?

Q 2. What are challenges you face as an organization when it comes to clothing for the participants?

Q 3. How does sustainable building and design theory and practice align with San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission buildings?
Q 4. What are your organizational goals and objectives for the remaining year? Please include your personal thoughts and recommendations as to how others may contribute to your vision?

Q 5. What are the largest challenges of your participants in gaining access to food?

As evidenced by the question examples, students utilized various methods of inquiry in order to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Trimmer about the new facilities along with the mission of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Students took notes or recorded the session to support their proposal strategies.

**Draft Proposals: Refining and Brainstorming**

**Student proposal drafts and initial criteria.**

In the three small groups, students developed proposals to present in class. The aim of these proposals was to generate feedback so that students could improve the proposal for the final presentation the next week. The students received feedback based on a grading rubric that was also used on the final presentation, and this rubric reflected the goals of the project and served to ground the students in theories and methods that would support their project activities. Students received the completed rubric after the initial proposal draft in order to improve upon their work.

**Initial proposal findings by group.**

Three proposals, each with a distinct point of view and project idea, were presented in the course. To reiterate, students were asked to develop two small sustainable proposals to improve the operations or space of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. One of the two ideas had to include apparel, given the impact of the Apparel Design and Merchandising industry on natural and human resources (Kunz &
The other idea could focus on any of the other areas of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Group A suggested the shelter implement a more in-depth nutritional education system, emphasizing healthy eating habits and suggesting ways to reduce food waste. The apparel-based proposal was based on a slogan, “don’t waste, donate, and help educate!” that served to encourage the shelter administration to partner with key organizations. For example, Group A suggested partnering with local retail stores to collaborate on donations as well as dry cleaners looking to clear out their forgotten items. This way, shelter residents could have access to clothing and fabric for upcycling into blankets, pillows, or rugs. The education portion on the proposal indicated that residents could have access to sewing classes and retail experience in the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission thrift stores.

Group B proposed sewing classes for the younger residents with support from the adults in the facility with sewing skills, emphasizing positive interactions between students and adults. Consumer Affairs was the second area of Family and Consumer Sciences chosen for a proposal. Students suggested consumer and financial education workshops run by CSUN students for internship credit. The third proposal focused on nutrition, suggesting that the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission incorporate healthy cooking classes, a garden, and composting into their daily operations. Although this group did not offer any conclusions or reflections, the ideas corresponded to the initial objectives of the proposal at the outset of the presentation.

Group C’s presentation included theories to help support the proposal suggestions as well as references. Group C drew upon eco-humane design theory, Human
Environmental Theory, and Color theory for their projects. Focusing on generating more income for the shelter, Group C’s proposal applied merchandising principles to the Hope of the Valley Thrift Store operated by the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Students suggested that the store could improve their visual merchandising, create an upscale environment through merchandising techniques, harness social media to increase customers, and collaborate with CSUN to obtain these goals. The interior design proposal suggested that the shelter hang welcoming and enticing photographs and images of healthy cooking, community gatherings around a table, and chefs interacting with residents. Each proposal generated feedback for students to incorporate into their final proposals.

Final Proposals: Presenting and Reflecting

**Community partner director presence.**

The final proposals and essays served as the course’s final examination and were worth a total of 50% of the students’ final grade, including the peer evaluation submitted with the final proposal. Given the weight of the final proposal in the final grade, the project was central to meeting course objectives. The project also had to have real value to the community partner in order to increase student agency in the project as outlined by Carver (1997). Therefore, it was vital that staff representatives were present for the final proposals. The director was able to attend and provided feedback to each group after the presentation.

**Final project analysis by group.**

*Group A: clothing workshops.*
This group developed their proposal by including pre-research about homelessness both locally and nationally, grounded theory of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development, and a clear purpose statement. The students changed focus from nutrition in order to better suit the majors included in this group (Figure 4). Through the lens of Family Studies, Group A found that homeless children are greatly impacted by their family’s situation. Because of the vulnerable status of children in this environment, Group A suggested peer-to-peer learning models for children at the shelter along with their adult counterparts in the fields of apparel, home and lifestyle, and motivational workshops. Each workshop would include lectures from CSUN sustainability students, interactive activities, and reflection. The results of these workshops would be improved family communications as well as increased knowledge and understanding of apparel waste, upcycling, and generating personal style suited to gaining employment. Group A maintained its focus on education and upcycling but completely changed the suggested projects, implying that they fine-tuned their proposal by tying it directly to pre-research and conceptual models.

**Group B: sewing lessons.**

This group also proposed their ideas by using grounded theory of Ecological Model of Human Development to support their existing objectives (Figure 4). The apparel proposal was improved by incorporating service learning into the sewing lessons, suggesting that CSUN Apparel Design and Merchandising majors teach shelter residents how to sew, mend, and upcycle donated clothing. This group also maintained that shelter residents should learn how to utilize unwanted clothing at the shelter and transform it into furnishings for the shelter. The consumer education proposal was unaltered, but nutrition
research was greatly improved through a clear review of pertinent literature and increased interactivity in the proposal. They also suggested a connection to Family Studies in that CSUN majors could be an additional support system for shelter residents, offering the names of relevant courses offered at CSUN that would dovetail with this pursuit. Group B pursued breadth over depth, and the feedback indicated that it might have behooved them to focus and collaborate on the two assigned proposals.

**Group C: improving visual merchandising of the thrift store.**

This group proposed their study by expounding upon their draft (Figure 4). Their pre-research of homelessness increased, and they offered relevant statistics. They also explained why the group unanimously chose the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission as the community partner; highlighting the new facility, close proximity to CSUN, and goal as an organization. Their purpose was clear, and each of the two proposals included scholarly research about why each proposal was relevant and important. The apparel proposal centered on improving visual and product merchandising at the thrift stores. Group C suggested that CSUN Apparel Design and Merchandising students could style windows to make the merchandise look more appealing, train employees in basic merchandising principles, and generate social media buzz for the stores. Using Mere Exposure Effect Theory, they proposed that product placement could be used to entice customers more effectively. Group C also applied Attention Restoration Theory to their design proposal, suggesting that photographs featuring healthy lifestyles would improve the well-being of shelter residents. This proposal was clear and concise (Figure 4).
Following up with the community partner.

After the presentations, the director thanked the students for the proposals and added that he hoped they could be implemented during the next course offering. His email pinpointed the vitality of the collaboration: “thank you for choosing to work with the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. I look forward to continuing to find ways that we can work together to benefit our larger community as well as your students,” he wrote in an email. As the second research objective, four main themes were found when applying Carver’s (1997) framework (Figure 1).

Student Feedback and Reflection

Students reflected on the community service-learning project before the project began and after its completion. Initially, their responses indicated that no connections between sustainability concepts and community service projects were made. Students understood that “interacting” with organizations and providing for “underserved communities” were vital concepts, but they did not relate these ideas to sustainability.
Students expressed changes in attitudes, beliefs, habits, and values towards environmental sustainability. For example, buying clothing second hand to preserve natural resources, purchasing food from farmers’ markets, and designing clothing with eco-friendly materials were referenced.

Students expounded upon sustainable practices and were able to relate them to the service-learning project. The main themes that emerged regarding students’ perspectives on sustainability changing based on this course/project were increased knowledge/awareness about issues of sustainability, impact on daily life/lifestyle/habits, a greater academic understanding, a change in spending habits, increased awareness of environmental issues, and an impact on well-being and self-care.

One student responded that the project “allowed me to get a glimpse of just how kind-hearted people are still nowadays,” and that the project was impactful “because it made me more conscious of how I look at those who are homeless.” She added that she believed that this project was offered in a sustainability course to provide students real-life experiences that they could carry over to their professional and academic lives. Through these types of projects, students “see that these situations are real, and that we have the power to bring change to the lives of the less fortunate.”

Objective #2 Findings: Development of Keywords and Phrases

Four keywords/phrases emerged from this project, namely student-driven, participatory, value to community partner, and engendering social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising fields (Figure 5). Through adopting Carver’s (1997) framework, these keywords were determined. Each directly correlated and responded to a course project objective and Program Characteristic as outlined by the grounded
theoretical framework (Figure 6). Therefore, following both guiding project criteria it can be concluded that students developed a sense of agency, belonging, and competence through this experiential service-learning project. Carver wrote that the framework was “meant to be used as a map for charting the course of action taken by people who need to decide what they want to know about a service learning program and how they are going to acquire that knowledge,” which was applied to the sustainability course project (Carver, 1997, p. 148).

![Applied Carver’s (1997) Conceptual Framework of Experiential Education](image)

**Figure 5:** Applied Conceptual Framework of Experiential Education

**Student-driven characteristics.**

The first keyword to emerge from this experience was the concept that the project was **student-driven**. This theme corresponds to Carver’s term of active learning, which
she describes as “searching for explanations, figuring out ways of understanding, using [students’] imagination and being creative” (Carver, 1997, p. 145). The class unanimously chose the community partner. Each group in the class researched the issue of homelessness, similar organizations to the partner organization, and drafted relevant interview questions for the community partner in the pre-research phase of the project. During the project, students provided each other with constructive feedback about the feasibility and creativity of their proposal drafts. Each group presented a final proposal to the community partner. After the project, students wrote peer evaluations for each group member and reflected on the experience through surveys and discussion. At no point did the researcher or instructor use didactic strategies to get students engaged in the project, nor were students told what proposals to generate. The students themselves were the loci for exploring and attempting to offer solutions to the complex problems of homelessness and unsustainable practices in their own community. Therefore, the first course objective of demonstrating how sustainability issues are connected to environmental, economic, and social equity was met.

**Participatory characteristics.**

The second keyword to emerge was the participatory nature of the project. As students experienced the processes and outcomes of exploring issues important to the community, finding a partner, drafting, refining, presenting, and reflecting on proposals they found meaning on both academic and practical levels. The research in the proposals used various grounded theories to offer solutions to real-life problems, which contributed to the overall authenticity of the project. Furthermore, due to the participatory nature of the project students were able to take ownership of their proposals and confidently
convey their ideas to the community partner. Each student was a key member of the team as shown in the peer reviews, and collaboration, reflection, and critical feedback was necessary from each team member. The instructor and researcher used the same rubric as students while evaluating proposal drafts, indicating that each task was completed with the support and structure provided by the staff. The second project objective demonstrating student knowledge of sustainability theories and concepts by participating in the project was upheld because students researched applicable theories to apply to each proposal.

**Community partner characteristics.**

In order for students to gain agency and empowerment in a service-learning context, the project must be relevant and useful to a community partner (Carver, 1997). While the prior keywords related directly to the student experience, the third phrase was **value to community partner**, which added to the verisimilitude of the project and fostered real stakes for student participants. Once students leave an academic environment, they enter a professional world where they will be held accountable to company bottom lines, client needs, and professional requirements. The service learning experience, then, should introduce students to “habits, memories, skills, and knowledge that will be useful to them in the future,” and provide an opportunity for students to harness what they accomplished in the classroom for the benefit of their professional lives (Carver, p. 148, 1997).

Students in this project directly interfaced with the community partner representative, researching his organization, asking him challenging questions, and responding to his feedback about their proposals. The director of the San Fernando
Valley Rescue Mission was an integral part of the project for students because he was an outside presence as well as collaborator in the process. His stories about the challenges, successes, and everyday operations of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission and its thrift stores provided a vital perspective while students were developing their proposals. In turn, the director of the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission appreciated the time and effort students took in the proposals and hoped they would be implemented in years to come. The reciprocity of the relationships implied that participants demonstrated how professional practices impact sustainability at the community level, the third course objective.

Social responsibility in the Apparel Design and Merchandising field characteristics.

The fourth and final key phrase that emerged from this project was that it engendered a sense of social responsibility in the Apparel Design and Merchandising field for students. As mentioned, Apparel Design and Merchandising is one of the key areas of the Family and Consumer Sciences field. While not all of the participants in the service-learning project were Apparel Design and Merchandising majors, each group had the direction to incorporate related issues into one of their two proposals. The reasoning for this direction was twofold: one, everyone wears clothes and engages with textiles on a daily basis and two, the Apparel Design and Merchandising industry has many areas for improvement in social and environmental sustainability.

For Carver, this idea is referred to as “drawing on experience,” whereupon students “are guided in the process of building understandings of the phenomena, events, human nature, by thinking about what they have experienced” either in their own lives or
in the course (Carver, 1997, p 147). The first unit of the course was explicitly about sustainability in the Apparel Design and Merchandising field, and students were asked to recall, synthesize, and transform what they learned in that unit to this project. Each student had some working knowledge of the issues related to sustainability in the Apparel Design and Merchandising field regardless of major. Through the formal learning setting of the classroom and interactive experience of the project, they expressed that they had become more aware of the impacts their clothing choices made on the environment and on those making their clothes.

As shown in their projects, students researched and expressed creative solutions for apparel-related issues such as offering sewing classes, teaching upcycling techniques, and using merchandising skills to improve shelter profits. Students therefore demonstrated knowledge of sustainable applications in areas of Family and Consumer Sciences, including but not limited to Apparel Design and Merchandising. A summary of the results is shown in Figure 6.
### Figure 6: Summary of Results

**Applied Conceptual Model Table – Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme from Carver (1997)</th>
<th>Project Characteristics (Value?)</th>
<th>Characteristics of Setting</th>
<th>Competence/Project Objectives of Sustainability class</th>
<th>Example Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students as focus:</td>
<td>Student-driven</td>
<td>Inclusive learning</td>
<td>Students will be able to demonstrate how sustainability issues are connected to environmental, economic, and social equity</td>
<td>• Students chose community partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students interviewed community partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students experience</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Tasks completed with</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainability theories and concepts by participating in the project</td>
<td>• Students applied theories of sustainability to projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process and outcome:</td>
<td></td>
<td>support (from instructors,</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students offered feedback of theories and strategies in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td></td>
<td>each other)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students shared proposals/interfaced with community partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing a hands-on</td>
<td>Value to community partner</td>
<td>Empathy for community</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate how professional practices impact sustainability at the community level</td>
<td>• Students visited community partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience in a</td>
<td></td>
<td>members</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student proposals suggested sustainable ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional environment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Survey results showed changes in attitudes, beliefs, values, and habits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection to the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students create</td>
<td>Engendering of social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising</td>
<td>Accountability for</td>
<td>Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainable applications in areas of FCS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>decisions and actions</td>
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<td>related to clothing</td>
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<tr>
<td>based on research and</td>
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<tr>
<td>visit:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing on experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The two objectives set forth at the outset of this project were fostered, as well as the overarching goal to provide practical suggestions for educators of diverse fields looking to incorporate project-based service learning into their pedagogies. The two objectives were:

1. The purpose of the project was to refine and implement an existing service-learning project while developing related lectures and other course materials.

2. A revised model of Carver’s (1997) Conceptual Framework for Experiential Education was applied to the project in both development strategies to provide a grounded theory for the project in the future.

Throughout the five weeks of the actual service-learning project and the ten weeks of instruction, along with the year of preparation by the researcher, detailed project procedures were developed and implemented by engaging the four themes of student-driven, participatory, value to the community partner, and engendering of social responsibility in Apparel Design and Merchandising fields.

This project revised and adopted Carver’s (1997) model to explain and ground the service-learning project. Project Characteristics, Characteristics of the Setting, and Competence/Project Outcomes geared together to be connected to and engaged with the development of agency, along with students and instructors throughout the course. Students developed final group proposals by applying knowledge and understanding of sixteen weeks of coursework culminating in the service-learning project. The service-learning project was implemented for the last four years since the course was created; however, this is the first time that students were engaged in-depth to select their own
community partner. Finally, students’ learning outcomes would be greater with this student-centered project.

Overall, this small service-learning project was successful in meeting both the course objectives and following the framework as set forth by Carver (1997). What have emerged from this project are simple and practical suggestions for educators or practitioners looking to implement service learning in their academic or professional pursuits (Appendix D). Oftentimes, instructors find it challenging to incorporate service learning into formal course objectives at the university level (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Stanton et al., 1999; Steinberg et al., 2010). However, the guidelines and tips espoused by this experience serve to provide those looking to reach out to the community helpful and practical ideas about how to make this leap less overwhelming.

Recommendations and Limitations

Through developing, implementing, and assessing the service-learning project in the sustainability course, a list of practical suggestions for educators and/or practitioners emerged. These guidelines are useful to university-level educators seeking to incorporate PBSL in their formal learning curricula or members of organizations looking towards community engagement to promote agency in employees. Scholars researching case studies or ready examples of successful PBSL may also use the recommendations to follow.

Recommendations for educators.

While the recommendations that follow are by no means comprehensive, didactic, or rigid, they do serve to offer simple, practical, and observed insights into how PBSL adopters can help their project run more smoothly and impactfully based on
experience. From the planning perspective, it is vital that the project have its own objectives tied to the academic ones for the course or organization as a whole. If one can connect the need for community service to the course or organization mission, then the stakeholders will be more likely to agree with the reasoning for the project because it is already in line with the overall vision. Furthermore, the project is established with its own set of objectives that can be referenced consistently for participant accountability.

Next, it is the instructors’ responsibility that the participants understand that the project is a part of the formal environment of the organization and will be graded or evaluated with the same rigor as other assignments. When finding a community partner, utilize any and all campus or neighborhood resources. Who are your neighbors? What existing partnerships does your department/college/university/organization have? Where do you see a need in the community? Then, narrow down the list based on preliminary conversations. Does the community organization work with college students or your population? Does the contact sound willing to share challenges, goals, resources, and anecdotes? Potential community partners should be in complete communication with the instructor or organization contact, understanding that they may not be chosen for the project. If at all feasible, participants should choose the community partner to increase agency and dedication to the project.

Once chosen, the community partner, instructor, and any other key stakeholders should collaborate on a schedule for the project and/or proposals. Once the relationship is established, pre-research and time to dialogue about the community issue at stake is vital in the classroom or organization environment. Participants must feel prepared to observe the site, interview the contact, and document the process. Overall, try to ensure that as
much transparency as appropriate is valued and practiced. Once the project begins, constant communication between participants the community partner and other stakeholders is important to ensure proper logistics and learning.

This is a process. Participants must have time and space to refine proposals, understand assessment, and dialogue with co-participants before implementing any projects. During the proposal process, the community partner must be able to give feedback to provide authenticity. Within the course or organization context, reflection at multiple intervals gauges participant learning and agency, as well as gives the facilitator a chance to assess teamwork, problem-solving skills, or any related interpersonal conflicts or challenges. Reflection may be written or verbal, individual, in pairs, or in small groups. At the end of the sustainability course project, students completed a peer evaluation for each member of their small group that was included in their final grade.

Finally, simple is not easy. Just because a project is based on proposals does not mean that participants are not galvanized to apply their foundational knowledge to community service in the real world. When framed within the context of the course or organization mission and provided the proper resources, participants will take the project seriously and produce proposals of depth and quality.

**Recommendations for the future of the Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences course.**

Within the context of the *Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences* course, based on the project explored in this study three suggestions for future facilitators stand out. First, all participating instructors should attend the final presentations alongside the community partner. While one professor involved in the course was in attendance, all of
the professors should offer support, feedback, and connections to their areas of expertise to the proposals. Second, the project should be emphasized throughout the course, with students crafting questions and brainstorm ideas about potential themes or issues during the first 10 weeks. This way, students pay more attention to proposal implementation, the final and most central suggestion. The instructors should permit participants to implement at least one of the proposals generated by the group to increase the value of the project to both the organization invested in community service and the community partner itself.

It may not be possible for every proposal to be incorporated in the partner organization’s daily operations, but if participants were afforded opportunities to engage with the population outside of the college campus, actively plan for a project, and document and evaluate its successes, they will find more agency and empowerment in the experience. There is hope that students will have the chance to see real change impacted on their communities and beyond through this project’s improved organization and theoretical support.

**Limitations.**

This project was limited in its generalizability, due to the specificity of circumstances, stakeholders, and participants. However, by connecting the project to a grounded theory and documenting the process of how student-learning outcomes were met, this project is flexible enough to use in other programs at institutions and organizations.
References


Kim, J. (2013). Community service-learning project in apparel for special needs in the program of apparel design and merchandising. In P. Lan Lin & M. Wiegand (Eds.), *Service-learning in higher education: Connecting the global to the local* (pp. 173-182). Indianapolis, IN: University of Indianapolis Press.


Appendix A: Service-Learning Project Syllabus

Family and Consumer Sciences 496 S:
Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences

California State University, Northridge
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences
College of Health and Human Development

Instructors:
Dr. Jerry-Ann Harrel-Smith (Family Studies)
Dr. Jongeun Kim (Apparel, Design and Merchandising, Professor of Record)
Dr. Terri Lisagor (Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science)
Dr. Yoko Mimura (Consumer Affairs)
Dr. Kyriakos Pontikis (Interior Design)
Ms. Sara Stevens (Apparel Design and Merchandising, acting TA for final project)

Semester: Spring 2015  Day/time: Monday, 4:00 to 6:45 pm  Room: SQ 241

Final Project/Report:

GRADE DISTRIBUTION: 40%
Final Research paper due and Presentation Date: 5/11/2015 5:30-7:30 pm

FINAL PROJECT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:
• Students will be able to demonstrate how sustainability issues are connected to environmental, economic, and social equity.
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainable theories and concepts.
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of sustainable applications in areas of Family and Consumer Sciences.
• Students will demonstrate how professional practices impact sustainability at the community level.

DESCRIPTION OF FINAL PROJECT AND SCHEDULE:

Overview:
Working in small groups (3-4 students per group), you will collaborate on a service-learning project with a community partner of the your group members’ choice. Service learning means that we will use what we have learned about sustainability in this course to help a partner organization better serve their target populations in real and meaningful ways. Since clothing encompasses many facets of sustainability, the project will revolve around clothing. You may choose to upcycle or repurpose old clothes or run a clothing
drive for people in need, for example. You will be tasked with choosing a community partner based on CSUN’s existing collaborators, designing a project, divvying up tasks, and implementing an experience or creating tangible items for the community partner’s benefit. You will also be asked to write brief reflections after each class session.

- Study its practices and identify the critical issues or areas for improvement.
- Contact focus group meeting/ interview director, members, clients, teachers, and/or staff.
- Upload presentation files and final research paper on Moodle by 5/10 and present in class on 5/11

During this final meeting we will also complete the following:

- Class post test survey
- Community partner survey
- Peer assessments

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

- Class participation and discussions
- Research skills and procedures
- Final research paper
- Powerpoint presentations
- Group collaboration
- Robustness of sustainability proposal

**Tentative Schedule:**

4/13 – Final Project Planning Introduction, Interactive Lecture and Discussion (Pre research assignment 10 points)

- What is service learning? How does it work? How does it support what we have been learning about sustainability so far?
- How do we find an appropriate community partner? (Introduction to CIELO, neighborgapbridge)
- Brainstorm assignment: Form small groups. Think about how a service-learning project revolving around clothing can serve that partner. Don’t limit yourselves, just consider who the partner is, what their needs are, and what assets we posses.

4/20 – Final Project Group Works (Framework assignment 20 points)

- Develop a framework for your work (define problem, choose themes/topics to investigate).
- Study its practices and identify the critical issues or areas for improvement.
- Contact focus group meeting/ interview director, teachers and staff.
- Work with your team to develop an outline for your proposal:
  - Title
  - Objectives
- Findings
- Proposals

• Mini-presentations: Choose 2-3 of your best ideas and present them to the other groups. From each group, we will choose the best idea as a class. Then, we will vote on the best idea and connect with the chosen partner about the intended project.
  o Example committees: logistics, communications, documentation, and implementation
  o OR committees could be 3-4 discrete mini projects (TBD)
• Assignment: reflect on the main ideas of sustainability you have encountered so far. Consider how they apply to a service-learning project. How do our clothes encompass many of these general topics such as Apparel Design and Merchandising industries, consumer affairs, nutrition, family studies, and design?

4/27 – Site Visit (off campus, TBD)

• Each group must prepare 3-5 questions for the community partner to further hone and shape the project. The interviews will help better understand the partner and assess their needs.
• Each group will take photos and document findings on a site tour
• Each group will meet with Sara and/or Dr. Kim to discuss ideas

5/4 – Pre-Preparation for improvement (Improve presentation 20 points)
• Submit pre presentation file (Improve proposal presentation) on Moodle by 5/3, no more than 10 pages. See the guide line on Moodle
• Feedback and improvement will be discussed in class

5/11 FINAL PRESENTATION – Culminating Experience/Proposal/Reviewing previous projects (50 points)
• Submit final presentation file powerpoint file on Moodle by 5/11
• Submit final research paper on Moodle.
• The length of final report should be around 3,000+ words in length. It should be typed in a standard size 12 font, double-spaced, and have 1 inch margins. Project/report must be uploaded on Moodle by the cutoff time.
• Submit 1-2 pages of final reflection on Moodle after the experience at the end of the final report.
Appendix B: Introduction to Service Learning Lecture

**SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT: INTRODUCTION**

FGS 4905: Sustainability in Family and Consumer Sciences
Spring 2015
Sara Stevens

**WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?**

- How would you define sustainability based on what you have learned so far?

Students in FGS 473 present their avant-garde designs made with recycled materials at the TRENS Career Symposium, November 2014

**SUSTAINABILITY: SOME DEFINITIONS**

- “Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations” (Environmental Protection Agency, 2015).

- “Sustainability demands ways of living, working, and behaving that enable all people of the world to lead healthy, fulfilling, and economically secure lives without destroying the environment and without exhausting the future welfare of people and the planet.” (Sandell, 2001).

- “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland report, 1987).

**IN IMAGES**

- **humanity**
- **economy**
- **nature**


**WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?**

- "A credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996).

- What does that mean to you? What experience do you have with service learning or community service?

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: Choosing a Community Partner in 496S**

- How do you choose a community partner?
- What are the kinds of things you look for?
NARROWING DOWN THE SEARCH

- CIELO: Center for Innovative and Engaged Learning Opportunities
  - http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement
- Searched for organizations in Northridge, Reseda, and North Hills
- Reached out to 7 potential partners and heard back from three
- Scheduled site visits and interviews

Community Engagement
Through Service Learning

MEET THE CANDIDATES

- SF Valley Rescue Mission
- CSUN Women’s Research and Resource Center
- Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
RESCUE MISSION

- Founded in 1998
- Shelter opened in 2002
- New shelter set to open later in 2015 with 90 beds
- Focus on:
  - Temporary housing
  - Case management, job placement support, and educational activities for students
  - SOS (Survival Outreach Services) provide hot showers in a mobile unit
- Three thrift stores operating in the SFV to raise funds for the shelter and offer economical products to families

JOAQUIN MILLER CAREER AND TRANSITION CENTER

- First career and transition center for special needs students ages 18-32
- Part of LAUSD
- Serves students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities
- Hands-on job training in landscaping, bakery, auto detailing
- Training in professionalism, self-advocacy, social skills, and character building
- 236 students

CSUN WOMEN’S RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTER

- Oldest women’s center in the California State University system
- Housed in the College of Humanities in the Gender and Women’s Studies department
- Raising awareness about issues related to women and gender inequality
- Puts on events, lectures, and screenings
- Partners with domestic violence shelters

http://www.csun.edu/women-research-resource-center
FROM YOUR SYLLABUS

Working in small groups (3-4 students per group), you will collaborate on a service-learning project with a community partner of the group members’ choice. Service learning means that we will use what we have learned about sustainability in this course to help a partner organization better serve their target populations in real and meaningful ways. Since clothing encompasses many facets of sustainability, the project will involve reused clothing. You may choose to upcycle or repurpose old clothing or run a clothing drive for people in need, for example. You will be tasked with choosing a community partner based on CSUN’s existing collaborators, designing a project, conducting interviews, and implementing an experience or creating tangible items for the community partner’s benefit. You will also be asked to write brief reflections after each class session.

- OBJECTIVES:
  - Study its practices and identify the critical issues or areas for improvement.
  - Conduct focus group meeting/interview director, members, clients, teachers, and/or staff.
  - Upload presentation files and final research paper on Moodle by 5/10 and present in class on 5/11.

TO REVIEW...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The JoAnn Miller Career and Transition Center</td>
<td>Career placement and life skills training for moderate to severe intellectually disabled students 18-22</td>
<td>8218 Wazalone Ave, Reseda, CA 91335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLICK Women’s Research and Resource Center</td>
<td>Raising awareness of issues related to gender inequality, planning and implementing events</td>
<td>8354 Maxfield Street, Northridge CA 91330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission</td>
<td>Housing and other services benefiting the homeless</td>
<td>8714 Darby Ave, Northridge CA 91326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
Appendix C: Sample Community Partner Letter

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a graduate student in the Family and Consumer Sciences M.S. program within the Apparel Merchandising option. My thesis is developing a service-learning project related to sustainability and apparel under the direction of my amazing advisor, Dr. Jongeun Kim, copied on this email.

I will be coordinating the service learning portion Family and Consumer Sciences496S, Sustainability and Family and Consumer Sciences, an experimental upper division course where students collaborate to choose a community partner, visit the site, research the organization, and ultimately make recommendation presentations to the partner about how to make the organization more sustainable. Sustainability as you may know encompasses improving the lives of those within communities and organizations as well as the environment.

Dr. Kim and I were wondering if we could discuss the possibility of a partnership between our students and The San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission beginning after Spring Break. I found your organization in our service-learning directory. The San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission seems like a fantastic example of a potential partner organization. Generally, we organize 1-2 site visits where the partner organization explains the mission, offers a tour of the site, and raises awareness about the issues the organization engages with. The students are creative, responsible, and eager to learn about worthwhile organizations tackling societal challenges.

I'm hoping we can meet or arrange a phone call to discuss the possibility of a partnership. I took this class last Spring, and I can attest to its value and the seriousness of purpose with which Dr. Kim and the team of professors lecturing in this course take this work. I look forward to hearing from you. I've attached a syllabus for your convenience. Please let me know if you have any questions, as this is a lengthy email!

Best,
Sara Stevens
Family and Consumer Sciences, Apparel Design and Merchandising
California State University, Northridge
Appendix D: Final Student Proposals

**Sustainability Proposal for San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission**

*Josie Brato, Mari Hrncirian, & Derick Siguenza*
*California State University, Northridge*

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**San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission**

**Mission Statement:**
To offer refuge, recovery and restoration to the homeless community in the San Fernando Valley and nearby areas.

**Site Locations Visited:**
- Super Thrift Store
  18344 Sherman Way, Reseda, CA 91335
- San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission
  8756 Canby Avenue Northridge, CA 91325

---

**Background on Homelessness**

- Of that amount, 69% resided in residential programs while the remaining 31% (177,373) were unsheltered.
- 113,952 of the unsheltered homeless count was found in California.
- California has the largest amount of unsheltered homeless persons in the nation.

---

**Why We Chose this Community Partner**

- Choosing the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission was a unanimous decision of the students.
- New facility provided us with wide room for growth.
- Their community contribution is fantastic and we want to improve it.
- Our proximity to them is ideal and we have the right resources.

---

**Purpose of the Proposal**

**Theme:**
"Helping, not hurting" (Wade Trimmer)

**Objectives:**
1. Develop a promotional tool for the Super Thrift store to help sustain the Mission through increased revenue.
2. Improve visual merchandising and product placement strategies at the Super Thrift store in Reseda, CA to bring added revenue.
3. Create an environment of health and well-being, through design elements using visual art and photographs.

---

**Super Thrift Store**

- Teens spend 21% of their income on clothing.
- Instagram is the #1 social media platform.
- Combine these two statistics to target teens as revenue source.

---

**Marketing Super Thrift**

- California State University, Northridge apparel design and merchandising students have valuable knowledge.
- Style window displays
- Train employees
- Work on the Instagram

---

**Visual Merchandising**

- Selling strategy is use of proper visual displays.
- Considered to be an art that represents the image of the shop (Standa & Bratsen, 2013).
- Create signage covering a large amount of window space, visible to consumers.
**Product Placement**

- Better merchandising techniques to upscale shop and grab attention
- Curated products on shelves and against window
- Mere Exposure Effect Theory
- Product placement, color combinations, lighting, and prop selection are key components to a successful window display.

**Environment of Health & Wellness**

- During site visit, photographs reveal blank slate; grey walls
- Depicts improvements to the environment can be implemented

**Design Environment for Health**

- Create an environment of health and well-being; Improve design environment
- Attention Restoration Theory (ART): human attraction to restorative environments creates potential (concentration, tackle life's challenges, stress reduction).
- May help provide the residents with surroundings conducive to healing
- May help with their reintegration into society

**Images of Nature**

- Add design element of nature:
  - Photographs of plants and scenery of nature
  - People interact with their environment (passive, active)
  - Hang nature photographs in community a

**Colorful Images of Healthy Food**

- Add colorful design element:
  - Colorful pictures in the kitchen and dining areas
  - Helps facilitate improvements in mental health
  - Colorful images stimulate the senses and promote healing

**Visual Art for Health**

- Steps to take:
  - Recruit a photographer
  - CSUN Visual Arts program has photography students
  - Create community-service learning project
  - Assign them projects: Nature & Healthy Foods
  - Printing of digital photographs
  - CSUN photograph development lab
  - Using vendor such as Shutterfly
  - Simple Framing 11x14 (large portrait) to 24x36 (poster size)
  - Pricing ranges: $16.95 - $37.99 dependent on size/color

**Overview of Theories Applied**

1. Sustainable Development
2. Human Ecological Theory
3. Color Therapy
4. Mere Exposure Effect Theory
5. Attention Restoration Theory (ART)

**In Closing**

- Expected results of proposal:
  - Improve the revenue stream and level of revenues coming in from the Super Thrift store.
  - Improvement the health and overall well-being of the residents through in nature and color
  - Residents will have greater chances and opportunities for a successful rehabilitation and transition into an autonomous life in society.
Objectives
1. Residents will consume ethically within sustainable means.
2. Residents will be provided with a consumer goods education enabling sustainable and conscious consumption.
3. Residents will be informed on the importance of healthy nutrition, such as locally grown food as well as sustainable apparel design and merchandising.

Theory - Ecological Systems

Findings: ADM
- SFV has 903 families that are filled with families of 4. One-third of the families is members of a school age.
- The demand for clothes grows up.
- The SFV site is donated some of the clothing from thrift stores. In fact, they are donated to small that they have unused clothing.
- However, these clothes are hand-tied down and are more likely to become smaller after a short period of wear.

Recommendations: ADM
- Seizing classes will be offered to adults as well.
- Gain knowledge in producing and repairing clothing.
- Utilize the leftover clothing that may not be capable of being used.
- CSUN Design Majors can teach the class for a service learning project.
- Materials can be purchased by SFV missions.

Findings: Consumer Affairs
- Lower income consumers, including SFV residents, may enjoy on-site or off-site purchases, which need to be reprocessed at their thrift stores in a sustainable fashion.
- Not only would such a policy benefit lower income consumers, but it also helps SFV residents and families, who can benefit directly, as well as reduce pressure from their local stores.
- Sustainability may enable a sustainable economic future, but for that an equitable economic debt with a financial sector that works as such in 2010.
- There is a lack of consumer-based education which needs to be implemented at their sites.

Recommendations: Consumer Affairs
- The SFV mission may also build consumer educational based on the food and consume by local consumer protection and families who are living in poverty. It is required for such consumer.
- The types of consumer goods education will come from SFV residents and families. It will facilitate purchase when people are responsible for their consumption and sustainable issues. One may benefit from it.
- Similarly, the education may also offer consumer-based education that will offer the SFV mission to consume more sustainably, allowing for sustainable consumption with our locally purchased.
- The city council and/or public should encourage more knowledge and expertise within the Consumer Affairs options to exchange in increasing more and highly practical experience.

Findings: Nutrition
- Participants lack the knowledge on how to use certain fruits and vegetables.
- Excess donated junk food
- Hanging herb garden is a future project but no definitive plans for a produce garden
  - Lack of local, sustainably grown produce
  - No program to sanitize food waste in place
  - (Trimmer, 2015)
Findings in the Literature: Nutrition

- Lack of cooking knowledge and skills lead to more convenient foods
  (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008).
- Homeless women have low dietary intake of fruits and vegetables while fat intake is high
  (Davis, Robinson, Molet & Anesh, 2008).

Findings in the Literature: Nutrition

- Community gardening improves nutritional status, provides stress relief, encourages personal growth and brings a sense of inclusion
  (Gold & Jackson, 2008).
- Recommendations: Nutrition
  - Provide nutrition and gardening based education to increase intake of healthy foods while allowing residents to gain skills and work in a community garden (Gold, Boll, & Jackson, 2015).
  - Create a composting system in order to safely use organic waste matter (ex. spoiled produce) to feed their gardens (Smith & Jones, 2009).

Family Studies

The Family Studies Program (FSP) offers an array of courses designed to prepare professionals to work with individuals, families, and communities in a variety of settings. The program is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support and enhance family life, development, and well-being. The program is accredited by the Council for Social Work Education and offers a Master of Science in Family Studies.

Site Pictures
References


Education Through Interactive Workshops: Home is where it begins
By: Raha Albeshr
Rose Chang
Stephanie Wong

Purpose:
Practicing a sustainable culture through Peer Guided Group workshops beginning at the core root of the habitat setting [microsystem]...

Issues on Homelessness
Categories to Discuss:
"Chronic"
Homelessness: 10 %
Transitional homeless: 80 %
Remaining: 10 %

San Fernando Rescue Mission
Why we chose to work with them?
Newly renovated offering state of the art facility for families and individuals to create a private and public space...

San Fernando Rescue Mission

- The shelter is new and there are no people at the site. However, we were able to explore the facility with the help of the workers at the site. We noted the following:
  - The shelter is equipped with a large modern kitchen
  - A large living room equipped with a TV that allows socializing
  - The private bedrooms are structured in such a way that married couples can share facilities such as the bathroom
  - There is ample parking for visitors and residents at the shelter
  - There is a wide playing ground for the kids
  - A computer lab has been installed in the facility for facilitating communication and information sharing
  - There is a large garden where organic fruits can be grown to supply the home with fresh fruits and vegetables.

San Fernando Rescue Mission

- Photo taken by Raha

Modern Bathrooms

- Photo taken by Raha

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Theoretical frameworks within the scope of Family & Consumer Sciences

**Family Studies**
Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology system theory:
- **MICROSYSYTEM:** development of solid social environment, building a familial-type of bond + relationship  
  (Benson & Deal, 1995)
- Household management skills (Churaman, 1970)
- Development of social skills through physical interaction  
  (Davey & Paolucci, 1980)

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**Apparel Design and Management**

ISSUE: “Fast Fashion” Culture produces Waste Culture

SOLUTION: Waste management protocol

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**Proposed Framework**

Incorporating sustainability values through interactive peer-to-peer workshops:
- Apparel Workshops
- Home and Lifestyle Workshops
- Motivational Workshops

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**Method**

- Once a week student workshops. 2 hours and 40 minutes long
- Put on by CSUN students enrolled in a sustainability course.
- 50 minute lecture and powerpoint
- 50 minute interactive activity
- 30 minute reflection
Apparel Workshops
- **Week 1**: Introduction on the issues in regards to the practice of sustainability within the apparel industry and tapping into apparel waste management.
- **Week 2**: How to resolve the issues of waste in regards to apparel.
- **Week 3**: Introduction to the idea of Upcycling.
- **Week 4**: A tutorial on how to put together the perfect job interview outfit.

Home and Lifestyle Workshops
- **Week 1**: Introduction on the basics of living in a sustainable home.
- **Week 2**: How to manage a home in the most sustainable way. For example cleaning the rooms: waste management, maintaining waste by recycling, and finding ways to upcycle garments, cans, bottles, and disposing food remnants.

Home and Lifestyle cont.
- **Week 3**: The importance of family bonding and how building a stable foundation with a great support system.
- **Week 4**: Fun ways and ideas to promote family bonding time. Planning movie night, game night, and family dinners.

Motivational Workshops
- **Week 1**: Inspirational speaker (someone who got out of the challenge and their story on how they got out of the homeless lifestyle).
- **Week 2**: This topic is directed mainly towards women. Information on how to get out of a bad situation, for example an abusive relationship and how to show your kids if any to not fall into the same patterns.

Motivational Workshops cont.
- **Week 3**: Tips on how to prep for an interview, for example a session on resume building, using what they learned in the apparel workshop to dress for success and so forth.
- **Week 4**: Wrap up of everything that was learned. Have the people in the homeless shelter get into groups and put together their own workshop to demonstrate their understanding of everything that was taught throughout the month.

End Result
- Educated on waste management within the apparel industry
- Learn upcycle and reduce the amount of waste being produced within our daily lives.
- Dress to impress
- Importance of family bonding and building a strong support system

End Result cont.
- Interview tips
- Overall living a more sustainable lifestyle
- Motivation to better their lives

References
References


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Appendix E: Practical Tips for Educators

What we learned: Practical tips for educators or practitioners implementing service-learning projects in their courses or organizations:

1. The project should have its own objectives tied to the academic ones for the course as a whole.
2. Students should understand that the project is a part of the course and will be graded with the same rigor as other assignments as well as prepared to tailor their learning for real life experiences.
3. Utilize any and all campus resources. Who are your neighbors? What existing partnerships does your department/college/university have? Where do you see a need in the community? (Sample contact letter!)
4. Narrow down your list based on preliminary conversations. Does the community organization work with college students? Does the contact sound willing to share challenges, goals, resources, and anecdotes?
5. Potential community partners should be in complete communication with the instructor, understanding that they may not be chosen for the project.
6. If at all feasible, students choose the community partner to increase agency and dedication to the project.
7. Once chosen, the community partner, instructor, and any other key stakeholders should collaborate on a schedule for the project and/or proposals.
8. Pre-research and time to dialogue about the community issue at stake is vital in the classroom environment. Students must feel prepared to observe the site, interview the contact, and document the process.
9. Once the project begins, constant communication between students, the community partner, and other stakeholders is important to ensuring proper logistics and learning.
10. This is a process. Students must have time and space to refine their proposals before implementing any projects.
11. The community partner must be able to give feedback to students to provide authenticity.
12. Reflection at multiple intervals gauges student learning and agency.
13. Simple is not easy. Just because a project is based on proposals does not mean that students are not galvanized to apply their academic knowledge to community service. When framed within the context of the course and provided the proper resources, students will take the project and course material seriously.