

**“ Up-Close and Personal ”:
An Evaluation of the American Red Cross
Partners for Youth Program**

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March 1999

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**“UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL”:
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YOUTH PROGRAM**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MARCH 1999**

Partners for Youth, which is currently based in twelve Philadelphia middle schools, is the core of the American Red Cross Youth programs. The program embodies the central insight that community involvement is a vital avenue for helping young adolescents achieve a positive life direction. Partners for Youth, like other service learning programs, emphasizes the importance of *learning* through service in order that young people grow intellectually as well as personally.

In this report, Research for Action examines the Partners for Youth program and its successes and challenges in three case-study schools during the fall and winter of the 1998-1999 school year. This evaluation of Partners for Youth draws on qualitative research methods, including interviews, focus groups, observations of program activities, and document analysis.

The study addresses three broad questions:

- What does the program look like as it unfolds in Philadelphia middle schools?
- How does Partners for Youth change the way that middle school students view themselves and their communities?
- How does Partners for Youth enhance and develop the program goals of participating public schools?

Our primary research focus in this study was the Partners for Youth Life Skills program. In the Life Skills classes, paid Red Cross facilitators meet with middle school students and cover topics ranging from "Values" to "Overcoming Obstacles." Each class meets once a week for approximately fourteen weeks and culminates in a student-developed service learning project.

Findings

The data analyzed for the evaluation report indicate that Partners for Youth provides young adolescents with support and encouragement to forge positive directions for themselves. Interviews and observational data indicate that the Life Skills curriculum and facilitators' strong connections with students create safe spaces to explore challenging social issues that young adolescents confront on a daily basis. In addition, students, teachers, and facilitators consistently report that Partners for Youth and the Red Cross

facilitators are helping young adolescents develop positive perceptions of themselves as valuable, contributing members of their communities.

Facilitators have successfully adapted the Life Skills curriculum to diverse groups of students and helped their students implement many successful service learning projects. However, Red Cross facilitators have often faced logistical obstacles in developing meaningful service projects that are closely linked to student learning. Facilitators have also reported that without communication, cooperation, and collaboration with classroom teachers, Life Skills classes do not meet their full potential.

Staff members at the participating schools currently report little familiarity with the Red Cross's Life Skills curriculum. However, teachers and administrators are favorably disposed towards Partners for Youth, want to learn more about the Life Skills curriculum, and may be eager to build upon Red Cross programming as a resource for meeting promotion and graduation requirements for service learning that will be in place in the year 2000. This study suggests that the relationship between the Red Cross and the School District of Philadelphia can continue to grow in new and fruitful directions.

Recommendations

- **Document modifications to the Life Skills curriculum as they occur.** A description of successful modifications will serve as a guide and inspiration to current and future facilitators.
- **Maintain a consistent group of Partners for Youth facilitators.** Staff continuity will minimize logistical challenges that were encountered by the Life Skills facilitators in implementing service learning projects during the period of this study.
- **Increase and formalize channels of communication with classroom teachers and school administrators.** This might include regularly scheduled attendance at faculty meetings, periodic attendance at Small Learning Community meetings, or the use of school resources to organize after-school professional development sessions.
- **Identify and utilize resources and structures within the School District that are in place to support service learning.** School-to-Career Coordinators can provide classroom teachers with guidance about integrating Partners for Youth service learning projects into their academic curricula. The coordinators of Small Learning Communities (or smaller collegial groups within schools to which all teachers now belong) can arrange planning time for teachers to discuss the role of service learning in their classrooms.
- **Develop joint funding proposals at the district, cluster, or school level.** Such proposals can position the Life Skills curriculum as a valuable and proven resource to the Philadelphia School District. With further funding and support the curriculum can

be adapted to serve as a basis for meeting the district's "Citizenship" requirements at the middle school level.

Conclusions

Research for Action is pleased to report that the current study indicates that Partners for Youth, and specifically its Life Skills component, successfully promotes the social and emotional development of young adolescents. This study also suggests that new forms of cooperation with classroom teachers and other personnel in the School District of Philadelphia have the potential to build on the Red Cross's current strengths in helping young adolescents develop positive life directions through community service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	2
CHAPTER TWO: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES.....	7
CHAPTER THREE: FACILITATORS' PERSPECTIVES.....	13
CHAPTER FOUR: PERSPECTIVES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS.....	18
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	22
APPENDIX A: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	
APPENDIX B: SCHOOL-BASED RESEARCH ACTIVITIES	
APPENDIX C: SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	
APPENDIX D: PROTOCOLS	
APPENDIX E: WORKS CITED	

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Service Learning and the American Red Cross

Upstairs in the sun room, the students and older people sit together every other seat around a large rectangular table. Some of the residents seem alert; others appear to be dozing or having a hard time concentrating. During the next two hours, the students learn about the nursing home, converse with the residents, sing the song they prepared, and join in their regular activities, such as word games and ring-toss. The ring-toss game is not easy for either the children or the older people, and I note that every time someone finishes their turn, the whole room cheers. All are engaged, including the staff and me.(From a researcher's fieldnotes)

This paragraph describes a culminating service project in the Life Skills component of the American Red Cross Partners for Youth Program. The class had spent approximately fourteen weeks with a Red Cross facilitator exploring their goals and values, assessing the needs of their community, and developing a service learning project. After the students finished their service activity, they completed several sets of written reflections in which they vividly described their increased awareness of the value of helping others.

Partners for Youth began in 1991 and is currently based in twelve Philadelphia middle schools. According to program materials, this program "is the core of the American Red Cross Youth programs, which "works intensely with students in the critical and often volatile Middle School years" (The American Red Cross).

According to the principal of a participating school, "Service learning assists the children in becoming more productive citizens in the years to come.... The Red Cross is often thought about in disasters, but [Partners for Youth] gives up-close and personal experience with the Red Cross."

The program's overarching goal is "to further personal growth, leadership, personal and civic responsibility, and resiliency of youth through skill development and community service" (American Red Cross 1997). The program is based on the principle that service learning is an empowering experience for 'at risk' urban youth. Partners for Youth embodies several recommendations from the Carnegie Council's landmark study of middle school students (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1995). According to the Carnegie report, connecting schools with communities and improving academic performance through fostering health and fitness are two key ways to improve the educational experiences of middle school students. In the Partners for Youth model, life skills training and Red Cross safety skills are combined with service learning projects to enhance youth leadership, self-worth, positive peer relations, and positive aspirations among young adolescents in Philadelphia middle schools.

Overview of the Study

As America's premier service organization, the American Red Cross brings unique resources, but also faces unique challenges in its work to help low-income Philadelphia students identify positive life directions. In this study, Research for Action examines the Partners for Youth program's successes and challenges in three Philadelphia public schools in the fall and winter of the 1998-1999 school year.

The study was guided by three broad questions:

- What does the program look like as it unfolds in Philadelphia middle schools?
- How does Partners for Youth change the way that middle school students view themselves and their communities?
- How does Partners for Youth enhance and develop the program goals of participating schools?

The study of Partners for Youth drew on qualitative research methods including interviews, focus groups, observations of program activities, and document analysis (Patton 1990). Observations, interviews, and discussions with the Red Cross staff and facilitators provided detailed information about the ways that the program is conceived and enacted.¹ Similarly, observations and interviews with students and teachers illuminated the role that Partners for Youth and service learning play within the daily lives of urban middle school students and schools. In addition, document analysis provided an overview of the program in schools and classes that were not directly observed. Please see appendices for more detailed discussions of research methods, activities, and sample.)

Overview of the Report

In the rest of this chapter, we describe the approach of Partners for Youth to service learning and the program's major design elements. We also provide a brief overview of approach to service learning currently in place in the School District of Philadelphia.²

¹ The Red Cross staff also collects quantitative data about program outcomes in the form of pre-tests and post-tests, but the analysis of quantitative data is not currently available.

² Although the Red Cross also collaborates with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, this evaluation looked at Partners for Youth as it is implemented in public schools.

In the following chapters, we present our findings and examine the Partners for Youth program in three Philadelphia middle schools. In Chapter Two, we discuss outcomes for participating students, highlighting student perspectives. In Chapter Three, we examine the implementation of Partners for Youth Life Skills curriculum from the perspective of the Red Cross facilitators. In Chapter Four, we consider teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Partners for Youth program and how it meshes with their existing goals and programs. Chapter Five summarizes our findings and makes recommendations for strengthening and building on the current direction of Partners for Youth.

The Partners for Youth Program

Partners for Youth embodies the theory and methods of service learning – an educational reform model based on the central insight that community involvement is a vital avenue for helping young people to achieve a positive life direction. As stated in the Partners for Youth manual,

Partners for Youth is based on research showing the critical need for youth to be involved in their own communities and on the directives of teachers and administrators who encourage students to go forth into the communities to achieve academic and personal success (American Red Cross 1997).

As stated in its manual, Partners for Youth embraces the standards for school-based service learning developed by the Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform (ASLER). In addition to encouraging the action of community service, Partners for Youth, like other service learning programs, emphasizes the importance of *learning* through service in order that young people grow intellectually as well as personally (ASLER 1993; Conrad and Hedin 1991; Fertman, White and White 1997; Giugliano n.d.).

Partners for Youth is designed to incorporate the four components of school-based service learning that can turn a well-designed service project into a learning experience - one that encourages students to integrate their cognitive, emotional, and social experiences. The four components that service learning advocates consider necessary for engaging students in a well-designed, thoughtful process are preparation, service, reflection, and celebration.

Partners for Youth participants engage in an extended period of preparation for service. During this period of preparation, young adolescents learn and practice skills that help them identify their own goals and values, engage in problem-solving, and identify community needs before they develop and implement a service project. The other components of service learning - reflection, and celebration - are addressed through oral and written reflections in each class and through multi-class celebrations like holiday parties and pizza parties.

Partners for Youth has two major program elements: Life Skills Classes and The After-school Program. The Community Services Department of the American Red Cross coordinates and provides administrative support to both of these program elements. Through most of the fall of 1998, the management team of the Community Services program assumed oversight of the program. In the winter of 1999, a former facilitator was able to move into position full-time.

The Life Skills curriculum consists of twelve weeks of preparation and a culminating service learning project. Facilitators meet with classes during the regular school day, teach students personal and civic responsibility, and guide students toward meeting their personal goals for community involvement. The preparation component of the service learning cycle is highly elaborated, with a structure that helps facilitators guide students through eight units that utilize cognitive and social skills related to future planning, hypothetical thinking, and consideration of others.

During the 1998-99 school year, Life Skills classes are being taught by paid facilitators hired by the Red Cross. In previous years, City Year volunteers (members of the National Youth Service Corps) taught these classes. Each of three facilitators is responsible for teaching Life Skills classes in four schools for two cycles. Facilitators are on-site at each school once a week, teach between four and six classes at each school each week, and develop service learning projects with each class. The fall Life Skills cycle observed by Research for Action lasted approximately 14 weeks, including service learning activities.

The After-school Program is offered one afternoon a week at each school and remains the primary responsibility of a team of City Year volunteers assigned to each school. In the after-school program, students "have the opportunity to empower themselves and connect with their peers through service and Red Cross safety training" (American Red Cross).

In the fall of 1998, the activities and responsibilities of the City Year volunteers varied from site to site. During the early winter of 1999, the Red Cross and City Year held a joint meeting devoted to strategizing and problem solving to increase communication and clarify lines authority among the Red Cross and City Year team members.

Research for Action sample was able to observe an active after-school program at one school in our sample. The facilitator at another school in the sample reported that the after-school program was in place, but no activities occurred on the days when researchers were on-site. During the fall, the third school in the sample identified a member of the school faculty to take responsibility for the after-school program and work with the Red Cross on implementing it during the winter and spring.

Service Learning in the School District of Philadelphia

Like other school districts, the School District of Philadelphia has become increasingly interested in service learning as a method of integrating experiential, real-world learning into the academic curriculum. On June 29, 1998, the Philadelphia Board of Education voted to include service learning and a "Citizenship Project" as promotion and graduation requirements for all Philadelphia students. The School District requires that service learning projects actively engage students in meeting real community needs and demonstrate academic rigor and integration with the Philadelphia Curriculum Frameworks (School District of Philadelphia 1999). The School District's Content Standards and the associated Curriculum Frameworks articulate expectations about what all Philadelphia public school students need to know and what they need to be able to do.

The School District's approach to service has in common with the Red Cross a commitment to authentic student engagement in community service and a commitment to link service to learning. However, the School District places much stronger emphasis on *academic rigor, curricular integration, and assessment* of service learning that does the Partners for Youth program. Outside partners working with the District need to consider the best ways to interface with districtwide expectations about service learning.

During the 1998-99 school year, the Red Cross moved to a new level of formality in its relationship with participating schools. Each school began making a financial contribution as a way of supporting the After-school program and the Life Skills curriculum. In addition, for the first time, schools signed contracts specifying their responsibilities to the Red Cross. These responsibilities included providing the facilitators with a work space, access to telephones, and other logistical supports. Although the financial contribution to Partners for Youth was a minimal part of a school budget, the Red Cross Director of Community Service believes that school contributions and contracts represent a new level of buy-in and commitment to the program.

The data that we present in the following chapters suggest that the relationship between the Red Cross and the School District of Philadelphia can continue to grow in new directions. In particular, as we show below, Life Skills classes successfully promote the social and emotional development of young adolescents. However, the data also suggest that increased communication and cooperation between Red Cross facilitators and classroom teachers could substantially build the capacity of Partners for Youth.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

[The facilitator] gave us little tabs to write down three things that are most important to us in our lives. She kept narrowing from five to four to three to two to one, so people would know how to make choices. And she was teaching us how one goal can lead to another. If you have one important goal, it can help you to get to other goals (8th grade student, November 1998).

In this section, we explore how participation in Partners for Youth Life Skills classes contributed to changing attitudes among middle school students. All students in the program attended schools that qualified for Title One funds because of the schools' poverty rates. Males and females were represented approximately equally in the study, and the majority of students were African-American.

Data for this chapter were drawn primarily from seven student focus groups, informal interviews, and classroom observations. In addition, the chapter includes data about teachers' and facilitators' perceptions of the program's impact on their students.

Student comments strongly point to the significance of the program's focus *on* the students; they responded positively to a curriculum and approach that allowed a relational cognitive style and provided freedom of movement, variation, creativity, divergent thinking approaches, inductive reasoning, and a focus on people (Belenky et al. 1986; Goleman 1995). During three months of fieldwork, the Research for Action team observed nine Life Skills classes that covered four of the ten basic sessions from the Life Skills curriculum. Topics for these sessions included: "Developing Direction," "Values," "Goal Setting," and "Developing a Service Project." In addition, we observed one class engaged in a service learning project.

As Conrad and Hedin wrote in 1991, school-based service learning provides a rich opportunity for students to engage in experiential learning, in which their own activity within the world becomes the basis for cognitive and conceptual development. According to Conrad and Hedin:

Rooted in the developmental theories of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and others who stress learning as an interaction with the environment, this approach holds that development occurs as individuals strive to come up with more satisfying and complex ways to understand and act on their world (p. 745).

In general, each class period observed by the research team engaged students by combining a variety of activities, including presentations by the facilitator, whole group discussion, and individual or small group activities, sometimes including reading or writing. In each class, the facilitator frequently used interactive techniques to engage students, such as listening to them, providing feedback and explanations, posing open-ended questions, and rephrasing, summarizing and reinforcing students' ideas. In seven

out of nine Life Skills classes observed by the research team, facilitators engaged students in the content and process of the class without spending a substantial amount of time on classroom management issues. Overall, students were attentive and participated actively in the classes observed by RFA.

FINDING ONE: The personal connection between students and facilitators was a crucial aspect of the Partners for Youth program.

Students offered very positive comments about the Partners for Youth Program, and in particular about the three facilitators. Students reported enjoying the interactions with the facilitators, and they also enjoyed it when facilitators encouraged them to learn more about each other. Advocates of service learning and other forms of experiential learning recognize the importance of developing interpersonal dialogue as background for personal change and development (National Society for Experiential Education 1998); the connection between students and these facilitators was a programmatic strength that deserves elaboration.

Students' personal connection with the Red Cross facilitators was echoed across the participating schools. In one focus group of 7th graders, a boy shared that he liked the facilitator's willingness to move back and forth between more formal and informal roles. This student said:

...The way [the facilitator] explains to us and the way he talks to us is familiar. Sometimes he plays with us for a while and then he says we have to get ready for work.... After the lesson, he tells us we can ask questions about him...

In another group of five 8th graders, one focus group member explained that the facilitator's personal style helped to make the class content accessible to them, and the other four nodded in agreement:

My classmates like this class, no one seems like they are going to go to sleep or tries to play around and ignores what she is saying. Most of our classmates are into what [the facilitator] is saying to them.... So as you get to know her, you'll start to feel better in your heart, because she's a very out-going person, and the stuff that she be teaching; some people don't understand so she breaks it down to them.

A few students also noted that they appreciated the "individualized" attention they received from the facilitator. According to one eighth grader, the individual attention helped her see the world in a different way:

She had a meeting with me by myself. The crowd I was hanging around with they were actually laughing at people out on the street. She was letting me know that my friends might end up the same way. You have to have a positive heart towards people that are less fortunate than you are, in due time you grow.

Teachers and facilitators themselves echo the importance of students' relationships with facilitators in making the program work. As one teacher commented, "I think it's a good program basically because it's taught by younger people, and they are more in tune with the youth that we have here. Sometimes it's easier for students to listen to other peers."

Commenting on an interview with the same facilitator, a researcher noted that growing personal relationships between facilitators and students had a spillover effect beyond the formal curriculum. The researcher commented in her fieldnotes, "[The facilitator] is getting close to the students. They come to talk about their families and other issues after classes. Even parents call and ask questions about the Red Cross and its services."

FINDING TWO: The Partners for Youth curricular content combined with the facilitators' personal styles encourages young adolescents to reflect on their own value systems and explore complex social issues.

The Partners for Youth curriculum and the social and emotional connection some of the students formed with the facilitators provided a psychologically safe space to explore troubling problems the students saw in their school and communities.

The following vignette illustrates the types of mutual trust and shared dialogue that created an environment in which students feel comfortable exploring difficult personal and social issues.

Classroom Observation (from a researcher's fieldnotes)

I notice that the students are much more focused than the last time I visited. The tone of the class is calm and serious (not too serious, but the students are attentive). Students are writing down the main question of the day, "What would I do to make things better?" Students are quietly writing their ideas down.

Student: I want to change everything.

Classroom teacher: State it specifically.

It's very quiet.

Facilitator: How many have realized that your community needs a change?

10-12 students raise their hands.

Facilitator: Who wants to respond?

Boy: Stop drug selling, change the lives of poor people. Stop profanity.

Facilitator: OK, How would you change that?

Other students interrupt by saying, "That's not going to happen."

The class described above continued with a focused dialogue between the students and the facilitator about how they could take personal responsibility for change their community. The students listened attentively as the facilitator, who had grown up in a nearby neighborhood, talked about how young people could talk directly with their peers about self-destructive behavior. For example, the facilitator suggested that students be respectful to other people even if they don't like their behavior. He also cautioned them to think carefully about whether people they saw on the streets "doing nothing" are selling drugs or if they just have nothing to do.

Several students noted their appreciation of the curriculum content, suggesting that the content, as delivered by these three facilitators provided opportunities that helped students see themselves and each other in different ways. According to one 7th grade girl:

In Red Cross classes, we do different activities, instead of learning [just] subjects like math, we can learn about each other.... I like it because [the facilitator] talked about values. And what I thought was values was like the kind of clothes you have and [the facilitator] said it's the things that you can't touch like love, friendship, and stuff like that, and that's why I like it.

The facilitators made many similar observations about the value of the curriculum. One facilitator feared that he was not developing rapport because he encountered so many students during the day. Nevertheless, during our first site visit, he reflected on the positive process he saw occurring during his classes, saying "There are always moments in the day when I see someone is thinking and figuring things out. Whether it's about goals or values, there are always great things."

By the end of the first cycle, all of the facilitators talked about some of the end results they saw. According to one facilitator:

They are getting a sense of value. Things that they are going to need in their life, goal setting and goal planning. How to assess their own needs as well as others.... So, they are getting a lot of life skills out of this. How to help someone without having something in return.

According to another:

[I see] their interest in the program, their interest in the Red Cross. Yesterday one of the students recognized the Red Cross on the news and wanted to talk about what he had heard. They are more aware of agencies out there that help people and doing the service learning will allow them to experience the helping themselves.

Similarly, teachers at the participating schools commented that the Life Skills classes were valuable experiences for building students' self-esteem, awareness of others, and enthusiasm for community involvement. One of the classroom teachers noticed a seriousness and focus among her students and attributed it to the Red Cross classes, commenting, "They ask more questions and speak in classes, so their communication skills have improved."

According to one Small Learning Community Coordinator, "Students are now more aware of their responsibility for the community. It has built and increased their self-esteem. They've learned the concept of sharing and volunteerism."

Even in classes where the facilitators faced classroom management challenges, participating teachers believed that students benefited from the active approach to learning. According to one teacher:

Some kids are disinterested in everything, and they were disinterested in this. But some of them who aren't interested in other things did get involved in this, though.... The kids got excited at the project at the end. They spent so much time talking about doing things, and then they finally did it.... The experience has been positive.

Although the data suggest that many students are developing a new sense of their own empowerment through dialogue and experiential learning, other students reveal their perceptions of the intractable nature of some social and economic issues. In one 7th grade classroom, a girl tempered her classmates' enthusiasm for helping others by saying, "It's okay, some people are fine, but certain people are rude.... I tried to help [the younger students] study, but they got tired of studying and then they get mad at you." A 7th grade boy followed the previous quotation by commenting, "We went up to [inaudible] or somewhere and cleaned, painted and stuff, but they messed it up again and I won't go there this year."

However, what seem most promising about the students' experiences with service are reflections suggesting that the Partners in Youth curriculum has the potential to successfully combine discussion and action.

FINDING THREE: Participation in the preparation, action, reflection, and celebration components of service learning stimulated new awareness and self-perceptions among many participating students.

A few students hinted in their reflections that the curriculum content and the ensuing discussions and action with their classmates and the Red Cross facilitators represent the first time they are hearing and also believing that "kids can make a difference, too." One group of 5th grade students wrote about their service learning project at a nursing home:

"We went to show that little kids care about you [the elderly]. We learned that the old people have lots of comments."

"It made me feel good about myself because I finally did something good for a change."

Some expressed sadness: "It made me feel not okay that some people aren't as lucky as me." Several reflected that they were not sure that this experience "changed their values," but, as one 5th grader put it, "Now, I know the world doesn't revolve around me."

Still others wrote about their changed perceptions, "I learned that old people can be as fun as kids."

A few were quite eloquent in their reflections. A 5th grade girl shared, "This made me feel joyful and warm and I know now that I would like to take care of the elderly."

Several faculty members also observed that the service learning projects successfully linked active learning with a chance for students to explore values and social issues. The teacher whose students wrote the reflections above explained:

It was not just like another trip....[The facilitator] taught us how to behave, how to communicate, what to expect.... The kids put cotton in their ears, taped their fingers, so they would know what it felt like not to hear well or be too stiff to move.

A facilitator also described the positive impact of active, engaged learning, in which students had an opportunity to wheel nursing home residents down the hallways, through the elevator, and then back to their rooms:

The kids were all totally focused and everybody wanted a place to go and have somebody to push and help out, and they were careful, going slow.... It was great that the staff trusted the kids enough to do that.... They come away feeling good about themselves that they really contributed and helped.... I like to think that the best piece they come away with is just feeling good about themselves as someone who can make a little difference.

In sum, students, teachers, and facilitators all believe that Partners for Youth provides a learning experience in which young adolescents can connect with concerned adults, develop a new sense of their own abilities, and begin to understand the value of helping others. These data suggest that connectedness with adults leads to the creation of a safe space, which opens up the possibility for young adolescents to discuss challenging and controversial issues, and also to students' willingness to embrace the possibility of their own self-efficacy in changing the conditions of their lives and communities.

CHAPTER THREE: FACILITATORS' PERSPECTIVES

I want the students to learn their values, how to become better members in the community, how to become more active in the family, to be more active in the community, more active in the school. To help building their self-esteem, their pride, and anything I can, 'cause all of these lessons can do that (Facilitator, November 1998).

In this section, we examine facilitators' successes and challenges in implementing the Partners for Youth Program. As the above quote suggests, the three Partners for Youth facilitators hired during the fall of 1998 brought enthusiasm, hope, and dedication to their work with urban middle school students. The facilitators also drew on a range of different skills, experiences, and personal styles to implement the Partners for Youth Life Skills curriculum. Each facilitator brought a different set of strengths to the program. These included the shared identity of being African-American, personal experience growing up in an urban neighborhood, professional experience with urban teens, and previous experience with informal education and team-building.

During the first Partners for Youth cycle, which ended in January, each facilitator successfully forged working relationships with a large number of classroom teachers, modified the Partners for Youth Curriculum to meet the needs of a wide range of students, and developed service learning projects for their classes.

The data in this section are drawn from two formal interviews with each facilitator, one conducted in November during the early weeks of program implementation, and one conducted in January when students in the first cycle of classes were in the process of completing their service learning projects). The section also draws on a focus group with facilitators conducted in early October, journals in which facilitators described early meetings with their classes, informal conversations, and observations of facilitators' interactions with students and teachers during visits to Life Skills classes and other program activities.

FINDING FOUR: Facilitators successfully adapted the Life Skills curriculum to diverse groups of students.

Observations and interviews suggest that in general, students were engaged with the process and content of the Life Skills classes. However, in interviews, the Partners for Youth facilitators mentioned that they need to tailor the PARTNERS FOR YOUTH curriculum to each class's level and interests. Neither the format nor the content of the curriculum necessarily makes sense to all students. Given the wide range of age groups and types of classes (from regular to special education classes), facilitators successfully and enthusiastically developed their own creative approaches.

All three facilitators adapted the curriculum to make it as interactive as possible. According to one, "The main part of the curriculum works well, but none of us does the little lecture sessions.... The more we omit that and gear it toward the students talking about themselves, the better it is." Similarly, another described the creative process of encouraging active student involvement:

I try to get across the lecture part quickly and then let them interview each other, or do activities with each other...I change the curriculum to match their lives I can't say the stuff the way it is in the book.... I find that I have to update it, add things, and combine things.... I'm excited about learning to do some of the activities differently and using my creativity. It has been a great learning experience for me.

Facilitators made not only general adaptations, but consistently adapted the curriculum to the needs of particular classes. One found the curriculum geared below the level of his 8th grade students. Another struggled to make it accessible to two groups of special education students. As a facilitator explained, "You have to be really creative. If your lessons are not going well, you have to change them.... If my lesson is not going well this week in a certain class, all throughout the week and weekend, I think about how to bring the lesson back and get their interest."

Overall, facilitators were committed to the goals and activities of the Life Skills curriculum in general, and the service learning projects in particular. As one facilitator explained, the service learning approach would be useful even if the projects were not successful; "The lessons in the Life Skills curriculum about needs, values, goals, and obstacles will be reflected in developing service learning projects. Even if the project doesn't succeed, [the students] come away with something."

Facilitators were creative and successful in adapting the Life Skills curriculum to diverse groups of students. However, they faced additional challenges in bringing the service projects to fruition. Facilitators were able to implement very successful service learning projects with a number of classes. Other classes were limited in the extent to which they were able to participate in the full process of service learning.

FINDING FIVE: During the first cycle of the 1998-99 school year, the Partners for Youth Program confronted limitations in carrying service learning projects through the four stages of planning, service, reflection, and celebration.

As early as November, one of the facilitators commented that "it seems daunting" to coordinate projects for 14 different groups of students. Program documents and interviews with facilitators indicate that by the end of January, when the first cycle was due to end, many, but not all, participating classes had completed their service projects.

All three facilitators described extensive challenges as well as enthusiasm in relationship to the service learning projects.

Two facilitators reflected on the difficulty middle school students often have in identifying attainable goals. In many instances, the adults rather than the students ended up proposing feasible projects. As one facilitator put it:

[A major challenge was] coming up with the idea with the students about what they would like to do. Many of them had no idea or many of them had ideas but they weren't reachable.... I brought [suggestions that other classes made] and said, "How about going to a shelter or going to see the elderly?" I made suggestions and they pretty much liked the idea.

The facilitators also faced logistical obstacles. Some of these many obstacles included: identifying an appropriate community service site, collecting student permission slips, arranging adequate adult supervision for the students on the trip, organizing adequate coverage for students left behind, and getting permission for students to miss other classes. One of the facilitators explained some of the difficulties that all of the facilitators encountered:

I had very, very big challenges. The agencies, a lot of them, were very hesitant for us to bring 6th graders, and sometimes even 8th graders.... Sometimes the class that I'm teaching, they are not with their homeroom teachers and so it's very difficult for me to take up any of that subject teacher's time. Also, when I'm teaching several classes in a day, trying to go out on a service project and then get back in time to teach my classes is a challenge.

Facilitators were extremely aware of the needs and challenges involved in developing service projects, but the components of reflection and celebration did not appear highly salient in their conversations with researchers about service learning. One facilitator commented that when the service activity was substantial, serious reflection was possible. In other cases, students did not have much to reflect about.

Another facilitator told a researcher, "After the service project, it will be done with that class, and then I will start some other new classes.... That will be the end, except for a wrap up and a review." Given the challenges facilitators faced in achieving the service part of the projects, it is not surprising that many classes had little time or energy to engage in reflection or celebration following their service activities.

In spite of the challenges that the facilitators faced in the first Partners for Youth cycle, the data suggest that facilitators are building networks and a knowledge base that will make the implementation of service projects smoother during the second cycle. One facilitator portrays a growing network among facilitators, teachers, and community agencies:

Classroom teachers were very helpful. They would say, "Don't worry about taking the students. I'll deal with the other teachers...." The other facilitators and I were in the same boat, so we have been sharing lists, and telling each other, "You can do this or you can do that...." Looking overall at the service projects I have done, the agencies have realized that the kids are not that bad and I should be able to come back next time. I think that is happening for all of us, so we'll have a larger network for next time.

FINDING SIX: Facilitators believe that greater involvement by classroom teachers can enhance the Life Skills classes and service learning projects.

During Research for Action's first set of interviews with facilitators, the role of classroom teachers in relationship to classroom management issues was particularly important. Partners For Youth facilitators, like middle school facilitators throughout the district, faced challenges in classroom management, and they needed ongoing support from classroom teachers in learning how to address these issues. The general climate established by the teacher set the stage for Red Cross facilitators.

In classes where students were expected to work, learn, and contribute, the facilitator was able to concentrate on the Life Skills curriculum rather than classroom management. One facilitator commented in early November:

Generally, teachers don't respond to anything. There are some classes where the teachers are very active inside of my class, but there are always some teachers who assume that they can just walk out of the classroom.... Basically, when I am in school some of the teachers expect me to fill in the disciplinarian role, and it takes a lot away from my lessons.

Another facilitator portrayed her strategy for gaining cooperation from the teacher by making discipline issues known, "Once last week, I grabbed the teacher's attention by saying very loudly to the class, 'Look, I have you for only 45 minutes a week.' The teacher then said, 'Is this feeling hard on you?' Then she took the notes from the kids and got order for me."

By the end of the first cycle, facilitators expressed less concern with class management issues. As one said, "I know better how to approach the teacher in the beginning to make sure he or she understands that he or she should be in the classroom to make the program work better the next time around."

The other facilitators also described the need for more involvement by classroom teachers, although they did not explore issues of classroom management when they were interviewed in January. One facilitator explained that he enjoyed working in schools where "I have more active teachers. At this school, one in three is active. The rest are like, 'This is your class. I'll just observe.'"

Another facilitator desired more active communication with the classroom teachers to deepen the service learning in Partners for Youth:

If there was some way we could get the teachers more prepared too, it would also help them conceptualize what we're doing.... It would be a great partnership, saying Red Cross is gonna prepare the kids and do a long, drawn-out preparation process. We'll do the logistics for the [service] project and then you [the classroom teacher] need to tie it into everything else that's going on.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERSPECTIVES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

The outcomes of service learning are two-fold. First, the student gets an intrinsic value from giving service. They give of themselves and understand that charity is not primarily in dollars. The personal investment is even more important. Second, learning is taking place (Middle school principal, January 1999).

Analyses of interviews with teachers and administrators indicates that staff who are familiar with the program unanimously believe that Partners for Youth is a valuable affective, social, and citizenship experience for middle school students.³ Many middle school teachers and administrators observe that the Red Cross service learning program helps their schools meet Philadelphia School District's cross-cutting standards and the District's soon-to-be implemented standards for promotion and graduation.

However, faculty members at participating schools also report limited knowledge about the specific goals and activities of the Life Skills classes. Middle school staff, unlike the Red Cross, usually referred to the Red Cross programs in generic terms. They did not distinguish between the Life Skills classes taught by paid Red Cross facilitators and City Year volunteers and the After-school program run by City Year volunteers. Across the three case-study sites, faculty members report that increased, regular communication with the Red Cross could be an important vehicle for making Partners for Youth a more vital part of participating schools.

Classroom teachers were present in all nine classroom sessions observed by RFA. In all cases, regular teachers or substitutes were in the rooms, often sitting at their desks, correcting papers. In six of the classes observed, teachers were at least briefly involved in the Life Skills discussions and activities that took place in the class. For example, one 5th grade teacher commented about the Life Skills classes, "It's hard not to get involved." In three of the nine classes observed by RFA, teachers' roles were minimal, consisting at most of occasional directives to students to stop talking or to listen to the facilitator.

In the only school where the research team was able to observe an active After-school program, two classroom teachers demonstrated knowledge and support for it. One teacher took the students to a local nursing home to perform their play about Dr. Martin Luther King. Another teacher invited the students to perform the play at the annual Black History Month Assembly of the school.

³ 16 teachers and administrators were interviewed for this study. Of these, one Small Learning Community Coordinator had not had direct contact with the Red Cross facilitators. She was the only middle school staff member interviewed who did not express a positive opinion about partners for Youth.

FINDING SEVEN: Middle school teachers and administrators articulate a wide variety of visions of the relationships between Partners for Youth and the rest of their curriculum.

The staff at participating schools value the affective and social aspects of classes offered by the Red Cross, but they voice a range of opinions about linkages between Life Skills classes and the rest of their curriculum. Some faculty members believe that the Red Cross program matches the District's service learning requirement or they articulate sophisticated perspectives about the potential relationships between service learning and the academic goals of middle schools. On the other hand, many teachers comment on the challenges of integrating service learning with the rest of their curriculum.

Several staff members articulated a vision of deep curricular integration in their schools. For example, one principal observed that service learning acts as the pivot for a Small Learning Community in his school. According to this principal, the idea of "community" is a focal point for study across all subjects in the Small Learning Community.

Service learning is incorporated into the life long-learning skills curriculum. It teaches techniques of being able to read the materials, some of [the activities] use math. It is ongoing and across the curriculum.... This year we have a community that is focusing on service learning as part of the community.... All subjects and the entire curriculum is about community.

Most teachers interviewed also commented that they saw obvious ways to integrate the Life Skills curriculum into their other classes. One teacher provided several examples of this approach:

A couple of weeks ago we started to read a book on AIDS and the information [given in the Life Skills class] and talking with the kids [in the Life Skills class previously] helped a great deal. Also another book I did was on identity, and they talked about goals and different things that kids should have.... So everything the Red Cross facilitator has taught has basically tied in.... What [the facilitator] talks about is implemented in all of the subjects.

As several faculty members noted, the Red Cross is an important source of support to district mandates because service learning will be a requirement for all students in the year 2000. As one administrator pointed out, students must perform one service-oriented project in order to be promoted from 8th grade and another one in order to graduate from high school.

In addition to helping students to meet promotion and graduation requirements, using service learning projects can help teachers implement Philadelphia's Curriculum Frameworks. One teacher explains, "There's something in our curriculum that we call the cross cutting competencies, and service learning is a large part of that. So anything that

the American Red Cross wants to do, as far as service learning is concerned, would definitely touch the curriculum."

However, teachers and administrators also pointed out that building more extensively on the Partners for Youth Program might be impossible because of other curricular mandates. In particular, several teachers mentioned conflicts between their regular curriculum and expanding or deepening the themes of the Life Skills classes. One teacher valued Partners for Youth because "the Life Skills curriculum touches on a lot of issues that kids deal with" that regular teachers don't have time to address in their classes. This teacher saw the value of community service, but she did not expect it to be reflected in students' academic achievement:

I think [the community service project should] have a positive impact, but it's not gonna show up in their grades, but it's a positive thing to do. It's serving a need that I'm sure teachers understand, but just don't have time to cover in the classroom.

Even a teacher who is in a Small Learning Community with the theme of UJIMAA (or community service, in Swahili) sees a conflict between mandates for community service and mandates for improved academic achievement. She commented that her Small Learning Community coordinator "wants us to be out in the community more than one day a week, but we have to prepare kids for the tests." This teacher added that she sees how to develop lesson plans to link service learning to reading or writing, but "it's harder to see the relationship for math or science."

Like Red Cross facilitators, staff members described logistical challenges to deepening their work with service learning. For example, one teacher mentioned the challenge of organizing service learning trips that can involve a whole class. A principal in the same school talked about the difficulty of incorporating service learning into his school, which had 30% first- and second-year teachers who are still mastering the basics of classroom management. In addition, like Red Cross facilitators, teachers and principals pointed out inadequate communication between the Red Cross and school personnel as a barrier to deepening their involvement with service learning.

FINDING EIGHT: Many participating teachers and administrators report a desire for more communication with the Red Cross staff and facilitators through clearer channels.

At two case-study schools, administrators reported having minimal contact with the Red Cross. At one school, the principal didn't know anything about the Red Cross's Life Skills Curriculum or focus on service learning. At the same school, the coordinator of the Small Learning Community that housed Partners for Youth was equally oblivious, complaining, "I knew that [the Red Cross] was in the building, but I never saw them do anything."

In another school, the administrator also noted the lack of communication between the Red Cross and the school. The principal reported that he didn't know when the Red Cross was going to show up at the beginning of the year, and the Red Cross contact person noted that the facilitator had not been able to meet with participating teachers before the program began in the fall of 1998.

At the third case-study school, the administrators and Small Learning Community coordinator reported good communication with the Red Cross staff. However, across all the schools, participating classroom teachers desired more communication with the Red Cross staff. One teacher suggested:

Maybe [the Red Cross could] come in a little more. Maybe perhaps in the future we could sit down with them during the summer and go over exactly what the curriculum is and maybe we can tie in a little better. Or even in the end of the year or sometimes after school, we can set up a time when we can go over the curriculum with them.

Another teacher, a member of a service-focused learning community, commented that there was not much connection between the Life Skills classes and her other classes.

But there could be I don't even know what the curriculum is.... I haven't been shown these are all the points we wanna go over. When [the facilitator] comes in, even though [the person] gives students a folder, I didn't really see the write up, or things like "these are the aims of the program and what we are trying to convey."

Teachers and administrators suggested the following modes of communication, some of which the Red Cross has already used,

- introducing the program at the beginning of the year so that interested teachers have a chance to self-select;
- helping teachers become aware of the overlaps between the Life Skills curriculum and the Philadelphia Curriculum Frameworks;
- taking advantage of "looping" [a system in which a class of students stays with one teacher from 5th through 8th grade] to work with one teacher and his or her students over a number of years;
- providing paid professional development so classroom teachers will know more about implementing the Life Skills curriculum themselves;
- providing teachers with specific ideas for lesson plans that would link service learning and other curricular areas; and

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To summarize, the data analyzed in this report indicate that Partners for Youth provides young adolescents with support and encouragement to forge positive directions for themselves. Interviews and observational data indicate that the Life Skills curriculum and facilitators' strong connections with students create safe spaces to explore challenging social issues that young adolescents confront on a daily basis. In addition, students, teachers, and facilitators consistently report that Partners for Youth and the Red Cross facilitators are helping young adolescents to develop positive perceptions of themselves as valuable, contributing members of their communities.

Facilitators successfully adapted the Life Skills curriculum to diverse groups of students and helped their students to implement many successful service learning projects. However, Red Cross facilitators often faced logistical obstacles in developing meaningful service projects that are closely linked to student learning. Facilitators also reported that communication, cooperation, and collaboration with classroom teachers maximized the effectiveness of their Life Skills classes.

Staff at the participating schools currently have little familiarity with the details of Red Cross's Life Skills curriculum. However, teachers and administrators are favorably disposed towards Partners for Youth, want to learn more about the Life Skills curriculum, and may be eager to build upon Red Cross programming as a resource for meeting the new Philadelphia requirement for service learning.

Recommendations

The Red Cross has valuable experience and resources available to help the School District of Philadelphia to meet its stated commitment to service learning. The current direction of Partners for Youth, with paid staff and required commitments from participating schools, suggests that the Red Cross is committed to deepening and strengthening its relationship with Philadelphia public schools.

To continue moving in this direction, the Red Cross needs to go on providing organizational support to its own staff in the challenging work they are successfully doing. In addition, the Red Cross needs to consider how its approach to service learning is both similar to and different from that of the School District. Both organizations share a commitment to authentic student involvement in addressing real community needs. However, unlike the Red Cross, the School District has a strong emphasis on academic rigor, curricular integration, and assessment of student learning as it relates to service. As the Red Cross increases its commitment to working with students in the Philadelphia schools, it will also face decisions about how to address these similarities and differences.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: Document modifications to the Life Skills curriculum as they occur. A description of successful modifications will serve as a guide and inspiration to current and future facilitators.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: Maintain a consistent group of Partners for Youth facilitators. Staff continuity will minimize logistical challenges that were encountered by the Life Skill facilitators in implementing service learning projects during the period of this study.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: Increase and formalize channels of communication with classroom teachers and school administrators. This might include regularly scheduled attendance at faculty meetings, periodic attendance at Small Learning Community meetings, or the use of school resources to organize after-school professional development sessions.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: Identify and utilize resources and structures within the School District that are in place to support service learning. School-to-Career Coordinators can provide classroom teachers with guidance about integrating Partners for Youth service learning projects into their academic curricula. Small Learning Community Coordinators can arrange planning time for teachers to discuss the role of service learning in their classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: Develop joint funding proposals at the district, cluster, or school level. Such proposals can position the Life Skills curriculum as a valuable and proven resource to the Philadelphia School District. With further funding and support, the curriculum can be adapted to serve as a basis for meeting the district's Citizenship requirements at the middle school level.

In conclusion, Research for Action is pleased to report that the current study indicates that Partners for Youth, and specifically its Life Skills component, successfully promotes the social and emotional development of young adolescents. This study also indicates that the relationship between the Red Cross and the School District of Philadelphia can continue to grow in new and fruitful directions that can increase the Red Cross's capacity to support the development of young people through community involvement.

APPENDIX A

Methods of Data Collection in Partners for Youth Evaluation

Methods of Data Collection in Partners for Youth Evaluation

- **Two rounds of site visits to three Partners for Youth schools conducted between November 1998 and January 1999.** Three sample schools were chosen out of the 14 Philadelphia Partners for Youth schools to represent different histories with the Red Cross and a range of locations within the Red Cross's Philadelphia service area. The first round of site visits consisted of interviews with teachers, administrators, and Red Cross facilitators; observations of Life Skills classes; focus groups with students; and observations of after-school activities where possible. The second round of site visits consisted of follow-up interviews and focus groups with teachers, facilitators and students, as well as observations of service learning projects where possible.
- **Observation of Red Cross program activities and discussions with Red Cross staff and facilitators.** The research team observed two meetings of Red Cross facilitators and conducted a focus group with facilitators. The research team also participated in planning and feedback discussions with Red Cross staff.
- **Document analysis.** In order to attain a broader overview of program vision and implementation, the research team collected and analyzed three sets of documents: Partners for Youth curriculum materials, facilitators' journals describing entrée into the sample schools and Red Cross reports of program activities for all schools during the time period covered by the research.

APPENDIX B

Partners for Youth School-based Research Activities

Partners for Youth School-based Research Activities

Number of Research Activities by School

	Classroom Observations	City Year Activities Observations	Administrator Interviews	Teacher Interviews	Student Focus Group	Student Interviews
School 1	4 (6 th & 7 th grade)	1 (Holiday Party)	1 (Principal & Assistant Principal, Joint Interview)	2 (SLC Coordinator, Interviewed Twice) 2 (2 Teachers)	3 (6 th & 7 th grade, 7 th grade -repeat)	None
School 2	2 (6 th & 8 th grades)	None <i>No City Year Program</i>	1 (Principal)	1 (SLC Coordinator) 1 (3 Teachers, Joint Interview)	3 (7 th & 8 th grade, 8 th grade -repeat)	1 (Two 6 th graders)
School 3	4 (5 th & 7 th grade)	1 (Rescue Breathing Activities)	1 (Principal)	1 (SLC Coordinator) 4 (4 Teachers)	1 (7 th grade)	Informal interview with eight 5 th graders

Total Number of Research classes and informants

Number of classes visited: 10

Number of administrators interviewed: 4

Number of teachers interviewed: 12

Number of students interviewed (including focus group interviews): 36

APPENDIX C

Sampling Techniques for Observations and Focus Groups

Sampling Techniques for Observations and Focus Groups

According to the original design for classroom observations and focus groups, researchers were to observe and interview students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes in each case-study school. Teachers were instructed to select 6 focus group participants from each class that was observed. Teachers were asked to pick equal numbers of students whom they believed to be likely to succeed in school, students whom teachers were worried about, and students who were somewhere in the middle. For logistical reasons (i.e. the range of grades participating in Partners for Youth in each school, regrouping of classes due to teacher absences, and changes in class schedules), it was impossible to observe and interview 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in each school. For similar reasons (e.g. changes in class schedules, substitutes who did not know their students), the research team was not always able to select students for focus groups as we had originally planned.

Although the actual selection process for focus groups was controlled by teachers, our analysis of the conversations that took place in the focus groups suggests that focus group participants did indeed represent a range of middle school students. In every focus group, students spoke from a range of perspectives about issues such as academic success, compliance with institutional expectations, risk-taking behaviors, academic challenges, and conflicts with peers or authority figures.

APPENDIX D

Protocols

Protocols: Round I of Site Visits

1. Principal Interview
2. Classroom Observations
3. Student Focus Group Questions
4. Facilitator Interview

Principal Interview

Could you tell me a little bit about the Red Cross Program in your school?

How does this support your school's curriculum? (possibly probe, what do you see as the purpose of Service Learning?)

How has it been working out so far? Where do you envision it going this year? In the future?

If time permits, ask the principal more about the school: Can you tell me about the _____ school? What are the students like? What are the teachers like? Are there any other special programs taking place here?

Classroom Observations

I. Overall classroom context:

Describe the grade level, the teachers, the students. What does the classroom look like?

II. Overall pedagogical context:

What is the objective of the lesson? Please provide a general picture of how the period is organized: re full group lesson/pair/individual? How does this vary throughout the period?

III. Student/teacher roles and involvement

What are the roles of facilitators and students in this class? What is the role of the regular classroom teacher?

Are their roles flexible? Rigid? Who is teaching? Who is learning?

How are students interacting with the content of the lesson? Are there different viewpoints? How can you tell?

Who speaks? When? (Do facilitators call on students? Do they wait until the facilitator calls on them?) Who doesn't speak?

Who asks questions? What kinds of questions?

Do students give feedback to each other? Do they support each other's ideas? How do students show support for each other?

What language do students use when they describe themselves, their peers, adults, teachers, school, and the community (e.g. active/passive tense, We/they/I)? Do they use inclusive or exclusive language?

Student Focus Group Questions

How is the class going? (probes and expansions: What are you learning? Do your classmates seem to like this class? Why or why not? How is different from other classes?, could probe here about specific things or topics that you saw happening in the class)

Can you tell me what it is like to be in (6th, 7th, 8th) in this school?

Does it seem like what you are learning in this class is going to help you? (Now? In the future?)

(One of the purposes of this class is to work on service learning projects). What do you think that service learning means?

What kinds of things do you do now to help people that you know? (How do you help people in your family? How do you help friends?, anyone else?)? How do you feel about this?

If you were asked to identify 2 or 3 things to work on to help your school or community what would they be? How do you think it would make you feel if you could change these things?

Do you think these classes might help you follow through with any of these ideas? (Why? Or if they say no, Ask if there is anything that would help change the school or the community?)

Facilitator Interview

Can you tell me a little bit about the classes that we saw today? Did they go the way that you expected them to? Would you do anything differently if you could do it over?

Overall, what would you say is going well? What are you most excited about? (could probe work with students, relationships with teachers, service learning projects)

What are some of the challenges?

What do you hope the students will get out of the program?

How is the Life Skills Curriculum working for you? What do you do when topics come up that are not part of the curriculum or are out of order in the curriculum?

How are the classes at _____ like the classes at the other schools? How are they different? What about the overall approach of the school or the SLC to the Red Cross?

Where do you go for support for this work? (probe Red Cross staff, other facilitators, teachers at school, friends, etc., how do these help?)

Is there anything that you would change about the program?

Protocols: Round II of Site Visits

1. Classroom and Service Learning observations
2. Student Focus Group Questions
3. Teacher Focus Group Questions
4. Facilitator Interview

Classroom and Service Learning Observations

I. Overall context of classroom or service learning site:

Who are the students, the teacher(s), the other adults? For a service learning site, describe the site.

II. Overall pedagogical context:

What is the objective of the lesson or activity? Please provide a general picture of the tasks and activities students are expected to engage in. Are these whole group, small group, individual, etc.? How does this vary through the observation?

III. Student involvement with service learning:

How are students talking about the service learning project? Whose language is used. (kids' words, teachers' words, etc.)?

If students make negative or pessimistic comments, how do other students and adults respond?

What is the group process around deciding or enacting the project? Who's taking ownership of the project?

Do students team up? How?

Is there evidence that students find engaging in the project socially acceptable? Cool? Corny?

Do students know why they are doing the project? Is the purpose mentioned in discussion?

Do students show evidence of "empowerment" through participating in this project? e.g., do they talk about themselves as "models" for others?

Student Focus Group Questions

How is the class going?

What's going to be the subject of your service learning project?

How did your class come up with the project?

When you talked about (the project topic), what kind of things did the students say? Is this important for you and your life? Are there are other things that are more important?

What school work will you use to carry on this project? Do you see any other ways that school skills are useful for the community?

If you would report back to the Red Cross about how to make this class better, what would you say? What would you say to the principal of your school about these classes?

Thinking back to the classes that you had since September, how is (facilitator) same or different from your regular teachers?

Teacher Focus Group Questions

Could you tell me your view of service learning?

Do you see a link between the middle school philosophy and the service learning?

(for Service Learning SLCs) Your SLC is ---. How did you come up with this theme?

How visible is Red Cross in this school? What are some of the perceptions of it?

What needs does RC program currently meet?

What do you think could be the learning outcomes of service learning? (Emotional, social, intellectual?)

What kind of collaboration do you have with the Red Cross now? How much time did you spend with the Red Cross facilitator? What was the nature of the communication (seeking advice about students, about logistics, about the curriculum, etc.?)

Would it be worth while for RC facilitators to come into your SLC meeting?

Facilitator Interview

Can you tell me about the process leading up to the class we saw today? (Was it student centered?, Were there challenges in planning for service learning?)

Where did you go for support for planning the service learning project? (teachers? Outside resources?) Do you think you made any connections for yourself or the school that will last past this project?

What would you say is going well overall? What are the most exciting things that happened in this class? What can other people learn from things that have worked for you?

What other steps will you be taking to finish up the class? (Is there going to be any kind of written or verbal reflection process? Any activities to give students recognition from peers or community? Any other form of closure?)

Can you tell me more about the impact of service learning on the students?
(What do you think students are getting out of this? What evidence do you see in students' behavior? What academic skills did students use as they planned and performed the project?)

Overall, how does this class compare with other classes in this school? What about with classes in schools?

Can you describe what has happened with the City Year Team and the After School Program?

APPENDIX E

Works Cited

Works Cited

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