Assessing Service Learning Using Pragmatic Principles of Education:
A Texas Charter School Case Study

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Abstract

In light of escalating school violence, school reform must consider numerous factors affecting education that address the fragmentation of child development. Charter schools are increasingly gaining public and private sector support because they provide the flexibility of a private school but receive public financial support. This flexibility allows charter schools to explore innovative models of education that address student developmental needs.

The purpose of this case study is to observe the service learning model of education practiced by the American Institute for Learning, a Texas charter school. Pragmatic principles of education, espoused by John Dewey, are used to assess the practice of service learning. In addition, current research proposed by the Search Institute is used to assess the level of healthy developmental assets present in the school's student population. Four components of pragmatism (e.g., collaborative learning, collaborative teaching, community education, and practical education) are identified from the literature and used as the basis of the first working hypothesis. The second working hypothesis observes student support and motivation which are assessed using eight developmental categories identified by the Search Institute (e.g., social support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity).

Classroom observation and surveys administered to students, teachers, counselors, and curriculum developers, provide evidence for assessing the school's service learning model and the developmental status of some of its students. The extent that pragmatic and developmental characteristics are present are assessed on four levels: excellent, good, fair, and poor. This rating system provides the basis for analyzing the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The escalating violence taking place in some of the nation's public schools leaves little doubt that the issue of disaffected youth is one of the most urgent challenge facing our nation in the twenty-first century. The most recent school shooting in Littleton, Colorado indicates the stark reality that many youth feel alienated and distrustful of our social institutions (Stepp 1999, p. E1). This tragedy adds an even more critical dimension to school reform, one which calls for the participation of all members of society in restoring the sense of community that has eroded throughout the twentieth century.[1]

The factors contributing to the problems of education are numerous, and their solutions require a comprehensive analysis of society (Dewey 1916, p. 81). Although schools are often blamed for the ills of society, Sandra Waddock (1995) argues that the problems affecting schools are "directly and indirectly attributable to failures in society related to deteriorating family structures, changing economic conditions, failing community infrastructures, poverty, classism, and racism" (p. 156). Because schools play such a vital role in a democracy, the problems of education are increasingly being explored by students of Public Administration.[2] Some of these studies have explored attitudes

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[1] Concerned about the disintegrating social fabric contributing to tragic school shootings, Michael Lauderdale (1999) writes, "learning to live with and respect others is a continuous lesson taught by the immediate social fabric"(p. E3). Waddock (1995) points out that, "schools exert little control over the community infrastructure that supports families or the status of families themselves which has deteriorated rather dramatically over the past 30 years" (p. 158). Similarly, in his book *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) writes that " schools are, indeed, one important method of the transmission which forms the dispositions of the immature; but it is only one means, and compared with other agencies, a relatively superficial means" (p. 4).

[2] This Applied Research Paper (APR) joins other recent Applied Research Projects from Southwest Texas State University in their analysis of school issues. These include: Deborah Durham, "School-Based Health Centers: The

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on school choice, and school-based health centers (Mendez 1995; Durham 1995). Others have explored employer perceptions of school-to-work programs and efforts by schools to reach out to communities (Mejia 1996; Sheridan 1996). All of these studies recognize that education is struggling to find a balance between its organizational structure and its social environment, and that young people today need greater support on their path to adulthood.

John Dewey (1916), an early pioneer in the area of experience-based education, realized that education needed to help children integrate into the larger society by offering them the opportunity to interact with the community. His pragmatic theory of education focused on emulating community experiences and involving students in activities that had practical application in the real world. Both Jane Addams and Dewey believed that education was at the heart of a democracy, and that it was important to have an educated population that understood the responsibility and implications of voting and participating in a democracy. Prominent during the Industrial Revolution, pragmatism was a key element in the Progressive movement that sought to reconcile the drastic social changes taking place at that time. Rapid industrial developments provoked rural migration to urban areas, creating new demands in both the private and public sector and placing greater stress on individuals, their families, and communities. Schools, according to Dewey, could help reconcile the many changes taking place by incorporating the community into the educational experience and emphasizing the concept of shared learning.

Applying Dewey's vision of a pragmatic school to the current structure of education is far

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Attitudes and Perceptions of Austin Independent School District Principals and Area Superintendents," (Spring, 1995); Sulema Mejia, "School-to-work Transitions for Youth: A Survey of Austin Employers' Attitude and Perception," (Fall, 1996); Omar Mendez, " School Choice: A Survey of Perceptions and Attitudes of Texas School Principals," (Spring, 1995); and Laura Sheridan, "The Alliance Schools Project: A Case Study of Community-Based School Reform in Austin, Texas," (Spring, 1996);

from easy, however, since most schools remain isolated from their communities and struggle with issues of overcrowding, drugs, and inequitable distribution of resources (Bean 1998). Implementing pragmatic principles of education requires greater community involvement and new insights into what students *really* need. The current crisis in education calls for increased collaboration between the public and private sector to ensure adequate resources and opportunities for schools in their effort to educate future generations.

School Reform and Public Administration

The task of school reform is to recognize that social order and values have changed in the process of shifting from an agricultural society, to an industrial society, to our current age of information (Fukuyama 1999, p. 55-80). These changes have brought about certain advantages that offer greater choice, comfort, and technological advancement, but have also caused disruption in our social kinship. The effects of modernization on social relations was a key concern in the Progressive Movement that took place at the turn of the twentieth century. The theory of Pragmatic education evolved during this time as a means of ameliorating the process of modernization. Pragmatism, with its emphasis on experiential education, was seen as vehicle of social change - one which would increase democratic activity.

According to Patricia Shields (1998) pragmatism is a "living philosophy" that provides a link between theory and practice. Shields concurs with Dewey and Pierce that pragmatism is a philosophy that has the potential for integrating politics, philosophy, and science. In addition, she maintains, pragmatism has utility in teaching, research, and policy implementation. Through the process of 'community inquiry' both knowledge and practice is examined, cultivated, and validated.

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Collaborative inquiry, a combined effort by individual inquires, allows theories and policies to be tested and scrutinized in relation to the real-world. For both Jane Addams and John Dewey, this process was synonymous with democratic participation and the basis for their pragmatic philosophy of education (as cited in Shields 1998, p. 203).

As Shields (1998) points out, *"Public Administration deals with the stewardship and implementation of the products of a living democracy,"* and education plays an integral role in the function of a democracy (p. 203). Public administrators can mediate and facilitate the process of school reform by combining an understanding of community development with political experience in promoting civic awareness (p. 203).[3] Waddock asserts that increasing collaboration between schools and outside agencies "is critical to developing the changed perspective that is necessary for schools to become catalysts for change" (p. 159). She points out that while schools can control what they teach, they have little control over socio-economic factors which affect student learning. Many people believe that the most effective means of reaching disaffected youth is to implement educational practices that encourage community service (Ferguson ca., 1993; Kinsley 1997; Smith 1998).

Advocates of community service education, also referred to as service learning, hope to create a sense of civic responsibility and greater democratic participation among younger populations. Service learning allows individuals to participate in projects that benefit the community while providing a forum for reflection and reciprocity (Brandell and Hinck 1997). Research on service learning has been sparse and inconclusive and some critics contend that service learning does

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[3] It should be noted that both National Association of School of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) promote community service activities in high schools.

not meet some educational goals, such as improving academic performance (Alt, 1997). On the other hand, advocates emphasize the value it holds for improving student social skills and self-esteem (Ciaccio 1999). Joseph Ciacco (1999) argues that the advantage of service learning is that it is "interdisciplinary - a whole experience that is greater than the sum of its parts - in sharp contrast to the fragmented, isolated, single-subject orientation of the learning process in most secondary schools" (p. 64).

Research Purpose

In an effort to create a more supportive environment charter schools, a growing trend in school reform, are exploring new educational models like service learning that allow students the opportunity to reconnect with their community and society in general. *The American Institute for Learning (AIL), a Texas charter school, has endorsed service learning as an educational model and will serve as the focus for this single case study.* This research explores the similarities between service learning and pragmatism and examines the attitudes of students participating in this school's service learning education. *The purpose of this research is twofold: First, it assesses the American Institute for Learning's (AIL) practice of service learning using pragmatic principles of education; Secondly, it describes AIL's student perceptions of support and motivation using the Search Institute survey on developmental assets.* These two objectives will offer insight into the effects of service learning, its similarities to pragmatic education, and determine whether service learning has the potential for helping at-risk youth feel more connected to their society. The pragmatic principles serve as a guide for assessing the school's curriculum, while the developmental assets provide a framework for assessing student perceptions.

Organization of Research Project

This research explores the potential that service learning has for reaching disaffected youth. It does so by comparing service learning to pragmatic principles of education and examining student perceptions about themselves. Data is gathered using two working hypothesis to assess how closely service learning resembles pragmatic education and describe a profile of students' developmental assets. The second chapter, following the introduction, explores the role of education in a democracy by providing an overview of school reform, pragmatism, psychological development, and service learning. The contents of this chapter merge to form the two primary working hypothesis that serve as the basis of investigation. The third chapter explains the development of charter schools in greater detail and describes the setting for this particular research project. The fourth chapter outlines the methodology used in the research and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the case study. The fifth chapter discusses the results of the surveys and classroom observations used to assess the practice of service learning and describe the student population at AIL. The sixth chapter provides general observations and conclusion of this research.

(p. 7). His in-depth interest in Kant, led him to study philosophy at Harvard.

Seeking to tap into the gap between science and philosophy, Pierce's theory of inquiry discounts Descartes' belief "in a single thread of inference" and that the "ultimate test of certainty is to be found in the individual conscience" (Piece 1968 as cited in Murphy 1990, p. 11-12). Instead, Pierce argued that man had neither introspection or intuitive abilities to understand the "truth" and that "knowledge, truth, and reality" could only be understood through community inquiry. Pierce held that experimentalism, based on community of inquiry, offered the opportunity for testing natural phenomenon.

Since Pierce, many people, including William James, John Dewey, Jane Addams, and Donald Davidson, have expanded the theory of pragmatism to address cognitive psychology, education, and linguistics. More than a century old, the theory of pragmatism is still considered by some contemporary scholars to be of value as an organizing principle for understanding policy implementation and serve as a link between the theoretical world of academia and the practical world of the practician (Shields 1996, p. 393). Shields (1998) has incorporated the theory of pragmatism in education by using a "notebook method" for teaching research methods in higher education (p. 204). This method utilizes the practice of *"Read-Write-Think-Connect to Experience"* as an organizing principle for conducting graduate-level research (p.205). The active note-taking process helps students connect theory and practice. Educators are re-examining the utility of pragmatism and emphasizing a more functional approach to education.[6] James Beane (1998) advocates the return of pragmatism in designing schools and curriculum that increase the emphasis

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[6] Romeo Eldridge Phillips, "John Dewey Visits the Ghetto," *Journal of Negro Education* 47, no.4 (1978); Edward F. Potthoff, "Functionalism in General Education," *Journal of Higher Education* 14, no. 3 (March 1943): 148 - 152. Both authors advocate a return to practical, as opposed to, subject driven education.

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on experience in order to foster more democratic values.

John Dewey (1916) felt strongly that schools were an ideal forum for practicing and creating a more Democratic society. The two primary criteria for creating a democracy, according to Dewey, are a greater awareness of mutual interest and greater interaction between social groups with the intention of communicating communal respect and consideration (p. 86-97). Dewey saw that ultimately a democracy depends on the public's commitment to vote, and this commitment is dependent on education and a sense of community awareness . It made sense to Dewey that if a democratic society desired an educated vote, it would have to establish schools that inspired shared learning (e.g., *collaborative learning*). Addressing this point, Dewey writes:

> The devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact. The superficial explanation is that a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated. Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest: these can be created only by education. But there is a deeper explanation. A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of *associated living*, of conjoint communicated experience (italics added, p. 87).

John Dewey, contemplated the role of the individual in society and the purpose of education, at length in his effort to establish a school that both nurtured the integrity of the individual and preserved a sense of community amidst the rapid changes of the Industrial Revolution (Tanner 1997). Dewey's ideal school incorporated social learning, in an integrated, interactive format. As society moved from an agrarian system to an industrial system, Dewey anticipated that the economic changes would negatively impact family dynamics and disrupt communities. A competitive market left parents with less time to spend with their children, steadily eroding the cooperative spirit prevalent in agrarian communities. Anticipating the potential for alienation and stratification, Dewey

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argued that a pragmatic education, based on organized, cooperative inquiry, could bridge the gap between the individual and society (e.g., *community education*).

Dewey believed that schools should be designed to reflect a community structure, where students learned about their roles in the community and received individualized instruction in a small group setting (Tanner 1997, p. 166). In this setting, students would focus on the similarities people share, the value of developing a community service-oriented sense of responsibility, and develop problem-solving skills in an active learning environment. The key to implementing such a school structure, according to Dewey, depends on a curriculum that considers the child's physical and psychological development, is adaptive to accommodate students' evolving needs, and fosters self-motivated learning. This occurs in a small-group setting that allow individual attention for each student by the teacher. In his opinion, the role of the teacher is just as important as that of the parents in guiding the child into adulthood. Teachers would be experts in their field able to integrate social reality into the curriculum and work collaboratively with other educators to develop a cumulative, evolving curriculum (e.g., *teacher expertise*).

In his time, Dewey (1958) saw the educational system as a "patchwork whose pieces do not form a pattern" (p.88). As an educator, Dewey observed that the education system was disjointed, and segmented in its curriculum, social value, and administration. Dewey noticed that new and old ideas of teaching existed simultaneously without relevance to their impact of social significance (e.g., *testing out new teaching methods and social significance of subject matter*). Dewey realized that the Industrial Revolution set off a series of problems for education. It dramatically increased student to teacher ratios (e.g., *class size*), it provided a mechanistic curriculum that deprived students of social understanding, and stifle students' intellectual and personal growth.

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Dewey did not blame teachers - he viewed the educational structure as the problem - but he did feel badly for the students who completed their education and came out feeling disoriented, confused, and insecure about their capabilities and their future (e.g., *practical education*). Dewey believed teachers were fully capable of instilling democratic values. One way to accomplish this was to have students participate in school responsibilities. "Absence of participation," says Dewey, "tends to produce lack of interests and concern on the part of those shut out," in addition, "habitual exclusion has the effect of reducing a sense of responsibility for what is done and its consequences" (p. 64-65).

Dewey saw teachers as the direct link in guiding the process of student self-actualization and felt strongly that they should function as an integrative way in creating curriculum and forming school policies (e.g., *collaborative teaching*). Unfortunately, the educational system often takes teachers' power away causing passivity and a lack of responsibility. It was important in Dewey's opinion that teachers have a clear understanding of the world they live in, be aware of the issues in society, and be able to sort out the influences of the past. Self-reflection on the part of the teacher is essential to helping students develop self-reflective skills - a key element of pragmatic education.

The theory of pragmatic education continued to evolve in the 1960s and 1970s in the Critical Humanism Movement, but with an added emphasis on incorporating students in the process of developing the school and its curriculum (Nemiroff 1992, p. 28-3). In her book, *Reconstructing Education: Toward A Pedagogy of Critical Humanism*, Greta Hofmann Nemiroff explains how the theoretical and philosophical beliefs of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Karl Marx, coincide with Dewey's principles of education to form the theoretical foundation for the movement. The goal of

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in order to improve societal values.

Carl Rogers joined Maslow and Dewey in their concern over the lack of coherent values expressed throughout the culture (Nemiroff 1992, p. 36-38). Rogers felt that traditional education valued only the intellect and did not allow for the emotional development of students. He noted that dysfunctional people lived in a continual state of fear of themselves and of the world around them and that in order to transcend their limitations and make more authentic choices, they needed to become aware of the formative factors in their personal backgrounds contributing to their limitations. Like Dewey, Rogers saw the relationship between the teacher and the student to be an essential component in helping people become self-actualized.

In Beane's (1998) opinion , the noble efforts made by Dewey and the Progressive Movement to create a more experiential and self-actualizing curriculum was undermined by their association to the efficiency movement and "the persistent alliances between high-culture and economic self-interests and by the right-wing evil of the McCarthy era" (p. 8). The student-centered ideal expressed in the Progressive and Critical Humanism movements was interpreted by some people as too individualistic and not conducive to competition. For many, the Critical Humanism was too romantic and idealistic and did not succeed in teaching students anything of value, especially not the traditional basics preferred by conservatives (Nemiroff 1992, p. 49). Experience was often emphasized over content. Nor, according to its critics, did it succeed in minimizing the inequity between the rich and the poor.[8] Some educators today yearn for the kind of school setting Dewey described, but they realize they must contend with social and political forces that resist and constrain the development

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[8] According to Nemiroff, Jonathan Kozol saw the Free Schools associated with the Critical Humanism Movement as essentially narcissistic, anti-political, having the potential for social disruption if applied to public schools (p. 49-51).

of progressive education (Beane 1998, p. 11).

Overview of School Reform

Although there is little consensus about how to change the school system, there is a general consensus that schools are in a state of crisis (Magnus son 1996, p. 74b). Given the discouraging test scores of American students compared to other industrial countries, the primary emphasis in current reform is on academic standards and accountability (Magnusson 1996).

In designing a new school structure, Waddock (1995) says, "schools need to make two types of important changes; first restructuring the content, approaches, and structure internal to the school and second, restructuring the external relationships to stakeholders so that a new community infrastructure develops to replace the deteriorated infrastructure" (p. 160). According to Labaree (1998), the current trend in education toward social mobility indicates a growing emphasis on personal attainment, social stratification and competition (p. 51). Supporters of this trend advocate goals oriented toward school-choice, vouchers, charter schools, and new administrative styles that stress school-based management, or contemporary business theory. Those who favor a private, entrepreneurial approach want to incorporate contemporary theories of management in order to measure and produce academic results (Magnusson 1996, p. 74b).

One of the problems with schools based on free-market accountability is that their records and functions are not necessarily open to public scrutiny (Molnar 1996, p.10). There is also the possibility that some of these proposals would be more advantageous to private schools than for public schools.[9]

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[9] Omar Mendez(1995) reports that principals in private schools favor choice proposals more that public school principals (85).

Yet the effectiveness of these new concepts is still unknown. Daniel Duke (1999) claims that many of the new concepts practiced around the country are giving low-income students a better chance for education than traditional high school programs could promise them at this time (p.50). Supporting Dewey's perspective, Duke reports that successful programs practice a reflective process in which goals and plans are identified (p. 51).

Nevertheless, as John O'Neil (1996) points out, many people "are concerned that the trends toward more options and greater choice represent a shift with dangerous philosophical overtones" (p. 8). The concept of choosing schooling outside public education received legislative support in 1925, when a group of nuns challenged Oregon law claiming that all children needed to attend public school (Smith 1998, p. 56). In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the nuns noting that parents had the right to choose the kind of education they wanted for their children so long as they kept in mind that they had a "high duty" to "prepare (them) for additional obligations" (p. 56). Yet Sally Bomotti (1999) reports that the practice of school choice can lead to increased school stratification and draw money away from public schools in need of money (21). Currently, the educational system is mixed and largely public, but interest in private education is increasing and so is the desire for public financial support in the issue of school choice.

Vouchers represent one school-choice strategy that supports the notion of competition and personal attainment. The concept originated with Milton Friedman, in the 1950s, as a market-driven approach to school reform that would introduce competition among schools by providing parents with vouchers to pay the tuition for the school of their choice (Latham 1998, p. 82-83). Those who defend vouchers believe the competition will weed out ineffective schools and forge a greater alliance between teacher, parents, and students. Vouchers, however, would not guarantee all students the

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same opportunity to attend any particular school since schools would be private and able to set tuition fees and entry criteria. Among those who argue that vouchers are not a sound direction for public education, Beane (1998) notes that "schools are simply one more example of niche products in a free marketplace of educational boutiques where parents are 'consumers' of our teaching 'products' " (p.9). Also, research on whether voucher systems improve academic performance has been inconclusive (Latham 1998, p. 82-83).

Charter schools are privately managed and receive both public and private financial support. They offer an alternative to public schools while avoiding the discriminating implications of vouchers. (Nathan 1996, p. 17). Providing room for both curriculum and structural innovation, and showing promise in meeting minority student needs, charter schools have been gaining support in both Liberal and Conservative camps. Molnar (1996) asserts that charter schools offer the best opportunity for reinforcing our democracy and potential for quality, caring education (p. 12). Still, as Smith (1998) points out "charter schools blur the boundary between public and private schools," challenging the balance between public and private interest and therefore causing "lively-and often heated and contentious - debate" (p. 56). Ultimately, Waddock (1995) believes, "mechanisms for change will arguably be neither fully hierarchical, totally market based, nor completely collaborative or coalitional. A combination of strategies will be necessary if schools are to become catalysts and heroes rather than villains and victims" (p. 157).

The Politics of Education

Finding a balance between public interest and private interest will be a focal point in restructuring education in the twenty-first century. Along with the other social institutions feeling the pinch of government downsizing and decentralization, schools are having to consider new paradigms for teaching while resources are declining. Those who favor private efforts for reforming schools maintain that government bureaucracies have been unresponsive and cumbersome and tend to overregulate schools (Molar 1996, p. 9-15). As Oravitz (1999) points out, "no business could run a profitable operation and produce a quality product if it had to operate under the rules, regulations, laws, and court decrees which are imposed on school districts" (p. 15).

The current trend in devolution has reawakened the educational goals of individual development and social interest, creating new powerful social movements that are forcing a restructuring of public and private goals. "Some of these," according to Michael Apple (1998), "may lead to increased democratization and greater equality, while others are based on a fundamental shift in the very meanings of democracy and equality and are more than a little retrogressive socially and culturally" (p. 24). The prevailing conservative trend in education, according to Apple, is made up of an alliance between "neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, authoritarian populists, and a professional new middle class" (p. 24). Many of these groups support market-driven education and personal choice while at the same time requiring standards and regulations. These groups are fueled by an overall distrust in government and the belief that the market can correct many of our social problems. They also long to recapture nostalgic traditional norms of the past.

David Labaree (1997) is uncertain whether the goal of education is swinging between conservative and liberal objectives or whether it is, in fact, evolving in a completely new direction.

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In the struggle to find balance between individual (private) benefit and social (public) benefit, he points out that education has had to contend with three competing goals: democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility. These goals align, respectively, with the educational perspective of the citizen, the taxpayer, and the consumer. The problem lies in that the citizen and the taxpayer see education as a public good, whereas the consumer sees it as a private good. Therefore, designing an educational approach that can integrate these goals is difficult.

The democratic equality approach to education realizes that individuals in a democracy are dependent on each other's role as citizens and that all children should receive equal access to quality education in order to become responsible and competent citizens. Eric Schaps and Catherine Lewis (1998) suggest there are three qualities of citizenship that contribute to competency. They are: 1) deep regard for self and others; 2) a commitment to core values of justice and caring; and 3) consideration and civility in their interactions with others.[10]

The social efficiency approach, on the other hand, emphasizes our economic interdependency and supports the idea of preparing individuals to fulfill certain roles in the economic market. This goal would be represented by "neo-liberals" who want to modernize the economy and institutions based on market competition (Apple 1998, p. 24). The social mobility approach sees education as a commodity which provides individuals with a competitive edge in their quest for social positioning. This approach is taken by the "professional new middle class" that Apple (1998) referred to. This group seeks to protect their professional interests by emphasizing policies of accountability, efficiency, and management (p. 24). These competing goals are part of the struggle to balance social

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[10] Schaps and Lewis (1998) also claim that, "good citizens are neither doormats nor narcissists, neither blindly self-sacrificing nor ruggedly self-serving. They speak up strongly for what they believe and want, but they also try hard to hear, to understand, and to accommodate the needs and perspectives of others" (p. 23-24).

equality with a competitive economic market. Labaree (1997) notes that the struggle is "a fundamental source of strain at the core of any liberal democratic society" (p. 41). However, Apple (1998) notes that "in the process, democracy has been reduced to consumption practices (and) citizenship has been reduced to possessive individualism" (p. 24).

John Abbott believes that "the Knowledge Age" will offer new possibilities and that technology offers a different interaction between education and the economy (Abbott 1997, p. 15). He sees formal schooling as the "start of a dynamic process through which pupils are progressively weaned from dependence on teachers and institutions," and where "they are given the confidence to manage their own learning, collaborate with colleagues as appropriate, and use a range of resources and learning situations" (p. 15). He joins Dewey, and the Critical Humanists, in advocating a style of education which emphasizes "reflective intelligence" (p. 14).[11]

Indeed, Carroy Ugene Ferguson (ca. 1993) points out that a paradigm shift is taking place. Ferguson believes that the status quo of inculcating obedience and conformity in a rigid, hierarchical school structure is shifting to one that fosters a lifelong desire to learn, strengthens self-discipline, and sparks creativity and curiosity (Ferguson ca. 1993, p. 1). In Ferguson's opinion, this new paradigm of learning, "implies a shift in consciousness, a new way of viewing the world and of carrying out education" (p. 2). It seeks to transcend limitations in order to offer innovative change to schools, individuals, and society. Abbott (1997) predicts that, "successful 21st-century societies will have learning communities in line with the needs of a continuously changing economic and social environment" (p. 15).

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[11] For Dewey, self-reflection was an inherent aspect of problem-solving, and for the Critical Humanists it was an essential tool for developing a healthy self-concept (Nemiroff 1992, p. 28-29).

As school reform continues to evolve in the twenty-first century, it is important to realize that efforts to introduce innovative concepts of education have met with political resistance. Labaree argues that the fundamental, "problems with American education are not pedagogical or organizational or social or cultural in nature but are fundamentally *political*" (p. 40). Yet as Schaps and Lewis (1998) point out, the question still remains: "How can public education help prepare our youth to sustain a just and humane democracy?" (p.24). One step in this direction is to expand the context of school structure to include a greater emphasis on developing caring relationships as opposed to obedience to rules (Enomoto 1997, p. 354-355). Beane (1998) advocates a return to the Progressive ideals of education which maintained a "firm conviction that democracy is possible, that the democratic way of life can be lived, and that our schools should and can bring democracy to life in the curriculum, in school governance, in community relations, and in the hearts and minds of young people" (p.8).

Jane Addams, a key figure in the development of pragmatic eduation, was Dewey's mentor because she gave life to the democratic principles of education they both believed in (Schugurensky n.d).[12] Addams and Ellen Starr founded the Hull House, a settlement home in Chicago, that provided social services and education to low-income people; most of them immigrants. The Hull House had a multifaceted approach for providing services to its participants. It offered a variety of programs to help people build a foundation for themselves such as: employment training, child-care support, cooking, kindergarten, sewing, art, and music. In addition, the participants of Hull House went out into their communities and conducted research to identify the most common problems facing their

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[12] Dr. Schugurensky provides an example of pragmatic education by having his students work in groups to prepare historical information relating to education over the internet.

community. Addams, like Dewey, James, and Pierce, realized that people learned by doing, and that collaborative inquiry was the best means for understanding reality at any given time. In this way, people developed a sense of personal responsibility, personal power, and community bonding.

One of the key principles guiding Hull House was the belief that relationships must be created that are "consistent and ongoing" in order to lay the foundation for democratic participation and stimulate learning (Schugurensky n.d., p.18). Intergenerational learning and one-on-one interaction with students were two concepts practiced at Hull House to create a sense of community. These two concepts seem far removed in the current school reform debate, but unlike today's education which segregates grade levels, the Hull House incorporated parents, and children of all ages in the process of education. Jane Addams knew that everybody had something to teach and therefore older students served as mentors to the younger students, and parents participated in their children's education. The purpose of these strategies was to foster democratic values, but unfortunately they are seldom practiced in mainstream public education today.

According to Judith Torney-Purta (1997), "interest in empirical analyses linking education levels and political knowledge to citizenship has had a recent and rather sudden surge" (p. 446). The relationship between civic responsibility and education has serious implications for a democracy because it affects voting, tolerance, and awareness of political issues. Many people are concerned about the extent to which future generations will participate in a democracy. John Abbott (1997) maintains that, "humans have learned to use their brain ever better with each generation over millions of years - except for the last five or six generations" (p. 11). This suggests that educational reform of the last twenty years has not been effective, and a closer look at both the content and context of education is necessary. James Beane (1998) recognizes that it is not only curriculum standards that

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are at stake, but the very fabric of our democracy which is in danger (p. 9).

Because the problems that plague schools are so intrinsically connected with the problems that face society as a whole, they must be analyzed in the context of school organization, familial participation, history, politics, culture and developmental psychology (Glasser 1992; Wentzel 1999). Francis Fukuyama (1999) offers some encouragement about the future, however, noting that "social order, once disrupted, tends to get remade," and we can expect a new social order because, "human beings are by nature social creatures, whose most basic drives and instincts lead them to create moral rules that bind them together into communities" (p. 56).

Psychology and Education

Rousseau was fortunate in that the influence of the Enlightenment Era allowed him to overcome his lack of formal education to find intellectual expression in writing. He was less fortunate, however, in his ability to adapt to a chaotic, impersonal world (Wilkie and Hurt 1992, p. 479). His writings reveal that at least to some extent, Rousseau's early childhood experiences of loss and abandon contributed to his general sense of social isolation. Unable to make sense of a chaotic world, Rousseau spiraled into psychological deterioration experiencing delusions of persecution and paranoia. Rousseau's literary legacy and insight challenges society to take a closer look at the connection between education, psychological development, and society.

Research over the last 20 years has been placing greater emphasis on human psychological development and environment, especially in the area of morality and learning (Schaps and Lewis 1998, p. 24). The concept of child nature developed by Rousseau, Locke, and educators of the progressive era, saw child development as progressing in a uniform, predictable manner, following

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the laws of nature (Elkind 1997, p. 242). This concept had a profound influence on education, proposing the idea that children follow universal patterns of development.

Postmodern educators, however, are learning that children don't develop in a progressive, incremental manner, but rather, follow an irregular, individual pattern that is affected by the individual's genetic composition and environmental influences. Margaret Beale Spencer (1999) notes that often societal and cultural factors are considered in the process of analyzing the gap between school and family, however, seldom does research consider the simultaneous interaction between culture, context, and psychosocial developmental practices (p. 43-57). Postmodern educators are recognizing that children have both unique and universal qualities which correspond to various social, biological, and psychological dimensions (Elkind 1997, p. 241-244).

Even though Dewey was part of the modern era of education, he did not believe that child development was predictable or universal in nature (Elkind 1997, p. 242). His pragmatic theory for schools contains many insights into education and child development that are just as relevant today as they were in the early nineteen hundreds. Dewey saw schools as the laboratory that explored certain 'working hypotheses' connecting the relationship between psychological development and education (Tanner 1997, p. 15). He realized that schools affect children's civic development directly and indirectly, and that creating a sense of community enhanced emotional development. Schaps and Lewis (1998) agree, claiming that "elements of citizenship have cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, all of which are learned" (p. 24).

Exactly how to develop a school that meets cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions while developing civic behavior is still not clear. Character education, religious teaching, or service learning, are a few of the strategies aimed at curtailing the growing sense of isolation and

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detachment among our youths. In exploring new strategies, Beane (1998) suggests that, "the curriculum treat students with dignity, as real people who live in the real world and care about its condition and fate" (p. 10). He voices the concern of many educators who worry that focusing improvement solely on achievement scores is ineffective and possibly damaging in the long run. More and more educators are realizing that the key to helping students re-engage in the learning process is to help them become connected to the world around them in some productive way (Beane 1998; Ciaccio 1999). Community service learning programs attempt to do just that and offer hope for encouraging self-actualization through critical thinking, problem-solving, and caring (Ciaccio 1999, p. 64-65).

Developmental Assets

The impact of environmental factors on children and adolescence is gathering greater attention as educators learn to deal with an increasing level of violence in schools. Millions of children go to school suffering from the effects of neglect and abuse. As Perry Passaro et al., (1994), points out, "these students usually experience little, if any, success in school because of the psychosocial factors that intrude on their lives" (p. 3). Facilitating the personal development of each student is a great challenge that requires a restructuring of educational goals. In fact, Conrad Farner (1996) insists that reformers should consider shifting the emphasis on traditional, academic basics to more personal developmental basics. The first item on Farner's list for helping at-risk students succeed is "belonging," followed by "mastery," "independence," and "generosity" (p. 27). A key to creating a sense of belonging is having students participate in tasks that are valuable to the school and community such as involving them in fund-raising activities or volunteering at an area nursing home

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or hospital (28). Schaps and Lewis (1998) claim that, "the higher a student's sense of community, the more likely the student is to show a wide range of positive characteristics, including many which are directly related to the major dimensions of citizenship, such as empathy, concern for others, kindness and helpfulness, skills in conflict resolution, altruistic behavior, and social competence" (p. 25).

In an attempt to synthesize the many psychological and social factors affecting youth today, the Search Institute has developed a framework made up of forty assets as a tool for assessment or policy development. The Search Institute points out that much of the social policy designed to improve the well-being of children and adolescents follows a "problem-focused paradigm" that targets the reduction of external risks and behaviors (Leffert et al., 1998, p. 209).[13] Unfortunately, problem-focused programs often have limited long-term success. Poor performance of these programs range from lack of funding to high recidivism rates. The Search Institute challenges the problem-focused paradigm and proposes a developmental paradigm which "promotes core elements of human development known to *enhance* health and well-being" (p. 209; italics added).

The goal of the Search Institute is to "mobilize and unite community based efforts to promote core developmental processes, resources, and experiences for children and adolescents" (Leffert, et al., 1998, p. 209). Identifying eight categories of well-being, the institute has developed a 156-item survey that tests for the presence of forty developmental assets. It serves as both a benchmark for positive developmental targets as well as an instrument for predicting at-risk behavior. In short, "the developmental assets have utility as both a theoretical framework and an applied research model" (p.

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[13] The Search Institute is based in Minneapolis and was founded by Dr. Merton P. Strommen in 1958. It originally focused research on youth within a religious setting but expanded to include a nonsectarian focus on the healthy development of young people.

210). Table 2.1 describes the eight developmental categories identified in the Search Institute's research. Each of these categories is further subdivided into specific characteristic, referred to as assets. Table 2.2 outlines the 40 developmental assets and describes the percentage of students (6th through 12th grade) in their study found to experience these assets.

Table 2.1 Developmental categories identified by the Search Institute that contribute to healthy maturation.

Support - Young people need to experience support, care and love from their families and many others. They need organization and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments	**Commitment to learning** - Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.
Empowerment - Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.	**Positive values** - Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices.
Boundaries and expectations - Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" or "out of bounds."	**Social competencies** - Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.
Constructive use of time - Young people need constructive, enhancing opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.	**Positive identity** - Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

After studying survey results for over 100,000 6th through 12th graders, the institute found that the average young person only has 18 of the 40 assets; only 8% had 31 of the 40 assets. By capturing the attitudes and perceptions of young people with respect to their personal development, the survey serves as a catalyst to help teachers, schools, parents, and students find better ways of communicating and identifying weak areas that contribute to student failure. One of the weakest areas is the sense that youth feel valued by their community. The issue of belonging is a key element in

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establishing self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

Table 2.2 Percentages of young people experiencing the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets.[14] Almost 100,000 6th-12th grade youth, from 213 towns and cities around the United States, were surveyed.

External Assets	% say Assets present	Internal Assets	% say Assets present
Support		**Commitment to Learning**	
Family support	64%	Achievement motivation	63%
Positive family communication	26%	School engagement	64%
Other adult relationships	41%	Homework	45%
Caring neighborhood	40%	Bonding to school	51%
Caring School Climate	24%	Reading for pleasure	24%
Parent involvement in school	29%		
Empowerment		**Positive Values**	
Community values youth	20%	Caring	43%
Youth serves as a resource	24%	Equality and social justice	45%
Service to others	50%	Integrity	63%
Safety	55%	Honesty	63%
		Responsibility	60%
		Restraint	42%
Expectations		**Social**	
Family boundaries	43%	**Competencies**	
School boundaries	46%	Planning and decision making	29%
Neighborhood boundaries	46%	Interpersonal competence	43%
Adult role model	27%	Cultural competency	35%
Positive peer influence	60%	Resistance skills	37%
High expectations	41%	Peaceful conflict resolution	44%
Constructive Use of Time		**Positive Identity**	
Creative activities	19%	Personal power	45%
Youth programs	59%	Self-esteem	47%
Religious community	64%	Sense of purpose	55%
Time at home	50%	Positive view of personal future	70%

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[14] Leffert, "Developmental Assets," p. 212. Recreated with permission for educational purposes.

The Issue of Belonging and Self-Esteem

In today's society, many adults do not have much time to spend with young people, and even if they do, they sometimes have difficulty adequately addressing the concerns of the young person (Stepp 1999, p. E1). Although there is no evidence to indicate that there are any more disaffected children today than there were fifty years ago, one of the main differences seen in today's youth is the lack of belief that they can make the world a better place. Addressing this sense of loneliness and desperation, is part of the basic need that must be met for so many students in public education.

Both Glasser (1992) and Farner (1996) agree that creating a sense of belonging should be one of the main goals in education reform. Glasser believes that schools could help students make better choices if they realized that they are motivated by a sense of belonging, freedom, power, and fun (p. 20).[15] Similarly, Farner suggests four elements that include the sense of belonging, as well as mastery, independence, and generosity, which differs from Glasser's area of fun in that it places greater emphasis on a virtuous sense of worthiness and usefulness, especially as it applies to the community (p. 27). Both authors believe that implementing these theories of motivation can contribute to a significant reduction in school disruptions and student drop-outs.

In an attempt to address the importance of environment and experience on self-esteem, Spencer (1999) points out that "it is not merely experience but one's perception of experience in culturally diverse contexts that influences how one evolves an identity and experiences a sense of self" (p. 44). Wenzel (1999) agrees stating that, "continued research on social support and belonging as

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[15]   Glasser (1996) defines belonging as "the feeling of acceptance", freedom as the "ability to use creative and problem-solving skills to make choices", power as "implementing decisions, or manipulating our environment to achieve goals", and fun as "being interested and motivated in what is being taught" (p. 20).

it relates to school adjustment is needed," and that "we need to understand how teachers as well as students define and demonstrate supportive, caring relationships at school" (p. 61). The Search Institute research has been instrumental in this capacity, finding that young people immersed in adverse situations are more resilient and likely to overcome their disadvantage when they have at least one positive relationship in their lives (Leffert et al. 1998, p. 210).

To increase the opportunity for young people to have more contact with adults, Lauderdale (1999) suggests smaller classes and school hours that support family schedules in order to "make 'connectedness' exist at 100 percent" in schools and families (p. E3). Waddock agrees, and notes that schools need to start thinking about expanding the activities offered at schools in order to help families and communities survive in an increasingly complex world (p. 166). According to Joe Nathan (1996), smaller schools, with small-group settings, are also essential for creating a sense of value and inquiry (p. 18-19).

There is concern, however, that some teachers, in an attempt to boost student self-esteem, accept lower quality work from students (Schaps and Lewis 1998, p. 69). While many educators agree that it is necessary to help children improve their self-esteem, the idea also carries some political and ideological undertones (Kahne 1996). Joseph Kahne (1996) recommends that, "before analysts can assess self-esteem as a goal for policy and practice, they must consider the ideological orientations of those who use the term and the cultural norms that shape the debate" (p. 3).[16] To begin with, the concept of self-esteem, and the factors that contribute to developing good self -

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[16] Kahne's research on self-esteem explores the findings by the California Taskforce on Self-Esteem, which to date has be the largest political Taskforce to take up the issue on self-esteem.

esteem, is difficult to define (33).[17] Second of all, both Liberals and Conservatives favor programs

that enhance self-esteem, when they support their own political values. Conservatives are more likely

to support programs that enhance self-esteem if they hold promise for reducing dependence on

government programs, yet finding consensus on what to include in such programs is difficult.

Controversies inevitably arise, however, as religious leaders and minority groups vie for

representation in the program's content.

Efforts to promote programs that target self-esteem are further hampered by the fact that

there is no indication that they improve academic achievement.[18] Self-esteem is a "slippery" concept

to define, according to Kahne (1996) because it is, "likely to be acknowledged, promoted, even

cherished, but rarely defined, monitored, or used to guide educational policy" (p. 18). Yet self-

esteem is an inextricable part of creating a sense of belonging because children find value in

themselves when they feel they have value to their community (Benson et al., 1998, p. 55-72)

Schaps and Lewis (1998) agree, which is why they believe that schools don't really have a choice

whether or not they should participate in molding student character, but rather they must determine

how well they will address the challenge (p. 27). In addition while much is already expected of

teachers, the authors feel that they must be trained to promote caring and justice while maintaining

high academic expectations.

The tragic shooting in Littleton, Colorado demands that our society pay greater attention to

the social practice of "associated living" discussed by Dewey (p. 87) in order to probe the factors

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[17] The psychological theories of self-esteem will be discussed at greater length in chapter two.

[18] Kahne reports Martin Covington's findings that although there is some correlation, there is "no strong evidence" that scores improve (p. 11).

contributing to the sense of alienation so many young people feel today. "To explain these horrible and tragic acts," Michael Lauderdale (1999) points out, "we must look to causes other than poverty, broken families, a culture of violence, racism or the easy availability of guns" (p. E3). In an effort to avoid religious indoctrination in public education, no consistent forum exists to help young people learn moral and ethical values. For this reason, educators and policy makers are contemplating new teaching strategies; ones that foster desire for lifelong learning, concern for the community, and personal accountability (Ferguson ca., 1993).

Service Learning

In light of the declining moral state of today's schools, many educators feel it is time to rekindle Dewey's concept of schools where there are "lessons yet unlearned about things that deeply concern us - educating children in the problems of living together as a community, nation, and world, and creating a new curriculum that is matched to child growth" (Tanner 1997, p. 1).[19] Waddock (1995) agrees, stating that "fundamentally, the new assumption, the only possible one given the reality of problems of education....is that education is a shared responsibility" (p. 158). Yet, according to Leffert et al., (1998), "the role that communities play in adolescent development is a relatively resent line of inquiry that has been driven by awareness of the rising incidence of problem behavior and an interest in the role that contextual factors may play in influencing developmental outcomes" (p. 210).

Bridging the gap between school and the community is one of the primary goals of school reform. As Schaps and Lewis (1998) point out, "many current school improvement initiatives recognize in some way the school's potential to promote civic development" (p. 24). Some schools help children learn cooperative and community-building skills by having them work on individual and group projects and present them at monthly community meetings (Nathan 1996, p. 18-20). Others incorporate children in the maintenance of the school, picking up garbage and cleaning up graffiti (Ciaccio 1999, p. 64). Service learning is gaining more attention because it integrates the individual and the school into the community. Students participate in the community in a variety of ways that may include gathering information for a particular agency, interviewing community members, and participating in some capacity in solving some of the community's problems.

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[19] The "one size fits all" style of traditional education is difficult to change but Duke (1999) argues that, "insisting that all teenagers be required to obtain a secondary education in exactly the same way is difficult to defend. Where is the evidence that our society would be well-served by the standardization of secondary education?" (p. 50).

Service learning, according to Joseph Ciaccio (1999), "tends to be interdisciplinary - a whole experience that is greater than the sum of its parts - in sharp contrast to the fragmented, isolated, single-subject orientation of the learning process in most secondary schools" (p. 64). This is what Dewey (1938) referred to as the "philosophy of experience" which would allow students to develop their particular interests and potentials (p. 10). In this sense, service learning closely resembles pragmatic principles of education. The key to pragmatic education, according to Beane (1998) is a curriculum which treats students with respect, strives to preserve the individual's heritage, is relevant to the real world and encourages inquiry (p. 10). He echoes Dewey's belief that the work students perform in school should, "involve more making and doing, more building and creating, and less of the deadening drudgery that too many of our curriculum arrangements still demand" (p. 11).

Experiential learning was summarized by Martha Naomi Alt (1997) to include four key steps. First, the event is experienced or observed. Second, the individual reflects on the experience. Third, concepts are developed to generalize the experience to real-world situations. And fourth, these concepts are tested out in various situations (p. 9). She points out that "service learning was developed partly to produce benefits associated with an experiential-based learning model," but differ from this model in two way: 1) participants volunteer in activities that help meet a community's needs; and 2) the service is integrated into the curriculum in a way that help participants reflect on the experience (p. 9).

Schaps and Lewis (1998) note that these community-bonding strategies take into account that "schools inescapably influence children's civic development through the content they teach directly. Perhaps more importantly, they influence this civic development through the hidden curriculum of relationships with others, classroom management and discipline, and organizational climate and

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policies" (p. 24). Although some educators do not necessarily develop their curriculum with the ideal of promoting democratic skills, more and more educators are realizing that greater attention should be given to the role of the individual in society.[20]

Even as schools take the steps toward reform, implementing innovative educational ideas and promoting community service, they must contend with conservative political forces resistant to change (Fergusson ca., 1993, p. 4). Although community service has potential for helping youth connect with their community, Ciaccio (1999) sees that, "too many schools employ community service only as a sporadic activity when it should be an ongoing K-12 commitment" (p. 63).

Amidst the struggle to find balance between restructuring education, our communities, and our cultural and political values, Fukuyama (1999) offers some encouragement that "social order, once disrupted, tends to get remade," and that we can expect a new social order because, "human beings are by nature social creatures, whose most basic drives and instincts lead them to create moral rules that bind them together into communities" (p. 56). Waddock (1995) hopes that:

> By openly taking on responsibilities and admitting their central role in an interdependent set of social institutions and by forcing families, community organizations, and policy-makers to assume theirs, school officials could become the key catalytic agents for the social change needed for economic, social, and democratic success in the 21st century (p. 159).

Service learning alone is not a panacea for the ills that affect education. Certainly, a multi-disciplinary approach is required but difficult to achieve. Pragmatic principles of education attempt to provide a model of education and service learning, with its emphasis on experiential education,

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[20] Certainly Schaps and Lewis (1998), Beane (1998), and Smith(1998), believe schools hold the potential for improving our democracy, but sadly, Kahne (1996) reports that many of his students seldom think of democracy or citizenship when defining education (p. 4).

seems to encompass some of the community and cooperative attributes of pragmatism.

Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals the complexities of analyzing school reform. It is evident that understanding school reform requires a comprehensive view of how society, the family, the economy, and other social institutions interact to affect education. Causal relationships are nearly impossible to define, but exploration of various programs and educational settings have contributed insight into new ways of providing support for education. In this research, the review of the literature on pragmatism provides a general framework for assessing service learning. *Four general principles of pragmatism have been selected from the literature to describe pragmatic education: collaborative teaching, collaborative learning, community education, and practical education.*[21] *Eight general developmental areas, as suggested by the Search Institute, are assigned to assess the presence of internal and external assets recommended for success.* Tables 2.3 and tables 2.4 outline the descriptive categories that support the two working hypotheses guiding this research.[22]

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[21] Laurel Tanner, Dewey's Laboratory School: Lessons for Today. Teachers College, New York, 2997.

[22] This research design was influenced by the research of Laura Sheridan and John Allan Roberts, two graduates from Southwest Texas University. Laura Sheridan's (1996) research offered examples of exploratory working hypothesis while John Allan Roberts' (1998) case study research used a practical ideal type in conducting his case study research.

Table 2.3 Summary of
Pragmatic Principles

Pragmatic Principles
Collaborative Learning
Collaborative Teaching
Community Education
Practical Education

Table 2.4   Summary of Developmental Assets

	Developmental Assets
External	Support
	Empowerment
	Boundaries and Expectation
	Constructive Use of Time
	Commitment to Learning
Internal	Positive Values
	Social Competencies
	Positive Identity

Two working hypotheses are used: 1) to assess the similarity of service learning and pragmatic principles of education and 2) to assess student perception of internal and external assets.

The first working hypothesis compares service learning to pragmatic education using four subhypotheses to examine the extent of collaboration practiced by students and teachers and determine whether AIL promotes practical community education. The second working hypothesis examines student attitudes using three subhypothesis to assess the level of internal and external assets perceived by the students and their regard for the school.

The two working hypothesis and seven subhypothesis which make up the conceptual framework for this research are listed in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Linking the Working Hypotheses to the literature.

#	Working Hypothesis	Literature
1.	The service learning model offered by the American Institute for Learning parallels various principles of pragmatic education.	Dewey, 1916; Tanner, 1997
1a.	Students at the American Institute for Learning participate in activities that promote collaborative learning.	Dewey, 1916; Passaro, 1994
1b.	Teachers at the American Institute for Learning participate in collaborative teaching activities.	Dewey, 1916; Tanner, 1997;
1c.	The American Institute for Learning promotes community education.	Dewey, 1916; Fergusson, 1993; Passaro, 1994
1d.	The American Institute for Learning offers practical education.	Dewey, 1916; Elkind, 1997; Beane, 1998; Fine, 1994; Passaro, 1994
2.	Students at American Institute for Learning express external and internal assets that indicate school satisfaction and a desire to succeed.	Leffert et.al., 1996; Benson, et.al., 1998 Passaro, 1994; Glasser, 1990
2a.	Students at the American Institute for Learning express external assets that support student success.	Leffert et.al., 1996; Benson, et.al.,1998 Wentzel, 1999; Nemiroff, 1992; Passaro, 1994
2b.	Students at the American Institute for Learning express internal assets that indicate feelings of bonding to the school and a desire to succeed.	Dewey, 1916; Enomoto, 1997; Glasser, 1990; Fine, 1994
2c.	Alumni of the American Institute for Learning feel that school made a difference in there lives	Enomoto, 1997; Elkind, 1997

Education is an essential building block of society; it is also a reflection of society itself. In order to attend to the current crisis in education, it is important to consider the numerous factors that affect learning and bonding. This research explores the condition of one Texas charter school involved in the education of at-risk youth. An overview of the current status of charter schools and the setting for this research will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Charter School Setting

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: first, to provide an overview of the charter school movement, second, to discuss charter schools' role in the state educational system, and third, to describe the organizational characteristics of the American Institute for Learning.

An Overview of the Charter School Movement

The Charter school movement, like the voucher movement, can be a politically-charged topic of discussion. Charter schools' place in the educational system not only threatens the established public education system, but also puts a kink in the relationship between the private and public sector. Nevertheless, the movement has picked up momentum. Educators and legislators alike are increasingly willing to consider the concept of charter schools as a viable option in school reform.[23]

In the 1970s, early concepts of charter education considered giving greater autonomy to a particular department or group of teachers in order to troubleshoot certain areas of education (Budde 1996, p. 72-73). Later, in 1991, the first charter school legislation was passed in Minneapolis, to allow privately managed, non-sectarian schools to receive public funds for education. Since then, charter schools have gained so much approval, Budde (1996) projects that "by the year 2003, there may be as many as 5,000 charter schools enrolling 1.5 million students and supported by a tax

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[23] Although Ray Budde (1996) participated in the early proposals for education by charter in the 1970s, he realized that the concept of charter schools has evolved beyond his initial understanding and that 'there are more powerful dynamics at work in creating a whole new school than there are in simply restructuring a department or starting a new program' (p. 72).

revenue approaching $3 million!" (p. 73).

Charter schools offer an alternative to the voucher system. While the legal terms that define charter schools differ from state to state, all states consider charter schools to be private schools that operate under a special contract to educate children in a nonsectarian format (Molnar 1996, p. 11). Those who oppose charter schools worry that schools with a for-profit motive will cut back on services like transportation and special education intended to help disadvantaged populations (Dykgraaf and Lewis 1998, p. 51-53). The fact that charter school laws are so varied raises concerns about evaluating academic performance and fiscal responsibility (Pipho 1997, p. 489-490). Even though charter schools are more autonomous, Smith (1998) argues that accountability is localized through parental satisfaction and contractual obligations (p. 56). Budde (1996) agrees that school-based management strategies, like charter schools, can improve education, but he also points out the disruptive potential decentralization can have on funding, curriculum, and school accountability.

Molnar (1996) contends that there are three types of charter school advocates: Zealots, Entrepreneurs, and Reformers (p. 10). Zealots hold the rigid belief that private methods of solving education will always be superior to public systems of education. Entrepreneurs want to make a profit from a new system of education. Reformers, on the other hand, want to design a new system that expands the creative opportunity of schools and encourage interaction among children, parents, and teachers. Of the three, Molnar believes that the child-centered reformers mean well, but that much of the charter school movement is influenced by Zealots and Entrepreneurs who are interested in private, market-driven, control of education. Smith (1998), however, counters that criticisms based on privatizing aspects of charter schools are simplistic and that "virtually all debate on the topic neglects, or at best downplays, the democratizing potentials of charter schools" (p. 56).

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Charter schools are gaining broad favor from legislators and educators alike. For example, the Charter School Expansion Act, signed into law by President Clinton in 1998, encourages states to adopt stronger charter school legislation and doubles the federal money to assist new charter schools with start-up costs (Pipho 1997, p. 490). Those in favor of charter schools believe they can explore innovative educational models that may help improve public education. According to Nathan (1996), the charter school movement "appeals to many educators who acknowledge that there are major societal problems but believe that schools can have a significant, measurable, impact on young people" (p. 16). "It's impossible to say what charter schools look like," say James Traub (1999), "with the educational marketplace jammed with competing designs, the charter school has become the blank slate on which absolutely everything can be drawn and tested" (p. 30). Some of the key principles guiding charter schools include:

- Charter contracts stipulate that academic performance must improve in order for the contract to be renewed.

- Charter schools do not have to adhere to the same rules and regulations that other public schools have to, except in areas of safety.

- Schools can establish their own administrative structure and ownership.

- Funding per-pupil is the same as other public schools.

- Families can choose which school they wish their child to attend.

- Charters can be sponsored by various organizations that include a state board of education, public universities, and local school districts (Nathan 1996, p. 16-17).

Many charter schools are driven by a specific mission and organized by individuals interested in creating a particular school. Some are started from scratch by groups of educators, while others convert from already established private schools. Since start-up costs are high for charter schools,

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some teachers and parents have refurbished downtown buildings and warehouses donated by the city in order to lower costs (Nathan 1996, p. 18). Inadvertently, this obstacle has placed some charter schools exactly where Dewey suggested - right in the center of the community.[24]

Because so many charter schools cater to the needs of at-risk youth and high school dropouts, many charter schools are taking the opportunity to not only improve academic achievement, but also provide students with the opportunity for personal growth and community awareness. Nathan (1996) and others believe that the "charter concept - combining freedom, accountability, and competition - can be an important part of redesigning and strengthening public education" (p. 20). Supporters believe that charter schools have the potential to draw universities, business, and community members into the process of creating a more functional educational system (Duke 1999, p. 48-52).

Although Pipho (1997) recognizes the rapid growth of charter schools, he questions whether actual success stories will impact the broader educational system. In his opinion, "charters are viewed as an outside force (and) new ideas may get an even slower acceptance" (p. 490). Yet charter schools are relatively new to many states and it is still too soon to know what kind of impact they will have on the public education system and academic performance.

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[24] This is essentially the case for AIL. There are pros and cons, however, for this location. On the one hand, students see a bustling professional downtown; on the other, they see bars and adult entertainment.

Texas Charter School System

Following the enactment of Texas Education Code §§ 12.101 - 12.118 in 1995, twenty

charter schools were granted open-enrollment charter school status. [25] Sixteen of the twenty schools

began their operations in the fall of 1996.[26] Legislation gives the Texas State Board of Education

(SBOE) authority over charter schools and offers three types of charter contracts:

> **Home-rule school district charter-** A district charter with the powers and entitlements of a district and board of directors, including taxing authority
>
> **Campus charter** - A charter granted to parents and teachers for a campus or program by the board of trustees.
>
> **Open-enrollment charter** - A charter granted to an eligible entity (e.g., institution of higher education, private or independent institution, 501 (c)(3) organization, or government entity) to operate a school in a facility of a commercial or nonprofit entity or a school district.[27]

Charter schools are given more flexibility to create their curriculum and organization but must

still be accountable to the SBOE. One example of their flexibility is that teachers are not required to

be certified.[28] Like public schools, however, Charter schools must follow the prescribed state wide

accountability system. This includes TAAS testing, providing enrollment information, participating

in an accreditation process, and undergoing scrutiny by an independent consortium outside the

SBOE.[29] Charter schools are also evaluated by the Texas Education Agency with onsite visits,

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[25] Brooks Flemister, Texas Education Agency Executive Summary, Austin, Tx., April 14, 1998.

[26] The American Institute for Learning is among the sixteen schools.

[27] Information provided by SBOE.

[28] According to the SBOE, 48.8% of charter school teachers are not certified.

[29] Flemister, p.2; The University of North Texas, the University of Houston, The University of Texas at Arlington, the Texas Center for Educational Research, and the Texas Justice Foundation all participate in this consortium.

budget reviews, and technical assistance. In the second year evaluation, the SBOE found that:

> Charter schools serve a larger percentage of minority (76.2% to 53.0%) and at risk students (68% to 39.0%) than do Texas public schools statewide exploding the 'white flight' and 'public money for private schools' myths. Seven of the charters are dropout recovery schools bringing over 1200 children back into public education, and doing so with an attendance rate of over 80%, while the overall attendance rate for charters exceeds 90%.

In general, special student populations (e.g., special education, limited English proficiency, etc.) are under represented in charter schools although there are a few that are specialized to meet these students' needs. Classes tend to be smaller than traditional public schools, although the increasing demand is bringing the student-to-teacher ratio up to the same level as that of public schools.

There are many obstacles to overcome in establishing and maintaining charter schools. The toughest obstacle is meeting the school's financial obligations. Most of the revenue for charter schools comes from state aid, with a small percentage coming from the federal government and private sources. Costs are especially high during the initial startup period. Charter schools are also at a disadvantage in meeting TAAS score requirements when compared to public schools. Still, charter schools in Texas are gaining more support. New legislation has been proposed to increase the number of charter schools to 140. In her executive summary, Brook Flemister, senior director for TEA, concludes that:

> The charter program has the potential to positively affect students of all grade levels and ability levels and to serve as innovative models for the public schools system of Texas. The original seventeen schools, along with the two charter schools which opened for the first time in August 1997, have begun the development of a new paradigm in Texas public schools.

The American Institute for Learning (AIL)

AIL was among the first sixteen open-enrollment charter schools initiated in the fall of 1996. Prior to its status as a charter school, AIL was a private educational enterprise that provided GED preparatory education.[30] The school was founded by Richard Halpin (AIL CEO) as an art education program serving inmates in jail. The goal of the program was to help undereducated adults become more self-sufficient. AIL is a "private, nonprofit organization providing comprehensive education, employment-training and human services to dropout youth and adults lacking basic skill."[31] The school offers students the opportunity to earn a diploma or a GED, as well as receive certificates of mastery in a variety of Project-Based Education programs.

Like businesses, many charter schools, including AIL, use a mission statement to organize their objectives. AIL's mission statement is:

> *To empower individuals to become productive,*
> *self-sufficient citizens through a holistic approach*
> *incorporating innovative learning, personal development and*
> *economic opportunities.*

AIL's Project-Based Education involves students in their community in many ways: building environmentally sound homes in economically deprived neighborhoods, cleaning up public parks, and conducting theatrical productions. Table 3.1 provides a summary of AIL's project-base education[32].

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[30] Prior to being called AIL, the school was called Creative Rapid Learning established in 1978. Currently the school is undergoing another name change to "American Youth Works."

[31] Information provided by the AIL's information pamphlet.

[32] Information provided by AIL.

Table 3.2 Summary of the American Institute for Learning Project-Based Education

Casa Verde Builders: Providing youth and opportunity to learn construction skills while building energy-efficient homes

E-Corps: Teaching youth about conservation while preserving our precious natural heritage.

Cultural Warriors: Applying theater arts to highlight the challenges to at-risk youths in presentations to schools, groups, and the community.

PC Training: Preparing students with word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and desktop publishing for PC Windows in a hands-on learning lab.

Technology/Multimedia: Students will explore web page design, desktop publishing and video production.

Health: Preparing students for careers in health, while providing health services for the student community.

Career Planning: In the Career Resource Center, students develop real-world tools to aid their transition to employment.

AIL has received numerous awards for its community service and innovative education model; the hard work and recognition have helped bring in substantial financial support from the community and national foundations.[33] Recently, AIL accomplished its goal of having a centralized location in the heart of downtown Austin. The construction of its new building allows the school to provide all its services (in addition to the project-based education, it offers health care, career development, counseling) under one roof. Table 3.3 provides a profile of AIL's student population.

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[33] The number of awards and corporate sponsorships are too numerous to list in this report.

Table 3.3 American Institute for Learning demographics for the 1999-2000 school year

Gender	Ethnicity	Social Profile
46% Female	13% African American	76% Low-income
54% Male	57% Hispanic	15% On probation or parole
	28% White	13% Parenting Teens
	2% Other	
Total of 250 students enrolled for the year		

The American Institute for Learning is a dynamic and multifaceted organization. It is young in its role as a charter school providing an eclectic education to young adults but it has a long-standing history of providing alternative education. The following chapter discusses the method used for assessing the school's service learning model of education and gather staff and student perceptions.

Chapter Four

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodological approach used in the empirical portion of the study. The single case study method was selected to explore the service learning model of education practiced by the American Institute for Learning. This chapter examines the advantages and disadvantages of using the single case study and describe the strategy for collecting empirical evidence. The conceptual framework, made up by two working hypothesis, guides the collection of evidence. Classroom observation and survey response from students and staff will provide evidence for assessing service learning's pragmatic tendencies and student developmental assets.

Justification of the Case Study Design

Case studies encompass a broad scope of inquiry distinct from traditional scientific inquiry. Their descriptive narratives are seen by some in the scientific community as a prelude to serious scientific research. Most sociological conditions are well established and difficult to examine in their active state. Nevertheless, case studies have provided new insights and examined existing sociological theories that have garnered scientific support and increased our understanding of social phenomenon. Larry Lyon (1987) describes the evolution of community inquiry and the challenge of studying the multiple variables that make up a community.

Early community theorist, like Ferdinand Töonies and Max Weber proposed typological approaches for examining community entities, but it was not until Robert and Helen Lynds' study of *Middletown* (1929), that researchers took the value of holistic single case studies more seriously

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(Lyon 1987, p. 9-10). The Lynds' research moved beyond the methodology of ideal types to recognize the elusive variable of community power. Although case study research received ample recognition during this period of time, the difficulty of generalizing findings, replicating experiments, or predicting sociological phenomenon diminished interest in this methodology over time. Yet the dynamics between rural and urban communities, differences in values between people of varying ethnicity, inequity, and class stratification, continue to affect communities and for this reason, community research is on the rise. Lyon points out that, "today, community sociology is attempting to discover, describe, and understand the interaction between the mass society and the local community" (p. 16). Case studies are well suited to meet these objectives.

The early theorist like Töonies and Weber proposed community typologies (i.e. Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, rationalism, etc.) that endure today partly because they were tested out through case study research. One advantage of case studies is that they can serve as a blank slate for documenting new social developments (exploring the effects of charter schools certainly falls into this category). In his book, *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, Robert Yin (1994) describes the evolution of case study research. He points out that case studies allow flexibility in exploring a variety of data which might provide greater understanding to a contemporary and "complex social phenomenon" (Yin 1994, p. 3). Once viewed as a preliminary, exploratory, tool of research, the use of case study methodology has expanded to include descriptive and explanatory research.

According to Yin, case studies are often used to better understand social, psychological, or political situations because they "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events - such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries" (p.3). It is important to note, however, that

other components of case study designs, like document analysis, surveys, or experimental designs can also stand alone and enhance understanding of social phenomenon. Therefore, determining which strategy is most advantageous depends on the nature of the research purpose and the amount of control the researcher has in the area of investigation.

Yin says that selecting a case study design must take into account three conditions: "(a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events" (p. 4). He maintains that although case studies generally ask 'how' and 'why' questions, they can also include 'who,' 'what,' and 'where' questions for research (p.5). He notes that since these questions can also be answered through an experimental approach, researchers considering case study designs must determine whether the research questions requires manipulation of the environment or participants, or whether it intends to focus on an historical event.

Case studies usually involve observation of the event being studied in its current, natural state. Whereas an experiment deliberately separates a phenomenon from its context, Yin maintains that case studies are useful for studying the context believed to be relevant to the phenomenon (p. 13). He points out that there are many areas of overlap between research strategies and notes that the "case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence - documents, artifacts, interviews, and observation - beyond what might be available in the conventional historical study"(p.8). This provides a wide-angle view of a situation, but many in the scientific community still believe that the focus of case studies is too ambiguous for scientific investigation.

There are many criticisms and disadvantages of case studies. Indicative of the bias against them, Yin observes that "most social science textbooks have failed to consider the case study a formal

research strategy at all" (p. 12). Case studies are often viewed as a weak source of evidence because experimental bias can mold particular outcomes. Similarly, scientists argue that case study findings are inconclusive because they are difficult to recreate and not readily generalized to other situations in the real-world. Yin, however, argues that single experiments are also not generalizable and, in fact, can only be generalized to their "theoretical propositions" (p. 10). The fact that some case studies based on lengthy narrative descriptions has led to the belief that "they take too long, and they result in massive, unreadable documents" (p. 10). Yin maintains that the effort involved in doing a case study depends on the method of data collection used in the study (ethnography and participant-observation are more time consuming).

Ultimately, case studies are best suited for understanding contemporary events or to understand their process over time. They are appropriate for studying phenomenon not easily removed from its real-life context, when there are numerous variables to be examined, or when a preliminary understanding of an event is desired (Yin 1994, p. 13). Case studies are broad enough to include both quantitative and qualitative evidence. They can describe and explain real-life situations, evaluate program implementation, and "explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes" (p. 15). These attributes justify the use of the case study method for exploring the American Institute for Learning. This case study uses limited participant observation, formal classroom observation, and surveys of the staff, students, and alumni of AIL.[34]

According to Yin, the single case study is appropriate for initial exploration and

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[34] I spent one year as a volunteer working for the organization, interacting with students, teachers, and administrators.

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experimentation. Although AIL has been established for a long time as a school, it is a relatively new

charter school practicing a non-traditional model of education. The objective of this research is to

provide a general overview of the school in its contemporary setting. Using the case study design

allows observation of the many facets of service learning and allows comparison with pragmatic

models of education. Anonymous surveys are used to assess the opinions of students, teachers, and

curriculum instructors.[35]

Justification of Survey Method

Yin distinguishes survey research from case study research but maintains that case study is

flexible enough to include "more than one strategy" (p. 9). Generally research that focuses on 'how'

and 'why' are best suited for case studies alone. Research questions that seek answers like 'what,'

'who,' or 'where,' on the other hand, are best suited for surveys. According to Yin, surveys as a

research strategy is "advantageous when the research goal is to describe the incidence or prevalence

of a phenomenon or when it is to be *predictive* about certain outcomes" (p. 6). Yin does mention

that the two can be combined. Therefore this research utilizes surveys as an instrument within the

case study design to assess 1) *how* the practice of service learning compares to pragmatic principles

education and 2) *how* students attending AIL compare to those in other research (i.e, the Search

Institutes findings on developmental assets). The goal of this methodology is to better understand

the practice of service learning and provide a developmental profile of the student population.

Anonymous surveys are used in this research because they provide an economical, efficient,

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[35] Only one curriculum director is employed by the school, but the Principal and Education and Intake manager participate in the process of curriculum develop, therefore they filled out the same survey.

and discrete means for describing the participants at AIL.[36] Surveys are also flexible allowing many questions in examining the subject of inquiry. The student survey explores many personal issues and anonymity allows participants to share sensitive information valuable in describing the student population at AIL. Although the survey attempts to describe student social and personal characteristics, one short coming of survey questions is that they presuppose certain conditions that may not be appropriate for all participants.

It is important, therefore, to consider the disadvantages of using survey research. Yin cautions that "surveys can try to deal with phenomenon and context, but their ability to investigate the context is limited" (p.13). The problem with using surveys in case studies is that they are limited in the number of variables that can be analyzed. This disadvantage is taken into account even though numerous pragmatic and developmental variables are considered in this study. Experimental bias is another weakness that can affect the design of survey questions. Efforts to avoid experimental bias are made through the use of triangulating data gathered from students, staff, and classroom observation (Yin 1994, p. 91). In addition, evidence relies heavily on the Search Institute's survey which has been tested throughout the country with nearly 100,000 youths.

Still, as Earl Babbie (1995) points out, standardization "often seems to result in the fitting of round pegs into square holes" (p. 273). Surveys are limited in their ability to describe the context of a social phenomenon and Babbie notes that they tend to be "weak on validity and strong on reliability" (p.274). The hypothetical context of survey questions may force participants to come up with an opinions not necessarily relevant to their lives. Although object measurement of self-

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[36] Earl Babbie (1995) notes that surveys are economical and are "useful in describing the characteristics of a large population" (p. 273).

reported data is difficult, the Search Institute has found consistent pattern of responses with the extensive data collected over time. On the other hand, using a survey like the Search Institute's may be more valid at describing student interest in school than analyzing attendance records (e.g., document analysis).

Unlike much of the research in school reform, this research relies heavily on the opinion of the students at the American Institute for Learning.[37] In conducting their research on school reform, Hernandez - Gantes et.al. (1995) point out that "missing in both sides of the debate, however, is student-level information describing the impact of these reforms on learning experiences and transitional experiences upon graduation from high school" (p. 2). This research supports the opinion that student input into the problem of school reform is essential.

Operation of Research

This case study provides a general overview of the American Institute for Learning by taking into account input from teachers, students, counselors, and curriculum directors. Information gathered from their opinions and classroom observation will be used to assess the school's practice of service learning. The Search Institute survey on developmental assets is a tool used for examining a sample of the school's student population. Developmental assets describe forty variables conducive to healthy maturation. The empirical portion of the study is guided by the research purpose and organized by the literature and ultimately by the following working hypotheses:

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[37] Although Alt (1997) points out areas of improvement in student self-esteem, she also notes that "many areas of positive social maturation reported, however, rely on students' self-evaluations or small differences between participants and nonparticipants (or small gains among participants) (p. 11). This research supports opinion that student input into the problem of school reform is essential. In addition, small gains are better than no gains. While conducting the field research, it was interesting to find a handful of students who actually completed both the GED *and* Diploma; this may be a small gain from a statistical point of view, but it also indicates a student interest in the school.

First Working Hypothesis: The service learning model offered by the American Institute for Learning reflects various principles of pragmatic education.

> **WH 1a:** AIL practices collaborative learning activities.

> **WH 1b:** Teachers participate in collaborative teaching activities.

> **WH 1c:** The school promotes community education.

> **WH 1d:** The American Institute for Learning offers practical education.

Second Working Hypothesis: Students at American Institute for Learning express external and internal assets that indicate school satisfaction and a desire to succeed.

> **WH 2a:** Students express external assets that support student success.

> **WH 2b:** Students at the American Institute for Learning express internal assets that indicate feelings of bonding to the school and a desire to succeed.

> **WH 2c.** Alumni of the American Institute for Learning feel that school made a difference in there lives.

These working hypotheses guide the research design and data collection effort. All surveys are constructed so that they will provide evidence to test the working hypotheses. The questionnaire items construction was drawn directly from the working hypotheses.

The Search Institutes' survey of developmental assets provides the primary framework for the anonymous student survey used in this study (Appendix B). Some questions were modified to accommodate AIL's uniqueness.[38] The survey is made up of 120 Likert-type questions with more than one question per asset (forty total assets). A Likert scale ranging for "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" will provide a 5-point measure for analyzing survey responses. Anonymous surveys were also given to teachers, counselors, and curriculum developers (Appendix C, G, and E,

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[38] Approximately 25 of the original Search Institute questions were omitted. Listing these would be difficult since some of the original questions were moved around during the formatting of the revised survey.

respectively). Most questions were Likert-type, while a few were open-ended. In addition, observation of four classrooms were conducted (Appendix I) as well as alumni phone interviews (Appendix J). Time constraints on this research did not allow for pre-test, post-test examination of student and staff perceptions.

Student participants were sampled based on attendance at time of survey and teacher approval. This judgmental selection of classroom and student populations is appropriate for initial observations and because it is the least disruptive means of studying students in their classroom (Babbie 1995, p. 225). Most students are considered at-risk although some choose to attend the school as an alternative to traditional public education. The entire population of teachers, counselors, and curriculum developers were available and able to complete the survey. A mix of Likert-type and open-ended questions were used in staff surveys. Table 4.1 summarizes the sample populations involved in this study and Table 4.2 summarizes the classroom observation samples.

Table 4.1 Summary of the American Institute for Learning sample populations

Participants	Total Population	Sample Size	% of Total Population	Type of Sample
Students	250	85	34	Judgement
Teachers	17	17	100	Entire Population
Counselors	10	10	100	Entire Population
Curriculum Developers	3	3	100	Entire Population

Table 4.2 Summary of the American Institute for Learning judgmental classroom observation samples

Classes	Number of Students	Total Number of classes	Sample Size	% of classes observed
At AIL	250	39	4	10
Journeys	21	1		
Paper Trails	7	1		
Geo-Math	10	1		
Continental Drift	9	1		

Operationalization of Working Hypothesis

The literature in Chapter two illustrates the variables used to support the framework for this research. Four principles of pragmatic education were selected from the literature to assess service learning: Collaborative learning (WH1a), collaborative teaching (WH1b), community education (WH1c), and practical education (WH1d). These features combine to form the subhypothesis that support the first working hypothesis:

> **First Working Hypothesis**: The service learning model offered by the American Institute for Learning reflects various principles of pragmatic education.

Tables 4.3 through 4.8 summarize how the questionnaires and other modes of observation are linked to the working hypotheses. Each table illustrates the specific survey question used to describe the various characteristics of pragmatic education or developmental assets. The subhypothesis are developed in the following tables.

WH 1a: AIL practices collaborative learning activities.

Survey and observation evidence to support or reject WH 1a is illustrated in Table 4.3, which

lists eight variables describing collaborative learning features.

Table 4.3 Linking evidence from surveys and classroom observation to collaborative learning features (WH1a)

Collaborative Learning Features of Pragmatic Schools	Research Method	Evidence* Survey Question
Classes are small enough to give individual attention to students	Survey and classroom observation	TS: 10　　CD: 10 SS: 79 CO: 4
Students are free to move around the room and seek help from others.	Survey and classroom observation	TS:11　　SS: 21 CO: 8
Teachers are viewed as a "fellow-worker" as opposed to an "all- powerful ruler."	Survey and classroom observation	CS: 4 SS: 120 CO: 1, 2
Students enjoy the school.	Survey	SS: 24, 32 CS: 14　　TS: 21
Students are given responsibilities as citizens of the school.	Survey	TS: 13　　CD: 13 SS: 22, 103　CS: 9
Students participate in the evaluation of the school.	Survey	TS: 16　　CD: 16
Students participate in self- evaluation.	Survey	TS:17　　CD: 17 CS: 11
Cooperative learning takes place.	Survey and classroom observation	TS: 12,18 CD: 11, 12, 18 CS: 8, 12 SS: 5, 23, 78

*TS= teacher survey; SS= student survey; CO= class observation; CS= counselor survey; CD= curriculum developer survey, SR= School records

WH 1b: Teachers participate in collaborative teaching activities.

Table 4.4 list three characteristics of collaborative teaching and survey questions to support or reject WH1b.

Table 4.4 Linking the evidence from surveys to collaborative teaching activities

#	Collaborative Teaching Features of Pragmatic Schools	Research Method	Evidence
1	Teachers are specialists in their subject fields.	Survey	**TS:** 3
2	Teachers meet frequently to discuss events and curriculum.	Survey	**TS:** 23
3	Teachers work together with curriculum developers.	Survey	**TS:** 4

WH 1c: The school promotes community education.

Table 4.5 list four features of community education and survey questions to support of reject WH1c.

Table 4.5 Linking the evidence from surveys to community education (WH1c)

Features of Community Education	Research Method	Evidence from Survey Question
Students develop habits of cooperation and service to the community.	Survey	**TS:** 19 **CD:** 19 **SS:** 5, 78 **CS:** 8
School incorporates cultural and educational institutions in the community to enrich the curriculum.	Survey	**TS:** 15 **CD:** 15
There is a close relationship with a university.	Survey	**TS:5** **CD:5**
School is organized as a social community.	Observation	Setting

WH 1d: The American Institute for Learning offers practical education.

Table 4.6 lists 7 features of practical education and survey questions to support of reject WH 1d.

Table 4.6 Linking the evidence from surveys to practical education (WH1d)

Features of Practical Education	Research Method	Evidence from Survey Questions
Speaking and listening skills are encouraged.	Survey and classroom observation	**TS:** 20 **SS:** 26 **CD:** 20 **CO:** 3, 5
AIL is perceived by students and staff as different from other schools.	Survey	**TS:** 14 **CS:** 10 **SS:** 118 **CD:** 14
Curriculum considers developmental needs of students.	Survey	**TS:** 7 **CD:** 7 **CS:** 7
School has a test-and-see (experimental) attitude.	Survey	**TS:** 8 **CD:** 8
Curriculum is continually being developed and modified to serve students' changing needs.	Survey	**TS:** 9 **SS:** 116 **CD:** 9
Curriculum engages students in solving real world problems. (Project-based)	Survey	**TS:** 6 **CD:** 6 **SS:** 20 **CS:** 6
Social significance of subject matter is brought out in instruction.	Survey and classroom observation	**CD:** 3 **CO:** 9

Chapter two also discusses the forty developmental assets that provide the framework for assessing student attitudes. The twenty external assets and twenty internal assets, along with input from alumni of AIL, combine to support or reject the second working hypothesis and the subhypothesis which support it.

Second Working Hypothesis: Students at American Institute for Learning express external and internal assets that indicate school satisfaction and a desire to succeed.

WH 2a: Students express external assets that support student success.

Table 4.7 list sources of evidence from surveys to support or reject WH2a.

Table 4.7 Linking the evidence from student surveys to supportive external assets

External Assets			
Asset Category	**Asset Definition**	**Evidence from Survey Questions**	**Measure**
1. Support	1. Family support	SS: 30, 43	Survey
	2. Positive family communication	SS: 39, 48	
	3. Other adult relationships	SS: 84, 110, 112	
	4. Caring neighborhood	SS: 52, 86	
	5. Caring school climate	SS: 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 93, 118	
	6. Parent involvement in school	SS: 34, 35, 36	
2. Empowerment	7. Community values youth	SS: 83	Survey
	8. Youth as resources	SS: 49, 85, 117	
	9. Service to others	SS: 5, 61	
	10. Safety	SS: 90, 99, 100, 101	
3. Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	SS: 42, 51, 76, 94	Survey
	12. School boundaries	SS: 46, 105	
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	SS: 53	
	14. Adult role models	SS: 111	
	15. Positive peer influence	SS: 10, 69, 95, 96, 97, 98	
	16. High expectations	SS: 29, 30	
4. Constructive use of time	17. Creative activities	SS: 63	Survey
	18. Youth programs	SS: 54, 58	
	19. Religious community	SS: 8, 60	
	20. Time at home	SS: 108, 109	

WH 2b: Students at the American Institute for Learning express internal assets that indicate feelings of bonding to the school and a desire to succeed.

Table 4.8 lists sources of evidence from surveys to support or reject WH 2b.

Table 4.8 Linking the evidence from student surveys to positive internal assets (WH 2b)

Internal Assets			
Asset Category	**Type of Asset**	**Evidence from Survey Questions**	**Measure**
5. Commitment to learning	21. Achievement motivation	SS: 24, 27, 104	Survey
	22. School engagement	SS: 20, 22, 23, 32, 103	
	23. Homework	SS: 19	
	24. Bonding to school	SS: 26, 47, 92 AS: 7, 8, 9	
	25. Reading for pleasure	SS: 59	
6. Positive values	26. Caring	SS: 6, 13, 62, 65	Survey
	27. Equality and social justice	SS: 7, 9, 12	
	28. Integrity	SS: 14, 15	
	29. Honesty	SS: 16	
	30. Responsibility	SS: 17	
	31. Restraint	SS: 44, 45, 57, 74, 75, 77	
7. Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making	SS: 66, 67, 72	Survey
	33. Interpersonal competence	SS: 70, 71	
	34. Cultural competence	SS: 11	
	35. Resistance skills	SS: 55, 64	
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	SS: 56, 89, 102	
8. Positive Identity	37. Personal power	SS: 18, 68, 87, 107	Survey
	38. Self-esteem	SS: 37, 38, 39, 73, 80	
	39. Sense of purpose	SS: 41, 82	
	40. Positive view of personal future	SS: 81, 88, 119	

WH 2c. Alumni of the American Institute for Learning feel that school made a difference in there lives.

Table 4.9 lists sources of evidence from interview questions used to support or reject WH2c.

Table 4.9 Linking alumni opinion with evidence from telephone interviews (WH 2c)

Working Hypothesis	Measure	Evidence from Survey Question
Alumni continued other forms of education after completing their program at AIL	telephone interview	AS: 3
Alumni feel that school made a difference	telephone interview	AS: 7
What did you like most about AIL	telephone interview	AS: 8
What do you feel AIL can improve on	telephone interview	AS:9

The viewpoints of teachers, students, counselors, and curriculum directors, contribute greatly to the empirical portion of this study. The student questionnaires are more in-depth than the staff questionnaires but the purpose is to present an overview of AIL as seen by those involved in the school. These extensive data gathered through these surveys are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the qualitative and quantitative data of this case study. Following Yin's (1994) principles of data collection, this research has: 1) used "multiple sources of evidence," that include surveys, school documentation, and participant observation, 2) created "a case study database"; and 3) provided meaning to the data by maintaining a "chain of evidence" (p. 98). The principles of pragmatic education described in the literature and the developmental assets identified by the Search Institute provide the "theoretical orientation guiding (this) case study analysis" (Yin 1994, p. 104). This theoretical framework is distilled in the form of two working hypotheses that provide the basis for matching patterns of activities of service learning with pragmatic education and for matching student self-assessment with research on developmental assets (p. 106).

Data is organized in a tabular format and illustrates the response to the descriptive characteristics of the two working hypotheses. Staff and student perceptions are assessed by providing the rate and range *positive* responses. Table 5.1 summarizes the method for assessing survey responses.[39] If the rate falls above 50% the characteristic are considered present. A response range that falls primarily in the 50% range is considered fair.[40] A response range that is below 50% is considered poor. A response range that falls primarily in the 60% range is considered good, and

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[39] An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was not possible because the number of participants in each group was too varied; the number of cases per category differed too much for comparison (DiLeonardi and Curtis 1992, p. 132).

[40] This research modified the Search Institute's survey so it was not possible to recreate their method of analysis.

one that falls above 70% is considered excellent.

When most of the various groups of participants respond positively (e.g., two out of three groups give a positive response above of 50%) the descriptive category is assessed as at least "fair" with the possibility of being assessed as "excellent," depending on the range of responses. Therefore, each descriptive category is defined as either being present or not, and as having an excellent, good, fair, or poor standing in the organization and student developmental profile. If there is a disparity between sample population responses, teachers are given greater weight because there are more teachers in the staff population and because they interact more with students.

Table 5.1 Survey response assessment values

Range/Rate of Response	Assessment Value
Above 70%	Excellent
60%	Good
50%	Fair
Less than 50%	Poor

Sample profile: Fifty daytime students and 35 evening students participated. They ranged in age between 16 and 21 year old. There were 47 males and 36 females that participated in the survey.[41] Thirty eight percent live in two-parent homes, 31% live in one-parent homes with the mother as the head of household, and 19% live on their own. The other 10% either alternate between two homes (5%) or live with their father (5%). Forty two percent report participation in the school's community activities, while 58% said they had not participated in community activities.

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[41] This research failed to include a "20" and "21" year bracket which would have been useful in identifying those student who live alone or out of the home.

Staff surveys were administered during weekly teacher meetings or handed to the staff personally. All of AIL's teachers, counselors, and curriculum developers participated in the study (17 teachers, 10 counselors, and 3 curriculum developers). Only 2 of the 14 full-time teachers surveyed are certified. Teachers' years of experience ranged between 2 months and 22 years (average of 7 years). The average number of years teaching at AIL was three with a range of 6 month to 10 years. Four classrooms were observed and 53 alumni were called.

Evidence

Specific responses to all survey questions can be found in the Appendixes. Appendix B list the response percentages from the student surveys. Appendix D lists response percentages from teacher surveys. Appendix F lists responses from the curriculum developers. Appendix H lists responses from the counselors. Appendix I lists results from the classroom observation. And finally, Appendix K lists responses from alumni participants. All of these results are synthesized into values of excellent, good, fair, and poor in order to assess each of the working hypothesis.

First Working Hypothesis: *The service learning model offered by the American Institute for Learning reflects various principles of pragmatic education.*

WH 1a: *AIL practices collaborative learning activities.*

Table 5.2 lists the overall rate of responses for each of the eight characteristics that describe collaborative learning. Most of the participants felt that AIL class size was adequate and conducive to learning. They also agreed that students have the freedom to move around the classroom and seek help from others. Students seemed to feel that teachers were more like peers that authoritarians,

although counselors felt this was less evident.[42] Even though this descriptive category is assessed as "fair," it is interesting to note that alumni response (see Table 5.8) indicated a high level of satisfaction with teacher support.[43] Student satisfaction at school included a broad range of responses (64%- 86%) with 64% of students "strongly disagreeing" to the question "I feel bored at school." In the area of school responsibilities, students felt the school was providing them with an opportunity to participate while teachers felt this area needed improvement.

Classroom observation indicated genuine attention by the part of teachers, they often recognized their ideas and referred to students by name.[44] Class size averaged 12 students, a very reasonable number. Results for the descriptive category of cooperative learning are skewed by the low-rate of actual volunteer activity (33%) performed by the students at AIL. It is quite possible that this number is actually high if compared to volunteer behavior in other schools. Even so, teacher responses indicate that students are not participating enough in the school process. This includes participation in school responsibilities, self-evaluation, and evaluation of the school.

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[42] Questions for this category were poorly written and did not seem to capture the relation between students and teachers.

[43] This response is based on an open-ended question. Teacher satisfaction was the most often sighted response.

[44] Teacher recognizes student idea or refers to by name 9 times per class.

Table 5.2 Assessing the evidence from surveys and classroom observation that indicate the presence of collaborative learning features of pragmatic education (WH 1a)

Collaborative Learning Features of Pragmatic Schools	Positive Response Rate	N	Response Above 50%	Assessed Value
Classes are small enough to give individual attention to students	TS: 70%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 94%	83	Yes	
	CD: 100%	4	Yes	
Students are free to move around the room and seek help from others.	TS: 100%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 80%	85	Yes	
	CO: 100%	4	Yes	
Teachers are viewed as a "fellow-worker" as opposed to an "all- powerful ruler."	SS: 63%	73	Yes	Fair -Good
	CS: 22% (67% said neither)	10	No	
Students enjoy the school.	TS: 76%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 64%- 86%	80	Yes	
	CS: 100%	10	Yes	
Students are given responsibilities as citizens of the school.	TS: 47%	17	No	Fair
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
	CS: 78%	10	Yes	
Students participate in the evaluation of the school.	TS: 41%	17	No	Poor
	CD: 67%	3	Yes	
Students participate in self- evaluation.	TS: 35%	17	No	Poor
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
	CS: 44%	10	No	
Cooperative learning takes place.	TS: 76% - 88%	17	Yes	Excellent
	CD: 67% -100%	3	Yes	
	CS: 78% - 89%	10	Yes	
	SS: 33% - 87%	82	No	

*TS= teacher survey; SS= student survey; CO= class observation; CS= counselor survey; CD= curriculum developer survey

WH 1b: *Teachers participate in collaborative teaching activities.*

Table 5.3 describes the general practice of collaboration among teachers and curriculum directors. Most of the open-ended questions indicated that teachers interact in both casual and structured ways, especially in the area of team-teaching.[45] This evidence was mostly gathered by classroom and participant observation. Many of the teachers (77%) felt comfortable in their specialty even though most are not certified (2 out of 14 are certified). Teachers meet frequently to discuss school events and curriculum but they do not work extensively with the curriculum developer. Nevertheless, AIL seems to have an adequate level of teacher collaboration.

Table 5.3 Assessing the evidence from surveys and classroom observation that indicate the presence of collaborative teaching features of pragmatic education (WH 1b)

#	Collaborative Teaching Features of Pragmatic Schools	Positive Response Rate	N	Response Above 50%	Assessed Value
1	Teachers are specialists in their subject fields.	**TS:** 77%	17	Yes	Excellent
2	Teachers meet frequently to discuss events and curriculum.	**TS:** 82%	17	Yes	Excellent
3	Teachers work together with curriculum developers.	**TS:** 47%	17	No	Poor

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[45] All four of the classrooms observed were taught with two teachers.

WH 1c: *The school promotes community education.*

Table 5.4 describes student and staff perceptions of community education at AIL. There is a discrepancy between students and staff as to whether AIL helps "students develop habits of cooperation and service to the community." One reason for student scores skewing results may be that less than 50% participated in actual community activities. Once again, however, this may be a higher number than average for high schoolers.

Both teachers and curriculum developers agree that "cultural and educational institutions...enrich the curriculum." Though one area that is deficient is collaboration with area universities. This may be an area in which *both* the school and area universities can work on to increase activity. As mentioned in Chapter three, universities do play a role in the assessment of charter schools as part of the statewide evaluation system.

AIL resembles the community in that it is located downtown, but it is not necessarily a family-oriented environment. Although, it does provide exposure to an atmosphere of business and profession.

Table 5.4 Assessing the evidence from surveys and classroom observation that indicate the presence of community education (WH 1c)

Features of Community Education	Positive Response Rate*	N	Response Above 50%	Assessed Value
Students develop habits of cooperation and service to the community.	SS: 42%	84	No	Excellent
	TS: 94%	17	Yes	
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
	CS: 89%	10	Yes	
School incorporates cultural and educational institutions in the community to enrich the curriculum.	TS: 76%	17	Yes	Excellent
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
There is a close relationship with a university.	TS: 18%	17	No	Poor
	CD: minimal	3	No	
School is organized as a social community.	Downtown	1		Good

*TS= teacher survey; SS= student survey; CO= class observation; CS= counselor survey; CD= curriculum developer survey

WH 1d: *The American Institute for Learning offers practical education.*

Table 5.5 describes student and staff perception of practical education. The table indicates agreement among participants that AIL offers practical education. All positive responses were above 50% and are assessed as "good" or "excellent." A number of students reported that teachers are attentive, but teachers believed listening and speaking skills needed more emphasis. Many agreed that AIL is different than traditional public highs schools, but counselors felt less so. There is strong indication that AIL considers students' developmental needs, and does so on an experimental basis involving students in real-world activities, and incorporating social significance in the lesson plans.

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One observation made while conducting classroom observation was the use of a notebook for compiling student productivity. Three of the four classrooms used a similar "notebook method" of teaching espoused by Shields (1998). Teachers opted not to use published notebooks with prescribed exercises, and instead had students work on contemporary topics and collect their work in a notebook . The journalism class used computers to help students learn how to write articles and prepare them for publication in the student newsletter.

Another key aspect of pragmatism evident during field research was the active and creative exercises intended to stimulate self-reflection. One team of teachers used the concept of a labyrinth as a metaphor for life and combined this exercise with literature, painting, and group discussion. The act of self-reflection is a key aspect of pragmatic education but this research design failed to emphasize this quality. It should also be noted that students who participate in the Casa Verde and Ecorp project-based programs participate in a "rap" session between work periods and class periods. This anecdotal evidence offers support that AIL incorporates the practice of self-reflection - a key principle of pragmatic education - in their model of service learning.

Table 5. 5 Assessing the evidence from surveys and classroom observation that indicate the presence of practical education (WH 1d)

Features of Practical Education	Positive Response Rate	N	Response Above 50%	Assessed Value
Speaking and listening skills are encouraged.	TS: 59%	17	Yes	Good
	CD: 67%	3	Yes	
	SS: 81%	85	Yes	
	CO: yes	4	Yes	
AIL is perceived by students and staff as different from other schools.	TS: 100%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 80%	74	Yes	
	CS: 67%	10	Yes	
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
Curriculum considers developmental needs of students.	TS: 71%	17	Yes	Excellent
	CS: 89%	10	Yes	
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
School has a test-and-see (experimental) attitude.	TS: 76%	17	Yes	Excellent
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
Curriculum is continually being developed and modified to serve students' changing needs.	TS: 88%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 91%	75	Yes	
	CD: 100%	3	Yes	
Curriculum engages students in solving real world problems. (Project-based)	TS: 83%	17	Yes	Excellent
	SS: 89%	85	Yes	
	CD:100%	3	Yes	
	CS: 100%	10	Yes	
Social significance of subject matter is brought out in instruction.	CD: yes	3	Yes	Excellent
	CO: yes	4	Yes	

*TS= teacher survey; SS= student survey; CO= class observation; CS= counselor survey; CD= curriculum developer survey

Second Working Hypothesis: *Students at American Institute for Learning express external and internal assets that indicate school satisfaction and a desire to succeed.*

WH 2a : *Students express external assets that support student success.*

Table 5.6 describes the range of response to the first twenty developmental assets that reflect external areas of support. Only 7 of the first twenty assets received a "good" to "excellent" assessment (35%). Generally, students had more negative responses with regard to caring neighborhood and other adult relationships. Interestingly, there were more positive responses in the areas of school and family support, although parent involvement in school had mixed input.[46] Students expressed a strong deficiency in the area of empowerment, and seemed to feel relatively safe. Boundaries and expectations were also low. This evidence indicates that students receive messages of boundaries and expectations from family and school, but not so much from their community. The school fares well in the area of boundaries and expectation (66% agree) with many students (83%) believing that their negative actions have consequences at school. Constructive use of time has the lowest range of scores indicating a lack of participation in constructive activities, but it seems that many students spend little time watching TV (35% say they see less than 1 hour of T.V. a day).

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[46] Approximately 20% of the students lived alone and therefore did not respond to some family-oriented questions.

Table 5.6 Assessing the evidence from student surveys that indicate positive external support (WH 2a)

External Assets					
Asset Category	**Asset Definition**	**Positive Response Range**	**N**	**Range Falls Above 50%**	**Assessed Value**
Support	1. Family support	78% - 81%	85	Yes	Excellent
	2. Positive family communication	70%	83	Yes	Excellent
	3. Other adult relationships	28% - 35%	75	No	Poor
	4. Caring neighborhood	24% - 63%	82	No	Fair - Poor
	5. Caring school climate	77% - 89%	74	Yes	Excellent
	6. Parent involvement in school	38% - 74%	84	No	Fair
Empowerment	7. Community values youth	35%	83	No	Poor
	8. Youth as resources	56% - 71%	74	No	Fair - Good
	9. Service to others	20% - 42%	84	No	Fair
	10. Safety	65% - 96%	79	Yes	Good-Excellent
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	31% - 73%	76	No	Fair - Good
	12. School boundaries	66% - 83%	76	Yes	Good - Excellent
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	28%	83	No	Poor
	14. Adult role models	40%	74	No	Poor
	15. Positive peer influence	32%-79%	80	No	Fair - Good
	16. High expectations	81% - 85%	85	Yes	Excellent
Constructive use of time	17. Creative activities	15% participate in activities 3-11 hrs/wk	83	No	Poor
	18. Youth programs	23% - 30%	85	No	Poor
	19. Religious community	19% - 53%	84	No	Poor - Fair
	20. Time at home	35% see 1 hr or less	74		Good

WH 2b: *Students at the American Institute for Learning express internal assets that indicate feelings of bonding to the school and a desire to succeed.*

Table 5.7 describes student self-perceptions and internal assets. Twelve of the twenty assets (60%) have a positive response range above 50%. Commitment to learning indicates high motivation to learn and engagement in school, but some learning behavior is low (e.g., reading for pleasure). The category assigned to homework is not really relevant to AIL because the school does not require homework of their students, therefore this area may be skewing results. It is important to point out, however, that alumni follow up research revealed a handful of students who had actually completed both the GED *and* Diploma; this may be a small gain from a statistical point of view, but it also indicates a genuine interest in learning on the part of the students.

In the area of positive values, students report high level of positive responses with regard to caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, and responsibility, but report low positive responses for the area of restraint.[47] The social competencies category is vague because there was a wide range of responses, however, some areas like resistance skills and interpersonal competence is clearly low. Positive identity also varied in the range of response, but results indicate that students generally have a fairly good sense of personal power and positive view of their personal future, even though many report low self-esteem (33%).

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[47] Thirty two percent of students volunteer 3-11 hours per week.

Table 5.7 Assessing the evidence from student surveys that indicate positive internal motivation

		Internal Assets			
Asset Category	**Type of Asset**	**Positive Response Range**	**N**	**Range Falls Above 50%**	**Assessed Value**
Commitment to learning	21. Achievement motivation	79% - 91%	76	Yes	Excellent
	22. School engagement	64% - 89%	77	Yes	Good - Excellent
	23. Homework	93% do less than 1hr./wk	84	No	Poor
	24. Bonding to school	81% - 86%	79	Yes	Excellent
	25. Reading for pleasure	7% read more than 11 hrs./wk	84	No	Poor
Positive values	26. Caring	65% - 79%	84	Yes	Good - Excellent
	27. Equality and social justice	68% - 84%	85	Yes	Good - Excellent
	28. Integrity	88% - 92%	85	Yes	Excellent
	29. Honesty	74%	84	Yes	Excellent
	30. Responsibility	90%	85	Yes	Excellent
	31. Restraint	13% - 79%	81	No	Poor - Good
Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making	17% - 65%	82	No	Poor - Good
	33. Interpersonal competence	17% -30%	83	No	Poor
	34. Cultural competence	67%	85	Yes	Good
	35. Resistance skills	45% - 55%	81	No	Poor - Fair
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	48% -65%	78	No	Poor - Fair
Positive Identity	37. Personal power	69% - 77%	74	Yes	Good - Excellent
	38. Self-esteem	33% - 86%	82	No	Poor - Good
	39. Sense of purpose	56% - 72%	83	Yes	Fair - Good
	40. Positive view of personal future	70% - 76%	74	Yes	Excellent

WH 2c. *Alumni of the American Institute for Learning feel that school made a difference in their lives.*

Table 5.8 describes the alumni response in telephone interviews. Most students (82%) have not sought additional education after completing their education at AIL although 12% indicated a desire to do so, and 6% had done so and completed their education. Over 70% found the school helpful in helping them make the transition from school to work, 23% found it somewhat helpful, and 6% did not find it helpful at all.

Most students had a pleasant experience at AIL, only 2% did not enjoy it. The most common compliment of the school was the supportive attitude found in teachers and staff, and most students felt no changes were needed or did not know what they would change. Some students were affected by the numerous changes taking place at the school (10%) and felt the school should make a greater effort to control disruptive students (10%)

Table 5.8 Assessing the evidence from alumni telephone interviews that describe alumni status and attitudes about school

#	Survey Question	N	Response
3	Have you sought additional education or vocational training after graduating from AIL? If yes, where?	51	82%= No 12%= Plan to go 6% = attended and completed
7	On a scale of 1 to 3 (1= not helpful, 2= somewhat helpful, 3= very helpful) do you feel AIL helped you make the transition from school to work?	51	71% = very helpful 23% = somewhat helpful 6% = not helpful
8	What did you like most about AIL?	51	47% = supportive teachers, staff 14% = combination of all 12% = atmosphere 12%= flexible, self-paced 8% = curriculum, project-base 4% = student-teacher ratio, class size 2% = working with other people 2% = did not like it
9	What do you feel AIL should improve on?	51	39% = no changes needed 12% = no suggestions made 10% = sense changes taking place 10% = disruptive students 8% = other 6% = improve school aesthetics, size 4% = more staff support 4% = expand project-based curriculum 2% = improve school efficiency 2% = did not like it 2% = class size is too big 2% = provide day care

The evidence compiled in these tables provides an assessment of AIL's service learning program and insight into its student population. This information is further synthesized in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: 1) it provides an overview of the evidence presented in this study; 2) it analyzes AIL's in light of the working hypothesis; and 3) it discusses strengths and weaknesses of the study. An overall assessment of each working hypothesis and subhypothesis is presented. It concludes with a final assessment of AIL's pragmatic characteristics and students' developmental status.

First Working Hypothesis: The service learning model offered by the American Institute for Learning reflects various principles of pragmatic education.

    WH 1a: AIL practices collaborative learning activities.

    WH 1b: Teachers participate in collaborative teaching activities.

    WH 1c: The school promotes community education.

    WH 1d: The American Institute for Learning offers practical education.

This research concludes that the American Institute for Learning service learning model does reflect all of the pragmatic principles of education assigned in this study. All four subhypothesis received positive remarks assessing the characteristic as "good" or "excellent." In WH1a., five of the eight descriptive characteristics were assessed as "good" or "excellent." In WH 1b., 2 out of 3 were assessed as "good" or "excellent;" in WH 1c., all the categories were assessed as "good" or "excellent;" and in WH 1d., 3 out of 4 were assessed as "good" or "excellent."

Areas that need improvement include: participation of students in school responsibilities, self-evaluation of student's process, and school assessment. Although the school does work with area

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universities in some capacities (e.g., student internships available for college students), teachers are not inclined or able to work with universities in developing curriculum.

The school is very strong in the kind of support teachers and staff provide students and is consistent in introducing topics of social value in its curriculum. Students and alumni indicate high level of school satisfaction, although self-motivated learning is low. Most of the participants (teachers, students, counselors, and curriculum developers) believed that AIL helps to foster cooperation and community involvement, yet actual participation in community events among students surveyed is low. Evidence for the second working hypothesis focuses on the social context that contributes support to students.

Second Working Hypothesis: Students at American Institute for Learning express external and internal assets that indicate school satisfaction and a desire to succeed.

   WH 2a: Students express external assets that support student success.

   WH 2b: Students at the American Institute for Learning express internal assets that indicate feelings of bonding to the school and a desire to succeed.

   WH 2c. Alumni of the American Institute for Learning feel that school made a difference in there lives.

Unlike the first working hypothesis, the evidence for the second working hypothesis is mixed. Overall, students responded more favorably to WH2b.(60%), than WH 2a.(35%), indicating a greater sense of internal assets that external assets. Many students expressed high levels of family and school support, although community and other social relationships are low. The evidence clearly identifies that most students do not feel that their abilities are being tapped and utilized in their communities. Nor do many of them show that their natural talents are being explored in extra curricular activities.

This is one area the school is in the process of developing by making clubs available to students.

In general, with the exception of family and school support, students express low external assets levels. The data on family and school support does support WH1a., which are the two factors most likely to promote success. The lack of social cohesion and support is a pervasive problem affecting most communities.

The evidence for WH 2b indicates students are committed to learning with regard to school and personal goals, but are less inclined to participate in self-motivated learning. Students greatly appreciate positive values like honesty, caring, responsibility, and equality and social justice, but waiver in the areas of self-restraint and peaceful conflict resolution. Social competencies are mixed with cultural competence fairing better than personal responsibility and interpersonal competence. Students surveyed generally expressed a positive sense of identity although low marks in self-esteem contradict some of the other findings. Given the stereotype associated with "at-risk" youth (i.e., irresponsible, dangerous, failures), the students surveyed at AIL indicate positive internal assets that are reflected in their dedication to success and learning.[48] Many have a positive view of their future and feel bonded to their school (81%-86%).

Weaknesses of the Study

As discussed in the literature, educational research is complicated by the numerous factors affecting child development and learning. This study incorporated numerous variables in order to provide a broad scope view of the American Institute for Learning. The lack of control variables

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[48] AIL has been the subject of many local newspaper articles, commending the school for its efforts and curriculum, but students are quick to correct authors that misrepresent their abilities based on stereotypic biases.

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makes it difficult to compare variables to other settings. This is also the case for comparing variables and sample populations within the study. The lack of congruent questionnaire items and small sample sizes among the staff population also made it difficult to compare group perceptions.

Another problem affecting this study is that the sample of curriculum developers was too small and not necessarily relevant. Only one curriculum developer works full-time to synthesize the curriculum of the entire school. Teachers develop their own curriculum and the curriculum developer documents it for the school. The other two curriculum developers are mostly involved in administrative duties and, therefore, questions were not really appropriate to their job assignment.

Similarly, the student survey contained questions not necessarily appropriate to some students who did not live at home. Although, questions were modified to accommodate these students, no age bracket was allowed for students over 19 years. Even though these conditions were drawbacks to this study's design, the study provides a good overview of the school's efforts.

Strengths of the Study

Although at first the length of the student survey seemed risky, the high completion rate (83% of students completed the survey) indicated that students were interested in the survey questions. Debriefing sessions following the surveys found that students were interested in the topic of school reform and eager to share their ideas. The size of the student sample and their input is a key strength in this study.

One pragmatic principle which was discussed in the literature but omitted from the study's design is the practice of self-reflection. The fact that this study incorporated participant surveys *and* classroom observation allowed for the observation of this attribute. An advantage of classroom

observation is that the relationship between students and teachers is more apparent. Students' commitment to learning, their participation in an educational setting, and their regard for the teacher is available for observation. Positive observations include: students timely arrival and participation in classes that start at 8:00 a.m., courteous yet analytical discussions with teachers, and completion of classroom assignments. Likewise, disruptive behavior was observed, although none that was disrespectful of the teachers.[49] Direct observation and alumni interviews revealed that some students are serious about attending the school and are bothered by students who are disruptive.

The multiple input from participants at AIL in conjunction with the classroom observation is a cornerstone of this research. Participants seemed genuinely interested in the research and willingly filled out the surveys. The greatest effort came from the students themselves.

Final Summary

The evidence analyzed in this research suggests that the model of service learning practiced by the American Institute for Learning closely resembles the principles of pragmatic. Like many young people in the United States, however, the students at AIL have a limited in amount of external, social assets that promote healthy maturation. Students do report a high level of support from their school and families (school was slightly higher) and are generally optimistic about their future. Although the school is limited in how it can affect student's social support, it appears to be providing a high level of support for students attending the school. In addition to bonding to the school, students surveyed expressed a desire to learn and succeed.

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[49] The presence of an observer may affect these observations.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Anonymous Student Survey Response Table

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
5	Have you participated in Case Verde, E-corp, or any community event sponsored by the American Institute for Learning since you have been attending here?	85					Yes: 41.7% No: 58.3%
6	Helping other people		14%	7%	79%		
7	Helping to reduce hunger and poverty in the world		19%	13	68		
8	Being religious or spiritual		20	27	53		
9	Helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly		9	7	84		
10	Having friends who want me to succeed		9	12	79		
11	Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am		19	14	67		
12	Speaking up for equality		9	12	79		
13	Giving time or money to make life better for other people		16	19	65		
14	Doing what I believe is right even if my friends make fun of me		11	1	88		
15	Standing up for what I believe even when it's unpopular to do so		6	2	92		
16	Telling the truth even when it is not easy		13	13	74		
17	Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble		8	2	90		
18	Doing my best even when I have to do a job I don't like	84	8	10	71		
19	On an average school day, about how much time do you spend doing homework outside of school?	84					93% less than 1 hr
20	What I am learning in this school will help me in the real world		2	9	89		
21	Students at AIL are free to move around the classroom and get help from others		5	15	80		
22	AIL allows students to participate in school responsibilities		2	18	80		

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
23	I am learning in a cooperative environment		2	11	87		
24	At school I try as hard as I can to do my best work		5	9	86		
25	My teachers really care about me		5	18	77		
26	My teachers really listen to me		6	13	81		
27	It bothers me when I don't do something well		12	9	79		
28	I get a lot of encouragement at my school		4	7	89		
29	Teachers at my school push me to be the best I can be		5	11	85		
30	My parents push me to be the best I can be		12	7	81		
31	A.I.L helps students build cooperative skills		1	13	86		
32	Feel bored at school		17	19	64		
33	During the last four weeks, how many days of school have you missed because you skipped or "ditched"?	80					50% missed 0 days, 16% misses 1, 15%missed 3, 8% missed 4 or more
34	How often do your parents help you with your school work	84	20	16	43	21	
35	How often do your parents talk to you about what you are doing in school	84	11	6	74	10	
36	Go to meetings and events at your school	84	42	7	38	13	
37	On the whole, I like myself	84	7	10	86		
38	At times, I think I am no good at all		26	17	57		
39	I get along well with my parents		13	17	70		
40	All in all, I am glad I am me		6	8	86		
41	I feel I do not have much to be proud of		12	16	72		
42	If I break one of my parents' rules, I usually get punished	81	49	20	31		
43	My parents give me help and support when I need it		14	8	78		
44	It is against my values to drink alcohol while I am a teenager	83	55	17	27		
45	It is against my values to have sex while I am a teenager	84	66	21	13		

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
46	At AIL, there are clear rules about what students can and cannot do		6	11	83		
47	I care about the school I go to		5	14	81		
48	My parents often tell me they love me		19	10	71		
49	In my family, I feel useful and important		15	24	61		
50	Students in my school care about me	83	12	41	47		
51	In my family, there are clear rules about what I can and cannot do	82	17	10	73		
52	In my neighborhood, there are a lot of people who care about me	84	49	27	24		
53	If one of my neighbors saw me do something wrong, he or she would tell one or my parents	83	50	22	28		
54	Been a leader in a group or organization	84					never: 40 once: 18 twice: 12 3-4 times: 13 5 or more: 17
55	Gotten into trouble with the police	84					never: 45 once: 20 twice: 8 3-4 times: 14 5 or more:12
56	Hit or beat up someone						never: 48 once: 14 twice: 13 3-4 times: 10 5 or more: 15
57	Damaged property just for fun	84					never: 79 once: 2 twice: 7 3-4 times: 5 5 or more: 6
58	Playing on or helping with sports teams at school or in the community						0 hr: 66 1 hr: 7 2 hrs: 4 3-5 hrs: 15 6-10 hrs: 5 11 or more: 3

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
59	Reading just for fun	84					0 hr: 39 1 hr: 29 2 hrs: 11 3-5 hrs: 11 6-10 hrs: 4 11 or more: 7
60	Going to programs, groups, or services at a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious or spiritual place	84					0 hr: 58 1 hr: 14 2 hrs: 8 3-5 hrs: 12 6-10 hrs: 6 11 or more: 1
61	Helping other people without pay to make your city a better place for people to live	84					0 hr: 65 1 hr: 10 2 hrs: 6 3-5 hrs: 5 6-10 hrs: 6 11 or more: 8
62	Helping friends or neighbors	84					0 hr: 26 1 hr: 20 2 hrs: 21 3-5 hrs: 11 6-10 hrs: 9 11 or more: 12
63	Practicing or taking lessons in music, art, drama, or dance, after school or on weekend	83					0 hr: 70 1 hr: 6 2 hrs: 2 3-5 hrs: 4 6-10 hrs: 1 11 or more: 10
64	Knowing how to say "no" when someone wants me to do things I know are wrong or dangerous	84	30	11	59		
65	Caring about other people's feelings	84	17	9	74		
66	Thinking through possible good and bad results of different choices before I make decisions	83	18	17	65		
67	Saving my money for something special rather than spending it all right away	83	43	19	37		
68	Giving up when things get hard for me	82	10	21	69		
69	Staying away from people who might get me in trouble	83	37	23	40		
70	Feeling sad when one of my friends is unhappy	83	43	27	30		

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency		
71	Being good at making and keeping friends	83	72	11	17				
72	Being good at planning ahead	82	58	21	21				
73	Taking good care of my body	83	42	25	33				
74	If you drink alcohol, how many times have you had <u>five or more</u> drinks in a row in the <u>last two weeks</u>	83					none: 48 once: 14 twice: 12 3-5 times: 16 6-9 times: 4 10 or more: 6		
75	Do you smoke cigarettes?	83					Y=48	N=30	S=22
76	If you came home from a party and your parents found out that you had been drinking, how upset do you think they would be?	84	33	20	31	15			
77	How many times, if any, have you used marijuana or hash in your lifetime?	81					0 = 15% 1 = 4% 3 = 2% 6 = 4% 10 = 6% 20 = 6% 40 = 63%		
78	How often do you participate in group activities at AIL?	82					never: 33 % 1x/wk: 19% 2x/wk:8% 3x/wk: 17% 1x/mo: 22%		
79	Are classes at AIL too big, too small, or just the right size?	83					too big: 2% too small: 4% just right: 94%		
80	How often did you feel sad or depressed during the <u>last month</u>?	82	12	21	67				
81	Have you ever tried to kill yourself?	83					No: 76% Yes: 17% Yes, more than once: 7%		
82	Sometimes I feel like my life has no purpose	83	28	16	56				
83	Adults in my community make me feel important	83	37	28	35				
84	Adults in my community listen to what I have to say	82	41	31	28				
85	I'm given lots of chances to help make my community a better place to live	82	37	24	39				

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
86	Adults in my community don't care about people my age	82	38	34	28		
87	When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things better	81	7	16	77		
88	When I am an adult, I'm sure I will have a good life	80	6	20	74		
89	Taken part in a fight where a group of your friends fought another group	80					0 = 65 % once = 14% twice = 14% 5 or more = 7%
90	Carried a knife or gun to protect yourself	80					0 = 65 % once = 6% twice = 4% 3-4 times = 4% 5 or more = 21%
91	Does AIL provide you with an opportunity to participate in school functions? (e.g. newsletters, community events, presentations, etc)	80	10	10	80		
92	Does AIL feel more comfortable that other schools you have attended?	79					Yes: 86% No: 0 about the same: 11% not sure: 2%
93	**If you had an important concern about drugs, alcohol, sex, or some other serious issue, would you talk to your parent(s) about it?**						**Throw out**
94	How often do your parents ask you where you are going or with whom you will be?	76	20	18	49	13	
95	Among the people you consider to be your closest friends, how many would you say drink alcohol once a week or more	81	27	25	48		
96	Among the people you consider to be your closest friends, how many would you say have use drugs such as marijuana or cocaine.	81	52	16	32		
97	Among the people you consider to be your closest friends, how many would you say do well in school	78	26	32	42		
98	Among the people you consider to be your closest friends, how many would you say get into trouble at school	80	16	19	65		
99	How often do you feel afraid of walking around your neighborhood?	79	10	11	79		

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
100	How often do you feel afraid of getting hurt by someone at AIL?	79	3	1	96		
101	How often do you feel afraid of getting hurt by someone in your home?	79	5	4	91		
102	Imagine that someone at your school hit your or pushed you for no reason. What would you do?	78	14	17	79		
103	Students help decide what goes on in my school	77	16	18	66		
104	I don't care how I do in school	76	5	4	91		
105	If I break a rule at school, I'm sure to get in trouble	76	10	24	66		
106	My parents spend a lot of time helping other people	76	49	28	29		
107	**I have little control over the things that will happen in my life**						**Throw out**
108	On an average school day, how many hours do you spend watching TV or videos?	74					0 = 17 .5 = 10 1 = 8 2 = 26 3 = 14 4 = 24
109	On an average school day, how many hours do you spend at home with no adult there with you?	76					0 = 19 .5 = 12 1 = 7 2 = 12 3 = 13 4 = 36
110	How many adults have you known for two or more years who give you lots of encouragement whenever they see you	74					0 = 12 1 = 14 2 = 16 3 = 21 5 = 35
111	How many adults have you known for two or more years who spend a lot of time helping other people	76					0 = 17 1 = 23 2 = 20 3 = 17 5 = 23
112	How many adults have you known for two or more years who talk with you at least once a month	75					0 = 16 1 = 21 2 = 23 3 = 13 5 = 27

#	Survey Question	N	1-2	3	4-5	N/A	Frequency
113	What is the highest level of schooling your father (or step-father or male foster parent/guardian) completed?	74					Grade school or less: 4 Some high school: 26 Completed high school: 23 Some college: 15 Completed College: 11 Graduate school: 9 Don't know: 12
114	What is the highest level of schooling your mother (or step-mother or female foster parent/guardian) completed?	74					Grade school or less: 9 Some high school: 26 Completed high school: 18 Some college: 18 Completed College: 16 Graduate school: 7 Don't know: 7
115	Does AIL feel different to you than other schools?	75					Yes: 89 No: 4 About the same: 7
116	Do you feel that AIL is making a positive difference in your life?						Yes: 91 No: 4 Not sure: 5
117	Does AIL provide you with an opportunity to participate in school functions						Yes: 71 No: 11 Sometimes: 18
118	Does AIL feel more comfortable than other schools you have attended						Yes: 80 No: 4 About the same: 16
119	Do you think you will enroll in college after completing your program at AIL?						Yes: 70 No: 5 Not sure: 24
120	Which of the following terms best describes teachers at AIL?						Fellow-workers: 63 All-powerful rulers: 14 Neither: 23

Appendix B : Anonymous Student Survey and Coding Key

Please fill in the circle which best represents you.

1. How old are you?
   16 = 16 or younger   18 = 18
   17 = 17   19 = 19 or older

2. What is your sex?
   1 = male
   2 = female

3. How do you describe yourself? If more than one,
   mark each that applies to you.
   1 = American Indian   4 = Hispanic
   2 = Asian   5 = White/Anglo
   3 = Black/African American

Some of the questions in this survey ask about your parents. In this survey, "parents" refer to the adults who are now most responsible for raising you. They could be foster parents, step-parents, or relatives/guardians. If you live in a one-parent family, answer for that adult.

4. Which of the following best describes your family?
   1 = I live with two parents.
   2 = I live in a one-parent family with my mother.
   3 = I live in a one-parent family with my father.
   4 = Sometimes I live with my mother and sometimes with my father.
   5 = I live on my own

5. Have you participated in Casa Verde, E-corp, or any community event sponsored by the American Institute for Learning since you have been attending here?
   1 = Yes
   2 = No

How important is each of the following to you in your life? Mark one answer for each.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Not sure	Quite important	Extremely important
6. Helping other people	1	2	3	4	5
7. Helping to reduce hunger and poverty in the world	○	○	○	○	○
8. Being religious or spiritual	○	○	○	○	○
9. Helping to make sure that all people are treated fairly	○	○	○	○	○
10. Having friends who want me to succeed	○	○	○	○	○

	Not important	Somewhat important	Not sure	Quite important	Extremely important
11. Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am	○	○	○	○	○
12. Speaking up for equality	○	○	○	○	○
13. Giving time or money to make life better for other people	○	○	○	○	○
14. Doing what I believe is right even if my friends make fun of me	○	○	○	○	○
15. Standing up for what I believe even when it's unpopular to do so	○	○	○	○	○
16. Telling the truth even when it is not easy	○	○	○	○	○
17. Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble	○	○	○	○	○
18. Doing my best even when I have to do a job I don't like	○	○	○	○	○

ABOUT SCHOOL

19. On an average school day, about how much time do you spend doing homework outside of school?

   0 = None   1 = 1 hour
   .5 = Half hour or less   2 = 2 hours
   .75 = Between half an hour   3 = 3 or more hours
        and an hour

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How much do you agree or disagree with the following?
Mark one answer for each.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
20. What I am learning at this school will help me in the real world	5	4	3	2	1
21. Students at AIL are free to move around the classroom and get help from other students	○	○	○	○	○
22. AIL allows students to participate in school responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○
23. I am learning in a cooperative environment	○	○	○	○	○
24. At school I try as hard as I can to do my best work	○	○	○	○	○
25. My teachers really care about me	○	○	○	○	○
26. My teachers really listen to me	○	○	○	○	○
27. It bothers me when I don't do something well	○	○	○	○	○
28. I get a lot of encouragement at my school	○	○	○	○	○
29. Teachers at my school push me to be the best I can be	○	○	○	○	○
30. My parents push me to be the best I can be	○	○	○	○	○
31. AIL helps students build cooperative skills	○	○	○	○	○
32. I feel bored at school most of the time	1	2	3	4	5

33. During the last four weeks, how many days of school have you missed because you skipped or "ditched"?

0 = None	4 = 4-5 days
1 = 1 day	6 = 6-10 days
2 = 2 days	11 = 11 or more
3 = 3 days	

For each of the following, mark one response.
How often does one of your parents....?

	Often	Some-times	Seldom	Never	Does not apply to me
34. Help you with your school work	5	4	2	1	0
35. Talk to you about what you are doing in school	○	○	○	○	○
36. Go to meetings or events at your school	○	○	○	○	○

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?
Choose one answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
37. On the whole, I like myself	○	○	○	○	○
38. At times, I think I am no good at all	○	○	○	○	○
39. I get along well with my parents	○	○	○	○	○
40. All in all, I am glad I am me	○	○	○	○	○
41. I feel I do not have much to be proud of	1	2	3	4	5
42. If I break one of my parents' rules, I usually get punished	5	4	3	2	1
43. My parents give me help and support when I need it	○	○	○	○	○
44. It is against my values to drink alcohol while I am a teenager	○	○	○	○	○
45. It is against my values to have sex while I am a teenager	○	○	○	○	○
46. At AIL, there are clear rules about what students can and cannot do	○	○	○	○	○
47. I care about the school I go to	○	○	○	○	○
48. My parents often tell me they love me	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
49. In my family, I feel useful and important	○	○	○	○	○
50. Students in my school care about me	○	○	○	○	○
51. In my family, there are clear rules about what I can and cannot do	○	○	○	○	○
52. In my neighborhood, there are a lot of people who care about me	○	○	○	○	○
53. If one of my neighbors saw me do something wrong, he or she would tell one or my parents	○	○	○	○	○

During the last 12 months, how many times have you...?

	Never	Once	Twice	3-4 Times	5 or More Times
54. Been a leader in a group or organization	0	1	2	3	5
55. Gotten into trouble with the police	○	○	○	○	○
56. Hit or beat up someone	○	○	○	○	○
57. Damaged property just for fun (such as breaking windows, scratching a car, putting paint on walls, etc)	○	○	○	○	○

During an average week, how many hours do you spend...?

	Number of hours					
	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11 or More
58. Playing on or helping with sports teams at school or in the community	0	1	2	3	6	11
59. Reading just for fun (not part of school work)	○	○	○	○	○	○
60. Going to programs, groups,or services at a church	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Number of hours					
	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11 or More
61. Helping other people without pay to make your city a better place for people to live	○	○	○	○	○	○
62. Helping friends or neighbors	○	○	○	○	○	○
63. Practicing or taking lessons in music, art, drama, or dance, after school or on weekends	○	○	○	○	○	○

Think about the people who know you well. How do you think they would rate you on each of these statements?

People who know me would say that this is...

	Not at all Like me	A Little Like me	Some-what Like me	Quite Like me	Very Much Like me
64. Knowing how to say "no" when someone wants me to do things I know are wrong or dangerous	1	2	3	4	5
65. Caring about other people's feelings	○	○	○	○	○
66. Thinking through possible good and bad results of different choices before I make decisions	○	○	○	○	○
67. Saving my money for something special rather than spending it all right away	5	4	3	2	1
68. Giving up when things get hard for me	○	○	○	○	○
69. Staying away from people who might get me in trouble	○	○	○	○	○
70. Feeling sad when one of my friends is unhappy	○	○	○	○	○
71. Being good at making and keeping friends	○	○	○	○	○
72. Being good at planning ahead	○	○	○	○	○
73. Taking good care of my body (eating healthy, exercising, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○

In this section we ask you about alcohol and other drugs. Please answer honestly. Remember, you are not asked to put your name on this form, so no one will ever be able to tell you how you answered.

74. If you drink alcohol, how many times have you had <u>five or more</u> drinks in a row in the <u>last two weeks</u>

    0 = None   3 = 3-5 times
    1 = Once   6 = 6-9 times
    2 = Twice   10 = 10 or more times

75. Do you smoke cigarettes   1 = Yes   2 = No   3 = Sometimes

76. If you came home from a party and your parents found out that you had been drinking, how upset do you think they would be?

    1 = Not at all upset   4 = Very upset
    2 = A little upset   5 = Extremely upset
    3 = Somewhat upset   0 = Does not apply to me

How many times, if any, have you used marijuana or hash.....?

		Number of Times					
0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10-19	20-39	40+

77. In your lifetime.............. 0......1....2.....3.....6........10........20.....40

78. How often do you participate in group activies at AIL?
1 = Once a week   4 = Once a month
2 = Twice a week   5 = Never
3 = Three or more times per week

79. Classes at AIL are:
1 = Too big   2 = Too small   3 = Just the right size

80. How often did you feel sad or depressed during the <u>last month</u>?
1 = All of the time   3 = Some of the time   5 = Not at all
2 = Most of the time   4 = Once in a while

81. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?
    3 = No   2 = Yes, once   3 = Yes, more than once

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?
Mark one answer for each.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis- Agree	Strongly Disagree
82. Sometimes I feel like my life has no purpose	1	2	3	4	5
83. Adults in my community make me feel important	5	4	3	2	1
84. Adults in my community listen to what I have to say	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
85. I'm given lots of chances to help make my community a better place to live	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis- Agree	Strongly Disagree
86. Adults in my community don't care about people my age	1	2	3	4	5
87. When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things better	5	4	3	2	1
88. When I am an adult, I'm sure I will have a good life	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

During the last 12 months how many times have you...?

	Never	Once	Twice	3-4 Times	5 or More Times
89. Taken part in a fight where a group of your friends fought another group	0	1	2	3	4
90. Carried a knife or gun to protect yourself	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

91. Does AIL provide you with an opportunity to participate in school functions? (e.g. newsletters, community events, presentations, etc)
5 = Yes   4 = Yes, but not interested   3 = Not sure
2 = No   1 = No, I wish they did

92. Does AIL feel more comfortable that other schools you have attended?
1 = Yes   2 = No   3 = About the same   4 = Not sure

93. *If you had an important concern about drugs, alcohol, sex, or some other serious issue, who would you talk to about it?*
    1 = My mother   *5 = Other family relatives*
    2 = My father   *6 = My friends*
    3 = My school counselor   *7 = Other (choice not available)*
    4 = My teacher

94. How often do your parents ask you where you are going or with whom you will be?
    1 = Never   4 = Most of the time
    2 = Seldom   5 = All of the time
    3 = Some of the time   0 = Does not apply to me

Among the people you consider to be your <u>closest</u> friends, how many would you say...

	None	A Few	Some	Most	All
95. Drink alcohol once a week or more	5	4	3	2	1
96. Have use drugs such as marijuana or cocaine	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
97. Do well in school	1	2	3	4	5
98. Get into trouble at school	5	4	3	2	1

99

How often do you feel afraid of...

	Never	Once in a while	Some-times	Often	Always
99. Walking around your neighborhood?....	○	○	○	○	○
100. Getting hurt by someone at AIL?........	○	○	○	○	○
101. Getting hurt by someone in your home?................	○	○	○	○	○

102. Imagine that someone at your school hit your or pushed you for no reason. What would you do? Mark one answer.
   5 = I'd hit or push them right back.
   4 = I'd try to hurt them worse than they hurt me
   3 = I'd try to talk to this person and work out our differences
   2 = I'd talk to a teacher or other adult
   1 = I'd just ignore it and do nothing

How much do you agree or disagree with the following? Mark one answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
103. Students help decide what goes on in my school.............	5	4	3	2	1
104. I don't care how I do in school..............	○	○	○	○	○
105. If I break a rule at school, I'm sure to get in trouble...........	5	4	3	2	1

	Never	Once in a while	Some-times	Often	Always
106. My parents spend a lot of time helping other people	1	2	3	4	5
107. I have little control over the things that will happen in my life	5	4	3	2	1

On an average school day, how many hours do you spend...?

	None	Less than 1 Hour	1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 or More Hours
108. Watching TV or videos.............	0	.5	1	2	3	4
109. At home with no adult there with you	○	○	○	○	○	

The following questions ask about the adults you know. Do not count your parents or relatives.

How many adults have you known for two or more years who...?

	0	1	2	3 or 4	5 or more
110. Give you lots of encouragement whenever they see you	0	1	2	3	5
111. Spend a lot of time helping other people.............................	○	○	○	○	○
112. Talk with you at least once a month	○	○	○	○	○

113. What is the highest level of schooling your father (or step-father or male foster parent/guardian) completed?
   1 = Completed grade school or less
   2 = Some high school
   3 = Completed high school
   4 = Some college
   5 = Completed College
   6 = Graduate or professional school after college
   7 = Don't know or does not apply

114. What is the highest level of schooling your mother (or step-mother or female foster parent/guardian) completed?
   ○ Completed grade school or less
   ○ Some high school
   ○ Completed high school
   ○ Some college
   ○ Completed College
   ○ Graduate or professional school after college
   ○ Don't know or does not apply

115. Does AIL feel different to you than other schools?
   1 = yes   2 = no   3 = about the same

116. Do you feel that AIL is making a positive difference in your life?
   ○ yes   ○ no   ○ not sure

117. Does AIL provide you with an opportunity to participate in school functions? (e.g. newsletters, community events, presentations, etc)
   ○ yes   ○ no   ○ sometimes

118. Does AIL feel more comfortable that other schools you have attended?
   ○ yes   ○ no   ○ about the same

119. Do you think you will enroll in college after completing your program at AIL?
   ○ yes   ○ no   ○ not sure

120. Which of the following terms best describes teachers at AIL?
   ○ Fellow-workers   ○ all-powerful rulers   ○ neither

Appendix C: AIL Anonymous Teacher Survey (TS)

1. How many years have you been teaching?

2. How long have you been teaching at AIL?

3. Do you have a teaching specialty? If so, how does it contribute to curriculum development at AIL?

4. Do you work with other curriculum developers to design the curriculum at AIL?

5. Do you use resources from area universities in developing curriculum here at AIL?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis- Agree	Strongly Disagree
6. The curriculum at AIL engages students in solving real-world problems	O	O	O	O	O
7. The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs (i.e., health, preparation for society, guidance, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
8. AIL is open to experimenting with its curriculum. These ideas are tested out and terminated if found ineffective	O	O	O	O	O
9. Curriculum is developed and modified periodically to accommodate students' changing needs	O	O	O	O	O
10. Class size at AIL is adequate for providing students with individual attention	O	O	O	O	O
11. At AIL, students are free to move around in the classroom and seek help from others	O	O	O	O	O
12. Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills	O	O	O	O	O
13. Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities	C	O	O	O	O
14. AIL is different from traditional public high schools	O	O	O	O	O

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis- Agree	Strongly Disagree
15. The curriculum at AIL incorporates cultural and educational institutions from the community	O	O	O	O	O
16. Students at AIL have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the school and teacher performance	O	O	O	O	O
17. Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance	O	O	O	O	O
18. I am working in a cooperative teaching environment	O	O	O	O	O
19. The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service	O	O	O	O	O
20. Speaking and listening skills are emphasized in the curriculum here at AIL	O	O	O	O	O
21. It seems to me that most of the students attending AIL are interested in the school	O	O	O	O	O
22. AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior	O	O	O	O	O

101

23. How many times per week (if any) do teachers meet to discuss curriculum and school events?

24. How many times per week (if any) do students in your classroom work in groups on projects?

25. Parent involvement at AIL is: HIGH   LOW   MODERATE   (Circle one)

26. What is the most common disciplinary problems you face with students at AIL?

Appendix D: Anonymous Teacher Survey (TS)

#	Survey Question	N	Av. Yrs	% Yes	% No	% - 1-2	%- 3	% 4-5
1	How many years have you been teaching?	17	7					
2	How long have you been teaching at AIL?		3					
3	Do you have a teaching specialty? If so, does it contribute to curriculum development at AIL?			77	23			
4	Do you work with other curriculum developers to design the curriculum at AIL?			53	47			
5	Do you use resources from area universities in developing curriculum?			18	82			
6	The curriculum at AIL engages students in solving real-world problems?					11	6	83
7	The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs? (i.e., health, preparation for society, guidance, etc.)					0	29	71
8	AIL is open to experimenting with its curriculum. These ideas are tested out and terminated if found ineffective?					12	12	76
9	Curriculum is developed and modified periodically to accommodate students' changing needs.					12	0	88
10	Class size at AIL is adequate for providing students with individual attention					18	12	70
11	Students are free to move around the classroom and seek help from others					0	0	100
12	Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills					6	6	88
13	Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities					18	35	47
14	AIL is different from traditional public high schools					0	0	100

#	Survey Question	N	Av. Yrs	% Yes	% No	% - 1-2	%- 3	% 4-5
15	The curriculum at AIL incorporates cultural and educational institutions in the community					6	18	76
16	Students have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the school and teacher performance					18	41	41
17	Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance					18	47	35
18	I am working in a cooperative learning environment					18	6	76
19	The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service					0	6	94
20	Speaking and listening skills are emphasized in the curriculum here at AIL					0	41	59
21	It seems to me that most of the students attending AIL are interested in the school					6	18	76
22	AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior					24	23	53
23	How many times per week do teachers meet to discuss school events and curriculum?							
24	How many times per week do students in your classroom work in groups on projects							
25	Do you consider parent involvement to be high, low, or moderate? (Circle one)					88 Low	12 Mod	0
26	What is the most common disciplinary problem you face with students at AIL							

Appendix E: Anonymous Curriculum Developer Survey

1. In your opinion, what are some of the primary principles guiding curriculum development here at AIL?

2. How do you gauge curriculum effectiveness?

3. In what way does the curriculum at AIL reflect social issues?

4. Do you work with teachers to design the curriculum at AIL?

5. Do you use resources from area universities in developing curriculum here at AIL?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
6. The curriculum a AIL engages students in solving real-world problems	O	O	O	O	O	15. The curriculum at AIL incorporates cultural and educational institutions from the community	O	O	O	O	O
7. The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs (i.e., health, preparation for society, guidance, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O	16. Students at AIL have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the school and teacher performance	O	O	O	O	O
8. AIL is open to experimenting with its curriculum. These ideas are tested out and terminated if found ineffective	O	O	O	O	O	17. Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance	O	O	O	O	O
9. Curriculum is developed and modified periodically to accommodate students' changing needs	O	O	O	O	O	18. I am working in a cooperative teaching environment	O	O	O	O	O
10. Class size at AIL is adequate for providing students with individual attention	O	O	O	O	O	19. The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service	O	O	O	O	O
11. Group projects are an important part of the curriculum at AIL	O	O	O	O	O	20. Speaking and listening skills are emphasized in the curriculum here at AIL	O	O	O	O	O
12. Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills	O	O	O	O	O	21. AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior	O	O	O	O	O
13. Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities	O	O	O	O	O						
14. AIL is different from traditional public high schools	O	O	O	O	O						

23. Parent involvement at AIL is: HIGH LOW MODERATE (Circle one)

Appendix F : Anonymous Curriculum Developer Survey (CD)

#	Survey Question	N	Response				
1	In your opinion what are some of the primary principles guiding curriculum development here at AIL?	3					
2	How do you gauge its effectiveness?						
3	In what way does the curriculum reflect social issues?						
4	Do you work with teachers to design the curriculum at AIL						
5	Do you use resources form area universities in developing curriculum here at AIL						
			Yes %	No %	1-2 %	3 %	4-5 %
6	The curriculum at AIL engages students in solving real-world problems?				0	0	100
7	The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs? (i.e., health, preparation for society, guidance, etc.)				0	0	100
8	AIL is open to experimenting with its curriculum. These ideas are tested out and terminated if found ineffective?				0	0	100
9	Curriculum is developed and modified periodically to accommodate students' changing needs.				0	0	100
10	Class size at AIL is adequate for providing students with individual attention				0	0	100
11	Group projects are an important part of the curriculum at AIL				0	33	67
12	Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills				0	33	67
13	Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities				0	0	100
14	AIL is different from traditional public high schools				0	0	100

#	Survey Question	N				Response		
15	The curriculum at AIL incorporates cultural and educational institutions in the community					0	0	100
16	Students have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the school and teacher performance					0	33	67
17	Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance					0	0	100
18	I am working in a cooperative teaching environment					0	0	100
19	The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service					0	0	100
20	Speaking and listening skills are emphasized in the curriculum here at AIL					0	33	67
21	AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior					0	0	100
22	Parent involvement at AIL is: HIGH LOW MODERATE					100 Low	0	0

Appendix G: Anonymous Counselor Survey

1. On the average, how many discipline problems do you attend to per week?

2. How many attendance problems do you attend to per week?

3. What is the most common disciplinary problems you face with students at AIL?

4. (Circle best answer) In my opinion, students at AIL probably perceive teachers as:

      a. All-powerful rulers   b. Fellow-workers   c. Neither a nor b

5. Parent involvement at AIL is: HIGH   LOW   MODERATE   (Circle one)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
6. The curriculum at AIL engages students in solving real-world problems	O	O	O	O	O
7. The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs (i.e., health, preparation for society, guidance, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
8. Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills	O	O	O	O	O
9. Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities	O	O	O	O	O
10. AIL is different from traditional public high schools	O	O	O	O	O
11. Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance	O	O	O	O	O

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree
12. I am working in a cooperative environment	O	O	O	O	O
13. The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service	O	O	O	O	O
14. It seems to me that most of the students attending AIL are interested in the school	O	O	O	O	O
15. AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix H: Anonymous Counselor Survey (CS)

#	Survey Question	N	Response		
1	On average, how many disciplinary problems do you do you attend to a week?	9			
2	How many attendance problems do you attend to a week?				
3	What is the most common disciplinary problem you face with students at AIL				
4	Students at AIL probably perceive teachers as: All powerful rulers, fellow-workers, neither		11%=All powerful rulers 67%= Neither 22%= Fellow-workers		
			1-2 %	3 %	4-5 %
5	Parent involvement at AIL is: HIGH LOW MODERATE		78 Low	22 Mod	
6	The curriculum at AIL engages students in solving real-world problems?		0	0	100
7	The curriculum at AIL considers the students' developmental needs?		11	0	89
8	Students at AIL are learning cooperative skills		0	11	89
9	Students at AIL engage in school responsibilities		11	11	78
10	AIL is different from traditional public high schools		11	22	67
11	Students participate in self-evaluation of academic performance		12	44	44
12	I am working in a cooperative teaching environment		0	22	78
13	The curriculum at AIL helps students build cooperative skills and community service		0	0	100
14	It seems to me that most of the students attending AIL are interested in the school		0	0	100
15	AIL provides clear boundaries of acceptable student behavior		11	11	78

Survey Question	N	Average frequency per class	Average class size	Yes	No
How many times does the teacher refer to the student by name?	4	9			
How many times does the teacher recognize a student's idea?		9			
How many times do students get interrupted by the teacher?		1			
How many students were present in the classroom today?			12		
Does teacher encourage speaking?				4	
How many times do students ask relevant questions about the lesson/class topic?		8			
Do students work together in groups?				4	
Are students free to move around the classroom?				4	
What was the topic discussed today?		Journalism, Geography, Math, English			

Appendix J: Student Follow-up Questionaire

Student Name:_____

Current Address:_____

Current Telephone:(Hm)_____(Wk/alt.#)_____.

AIL Completion date:_____ Social Security #:_____

Casa Verde _____; E-Corp_____ GED _____ Diploma _____

1) Are you currently working? If yes, where?

2) Have you used the services provided by AIL's Career Resources Center?

3) Have you sought additional education or vocational training after graduating from AIL? If yes,
where?
Y = 1   N = 2   3 = Planning to go   4 = in school at time of interview 5 = Yes, completed education

4) If yes, did you complete the training?

5) If you attended ACC, did you use their parallel studies services?

6) Did you pass the TASP test of achievement given by the college?

7) On a scale of 1 to 3 (1= not helpful, 2 = somewhat helpful, 3= very helpful) do you feel AIL helped
you make the transition to school/work?

8) What did you like most about AIL?

1 = supportive teachers, staff   5 = working with other people
2 = student-teacher ratio, class size   6 = flexible, self-paced
3 = atmosphere   7 = combination of all
4 = curriculum, project-base   8 = did not like it

9) What do you feel AIL should improve on?

1 = disruptive students   6 = sense changes taking place   11 = provide daycare
2 = no changes needed   7 = improvev school efficiency   12 = other
3 = no suggestions made   8 = did not like it
4 = improve school aesthetics, size   9 = class size is too big
5 = expand project-based curriculum   10 = more staff support

10) Would you be interested in returning to talk to students about your experience in AIL or
participating as a volunteer in school and community activities offered by AIL?

Appendix K: Alumni Follow-up Survey (AS)

#	Survey Question	N	Response
3	Have you sought additional education or vocational training after graduating from AIL? If yes, where?	51	6% = attended and completed 49%= No 12%= Plan to go
7	On a scale of 1 to 3 (1= not helpful, 2= somewhat helpful, 3= very helpful) do you feel AIL helped you make the transition from school to work?		71% = very helpful 23% = somewhat helpful 6%= not helpful
8	What did you like most about AIL?		47% = supportive teachers, staff 4% = student-teacher ratio, class size 12% = atmosphere 8% = curriculum, project-base 2% = working with other people 12%= flexible, self-paced 14% = combination of all 2% = did not like it
9	What do you feel AIL should improve on?		10% = disruptive students 39% = no changes needed 12% = no suggestions made 6% = improve school aesthetics, size 4% = expand project-based curriculum 10% = sense changes taking place 2% = improvev school efficiency 2% = did not like it 2% = class size is too big 4% = more staff support 2% = provide daycare 8% = other

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