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Table of Contents

Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement

103 ..... Identity Status, Service-Learning, and Future Plans

Lynn E. Pelco
Virginia Commonwealth University

Christopher T. Ball
College of William and Mary

Marcia's *(1966)* identity status paradigm served as the theoretical framework to study the impact of service-learning on clarifying future plans for emerging adults with varying identity statuses. The study participants were 195 undergraduates at a large urban public university in the southeastern United States. The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale *(Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008)* was administered at the beginning and end of the semester during which participants completed their service-learning class. The Service-Learning Impact on Future Plan Clarity Questionnaire developed by the authors for this study was administered at the end of the same semester. A two-step cluster analysis resulted in five identity status groups. Students in all five groups indicated that service-learning helped them clarify their future plans. Moratorium identity status group members reported significantly less benefit from service-learning for clarifying future plans. Results are discussed and implications for research and practice are provided.

127 ..... "We Don't Leave Engineering on the Page": Civic Engagement Experiences of Engineering Graduate Student

Richard J. Reddick, Laura E. Struve, Jeffrey R. Mayo, and Jennifer L. Wang
University of Texas at Austin

Ryan A. Miller
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Few scholars have examined the civic engagement experiences of graduate students in engineering fields. To address this void, this study uses social exchange theory and experiential learning theory to consider the experiences of engineering graduate students in service programs at a predominantly White research university. The findings suggest that students are highly motivated to serve and derive complex meaning-making from their service, thus advancing understandings of how engineering graduate students find meaning in civic engagement. Although engineering graduate students may be expected to focus primarily on research and professional advancement, our findings suggest there is an opportunity to more fully involve students in civic engagement activities.

relationship-driven, and internally focused interactions in online service-learning collaborations.

Book Reviews

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From the Editor…

Good reading on a rainy afternoon

For the past few months, copies of *Outside* magazine have been mysteriously showing up in my mailbox. I did not subscribe to the magazine as I am not a particularly "outsdoorsy" person, but still they keep appearing. As with most of my mail that I do not know what to do with, every issue gets set aside in my "deal with it later" pile. Recently, we have had a series of summer thunderstorms in Georgia of startling intensity that make going outside unpleasant, so I decided on one such afternoon that reading about the outdoors was preferable to being outside. Subsequently, I spent an engrossing afternoon sitting on my screened porch in the midst of a true gully washer, reading about interesting people who are challenging the limits of human endurance, exploring parts of the world in physical ways I could not dream of doing, and sharing their stories in an attempt to create understanding or provoke discussions about the way we choose to engage with the world. As a newsstand periodical, these are timely, current stories shared at *this moment* because of their relevance and ability to capture human interest—and sell magazines, of course.

As the editor of a research focused journal, while seemingly nothing like a newsstand magazine, it made me think about the practice of publishing periodicals; that is, these articles pieced together into issues that make up *this moment* in our scholarly enterprise, in *JHEOE's* case, *this moment* in the scholarship of engagement. As we put together these snapshots in time, our issues often do not truly have a connecting theme. Rather than viewing this as a deficit, I find that reading through a whole issue rather than just one article as we often do, results in interesting juxtapositions of ideas, methods, questions, and purposes. For *JHEOE*, the connecting thread is the complex people, places, affiliations, and institutions involved in community engagement work. As a result, I often think of these issues we publish more as scrapbooks filled with candid snapshots of our field caught and preserved so that we have a record of this moment in scholarship. Hopefully, each issue does a decent job of representing the larger scope of work conducted by an array of scholars in the field that is undertaken within diverse institutional, community, and political contexts.

This issue's scrapbook collection begins with two reflective essays, one an autoethnographic essay on the reflections of a

group of scholars moving from a traditional to a critical approach to service-learning practice; the other, a retrospective look at an institutional approach to conducting community-engaged scholarship over the last 30 years. First up, Groark and McCall present the evolution of the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development over three decades, and the lessons learned for developing an engagement unit that supports scholarship stemming from community-based projects. In particular, the authors offer some interesting strategies based on long experience designing and analyzing research studies that are community-based. They also offer an insightful critique of how and why community-based studies require different methods and institutional support when compared with basic research methods employed by most social scientists. This is followed by Latta, Kruger, Payne, Weaver, and VanSickle's fascinating essay exploring a year long reflection process undertaken by a faculty learning community to examine and understand critical service-learning practice. This essay is a good read because the autoethnographic approach lays bare the self-reflection necessary for moving practice toward critical service-learning pedagogy. The authors also provide helpful examples of question prompts for written reflections and authoethnographic writing that will be useful to many readers who are considering their own practice.

The research articles featured in this issue provide a collection of scholarly snapshots ranging in topic and focus from institutional, student, and community concerns and are truly diverse in their approaches. In sort, there's a little something for everyone in this section. Leading off, Orphan presents a qualitative study of four regional comprehensive universities using a framework for analyzing university responses to neoliberal state priorities. In particular, the author examines how a focus on economic impact and revenue generation may affect the public purpose of these institutions across various dimensions.

Shifting the focus from the institution to the student, Pelco and Ball's research examines how service-learning participation may help students develop and clarify future plans. For an added dimension, this research study breaks new ground by looking at the intersection between identity status development and service-learning. Their findings have interesting implications for how and when service-learning should be embedded in the curriculum to ensure that it has the most impact on clarifying future plans and student success. Continuing with a focus on student learning, Reddick, Struve, Mayo, Miller, and Wang examine the civic engage-

ment experiences of graduate engineering students at a research university, analyzing their motivations for serving as well as the implications and benefits for STEM fields more broadly. The authors are particularly interested in how involvement in civic engagement activities by STEM graduate students may add meaning, purpose and long-term connection to societal issues in students' research or professional practice.

Our next snapshot brings the partner into full focus. Hauerwas and Creamer's article examines a largely unexplored aspect of international teaching education partnerships—the impact on host schools, teachers, and classroom students. The authors present the voices of Italian teachers and their classroom students with implications for strengthening such international partnerships and teaching experiences, particularly related to intercultural communication and understanding, and professional development of cooperating teachers. Finally, to round out this eclectic collection of research articles, Shah et al. explore how an asset-based community development approach can be employed to strengthen online relationships in a digital service-learning program. Termed eABCD, the ABCD community development model is translated from place-based to a virtual context through a digital writing project conducted between college and rural youth.

Once again *JHEOE* also features a robust array of book reviews representing a cross-section of the prolific community engagement scholarship currently being published. McNall and Barnes-Najor review Beckman and Long's edited volume *Community-Based Research: Teaching for Community Impact* and recommend it as an essential volume for those either brand new to CBR, or experienced researchers seeking new ideas. Additionally, two frameworks for CBR are highlighted for their potential in planning and implementing CBR.

Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, and Thomas's edited book *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement* presents an overview of the theory, practice, and implementation in both the classroom and community of deliberative pedagogy, a teaching and learning approach meant to introduce students to thinking strategies that promote understanding of their role and subsequent action as informed and involved citizens in a democratic society. Fletcher recommends this volume particularly for this pedagogy's potential for engaging youth in civic deliberation, and as an added tool for many campus engagement strategies. Finally, we round out this issue with Elizabeth Tryon's review of *Regional Perspectives on Learning by Doing: Stories from*

Engaged Universities Around the World. Hoyt's edited volume adds an important dimension to the community engagement literature by widening our lens beyond the United States to international settings with interesting and varied case studies from universities around the world and their approaches to engagement.

Once again, we are grateful for the support of so many who prepare each issue for publication. Thank you to the authors who share their work, peer reviewers who provide valuable and constructive critique to strengthen the scholarship contained in each issue, and associate editors who provide vision and guidance for the focus of the journal. As you flip through the pages of this issue of *JHEOE*, I hope it makes for some good reading—perhaps on a rainy afternoon—that opens the door a bit wider on your own understanding of the world of community engagement, and inspires your individual contributions that may someday appear as snapshots in future issues of *JHEOE*.

Shannon O'Brien Wilder
Editor

Reflective Essays

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Lessons Learned from 30 Years of a University–Community Engagement Center

Christina J. Groark and Robert B. McCall

Abstract

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development (OCD) has practiced university–community engagement activities for 30 years. This has included hundreds of specific projects conducted with community partners, all funded by outside grants. Based on our experience, we describe some lessons learned regarding the operation of a university–community engagement unit, the conduct of community-engaged scholarship, and some of the challenges that the engagement endeavor poses to traditional research universities. These themes are discussed in the hope that other engagement units can benefit from these experiences.

Keywords: university–community engagement, collaborations and partnerships, research and practice projects, nonprofits, translational projects, implementation

Introduction

The concept of university–community engagement is rising in prominence at many universities. This term refers to the "process that brings together groups of stakeholders from neighborhoods, city, or region (including individuals, organizations, businesses, and institutions) to build relationships and practical collaboration with a goal of improving the collective well-being of the area and its stakeholders" *(Maurrasse, 2010, p. 223)*. Although the term is relatively new, the concept is not; it has a long history (e.g., *Burack, Fitzgerald, & Seifer, 2010; Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifer, 2010; Jacobs, Sutin, Weidman, & Yaeger, 2015a*). However, some have observed that there has been more rhetoric than action over the last 25 years (e.g., *Bruckhardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004; Community Partner Summit Group, 2010; Pollack, 2015*). This article reports lessons learned over 30 years by one university unit devoted to conducting community engagement projects in the hope that they will be useful to other such endeavors.

A Brief Selective History of Engagement

Colleges and universities in the United States were originally modeled after their European counterparts, which were descendants of monasteries with a tradition of reclusive scholarship—

learning for its own sake and teaching the next generation of scholars.

A major turning point in that tradition was the Morrill Act of 1862, which provided land, often in rural areas, to states to create "land-grant" institutions that were required to provide knowledge for the public good *(Soska, 2015)*. Later, in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act established a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state governments to initiate "extension" programs through their land-grant institutions to provide practical information to farmers and their families on agriculture and home economics. Over the years, however, land-grant institutions thrived and became major research centers, and the extension programs were progressively dwarfed by mostly basic research in other fields *(Soska, 2015)* and were sometimes academically treated differently, if not devalued.

Eventually some legislators (e.g., William Proxmire, Barbara Mikulski) became concerned that academics perceived research funding as an "entitlement," taxpayers were not getting their money's worth, and more federal dollars should be spent on practical issues (e.g., *"The Hand," 1994*).

Some academics agreed. Specifically, Bok *(1990)* and Boyer *(1990, 1996)* complained that universities had grown too insular and needed to devote more effort to directly dealing with the needs of society. Partly as a consequence, two kinds of actions followed. One we might call a "top-down" approach, in which national reports, commissions, and compacts were initiated that urged university presidents and other top administrators to create policies and activities that would promote engagement with the community across the entire university *(Fitzgerald, Allen, & Roberts, 2010a; Jacobs, Sutin, Weidman, & Yeager, 2015b)*. The second, a "bottom-up" approach, consisted of specific projects and units within universities that pursued engagement activities. Some federal agencies, notably the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Education (DOE), funded such projects at several universities across the country.

However, faculty in many universities that emphasize basic research and scholarship as a criterion for promotion do not value research and other types of projects that have local rather than national relevance and are conducted in the messy laboratories of the community *(Kaplan, 2015)*. Thus, even as some universities have encouraged numerous and varied university–community

endeavors (e.g., *Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Simon, 2010*), others have found it difficult to get faculty interested in such projects *(Shields, 2015)*.

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development

The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development (OCD) was created in 1986 as a bottom-up effort to promote interdisciplinary scholarly activities within the university and mutually beneficial university–community collaborative projects *(McCall, Groark, Strauss, & Johnson, 1995)*. Although the national historical themes described above have influenced its 30-year evolution, OCD's initial creation was not a result of the broader movement toward engagement. Indeed, for example, it was established before the agenda-setting papers of Bok *(1990)* and Boyer *(1990)* and the urgings of Proxmire and Mikulski.

This article presents a brief history of OCD's development, some of the lessons learned regarding its operation as a university–community engagement unit, some issues of conducting research and scholarship in partnership with the community, and a few challenges that engagement presents to traditional research universities.

A Brief History of OCD

The early history of OCD has been previously described in detail *(Groark & McCall, 1996; McCall, 1996; McCall et al., 1995, 1998)*. Here we mention a few crucial elements of that history as well as a brief summary of what OCD has become to provide a context for the lessons learned.

Two faculty members perceived a local need for collaborations among literally hundreds of faculty and community agencies that shared interests in children, youth, and families and that otherwise tended to operate in isolation from one another. They formed an interdisciplinary committee of faculty to plan what became OCD, convinced the university to fund a professor slot to be its director, and obtained 3 years of operating money from two local foundations to have OCD blend the academic concerns of the university with the practice and policy interests of the community. In this sense, OCD itself was born out of a university–community collaboration.

The university, as part of its 200th anniversary celebration in 1987, was encouraged by community leaders to establish a single point of contact between the community and the univer-

sity. Although OCD was focused specifically on children, youth, and families, it was designed to be an all-university unit, but it was never perceived as part of an all-university response to this community request. However, because it was originally administratively located in the Provost's Office and directed by a senior faculty member, it was, at least in these ways, an academic rather than an administrative unit, which was unusual for early university–community engagement units *(Soska, 2015)*.

OCD was originally conceived to facilitate, but not operate, interdisciplinary and university–community collaborative projects, which is one reason it was called an *office* rather than a *center*. However, OCD's early attempts to facilitate interdisciplinary and university–community projects moved OCD in two unexpected directions. First, applied university–community projects were less attractive to young faculty concerned with obtaining tenure through basic research and scholarship. Senior faculty, in contrast, were quite interested in such projects and potentially had much experience and numerous credits to offer them; however, despite their eagerness to consult with the project, they did not have the time or inclination to take an active role in writing a grant to support, or to be the principal investigator (PI) and operate, such projects. In contrast, community agencies were eager and willing to devote time and resources to creating new projects; after all, they really did perish without grant money (if not publications). They were also flexible, creative, and willing to compromise for the sake of the project.

Second, despite the uneven participation, projects were created. But when the first such project was funded and OCD proposed to step aside to allow the partners to operate the project, the collaborators insisted that OCD stay on as the PI. They reasoned, "If we needed an independent convener to get this project started, we certainly need an independent PI when we have real money and responsibilities to manage." As a result, OCD became an operator of collaborative projects as well as a facilitator of them.

For OCD, this early redirection eventually led to a total annual budget of as much as $8.5 million and an off-campus physical facility of approximately 16,000 square feet. A staff of up to 50 people was hired to implement projects, and 10–20 graduate students were hired, mentored, or taking internships at OCD in any one year.

Over the years, OCD emphasized one of the three categories of engagement that later would be described by the Carnegie

Commission *(Carnegie Foundation, 2007)* as "outreach and partnerships," in which OCD provided its expertise, resources, and time for use by the community (i.e., outreach) in projects that were conducted as partnerships to the extent possible. Although often perceived as traditional public service, these projects were not academic volunteerism, because conducting such projects was OCD's "job," not avocation, and every project had to be externally funded.

Some Lessons Learned About Operating an Engagement Unit

Every engagement unit will be different as a function of the specific circumstances in which it operates. Nevertheless, we discuss below several lessons learned about operating OCD that may apply to some similar units elsewhere.

Balanced leadership. It was clear very early that the new OCD director, who had academic and communication credits and was brought in from the outside, did not know human services in general and the Pittsburgh community of foundations and service professionals in particular. Therefore, a partner was hired who was experienced in these matters, and after a few years, this partner became codirector. This combination of complementary skills helped OCD become known and respected by both academic and community professionals, which helped to foster collaborations among these groups to improve practice and policy in the region.

After 30 years, do we recommend that other such units have codirectors who represent the two constituencies a university–community engagement unit tries to integrate? Their functions need to be equally represented, but not necessarily as codirectors. That is, a university–community engagement unit needs to know and respect and be known and respected by both constituencies, and it helped that both codirectors were given faculty appointments. It may be unusual either to find a single person who meets these criteria or two people who have sufficient knowledge and respect for the other profession and are able to work smoothly together. So how such a unit is directed and staffed depends on the characteristics of the available people, but both constituencies should be equally and prominently represented.

Full-time directors. Integrating faculty across disciplines had been tried at the university before OCD was created, but it did not work very well. One possible reason is that the prior endeavor was directed part time by a senior faculty member who was not a specialist in this domain and had numerous other responsibilities

on his plate. We believe OCD worked partly because there were full-time codirectors with relevant and complementary skills who were dedicated and committed to the task.

Core funding. Such a unit needs core funding that covers the salaries of senior administrators and other staff who work to support the unit, as well as expenses involved in prospecting, piloting, and applying for funds for projects; expenses that cannot be supported by project grants; tiding over major staff during short-term gaps in funding; and covering a variety of other expenses (e.g., rent, travel). It is important to have a reasonable source of unallocated core funding, not just salary support, that might come from the university and/or local sources, to be able to facilitate collaborations, create and fund new projects, and survive variability in grant funding.

No quid pro quos. Early on, OCD's collaboration activities were greeted with skepticism stemming from a history of self-serving university dealings with the community. We were often asked by potential partners, "Why are you doing this? What is in this for you? Do we, or will we, have to pay for your services? What are you going to take from this?" It was very helpful for OCD to have enough core funding to be able to say, "We are paid to do this, this is our job, and we will not take anything from the project if it is funded, except if OCD staff play a continuing role in implementing it."

Flexibility. OCD's broad mission, largely limited to children, youth, and families, and with a primarily behavioral emphasis, embraced a wide range of potential projects, and OCD's attentiveness to changing community priorities and willingness to implement funders' agenda gave it great flexibility. Indeed, some have suggested that OCD's "nimbleness" has contributed substantially to its longevity—three decades and counting.

But there are downsides to this characteristic. Both codirectors' backgrounds in early childhood development and the name "Office of Child Development" led to the perception that OCD had an early childhood emphasis, even though its projects often were aimed at adolescents and families. Conversely, because OCD supported projects in a wide range of subject areas, codirectors and staff often lacked scholarly backgrounds and experience in OCD's project domains. As a result, someone at OCD had to get up to speed on the literature, or OCD had to collaborate with a faculty member or someone else who could bring specialist knowledge to specific projects.

Funding for specific projects. Specific projects fostered or managed by the unit are likely to need separate external funding, and such projects live or die on their own program and financial success or failure. Large grants often come from federal sources, and depending on the nature of the project, faculty can be a great help in securing some of these grants.

More commonly, however, community projects may be funded locally, if there are sufficient local resources (e.g., foundations, local and state government agencies). Although it varies with the source, local funding can be different from federal and national foundation grants. It may be based more on personal relationships, and funding applications may be decided by a single program officer rather than several outside reviewers. It is important to develop relationships with local government and foundation leaders by introducing yourselves to them, participating on local task forces, providing them with scholarly information relevant to their needs, and participating in their community events. It also helps to cultivate local university and community "champions" who are vigorous in advertising and supporting the unit to opinion leaders. It may take deliberate efforts and several projects over several years to establish relationships of trust and responsibility with relevant foundation and government officers, and when major players change, the process must be renewed.

Not all projects will be initiated by the unit. Some local funders may be accustomed to deciding themselves what local projects should be conducted and funded, whereas others may look to the university to tell them what is needed and what works. Early on, Pittsburgh foundations frequently decided what they wanted done and asked OCD to implement it; later, OCD made more program suggestions and modifications to foundation ideas and initiated more applications.

Provide constituencies with useful services. In the early years, OCD tried to stimulate interest in applied projects and foster communication among university and community constituencies as well as provide useful services to both groups. Specifically, OCD published a newsletter that contained special reports of research-based information relevant to faculty, service professionals, and funders; it distributed notices of funding opportunities; it sponsored interdisciplinary and applied colloquia, workshops, conferences, and luncheon discussion groups; it collected and published health, education, and welfare indicator data that were used as background in grant requests; it convened diverse groups of faculty and community professionals around possible new projects;

and it published a variety of directories of personnel, services, and policies.

One of the more unusual projects was the organization and sponsorship of a colloquium course, which featured guest lecturers from across the country as well as local faculty and community professionals who spoke on applied academic–community topics pertaining to children and families. The course met weekly, was advertised to university and community constituencies, and was taken for credit by students who stayed after each presentation for guided discussion led by the speaker and OCD. In addition, OCD created and funded two interdisciplinary training programs, offered seed grants for applied projects, and initiated collaborations that led to a local site of the NICHD Early Care Network. These several activities created an identity for OCD in the university and community, brought diverse faculty and service professionals together, and provided useful information to these constituencies. A survey of faculty and community professionals attested to their value and utility *(McCall et al., 1995)*.

Domains for special projects. Over time, OCD created partnerships to develop new special projects in five domains that related to community needs: (1) interdisciplinary education, training, and technical assistance; (2) interdisciplinary research and scholarship; (3) human service demonstration programs; (4) program monitoring and evaluation; and (5) needs assessments and policy studies. For example, OCD and community practice and policy professionals managed the Pittsburgh site for several federal multisited intervention demonstration programs. OCD and staff offered expertise in grant writing, measurement, evaluation design, implementation and management of community-based service projects, and research information regarding what works. These were valuable commodities to many community agencies, and having a university partner often lent some degree of status and credibility to grant applications to federal funders.

Staff. As noted above, OCD did not simply facilitate new collaborations; it also managed and operated them, often as the principal grantee. As a result, OCD acquired staff to perform duties that collaborating community agencies could not (e.g., recruit participants, collect data, manage and analyze databases, provide technical support, train service staff). Graduate students often brought unique skills to a project (e.g., knowledge of scholarly literature or ability to review it, statistics and database management), but most did not have experience working in low-resource neighborhoods and could only work restricted hours on an irregular schedule.

Having its own staff also permitted OCD to conduct many community-based projects that faculty were not able to perform. For example, local foundations frequently wanted a community needs assessment conducted, and they wanted to start it immediately and be finished in 3 months. Faculty typically could not accommodate this schedule, and they largely were not interested in a project that essentially had only local, not national, implications *(Kaplan, 2015)*. But OCD eventually had the staff available to start immediately; conduct the literature review, surveys, and geomapping; and compose and manage a faculty–community advisory committee.

However, if the unit cannot engage faculty and cannot afford senior staff who can create and fund projects, these responsibilities fall on the director(s). We found that the more the OCD codirectors funded, implemented, and managed projects, the less time they had for assembling new collaborations and participating in typical academic functions.

An attitude of mutual respect. A long-standing necessary element of successful university–community collaborative projects is mutual respect among faculty and community professionals *(Community Partner Summit Group, 2010; Groark & McCall, 1996, 2008; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Mordock, 1993).* These groups have different skills, knowledge, values, responsibilities, constraints, and criteria for success, and they may not be accustomed to sharing control over their projects. Also, they often harbor unfavorable attitudes toward one another. Defusing these potential antagonisms requires a leader or coleaders who understand and respect, and have the respect of, both constituencies.

Attitudes based on experience or hearsay are not the only potential source of friction. Conflicts can also arise over ideal scientific methodology, social service best practices, regulations, stakeholder values, and practical circumstances in creating and implementing innovative interventions in community settings. Leaders and partners must be willing and able to compromise and find creative solutions, tasks not commonly required outside such a collaboration. It was in this domain that having codirectors at OCD was especially helpful, because each could represent the point of view of one profession but simultaneously understand and respect the opposite position. Occasionally, the codirectors hashed out the differences in private and then presented alternatives to the partners, and at other times they represented the two professions in a discussion among all partners in a given project.

Shared power. One of the most challenging attributes of true partnerships is sharing power equally between university and community collaborators *(Community Partner Summit Group, 2010)*. Many major projects OCD managed were not equal partnerships, because in some cases the federal government dictated the nature of the project in its request for proposals. Not only did the community feel the project was being foisted on them, but the funder required the project to have certain characteristics that the community found objectionable. It came down to having to accept these characteristics or not apply. Further, many grants were given to OCD/the university, even though on some occasions most of the money actually went to the community, so ultimately the university was responsible for the money and the project, which represented a power imbalance even if it was never overtly exercised.

Other projects are not prescribed beyond the general goal, which permits greater university and community collaboration in creating the program and sharing authority and responsibility. But jointly creating a project can also be rocky. Neither university nor community partners may be accustomed to sharing control and having to accommodate other viewpoints and professional standards and criteria in this process.

Managing successful partnerships. Research points to several characteristics of successful partnerships *(Groark & McCall, 2005, 2008)*. Participants must have a common purpose with clear, concrete, achievable, and specific goals. Each partner should be able to make some necessary contribution to the project; ideally, each partner is necessary, but no single partner or subset of partners is sufficient. All major stakeholders should be represented. Further, partners should be team players, have the ability to get along with diverse collaborators, handle conflict professionally, and accept group decisions that may conflict with their preferences. Regular meetings and good communication among group members are needed. Finally, strong, balanced, sensitive leadership is necessary. The leader needs to be able to listen to, understand, and respect diverse viewpoints, and be sensitive to the needs of each partner. But he or she also needs to be strong enough to keep the group on task and on schedule, deal respectfully with disagreements but achieve group decisions, and move the group toward achieving its goal. Only a few people excel in all these characteristics.

Respect for deadlines. OCD also respected community deadlines. Policymakers expected a report to be delivered on time and sometimes scheduled a news conference before receiving the report. To deliver the report late or not provide an advance copy

so the policymaker could be thoroughly prepared would embarrass the policymaker, and that would be the last such project OCD would get from them or others in town (word travels fast within a locality). OCD lived by the motto that "we do what we say we will do when we said we would do it," so staff were advised to double the estimate of the time they thought the project would take and gave that deadline to the funder. But then OCD would do whatever it took—nights, weekends, whatever—to deliver on time.

Lessons Learned About Scholarship in University–Community Projects

There are several lessons that pertain to conducting scholarship activities in the context of a university–community engagement unit.

Service-learning. OCD does not usually teach courses, although individual staff members do teach courses on an ad hoc basis. Therefore, we do not provide typical service-learning opportunities to students. However, through the years OCD has informally advertised itself as a place where students from several disciplines interested in applied work could get practical experience. Indeed, 10–20 students per year do take internships or work at OCD, and OCD faculty have advised and mentored numerous graduate students.

Although these activities do not look like traditional service-learning, Nyden and Percy *(2010)* suggested that involvement of this sort in an engaged research center "represents the more advanced level of service learning" because "it is the active use of theoretical and methodological skills in addressing issues of importance to local communities" *(p. 314)*. For example, OCD students have designed, executed, analyzed, and reported on surveys as part of community needs assessments; designed assessments and databases for charting participation and attitudes of community members of a major local project's governing committee; and participated extensively in assessments, data management and analysis, and publishing of academic reports on interventions for institutionalized and postinstitutionalized children in several countries.

Engaging faculty in local projects. Engaging faculty in community projects is a long-standing challenge at many universities (e.g., *Shields, 2015*). There are many possible reasons, including the common complaints that faculty are not interested in applied and local projects (e.g., *Kaplan, 2015*), and there is a preference for basic research credits to obtain tenure. Although some senior faculty

develop applied interests over time, it is difficult to persuade faculty to change their scholarly orientation from basic to applied. It is easier to hire faculty who already have applied interests. Engagement units at some universities have faculty slots, salary money, and joint positions with academic departments that permit them to have a strong voice in hiring faculty with applied interests; without such provisions, new faculty tend to be selected on more traditional academic criteria.

Community projects are often community specific; they may provide substantial benefit to many local people, but faculty and national funders relate to national theoretical needs *(Kaplan, 2015)*. However, sometimes faculty can perceive broader theoretical and practical implications in a project that starts as a local demonstration. For example, a specific intervention may constitute an exemplar of a theoretical principle or be a case study of a type of intervention being tried at other locations across the country. Perceiving the broader implications may make the project more interesting to faculty and potentially more eligible for national funding.

Also, bringing faculty together with service professionals and local policymakers to discuss the current state of a local problem on the one hand and the current state of relevant knowledge about the issue on the other hand can sometimes stimulate interest on both sides. For example, a service professional may decide that the evidence suggests the advisability of trying a modification in their approach or even an entirely new service, and the academic may realize the issue has parameters not previously considered—together they might create a project to satisfy both insights.

Translational research. As a result of an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality conference in 2001, major federal agencies concerned with health care began to fund community-based participatory research in an attempt to accelerate the implementation of scientific discoveries in community health practice *(Nyden & Percy, 2010)*. The most obvious efforts were to increase communications and implement in the community those interventions and treatments whose efficacy had been previously demonstrated in rigorous scientific studies.

This emphasis spread beyond health care to a broad range of social, educational, and welfare services now under the rubric of "evidence-based" programs. But implementation was much more difficult for a previously validated behavioral intervention than for one relying on health care practices. Even the label "evidence-based

practice" does not denote a "replication" and has become so diluted that it has nearly lost specific meaning.

For example, some years ago the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funded numerous sites across the country to implement the Comprehensive Child Development Program for pregnant women and young children. Although the intervention was "prescribed" in a 100+-page manual, the evaluation of 21 programs revealed substantial differences in the nature of the programs as implemented *(CSR, 1997)*. Further, several programs adopted a family support orientation that provided a vast array of different services from which families chose those pertinent to their needs, which meant that the treatment was different for each family within a site *(McCall, Ryan, & Plemons, 2003)*. Years later, ACF funded Early Head Start sites in a national effectiveness study, but it recognized then that each site would have a different incarnation of Early Head Start. Experiences such as these suggest that in social and behavioral services, "uniform treatment" across sites and across individuals within sites is rarely achieved *(McCall & Green, 2004)*.

This situation may contribute to the common impression that human service programs that have been demonstrated to be successful don't "travel very well," meaning that "replications" tend not to work as well as the original. This failure to replicate also may occur because the replication partners do not perceive the intervention as "theirs." Instead, they may feel the project is being imposed on them, and they do not have the same enthusiasm for or faith in the potential success of the intervention. A good deal of groundwork may be required to avoid these feelings and gain the enthusiasm and commitment (i.e., genuine buy-in) of the directors and staff of the new partners.

Even with substantial local enthusiasm, it is extremely difficult to replicate a preestablished intervention because so many characteristics of the new environment, service professionals, and participants are different from the original. "Replication" is a practical myth. This represents a serious compromise to the fidelity of a treatment model that is essential to being able to specify scientifically the nature of the treatment that results suggest was effective (or, in some cases, was not effective).

Occasionally, with substantial preparation of community agencies and staff, a predesigned program can be implemented in a new context with new people. Otherwise, in our experience, it is best to try to identify the elements of a program that likely previously

made it successful or are believed to be essential to a new program. These may be very general (e.g., reduce the number of caregivers serving a ward in an orphanage), and there may be little or no direct evidence substantiating their individual contributions to outcome. Nevertheless, these elements are considered inviolate and must be implemented; specific aspects of these components (i.e., six or eight caregivers) and other program circumstances (e.g., daily schedule of work hours) can be modified to fit the local circumstances *(Lindland, Fond, Haydon, Volmert, & Kendall-Taylor, 2015)*.

Implementation. No matter how effective a program may have been, if it is poorly implemented in a new context it is a poor program. So implementation is crucial to a program's success, but it is often an underemphasized aspect of replication or establishing a new program *(Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Groark & McCall, 2005, 2008, 2011; Lindland et al., 2015)*.

One crucial aspect of implementation is preparation of the directors and staff of the organizations that will implement the program. Typically, they initially resist change in general and are wary of someone from the university prescribing how they should deliver services. The goal is to get the director, senior professionals, and eventually line staff to buy into the program, which is best done by having them contribute meaningfully to its creation and design.

Sometimes interventions are designed from scratch in true partnership, starting with agreement about the problem to be addressed and the desired outcome. This approach, if well managed, usually leads to acceptance and enthusiasm.

At other times, a fairly specific intervention is desired, perhaps as part of a request for proposals or because a government entity has funded local replications of an evidence-based program. First, the director and senior staff of the agency must be convinced to implement the program. If the director and senior staff are unknown to you, organize social events to help people get to know one another before you concentrate on the project. Then it helps to listen—what does the agency do now and why do they do it this way? What are the current outcomes, and ideally what should the outcomes be? What should be changed to achieve those outcomes (i.e., theory of change)? What about implementing one or another component in a new program? Then go to a more formal logic model. This process can take many meetings and compromises on flexible aspects of the program. Then have line staff contribute to the implementation plans. They will know what can and cannot be done and why—the devil is in the details *(Groark & McCall, 2011)*.

Sometimes they will resist, and eventually you may need to declare, "You may be right, but let us give this a try." The program should not be started until everyone is committed to it; one or two line staff who do not subscribe to the new program can undermine the entire project. Finally, measure the implementation so it can be accurately described and elements can be used in the analysis (see below).

On one occasion OCD enabled community partners to design "on their own" an intervention OCD had in mind but did not communicate directly to them. In this case, OCD wanted to transform an orphanage for infants and young children to be more family-like in structure, operation, and caregiver interactions with children, similar to the St. Petersburg–USA Orphanage Research Team *(2008)* intervention. Using a Socratic method, OCD asked whether the directors and senior staff of the orphanage thought the family was the best place for rearing children—they did. Then OCD had them list in a table the characteristics of the ideal family (e.g., few and consistent parents, few children per parent, mixed ages of children, etc.). Then OCD asked what the orphanage was like on each of these attributes. When the table was completed (i.e., the orphanage was opposite to the family on every characteristic), there was a group epiphany—"Oh my, we have to change the orphanage!" OK, how do you want to change each of these characteristics? They planned "our" intervention in the next 2 days.

Sustainability. Many projects are designed to satisfy criteria of scientific rigor or to provide the maximum service to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. These are understandable strategies, but another consideration is planning the project to be sustainable once the demonstration grant is ended. One step in this process is to form an advisory committee at the beginning of the project composed of some stakeholders relevant to future funding (e.g., county director of human services, foundation officers). They come to feel the project is "theirs," and they understand and appreciate it when it comes time to continue funding it.

A second strategy is to design the project in a way that can be sustained. For example, use train-the-trainer strategies so senior staff can train replacement staff, and hire as few additional positions as necessary to avoid increasing the budget for operations. Also, write a manual describing the training curriculum and intervention so that the project can endure staff and director changes and be exported to additional sites.

Design and Analysis of Field Studies

Applied research conducted in community contexts may require different research designs and data analyses than basic research. The community is often an imperfect, sometimes very messy, laboratory consisting of a host of circumstances that threaten the internal validity of the study. Factors that increase external validity (i.e., ecological validity) often compromise internal validity (i.e., cause–effect relations). Even the gold standards of research methodology (random assignment, uniform treatment, etc.) actually may not be the most appropriate strategies *(McCall & Green, 2004)*.

Random assignment. Random assignment of individuals to a treatment versus a comparison group is often difficult to implement in the community, and if participants live in close proximity there may be treatment contamination among friends and relatives assigned to different groups. Random assignment of groups (i.e., neighborhoods, schools) is often more feasible, but initial comparability of groups can be an issue (use a longitudinal design that compares changes over time regardless of initial values). Social service workers often resist random assignment, preferring to give the treatment to the most needy individuals. However, if the treatment must be limited to a subset of eligible participants because of cost and staff availability, random assignment of eligible participants to treatment versus comparison groups may be the fairest approach.

No-treatment comparison group. Frequently, a comparison group is difficult or impossible to obtain. One cannot impose new measurements on staff and clients in a service that receives no benefit from the study. A variety of quasi-experimental designs can partly overcome this limitation *(Cook & Campbell, 1979; McCall & Groark, 2010; McCall, Ryan, & Green, 1999; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004)*, and modern statistical analyses (e.g., propensity score analysis, instrumental variables, structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, latent growth curve analysis, complier average causal effect) can help.

Participant dropouts. Participant dropout, intervention contamination, and even participants switching treatments can be major problems. Be sure to build into the program incentives for participants to complete the program. Intent-to-treat analyses, in which participants are included in the group to which they were originally assigned regardless of their actual experience with the intervention, is a common statistical strategy intended to preserve random assignment. But substantial numbers of participants may

be included in a treatment condition that they never or minimally experienced. It may be instructive to conduct intent-to-treat analyses and to compare selected subsamples that experienced the full intervention, dropouts, changes in treatments, and no treatments. Social services conducted in society are never randomly assigned to potential clients, so generalizations to practice may be more appropriate from self-selected samples.

In addition, there are often procedural inelegancies. Staff and clients vary in how long they remain in the program, and staff members may not work consistent schedules or may be off for several weeks, which threaten collecting true longitudinal data. Who collects data can be an issue. Research assistants have a value and training for collecting data but no relationship with clients or staff; staff do have relationships with clients but have limited time or value for data collection. Have staff administer the questionnaires that the client then mails to the evaluator. In most cases, compromises on scientific virtues are frequent. The task is to get the best obtainable, if not the ideal, research information, and interpret it appropriately.

Analyses of multiple-stage designs. Many interventions, such as two-generation interventions, actually represent a sequence of two or three stages. The intervention may consist of training caregivers or parents, who then learn from the training and presumably change their behavior with the children, resulting in the children improving developmentally. Unfortunately, some of these projects have been analyzed with insensitive procedures, and it is even possible that much of the lack of evidence for social programs derives in part from using inappropriate analysis procedures.

For example, the Comprehensive Child Development Program offered low-income families with young children a menu of services, and individual families selected which services were most appropriate for them *(McCall et al., 2003)*. The first problem was that the comparison group did not sit idly by but went out and got services on their own at nearly the same overall rate as the treatment group. Further, intervention effects for individual services were measured on the entire sample, even though in many cases fewer than 15% of the sample actually chose and received that specific service.

An alternative strategy for multiple-stage intervention versus comparison designs might be to measure the intervention that was provided and the extent to which participants experienced it. This should include measures of the inviolate as well as the discretionary

characteristics of the intervention. Then, if parents or caregivers are the proximal recipients, measure the extent to which they changed their behavior with the children in ways intended by the intervention. Then measure the effects on the children.

The first analysis is to compare the relation between the presumably crucial inviolate characteristics versus discretionary characteristics of the intervention and children's outcomes. One could also ask whether the inviolate factors relate to children's outcomes controlling for the variable characteristics. In the second analysis phase, determine the extent to which parent behavior mediated these intervention effects; presumably they should mediate most of the inviolate effects on children in the intervention condition to a greater extent than in the comparison condition.

Some Challenges to Universities of University–Community Engagement

Successfully operating a university–community engagement enterprise at a major research-oriented university can produce some major university challenges.

Staff may not fit. Being a center that houses staff who are "leased" to community projects can create challenges *(McCall, 1996; McCall et al., 1998)*. Community-based interventions may require staff who can relate to very low-income participants or who themselves have had mental health issues, been abused, or had adverse experiences with the law. Other needed staff may have a great deal of high-level community administrative experience and command a high salary but lack higher education. Such qualifications may not match the university's job classification system and salary scales. If exceptions to common university policies are needed, go to the lead administrator, not a lower level employee. Only the lead person can make exceptions, and he or she is more likely to have faced a similar issue before. Try to keep such exceptions to a minimum.

Indirect costs. Major research universities value receiving full indirect costs from some federal agencies, and some grants to an engagement unit may come from such agencies. But many local projects will be funded by local government and local foundations that pay only 10% of indirect costs or nothing at all, although many are accustomed to paying as direct costs some items that are typically included in the indirect cost calculation (e.g., space, administrative support). The university needs to accept this situation if it wants an engagement unit, and the unit and university should

work out an arrangement regarding traditional indirect costs paid as direct costs.

Assessment of scholarly activity. When basic research and traditional academic scholarship are the criteria for faculty promotion and tenure, peer-reviewed publications in high-quality journals and grants from research-supporting federal agencies, among other credits, are convenient criteria for scholarly quality and productivity. Community projects may offer significantly different results. Scholarship might contribute to the design of an intervention (e.g., research demonstrates that one home visit a month is not sufficient to produce family benefits; once per week is needed), and an evaluation may be more of a quality assurance study and published, if at all, in practice rather than research journals. A community project is less likely to be reflected in citation indices and more likely to result in "softer" measures, such as improving children's development, helping people out of poverty, even saving lives—outcomes that may be difficult to determine and quantify. If the purpose of scholarship is to improve the human condition, these outcomes certainly qualify as relevant and as indices of impact. But they must be documented through different methods, perhaps including committees of academic and community professionals who review reports and interview stakeholders, academics who understand applied methods and can judge quality in the face of limitations, testimonials of project participants, and so on.

Conclusion

In more than 30 years of conducting a great variety of university–community engagement projects, OCD has learned that such projects can be, but very often are not, direct translations of basic research methods and procedures. Compromises and sharing of control are usual, and the design and analysis of applied field projects can be very different from and more complicated than basic research methods. It will likely take many years for social-behavioral research disciplines to adjust to the realities of applied work and invent new approaches to dealing with its challenges, and it will take at least as long for the academic value system to reward such efforts on a par with basic scholarship. Applied research is more complicated and difficult to do well; rather than denigrate it as scientifically inferior, the disciplines should send their very best scholars to conquer its challenges and contribute directly to society's well-being.

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Approaching Critical Service-Learning: A Model for Reflection on Positionality and Possibility

Mark Latta, Tina M. Kruger, Lindsey Payne, Laura Weaver, and Jennifer L. VanSickle

Abstract

Mitchell *(2008)* asks faculty to adopt "a 'critical' approach to community service learning" *(p. 50)*, one that focuses on social change, redistribution of power, and the development of authentic relationships. However, the path of transformation from *traditional* to *critical* service-learning practices remains unexplored. In this autoethnographic reflective essay, five individuals share their journey from higher education institutions as they engaged in a community of practice examining their own questions, assumptions, experiences, and positionality to more fully understand critical service-learning (CSL). This essay documents self-discovery through an iterative reflection process, detailing the approach used to examine CSL and interrogate the relationship between positionality and critical theory. This process provides a roadmap for service-learning practitioners interested in developing their own critical consciousness. Key outcomes include a conceptual model positioning CSL on a spectrum, in which one may approach without necessarily achieving social change, and the development of a toolkit of CSL resources.

Keywords: critical service-learning, positionality, social change, faculty learning community, critical reflection, autoethnography

Introduction

These are our stories . . . how we got from there to here. *(Laura Weaver [LW], director of programs and member development at Indiana Campus Compact, Faculty Fellow field notes, February 28, 2017)*

I go back to the intake procedures for Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility. . . . I am here to teach, to listen, and to do something—anything—in hopes of reversing the stubborn trend of recidivism for each of my 125 students. I am here to deliver a bucket of water to a forest fire that has burned for years and shows no signs of slowing down. I am here because I joined AmeriCorps

> and wanted to help. I am here because one of my most vivid memories of my first day at Pendleton was the staff orientation in which I learned not one single person in the front office who spoke to us actually believed rehabilitation was a goal worth hoping for, and I refuse to embrace that cynicism, to let my bucket run dry. *(Mark Latta [ML], director of the Writing Center, instructor of English, and public literacy coordinator at Marian University)*

In this article, we weave together elements from a year-long reflection process, which utilized qualitative research tools, in an effort to share the outcomes of the journey of a faculty learning community examining critical service-learning. Our intention was to explore critical service-learning, seeking ways to expand not only our own pedagogical strategies, but the field as a whole. We hoped to trace the evolution of an intentional repositioning of a practitioner orientation from a *traditional* service-learning perspective toward a *critical* service-learning orientation, as defined by Mitchell *(2008, 2015)*. We sought to articulate emergent understandings and challenges that shape this evolution, and to examine how the movement from traditional service-learning to critical service-learning orientations attunes educator understandings of socially just pedagogy. In other words, it would not be enough just to understand the theory behind critical service-learning; our goal was to understand how to integrate critical service-learning into the classroom. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Boards of Indiana State University and Purdue University, or were exempted from review by Marian University and University of Indianapolis. Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis accepted the Institutional Review Board approval from Indiana State University and Purdue University.

Our iterative process was facilitated by the use of methodologies found within critical theory, critical race theory, and feminist theory *(DeMeulenaere & Cann, 2013)*. We captured and deconstructed our learning process and the evolution of our understanding of positionality, critical theories, and critical service-learning by recording our conversations and reflecting extensively both individually and collectively through writings and in conversation. This also allowed us to track our progress so that others could follow a similar path. In particular, we relied on critical, coconstructed autoethnographies *(Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012)* as a valid, reflexive data source *(Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2005)* that enabled us to "describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order

to understand cultural experience" *(Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011)*. As Ellis and Bochner *(2000)* note, this style can "show how important it is to make the researcher's own experience a topic of investigation in its own right" *(p. 733)* and is particularly well suited to examine, expose, and trouble the relationship between practitioner and practice. To highlight the role of this method and demonstrate the role of self-interrogation in approaching critical service-learning, we include excerpts of our own autoethnographies within this article.

This reflective essay is an attempt to contribute to the literature surrounding critical service-learning, literature that often positions traditional and critical forms of service-learning as binaries rather than a spectrum of practices and often neglects to address the role of self-interrogation. We share our journey here in the hope it may serve as a roadmap for others interested in expanding their service-learning efforts to bring about social change and developing their own critical consciousness *(Freire, 1970)*, an awareness "that through acts of creation and re-creation, man makes cultural reality" *(Freire, 2005, p. 39)* and may challenge systemic oppression.

In our attempt to gain insight into how one may achieve the aims of critical service-learning, we determined that the movement toward this understanding is itself an integral part of becoming critically aware and developing a critical consciousness. Additionally, the continued interrogation of one's own positionality and perspective is a fundamental part of developing a critical lens of personal and cultural understanding. Such understanding leads, we conclude, to the knowledge that one may approach critical service-learning, but may never arrive at that destination. Like a point on the horizon whose features begin to reveal their complexity in greater detail as one moves closer to them, the richer the complexities, possibilities, and nuances of social change appear as one moves toward the aims of critical service-learning. Also similar to the horizon destination, critical service-learning provides an orientation but no determinate finality. In other words, it may be more helpful to think of critical service-learning as an ongoing process that is never fully realized rather than an outcome with a defined end point.

The Fellows—A Community of Engaged Scholars

This article is one outcome of a community of five engaged scholars (Fellows), from different institutions across Indiana, who are dedicated to "learn[ing] *from* and *with* one another" *(Stevens & Jamison, 2012, p. 20)* as they examine issues from *within* and *across*

courses, disciplines, institutions, and the field of service-learning and community engagement. Fellows are invited to participate in the Indiana Campus Compact Faculty Fellows Program (the Program) and form a year-long learning community designed according to the tenets of Boyer's *(1996)* definition of the scholarship of engagement through the integration of community engagement with teaching, research, and service. More than 100 Fellows have participated in the Program since its inception in 1996. This year-long learning community experience for faculty aims to strengthen the field as well as the individual scholarship of the participants through a collaborative Fellowship Project *(Bringle, Games, Ludlum Foos, Osgood, & Osborne, 2000; Marthakis, Eisenhauer, & Jamison, 2013; Stevens & Jamison, 2012)*.

Interest in a Growing Movement

> LW: It seemed like this group would be long-time colleagues and even friends, with talks of group hikes and rock climbing trips, and bonding over the shared love of pie—yes we managed to include dessert with every meal we ate over the course of the two-day retreat. . . . Talks of a group project seemed to be gravitating towards the broad topic of critical service-learning, as this had become one of the "hot topics" of the field in the past few years—we had even managed to have Tania Mitchell speak at our Service Engagement Summit the previous March. . . .

Primed from attending the annual Indiana Campus Compact Service Engagement Summit in March 2016, which had the themes "Explore Critical Service-Learning, Power and Privilege" and "Charity vs. Social Justice," we began discussing and exploring the tenets of critical service-learning (CSL). The Fellows each had varying levels of knowledge and experience in grappling with ideas related to critical service-learning, including the concepts of positionality and critical theory, and an understanding of how to shift one's pedagogy from *traditional* service-learning to *critical* service-learning.

> At the beginning of this fellowship, I was aware of service-learning as a pedagogical practice (having been involved with ICC and community engagement activities for about 5 years), was also aware of the concepts

> of critical theory (having a bachelor's degree in sociology), and was also aware of the ideas and concepts of social justice (having gone on many tirades in the face of various injustices I have witnessed). What I was not very aware of (although I had heard the term) was the intersections of these ideas in the form of critical service-learning. The term immediately made sense to me as using the pedagogy of service-learning to bring about social justice, yet there are many nuances that I have discovered throughout the fellowship and many more that I know I have yet to uncover. *(Tina Kruger, [TK] Senior Faculty Fellow, chair and associate professor of multidisciplinary studies at Indiana State University)*

These differences in knowledge and varying degrees of understanding formed the basis of the Fellowship Project: Address a need to approach CSL in a way that would allow practitioners to enter into this understanding regardless of prior knowledge, demonstrate the importance of self-reflexivity as part of a willingness to experience a philosophical shift in understanding, and provide a toolkit of resources that would be useful throughout the journey. We aimed to explore CSL through investigating critical theory, examining our own positionalities, and critically reflecting on our current efforts in the field of service-learning and how those efforts could be shifted further toward CSL. We embarked on our journey guided by the following concepts and questions:

- What are CSL, critical theory, and positionality, and how do the three intersect?
- How does one identify their own positionality, and how would one help students discover their positionality?
- What tools and resources are best suited in facilitating practitioner movement from a traditional service-learning perspective toward a CSL orientation?

> As LW recalled: After a short while our group begins to split a bit with Tina, Mark and I talking more about our knowledge with and experiences in CSL and further still its connection to Critical Theory. At times, I can hear Jennifer and Lindsey's discussion and their lack of familiarity (uncomfortableness/hesitation) on the subject. . . . Tina and Mark laid out their idea for a CSL toolkit and how it could also examine the connections to various critical theories. Jennifer proclaims how this

> is a great idea, but that she isn't sure how much she can contribute besides testing the toolkit in her course as she doesn't have much knowledge in the area of CSL let alone Critical Theory, to which Lindsey nods her head in agreement.

CSL calls for educators to go beyond merely participating in the community to being agents of social change *for* and *with* the community *(Marullo, 1999; Mitchell, 2008)*. This call for social change and for educators to labor alongside communities as agents of social change requires a radical reconceptualization of teaching practices and a willingness to imagine what this shift might require of us. After some discussion of this social change declaration, the confusion among the remaining Fellows permeated the room. How do we, as educators, begin to integrate CSL into our courses?

> ML: I became interested in systemic oppression and organized violence long before I knew these terms or recognized their potential meaning in part by my experiences at Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility and in how these understandings played out in my personal life. . . .
>
> My path from Pendleton Juvenile into academia involved a position as a writing instructor at our local community college. During my interview with the program chair, I recall expressing a concern about my relative lack of experience. After all, I had only been teaching for two years and my experience was limited to the young men at Pendleton. "Actually, we feel your experience there makes you uniquely qualified for the community college system," my interviewer replied.
>
> "Oh, okay," I answered. . . .
>
> I don't remember any of my students from my first semester teaching at the community college. . . . Rather, here's what I remember from my first day of my first college writing class: there were no guards in the classroom. While this difference threw me off during my first few weeks at our community college, I soon discovered a similarity that caused me to question my assumptions surrounding education and my role in perpetuating systemic inequalities. . . .
>
> I began to wonder about my own role in perpetuating what appeared to be an educational system rigged against the student. Increasingly, I questioned my own

> assumptions of education and began challenging myself to look deeper at systemic issues. This is what led me to critical theory and social change.

It quickly became clear that beyond the role of critical reflection *(Ash & Clayton, 2009)* in shaping effective service-learning pedagogy, a gap exists in understanding how educators can adopt a CSL stance or what an adoption of this stance should entail. Additionally, little is known about how this movement toward a social change orientation will translate into curriculum development and community-learning strategies, or how it will shape the transfer of knowledge. We wondered: How does one actually do CSL?

What Is Critical Service-Learning?

Although the term *service-learning* really took hold within higher education in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the general concept of learning through service within a local community goes back to the origins of the contemporary American educational system within Dewey's model of education *(Dewey, 1916)*. Many educators report that service-learning can help students not only to develop intellectual, personal, and professional skills, but to emerge as more conscientious, thoughtful, civic-minded individuals (e.g., *Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001*). However, others have cautioned that poorly designed service-learning experiences may actually "reinforce stereotypes, decrease participants' motivation to engage in future service activities, and exacerbate power differentials between social and cultural groups" *(Furco, 2011, p. ix)*.

Although service-learning is commonly associated with community-engaged and democratic pedagogies, the modern origins of service-learning were focused primarily on the needs of students and institutions housing those students. This raised a number of criticisms that service-learning exploits members of the community by positioning them through a deficit orientation and using them for educational gain *(Butin, 2005; Cruz, 1990)*. Others raised questions about the ethics of tying credit to service, pointing out that charity not only maintains systemic issues *(Herzberg, 1994)* but also exacerbates these inequalities through requiring what amounts to "forced volunteerism" *(Boyle-Baise, 1998; Mitchell, 2008)*. Other critics (e.g., *Brown, 2001; Cipolle, 2004; Pompa, 2002; Robinson, 2000*) went further, stating that service-learning orientations that focus primarily on the needs of students and institutions are paternalistic and actively support the hegemony that many service-learning courses state they aim to disrupt.

Mitchell *(2008)* captured the range and evolution of criticisms related to service-learning within her work establishing the concept of *critical service-learning* (CSL). She distinguished between traditional forms of service-learning, which typically lack an explicit aim of questioning or disrupting social power imbalances, and CSL pedagogy, which centered on "working to redistribute power amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship, developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective" *(Mitchell, 2008, p. 52)*. These three tenets (referred to hereafter as Mitchell's tenets of CSL) form the foundation and aims of CSL.

Today's distinction between traditional and critical service-learning is one that boldly maintains a need to expose and disrupt systemic inequalities, working in "service to an ideal" *(Wade, 2000, p. 97)* that seeks to redistribute power. CSL positions an intentional social change orientation *(Mitchell, 2008)* as one necessary in identifying forms of oppressions in communities, understanding their systemic causes, problematizing hegemonies that benefit from power asymmetries, and utilizing asset-oriented strategies that work toward the support of socially just communities *(Brown, 2001)*. CSL also asks participants to consider and reflect on a wider, societal perspective of their service and to dialogue about the concepts of power, privilege, and oppression *(Brown, 2001)*.

This social change orientation relies on the power of the CSL practitioner to identify as a social change agent and to work through this identity. As general concepts of critical theory have worked through and have become embedded within the field of CSL, the importance of identity and positionality has recently begun to emerge. In order to create "authentic relationships" *(Mitchell, 2008, p. 52)* that seek to redistribute power, Donahue and Mitchell *(2010)* advise that, before attempting to engage in a CSL project, faculty examine their own identities and interrogate their positionality. This is sound advice, but service-learning practitioners, particularly those more accustomed to traditional service-learning, often lack a theoretical and practical understanding of what an interrogation of positionality entails.

Developing New Lenses: Interrogating Positions of Power, Privilege, and Identity

> Our group first decided that we needed to learn more about critical service-learning and critical reflection. That produced a large sigh of relief for me as I knew

> that is where I needed to start. I needed time to read, reflect, and digest what all of this meant. . . . I had doubts about whether my current or future service-learning projects could meet the goal of critical service-learning because of my lack of knowledge and because I felt like a beginner. I knew that I had work to do first. I thought that, to have my students participate in critical reflection and critical service-learning, I had to start by understanding the population to which my students would be exposed . . . , then examine/identify my own assumptions about the population, to figure out how to frame the experience so that students would be able to explore the strengths of the community while helping the facility provide a service to the community. For example, Mitchell *(2008)* suggests that faculty should select readings and tailor lectures to prepare students for their experiences and to see them through educative frames for example, asset-based assessments of communities or critical perspectives addressing systemic causes rather than only individual failings for community problems. I felt like I had no idea where to find those readings and/or how to include those concepts in my lectures/classes. *(Jennifer VanSickle [JV], professor of sport management and coordinator of the Undergraduate Sport Management Program at University of Indianapolis)*

The orientations of CSL draw generally from the postmodern epistemologies of critical theory and share lineage with the humanizing pedagogy of hooks *(1994)* and Freire *(1970, 1998)*, as well as the sociocultural theories of Foucault *(1966)* and Bourdieu *(1986)*. More specifically, CSL draws on Black feminist theory (e.g., *Collins, 2009; hooks, 1981, 2000*) and critical race theory (CRT; e.g., *Bonilla-Silva, 2014; DiAngelo, 2011; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995*) as the lenses through which power asymmetries and structural inequalities are interrogated. In order to develop "a critical approach that is unapologetic in its aim to dismantle structures of injustice" *(Mitchell, 2008, p. 50)*, CSL requires faculty to develop a critical stance *(Fook, 2007)* and an awareness of the "enormous role of their own and others' racialized positionality and cultural ways of knowing" *(Milner, 2007, p. 388)*.

To aid the development of a critical consciousness *(Freire, 1970)* and the interrogation of assumptive norms, feminist theory and CRT commonly employ an analysis of the interrelationships

between identity and power through the embodied knowledge frameworks of positionality *(Madge, 1993; Rose, 1997)* and intersectionality *(Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2006)*. Within positionality, "facets of the self . . . are articulated as 'positions' in a multidimensional geography of power relations" *(Rose, 1997, p. 308)*, and identity is composed of multiple selves, including "race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality" *(Madge, 1993, p. 295)*. Similar to positionality, intersectionality considers the intersections of these multiple selves as facets of social identities through which knowledge is filtered and toward which oppression is often directed *(Crenshaw, 1989)*. These frameworks provide entrance into a critical understanding of the ways in which knowledge may be embodied and power exerted or directed in relationship to particular social identities *(Collins, 2009; hooks, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006)*.

> JV: My multiple cultural identities are: White, female, American, homosexual, Christian, middle-class. I know that I have bias and bring that into the classroom, although I try to be objective. I have experienced very little discrimination and have always had the opportunity to succeed. Therefore, I am not sure that I can fully empathize with those who have been marginalized. I am sure that I allow or even espouse language in my classroom that is not always fair to others or that may paint an inaccurate picture of cultural identities that are unlike my own, even though I don't want that to happen.

Although a critical awareness of identity and privilege is necessary in order to disrupt the replication of oppression through educational practices *(Milner, 2007)*, connections and explorations of the influence of practitioner identity within CSL are not widely discussed within the current literature. Likewise, examples documenting the process of exploring practitioner positionality as part of taking on a critical stance seem to be missing from the body of work surrounding both traditional and critical service-learning. Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law *(2012)* draw specific parallels between CSL and CRT from a pedagogical stance, but this examination is not framed explicitly on the critical consciousness of those practicing service-learning. Donahue and Mitchell *(2010)* speak to the relationship between CSL and intersectionality and positionality of identity, albeit primarily from a student perspective.

Additionally, implications between practitioner positionality and the development of a critical stance through critical theory are an area of focus that is still largely unexplored within the literature. Butin *(2005, 2015)* and Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law *(2012)* have maneuvered the debate in this direction, calling on practitioners to examine their own criticality and commitment to upending systemic inequalities. Taylor *(2002)* also focused attention through the subjectivity and positionality of practitioners to some degree, but the focus remains on socially constructed and contested metaphors of service, falling short of articulating an explicit examination between practitioner identities and the tensions created by a shift toward CSL.

The literature that exists surrounding the intersection of critical theory and service-learning is emergent *(Butin, 2015; Donahue & Mitchell, 2010; Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012)*, and gaps remain surrounding the relationship between practitioner positionality and taking a critical stance in service-learning efforts. Mitchell *(2015)* takes up this consideration, but as we discovered through this Fellowship Project, a knowledge gap exists among service-learning faculty surrounding critical theory and the iterative reflection process in which to interrogate one's positionality.

Grappling With Meaning and Implementation: A Process of Reflection and Discovery

Throughout our process we employed multiple modes of gathering reflections, information, and insights. To spark thoughts and discussion we used an iterative process through which we discussed a topic, identified gaps in knowledge, read and explored literature to address those gaps, discussed again, and identified new gaps in our knowledge. We found this process, as well as completing the assessment tools detailed in Table 1, helpful in identifying our own positionality and revealing gaps in our understanding of CSL. The instruments we used assess beliefs about justice, commitment to civic action, the presence of prejudice, and other relevant factors (see Table 1 for complete listing and scope of tools used). While completing these scales, we utilized the cognitive interviewing techniques of "think-aloud" and retrospective verbal probing based on those described by Willis *(1999)*.

Table 1. Assessment Scales

Title of scale	Reference	Key elements assessed	Description of scale
Global Belief in a Just World	Lipkus, I. *(1991)*	General belief that "people get what they deserve and deserve what they get"	Seven-item scale in booklet form, and responses range from strong agreement to strong disagreement
Universal Orientation Scale	Phillips & Ziller *(1997)*	Nonprejudicial attitudes—a universal orientation in interpersonal relationships in which people pay selective attention to the similarities between themselves and diverse others	20-item scale; asks respondents to rate perceptions of self/other similarities; responses on a five-point scale range from "does not describe me well" to "describes me very well"
Social Dominance Orientation Scale	Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle *(1994)*	Extent to which people prefer in-group dominance and superiority over out-groups	16-item scale with seven-point responses ranging from "(1)—very negative" to "(7)—very positive"
Civic Attitudes Scale	Mabry *(1998)*	Civic attitudes as they relate to community service	Five-item scale; responses ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement
Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire	Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland *(2002)*	Attitudes, skills, and intentions of college students related to participation in service-learning	44-item scale; responses ranging from "(5)—strongly agree" to "(1)—strongly disagree"

> But where I really struggle is, okay, so how do I get into this bigger stuff, this deeper . . . The Universal Orientation. The Global Belief In A Just World. The Social Dominance scale. Where does that fit into my class and how do I . . . As a person that is also not confident in addressing those issues themselves, how do I enter that into my curriculum and engage with my students? And then, I don't have a good answer for that. I think that's where I've come to all this. *(Lindsey Payne [LP], director of service-learning, and assistant professor of environmental and ecological engineering at Purdue University, group transcript, November 4, 2016)*

Additionally, as part of the iterative process, guided by the questions listed in Table 2, we engaged in prolonged written critical reflection *(Ash & Clayton, 2009; Clayton & Ash, 2005; Fook, 2007)*. Although we made noticeable advances in collective and individual understanding of key issues in CSL, it became apparent throughout discussions that we each learned different things from the experience, at different times, and for different reasons. Expanded individual reflections on our particular experiences helped to identify key elements of transition in knowledge and understanding, which, we hope, might be of use to others interested in taking a similar journey related to CSL. Furthermore, by incorporating autoethnographies into our repertoire of critical reflection activities, we intended to "write both selves and others into our larger story" *(Denshire, 2013, p. 1)* and invited the reader to join us in the conversation and, perhaps, join the journey. This process led to the identification of key insights, "ah-ha" moments, and recurring themes in our development and understanding of key concepts of CSL and positionality.

We reviewed one another's independent reflections and autoethnographies, revisited recordings and transcripts from discussions, and posed questions to one another. This continual return to our narratives and responses formed the basis of our method in developing the critical coconstructed autoethnographies *(Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012)*. While we each authored our own stories, this process allowed us to also author the stories of one another and to explore more deeply the common themes and "ah-ha" moments described in the following sections. Although not explicitly stated as a goal for interpreting and drawing conclusions from the data, this process aligned the cohort toward organically adopting a consensus approach. At each stage of analysis, we grappled with interpretation together until each Fellow agreed with the understandings and implications. As we proceeded, we drafted ideas and models that we then further reflected upon, and which serve as the foundation of those shared here.

Table 2. Written Reflection Prompts

Questions used to prompt written reflection
What are my multiple cultural identities and how do they inform and/or effect my practice?*
How do I create a physically, intellectually, socio-emotionally, and culturally safe and inclusive learning community?*
How will I acquire accurate information about the cultural histories and community practice of my students?*
How are you feeling about/what are your thoughts on the process we have taken thus far—researching critical theories, critical service-learning, critical reflection?
How are you feeling about/what are your thoughts on the intersection of/between critical theory and critical service-learning? How does critical reflection fit in? Does it fit? If so, where? If not, why not?
What is your current knowledge level of critical theory, critical service-learning, critical reflection? Has it changed? If so, how has it changed? How do you feel about your current level of knowledge?
If you were not part of this learning community and were trying to work through this on your own, how would this experience potentially be different? Better? Worse? Would you keep going? Why/why not?
Where do I want to go (progress) from here with regards to my understanding and use of critical service-learning (and critical theory)?**

* *Question prompts from Great Lakes Equity Center, 2016.*

** *Question prompts utilized for autoethnographies.*

Finding a Path Forward: Reorienting Our Understandings of Critical Service-Learning

In sharing our iterative process to determine pathways for moving beyond traditional service-learning toward a greater understanding and implementation of CSL, we hope that others may also join in the journey. Through participation in critical analysis and self-reflection, we realized that Mitchell's *(2008)* tenets of CSL are, perhaps, far more difficult to achieve than we originally thought and that the language of achievement might itself be limiting our understanding of CSL as a continual process as opposed to a determinant destination. Working from a social change perspective to challenge the existing structures that reproduce social inequities while building authentic relationships and redistributing power is not something that can be accomplished in a semester *(Mitchell, 2008)* or a year; perhaps this is not even something that can be fully realized.

> TK: Having developed a somewhat deeper understanding of critical service-learning (CSL) this year, I

> realize that truly bringing about social change (the key goal of CSL) may not be possible in a semester, a year, or ever. . . .

Just as traditional service-learning has pitfalls *(Butin, 2005; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Cruz, 1990; Mitchell, 2008)*, CSL also has limitations *(Butin, 2015; Cahaus & Levkoe, 2017)*. Both the instructor and the student may enter into a project with the ideal of achieving Mitchell's tenets of CSL, but Mitchell *(2008)* acknowledges that "the types of service experiences that allow students to consider social change and transformation may not bring immediate results" *(p. 54)*. In fact, such experiences may initially discourage both the student and the instructor, as results and impacts may be delayed or unseen *(Doerr, 2011)*.

Maintaining a focus on immediate and concrete outcomes also runs the risk of ignoring the slow yet necessary process of working for social change, a process that demands a more full understanding of the complexities of situations and the richness of community members' embodied experiences. Therefore, a redefinition of what it means to *do* CSL is needed. Orientations centered on the practice of CSL rather than the dominant conceptualization of CSL as an outcome may be more helpful. Furthermore, we argue CSL is a means of both developing and enacting a critical consciousness. CSL is itself iterative and reflexive, simultaneously based on the knowledge, experiences, relationships, and critical awareness of those who are engaged in it while also capable of producing movements toward social change, authentic relationships, and the redistribution of power. In this sense, we believe it is more accurate to position CSL as a range of movements and strategies oriented toward *approaching* Mitchell's tenets rather than the arrival at them.

Approaching Critical Service-Learning: A Conceptual Model

> LP: I teach a service-learning course centered around stormwater management and the health of a local river. . . . This year I found myself on a journey past typical good will and good deeds that arise from traditional service-learning courses and toward a more critical perspective. . . . How do you motivate students to be actively engaged citizens . . . to be critical of society's injustices, striving for a better, healthier, more equitable, and sustainable world? How do you motivate them when all

> you can think about is your own White privilege and how it has sheltered you from many of the very issues you are asking them to rail against?

Butin *(2015)* argued that the desire to do justice is an action in itself and therefore is a positive step even if the goal of justice is not accomplished. We came to this same conclusion with the recognition that we were not yet at the point where we could successfully implement CSL. By acknowledging that we may never actually accomplish the end goal of systemic social change, we freed ourselves from the demand to *do* CSL. We concluded that *approaching* CSL is essential to *doing* CSL. Approaching CSL, by which we mean acquiring knowledge to advance closer to Mitchell's tenets of CSL, started for us with developing a thorough understanding of the concepts of CSL and critical theory, followed by the identification of our own individual positionality. What we discovered is that one cannot attempt to help students develop a social change perspective without first understanding one's own positionality in an attempt to develop a critical consciousness. The path toward social change, redistribution of power, and authentic relationships must start with the practitioner: In what ways are we orienting ourselves toward working toward these practices, allowing ourselves to imagine they are possible, or investigating how our own identities may be undermining these efforts?

Approaching CSL is a voyage of discovery. The model (see Figure 1) depicts a metaphor for our journey in the areas of knowledge acquisition and understanding of CSL. At first, CSL appears as a destination, as a discrete point in the distance. However, as one approaches that point it becomes apparent that it is not a discrete point but is actually a line, viewed end-on. Continuing to approach and explore that line, in turn, reveals that there might be an additional dimension, and that the line is actually a circle, viewed from the side, and that the approach is actually on a spectrum allowing a greater range of movement. But even further exploration reveals that the circle is actually a three-dimensional object with a measure of depth and breadth and multiple pathways providing multiple approaches. This latter view makes the initial understanding of what we thought was a determinate point now unrecognizable. However, as we draw closer to our more sophisticated concept of CSL, we also begin to recognize there is no end, only a new way of seeing it that begins to emerge as we progress. This, we believe, explains our journey of approaching CSL, and as long as we are willing to investigate our own location along this path and are

willing to embark on a philosophical shift in our understanding, it doesn't matter at what point along the spectrum one enters the process.

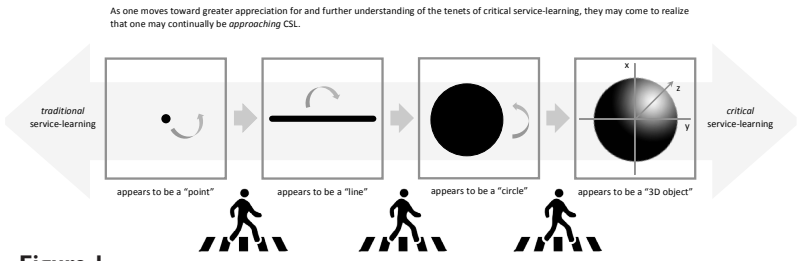

Figure 1.

At first we viewed enacting CSL as a destination—a point that we could somehow reach at the end of a semester or year. But through the iterative process of review, discussion, interpretation, and further review, we began to see the continuum of lenses through which CSL can occur, and, ultimately, the multidimensional, layered complexities of implementing CSL. It is only because we were able to interrogate our own positionality that we were able to achieve a more sophisticated understanding of our own critical consciousness and how that informs our individual CSL stance.

This iterative reflection process, which we found vital to ensuring that we were indeed approaching CSL, became a way for each of us to identify our own positionalities. For example, as conversation developed during the Fellowship Retreat in November 2016, where we discussed the tools highlighted in Table 1, we discovered the influence of past experience on present perspective. Additionally, we were able to pinpoint the various lenses through which we view our own and others' circumstances.

> JV noted, "I know exactly what I used to come from. . . . Where I'm at now in my life is very different from where I was 20 years ago in terms of my beliefs, my experiences. . . ."
>
> LW said, "Some of these questions I looked at very much through a professional lens. And then others I looked at from a very broad, holistic, community, world perspective."
>
> Likewise, TK said, "I'm with you. I didn't distinguish how I thought about [it] personally versus professionally, but the notes that I write sometimes reflect my personal perspective, or my perspective is more formed

> more by being an academic."
>
> LP added, "But it is kind of, 'What is your identity?' And then, 'How does your identity then manifest itself into your actions, your classes . . . ?' So on and so forth. And does it matter if you're a staff person or a faculty person, and does that force your identity to go different ways?"

Ultimately, these discussions amplified the realization that we enter a classroom with our own biases and our own perspectives. Our own personal positionality may determine the extent to which we can successfully implement CSL. Having a conversation around the questions on the assessment scales listed in Table 1 helped us to understand the critical nature of self-reflection and the importance of recognizing our own positionality. It also provided us with a roadmap for what we might do as a CSL practitioner to guide students' understanding of their own positionality. Our students, too, can approach Mitchell's tenets of CSL, but may not realize those outcomes within the confines of a single course or even their entire undergraduate experience. As Ashworth and Bourelle *(2014)* noted, "attempting to increase students' awareness of their own attitudes may be more of a realistic outcome" *(p. 75)*.

> TK noted: If, through my efforts, students adopt a more critical perspective of the social structures in our society and a better understanding of how those structures advantage/disadvantage people differently, then those students might go on to make changes that address those inequities throughout their lives.
>
> Similarly, JV concluded: While I have learned a lot during this time [as a Fellow] and am grateful for the patience, guidance and support of my colleagues, I still feel like I have a long way to go! It has been a great relief to me to discover that I may never even get there—and that is OK.

A Toolkit for Approaching CSL

One of the key factors we discovered through this Fellowship Project and its iterative process is that approaching CSL is a difficult and time-consuming task. We realized that, although we were fortunate to be part of a learning community as a means to facilitate this journey, not everyone will have such an opportunity to engage

with a cohort and explore these ideas in depth. This journey has shown us that there may be many other practitioners who also want to approach CSL, and we cannot overstate the value of a learning community and the discussions and reflection afforded within such a group. However, when such a community is not readily available, it may be useful to have a toolkit of resources that can facilitate the process of knowledge gain, self-reflection, and, ultimately, philosophical shift toward CSL. Therefore we assembled a toolkit *(http://libguides.marian.edu/CSL)* of preexisting resources, which include literature and assessment scales, reflection prompts, and personal reflections that can serve as a guide for others on a similar journey. The toolkit is intended to serve as a repository of resources that might help others approach CSL as we did throughout this journey.

The selected readings in the toolkit are designed to support a novice in gaining a deeper understanding of CSL and how it relates to critical theory and positionality. The toolkit also includes information on select assessment scales that one can use to begin to identify their own positionality as a practitioner and, potentially, to help students identify their positionality as well. These scales became especially salient during the middle of the iterative process and Fellowship Project as we realized that the deeper the understanding we gained of our own positionality, the more progress we each could make in approaching CSL—moving from the discrete point on the model to the three-dimensional circular object with a measure of depth and breadth that makes the initial point unrecognizable. The toolkit contains the Fellows' autoethnographies in an attempt not only to share our journeys, but also to bring other practitioners into a shared virtual learning community. These autoethnographies detail the Fellows' learning process, as well as their plans for future personal and professional growth.

> JV: So, my aim will be to take this in small steps. I intend to find ways to insert pieces of what I have learned about positionality, social justice, and critical service-learning into my project. I wish I could say I had a solid plan for where to start. But I cannot. I can begin by formulating a plan.
>
> LP: I knew I needed a clear plan for developing my own understanding and ability to implement the foundations of critical service-learning in my course. As fellows we talked about the journey and how we might approach critical service-learning, but I needed to put in the work. I also needed to accept that per-

haps, truly fostering critical, reflective perspectives in one semester just might not be possible. I had tried to integrate probing questions into my students' reflection assignments that would begin to spark some awareness in regards to their own positionality and bias as they approach their projects and project partners. We also had a few moments of in-class discussion that touched upon these issues, but I never felt like I was moving the dial. I just didn't know how.

Concluding Thoughts

Our intent with this essay is to convey the process we employed in our Fellowship year in the hope that our experiences might serve as a model for others as they seek to approach CSL. We do not claim to be experts. Instead, we attempted, to the extent we were able, to investigate our own embodied experiences *(Collins, 2009)* and blur the line *(Denshire, 2013)*, using this as a basis for situated knowledge and biases related to approaching CSL. We have invited the reader to listen in on our thoughts and conversations, and watch as we try to understand, unpack, wrestle, and learn, and while we were guided by Milner *(2007)* and his call for researchers "to consider dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen" *(p. 388)*, we understand this process of self-reflection as one that is ongoing and never complete. This process is guided by the intersections of our identities and positions of privilege we occupy as White practitioners, and we recognize we cannot "speak for that which we have not felt" *(hooks, 2000, p. 50)*. Although we did reflect on and discuss our own experiences of privilege and our positionality, we recognize that the primary focus of this essay has been Mitchell's tenet of orientation toward social change. In seeking to share with others interested in creating meaningful change through CSL pedagogy, we have limited our discussion of how we grappled with the privilege we each experience in our lives. Furthermore, given the insular nature of such a fellowship, actually building authentic relationships in the community was beyond the scope of what we could accomplish, although, again, we discussed frequently how we might each work toward such authenticity in our own CSL efforts.

During our journey, it became clear that achieving CSL as presented by Mitchell *(2008, 2015)* is a daunting goal—one involving a long, and at times seemingly impossible, process, especially within the structures of 16-week courses. We also discovered that the concept of achievement focused our attention away from the devel-

opment of a critical consciousness and interrogation of our own assumptions and toward the realization of our goal. This language of *achievement* allowed us to frame our efforts in terms of a CSL finish line and to maintain a focus on this terminus rather than understanding the importance of the journey. In this essay we have articulated our model of approaching CSL, described the importance of positionality and interrogating one's own positionality in approaching CSL, and provided practical methods that faculty can use to begin their journey.

> TK concluded: While the world may not be changed by any one project I do or even any well-planned series of projects, the world may indeed be changed by unleashing a steady stream of college graduates into the world who have the desire to make a difference and the beginnings of the skills necessary to do so. If I work to foster a love of continued learning and the desire to think critically about what is going on, "my" graduates will, ideally, continue to grow and develop along the trajectory of CSL principles.
>
> ML also revealed: The future of critical service-learning for me is one defined by paradox: I will remain frustrated by its seeming inability to produce the change desired in the frame of my short attention, and I will remain committed to it and the slow drip of change I hope it provides because I believe it is the best chance we've got.

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Research Articles

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Public Purpose Under Pressure: Examining the Effects of Neoliberal Public Policy on the Missions of Regional Comprehensive Universities

Cecilia M. Orphan

Abstract

Neoliberal ideology that narrows higher education's purpose to strengthening the economy is a threat to the civic engagement agenda and public purposes of U.S. higher education. Regional comprehensive universities (RCUs) are broad-access institutions founded to embody public purposes of student-centeredness, access, and civic and economic engagement. These institutions educate 20% of all college students, including large proportions of low-income, first-generation, minoritized, nontraditional, and veteran students. This article presents a qualitative case study of four RCUs grappling with their public purposes within a state policy and funding context shaped by neoliberal ideology. Despite administrators' efforts, the universities abandoned aspects of their public purposes to address neoliberal demands from state policymakers. Given the important role these institutions play in expanding educational opportunity and strengthening regional civic life, these findings carry long-term implications for the future of community-engaged research, the civic education of students, and the public purposes of higher education.

Keywords: Public Purposes of Higher Education, Leadership, Public Policy, Regional Comprehensive Universities

Introduction

On Main Street of an imagined town filled with abandoned buildings bearing fading logos of defunct factories stands a university founded in the 1960s to improve civic and economic life and educational access. This institution, the only public university within 50 miles, educates three quarters of the region's schoolteachers and a majority of its elected officials, remaining an open door to those seeking a college degree, requiring simply that applicants have a high school diploma or GED. A majority of students are first-generation, and many others are Pell recipients, minoritized students, and working adults. Recognizing that its students are often less civically engaged, the university offers students opportunities to strengthen their civic skills. In addition to serving

students, the university collaborates with elected officials and community leaders to improve civic life, conducts community-based research, and serves as the region's largest employer. Ultimately, the university strives to be a steward of place, improving regional civic and economic life in equal measure.

The university described above, although fictional, presents a composite sketch of the public purposes of regional comprehensive universities *(RCUs; AASCU, 2002, 2016; Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015)*. There are 420 RCUs that educate 20% of undergraduate students nationwide, enrolling four million students annually, a majority of whom are minoritized, nontraditional, low-income, veterans, and first-generation. These universities have been called "democracy's colleges" in recognition of their public purposes and efforts to inculcate students with civic skills *(Henderson, 2007, p. 14)*. Despite the important role RCUs serve, they are understudied and face immense policy and finance challenges *(Mehaffy, 2010; SHEEO, 2016)*.

Theorists *(e.g., Berman, 2012; Brown, 2003; Giroux, 2002)* posit that neoliberal ideology within public policy poses an unprecedented challenge for public institutions such as RCUs, as this ideology overemphasizes the economic and private purposes of higher education at the expense of the system's public purposes. Scholars have asserted that neoliberal ideology expressed in public policy has led to declines in state appropriations, rising expectations, and erosions to shared governance *(Dunderstadt, 2000; Gumport, Iannozzi, Shaman, & Zemsky, 1997; Kirshstein & Hurlburt, 2012)*. Higher education institutions have long played both civic and economic roles *(Berman, 2012; Thelin, 2004)*, yet scholars argue that neoliberal ideology threatens the civic, democratic contributions of institutions as they increasingly focus on their private, economic contributions.

This article presents findings from a qualitative case study of four RCUs grappling with their public purposes within a state policy and finance context shaped by neoliberalism *(Berman, 2012; Henderson, 2007)*. To shed light on these processes, the performance metrics that each RCU identified in response to the state context were explored. Performance metrics were important data points because they represent formalized abstractions of goals, values, and purposes *(Colyvas, 2012)*. This article presents a framework for understanding how institutional strategy reflected in performance metrics affects the public purposes of RCUs *(Brown, 2003; Chaffee, 1985a, 1985b; Hartley, 2002)*. Findings show that RCUs have been forced to weaken aspects of their public purposes when responding to a neoliberal state context. The implications of these findings for

the future of community-engaged research, civic education, and the public purposes of higher education are discussed.

Literature Review

Three bodies of literature were surveyed for this study. First, I examined scholarship about RCUs and their purposes. To contextualize the environment in which RCUs in this study exist, I surveyed scholarship about the effects of neoliberal ideology on postsecondary institutions. Because the state under study employed performance funding, I conclude by discussing what is known about this funding model.

Regional Comprehensive Universities and Their Purpose

Regional comprehensive universities were established in response to local demand as community colleges, normal schools, branch campuses, minority-serving institutions, YMCA night schools, and veteran education centers *(AASCU, 2016; Henderson, 2007; Supplee, Orphan, & Moreno, 2017)*. Although their histories vary, common threads can be traced through the purposes RCUs embody *(AASCU, 2002)*. RCUs steward their region's secondary education system by training teachers and partnering with schools to improve student civic and professional outcomes. In 2002 and 2014, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the sector's presidential association, released reports about RCUs' purposes as stewards of place. In 2003, AASCU launched the American Democracy Project (ADP), a national civic engagement initiative born from a concern that the sector's public purposes were under threat in a society increasingly focused on the private benefits of higher education. The association asserted that for RCUs to fulfill their purposes, they must find a balance between economic and civic engagement efforts when navigating funding cuts that may contribute to privatization. The stewards of place reports and ADP encouraged RCUs to use performance metrics that equally weigh civic and economic contributions.

The purposes of postsecondary institutions are derived from their missions, charters, histories, and cultures *(Hartley, 2002; Kotter, 1996; Scott, 2006; Simsek & Louis, 1994)*. Mission and vision are related ideas but distinct in operation *(Kotter, 1996)*. *Vision* refers to future directions and informs strategy, whereas *mission* concerns the reasons organizations exist. Vision, mission, and history culminate in purpose *(Hartley, 2002)*. How well purpose is reflected in day-

to-day operations is a question of mission coherence. When campuses change behavior, they are often met with accusations of mission drift, wherein stakeholders perceive a misalignment between organizational operations and purpose *(Dubrow, Moseley, & Dustin, 2006)*. Although research on RCUs is underdeveloped, there is evidence that mission drift has taken place in the sector. RCUs have historically presented low barriers for admission *(Henderson, 2007)*, yet some have increased requirements to privilege better prepared, less diverse students *(Zumeta, Breneman, Callan, & Finney, 2012)*. There is also evidence that the community engagement missions of some RCUs have been deemphasized, with resources formerly delegated for civic engagement being diverted to disciplinary research *(Desrochers & Kirshstein, 2012; Orphan & Hartley, 2013)*. Mission drift took place in response to public funding cuts.

Neoliberal Ideology and Higher Education

The public purposes of RCUs are emblematic of the larger U.S. postsecondary system *(Henderson, 2007; Thelin, 2004)*. Since the Morrill Land Grant Acts, colleges have engaged in economic development *(Bose, 2012; Giroux, 2002; Labaree, 1997, 2008)*. Colleges have also engaged in democracy building through community-based research and civic education *(Benson, Harkavy, & Hartley, 2005; Berman, 2012; Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999; Ehrlich, 2000; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011)*. Historically, efforts to balance public and private aims have led to tension within many institutions; however, scholars argue that this tension productively maintained equilibrium between these purposes *(Berman, 2012; Giroux, 2002; Labaree, 1997)*. In the 1960s, equilibrium began to erode in favor of higher education's private purposes *(Berman, 2012; Bose, 2012; Lambert, 2012)*. As research on human capital gained wide acceptance, Berman *(2012)* described how colleges came to be seen as places to cultivate human capital for the economy. In the 1970s and 1980s policymakers removed barriers for postsecondary institutions seeking private sector partnerships *(Berman, 2012)*. Arguably, the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 cemented this shift by allowing universities to patent research findings *(Calhoun, 2006)*. This policy was enacted before the recessions of the 1980s that led to declines in postsecondary appropriations. In the 1990s and 2000s funding declines continued, exacerbated by the Great Recession.

Scholars have pointed to the appeal of neoliberal ideology as encouraging disequilibrium between higher education's private and public purposes, and describe its manifestations in academic culture *(Apple, 2009; Berman, 2012; Brown, 2003; Giroux, 2002;*

Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Berman and Slaughter and Leslie described a shift in thinking around profiting from research. Whereas previously, academics believed it improper to patent findings as discoveries should be publicly accessible, after Bayh-Dole and cuts to funding, academics were encouraged to conduct research that supported institutional fiscal health *(Hursh & Wall, 2008)*. Giroux *(2002)* observed that at times, corporations influenced research agendas and curricula, raising implications for academic freedom. As professors increasingly acted as academic entrepreneurs, they moved away from community engagement and "values such as altruism and public service, toward market values" and profitable research *(Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p. 179)*. Scholars of neoliberalism have observed that those disciplines, particularly within the liberal arts *(Bose, 2012)*, that struggle to generate revenue are deemphasized. Scholars also assert that neoliberal ideology poses a threat to shared governance as administrators consolidate power in order to efficiently meet market demands *(Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)*. Giroux *(2002)* wrote that neoliberal ideology threatens the civic education of students "that allows them to recognize the dream and promise of a substantive democracy" *(p. 451)*. Neoliberal ideology views students as customers purchasing a service, and many administrators reflected this view by marketing college as a path to higher salaries. Finally, scholars assert that neoliberalism fortifies the walls of the ivory tower, supporting academics as they pursue profitable research while not concerning themselves with less lucrative community-based research. Encouragingly, federal grants have begun emphasizing community-engaged research; however, the federal government is becoming a minority investor in research as the interests of corporations and private foundations gain influence *(Hartley, 2011)*.

The cultural changes in postsecondary institutions were reinforced by policymaker demands for economic development *(Berman, 2012; Harvey, 2007)*. As campus stakeholders emphasized higher education's individual benefits, policymakers questioned public investment in individual prosperity and cut funding, causing institutions to raise tuition *(Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)*. This funding trend has continued, with the balance between public and private investments shifting so that individuals pay more for public higher education than the public *(SHEEO, 2016)*. Another result of funding cuts is increasing reliance on part-time non-tenure track faculty and declining numbers of tenure-line faculty *(Bose, 2012; Harvey, 2007)*. This shift has strengthened the power of administrators and eroded shared governance. Slaughter

and Leslie *(1997)* used resource dependency theory to explain why cuts to public funding contributed to market rationale on campuses, positing that institutions mimic the behaviors of private revenue sources. However, this argument fails to account for the societal allure of neoliberalism, expressed in public policy, that has affected postsecondary education. Lambert *(2012)* described these trends as a "conundrum," saying,

> The two missions driving public research universities need not be mutually exclusive, but in a market-based system many of these institutions find the state to be a less-reliable partner and, as a result, have begun to seek alternative revenue sources and greater autonomy and control. *(p. 6)*

Performance Funding

Performance funding is used to allocate funding to universities in 32 states *(Dougherty & Natow, 2015; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015)*. Performance formulae emphasize course and degree completion in economic growth areas, addressing racial disparities, and institutional mission differentiation. Rising expectations coupled with cuts and changes to funding have dramatically changed the policy and funding landscape for higher education *(Harvey, 2007; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004)*. These trends have been particularly difficult for RCUs to navigate as they have undergone severe funding cuts while being held to higher expectations *(AASCU, 2016; Mehaffy, 2010; Orphan, 2015)*.

Despite widespread policymaker support for performance funding, research demonstrates that it fails to meet its objectives and carries unintended consequences *(Hillman, 2016; Hillman, Tandberg, & Fryar, 2015; Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross, 2014; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014)*. In his analysis of 12 studies about performance funding, Hillman *(2016)* determined that degree production, research funding, and equity suffered as institutions raised admissions standards and shifted from need-based to merit-based aid to enroll students more likely to persist. Specific to RCUs, a sector that struggles with low retention and completion rates *(Schneider & Deane, 2014; Skomsvold, Radford, & Berkner, 2011)*, an assumption underlying performance funding is that institutions will improve when forced to compete for resources. Hillman critiqued this assumption, noting that RCUs have historically been underfunded and thus have weakened capacity to implement proven strategies to

improve student outcomes, including small classes taught by tenured professors and enhanced student supports.

With the exception of the scholarship described herein, insufficient research has examined administrative strategy at RCUs or how they enact their purposes. Much of the research about RCUs concerns their tendency to strive for prestige *(e.g., Gonzales, 2013, 2014; Henderson, 2009, 2013)*. To date, no studies have examined how a neoliberal state context affects the public purposes of RCUs, yet this phenomenon has implications for civic education, engaged research, and educational opportunity. This study aims to address this knowledge gap.

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

I used Hartley's *(2002)* conceptualization of institutional purpose, Chaffee's *(1985a, 1985b)* framework for organizational strategy, and neoliberal theory *(Brown, 2003; Giroux, 2002; Harvey, 2007)* to analyze the responses of RCUs to their state policy and funding context. Institutional purpose encapsulates a campus's values system and informs daily operations and mission enactment *(Hartley, 2002)*. RCUs were founded in a variety of ways and derive different meanings from these legacies *(Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987; Henderson, 2007)*. Regardless of origin, three elements of purpose, called by AASCU "stewardship of place," are present within RCUs: student-centeredness, educational access, and regional engagement *(AASCU, 2002, 2016; Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015)*. I conceptualize the purpose of RCUs as stewards of place to be twofold: (a) private and concerned with regional economic development and (b) public and democratic, concerned with regional educational access and civic and democratic betterment.

Chaffee *(1985a, 1985b)* proposed a taxonomy of organizational strategy in response to external challenges and opportunities that considers the role of purpose and comprises three styles: linear, adaptive, or interpretive. An organization exhibiting linear strategy emphasizes profit and productivity and views the external environment as less important than pursuing internally derived performance metrics. Given its emphasis on profit, private businesses tend to enact linear strategy. Organizations enacting adaptive strategy are concerned with survival through responding to the external environment and securing resources. Proposed programs or performance metrics are acceptable if they maximize resources and ensure external alignment. Organizations engaging in adaptive or linear strategy do not consider purpose. By contrast,

organizations enacting interpretive strategy embody a social contract among stakeholders concerning the organization's purpose. Leaders leverage communication, relationship building, and culture to shape member attitudes and create enthusiasm for purpose. Members change practice and performance metrics when they fear their organization's credibility is threatened due to misalignment of operations and purpose. Chaffee found that organizations can enact more than one style of strategy; however, one tends to dominate. Interpretive organizations are most resilient during times of stress and more likely to experience mission alignment. Echoing Chaffee's findings, scholars assert that although organizational change in response to external contexts is expected *(Zemsky, Wegner, & Massy, 2005)*, mission coherence predicts success *(Eckel & Kezar, 2006; Fjortoft & Smart, 1994)*.

Theorists argue that neoliberalism causes public institutions to overemphasize their private purposes while weakening their public purposes, through submitting

> every action and policy to considerations of profitability, [weighted equally with] production of human and institutional action as rational entrepreneurial action, conducted according to a calculus of utility, benefit, or satisfaction against a micro-economic grid of scarcity, supply and demand, and moral-value neutrality. *(Brown, 2003, p. 4)*

Performance funding can be understood as neoliberal for several reasons. First, in neoliberalism, "the market is the organizing and regulative principle of the state and society" *(Brown, 2003, p. 41)*. It would follow, then, that in a neoliberal state policy context, the market dictates funding allocations, as is clear from the emphasis in performance funding formulae on alignment between degree production and economic forecasts *(Education Commission of the States, 2017)*. Second, neoliberalism encourages competition among institutions that is assumed to improve quality, and this ideology is present in performance funding. Third, neoliberalism prizes standardization and assessment—also goals of performance funding—with institutions measured by the same formulae regardless of purpose *(Berman, 2012; Bose, 2012; Giroux, 2002; Lambert, 2012; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997)*. Finally, Hursh and Wall *(2008)* argued that performance funding is contrary to the public good; it is "rather a push to use assessment to hold higher education accountable for neoliberal goals" *(p. 12)*.

The enactment of purpose involves structural (policies and performance metrics) and ideological (values and beliefs) elements *(Hartley, 2002)*. Hartley's conception of purpose relates to Chaffee's theorization of interpretive strategy as a social contract of values that dictates responses to external contexts. The state's neoliberal policy and funding environment is an external context in which RCUs exist and must navigate *(Brown, 2003; Giroux, 2002)*. Because the mission of public institutions prevents them from operating with a profit motive *(Albert & Whetten, 1985; Hartley, 2002; Zemsky et al., 2005)*, this study used adaptive and interpretive strategies to analyze RCUs. Interpretive strategy reflective of an organization's purpose and social contract influences policies and performance metrics identified by that organization *(Chaffee, 1985a, 1985b; Colyvas, 2012)*. Interpretive strategy thus draws on ideological elements when responding to external contexts. Alternatively, institutions enacting adaptive strategy may identify performance metrics that demonstrate efficient and expedient alignment with the external context without consideration for how these metrics reflect purpose.

The implementation of performance funding requires that RCUs identify performance metrics to respond to changes in the dispersal of state appropriations *(Hillman et al., 2015; Hillman et al., 2014)*. Following Colyvas's *(2012)* assertion, I understood performance metrics as formalized abstractions that illuminate the style of strategy being employed, and how this strategy affects each RCU's tripartite purpose *(AASCU, 2002, 2016; Colyvas, 2012; Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015)*. For example, an RCU enacting adaptive strategy might identify performance metrics for admissions, tenure and promotion guidelines, and community–university partnerships that improve its standing in performance funding without reckoning with how these strategies affect purpose. Alternatively, RCUs enacting interpretive strategy may identify performance metrics that reflect and strengthen purpose. Because RCUs were founded with a regional economic engagement mission, I did not interpret fulfillment of this mission as mission drift when there was evidence that the civic, democratic mission was equally emphasized *(AASCU, 2016)*. When an RCU's pursuit of its economic purpose caused its community engagement mission to weaken, however, I understood this strategy as adaptive. This study posed the following research questions:

1. How does a neoliberal state policy and funding context affect the public purposes of that state's RCUs?

2. Within a neoliberal state policy and funding context, what style(s) of strategy (adaptive or interpretive) are enacted by RCU stakeholders?
3. How are the performance metrics identified by administrators reflective of adaptive or interpretive strategy and institutional purpose?

Research Methods

The population of interest was RCUs, of which there are 420 *(AASCU, 2016; Orphan, 2015)*. I used the following criteria, reflective of the sector's purposes, to differentiate RCUs from other institutions *(AASCU, 2002; Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987; Hartley, 2002; Henderson, 2007; Standard Listings, 2017)*:

- founded as branch campus, normal school, YMCA night school, regionally focused Historically Black College, or community college;
- 4-year institution;
- historically open enrollment with acceptance rates at or above 60%;
- Carnegie classified "masters," "baccalaureate," or "baccalaureate/associate" institution (Note: RCUs occasionally attain "doctoral" classification due to teaching or applied research doctoral programs that respond to regional needs [Supplee, Orphan & Moreno, 2017] I consider these institutions RCUs);
- Carnegie undergraduate profile classification of "inclusive";
- emphasis on teaching and student-centeredness and applied research with little to no disciplinary research;
- at least 80% of students from the region and at least 30% first-generation;
- evidence of stewardship of regional economic and civic life and civic education of students; and
- membership in AASCU.

Qualitative methods allowed for "use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or a group ascribe to a social or human problem" *(Creswell, 2007, p. 37)*. I was interested in understanding how RCUs respond to a state's policy and funding context, and how responses affected public purpose *(AASCU, 2002, 2016)*. Given that a phenomenon within a bounded system (strategy at RCUs within a neoliberal state con-

text) was studied, I chose case study methods, which allowed for exploration of how stakeholders navigated the context *(Yin, 2014)*.

State Policy and Funding Context

I first identified a state that had a policy and funding context reflecting neoliberal ideology *(Brown, 2003; Giroux, 2002; Perna & Finney, 2014)*. I used Perna and Finney's *(2014)* framework for analyzing state policy and funding contexts, which considers leadership and governance, policy levers and public funding, and structure and capacity of the postsecondary system. I sought evidence of neoliberal ideology in governance documents, including system-wide master plans, speeches by elected officials, and other artifacts that exposed the ideology of elected officials. The state chosen has a board of governors that identifies policy objectives and dictates appropriations. The governor was influential in higher education policy and saw the system as a tool for strengthening the state's economy. Neoliberal ideology was also evident in the rhetoric used by policy leaders. For example, policymakers couched investments in higher education as investments in the economy, demanded greater efficiency and competition, and emphasized vocational training while ignoring the liberal arts *(Orphan, Gildersleeve, & Mills, 2016)*. In policy documents and speeches, I saw no evidence of policymaker attention to higher education's civic, democratic contributions. To understand the levers used by policymakers, I analyzed legislation and policy documents. Without exception, these levers aligned with efforts to improve the economy and included cuts to public funding and the use of performance funding for over 50% of appropriations. Additionally, there were numerous incentives for workforce development and private-sector partnerships, but none for civic engagement. Accountability metrics reinforced economic goals. I elaborate on the fourth element of Perna and Finney's framework—the capacity of the RCU sector—in the case descriptions.

The State's RCU Sector

I held the policy and funding context constant and employed a cross-case study design to examine four RCUs in a single state *(Yin, 2014)*. A bounded time period (2010–2015) was selected during which state appropriations declined by 50% and policymakers implemented performance funding and heightened expectations for economic development *(SHEEO, 2016)*. The state has fewer than 10 RCUs; four were selected that represent founding legacies

typical of the sector. A second selection criterion was geographic location, as RCUs have been called "compass schools," a term that speaks to the importance of geography in shaping institutional purpose *(AASCU, 2002; Schneider & Deane, 2014, p.6)* I included RCUs that were geographically distributed in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The RCUs selected are representational of the broader sector, which allowed me to surface commonalities and differences in institutional responses to the state context.

Case Descriptions

Table 1 describes the selectivity, retention, and graduation rates of each institution before performance funding and after it had been in place for 5 years. Also included is information about each RCU's history, size, and location.

City State University is located in the state's second-largest city and is the city's largest landowner. Since White flight in the 1960s and 1970s, the city has struggled with segregation and inequity between White neighborhoods and neighborhoods of Color. City has Carnegie's "high research" designation and is a diverse campus with 18% African American students, 3% Asian, 5% Hispanic and Latino, and 3% multi-racial. Thirty-six percent of students are first-generation and 45% are Pell recipients. In 2014, the university received $71 million in state appropriations that accounted for 20% of its budget. This was down from a high of $83 million in 2009 when appropriations accounted for 40% of the budget. A centerpiece of City's purpose is its status as an urban-serving institution that facilitates engaged learning and research. Indeed, the president often describes the university as "of the city, not just in the city." The university has historically committed to providing supports for commuter students, including a parent support group and commuter student lounge. City has also long recognized that its students have often been disenfranchised from the political system and has implemented education programs to inculcate students with civic skills.

River State University is located in a small town in the state's southern, Appalachian region. River is situated next to a river that was once a manufacturing hub and has become less important as industry located to other states. Many of the town's residents live below the federal poverty level, and their educational level is 20% lower than the national average. The university holds the Carnegie designation for high nonresidential undergraduate enrollment. Eighty percent of students are first-generation, some are preliterate,

Table 1. Institutional Characteristics of RCUs

RCU	Retention rates		Graduation rates		Enrollment	History	Location
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015		
City State University (CSU)	66%	71%	29%	39%	14,210	Founded in 1875 as YMCA night school. Repurposed as university in 1965.	Urban
Thunder State University (TSU)	57%	51%	19%	22%	2,270	Founded in 1885 as normal school for African Americans. Repurposed as land-grant university in 1965.	Rural
Inventor State University (ISU)	70%	66%	45%	39%	14,425	Founded in 1963 as branch campus. Gained autonomy as university in 1965.	Suburban
River State University (RSU)	59%	64%	26%	36%	4,776	Founded as a community college in 1975. Repurposed as university in 1985.	Rural

Note. RCUs in this study were assigned pseudonyms related to notable regional or institutional features. River is next to an important river for state commerce, City is in the state's second-largest city, Inventor is named for the region's culture of innovation, and Thunder is named for the university's resilience after a natural disaster that nearly closed the university.

and many are first-generation high school graduates. Thirty-seven percent of students have an expected family contribution (EFC) of zero, and 40% receive Pell grants. The university is predominantly White, with 5% African American, 1% Latino or Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 2% multi-racial students. Since 2012, the university

has cut $8 million from its budget in response to declining appropriations. For a university with a budget of $50 million, this is a significant loss. An important touchpoint of the campus's public purpose is its familial culture, which is influenced by Appalachia's emphasis on family, and its commitment to teaching and student-centeredness. River's president often describes its purpose as being "a university of opportunity." The university established a center to encourage service-learning and engaged research focused on the unique circumstances in Appalachian communities, but due to funding cuts the center was closed and efforts to increase service-learning ended.

Inventor State University is located in a suburb of the state's fifth-largest city. The region has a history of innovation, with multiple inventions created just miles from campus, although manufacturing has begun leaving the region, creating economic difficulties. The university is predominantly White with 14% African American students, 3% Asian American, and 3% Hispanic or Latino. Forty percent of students receive Pell grants and 40% are first-generation. The state share of instruction has declined from a high of $92 million in 2010 to $84 million in 2015. A centerpiece of Inventor's purpose is its innovative spirit and fully accessible campus for people with disabilities. The university was founded as an access point for blue collar communities and has a culture of student-centeredness. Students are required to take at least one service-learning course before graduating, and many are involved in civic cocurricular activities.

Thunder State University is located in a rural area in the eastern middle part of the state and is one of the oldest HBCU land-grants in the country. It holds the baccalaureate colleges: diverse fields Carnegie Classification. In the 1970s, the region experienced a natural disaster, and Thunder played an important role in rebuilding the area. Following the disaster, regional median incomes remained low. Ninety-five percent of students are Black or African American, 67% receive Pell grants, 80% have an EFC of zero, and half are first-generation. State appropriations fell from a high of $20 million in 2008 to $14 million in 2014. An important feature of Thunder's purpose is providing access to Black and African American students, maintaining traditions and organizations celebrating African American cultures, and offering holistic supports for students. Campus members believe that the university's small size and tight-knit community supports the variety of needs students bring. The university was open enrollment until the late 1990s, when it raised admissions requirements and began

admitting 60% of students. As a land-grant university, Thunder assists with agricultural and community development, and under the new president has committed to deepening its civic engagement with the region.

Fieldwork and Data Collection

After IRB approval was obtained, data collection involved observations, interviews, and document analysis *(Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014)*. I took field notes to capture impressions about campus life during site visits and conducted 71 semistructured interviews with key stakeholders. (See Table 2 for a list of interviewees.) I asked participants to reflect on their RCU's current and historic purposes, how it engages with regional civic and economic life, and how admissions and enrollment management work. I also asked participants to describe how their RCU had responded to state policy mandates, funding cuts, and performance funding, and what performance metrics were used to assess progress toward meeting institutional goals. Participants included administrators who could speak to strategic planning, mission enactment, and the identification of performance metrics; faculty who could speak to support for community engagement and the faculty role in responding to policy and funding mandates; and staff who could speak to admissions and civic and economic engagement efforts. Community members were also interviewed, including nonprofit directors, school principals, presidents of chambers of commerce, and mayors. I asked these participants to describe the university's regional engagement. Two members of the state's board of regents were also interviewed (the state policy director and the vice president for finance and data). These policymakers were key informants who shared the rationale behind policy and funding strategies. I asked policymakers if there was a role for higher education in improving democratic, civic life. I also asked them to describe their goals for the system. Finally, I interviewed four national experts—AASCU staff members who offered insights about the national context for RCUs, and a State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) staff member who offered historical perspective on performance funding in the state. Interviews lasted 60–90 minutes and were conducted during site visits or over the phone.

Table 2. Interviews Conducted

Thunder State University	
Administrators	• President (emeritus and current) (2) • Provost (1) • Chief financial officer (former and current) (2) • Vice president, enrollment management and student affairs (1) • College dean (2)
Professors	• Full professor (1) • Associate professor (3) • Assistant professor (1)
Staff	• Director of government relations and civic engagement (1)
Community members	• Mayor (1) • Volunteer coordinator, partner organization (1) • Owner, small business (1)
Total participants	17
City State University	
Administrators	• Provost (1) • Vice president, enrollment management (1) • Associate provost for academic affairs (1) • Special assistant to the president (1) • Vice president, multiculturalism and civic engagement (1) • College dean (1)
Professors	• Associate professor (3) • Assistant professor (1)
Staff	• Directors, civic engagement centers (3)
Community members	• President, regional philanthropic organization (1) • High school nurse (1)
Total participants	15

Note: Continued on next page

River State University	
Administrators	• President (1) • Provost (1) • Chief financial officer (1) • Vice president, enrollment management (1) • Vice president, student affairs (1) • College dean (2) • Executive director, development foundation (1)
Professors	• Professor (1) • Associate professor (2) • Assistant professor (1)
Staff	• Director, institutional finance (1) • Director, student career services (1) • Director, center for international education (1) • Director, admissions (1)
Community member	• President, chamber of commerce (1)
Total participants	17
Inventor State University	
Administrators	• President (1) • Vice president, multiculturalism and civic engagement (1) • Vice president, enrollment management (1) • Chief financial officer (1) • Assistant vice president, institutional effectiveness (1) • College dean (2)
Professors	• Professor (2) • Associate professor (1) • Assistant professor (1)
Staff	• Librarian (1) • Director, civically engaged center (same participant as full professor) (1) • Director, women's center (1) • Director, center for international education (1)
Community members	• Volunteer coordinator, partner organization (1) • Owner, small business (1)
Total participants	16

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National Experts and State Policymakers	
National experts	• AASCU (3) • SHEEO (1)
State policymakers	• Board of governors (2)
Total participants	6

I collected strategic plans, tenure and promotion guidelines, admissions requirements, mission and vision statements, policymaker speeches, legislation dictating the implementation of performance funding, state appropriations, and university budgets *(Yin, 2014)*. These documents illuminated the state context, institutional strategy, and performance metrics.

Data Analysis

Audio files were transcribed, and documents and transcripts were anonymized to protect the identities of participants and institutions. As is standard practice for qualitative research (*Creswell, 2007; Saldaña, 2012; Yin, 2014)*, data analysis involved coding. I used a set of 10 a priori codes derived from the theoretical framework, research questions, and prior research *(Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013)*. These codes reflected the tripartite purpose of RCUs (e.g., the code "CIV" related to civic engagement, "ECON" related to economic engagement, "ACC" related to the university's access mission, "NEOLIB" captured neoliberal ideology), as well as each RCU's strategy (e.g., "ADAPT" concerned adaptive strategy, "INTER" concerned interpretive strategy, "PM" concerned performance metrics). After data were a priori coded, I engaged in emergent coding to gain a nuanced understanding of how these broad ideas were playing out at a micro level. During emergent coding, I saw patterns of strategy that affected purpose and identified codes to reflect these strategies (e.g., I used the "RAISE" code when an RCU had raised admissions standards, "STPART" when an RCU had strengthened a partnership).

After coding was complete, I wrote case descriptions that captured each RCU's evolution over the time period studied *(Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2014)*. Case descriptions allowed for cross-case analysis, which surfaced the uniqueness and similarities of institutional approaches year to year. I was also able to see how RCUs with different founding purposes and regional circumstances reflective of the broader RCU sector navigated this particular state context.

Limitations and Trustworthiness

Because this was a qualitative case study, a clear limitation was its scope—just four universities in one state were studied *(Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2014)*. Using four cases, a less in-depth analysis took place than would be expected with a single case study. Although this research focused on a single state, AASCU staff I interviewed shared that RCUs across the United States, particularly those in states that employ performance funding, are experiencing similar challenges *(AASCU, 2016)*. It is my belief that findings illuminate institutional practice within state contexts beyond the state studied. That said, the findings are most relevant to RCUs within state contexts similar to the one studied and are not generalizable. Another benefit of including four cases was the creation of a robust theoretical understanding of the research questions. I was able to apply adaptive and interpretive strategy and purpose theories to individual cases while theorizing about RCU responses to a neoliberal state context that captured broad trends. A final limitation concerned obtaining candid responses from participants. Fortunately, the universities are public, so there was ample public documentation to triangulate interview data.

Findings and Analysis

The RCUs evidenced adaptive and interpretive strategy with regard to the three elements of their public purposes when responding to the neoliberal state policy and funding context *(Berman, 2012; Brown, 2003; Chaffee, 1985a, 1985b)*. Two universities tended more toward adaptive strategy, and two tended more toward interpretive strategy. First, I describe findings related to the first research question: How does a neoliberal state policy and funding context affect the public purposes of that state's RCUs? I use case summaries to explore this first question. I then use Chaffee's framework to conduct a cross-case analysis of how the public purposes of RCUs were affected by the state context. When describing interpretive strategy, I illuminate instances of adaptive strategy found in the cases. I then describe the ideological leadership and symbolic management of administrators and activities that interpretive strategy inspired. By using this framework, I was able to interrogate the study's second research question: Within a neoliberal state policy and funding context, what style(s) of strategy (adaptive or interpretive) are enacted by RCU stakeholders? I then describe the performance metrics used by universities in order to answer the study's third research question: How are the performance metrics identified by administrators reflective of adaptive or interpretive

strategy and institutional purpose? I conclude with a framework for understanding how the responses of RCUs to a neoliberal state context affect their public purposes.

RCU Responses to State Policy and Funding Context

Table 3 summarizes each RCU's response to the state context with regard to its public purpose.

Table 3. RCU Responses to State Context

Thunder State University	
Regional access	• Elevated admissions standards • Transitioned scholarships to award merit instead of need • Recruited of out-of-state and international students • Created linkages with K-12 schools and community organizations • Developed articulation agreements with community colleges • Created holistic admissions process that recognizes perseverance and leadership • Targeted student recruitment efforts applicants outside the region
Regional economic engagement	• Increased emphasis on producing STEM graduates and alumni employment • Sought commercialization and private sector partnerships • Fostered partnerships with regional leaders to ensure economic interdependence
Regional community engagement	• Increased emphasis on community partnerships • Encouraged community partner participation in strategic planning • Increased number of service-learning courses • Created cabinet-level position for community engagement

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Student-centeredness	• Eliminated student support positions • Reduced tenure-track faculty; increased reliance on non-tenure track faculty • Adopted evidence-based remedial education strategies • Directed students to community colleges for remediation • Added mentoring program for first-generation students • Maintained communication with students to encourage them to reenroll • Cut faculty development • Implemented intrusive advising, early alert system, and student tracking
River State University	
Regional access	• Instituted requirement that applicants submit standardized test scores • Transitioned scholarships to award merit instead of need • Targeted student recruitment efforts toward applicants outside the region • Established GPA minimums for majors • Solidified linkages with K-12 schools and community organizations
Regional economic engagement	• Established student career center • Sought commercialization and private partnerships • Assessed alumni employment • Enhanced professional development for students
Regional community engagement	• Dismantled center for community engagement • Abandoned community partnerships • Maintained cocurricular student community engagement • Eroded supports for service-learning courses • Launched mobile health clinic for residents

Note: Continued on next page

Student-centeredness	• Added student success personnel and disability services • Adopted evidence-based remedial education strategies • Strengthened programs for preliterate students • Implemented student success curriculum for first-generation students • Improved distance education and credit for prior learning • Reduced tenure-track faculty; increased reliance on non-tenure track faculty • Cut funding to Center for Teaching and Learning • Instituted parking fees • Hired additional advisors • Increased class sizes and faculty teaching loads
City State University	
Regional access	• Shifted away from commuter students (raised parking fees) to entice traditional applicants • Increased selectivity • Offered bus passes to students from region • Established GPA minimums for majors • Increased out-of-state and international student enrollment • Improved distance education • Created linkages with K-12 schools and community organizations

Note: Continued on next page

Regional economic engagement	• Conducted economic impact studies • Eliminated degree programs with priority given to degrees that create economic impact • Established division for regional economic engagement • Sought commercialization opportunities • Established degree pathways that help students and employers understand employability of liberal arts degrees • Partnered with anchor institutions to strengthen economic impact
Regional community engagement	• Provided civic engagement grants for faculty • Reshaped tenure and promotion guidelines to emphasize community engagement • Implemented development for community engagement • Increased service-learning courses • Established vice president position for community engagement and diversity

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Student-centeredness	• Reduced tenure-track faculty; increased reliance on non-tenure track faculty • Increased class sizes and faculty teaching loads • Charged for parking; demolished parking lots to build dormitories • Emphasized full-time enrollment • Surveyed students to understand challenges faced; created programs that addressed challenges • Implemented intrusive advising, early alert system, and student-level tracking • Instituted cuts to cocurricular budget • Capped number of credits students can take without incurring extra fees • Established retention committee with goal of debunking deficit-based views of students held by faculty and staff • Centralized student advising and early alert system
Iventor State University	
Regional access	• Elevated admissions standards • Established GPA minimums for majors • Targeted recruitment to increase diversity • Solidified linkages with K-12 schools and community organizations • Developed articulation agreements with community colleges • Created transfer student resource center • Shifted toward merit aid instead of need-based aid • Strengthened out-of-state and international student recruitment

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Regional economic engagement	• Built neuroscience research building • Established economic engagement centers • Conducted economic impact studies • Hosted economic summits • Rewrote university mission statement to include economic engagement along with community engagement • Recognized faculty involvement in economic impact • Increased commercialization • Strengthened professional development for students
Regional community engagement	• Established vice president position for community engagement and diversity • Increased emphasis on preparing students civically • Equalized allocation of funds to research, community engagement, and teaching • Enhanced community engagement to address regional health and education • Increased service-learning opportunities • Educated business leaders and students about value of community engagement • Assessed campus/community partnerships to ensure reciprocity • Included community engagement in tenure and promotion guidelines

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Student-centeredness	• Established cultural centers to support minoritized students • Built student success center • Conducted student survey to understand challenges faced; created programs that addressed challenges • Involved undergraduate students in research • Cut student support staff • Increased class sizes • Reduced tenure-track faculty; increased reliance on nontenure track faculty • Reshaped remedial education to adopt evidence-based strategies • Implemented student success curriculum • Implemented intrusive advising, early alert system, and student-level tracking

As the table demonstrates, each university took different approaches in responding to the state context; however, there were commonalities across the four campuses. First, all elevated admissions standards in some way. Additionally, all reshaped remedial education. Some (e.g., River) curtailed community engagement to direct resources toward economic development. Others established senior administrative positions for community engagement and diversity. The following paragraphs discuss how these decisions affected the tripartite public purpose of each institution.

Access mission: Adaptive strategy. At each RCU, there was pervasive rhetorical and ideological support for access that is representative of interpretive strategy's management of meaning; however, this rhetoric did not always match reality, as described by City's vice president for community engagement and multiculturalism:

> The president talks as though that's what he wants to be: Embrace the city. Embrace our students, he tells a story of our students. We're the place for them. There's a rhetoric around that, but a lot of our habits are just traditional university habits running the rat race, trying to be what everyone else is. Basing our success on selectivity.

River's provost expressed a common sentiment common among participants faced with having to respond to performance funding:

> If your funding formula is tied to how many degrees you produce, your retention rates and so forth, the easy strategy, from my perspective, from any president's perspective, is okay—we just won't let anybody in with less than a 20 ACT and 2.5 GPA and our problems are over.

These comments illuminate the contrary impulses at work on campuses that lead to adaptive strategies. With the implementation of performance funding, Inventor, Thunder, and City instituted minimum GPAs and test scores for admission. Although River admits everyone who applies, students are now required to submit ACT scores, an unfamiliar process for the region's Appalachian culture that has effectively raised admissions standards, as described by the director for institutional finance:

> We do not require a minimum score. . . . In high schools, if there's a need, there is assistance available to cover the cost of the exam but if you've been out of school, a year, two, five, 10, you're going to have to fit [*sic*] the bill yourself. That has been a natural screening.

The universities also allocated larger shares of merit-based instead of need-based aid to attract better prepared students. Administrators used the number of academically prepared students enrolled, retention and graduation rates, and acceptance rates as performance metrics for these strategies. Adaptive strategy is evident in these decisions, as they were made to ensure fiscal stability within performance funding *(Chaffee 1985a, 1985b)*. This form of strategy is exemplified in the following quote from River's director of institutional finance:

> We had resigned ourselves to the fact that we're going to have to become more selective. Administrations change. The wind blew in a different direction and it was okay to be who we were. . . . [The president] was saying, "Well, if that's what we have to do to survive."

Given diminishing appropriations, the RCUs increased out-of-state and international enrollments. For River and Thunder, this growth was subtle, with just 30 or fewer international students. At City and Inventor, as much as 17% of the student body was inter-

national. The proportion of out-of-state students has grown most at Thunder, with 43% of students from out of state. Given the regional access mission of RCUs, these strategies are adaptive. This change was described by River's chief financial officer:

> Our mission is to provide a truly affordable open access to students that would not have an opportunity to go to college, mostly in this region. I think we've kind of lost sight of that too. . . . [We] are expanding our reach to a larger area because we need more students, but I think we have plenty of students here.

Performance metrics used in this strategy are enrollment targets for international and out-of-state students. Administrators determine targets through budgetary analyses, demonstrating how this strategy is adaptive and concerns financial survival instead of purpose.

The universities have historically welcomed commuter students, as was described by a City dean:

> The university was a pure product of the 60s. It saw itself as an access university. Mostly it was. . . . When we moved in there was only one dormitory and that was mostly for the athletes. It was very much a downtown commuter campus.

In the 5 years under study, each university shifted the number of nontraditional and traditional students so that fewer commuters enroll. Administrators cited commuter tendencies to enroll part-time and at multiple institutions as the reason for this shift *(Capps, 2012)*. These behaviors show the savvy of students juggling multiple responsibilities, yet performance funding penalizes institutions for these behaviors. To grow traditional student populations and address budget shortfalls, parking structures were removed to build dormitories, and parking fees were increased. City's director of the teaching and learning center described these changes, saying:

> They have taken out parking to put in dorms . . . and so there for people who have been around, there is a little sense of pushing folks out to make room for others. You do hear that among some students.

RCUs use the proportions of traditional and nontraditional students as performance metrics for this strategy.

The universities also began requiring students to achieve minimum GPAs to enroll in some degree programs. Stakeholders assert that students should demonstrate ability to perform academically before pursuing certain degrees. The unintended consequence of these policies is that students may gain admission to the university yet not be admitted to a college. To address this issue, two RCUs offer general studies degrees, and a third directs students to major in "organizational leadership." River's director of institutional finance described this strategy, saying,

> There's selectivity in the individual programs on campus. . . . You have a two-year nursing program but it could take you three or four years even if you're successful in being admitted. Then we have others who try to get admitted to a two-year program for four years. Age limit kicks in and they're stuck. . . . I like to know the students could at least leave us with a credential of some sort.

These strategies mean the university is meeting state demands for degrees; however, it is questionable how these degrees are regarded by employers. For universities allowing differential GPA requirements, academic units use student GPAs and retention rates as performance metrics.

Access mission: Interpretive strategy. Interpretive strategy was also evident with regard to each university's access mission. Although City elevated admissions standards, there are no plans to raise them further. The provost affirmed the university's desire to remain relatively open access, saying,

> Sometimes there's an inclination to [raise admissions standards]. . . . [City] has raised the admission standards to where it is, I think our concern is how many people you cut out when you do that. It can disproportionately affect minority students.

The provost's concern for minoritized students shows attention to the university's access mission. Administrators identified student diversity as a performance metric for this strategy.

Interestingly, Thunder is engaging in interpretive strategy even though it was the most selective of the four universities by including noncognitive measures in admissions to discern student civic leadership and resilience, as was described by the director of government relations:

> Kids who may not necessarily have the academic, the 2.0s and the 17s [ACT], now we're looking at, "What did you do in high school? Were you on student council? Did you play sports? Were you in the choir? Did you volunteer in your church?" Some of those other variables that might lend themselves to pursuing or staying with us until they get their degree—persistence.

Staff hope these efforts will preserve Thunder's commitment to enrolling minoritized students who may not meet academic admissions minimums while improving retention and graduation rates.

The universities also evidenced interpretive strategy as they negotiated their regional access mission. Staff solidified partnerships with K-12 schools and funneled resources to improving curricula to ensure graduates are better prepared. These actions not only improve the academic preparation of incoming students, they also ensure that RCUs are fulfilling access and regional engagement missions. Moreover, given that RCUs have longstanding missions to strengthen K-12 schools, these efforts are reflective of their teacher education roots. Finally, the four universities solidified articulation agreements with community colleges so that students are able to transfer without losing credits. These strategies are interpretive in that they are guided by each university's access mission. The performance metrics used to assess these strategies include students who are ethnically diverse and from the region, and the quality of partnerships with K-12 schools.

Student-centered mission: Adaptive strategy. The student-centered mission of each university was under pressure. RCUs often conceive of themselves as places of second chances *(Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015)*, and remediation has historically been an important pathway for academic success for many students. Indeed, as much as 60% of students at RCUs require remediation. Because the state policy context discourages universities from offering remediation, RCUs have changed remediation. Administrators couch their rationale for these changes in the need to respond to performance funding, as is demonstrated by River's president:

> With the new performance metrics, we no longer offer college developmental education courses. That is sunk, and we are going to partner with the community colleges to offer that support so that my faculty and staff—the students we are now recruiting are more college

> ready and can move quicker through the college experience. . . .

Three of the universities have eliminated remedial English. Students have access to tutoring to become remediated, although these resources are limited due to staffing cuts, as described by a Thunder dean: "I would have more staff members so that we can turn this place into a state-of-the-art tutoring center. Tutoring, tutoring, tutoring—just more tutors." Performance metrics used to assess these strategies are the number of incoming students that require remediation.

The teaching mission of each RCU was also under pressure. City and Inventor enhanced faculty development opportunities, but Thunder and River, due to budgetary challenges, decreased faculty development. Additionally, all four universities increased class sizes, eliminated tenure-track positions, added non-tenure track positions, and increased faculty course loads. These decisions evidence adaptive strategy as they focus on institutional survival and increased efficiencies. In determining the efficacy of these strategies, performance metrics concern financial savings and increased efficiency.

Student-centered mission: Interpretive strategy. There was also evidence of interpretive strategy with regard to each university's student-centered mission. Indeed, a number of administrators, like City's provost, expressed ideological support for student-centeredness:

> You can moan and you can say, "Oh, they haven't prepared this and that." That's our population. We've got to figure out how to educate them. You'll wait for hell to freeze over for the schools to get better at this or whatever it is. . . . They're not stupid. They're *not* stupid. They're bright and they're hard working.

As this quote demonstrates, many administrators and faculty encourage campus stakeholders to see student success as their responsibility. As a result of this ideological leadership, stakeholders, to varying degrees, were placing students at the center of retention efforts. At times, this meant recognizing the cultures students bring with them, as a River professor described: "Appalachian people tend to be very family oriented. Family is involved in what they do, so they like to be a part of what's going on with [students]." Campus stakeholders also engaged in student-level tracking to

reconfigure supports, as is described by Thunder's chief financial officer:

> What percent of our classes are graduating? What percent of our classes are . . . being retained? What has been our course completion rate? Before it gets published through another source, we already know. We've already engaged students. . . . So, we're looking at every single aspect of student [life because of] the performance based [funding] model. . . .

Institutions have developed cultures that recognize that many students, due to class backgrounds, need help understanding professional behavior, as is clear from this quote from a City professor: "The unwritten curriculum is to teach professional behaviors and things like being to class on time, dressing appropriately for public appearances."

Administrators also changed student advising and reinforced student-centeredness. Each institution has instituted intrusive advising, a strategy recommended by Complete College America that increases interactions between advisors and students and ensures individualized supports *(Earl, 1987)*. City and Inventor created intake centers for community college transfer students. Each university has historically represented the next step for community college students, and this strategy deepens commitments to supporting students. Administrators track student use of services and stakeholder investment in student success as performance metrics for these strategies.

Curricular changes also evidence interpretive strategy. City, Inventor, and Thunder shared a recognition that most of their students were less civically engaged than middle-class students whose parents had gone to college. In light of this recognition, two of the universities were active members of AASCU's American Democracy Project, and all three had been strategic about including civic experiences in the curriculum. Additionally, all four RCUs reshaped remediation to be evidence-based. City and Inventor are experimenting with offering credit for prior learning to nontraditional students, which deepens the university's commitment to these students. River's success curriculum evidenced interpretive strategy as it meets the unique academic and information needs of first-generation students. City and Inventor collected data to better understand the student experience and provide targeted supports. As a result, City allows students to register for

the entire academic year at once, making it easier for students to plan ahead, and offers financial incentives to encourage students to persist. These responses are interpretive in that they reflect the ideological commitment to providing individualized supports for students. Widespread stakeholder involvement in student life and student success, as well as the growing civic efficacy of students, are performance metrics for these strategies.

Regional engagement mission: Adaptive strategy. Finally, the regional engagement mission of the universities experienced pressure from a state context that rewards economic development while failing to incentivize civic engagement. Although economic engagement has always been an important element of the regional engagement mission of RCUs, some administrators at Thunder and Inventor conflated community engagement with economic development. This conflation runs the risk of overshadowing the civic component of each university's regional engagement mission. River provides an example of how this conflation can overshadow community engagement. Administrators dismantled the Center for Community Engagement to create the Center for Professional Development to respond to policymaker pressure to strengthen workforce development. In the aftermath of this change, a majority of the community–university partnerships were abandoned, and there was no institutional support for service-learning. In adapting institutional operations and forgoing this important aspect of the civic engagement mission, the university evidenced adaptive strategy. The performance metrics used to assess this strategy were measurable economic contributions and the number of students graduating with in-demand majors.

Regional engagement mission: Interpretive strategy. Each of the universities evidenced ideologies tied to regional community engagement, and three of the four had strengthened this mission in the face of policymaker demands for economic development. Thunder's director of government relations evidenced this ideology, saying:

> We want to show the community that we are producing students who are mature, academically focused, socially engaged. [The strategic plan] was [the president's] way of branding to the community that, "Whatever happened prior to me, whatever interaction you have with Thunder before I got here, I cannot address, but I can address your interactions moving forward."

Thunder administrators invited community members to participate in strategic planning and hired a director of community engagement and government relations. Faculty also increased their community engaged research, as was described by a dean:

> There is a professor . . . who's looking at how the air pollution around transportation systems are affecting African-Americans in large cities. [O]ne professor is researching using snake venom attracting the proteins from the snake venom for a cure for prostate cancer. Yeah, and there is a professor in geography who is looking at how to help disparities for African-Americans using GIS.

These efforts evidence interpretive strategy as the university strengthens its regional engagement mission.

City and Inventor also deepened regional engagement due to the ideological leadership of administrators. City's provost described the importance of reciprocity in community partnerships, saying, "The true definition was that university and communities come together in a symbiotic relationship, respectfully recognizing the knowledge and the wisdom that's in both." Inventor's president also evidenced ideological civic leadership in this quote:

> It starts with the way we started—by a grassroots group of blue collar people saying: We need you. We've never lost track of who we were designed to serve. We've had great leadership, not just presidents but provosts—people who have maintained that sense of purpose.

Both universities provided office space and expertise to nonprofit organizations, and included community leaders in campus governance. An Inventor community partner described these efforts, saying,

> I remember last year, getting an email . . . to take a survey about students and what they do for us and how we thought the partnership or relationship between Inventor and our organization was. It was nice to give them some feedback and tell them how beneficial the students are and how thankful we are for them.

In recognition of these efforts, City and Inventor achieved Carnegie's Community Engagement classification.

City responded to policymaker demands for workforce development by educating employers and students about the value of civic engagement in the curriculum so they better understood the university's mission. The performance metrics used by administrators include number of service-learning courses, quality and number of community partnerships, community-based research projects, and the attainment of the Community Engagement classification, which provided external validation for their civic commitments.

All four universities have expanded economic development activities through business incubation, aligning degree offerings with workforce needs, and expanding internship opportunities. City convenes business advisory boards to determine workforce needs and aligns curricula with these needs, as the provost described:

> We're inviting them [business leaders] sometimes by kind, but sometimes by size, and asking them what is it they need from us and how we can best respond to their needs. . . . You had to really get involved at the ground level and then just having the willingness to change the curriculum.

Performance metrics used to evaluate each university's economic contributions include economic impact indicators, number of private sector partnerships, faculty commitment to economic engagement, and students graduating with majors that meet regional needs.

Conclusion and Implications

How administrators enacted strategy in navigating a neoliberal state context carries implications for each campus's public purpose *(Berman, 2012; Brown, 2003)*. The cases demonstrate that administrative use of interpretive and adaptive strategy does not occur in a wholesale manner. This finding echoes Chaffee's *(1985a, 1985b)* that organizations can enact adaptive and interpretive strategies simultaneously. Each campus compromised elements of its public purposes. City and Inventor evidenced more interpretive strategy with regard to their public purposes, and Thunder and River evidenced more adaptive strategy. Incidentally, Thunder and River were the least well-funded of the universities, suggesting that there is a financial threshold at which RCUs can maintain their public purposes. For example, ISU and CSU had resources to establish

faculty grants for civic engagement and create vice presidents for community engagement with staffs to implement university-wide civic education initiatives, whereas TSU created a director for civic engagement who was charged with government relations, and RSU eliminated its civic engagement center due to funding cuts. Table 4 shows each university's use of adaptive and interpretive strategy along the three domains of public purpose. In most instances, a campus demonstrated both interpretive and adaptive strategy in a domain of public purpose. When determining whether a university was enacting adaptive or interpretive strategy within a domain, I sought a critical mass of activities reflecting a particular strategy by analyzing the rationale and rhetoric used, such as administrative messaging concerning survival and alignment with state demands (adaptive strategy) or concerning values and public purpose (interpretive strategy).

Table 4. Adaptive or Interpretive Strategy Along the Domains of Public Purpose at RCUs

	Regional engagement	Student-centeredness	Access
TSU	Interpretive	Adaptive	Adaptive
CSU	Interpretive	Interpretive	Adaptive
RSU	Adaptive	Adaptive	Interpretive
ISU	Interpretive	Interpretive	Adaptive

Building on this categorization, I propose a framework for understanding institutional responses to a neoliberal state context (Table 5).

When an RCU is enacting interpretive strategy with regard to its engagement mission, administrators send messages about the importance of balancing civic and economic engagement, and various staff and faculty respond by protecting this mission even when countervailing forces are operating within the state context. The institution's public purpose, then, acts as a prism through which the state context is refracted and institutional strategy and activities reflect purpose, not the state context. This was the case for City, Inventor, and Thunder. After stakeholders decide on a strategy that preserves a balance between civic and economic engagement, they create performance metrics that measure this balance. In this instance, the domain of public purpose is preserved and, in some ways, strengthened as a result of the institution's response to the neoliberal state policy and funding context. Alternatively, when

an RCU enacts adaptive strategy, it quickly reacts to an external force such as performance funding and changes operations to ensure survival, thus weakening its public purpose. This occurs, for example, when administrators require larger class sizes and rely heavily on non-tenure track faculty.

This research illuminates how a neoliberal state context affects the public purpose of RCUs, while also demonstrating promising strategies for preserving public purposes. Specifically, for administrators at an RCU—or any higher education institution—to preserve public purpose, they must consider how responses to external challenges and opportunities reflect the values of their institution. This work largely manifests through communicating the importance of public purpose to stakeholders so they embody it in their roles. That said, no institution in this study was immune to enacting adaptive strategy, and the public purposes of all four eroded, raising implications for civic education of marginalized students, a majority of whom attend RCUs, and the sector's public purposes.

There are also implications for educational access nationwide in these findings. Indeed, although all four institutions evidenced ideological rhetoric tied to access, all had raised admissions standards. This finding points to the necessity of aligning ideology and rhetoric with operational reality *(Hartley, 2011)*. The domains of each RCU's public purpose are also connected. When one falters, other domains risk faltering. For example, given that RCUs provide access to historically marginalized students who typically are less civically engaged *(Ehrlich, 2000)*, these institutions are important civic educators. Just by virtue of attending college, a majority of graduates are more civically engaged throughout their lives. Moreover, as Giroux *(2002)* wrote, neoliberal ideology threatens the civic education of students "that allows them to recognize the dream and promise of a substantive democracy *(p. 451)*." As neoliberal forces erode the ability of RCUs to maintain accessible admissions policies, the civic education of marginalized individuals is threatened. An increasing reliance on non-tenure track faculty members carries implications for civic education as these faculty often teach courses at multiple institutions and are constrained in their autonomy to craft civic experiences for students *(AAUP, 2013)*. The findings also raise implications regarding the agency that campus stakeholders have to enact interpretive strategy in the face of neoliberal public policy and finance. Public universities are required by law to respond to policymaker demands, and—as the

Table 5. Framework for Understanding Institutional Responses to a Neoliberal State Context

Neoliberal State Context

	Adaptive strategy	*Interpretive strategy*
Strategy and performance metrics (PMs)	*Access:* • Become selective • Recruit out-of-state students • Increase merit aid • PMs: Number of high-performing students; increased tuition revenue; retention or graduation rates *Regional engagement:* • Abandon community partnerships • Dismantle community engagement centers • PMs: Number of students employed and private sector partnerships *Student-centeredness:* • Hire non-tenure track faculty • Eliminate remedial education • Decrease faculty development • Decrease student supports • Remove parking lots and/or build dormitories • PMs: Number of remedial courses; proportion of traditional-age students; revenue from dormitories; institutional efficiencies	*Access:* • Strengthen regional student recruitment • Expand partnerships with K-12 schools • Enhance supports for students • PMs: Number of faculty and staff committed to access mission; diversity of students; number of students using supports *Regional engagement:* • Create balance between economic and community engagement • Create cabinet-level positions for regional engagement • Communicate professional skills gained through service-learning to business leaders • Assess university partnerships • PMs: Quality and number of partnerships; equal resources devoted to economic and civic engagement *Student-Centeredness:* • Increase individualized supports • Implement best practices for remediation • PMs: Students retained and graduated; faculty and staff commitment to student success
Public purposes	*Weakened public purposes*	*Strengthened public purposes*

Neoliberal State Context

findings show—are statutorily constrained in how they advance their public purposes.

The findings carry additional implications for support of community-engaged research *(Orphan, 2015; Orphan & Hartley, 2013)*. As policymakers demand greater economic development and private sector involvement, administrators may provide incentives for faculty to engage in technology transfer and broker private-sector partnerships, which diverts faculty attention from civic engagement *(Dunderstadt, 2000; Gumport et al., 1997; Kirshstein & Hurlburt, 2012)*. Performance funding formulae reward these behaviors.

Encouragingly, three of the four RCUs achieved balance in the economic and civic dimensions of their regional engagement missions, in large part due to the ideological leadership of administrators. In fact, there is a reasonable chance that the neoliberal state context was a catalyst for strengthening each campus's civic commitment. These findings, then, create a roadmap of sorts for administrators, faculty, staff and students interested in protecting and advancing the public purposes of public higher education in a neoliberal policy context. As Lambert *(2012)* wrote, the public and private aims of higher education need not be in conflict, so long as there is balance between both. In fact, research has shown that civic health and economic health in regions are strongly correlated *(National Conference on Citizenship, 2009)*. Perhaps with ideological leadership at all levels, RCUs might actually leverage neoliberal policy contexts to deepen their public purposes and ensure that all students and faculty are provided ample opportunities to engage civically.

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Identity Status, Service-Learning, and Future Plans

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Abstract

Marcia's *(1966)* identity status paradigm served as the theoretical framework to study the impact of service-learning on clarifying future plans for emerging adults with varying identity statuses. The study participants were 195 undergraduates at a large urban public university in the southeastern United States. The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale *(Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008)* was administered at the beginning and end of the semester during which participants completed their service-learning class. The Service-Learning Impact on Future Plan Clarity Questionnaire developed by the authors for this study was administered at the end of the same semester. A two-step cluster analysis resulted in five identity status groups. Students in all five groups indicated that service-learning helped them clarify their future plans. Moratorium identity status group members reported significantly less benefit from service-learning for clarifying future plans. Results are discussed and implications for research and practice are provided.

Keywords: identity status, service-learning, future plans, emerging adults, tertiary education, cluster analysis

Introduction

Identity is the stable, consistent, and reliable sense of who one is and what one stands for in the world *(Josselson, 1987)*. Understanding one's own identity and beginning to answer the question "Who am I?" are the critical developmental tasks facing traditional-age college students. Participation in tertiary-level service-learning courses has the potential to influence students' identity development and to shape students' plans for the future, in part, because these courses provide students with opportunities to practice applying what they know in real-world contexts and to reflect on those experiences *(Batchelder & Root, 1994; Cone & Harris, 1996)*. By focusing learning activities in service-learning courses on identity exploration and future plan development, service-learning course instructors can provide a learning space in which students can begin to explore the "Who am I?" and the "Where am I going?" questions that are critical for the developmental period. However, no research has yet been conducted to

study the impact of service-learning on clarifying future plans for emerging adults with varying identity statuses.

Psychosocial theories of identity development *(Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Josselson, 1973; Keniston, 1971)* emphasize the importance of the individual's internal psychological processes in directing identity development. These theories detail specific "crises" to be resolved at each age-related stage for continued growth to occur. Widick, Parker, and Knefelkamp *(1978)* defined crisis as "not a time of panic or disruption: It is a decision point—that moment when one reaches an intersection and must turn one way or the other" *(pp. 3–4)*. Erikson *(1968)* identified the central "crisis" or decision point during emerging adulthood as "identity versus role confusion." Arnett *(2000)* identified this "emerging adulthood" period as ranging from the late teens to the late 20s, when individuals are exploring views on love, work, and the world. The specific issues faced during Erikson's identity versus role confusion stage revolve around vocational decisions, relationships, and ideological beliefs and values.

The first researcher to empirically test Erikson's identity versus role confusion stage was developmental psychologist James Marcia. Using an interview protocol to investigate the process of identity development in male college students, Marcia *(1966)* found identity in emerging adulthood to be characterized by the presence or absence of exploration and commitment in vocational, relational, and ideological decision-making. Rather than describing identity development as a series of stages, Marcia *(1966)* presents a more fluid model of four identity statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. These four identity statuses are based on the combination of two underlying dimensions, exploration and commitment. *Exploration* refers to the individual's active weighing of various identity alternatives; *commitment* refers to the presence of strong convictions or choices *(Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005)*. Individuals with identity achievement status have formed clear identity commitments after exploring various alternatives (high commitment/high exploration). Individuals in the moratorium status have not yet made clear identity commitments but are actively exploring various alternatives (low commitment/high exploration). Foreclosure status individuals have made strong commitments without going through a period of exploration (high commitment/low exploration), and diffusion status individuals have not made firm commitments and are not actively exploring various alternatives (low commitment/low exploration).

Josselson *(1987, 1996)* investigated Marcia's four statuses with a sample of women and developed new names for the statuses and descriptive details for each. Josselson's descriptive status used the names gatekeeper (foreclosure), pathmaker (achievement), searcher (moratorium), and drifter (diffusion). Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., *(2008)* have validated Josselson's statuses with a large sample of female college students and have identified statuses that parallel those originally described by Marcia *(1966)*. Marcia's and Josselson's work in the field of identity status paradigms underlies one of the most coherent bodies of empirical research on identity formation *(Côté & Levine, 2002)*.

Successful identity development during emerging adulthood has been linked to a wide variety of positive life outcomes. Using Marcia's *(1966)* identity status categories, researchers have found links between identity status and correlates such as personality dimensions, internalizing behavior problems, and family relationships (for recent reviews see *Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Meeus, 2011*), with the achievement status showing the most positive outcomes. However, empirical studies have shown that only about half of young people obtain achievement status by early adulthood *(Kroger, 2007)*, and a meta-analysis covering 124 identity studies concluded that not until age 36 do half of participants reach the achievement status *(Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010)*. Researchers have also explored the relationships between extended identity exploration and college attendance during the emerging adult period *(Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008)* with the hypothesis that some traditional-age university students might get "stuck" in the exploration process and experience difficulty arriving at firm identity choices *(Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005)*. Some evidence exists to support this hypothesis. Emerging adults in the moratorium identity status group (i.e., individuals with low commitment and high exploration profiles) have been shown to express both adaptive and maladaptive ruminative exploration *(Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, et al., 2008)*.

Identity Status, Civic Engagement, and Service-Learning

Research has begun to emerge that addresses the connections between identity status in emerging adulthood, adjustment in college, and civic engagement. Berzonsky and Kuk *(2000)* assessed 363 matriculating university students (mean age 18.15 years) and found that students with achievement status demonstrated a strong sense of educational purpose. Other research demonstrates a consistent

positive relationship between achievement identity group membership and higher levels of civic engagement, civic mindedness, and stronger aspirations to contribute to communities, particularly when compared to individuals with diffusion identity status *(Busch & Hofer, 2011; Crocetti, Jahromi, & Meeus, 2012; Hardy & Kisling, 2006; Jahromi, Crocetti, & Buchanan, 2012; Padilla-Walker, McNamara, Carroll, Masden, & Nelson, 2008; Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2007)*.

Bringle and Clayton *(2012)* define service-learning as a course or course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal value and civic responsibility. Despite the steadily increasing use of service-learning pedagogy in tertiary education institutions throughout the United States and beyond, research connecting identity status and service-learning is scant.

Most service-learning research that has focused on identity addresses the relationships between service-learning class participation and the development of a personal, civic, or citizenship identity *(Battistoni, 2013; Brandenberger, 2013; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jones & Hill, 2003; Rhoads, 1997)*. In their constructivist study, Jones and Abes *(2004)* interviewed eight individuals 2 to 4 years after they had participated in an undergraduate service-learning internship class. Data from the interviews indicated that these emerging adults identified their service-learning class experiences as influencing their long-term decision-making regarding interpersonal relationships, career plans, and aspirations, as well as open-mindedness about new ideas and experiences. Batchelder and Root *(1994)* examined career identity development in a small sample ($n = 45$) of undergraduates from a variety of service-learning classes and found that students' career identity development, evaluated from content analysis of reflection journal entries, slightly increased over the course of the semester. Feen-Calligan *(2005)* used a qualitative analysis to explore professional identity development in one service-learning class of 11 graduate art therapy students over one semester. Her results supported the hypothesis that service-learning provided a supportive and reflective culture in which the students were able to gain professional experience, examine values, and develop personal awareness.

No studies currently exist that focus on service-learning and identity status. Given the empirical support for and cross-disciplinary importance of the identity status theoretical framework

(Josselson, 1987; Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008; Marcia, 1966), this study sought to explore the role of identity status in emerging adulthood for harvesting service-learning experiences to inform future plans.

Research Questions

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate the perceived impact of service-learning class participation on clarifying future plans in a group of emerging adults with varying identity statuses. There were two research questions:

1. Does service-learning class participation help university undergraduates clarify their plans for the future?
2. Does identity status influence the degree of benefit students perceive in clarifying their future plans as an outcome of service-learning class participation?

Method

Participants

One hundred ninety-five undergraduate students (53 males and 142 females) at a large urban public university in the southeastern United States participated in this study. One student's data was removed from the subsequent data analyses because he was identified as a multivariate outlier using the Mahalanobis distance measure. The final 194 participants were recruited from five officially designated service-learning courses taught in geography, education, and religious studies disciplines.

Courses at this university are designated as service-learning in the institution's course management system after the instructor provides evidence that every student in the class completes a minimum of 20 hours of service during the semester, the service meets a community-identified need, and the instructor incorporates reflection on the service into the course activities or assignments. The five class sections were selected for inclusion in this study because they (a) represented a variety of academic disciplines, (b) enrolled only undergraduate students, (c) enrolled undergraduates who were both majors and nonmajors in the courses' academic disciplines, (d) were taught during the semester the study was under way, and (e) were led by instructors who were willing to participate in the study.

Only students under the age of 25 were included in the data analysis, and their mean age was 20.58 years (SD = 1.29, *range* =

18–24 years). The students came from a variety of majors but were primarily in their sophomore, junior, or senior academic level at university. Table 1 summarizes the demographics of the sample and highlights the diverse student community from which they were sampled. The research was approved by the university's IRB, and all participants provided informed consent before participating in this study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Student Sample (*N* = 194)

	Percentages
Gender	
Male	26.8%
Female	73.2%
Minority status	
Minority	44.4%
White	55.6%
Parent education	
1st Generation	37.1%
Non-1st Generation	62.9%
Financial status	
Pell Grant recipient	31.8%
Not a recipient	68.2%
Academic year	
Freshman	1.0%
Sophomore	25.8%
Junior	39.2%
Senior	34.0%

Measures

Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS). The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale was developed by Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al. *(2008)* to measure four dimensions of identity formation based on the theoretical work of Marcia *(1966)*. Although the DIDS includes a fifth dimension that relates to ruminative exploration, this dimension was not included in the data analyses of the current study because it was not relevant to the goals of the current research. Two dimensions of the DIDS relate to identity commitment: commitment making (CM) and identification with commitment (IC). Each of these dimensions consists of five items. The CM dimension measures the degree to which the

respondent has made a commitment and includes items like "I have decided on the direction I want to follow in life" and "I know what I want to do with my future." The IC dimension measures the extent to which the respondent actually identifies with this commitment and includes items such as "My plans for the future offer me a sense of security" and "My future plans give me self-confidence." The other two dimensions of the DIDS relate to exploration and also consist of five items per dimension: exploration in breadth (EB) and exploration in depth (ED). As can be seen by their labels, the only difference between these two dimensions relates to the focus of the exploration. The EB dimension measures how much the respondent is exploring in breadth different alternatives and includes items such as "I think about the direction I want to take in my life" and "I think a lot about how I see my future." The ED dimension measures how much the respondent is exploring their current commitments in depth and includes items such as "I think about the future plans I have made" and "I talk regularly with other people about the plans for the future I have made." The DIDS uses a Likert response scale for each item, ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree."

Participants completed the DIDS at the start of the semester and again at the end of the semester. The test-retest reliability as measured by Pearson correlations was very good for each dimension: CM (.82), IC (.69), EB (.66), and ED (.56). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of each dimension for both recording times were also quite good: CM Time 1 ($\alpha = 0.85$), CM Time 2 ($\alpha = 0.86$), IC Time 1 ($\alpha = 0.87$), IC Time 2 ($\alpha = 0.89$), EB Time 1 ($\alpha = 0.73$), EB Time 2 ($\alpha = 0.76$), ED Time 1 ($\alpha = 0.63$), and ED Time 2 ($\alpha = 0.64$). Consequently, the mean of both time points was used as the final score for each dimension of the DIDS.

Service-Learning Impact on Future Plan Clarity Questionnaire (SLIP). The authors developed a short four-item questionnaire to measure students' beliefs about the perceived impact of their service-learning class experiences on clarifying their future plans (see Table 2). The first item examined the overall impact of the service-learning class, and the other three items distinguished the perceived impact of various service-learning class components on clarifying future plans. The participants expressed their level of agreement with each item from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree." The internal consistency of this measure was very good (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89). The sum of the four item responses was calculated as the final measure of the perceived impact of the service-learning class on clarifying future plans, with

a range of possible scores from 4 to 20. The mean SLIP score for the sample was 14.10 with a standard deviation of 3.79, suggesting that the majority of students found their service-learning class had helped them to clarify their future plans.

Table 2. Service-Learning Impact on Future Plan Clarity Questionnaire (SLIP) Items

1.	Being in this service-learning class has helped me clarify some of my plans for the future.
2.	The instructor for this service-learning class has helped me clarify some of my plans for the future.
3.	The community service part of this class has helped me clarify some of my plans for the future.
4.	The reflection activities/assignments I did in this class have helped me clarify some of my plans for the future.

Procedure

Students in five service-learning classes were invited to participate in the current study. Participation was voluntary, and participating students were offered the opportunity to be placed in a raffle for a $10 gift card. No other incentives were provided to the students for participating in the research. Participants completed the DIDS at the start and again at the end of the 15-week semester. Participants completed the SLIP questionnaire at the end of the semester.

Data Analyses

A two-step cluster analysis was conducted using the four dimensions of the DIDS to classify the students into identity status groupings. The first step involved conducting a hierarchical clustering procedure using Ward's method with squared Euclidean distances to provide the optimal cluster solutions for the four DIDS dimensions after removing multivariate outliers and standardizing scores. A scree plot of the changes to the agglomeration coefficient for different cluster solutions revealed the best number of clusters to fall in the range of four to six clusters. An examination of these cluster solutions in terms of their DIDS centroids revealed that the five-cluster solution provided the optimal statistical and theoretical cluster solution in agreement for the most part with the identity statuses found by Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al. *(2008)* and consistent with Marcia's original *(1966)* classification. The second step of the cluster analysis involved conducting a K-means analysis for a five-cluster solution using the centroids provided by the

hierarchical analysis as the initial cluster centers. The resulting five clusters are described in Figure 1 and reveal the following five identity status groupings: (1) achievement (n = 36), (2) emerging achievement (n = 62), foreclosure (n = 35), moratorium (n = 39), and diffusion (n = 22). The emerging achievement status group is unique to the current data set and was labeled in this way to illustrate that this group demonstrates an emerging trend toward identity achievement and exploration that is similar to, but not as well developed as, that of the achievement group. Statistical comparisons between the identity status groups were conducted using chi-square, t, ANOVA, and ANCOVA statistical tests.

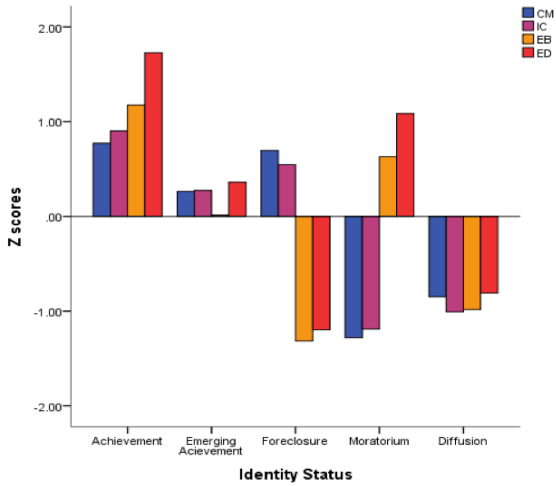

Figure 1. Standardized scores for the DIDS dimensions of Commitment Making (CM), Identification with Commitment (IC), Exploration in Breadth (EB) and Exploration in Depth (ED) for the five identity statuses.

Results

There were no significant differences in the gender, age, minority status, Pell grant status, and first-generation status of the students who made up the five identity status groupings, $p > .05$. However, there was a significant difference between the minority status groupings and the service-learning classes taken by those students, $\chi 2(N = 194, df = 4) = 18.09, p = .001$, with respect to one specific service-learning class. This was deemed a possible confound when comparing the five identity status groupings, because students in this class (n = 56) provided higher SLIP ratings (M = 15.80; SD = 3.81) than students in other service-learning classes (M = 13.42; SD = 3.74), $t(192) = 4.23, p < .001$. Consequently, member-

ship in this class was coded as a covariate in comparisons between the five identity status groups on their SLIP ratings. A significant ANCOVA was found when comparing the five identity status groups on their SLIP ratings, $F(4, 188) = 2.45$, $p < .05$. Post hoc analysis revealed that the only significant difference between the groupings was between the moratorium and achievement groups (refer to Figure 2). Students in the achievement group perceived their service-learning class as more beneficial for clarifying future plans than did students in the moratorium group.

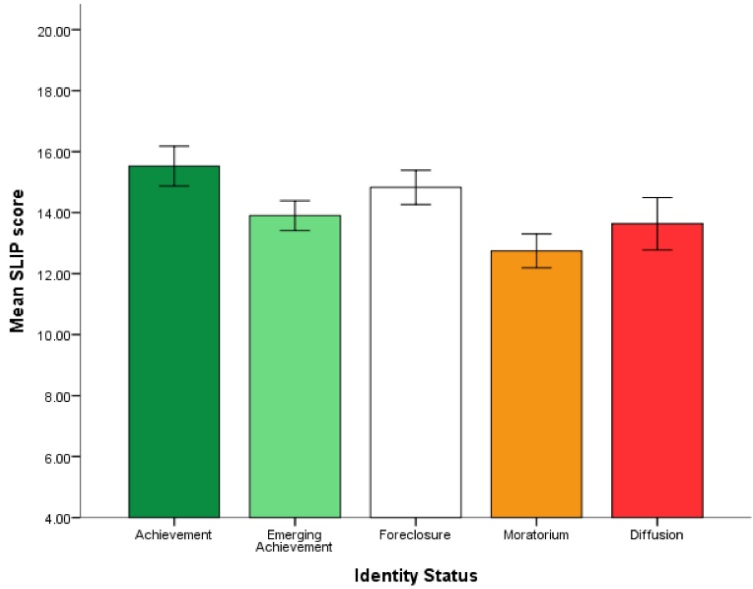

Figure 2. Differences between the identity statuses on the perceived benefits of the service-learning class for future plans clarification (SLIP).

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the role of identity status on university students' perception of the degree to which participating in a service-learning class helped them to clarify their goals for the future. The identity status theoretical framework developed by Marcia *(1966)* and extended by Josselson *(1987, 1996)* and Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al. *(2008)* represents one of the most coherent bodies of empirical research on identity formation *(Côté & Levine, 2002)*. However, this framework has not yet been applied to the study of service-learning as a high-impact educational practice. The results of this study add impor-

tant information to the literature on service-learning and identity in emerging adulthood.

The participants in this study were a diverse sample that included a significant percentage of traditionally underrepresented student groups, such as students from low income and racial minority backgrounds as well as first-generation students. Our data showed that students from diverse backgrounds generally found their service-learning class experiences helpful in clarifying their future plans. Across all participants, the mean SLIP rating was significantly higher than the midpoint (neutral) of the response scale, suggesting that the majority of students found their service-learning class had helped them to clarify their future plans.

There were no significant differences across demographic categories in identity status membership, indicating that each of the identity status categories created through cluster analysis consisted of a demographically diverse group of students. This finding provides preliminary evidence that identity status in emerging adulthood may not be dependent on demographic characteristics such as economic status, racial group, or gender; however, a larger sample would be needed to test the statistical difference between these student subgroups. Although our data showed no demographic differences in *identity status* categories, theoretical and empirical research exists that demonstrates the intersectionality of multiple social identities, particularly the individual experience of difference and oppression in the context of social identity development *(Jones, 1997; Jones & Abes, 2013; Jones & McEwen, 2000)*. This study did not explicitly address these topics; however, future research should explore the role of intersectionality on social identity commitments and service-learning participation.

Our results also showed an equal distribution of chronological age across the identity status categories, indicating that older individuals in this sample were just as likely to be in the diffusion and moratorium identity status clusters as in the achievement and emerging achievement identity status clusters; the same was true of younger individuals.

Prior research indicates that about 50% of individuals in the emerging adult age range (18–24 years) fall within the achievement identity status group *(Kroger, 2007)*. In our sample, only 18% had reached achievement identity status. Cluster analysis of this sample produced a unique category that we labeled emerging achievement, and 32% of our sample fell into this group. DIDS dimension score profiles for this emerging achievement identity status group showed

a constellation that appeared to be evolving toward an achievement identity status. For example, individuals in the emerging achievement identity status showed positive levels of commitment making (CM), identification with commitment (IC), and exploration in depth (ED), but these levels were lower than those of individuals in the achievement group. Together, the achievement and emerging achievement identity status groups make up 50% of the sample; both groups reported that their service-learning class experiences had a positive influence on clarifying future plans. Because the emerging achievement identity status group has not been reported in other studies to date, more research is needed to replicate our findings and, if replicated, to explore the characteristics and outcomes of this emerging achievement identity status group. For example, students in the emerging achievement identity status group may benefit from service-learning experiences that target their tentatively chosen career path and that integrate learning activities designed to explicate the relationships among community-based activities, academic/interpersonal/civic skills, and future plans.

Individuals in four of the five identity status groups (achievement, emerging achievement, foreclosure, and diffusion) reported equivalent and positive levels of perceived benefit from their service-learning class experiences on clarifying future plans. Individuals with diffusion identity status in our sample found their service-learning class experiences to be as helpful in clarifying their future plans as did individuals in the achievement, emerging achievement, and foreclosure identity status groups. Though preliminary, this finding is encouraging, given the less than positive life outcomes that diffusion identity status group membership can portend *(Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Meeus, 2011)*.

Only individuals in the moratorium identity status group reported significantly lower, although still positive, levels of perceived benefit from their service-learning class experiences on clarifying future plans. In our sample, 20% of individuals were identified as having a moratorium identity status. Individuals in the moratorium identity status group remain uncommitted about their future directions and are actively searching for options using both breadth and depth strategies. They demonstrate DIDS dimension score profiles that are low on commitment making (CM) and identification with commitment (IC) and high on both the exploration in breadth (EB) and exploration in depth (ED) dimensions.

In psychosocial identity development theories, moratorium has often been assumed to represent a hallmark of successful

transition to adulthood *(Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008)*. Traditional-age, full-time university students are often able to delay adult commitments and spend several years exploring life alternatives with few limitations on their choices *(Arnett, 2000; Côté & Schwartz, 2002)*. Under these conditions, individuals can thrive to develop fully formed identity commitments. However, some individuals experience this moratorium identity status as a confusing and anxiety-provoking stage during which seemingly limitless possibilities are experienced as both intimidating and disequilibrating *(Schulenberg, Wadsworth, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996; Schwartz et al., 2005)*. Modern Western consumer societies may appear increasingly chaotic to young people *(Berzonsky, 2003)* and expect individuals to create their own identities with little external help *(Baumeister & Muraven, 1996; Côté, 2002)*. In such societies the potential exists for emerging adults to become stuck in the moratorium exploration process and to experience considerable difficulty and stress arriving at identity commitments *(Schwartz et al., 2005)*.

Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al. *(2008)* found that a large percentage of emerging adults in the moratorium status category scored high on rumination. These researchers, however, hypothesize that this ruminative form of exploration is likely to be an indication of developmentally appropriate indecision within this age group rather than a trait of indecisiveness. Still, chronically indecisive individuals may experience fear in the face of important identity commitment decisions and may procrastinate or develop other forms of maladaptive functioning *(Milgram & Tenne, 2000; Rassin & Muris, 2005)*. The current study represents exploratory research aimed at describing relationships among identity status, service-learning, and future plans; therefore, rumination was not specifically measured. However, service-learning classes that are designed to help students explore future plans might also include strategies for referring students who express fear in the face of commitment decisions to the appropriate support services on campus, such as the career center or the counseling center.

How might service-learning instructors create learning environments that provide supports and scaffolds for increasing the identity commitments of students within the moratorium status identity category? One strategy could be to design reflection activities and assignments that provide opportunities for students to practice identity commitments, particularly career commitments, in a non-anxiety-provoking learning space. For example, students might benefit from reflection questions that ask them to describe potential careers related to the course topic and service site as well

as the individual student's perceptions of the ways in which these potential careers do and do not fit their strengths and interests. Some sharing of reflection question responses among classmates could provide students, particularly those in the moratorium status identity group, with positive examples of emerging identity commitments. Professionals working within the service site(s) might also speak to the service-learning students about their own identity commitment journeys. Table 3 provides a beginning set of ideas for service-learning class activities that target career identity exploration for students in each identity status group.

Table 3. Examples of Service-Learning Career Exploration Learning Activities for Students in Different Identity Status Groups

Identity status groups *(Josselson, 1996; Marcia, 1966)*	**Learning goal(s)**	**Learning activities**
Achievement/ Emerging Achievement (Pathmakers) Characteristics: high commitment high exploration	• Increase student awareness of their own skills/ talents as these relate to their own career interests • Build professional networks through community service sites • Analyze what it means to be a civic-minded professional within their chosen academic field	• Reflect (in writing or in class discussion) about a skill/talent you possess and describe a situation from your community service this semester when you have successfully used that skill/talent. • Reflect (in writing or in class discussion) on how professionals at your service site and in your chosen profession/academic field demonstrate civic-mindedness. • Interview a professional at your community service site about their career and describe the academic and interpersonal skills they have developed over time.

Note: Continued on next page

Identity status groups ***(Josselson, 1996; Marcia, 1966)***	**Learning goal(s)**	**Learning activities**
Foreclosure (Gatekeepers) Characteristics: high commitment low exploration	• Increase student awareness of the variety of paths that exist within their chosen career interest • Explore how their own personal strengths can be capitalized on within a professional work environment, including within their community service site/project	• For your chosen career path, research and describe at least two different/distinct work environments in which professionals within that career path work. Develop a list of pros and cons for each work environment related to your own personal strengths and interests. • Reflect (in writing or in a class discussion) on how the work environment of your community service site/project capitalizes, or could capitalize, on your personal strengths and interests. • Write an end-of-semester thank you letter to your community service site supervisor thanking them for providing you with opportunities to put into practice professional skills. Specify the professional skills you practiced and how these skills will be used in your future career.

Note: Continued on next page

Identity status groups ***(Josselson, 1996; Marcia, 1966)***	**Learning goal(s)**	**Learning activities**
Moratorium (Seekers) Characteristics: low commitment high exploration	• Increase student's awareness of their own personal strengths • Connect personal strengths to a "best fit" career direction	• Complete StrengthsFinder (i.e., the CliftonStrengths Assessment, Gallup) and reflect on how you are applying your top strengths during your community service. • Describe (a) a career path that would utilize your top strengths from the StrengthsFinder assessment and (b) the work settings/tasks of professionals in this career path.
Diffusion (Drifters) Characteristics: low commitment low exploration	• Identify career options that exist at the student's community service site • Identify career skills that already exist in the student's skill repertoire and that the student enjoys performing	• Research (in a written paper or small group discussion) the job titles and position descriptions of the staff members employed at your community service site (or other organizations like your community service site) and identify the professional skills needed for each position. • From a list of (21st century/transferable) professional skills provided to you by your instructor or campus career center, chose two that you enjoy performing. Describe a situation (in class, at your community service site/ project) during which you demonstrated at least one of those skills.

Note: Instructors may provide students with a choice of learning activities from across the identity status group rows and allow them to select the activities they find most interesting and/or helpful.

Implications for research. This study is the first to explore the relationships of identity status and service-learning class participation with future plans clarification. Research has demonstrated the importance of identity development during emerging adulthood, making the college context critical for identity exploration *(Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006; Montgomery & Côté, 2003; Waterman & Archer, 1990)*. "College environments provide a diversity of experiences that can both trigger consideration of identity issues and suggest alternative resolutions for identity concerns" *(Waterman, 1993, p. 53)*. Therefore, service-learning and other experiential pedagogies within the higher education context hold great promise for deepening our understanding of how identity development in emerging adulthood can be facilitated. Future research should seek to replicate and explain the findings. Longitudinal research and qualitative methodologies should be utilized to identify the long-term impact of service-learning courses on identity status as well as strategies for increasing identity commitments through service-learning class experiences. Future research should also explore the role of intersectionality on social identity commitments and service-learning participation.

Implications for practice. The results of this study are important for service-learning class instructors, community partners, and the administrators who operate service-learning programs on college and university campuses.

Our data provide preliminary support for the hypothesis that service-learning students who have not yet begun to make identity commitments may be the least able to derive benefit from their service-learning experiences to inform decisions about their futures. This finding is somewhat counterintuitive, as it may seem more likely that experiential education methodologies like service-learning would provide the most benefit to these uncommitted students. The findings from this study indicate that practitioners would be wise to develop explicit supports and scaffolds within their service-learning classes that enable students to "try on" and to evaluate the fit of a limited number of concrete future directions, particularly career directions.

Higher education institutions have the potential to leverage high-impact experiential education practices such as service-learning to provide students with the critical supports they need to explore career opportunities that lead to firm career identity commitments. It has been our experience that within the curricula of academic majors, these supports are either un- or underdeveloped. Career exploration and career identity commitments through ser-

vice-learning cannot occur within the confines of a single 15-week semester. However, academic departments that strategically and thoughtfully embed service-learning and other experiential learning opportunities across the entire curriculum map of the academic major have rich opportunities to support career exploration and career identity commitment. Resources to support this reenvisioning of the curriculum have been developed and are available to guide departmental faculty (see *Battistoni, Gelmon, Saltmarsh, Wergin, & Zlotkowski, 2003; Furco, 2003; Kecskes, Gelmon, & Spring, 2005; and Smith et al., 2009*). Individual service-learning course instructors can use Ash and Clayton's *(2009)* DEAL critical reflection model as an excellent starting place for the development of reflection activities that can promote deeper levels of career exploration and career identity commitment.

The results of this study also have implications for the community partners who interact with service-learning students. Students across all identity status groups indicate that their service-learning experiences helped them to clarify future plans, and community partners can leverage these opportunities by (a) building career information into their volunteer orientation programs (e.g., what sorts of transferrable professional skills do volunteers use and develop while volunteering; what career paths can be followed in organizations like theirs), (b) taking opportunities throughout the semester to acknowledge students' professional skills as these skills are demonstrated, and (c) describing to students the career paths experienced by the organization's leadership as well as the professional skills these leaders regularly use on the job. By making these invisible aspects of the workplace visible to students, community partners can play a powerful role in supporting students' career exploration and commitment, which in turn can help students become more engaged volunteers.

Limitations. One important limitation of this study is that it was conducted at a single university. Replication of the study at higher education institutions of varying types is needed. The relatively small size of the sample did not allow the researchers to test the model with specific subgroups of students; to separate out participants' commitments in vocational, relational, and ideological decision-making; or to explore questions of intersectionality and multiple social identity commitments as these relate to service-learning class participation. The relatively small number of class sections limited the representation of academic disciplines in this study to the humanities and social sciences. Replication of the study should seek to include a greater variety of academic

disciplines, including the sciences and the arts. Finally, these data cannot address the lingering concern about whether students self-select into service-learning and, if so, how this self-selection might have impacted the results of this study.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions are working to expand high-impact experiential learning opportunities such as service-learning *(Kuh, 2008; Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013)*. As they do so, it is incumbent on them to demonstrate the ways in which these pedagogies have positive impacts on student success. An important measure of student success is the extent to which students have made clear future plan commitments, and this study provides preliminary evidence that service-learning courses can be helpful to students in clarifying their future plans. Service-learning courses, through cycles of action and reflection, have the potential to provide curriculum-embedded opportunities for diverse groups of students to explore identity options and to make career and social identity commitments. Careful and scholarly approaches to the development of curriculum-embedded experiential education opportunities like service-learning hold great promise for transitioning a greater number of higher education students into successful adult lives.

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"We Don't Leave Engineering on the Page": Civic Engagement Experiences of Engineering Graduate Students

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Abstract

Few scholars have examined the civic engagement experiences of graduate students in engineering fields. To address this void, this study uses social exchange theory and experiential learning theory to consider the experiences of engineering graduate students in service programs at a predominantly White research university. The findings suggest that students are highly motivated to serve and derive complex meaning-making from their service, thus advancing understandings of how engineering graduate students find meaning in civic engagement. Although engineering graduate students may be expected to focus primarily on research and professional advancement, our findings suggest there is an opportunity to more fully involve students in civic engagement activities.

Keywords: graduate students; engineering; civic engagement; community service

Introduction

Growing student interest in community engagement and service-learning is widespread across institutions of higher education, as demonstrated by the surge in creation of service-learning and experiential learning programs (e.g., Engineering Without Borders) over the past decade and a half *(May, 2017)*. Graduate students are no exception to this rising interest, yet graduate education continues to train scholars with traditional narrowly focused academic goals and areas of expertise *(Franz, 2013; Matthews, Karls, Doberneck, & Springer, 2015; O'Meara, 2011)*. Graduate students, including those interested in community-based engagement or research, are socialized to be scholars and researchers *(Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007, 2010; Golde & Dore, 2001; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006)*. Furthermore, graduate students lack access to faculty members and advisors who encourage deviating from these cultural norms to pursue civic engagement *(Franz, 2013)*. This presents a challenge for graduate students pursuing civic engagement, as well as higher education programs intending to support such interests.

Community-based activities provide significant social and professional benefits to students who participate in them *(Laursen, Thiry, & Liston, 2012; Wallen & Pandit, 2009)*, as well as the communities in which they serve *(Gergen, 2012)*. These benefits include fostering persistence, gaining soft skills (e.g., interpersonal communication), feeling emotionally connected, and stimulating economic growth *(Gergen, 2012; Greenwood, 2007; Nasr, 2014)*. Considering these benefits and the potential impact on student programs, communities, and the U.S. economy, research exploring civic engagement is warranted.

The policy and higher education communities have emphasized research related to undergraduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). President Obama charged higher education institutions to produce one million more STEM graduates over the next 10 years; during his presidency, he detailed efforts to support more STEM-focused high schools and districts, improving STEM education at community colleges, and identifying best practices to engage youth and adults in STEM *(WHOSTP, 2013)*.

Existing research on undergraduate student civic engagement is substantial, and a growing body of recent research has evaluated graduate student civic engagement *(Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Latimore, Dreelin, & Burroughs, 2014; Laursen et al., 2012; Matthews et al., 2015; O'Meara, 2008a; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006)*. Within this body of research remains a need for further study on graduate STEM student involvement in civic engagement, especially within fields like engineering. However, there is a lack of research into graduate students' motivations for pursuing civic engagement work. A greater understanding of such motivations is needed to better support the engagement interests of graduate engineering students and graduate engineering programs.

As educators and administrators, we need to consider the ways in which our knowledge of graduate students' civic engagement efforts (defined as the various volunteer, outreach, and service activities in which these students elect to participate) intersects with this pressing need for STEM graduates. Institutions like the University of Texas at Austin and Northwestern University have civic engagement centers across disciplines, including STEM, but there is a need for scholarly inquiry to advance understanding of how these experiences shape students' academic and civic engagement meaning-making. Considering the vast scope of disciplines within STEM, our research team sought to understand the underlying motivation for graduate engineering students' involvement

in civic engagement, as well as how they made meaning of their service activities, through the following three research questions:

1. How do engineering graduate students at a research university describe their motivations to become involved in civic engagement opportunities?
2. How do engineering graduate students at a research university discuss their respective civic engagement behaviors?
3. How do engineering graduate students at a research university make meaning of their civic engagement and discuss its influence on their futures?

Literature Review

Civic Engagement and STEM

Although not as transparently well suited for civic engagement as some other academic fields (social work and education, for instance), STEM remains a viable area of inquiry where civic engagement has positive outcomes for students and community. In this study focused on graduate engineering students, we also highlight the broader literature on civic engagement and graduate students in STEM both because less work is available on engineering and civic engagement specifically and because findings from the engineering context may potentially translate to other STEM disciplines. Although civic engagement has been incorporated into many disciplines, it has not been as widespread in STEM fields *(Butin, 2006)*. Increased attention on the role of science and engineering fields regarding outreach and community engagement has encouraged the establishment of centers to address these needs. For instance, the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) leverages graduate education as a point of entry for improving learning and diversity in STEM fields and now has over 40 U.S. university partners *(CIRTL, 2016)*. Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibilities (SENCER) aims to make "science more real, accessible, 'useful,' and civically important" *(SENCER, 2016, para. 2)* by supporting faculty development programs; creating resources like model courses, research, and assessment; and promoting those who perform this work. At Purdue University, in the Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS) program, undergraduate students earn academic credit for community-based service-learning engineering design projects. EPICS enrolls almost 400 students per semester who are involved in 80–90 projects at a time *(Coyle, Jamieson, & Oakes, 2005)*.

Research has demonstrated how civic engagement models from these centers can be directly applied to undergraduate STEM curriculum efforts *(Fredeen, 2012; Ritchie & Tait, 2016)*; teaching and learning strategies in STEM fields *(Fink, 2009; Smith, Clarke Douglas, & Cox, 2009)*; and engineering student perceptions of the value of engagement efforts *(May, 2017)*. Scholarship regarding undergraduate engineering students' engagement has focused on developing "21st century" professional skills in cocurricular involvement *(Fisher, Bagiati, & Sarma, 2017)*, community service-learning *(Coyle et al., 2005, 2006)*, number of hours on cocurricular activities *(National Survey of Student Engagement, 2012)*, and definitions of engagement *(Heller, Beil, Dam, & Haerum, 2010)*. Goggins *(2012)* discussed a multitude of civic engagement and service-learning engineering courses at the National University of Ireland at Galway, stating that having these learning opportunities "gives students the flexibility to further explore areas that interest them, while gaining experience of working in a small team with community partners on 'real' projects" *(p. 248)*. Such opportunities align with Boyer's *(1996)* engaged scholarship and Sullivan's *(2005)* civic professionalism.

Graduate Students and Civic Engagement

Doctoral students are socialized to the norms and practices of attaining faculty positions at research institutions, especially in the STEM disciplines *(Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007, 2010; Golde & Dore, 2001)*. Thus, their training and preparation emphasize research over other components of scholarly life, like service *(Golde & Dore, 2001)*. At research universities, activities like community engagement or research that has a public purpose are considerably underrewarded; graduate students are therefore discouraged from pursuing similar types of work. O'Meara *(2006)* explained, "graduate students do not learn to 'see' community engagement as a way of being a scholar" (as cited in *O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006, p. 14*). As graduate students are further socialized into the role of scholar, they do not prioritize, and, in many cases, are discouraged from pursuing community engagement practices *(O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006)*. Although much of the work on civic engagement focuses on undergraduate education, a substantive strand of scholarship examines the impact of civic engagement and service/outreach activities among graduate students *(Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Latimore et al., 2014; Laursen et al., 2012; Matthews et al., 2015; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006)*.

One study found that graduate science and engineering students who served as science outreach educators experienced positive outcomes, including enhanced professional identities *(Laursen*

et al., 2012). Cherwitz and Sullivan *(2002)* discussed how STEM graduates collaborated with humanities scholars to develop "story telling techniques that will enhance the scientific literacy of students" *(p. 24)*. They pointed to a further advantage of civic engagement—which they term "intellectual entrepreneurship" (IE)—namely, that such opportunities allow graduate students in STEM areas to combat self-doubt and chart their own futures in the field:

> In the words of one engineering graduate student, IE allows "students to re-empower themselves, so they can get back control over their own education, their own future." A good example of this re-empowerment is a Ph.D. in mathematics. Although his advisor preferred that he take a postdoctoral position at a prestigious research university, this graduate chose to accept a faculty position at a small liberal arts college where he could pursue his first love—teaching. *(Cherwitz & Sullivan, 2002, p. 26)*

Undergraduate STEM fields have been late in building civic engagement into their disciplines, but they have made increasing investment in and commitment to mentoring and tutoring, as well as enhancing persistence and engagement among students. Further, STEM students and graduates enhance interpersonal and community-based communication via these civic engagement opportunities. Although much of the research examining the benefits of civic engagement, volunteerism, and service-learning has centered on undergraduate students, an emerging focus in the literature has been the impact and effect of civic engagement for graduate students in the STEM fields. Our inquiry seeks to expand this area by examining how engineering students in graduate school conceptualize and understand their civic engagement.

Mentoring, Civic Engagement, and STEM Fields

Given that college students are so invested in mentoring and tutoring, it is important to understand what impact these activities have on STEM, an academic area of need. The paucity of STEM majors, particularly from the populations of underrepresented minorities and women, has been documented and chronicled at length (see *Tsui, 2007*, for a comprehensive review). Experts identify mentoring as one of the most effective methods of increasing interest and sustaining persistence in STEM fields *(Ginorio & Grignon, 2000; Solórzano, 1993; Tsui, 2007)*. Similarly, tutoring has

been recognized as a "long-standing aid in student learning, and is widely used today as an intervention measure to enhance student performance and persistence" *(Tsui, 2007, p. 562)*.

Civic engagement via service-learning is a method of linking academic inquiry with the needs of a community and society *(Goggins, 2012; Zlotkowski, 2007)*. In a study of engineering students in Ireland, Wallen and Pandit *(2009)* found that the student engineers' engagement in community-based activities enhanced the participants' soft skills. This is essential in STEM fields such as engineering, as practitioners must simultaneously demonstrate an ability to keep their skills current while interfacing with and working in a changing societal context *(Greenwood, 2007; Nasr, 2014)*. These benefits not only improve outcomes for STEM students but also enhance the communities in which they serve. Volunteers become emotionally connected to the communities they serve and can sustain community involvement even after their term of volunteering, which is a strong indicator for economic growth *(Gergen, 2012)*.

Motivations for Graduate Students' Civic Engagement

Graduate students, especially those who aspire to be faculty members, are socialized away from pursuing service or community engagement work, which generally goes unrewarded at research universities *(O'Meara, 2008b; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006)*. O'Meara *(2008b)* explored faculty members' motivations for community engagement, an area that offers insight to graduate students who are being socialized to potentially become faculty members. O'Meara *(2008b)* found both intrinsic motivators (e.g., enhancing student learning, acting on personal commitments to specific issues, pursuing rigorous scholarship, desiring collaboration) and extrinsic motivators (e.g., fulfilling institutional and context-specific commitments) for engagement. Intrinsic motivators "that had to do with [faculty members'] own sense of personal and career goals" *(O'Meara, 2008b, p. 23)* were more commonly evidenced than extrinsic motivators. Although academia does not typically reward such engagement, prospective faculty also desire to engage in work that provides meaning and has an impact on society *(Austin, 2002)*. Graduate students have a considerable amount of "pre-existing knowledge, experience, commitment to continued education, and relative maturity" they can contribute to communities *(Levkoe, Brail, & Daniere, 2014, p. 71)*. Some graduate students see civic engagement as a way to make these connections between their scholarly work

and the real world *(Cherwitz & Sievers, 2003)*. Others hope to continue their undergraduate engagement work during their graduate careers, as they derive personal meaning and inspiration from this work *(Golde & Dore, 2001; O'Meara, 2008a)*. Missing from the literature is a nuanced view of their motivation for civic engagement activities and the meaning they derive from this work.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, we analyzed the civic engagement experiences of graduate students in the engineering fields. Theories that address both motivation and meaning-making associated with civic engagement are essential to understanding their experiences. To this end, we utilized social exchange theory *(Emerson, 1981; Homans, 1958)* and Kolb's *(1984)* experiential learning theory to direct our inquiry.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory assumes that individuals are self-interested actors who, in order to accomplish their goals, transact with other self-interested actors to gain access to resources in order to accomplish goals they could not achieve alone *(Emerson, 1981; Lawler & Thye, 1999)*. According to social exchange theory, individuals enact a cost-benefit analysis of forming, maintaining, or terminating relationships based on the perceived ratio of benefits to costs in the relationship *(Emerson, 1981)*. A central component in social exchange theory is the norm of reciprocal exchange. Individuals both give and receive benefits within a relationship. Interactions that include sequential giving may be bound by unspecified terms or obligations; however, each actor has motivation to fulfill the exchange *(Emerson, 1981)*.

Social exchange theory has been applied to investigate undergraduate and faculty STEM research involvement *(Eagen, Sharkness, Hurtado, Mosqueda, & Chang, 2010)*, mentoring in the context of higher education *(Griffin, 2008; Reddick, Griffin, Cherwitz, Cérda-Pražák, & Bunch, 2012)*, and undergraduate students and civic engagement and volunteering *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Sergent & Sedlacek, 1990)*; however, there is a dearth of literature integrating social exchange theory and civic engagement specifically in the context of STEM majors.

Experiential Learning Theory

Kolb's *(1984)* experiential learning theory (ELT) draws from classical theories of human learning and development that were developed from the work of influential scholars like John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. In an effort to integrate previous theoretical work regarding cognitive and socioemotional factors in learning, and to link theory with practice, Kolb *(1984)* created a four-stage cyclical model, the experiential learning model. At one end of the first dimension is the concrete experience, in which the learner is actively engaged in a task or experience, and at the other, the abstract processing of events and synthesizing of experience with knowledge. One end of the second dimension includes reflective, scrutinized observations of knowledge and experience, which is balanced with practical experimentation applying theorized abstract concepts on the other end *(Kolb, 1981)*.

ELT's applicability is interdisciplinary; over 1,000 studies have utilized ELT in fields including management, education, information science, medicine, nursing, accounting, and law *(Kolb & Kolb, 2005)*. Reviews of experiential learning in engineering fields widely cite Kolb's cycle model of experiential learning *(Verner & Ahlgren, 2004)*. As community-based action research gains prominence in STEM fields, additional inquiry into student motivation and outcomes is warranted. Chang, Wang, Chen, and Liao *(2011)* investigated an action-based service-learning collaboration between engineering students and a nongovernmental organization, finding that students were able to create meaning in their course material, enhance self-motivation and empathy, and develop academic goals appropriate for their career goals in relation to civic engagement initiatives. In an effort to capture our participants' respective motivation for civic engagement and their reflections and constructions of their involvement, we connected these theoretical frameworks to guide our inquiry.

Methodology

As researchers, we sought a methodology that afforded the ability to gain rich descriptions of engineering students' perceptions and explore the meanings and interpretations given to specific decisions, events, and motivations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). With these criteria in mind, we selected a phenomenological approach to our research query. As phenomenological researchers, we were concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved *(Welman*

& Krueger, 1999, p. 189). Our task was to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon of the participants' motivation for civic engagement and their reflections on their activities, remaining true to the facts as the participants understood them *(Groenewald, 2004)*. Our model was derived from Seidman's *(2006)* structure, which provided context (making the participants' behaviors meaningful and understandable), allowed participants to reconstruct the details of the phenomenon of civic engagement, and encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning the experience contained for them. This approach allowed us to obtain the "universal essence" *(Creswell, 2013, p. 76)* of participating engineering graduate students in service programs at a predominantly White research university.

We focused on the motivations that led graduate students in engineering fields to become civically engaged. The participants in the study were engineering students in two faculty-led research groups concentrating on sustainability issues in an energy subfield. Data were collected through a series of phenomenological in-depth interviews covering a wide array of topics, including formative experiences with community service, familial influences on volunteerism, and thoughts about how civic engagement would direct future experiences.

This study took place at a selective public institution in the southwestern United States. A public flagship university, it is classified as a doctoral university with highest research activity *(Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d.)*. Twenty respondents completed a survey distributed by researchers after securing Institutional Review Board approval. The survey served to recruit research participants, confirm study eligibility, and gather participant demographic data. Of the survey respondents, a subset of eight students (Table 1) were interested in participating in the study's in-depth phenomenological interview process *(Seidman, 2006; van Manen, 1990)* and were scheduled accordingly. The interviews addressed their life histories (past civic engagement, influence of family) and their volunteer and outreach experiences in depth (perceived value of community service, costs and benefits of committing time and energy to these endeavors). This information is summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Participant Overview

Participant	Degree	Department	Age	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity
Cara	Ph.D.	Civil Engineering	31	Woman	Asian
Matt	Ph.D.	Mechanical Engineering	30	Man	White
Ashley	Ph.D.	Civil Engineering	26	Woman	White
David	Ph.D.	Chemical Engineering	26	Man	Hispanic
Abby	M.S.	Environmental and Water Resources Engineering	24	Woman	White
Molly	Ph.D.	Materials Science and Engineering	24	Man	White
Elizabeth	M.S.	Mechanical Engineering	31	Woman	White
James	Ph.D.	Mechanical Engineering	26	Man	White

Table 2. Participants' Graduate School Engagement Activities

Participant	Current Engagement			
	Mentor for undergraduates	K-12 outreach	Women in Engineering	Other
Cara		x		
Matt	x	x		
Ashley	x			Engineers Without Borders
David		x	x	
Abby		x		
Molly		x		Religious ministries
Elizabeth	x	x		Habitat for Humanity; food banks; youth robotics competitions
James		x		Community energy audits; HS curriculum development

Each 60- to 90-minute interview was audio recorded and transcribed. This approach was selected to explore the phenomenon of engineering student volunteerism and outreach, despite perceptions that service is less valued than research in these fields *(Antonio, Astin, & Cress, 2000)*, and to understand how these students personally make meaning from these experiences. As phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of participants to extract the

essence from a shared phenomenon *(Creswell, 2013)*, this approach aligns with the purpose and scope of this study.

The analysis of this data was informed by the aforementioned theories on social exchange and experiential learning, but also integrated emic coding to understand fully the motivations, costs, benefits, and meaning-making associated with service and outreach. In this stage of analysis, researchers reviewed transcripts from interviews using an open coding process *(Strauss & Corbin, 1990)*, capturing unique aspects of the civic engagement experience from the perspective of engineering students. Sample open codes included *priorities*, *populations served*, and *family*. In subsequent coding stages, the researchers noted common themes and individual differences in the ways students are motivated to volunteer and how they interpret the cost-benefit analysis of social exchange.

Trustworthiness and Triangulation

To minimize threats to validity and trustworthiness, we employed many strategies in the qualitative tradition *(Creswell, 2013; Johnson, Rose, & Schlosser, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006)*. We triangulated findings by using a team approach to this study and employing several data collection methods and sources to address interpretive validation *(Ritchie & Ormston, 2014)*. Specifically, we drew on data from our initial participant survey, one-on-one interviews, and review of documents. Documents included websites and background literature about the civic engagement programs structured for engineering graduate students at the university under study. We also drew on the curriculum vitae of the study participants, allowing us to ensure that we captured their past and present activities. Furthermore, members of the research team wrote analytic and reflective memos about each interview, read transcripts, and coded independently, providing opportunities to challenge findings and assumptions and present alternate interpretations. To bolster credibility, participants in this study were given the opportunity to verify comments in their interview transcripts *(Creswell, 2013)*.

Findings

Participants identified different paths to their current civic engagement interests and efforts, but common themes emerged regarding both their underlying motivation in civic engagement and their meaning-making of these service activities. We focus on four findings regarding these students' civic engagement efforts:

prior engagement, professional cost/benefit of investment, communication skills, and paying it forward.

Prior Engagement

As a group, student participants in this study established themselves as civically engaged volunteers many years prior to graduate school. Participants' prior experiences profoundly shaped the ways that students chose to continue participation in civic engagement opportunities. For some, civic engagement was mandatory (e.g., as a requirement in a private school). For others, civic engagement was modeled by their family members and their experiences throughout childhood, adolescence, and college. Their respective backgrounds influenced their decisions to prioritize engagement opportunities during graduate school. All but one participant discussed growing up in a family environment that included volunteering. Participants described being required to participate in community service as youths. Parents, involvement in a religious institution, and school requirements were the most common sources prescribing community service. Participants shared that they volunteered for other reasons or went above and beyond any requirements.

Cara made the connection between prior work in communities with her current civic engagement as a graduate student very clear. At age 13 and encouraged by her mother, she volunteered at a zoo, in a hospital, and in soup kitchens. "My mom, actually, always encouraged me to volunteer. . . . I think she wanted me to see what life is like outside of my immediate environment." In addition to family encouragement to volunteer, Cara admitted that such activities could also advance one's resume. Prior to starting graduate school, her advisor described mentorship and volunteer opportunities:

> He mentioned that [the program] does a lot of outreach activities, such as speaking at [schools] and getting involved in all these activities. And I thought, "Oh, this is something that I've always done." You know, I'm still kind of doing it.

While in college, Cara became involved in the Society of Women Engineers, initially to seek support from and connections with peers, but eventually to continue her engagement with mentoring and seeking to encourage women to pursue engineering.

Elizabeth described extensive participation in service activities influenced by church, family, and, as an undergraduate, through membership in a sorority and as a peer mentor. She traced this involvement to her family:

> The sense of community in my family is very strong. So the most important things in our lives are relationships and community engagement and volunteering. It's about building relationships in the community and that makes us all stronger, so that's a thing in my family.

Another student, Molly, attended a school that required service, but she also chose to dedicate more hours than needed:

> So I went to a private school where community service was mandatory. In order to get your grades for the year, in order to graduate, you had to accumulate, I think, it was like 80 hours of community service. My parents definitely encouraged me to go a little bit beyond the mandatory 10 hours per year, or whatever it was.

Molly's mother also set an example by volunteering in the community.

In addition to family influences, five of eight participants discussed volunteering through church or religious groups, and three were involved in scouting while growing up. David shared that service was part of his religious identity:

> I think it's an actual part of the moral system that came with also attending church. So, we were Latter-Day Saints, and so it's a tenet of our faith to give back, charitably, to others. And, so, even though my parents didn't necessarily formally say, "You need to perform this many service hours a week," or month or whatever, but I was always encouraged to be mindful and to participate.

Initial involvement in scouts or church groups often gave way to volunteering (with or without other family members) in local social and community causes, including the environment (e.g., beach or river cleanup), homelessness (e.g., soup kitchens), and education (e.g., mentoring children or volunteering at a library). In addition, some participants remained involved in civic engagement activities through student organizations during their high school and under-

graduate years. One student, Ashley, described heavy involvement in service and volunteer activities:

> When I was really little, we used to, like, go do stream cleanups or walk around the neighborhood and pick up trash or . . . volunteer in the library, or I mean anything that you can think of, we probably did something like that. And then when we got a little bit older, we would go like on trips, and help build houses, or help tutor kids in the library, or we worked at like nursing homes, and so many things. So, yes, it's been a part of my life for a long time and I feel really strongly about it, that it's important not just for me, but other people that have the benefit of a lot of things that other people don't.

For Ashley, sources including family, church, scouts, and school groups influenced her orientation to civic engagement and service, an experience echoed by a majority of participants encouraged to serve through multiple influences.

Professional Cost/Benefit of Investment

Although these pre-graduate-school activities influenced their decisions to remain connected to outreach opportunities, the participants differed in their views on whether their continued civic engagement was a professional cost or benefit. The majority of students in the study recognized that their engagement came at a cost, which most often meant the loss of time—a valuable commodity for graduate students. Many of these participants weighed the opportunity cost of dedicating time to civic engagement over academic pursuits. Elizabeth shared her observation that within the academic STEM community, service should not come at the expense of research:

> As long as it doesn't interfere with your research, they love it, they think it's great. It's good for your community, they support it. It looks good for them as well, so it's everybody wins as long as you're not sacrificing your research and your work.

Elizabeth found that some of her professors would justify her service as "winky-winky, 'selflessly'" motivated networking opportunities, even though she believed her motivations were typically altruistic. Such comments led the participants to feel that their

service would be valued only as a supplement to, but never as a replacement for, research and academic work.

The students in the study who viewed their community service as a cost often described an inability or apathy toward keeping up with academic or professional expectations. Molly, who volunteered time to engineering outreach in the local community, described how the strain on her time postponed her expected graduation date:

> I recently quit [engineering outreach] in March because it was just getting to be too much, and I needed to actually finish my thesis. I'm a dual degree student, so my program is three years, but I'm in my fourth year right now. So I'm an extra semester late. Not just because I was doing stuff at the same time. I interned—[I'm in my] fourth internship right now, but essentially you're just learning that I do too much.

When she decided that her obligations were too great, Molly elected to step away from service, rather than accept a fourth internship that provided professional experience.

Elizabeth shared Molly's view that service would prevent her from meeting professional expectations, but she described indifference toward the perceived shortcomings:

> I will never be a "100-hour per week on a paid thing" kind of person because that means that I can't give back to my community, I can't give back to my family, and I can't give back to myself. I'm never going to be that person, that's just not who I am. I'll work 100 hours a week, but it'll be on a multitude of things, only 40–50 hours on my "job."

She felt her community service revitalized her: "I will be more productive, and you will get more positive amazingness out of me, if I have the freedom to go to Honduras and build five homes. I'll be better." Though Elizabeth acknowledged that service would take time away from her career, she would return personally fulfilled and prepared to work.

Though a minority of participants, a substantial subset of students in the study described the time spent on community service as a direct professional benefit. Consistent with the norm of reciprocal exchange *(Emerson, 1981; Lawler & Thye, 1999)*, participants

recognized the potential for professional advancement or formal recognition tied to helping others. David made a direct tie between service and outreach to populations underrepresented in STEM and funding opportunities:

> When they do this, they are doing it in the best of conscience, but I also know that a lot of the funding sources, such as the NSF [National Science Foundation], encourage outreach and then they give, in the subtext, bonus stars if it's girls and minorities. I think there's an incentive from funding sources.

Though not the entire motivation for civic engagement, the advantage in the competition for funding did not go unnoticed.

The majority of participants also stressed the ways in which the benefits from service and outreach differed from the benefits derived from research. For Abby, whose research focused on water and energy matters, giving back to the community provided the immediate gratification of knowing she had a positive effect on people's lives:

> For me personally, my research goals have always been very, very long term. I'll be really, really happy if I see some sort of turnaround in my lifetime as a result of the research that I've done. That would be really fantastic, but I'm looking on the scale of my lifetime, so [community service and outreach] is kind of providing me with a really nice opportunity to feel like I'm having an impact now. There's definitely a little bit of frustration kind of building up where I was. I didn't feel like I was doing anything. At the end of the day, not everyone can do what I'm doing and I am contributing, but it felt too slow, and so it's kind of nice to feel an immediate impact.

Though research and the application of findings is an often long and arduous process, direct work with the community brought Abby instant satisfaction. James, a master's student from a different research group on campus, described such "small victories" as the immediate benefits that he needed to stay motivated along the path to more substantial professional payoffs in the future.

Communication Skills

In addition to the intrinsic value, several participants also indicated that their civic engagement activities led to improved communication skills. Many of the participants noted the ease of their public speaking was attributable to the types of outreach initiatives they were involved in, reporting that they spoke to a variety of audiences, sometimes including large crowds. With regard to public speaking—a skill many participants noted as crucial to bridging the STEM community with the general public—participants' descriptions of their outreach and service aligned with the four stages of ELT: concrete experience, observation and reflection, formation of abstract concepts and generalization, and testing implications of concepts in new situations *(Kolb, 1984)*.

Several participants described how speaking to a diverse audience and lay people enhanced their ability to effectively communicate their research. Cara, an engineering doctoral student, reflected on her ability to communicate broadly:

> How do you communicate to a younger audience? How do you communicate to a slightly older audience? How do you have a one-on-one conversation that's, you know, specifically focused on one person versus presenting to, like, a—room of 300 people? These are all sort of maybe soft skills that research sometimes doesn't bring. . . . Like, sometimes you forget because you're in a field and only talking to people who are experts in the field, and you see, "Everybody knows this, right? It's common knowledge."

It is these kinds of soft skills that cannot be taught in the laboratory or classroom that these students refined with their civic engagement activities.

Participants acknowledged that these opportunities looked good on one's resume and also served as specific examples of skills that, although valued by employers, may not necessarily be acquired through course offerings. Abby noted how these civic engagement events forced her to interact with a variety of people, something that she was previously uncomfortable with and had little confidence doing. As her time in the field progressed, she felt greater comfort interacting with different people, and this has helped her move forward in many facets of her life. Cara suggested that graduate students are well situated to communicate with and generate excitement in younger students, sharing that faculty are

not quite as relatable and graduate students are "better qualified or have more to bring to the table than some of the undergraduate volunteers." As a graduate student, she felt approachable and had the confidence of an emerging expert in her field.

Finally, Molly articulated how these communication skills, in addition to their practical value, served the greater good:

> We are people that don't leave engineering on the page and the journal. That's not what we're necessarily writing for. Like that's important to communicate to the scientific community, but—and it's really easy to just do that—but like outreach lets you go beyond that and make sure that you are still able to communicate to people that aren't just engineers.

In addition to aligning with the four stages of Kolb's *(1984)* model of experiential learning, these instances of improving communication skills reflect tenets of social exchange theory as well. Participants both gave (disseminated knowledge and engaged with diverse communities) and received benefits (improved soft skills like speaking to a lay audience) from their civic engagement efforts.

Paying It Forward

Ultimately, participants recognized that involvement in these various outreach efforts could positively influence others, just as others had done for them, in a "pay it forward" approach. Matt stated, "I felt like I wanted to give back and keep that opportunity available, and even provide more opportunities for the people behind me. And so, I would be involved in trying to make sure that those things kept going." Several participants, both men and women, remarked how this "pay it forward" idea was especially important for women in engineering, as they are still underrepresented in STEM fields. Ashley recalled:

> I mean, for me, the Women in Engineering Program . . . especially, was, like, instrumental in keeping me in engineering because I probably would have quit in the beginning. . . . . probably the first year or two. But, I think that was really important for me to stay there, so I kind of like to give back if I can.

Five out of the eight participants were women, and each woman reflected on the importance of a mentor or outreach ini-

tiative in piquing their interest in STEM and then maintaining it. One participant, Cara, identified the importance for her of paying it forward and building awareness for a future generation of women engineers, as one woman did for her. She noted that in a male-dominated field like engineering, many of her women peers had fathers or other male role models who were engineers, but for her it was a woman college student who spoke to her high school class about majoring in engineering. Cara stated:

> Most girls who don't grow up with parents in one of these fields don't even realize that this is, like, a possibility for them. . . . I think it's important for [girls] to be able to consider that because I actually didn't know what engineering was until someone from—I still remember this. She was an industrial engineering major, and she came and talked to my high school calculus class about engineering. And I thought, "I've never heard of this field," you know, like, "What is this?" And it was fascinating, and I started researching it, and I ended up being in it.

Even the women who thought they could have been supported more in their pursuit of a STEM degree believed it was important to pay it forward to the next generation of women.

Participants described efforts to pay it forward to students whose backgrounds did not reflect their own. David, a Hispanic male Ph.D. student, appreciated the opportunities to educate students at an all-girls school on their opportunities in engineering:

> My dad was the first generation to go to college as well, but when I go to the outreach events I'm aware of that. I make sure that I don't assume that students understand everything because I certainly didn't when I was high school or middle school. I also have younger sisters, and they're going through their bachelor's degrees right now, so I often think of them when I work these events. Especially, when it comes to things like scholarships and stuff like that because there's money out there, I feel.

Though he did not personally relate to the experience of the students at outreach events, he connected their experiences to his father and sisters.

Cara found her work with the nearby schools for the deaf and blind to be particularly rewarding precisely because their experiences did not seem to match her upbringing in a suburban, upper middle-class community:

> I've never done any activities at a school for the deaf or school for the blind prior to joining [my research group], and I think that actually did change the way I think about outreach. Generally, when you do these things, and I hate to say it, a lot of times the parents who are more involved in the school district are the ones that are seeking these activities. Somebody's daughter is in the school here, and they would love to hear from an engineer. I think these are the same wealthy, suburban high school kids that already have parents in these professions. But I think the activities we do through [my research group] are more focused on kids who may not have that background already.

For Cara, outreach was more fulfilling when the students were less likely to have prior exposure to engineering. Her outlook on outreach expanded to include students with backgrounds different from her own.

Other participants noted how, through their programs, their professors, and the initiatives they were involved in, they had the space and opportunity to take their passion for their field of research and share it with others. One participant, Elizabeth, made the observation that academia's mission was to share knowledge generated in the academy. She elaborated:

> In academia you take a really smart person and you put them in an area where they can share, and actually are mandated to share. The whole job is about sharing and building in a community of people. . . . A professor by definition [is] not a researcher who can escape and just be in their lab; an academic is someone who engages in their community and is civic engagement. Even researchers have to engage because when you publish on your research, you have to engage at least with your community and you have to share your knowledge and . . . a requirement of any research project is that you share knowledge and it's giving back.

Whether recruiting the next generation of women engineers or engaging in their community by sharing new knowledge, each of these participants saw how their activities could pay it forward to a variety of people. Or, in Matt's words, "I have a lot of those experiences and I feel like I can help other people have those experiences."

Discussion and Implications

Looking to a generation that is more likely to choose a career that will allow them to make a lasting impact on others *(Esfahani Smith & Aaker, 2013)*, our study examines how their motivations and meaning-making affect civic engagement among engineering graduate students. Our findings reveal that engineering graduate students are not only motivated to serve in different community engagement capacities, but, moreover, find meaning in their service. Some motivation for service likely arose from students' previous engagement in civic and community service activities as youth and undergraduate students. Participants discussed how they balanced community service and their academic and research obligations, and how their membership in a research program facilitated their work in these areas. These graduate students tied their service and outreach to a sense of personal fulfillment that improved their work in the classroom and lab. The professional benefits included advantages on grant applications and a sense of immediate gratification, a feeling not often found on a research team that may not see their work come to fruition for years. Both men and women in the study identified the civic engagement as a much-needed opportunity to encourage girls and young women to consider STEM education and careers. These results echoed O'Meara's *(2008b)* findings that community-engaged faculty more often reported intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivators for their engagement. Participants largely emphasized how engagement fulfilled a sense of personal identity and commitment to serve rather than focusing primarily on how such engagement would be rewarded externally.

Findings from this study reinforce the notion that engineering students' involvement in community-based activities fostered development of soft skills, such as communication skills *(Laursen et al., 2012; Wallen & Pandit, 2009)*. These skills benefit STEM students personally and professionally (e.g., enhanced confidence in public speaking and increased value to employers), including contributing to increased professional socialization *(Laursen et al., 2012)*. In addition, these skills are particularly valuable where there is a need to bridge the gap between engineering researchers and

the general public. Interaction with a variety of audiences creates opportunities for graduate students to serve the greater society by communicating research ideas beyond the scientific community. Furthermore, modeling civic engagement may motivate others to participate in similar activities, which is relevant given the significance of prior engagement in future decisions to participate in outreach and service.

Social exchange theory and Kolb's *(1984)* experiential learning theory served as frameworks for interpreting how the students' motivation and meaning-making in civic engagement shape their academic, personal, and professional trajectories. Our findings suggest it may be beneficial to incorporate civic engagement opportunities in graduate engineering programs heavily focused on research. Personal and professional benefits derived from civic engagement demonstrate that the decision between civic participation and STEM research need not be viewed as a zero-sum game.

STEM fields are typically less diverse in their racial, ethnic, and gender composition, and those who major in STEM report less community service involvement than peers in other fields *(Antonio et al., 2000; National Science Board, 2007)*; our study connects these pieces to inform how we may expand our understanding of engineering majors' involvement in civic engagement, and, proximally, increase STEM education to underserved communities. Given the success of mentoring in engaging future STEM students *(Ginorio & Grignon, 2000; Solórzano, 1993; Tsui, 2007)*, this study demonstrates the important role graduate students play in cultivating STEM interests among underrepresented populations.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study is of importance to researchers in higher education, psychology, and STEM fields, as well as policymakers who are grappling with the challenge of counseling, supporting, and understanding the impact of an increasingly constrained job market on a generation often viewed as "selfish" and "narcissistic" *(Twenge & Campbell, 2009)*. These participants present a contrasting view of engineering students in search of meaning, and ultimately purpose and happiness *(Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013; Levit & Licina, 2011)*. This research contributes to policy and practice, providing direction in our understanding of how graduate students in engineering fields can be drawn to civic engagement practices to address inequality in higher education and society writ large. Structured service opportunities, facilitated by programs such

as departmental research groups, may function to both socialize students into engineering fields and promote greater service commitments. Programs should recruit students with a prior record of service activities as well as those new to service, in addition to emphasizing the personal and professional benefits students accrue from service.

Limitations and Future Research

As a qualitative study, this project is not designed to generalize to all graduate STEM students, but findings may have transferability to other settings and populations beyond the research site. Additionally, the sample featured few engineers of color; future studies should seek ways to capture the experiences of underrepresented populations. Students who participated in this study evidenced significant prior engagement in community service activities, a characteristic that may limit the transferability of findings. Additional research should consider the role of prior service activities in shaping STEM graduate students' service priorities as well as exploring how to engage students without a record of service.

Conclusion

Researchers and policymakers have declared a national imperative for recruiting students into STEM fields. Many graduate students in STEM fields, including engineering, may prioritize academics and research, but this study suggests that these students may also seek to engage in intentional community service and civic engagement activities. Using social exchange theory and experiential learning theory, this study addressed how graduate engineering students from a research university described their service experiences and detailed how these experiences complemented, rather than detracted from, their academic work and future careers. Students carefully weighed the costs and benefits of service and reported that their communication skills improved as a result of service involvement. In addition, students felt called to pay forward the benefits they had received as young adults to future students and their communities. These findings may inform engineering graduate training and efforts to engage students in service and civic engagement activities.

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Engaging with Host Schools to Establish the Reciprocity of an International Teacher Education Partnership

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Abstract

Although international teacher education partnerships necessitate relationships with host education communities, much of the literature addresses only the impact of the overseas teaching experiences on the American university intern. For this project, we investigated the benefits of participation in an international teacher education program for the Italian cooperating teachers and students in the host schools. The findings reveal that the Tuscan students profited by not only enhancing their English communication skills, but also by beginning to develop global awareness and understanding of their learning. Cooperating teachers were challenged in mentoring American interns, but ultimately benefited professionally and wanted to strengthen the partnership. Implications for engaging host teachers and primary students when building international education partnerships are shared.

Keywords: teacher education, partnerships, service learning, study abroad

Introduction

Educators and their students strive to develop the intercultural competence necessary to be global citizens in our 21st-century world *(Longview Foundation, 2008; UNESCO, 2013)*. One strategy for developing such competencies is learning through international collaboration *(Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Zhao, 2010)*. When individuals from differing cultural backgrounds work together to create a learning experience for all involved, a positive international collaboration can occur *(Wong, 2015)*. Plater *(2011)* highlights the importance of lived experience in the community that includes engaged face-to-face conversations and interactions necessary for developing global competence and citizenship. International teacher education partnerships necessitate collaboration and engagement with the schools in the host community *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2011)*. In this article we explore an international teacher education collaboration—a partnership between an American teacher education program and primary schools

in Tuscany, Italy—from the perspective of the host education community.

We entered into this research project after our participation in this international teacher education program in Florence; one of us as a faculty member in residence in Italy, the other as an undergraduate teacher education intern studying and teaching abroad. Recognizing that the international teacher education program was initially developed with the American teacher interns as primary beneficiaries, we wondered if the partnership was achieving its goals regarding international collaboration and global learning. (Throughout this article we use the term *intern* for the preservice teachers/student teachers to distinguish the interns, the cooperating teachers, and the primary students.) Such collaboration and learning necessitates a reciprocal relationship with members of the host community *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Crabtree, 2013)*. To this end, our research adds the important voices of the children and teachers of the international host community to help us build our understanding of practices necessary for developing mutually beneficial international teacher education partnerships.

Literature Review

To provide background for our research, we consider literature associated with teacher education partnerships in both local and international communities.

Teacher Education Partnerships

Central to teacher education are the clinical field experiences where interns have the opportunity to apply their learning to classroom contexts *(NCATE, 2010)*. Such school–university teacher education partnerships rely on the valuable contributions of the cooperating teachers (CTs) to the professional development of interns *(Walkington, 2007; Ziechner, 2010)*. In opening their classrooms to interns, CTs take on multiple roles, including mentor, socializer to the school community and profession, supporter, and evaluator *(Cuenca, 2011; Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008)*. Although CTs gain an additional resource in the classroom *(Sinclair, Dowson, & Thistleton-Martin, 2006)*, they also enter into a relationship with interns that has multiple and sometimes competing dimensions, often with little training *(Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015)*. Despite feeling challenged by the task, CTs report that the opportunity to host interns has led them to reflect on and modify their own teaching practices *(Kroeger, Pech, & Cope, 2009)*. Mentoring

of interns can also conflict with the CTs' primary role of teaching children *(Hoffman et al., 2015)*. Successful school–university partnerships require a shared commitment between the university and the CTs that values a mutual exchange of knowledge and resources for all stakeholders *(Burns, Jacobs, Baker, & Donahue, 2016; Walkington, 2007)*.

A review of the research on the impact of hosting interns on K-12 students found little data on student outcomes in regard to classroom achievement or students' perspectives of having interns in their classes (e.g. *Nath, Guadarrama, & Ramsey, 2011; Zeichner, 2010*). Studies that have reported student outcomes highlighted the increased opportunities for small group instruction as important to increasing student achievement *(Blanks et al., 2013; Fisher, Frey, & Farnan, 2004; Mewborn, 2000; Sherretz & Kyle, 2011)*. For example, interns in the Blanks et al. *(2013)* study provided Tier 2 interventions as part of a before-school tutoring project, contributing to an increase in literacy achievement in a Title I school. Similarly, Mewborn *(2000)* found that interns positively impacted the math achievement of their students when providing small group instruction. We identified only one study *(Cowart & Rademacher, 2003)* in which students' perspectives on having an intern in their classroom were incorporated. Cowart and Rademacher found that students perceived change when their schools participated in a professional development school partnership; the students identified the advantages of having an intern who helped them learn in new ways, but also acknowledged that the interns did not manage the class as well. The students' perceptions led the partnership to make adjustments to improve teacher effectiveness. Thus despite partnership commitments to all members, few studies have included student voices or assessed the benefits to students, perhaps because of the challenge of isolating the impact of hosting an intern on elementary students or identifying meaningful measures of student outcomes.

International Teaching Experiences

High-quality study abroad programs designed to develop participants' global competence include frequent opportunities for interaction with the international host community *(Engle & Engle, 2003; Lewin, 2009)*. This is particularly true when we consider teacher education abroad *(Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Phillion & Malewski, 2011)*. Consistent with the literature on local teacher partnerships, research on overseas field experiences focuses on the impact on interns' development (e.g. *Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Marx & Moss, 2011; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011*). Benefits frequently identi-

fied for the American interns include greater awareness of cultural identity and differences, empathy for language learners and their instructional needs, and flexibility and confidence in their role as teachers. Wilson's *(2015)* analysis of implementing and sustaining effective international teacher programs acknowledges the importance of communicating program goals with international colleagues and working with talented and supportive classroom teachers.

International teaching experiences necessitate interaction and collaboration with host teachers and students; however, what is known about hosts' perspectives and outcomes regarding these international teaching partnerships is sparse. Two studies incorporate the CTs' perspective; however, the research focus was the interns. In Stachowski and Chleb's *(1998)* study, CTs reported that the American interns were enthusiastic and globally aware; however, they also recommended that the program develop preexperience preparation addressing the host community's culture and educational practices. In another study of international student teaching, CTs indicated that, in addition to providing professional support, they helped their international interns adjust to new environments, and their interns reported that they frequently looked to the CTs for social and emotional support *(Firmin, MacKay, & Firmin, 2008)*. Kanyaprasith, Finley, and Phonphok's *(2015)* research on a United States–Thai education partnership reported benefits for multiple stakeholders: Thai teachers and students, as well as American and Thai interns. The Thai teachers indicated they had a chance to practice English, and their Thai students had positive attitudes toward the program as they experienced a variety of science-learning models. All participants reported the partnership was valuable for learning different pedagogical approaches from each other; however, teachers and graduate students were unsure of their roles in the program and expressed a need to plan and develop the program together.

In sum, we can infer from these few studies that CTs have taken an active role and have likely experienced opportunities for intercultural learning with their American interns. However, the students in the host classrooms have not been included in research on teacher education partnerships *(Kinginger, 2010)*. As Stephenson *(2006)* argued, abroad students and international program staff must act "as committed global citizens to ensure that we are carrying out our work in a way that is responsible to all parties involved" *(p. 67)*. In the case of international teacher education programs, parties

involved include not only the American teacher interns but also the CTs and the primary students in the host schools.

Theoretical Framework of the Current Study

Although teacher education partnerships assume relationships with host communities, the literature revealed a primary focus on the intern; we need to expand our understanding to include outcomes for the CTs and primary students. Thus, to examine the impact of our international education partnership on the host community partners, we drew on global service-learning research *(Crabtree, 2013; Sherraden, Bopp, & Lough, 2013)* to consider the reciprocity of the international teacher education program for the host community teachers and students. Although the teacher education program was not developed as a service-learning program nor intended to provide that particular value of philanthropic service *(Furco, 1996)*, we considered this framework appropriate based on what we perceive as compatible desirable outcomes for host communities. Specifically, Sherraden, Bopp, and Lough's *(2013)* framework for inquiry into serving abroad was used to guide our understanding of host benefits. Their framework identifies three categories of outcomes for the host communities: tangible resources, capacity building, and intercultural understanding. *Tangible resources* reflects monetary contributions and human capital that fill gaps in staffing, *capacity building* addresses organizational support and building of professional skills, and *intercultural understanding* develops from building relationships and learning from others from around the world. Thus, we believe that positive impact of a teacher education partnership on the educational community should encompass providing tangible benefits to meet hosts' needs, building the students' and teachers' capacities for teaching and learning, and enhancing participants' intercultural understanding.

Methodology

A qualitative case study design was used to describe the impact of an American teacher education abroad program for the Italian host school *(Stake, 2000)*. We used this methodology because we sought to understand "how the phenomenon matter[ed] from the perspective of the participants" in their local context *(Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 81)*. In addition, case study design allowed us to document with substantial detail the context, programmatic factors, and impacts using multiple data sources *(Kiely & Hartman, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013)*. Notes from the 2013 and 2014

program from cooperating teacher professional development and yearly program reports provided preliminary data about the international teacher program and its impact on partnership schools. However, primary data for the case study was collected in 2015 when the first author returned to Italy as a visiting scholar at the University of Florence. (The University of Florence is not directly involved with the American teacher education abroad program, and in 2015 the first author was only associated with the program as a researcher.) The six schools participating in the partnership at that time constituted the case study researched.

The International Teacher Education Program

For the past 5 years an American liberal arts college has offered its 3rd-year elementary/special education majors a study abroad option that includes living and teaching English in Florence, Italy for one semester. This overseas teaching program partnered with schools in Tuscany to provide the interns the opportunity to interact with Italian teachers and students, learn about Italian education practices, and develop their teaching skills. This international teaching experience was supported by two education courses: a language and literacy course taught by an American faculty member in residence, and a culture and education course taught by an Italian educator. American interns also took a beginning Italian language course and two electives.

For the Tuscan primary schools, the overseas program supplemented the teaching of English in their primary classrooms, as the interns taught English and shared knowledge about their culture and country with the primary students *(Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency, 2012)*. The interns were in the primary classrooms 4 hours each week and were the lead teacher for English 1 hour each week. The English as a foreign language lessons that they developed were aligned with the Italian–English competencies and language proficiencies of the students. Topics covered in fall 2015 included (but were not limited to) present progressive tense, commands, prepositions, traditions of Thanksgiving and Christmas, U.S. landmarks, and the vocabulary for city safety, daily routines, and professions.

The Italian primary teachers took on the role of CTs and provided mentorship for the interns. The mentoring responsibilities of CTs outlined in program documents included

- acclimating interns to the school environment,
- supporting the interns' lesson planning,

- maintaining communication with all involved in the program,
- assessing interns' teaching and providing feedback, and
- allowing students to observe other classes in the school.

Since a compulsory training period had recently been incorporated into teacher education as part of the 2010 Gelmini reform, none of the CTs themselves had student taught nor hosted an intern before their involvement with the abroad program.

The Italian study abroad program staff and education faculty worked with the CTs to support their involvement with the American teacher education program. This included an initial orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year with CTs, school principals, and English language coordinators; two observation visits by program faculty; and a final professional development session with all CTs involved in the program. Although it is the program's goal to retain effective CTs, the program has had to recruit new teachers and schools each year as it expanded the number of interns and as previous CTs were reassigned to earlier primary grades.

Research Participants

Schools ($N = 6$) involved in the partnership during fall 2015 were invited to participate in the research study. All 10 CTs who hosted the American interns volunteered for different aspects of the research study consistent with ethical procedures approved by the IRB. The CTs had been recommended by their principals and/or English language coordinators and met the following criteria: (1) were able to communicate in English, (2) had a minimum of 3 years' experience teaching English as a foreign language, (3) were currently teaching third through sixth grade students, (4) could complete weekly assessments and participate in regular planning sessions, and (5) were able to participate in orientation and professional development offered by the program. Table 1 provides background information regarding the CTs and their participation in observations, interviews, focus groups, and student questionnaires.

Table 1. Cooperating Teachers and the Data Available by Classroom

School	Grade[a]	Teacher[b]	Years			Data Available			
			Program	Taught	Taught English	Interview CT	Teaching Observations Intern	Teaching Observations CT	Questionnaires Student
School 1	5th/A	Anna	1st year	18	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	
School 1	5th/B	Lilianna	1st year	20	5	Yes			Yes
School 2	5th/A	Mia	2nd year	17	13	Yes			
School 2	5th/B	Mia							
School 3	4th/A	Natalia	1st year	36	23	Yes	Yes		Yes
School 3	5th/B	Natalia					Yes		Yes
School 3	4th/B	Natalia					Yes	Yes	Yes
School 3	4th/C	Natalia					Yes	Yes	Yes
School 3	5th/A	Lara	2nd year	15	5	Yes	Yes		
School 3	5th/B	Lara					Yes		
School 3	5th/C	Isa	2nd year	20	15	Yes	Yes		Yes
School 4	6th/A	Donna	1st year	5	5	Yes	Yes		
School 4	6th/B	Marco	2nd year	14	13	Yes	Yes		
School 5	5th/A	Giada	1st year	19	8	Yes	Yes		Yes
School 5	3rd/A	Maria	1st year	15	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

[a] *Each intern was assigned to a 3rd–6th grade English as a foreign language class. Some CTs taught more than one English class, and thus hosted more than one intern.*

[b] *Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of the CTs.*

Third through sixth grade students ($N = 158$) from eight classrooms participated in the research component of the program. The primary students began their compulsory study of English at age 6, with 1 or 2 hours of instruction a week. In the third through sixth grades this increased to 3 to 4 hours a week *(Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency, 2012)*.

Data Sources

Cooperating teacher interviews. CTs were invited to meet with the first author to discuss the teacher education abroad program. Prior to the interviews the teachers were provided with a list of questions in both English and Italian. *(See Appendix A).* Three teachers agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews varying from 45 to 60 minutes. Throughout these open-ended interviews the Tuscan teachers discussed in English their experiences with the program; the questions provided were only a starting point for the interviews. Interviews were transcribed by the second author and reviewed by the first author. Five additional teachers chose to answer the interview questions in writing—two in Italian, three in English. Both oral and written responses were included as CT data sources. A bilingual study abroad staff member who was not affiliated with the education program translated the Italian responses. The bilingual abroad program director reviewed the translations for accuracy. Researchers analyzed the translated interviews, as both researchers have only basic Italian language proficiency.

Classroom observations. The first author completed unstructured observations of the American interns teaching English as a foreign language. Event sampling was used to document CT–intern interactions, elementary student–intern interactions, and CT–elementary student interactions. The first author also observed three of the CTs when they were teaching English as a foreign language.

Tuscan primary student questionnaires. The primary students responded to a questionnaire written in Italian at the end of the fall semester after the interns finished teaching. The CTs and school principals distributed the student questionnaire in class in a manner consistent with approved ethical practices. *(See Appendix B.)* The students wrote in Italian and their answers were translated in a manner similar to the CT interviews.

Data Analysis

To analyze the meaning of the partnership experiences for the host teachers and students, an inductive process of analysis was

undertaken. In the first phase, each researcher identified thought units in the interviews, student questionnaires, and observation event reports *(Hycner, 1985)*. Identified units from all data sources were then sorted into two broad categories: impact on students and impact on CTs. Next, the units in each of these categories were open coded. A total of 24 codes were identified for impact on students, and 15 codes were identified for impact on CTs. To ensure interrater reliability, both researchers separately reviewed the data, identified thought units, and coded. Researchers met regularly to review code definitions and compare coding. The researchers' interrater agreement for the coding averaged 91 percent; differences were resolved by discussion. In the second phase, the two researchers used an iterative process of pattern coding and constant comparison *(Miles & Huberman, 1994)* to capture emergent themes. Six primary themes emerged from this analysis. In compiling the data to build a coherent story we sought to identify the significant patterns, establish interrelationships between the various data sources, surface minority voices, and resist interpretation from only our personal lens. (See Table 2 for codes and themes.)

Table 2. Data Analysis Codes by Category

	Codes	Themes
Student	Pronunciation	Enhanced English communication
	Interns' proficiency in Italian	
	Interns' English proficiency	
	Student language proficiency	
	Intern–student communication patterns	
	Learning English grammar	
	Learning vocabulary words	
	Global understanding	Developed a global awareness
	Language use in world	
	Relationships with people from other countries	
	Awareness of world	
	Global similarities	
	Geography	
	Culture and tradition	
	Intern's American home	
	General content knowledge	Reflected on how they learned
	Italian curriculum influences	
	Student reaction to pedagogy	
	Visuals	
	Repetition	
	Active participation	
	Group work	
	Technology/music	
	Teacher's use of language in lessons	

Note. Continued on next page

Cooperating Teacher	Intern teach for them English language coteaching Student learning Intern share materials Observe and support students	Participated differently during intern's EFL lessons
	Mentoring intern Communication Other pedagogical approaches Evaluation of intern	Learned from mentoring
	Value of project for school Access to native English speakers Teachers' professional development Collaboration Planning	Committed to improving partnership

We recognize that our personal participation in the abroad program framed our analysis and understanding of the host community data. As we undertook the inductive process of analyzing and interpreting data, we did several things to ensure the integrity of the project. All data analyzed had names of CTs, interns, and students redacted; the full data set was considered as a cohort. An audit trail of the data sources and detailed analysis memos was maintained to ensure triangulation of the data from all sources and that all findings could be confirmed to original sources *(Kiely & Hartman, 2011)*. Preliminary findings were shared with the overseas program director, Italian education faculty member, and a CT to address authenticity; their feedback was incorporated into our analysis. In addition, the first author continued to gather contextual information about Italian teacher education and teaching English as a foreign language practices in Tuscany from the University of Florence education faculty. During data analysis, we frequently discussed our personal experiences with the program and reflected on our participant observations about the local context in order to monitor our subjectivity progressively and negotiate the meaning *(Savin-Baden & Major, 2013)*. With this analysis we began to accumulate knowledge about the host schools' experience of having American interns.

Results

Results of the qualitative analysis of the teachers' interviews, students' responses, and classroom observations reflected the impact that the teacher education abroad program had on the Tuscan students and the CTs. Dominant themes and exemplars regarding primary student impact will be presented first, followed by the impact on the CTs.

Impact on Primary Students

The primary goal for the American interns and the Italian CTs was to further the Italian children's English language learning. The data suggest that participating in the international teacher education program led to improvement in the Italian students' English language communication. In addition, some of the students developed a global awareness and personally reflected on how they learned during classroom experiences with the intern.

Enhanced their English communication.

> In my experience we give children a lot of words: animals, clothes, numbers but only later do we teach conversation functions . . . with the American interns they learn the language, the communication and not just sentence structure. . . . They had to learn from the context, the global context. *(A CT from 2013 Focus Group 1)*

The Tuscan students improved their English language skills as they interacted in class with their interns. Students and CTs commonly noted the interns' speaking status as "mother tongue speakers" of American English. As one student explained, "She helped me a lot with the pronunciation, since her pronunciation was very American." Similarly, CTs highlighted the importance of students' hearing the language spoken by native speakers, thus allowing their pupils to develop an ear for different forms of English. CT Mia said, "Over time interns adjusted style, and Italian children and teachers began to develop an ear for the language." Additionally, the students frequently identified specific grammar constructions they learned from the intern, such as *there is*, *there are*, *progressive tense*, and *prepositions*; the students were observed "readily follow[ing] along, chorally repeating verb phrases, and referring to posters the interns had made to contrast the grammatical construction." One Italian student described the language skills gained as follows: "In reality I haven't learned many words from our American teacher, but how to make sentences (which to me is more important)." And

another wrote, "My American teacher helped me communicating because she taught me how to answer or ask questions."

American interns engaged the students' curiosity for learning a new language to communicate. As one CT in the 2014 focus group stated, "[the students] don't ask for the single meaning or translation of words like they do normally. They have to try harder to comprehend with a native speaker." And CT Anna told us "that in their attempts to get in touch with her, they came out using a vocabulary which I didn't expect they could have mastered. . . . They really surprised me." Observations documented students regularly trying to ask their intern questions in order to understand the English instructions, rather than relying on their CT whenever they were confused. For example, in one observation it was noted that the students understood the concept of size, which the intern was demonstrating, but they quickly turned to each other to figure out the English. Soon smiles burst out on their faces and they turned to the intern and said, "Short?" "Long?" The intern smiled back and said, "Yes." They were motivated to comprehend what their teacher was saying and interact with her. As the program director stated in her 2014 yearly report, "The greatest gift of this program to the Italian school children is the transformation of English from a subject to be studied to a living language."

Developed a global awareness. By communicating and establishing a relationship with their American interns, various students took a step toward global awareness. CT Natalie captured this simply when she said, "Relationships are so important before understanding, before speaking." In addition, a student indicated, "I've learned that we're all the same. We only speak different languages."

Frequently the interns taught lessons about American geography and traditions using a cross-cultural framework. On occasion, interns and students were observed sharing stories and photos of their homes, families, local landmarks, food, and holiday traditions. A group of students compared their own traditions to those of their interns as shown through the following responses: "as an Italian girl I have different traditions"; "to me cultural exchanges are fun also to understand traditions of that person"; and "in Italy we celebrate different holydays and traditions than the United States." A comparison stance was evident in the following students' descriptions about American geography: "I learned that there are different landscapes in America" and "I learned that in her world it is beautiful too." The weekly intercultural exchanges with their intern led a few students to recognize differences and consider their

actions in regard to these differences; for example, one student remarked, "The world is made of different cultures which must be respected," and another said, "No, I do not feel at home in every place I go, since I was not born there and I didn't have my things and my friends."

Global awareness was also evident as the students considered language use in different countries. Several students expressed the realization that "we can communicate even if we're from different countries." Frequently, the students commented that they learned the difference between "English language and American language" and acknowledged "that there are different Englishes spoken all over the world." The CTs spoke of the students' increased awareness of the American English dialect. As CT Mia said, "It's important for children's lives to show them there are differences. They have nourishment in their lives. They can recognize the American way to say the hour and the British way. Understand differences is important." In sum, by building relationships with their intern and learning about their language, home, and traditions, the Italian students began to recognize intercultural differences and consider the perspectives of others—important components of global competence *(UNESCO, 2013)*.

Reflected on how they learned. Students reacted to the different instructional approaches used by the interns in the classroom and frequently connected the pedagogy to their learning. Students reflected on the interns' use of participatory games, small group work, and the use of charts, pictures, and realia to illustrate concepts.

Regarding participatory games, one student exclaimed, "I learned very well when she taught me interrogative pronouns with the scavenger hunt." Another remembered an interactive ball game "when she let us play with the ball that we had to pass each other asking questions: Is there? Are there?" These simple statements showed what they learned, how they learned it, and its effectiveness for them. The observational data and CT interviews confirmed the motivation that was evident in their students when they played language games. Similarly, another student discussed the impact of active participation and small group work. "I've learned really well her lessons when she used to call us at the blackboard and when she let us explain our work after being divided into groups." The interns were frequently observed guiding the students in role-play dialogues with a partner. And CT Mia noted, "I think their ideas promoted working in pairs. . . . Children love working in pairs, working in groups."

When describing what the interns did to help them understand, students frequently used the words "explain," "example," and "show me" in reference to how posters, photos, and gestures helped them better understand the lesson that was being taught. This aspect of pedagogy was one that seemed new to a lot of the students as they stated, "She explained very well with her posters that I know others would have never done." Generally, the Italian teachers used curriculum workbooks, and thus the visuals that the interns used were both novel and more realistic.

Experiencing different pedagogies with their intern led most students to reflect on differences and their impact on their learning. The primary students recognized how they were personally benefiting from the different teaching approaches their intern used to teach English.

Impact on Cooperating Teachers

CTs were challenged by their role as mentors for the American interns, but they ultimately benefited professionally and wanted to strengthen the partnership. Dominant themes emerged from data analysis to provide evidence of the impact on the CTs in three areas: participation during EFL lessons, mentoring, and the global education partnership itself.

Participated during interns' EFL lessons. In the words of one former CT, "I feel a dual responsibility for students and for interns. I am mediating two levels of priority in my classroom." Observations revealed that the CTs participated in the interns' EFL lessons to ensure their own and their students' understanding of the interns' English. For example, teachers translated the interns' English instructions to Italian for their students, and confirmed the expectations for activities with the intern. For some CTs, this reflected the way they were observed teaching English as a foreign language: providing instructions in Italian for an English-language task. Other CTs translated only when the students and interns were having noticeable difficulty communicating. As Mia explained, "Classroom language is very important for children to know what to do [and] when they have to do it. Children can't participate if they don't understand what to do." She went on to say that the interns needed to learn to "speak slowly, and check for understanding." CTs were also observed checking their own understanding of English and practicing pronunciation. For example, CT Lara discussed differences between "night" and "evening" with her intern in a lesson comparing daily routines in America and Italy.

CT Anna and her intern were seen conferring about and modeling the use of the third person -s in English. And CTs Natalia and Giada frequently repeated English phrases after their intern to refine their pronunciation.

Interns teaching in the classroom also provided the CTs more time to closely respond to their students' learning. For example, CT Anna remarked about the opportunity to observe, "Observations were a stimulus to contribute to the classroom with new suggestions to help students learn." And CT Natalia explained:

> At the beginning the mentoring teacher's task during teaching was to serve as a sort of filter to support and check if the communication was passing. . . . As the experience progressed, this role lessened to the point that I simply walked around the classroom, observed and supported students with problems and disabilities.

Observation data confirmed that the CTs often worked one-on-one with students with special needs as the interns taught. Although most CTs participated in the interns' lessons to support learning, CT Donna interpreted her role differently; she was observed sitting in the back of the classroom grading papers throughout the intern's teaching. When her intern asked for help she said, "I could do it in Italian . . . but it is better for you to make an example." Donna was not asked to participate as a CT the following year.

Learned from mentoring. Although the teacher education program shared expectations with the CTs about their work with the interns, mentoring a student teacher was a new experience for all of the CTs. As CT Giada said, "It was hard to prepare for this experience." The CTs were exposed to different teaching methods used in their classrooms by the interns and learned about teacher education mentoring in the United States; however, not all of the CTs were comfortable with the culturally different practices and were challenged with how to respond to the differences.

The CTs noted frequently that they learned new approaches or were reminded of teaching approaches used by interns. For example, CT Maria commented that her intern "reinforces the value of working in pairs, sometimes we forget about it." And CT Isa said,

> They teach and organize a lesson about what I'm teaching for English language with my children, so they teach for me. They have my room. It's very important.

> I have new ideas for my work that I can use in another subject that I teach.

Lilianna reflected on new classroom engagement strategies she learned, such as attention signals like "1, 2, 3, eyes on me" and "thumbs up/thumbs down" to check for understanding. Materials that previous years' interns developed were hanging on classroom walls, and CTs referenced incorporating these charts and pictures when teaching other classes.

However, differences in approaches to teaching English also proved to be a point of tension between some of the CTs and their interns. In their education methods class, the interns were encouraged to focus on developing communicative competence and "specific English language content through meaningful activities that involved active engagement" *(Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2016, Literacy Course Syllabus)*. Such approaches were different from the pedagogies the CTs themselves were observed using and modeling, where the emphasis was on grammar and the use of recitation and workbook practice *(Enever & Moon, 2009; Ur, 2011)*. (The European Commission has recently recommended content and language integrated learning, which is based on principles similar to those underlying U.S. English language learner practices; *Scott & Beadle, 2014.*) Several CTs commented that interns needed to adjust their instruction to be more aligned with the students' English level. For example, CT Marco was observed saying, "The students only know the present tense, my intern needs to adjust and only use the present tense." Additionally, several CTs were observed stepping in and modeling pedagogies that focused on grammar: CT Natalia modeled choral recitation of verb conjugations, and CT Lara demonstrated the use of translation as a strategy to contrast the grammatical forms of Italian and English. These CTs' responses suggested they wanted the interns to teach in the same way that they taught EFL.

Conversely, some CTs appreciated that their students were participating in interactive activities, linking them to more global learning, and responded by problem solving with their intern and students when they didn't understand each other. CT Maria was observed eagerly asking her intern to share her materials that addressed respecting the global environment. CT Isa explained, "Global understanding is more important than understanding a particular form in the language."

CTs also struggled with program expectations regarding the evaluation of the interns' teaching, indicating they were not consistent with Italian cultural values.

> I feel miserable really about the evaluation because I always say "good" because they really are good, in my opinion. So to now know this kind of cultural difference for evaluation at US Schools. It helps not to be misunderstood. *(A 2014 CT's comment at the end of a professional development session)*

The teacher education program required CTs to (1) orally debrief with the intern at the end of each lesson and (2) complete a written evaluation form using a rating scale and comments. This form was available in English and Italian; teachers could use either language, with the program translating as necessary for the interns. In the professional development session offered each semester, program staff explained how interns benefited from weekly written evaluation and formative feedback on their lessons to improve teaching. In interviews and focus group discussions, CTs indicated "they didn't know the interns well enough to evaluate," "[Italians] view assessment holistically and don't traditionally break teaching down by standards," and they "were also concerned that rating the students would change their relationship with them if they were negative." Despite these different perspectives on assessments, CTs were observed to regularly share formative comments during and after lessons with interns and program faculty, but completed the evaluation form with excellent ratings and vague positive comments. CT Anna summarized by saying, "The tutors' [mentor's] role is very delicate. We must take up responsibility to correct the interns with the purpose of best helping them. In Italian culture this is always inconvenient."

Committed to improving the partnership. Generally, the CTs developed a greater commitment to the partnership and wanted to strengthen their schools' involvement. The initial need identified in the host schools was improving access to English instruction; as the abroad program director explained in her 2014 yearly report:

> The teachers really wanted native English speakers to come and work with the children. . . . both for the language model, but also to provide the Florence students with as much opportunity in English as they only get three hours of instruction a week in upper primary.

CTs acknowledged that most Italian pupils learn British English, but are taught by an Italian teacher who speaks English with an Italian accent. Additionally, two of the CTs interviewed wanted to encourage other teachers to get involved despite the teachers' negative self-assessment of their English skills. They believed communicating in English with their intern improved their language skills and was an important professional development for their job as teachers. "I have to talk to the interns about their lesson and that is important for me" (CT Anna).

After being involved with the program, the teachers described it as "a gift to our school" (CT Anna), "global collaboration" (CT Natalia), "we say [to parents] these interns don't come here to speak in general, but they do a perfect lesson . . . happy to see this serious work" (CT Maria). To strengthen the partnership and increase involvement of teachers, the CTs recommended recognizing it as "more important than understanding language" (CT Lilianna) and "a global education program" (CT Isa). CT Maria described the partnership as "valuable to us globalizing curriculum." School 3 participated in 2014 and again in 2015; the administration formally established it as a school improvement project for 2015. CT Isa described the project in this way: "We do this project for all the fourth and all fifth class. I think it's a good idea because it's not a general project, but it wants to improve and competencies, expertise with a special kind of classes and with teachers." CTs from School 5 indicated they were going to talk to their administration about making it a school project—to formalize the partnership and give teachers time in their schedule to coplan with interns and have additional opportunities for professional development. It was also noted in the study abroad director's 2015 yearly report that CTs were now asking for "more collegial English language practice and conversation to be included in the program." Finally, several teachers indicated that they wanted to participate in more partnership planning meetings with program staff, recognizing reciprocal benefits for the interns, their students, and themselves.

> I think the most useful would be detailed planning in order to be able to compare not just the content, but also the strategies in a clear and accurate manner. This is really important to me. *(CT Anna)*

Discussion

This study regarding the impact of an international teacher education partnership on the host community points to the potential of such programs to build the intercultural competence of all involved. The findings suggest the benefits outweigh the challenges for CTs and their students who participated in the intercultural collaboration partnership experience. The discussion of the findings is presented using Sherraden, Bopp & Lough *(2013)* framework that addresses the tangible benefits, the capacity building, and intercultural understanding of the host community (see Table 3). This will be followed by an acknowledgment of the limitations of the research and implications for community engagement when building international teacher education partnerships.

Table 3. Impacts on the Host Community

Tangential Benefits	Challenges
Intern led English class one day a week.	Facilitating communication between the students and the intern
Teachers and students accessed a native speaker to build intercultural communication skills.	
Intern's teaching provided teacher time to observe and support students.	
Capacity Building	**Challenges**
CTs increased capacity as EFL teachers.	Understanding expectations in mentoring
Students developed intercultural communication skills and an awareness of how they learn.	Adjusting to novel practices the interns used
Intercultural Understanding	**Challenges**
CTs and students built relationships with American interns.	Increasing the number of teachers involved
CTs committed to partnership and expressed a desire to work with university partners to build common understanding.	Establishing a schoolwide commitment
	Shifting the focus of the program from English to global understanding

Tangible Benefits, Capacity Building, and Intercultural Understanding

Tangible benefits. Tangible benefits of the partnership for the host schools were seen in the classroom where the American interns taught English as a foreign language. Consistent with previous research regarding local university–school partnerships, the

interns were identified as a valuable resource *(Sinclair, Dowson, & Thistleton-Martin, 2006)*. The interns' EFL classes provided meaningful opportunities for all participants to build intercultural communication skills and knowledge of American culture and geography. As native speakers, the interns modeled American English and encouraged students to engage in dialogue with them and with each other in English. This increased both primary students' and CTs' exposure to English and their motivation to use English *(Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency, 2012*). Through their participation, the students and CTs made personal connections with someone from overseas and shared knowledge about each other's culture and traditions, an important step in building global competence *(Plater, 2011)*. Finally, the teachers had more time to observe and support individual student learning when the interns were teaching. In sum, the global education partnership provided CTs and students access to an American intern who could help them develop their English skills and learn about American culture, as well as giving CTs time to respond to individual students' needs.

Capacity building. Although the partnership was established to build the interns' capacity to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in a globally aware manner *(Hauerwas, Skawinski, Ryan, 2017)* the findings suggest that the program's benefits for capacity building were reciprocal. Despite the greater emphasis on foreign language education in the primary schools, Italian primary teachers generally have minimal specialized training in language teaching. Nonetheless, with the 2010 Gelmini reform, each primary school teacher is the sole teacher of all subjects *(Giannikas, 2014)*. CTs recognized the partnership as an opportunity to expand their knowledge of English professionally. However, they also acknowledged that balancing the role of mentor and teacher in the classroom was challenging *(Hoffman et al., 2015; Kanyaprasith, Finley, & Phonphok, 2015)*; they prioritized their actions based on their primary students' learning, and at times took over the interns' lessons to ensure communication and familiarity with praxis.

Additionally, the CTs were exposed to different education practices used to teach EFL and assess interns' development as teachers; this necessitated collaboration with interns and faculty with differing cultural backgrounds to create a positive learning experience for all involved *(Wong, 2015)*. In mentoring, the CTs needed to consider the perspective of others as they reflected on their own training and teaching *(Kroeger, Pech, & Cope 2009)*. Some CTs had difficulty adapting to another perspective; they retreated to their

experiences, asking interns to use their EFL workbook and grammatical approaches, and expressed reluctance about critiquing their intern's teaching *(Ur, 2011)*. Others responded to the intercultural learning with insights to adapt their own teaching and approaches to mentoring, as well as strategies to strengthen the program. These responses reflected a continuum of reactions to intercultural differences evident in previous research on the intercultural development of teachers *(Cushner & Mahon, 2009)*.

By participating in the partnership, the primary students developed their capacity to be reflective learners who were excited to continue learning a new language and explore the world. They collectively struggled through points of miscommunication to learn about each other *(Wong, 2015)*. The desire to communicate with their American interns gave the students purpose for learning English. The students recognized that learning English would allow them to travel and meet others from around the world *(Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency, 2012)*. This reflective awareness transferred to their learning more generally. Students identified different educational practices the interns used in their EFL class and appreciated how the interactive approaches and use of visuals positively impacted their learning *(Cowart & Rademacher, 2003)*.

Intercultural understanding. Finally, the findings suggest the global teacher education partnership impacted members of the host schools' intercultural understanding. Intercultural understanding is built on relationships with others from around the world *(Sherraden, Bopp, & Lough, 2013)*. By participating in the partnership, both Italian elementary students and CTs built relationships with the American interns, allowing each to learn from one another *(Plater, 2011)*. The most frequent student comment was a request for their interns to come back and spend more time teaching them. A few students even understood the program's goal from the intern's perspective, acknowledging that they wanted their intern to continue learning to be a teacher. The students also expressed intercultural understanding when comparing their learning of British and American English and explaining how their Italian traditions were different from their American intern's traditions.

Additionally, the CTs established relationships with education faculty and study abroad staff that increased their understanding of teacher education practices used in the United States. They welcomed the intern into their classroom, attended professional development sessions, and offered suggestions to further the partnership to meet the educational needs of all involved. The CTs recognized

the importance of building relationships as their program recommendations focused on strategies that would increase teacher involvement and provide time to coplan and dialogue professionally about global education practices *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2011)*. Each of these purposeful actions demonstrated the CTs' commitment to intercultural understanding within the partnership.

Limitations and Future Directions

The researchers committed to present the voices of the host community objectively through their data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures; however, there were limits in language proficiency and intercultural knowledge. Everyone involved in the research and the partnership had differing degrees of English/Italian biliteracy and knowledge of educational practices in the United States and Italy. Because data collection and analysis occurred in both Italian and English, participants' and researchers' understanding of particular terms and questions was dependent on their biliteracy and knowledge of education practices. This was certainly evident as researchers and participants worked to understand each other's approaches to English language pedagogy and teacher evaluation. Thus we acknowledge that, as in all intercultural research where we learn from each other, both the researchers and the participants engaged in linguistic and cultural interpretation of educational concepts.

Although we encouraged participants to share freely about the impact of the partnership, the data included few negative comments and challenges. This may be due to the cultural reluctance to critique that the CTs referenced when discussing assessment practices, or could instead be due to the teachers' desire to continue involvement with the program. The student questionnaires were completed in the classroom under the supervision of the CT. Although the responses varied, we recognize that writing instruction in the primary classes tended to be teacher guided. Therefore, we wondered whether the teachers' voices may have influenced the students' responses as well. Including the impact on students when investigating the benefits of international teacher education partnerships is novel; we look forward to additional research in this area and the consideration of different data sources that might also validly capture the perspectives of the students and teachers in the host community *(Fisher & Ociepka, 2011)*.

Implications for Developing Global Education Partnerships

The inclusion of international field experiences is one approach American universities are using to develop interns' intercultural competence for teaching in diverse classrooms *(Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Phillion & Malewski, 2011)*. The development of such overseas programs necessitates intercultural engagement, attending to cross-cultural differences, and moving away from ignorance of others *(Rahatzad et al., 2013)*. The Italian host teachers' and students' experiences analyzed here highlight steps to take for teacher educators and study abroad providers who want to engage with schools overseas in partnerships that are mutually beneficial and supportive of intercultural learning:

1. **Begin by establishing the mutuality of the partnership.** Take into consideration the needs of the interns, CTs, and primary students as you determine goals for the education partnership together. Identify how host schools formalize the school improvement process so that you can align program requirements and host schools' needs. This is important for getting teacher buy-in and administration validation. Reciprocity can be maintained as part of such an international collaboration if regular opportunities to learn from each other's multiple perspectives are provided. Be prepared to revise and adapt the partnership as necessary as new members become involved.
2. **Value all voices.** Participation in the partnership provided opportunities for all members to build their capacities as intercultural communicators in a professional context, but there were points of uneasiness. University professionals and English speakers both represent privileged groups, and their voices are often viewed as most important *(Kinginger, 2010)*. A lot of time is necessary to build relationships in which all members of the partnership feel comfortable communicating and sharing their valuable knowledge. Work with abroad staff and community members to communicate using any and all languages. Make use of translation and cultural brokers from the community as necessary. Build in formal and informal opportunities for the host community to provide feedback on the partnership.
3. **Support intercultural learning.** Central to the interns' interactional experiences were opportunities to learn about Italian education practices and participate in guided reflec-

tion regarding cross-cultural differences. CTs also needed these opportunities as they learned to mentor American interns. Although the CTs were provided with professional development regarding American teacher education and their roles as mentors, facilitated cross-cultural analysis and reflection was not explicitly included. Collaborating to develop professional development regarding approaches to language teaching and structure of coteaching interactions would have been a good place for our partnership to extend the CTs' and our intercultural understanding.

4. **Children's learning is essential.** In developing and maintaining the partnership, don't lose the focus on the children. In many cases, the American interns were the first person from another country with whom the students had built an ongoing relationship. Such relationships are essential for building their global understanding. The students gained a purpose for learning English and understanding another person's traditions. Shifting the focus from learning English to a partnership to build global understanding would likely establish this important goal for students, interns, CTs, and program administrators alike.

Conclusion

Given that teacher educators strive to develop their interns' global competence and pedagogical praxis in diverse field experiences, building partnerships in schools abroad is one probable approach. However, little is known about the impact of such partnerships on the host community and how to best establish reciprocal practices that achieve positive benefits for all. The research reported in this article offers a starting point to consider the impact of American teacher education programs on the European schools in which interns practice teaching. Using a global service lens, tangible resources, opportunities for capacity building, and intercultural understanding were identified for both the Italian cooperating teachers and the primary students. However, challenges were also evident. Reflecting on the research that was carried out allowed us to see the potential of international programs to build intercultural competence; however, limitations in communication and approaches to data collection point to the need for additional research. For us to continue to build our program and for others to establish reciprocal education partnerships abroad, attention must be paid to building relationships with our partners, acknowl-

edging differences, and working together toward common goals of improved educational practice and global understanding.

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Appendix A

CT Interview Questions

1. How does having an American pre-service teacher as an intern with you impact your class?
2. What strategies do you feel are most helpful for the interns to know in working with the students in your class?
3. What professional teaching practices have your American interns learned in their time with you and your students? Where have you seen growth?
4. What supports are you finding are most helpful to provide to your interns?
5. How has the experience impacted you professionally?

6. What are the strengths of the program? What would you change?
7. How long have you been a teacher?
8. How long have you been teaching English/Literacy?
9. Have you had an intern from another country before this semester?
10. Have you had an American intern before this semester?
11. Can you provide some information about how you prepared to become a teacher?

Appendix B

Primary Student Questionnaire

1. How did your American teacher help you communicate?
2. What did you learn from your American teacher? About the English language? About the world?
3. This fall what did you learn about yourself as a global citizen?
4. My American teacher helped me . . .
5. How was your English class different this fall? How was it the same?
6. I wish my American teacher . . .
7. I learned best when my American teacher . . .

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Fostering eABCD: Asset-Based Community Development in Digital Service-Learning

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Abstract

The continuing expansion of digital service-learning is bringing emergent dynamics to the field of community engagement, including the challenge of fostering asset-based views of community partners in online spaces. "Online disinhibition" *(Suler, 2004)* can prompt harsh critique or insensitive language that would not have occurred during face-to-face relationships. Traditionally, the field of community engagement has drawn on asset-based community development *(Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)*, which calls for relationship-driven, asset-based, and internally focused partnerships, to encourage ethical and positive interactions with community members. However, this theory was not originally intended for digital, text-based interactions. This article explores how aspects of asset-based community development might be enacted in online partnerships, in electronic asset-based community development (eABCD). A case study of a digital writing partnership between college students and rural youth is used to illustrate how students can be supported in asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused interactions in online service-learning collaborations.

Keywords: eService-learning, digital partnerships, asset-based community development, writing

Introduction

Our online spaces are becoming increasingly multiple and more recently fraught with political tensions. Responding to another's thoughts for understanding and learning is less readily modeled than responding to be right, and algorithmic "filter bubbles" sort people into social silos. Even while digital interaction becomes a primary mode of communication, people often struggle to engage virtually across difference, as growing communication complexities impact the ability to see and value the full human behind the cyber-veil.

Against this backdrop, the field of service-learning is grappling with new challenges as the pedagogy traditionally enacted in face-to-face contexts is now appearing in digital spaces *(Kuh, 2014; Strait & Nordyke, 2015)*. "Online civic action and learning, as a space of community, challenges traditional assumptions of service-learning

to its core," Kliewer *(2014, p. 85)* asserted. The increase in distance learning, online education, and digital approaches to pedagogy has given rise to online service sites, and some students are completing service partly or entirely in virtual space. From communicating with nonprofit staff through wikis *(Walsh, 2010)* to completing a service-learning civic leadership certificate program entirely online *(Kliewer, 2014)* to digitally mentoring youth across the country *(Strait, 2015)*, these digital forms of service-learning provide a rich variety of engagement opportunities. Digital service-learning offers many benefits, as it may allow students to connect with community populations who would otherwise be isolated, such as rural or international populations who may be far from the university, and allow online distance-education students to experience service-learning regardless of work schedule, physical limitations, family responsibilities, or location *(Strait & Nordyke, 2015)*.

Yet as service-learning moves from community centers, youth tutoring programs, and nonprofit offices to wikis, e-mail, discussion boards, and Google Docs, important dynamics are shifting, raising questions and concerns for the field. Psychologists studying the differences between online and face-to-face communication have discussed the "online disinhibition effect" *(Suler, 2004)*, a reduction of self-regulation that occurs when communication becomes digital. As Suler *(2004)* explained, "People do or say things in cyberspace that they wouldn't ordinarily say and do in the face-to-face world" *(p. 321)*, which can lead to harsh critique, inappropriate self-disclosure, or insensitive language. Online disinhibition thus raises potential ethical concerns when students interact with community members online. To promote ethical and respectful community engagement, the field of service-learning has traditionally turned to asset-based community development *(Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)*, an approach to engaging communities that is *asset-based*, highlighting a community's strengths; *relationship-driven*, grounded in personal connections with community members and connections between community assets; and *internally focused*, encouraging community direction of the partnership. Yet this approach was designed for face-to-face community-building, provoking questions about how asset-based community development could be enacted in virtual spaces. This article presents a framework for what we term "eABCD," or electronic asset-based community development, drawing from a study of a one-semester virtual partnership between college education students and rural middle school students. Digital communications between the college students, community members, and instructor were coded

for the three components of asset-based community development (asset-based, relationship-driven, internally focused), and this data was combined with middle school student survey data to offer initial recommendations on how ABCD might be used in electronic contexts.

Asset-Based Community Development

Asset-based community development arose as a response to widespread deficit views of low-income communities in community development programs. Service-learning scholars have noted the dangers of deficit views in engagement, explaining that emphasizing the needs of communities as a counterpoint to the strengths of the university is harmful to both students and community members *(Boyle-Baise, 1999; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012)*. Deficit views can promote problematic stereotypes of community members as certain communities are portrayed in terms of their struggles *(Baldwin, Buchanin, & Rudisill, 2007; Schultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1996)*, lead to noblesse oblige or "savior" mentalities in students *(Lowenstein, 2009)*, hide the deep intellectual resources of community members *(Saltmarsh, Clayton, & Hartley, 2009)*, and hinder best practice principles such as the idea that "everyone learns and everyone serves" *(Honnet & Paulson, 1989)*.

Scholars within the field of teacher preparation have taken an especially strong stance against deficit-oriented views of diverse communities, given the field's emphasis on preparing people to work effectively with students who represent a range of demographics and life experiences. Over 20 years ago, Zeichner *(1993)* argued that

> many teacher education students come to their preparation programs viewing student diversity as a problem rather than a resource, that their conceptions of diversity are highly individualistic (e.g., focusing on personality factors like motivation and ignoring contextual factors like ethnicity), and that their ability to talk about student differences in thoughtful and comprehensive ways is very limited. *(p. 4)*

Unfortunately, this problem persists. In large part this is due to what scholars in the field of teacher preparation refer to as *the demographic divide*, wherein a primarily White, female, monolingual, middle-class population of teacher candidates is responsible for teaching an increasingly diverse population of students. Not

only do these preservice teachers often feel unprepared to interact with students from diverse backgrounds *(Dee & Henkin, 2002; Sleeter, 2001)*, they also often hold tacit beliefs that children from diverse backgrounds—especially students who are poor or from minoritized groups—are not as capable as White students. Service-learning is often championed as one approach to encourage more critical understandings of diversity in the field of education and across disciplines *(Glazier, Able, & Charpentier, 2014)*, yet framing communities in terms of their needs as part of a service-learning project may actually reinforce deficit-based orientations—encouraging stereotypes and exposing community members to students who hold and act on deeply problematic views *(O'Grady, 2000)*.

Asset-based community development *(Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)* responds to the dangers of deficit views and disrespectful engagement by promoting an alternate approach: a framework for community development "which insists on beginning with a clear commitment to discovering a community's capacities and assets" *(p. 1)*. Asset-based community development (ABCD) works to foster connections between these strengths in order to address needs. ABCD was developed out of Northwestern University by John Kretzmann and John McKnight, and the approach is now used in many countries worldwide, popularized through the toolkit *Building Communities from the Inside Out (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993)*. The approach was created from door-to-door studies in which researchers spoke with residents about instances in which someone had made an improvement to the community, and through analyzing the community member narratives, the researchers distilled principles for effective development *(McKnight, n.d.)*. Though some service-learning scholars have raised concerns about how a focus on local strengths can distract from the need for structural change *(Stoecker, 2016)*, ABCD is widely adopted in North American service-learning scholarship and practice *(Deans, 2000; Hamerlinck & Plaut, 2014; Lieberman, 2014)*.

The first pillar of ABCD is *asset-based*, as the approach begins by identifying various assets in a community, often through in-person conversations with residents to create an *asset map*. These assets include resources in local institutions, such as businesses and libraries; associations, such as church choirs and cultural groups; and the gifts of individuals, including populations traditionally framed in terms of their deficits, such as youth and the elderly. These assets are connected in order to foster development. In face-to-face service-learning, asset-based approaches involve activities

that build from the strengths of community members, such as painting a mural designed by a resident artist.

In addition to being asset-based, ABCD is *internally focused*, which means it highlights local definitions, creativity, and control. In other words, community residents have significant input into the nature and process of engagement activities, aligning with service-learning's foundational Wingspread principle, "An effective program allows those with needs to define those needs" *(Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, p. 1)*. This may mean, for example, that community residents would be heavily involved in directing meetings to design the service-learning activities.

A third ABCD characteristic is *relationship-driven*, suggesting an emphasis on building relationships among residents, associations, and institutions. This involves personal investment and time spent nurturing interpersonal connections, as well as efforts to foster stronger links between various people and groups. Service-learning scholars frequently talk about the critical nature of relationality in community engagement *(Skilton-Sylvester & Erwin, 2000)*, and as community writing scholar Goldblatt *(2007)* noted in his chapter aptly titled "Lunch," engagement work is rooted in face-to-face interpersonal relationships.

The three ABCD components—asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused—are interlocking, as it is through relationships that assets can be identified and connected, and through an asset-based acknowledgment of a community's wisdom and leadership that internal control can occur. Yet these components were originally designed for face-to-face development work in communities, and many examples from Kretzmann and McKnight and others who use their work feature in-person conversations, on-the-ground programs, and shared meals *(Avila, 2014; Battistoni, Longo, & Morton, 2014; Snow, 2014)*. The growing trend toward digital engagement suggests that ABCD needs to stretch in new directions.

eService-Learning and Online Disinhibition

Online community engagement is a newer but rapidly expanding approach *(Crabill & Butin, 2014; Dailey-Hebert, Donnelli Sallee, & DiPadova, 2008; Strait & Nordyke, 2015)*. Dailey-Hebert et al. *(2008)* have defined *service-eLearning* as "an integrative pedagogy that engages learners through technology in civic inquiry, service, reflection, and action" *(p. 1)*. Given the exponential growth of digital learning, the field of service-learning is working to synthesize

community-based pedagogies with online education, through face-to-face service connected to digital or hybrid courses *(Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Strait & Sauer, 2004)* or—the focus of this article—service that occurs online in conjunction with digital or brick-and-mortar classes *(Bourelle, 2014; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2010)*. Online service-learning "holds massive potential to transform both service-learning and online learning by freeing service-learning from geographical constraints and by equipping online learning with a powerful and much-needed tool to promote engagement" *(Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012, p. 123)*. Studies have suggested that eService-learning, even when the instruction and service are both entirely online, can have positive learning and community outcomes *(Waldner et al., 2010)*. Yet, as scholars have noted, electronic service-learning brings challenging dynamics around coordinating clear communication in online spaces *(Bourelle, 2014; Waldner et al., 2010)*; fostering critical service-learning, especially in contexts where digital communities may be centered on homogeneity *(Kliewer, 2014)*; effectively using technology to replicate the high-impact nature of in-person service-learning *(Kuh, 2014)*; and encouraging students to reflect on moments of discomfort when digital discord can often be deleted or ignored *(Alexander, 2014)*. Particularly noteworthy is the finding that "students may not feel 'connected' to the [community partner]. . . . In this situation, it may be difficult to foster an environment of 'teamwork' and collaboration, an essential element to a productive service learning experience" *(Waldner et al., 2010, p. 847)*.

Several scholars, in fact, have explored the challenges of building relationships in online education. Tu and McIsaac *(2002)* highlight the importance of social presence, defined as "a measure of the feeling of community that a learner experiences in an online environment" *(p. 131)*. Because the degree of social presence perceived by online course participants is dependent on the social context of the program itself, the nature and frequency of online communication, and the level of interactivity, successful relationship-building in virtual spaces must account for and negotiate the differing expectations of all participants. Establishing a welcoming digital environment is difficult, especially as public perception of virtual spaces is perennially marked by a sense of social *dis*connection and isolation *(Turkle, 2012)*.

Challenges such as these may be informed by an understanding of online disinhibition *(Suler, 2004)*, the lessening of self-inhibitions that occur when people interact in digital environments. Although disinhibition can have benign effects, service-learning professionals

may be particularly concerned about *toxic disinhibition*, which can provoke "rude language, harsh criticism, [and] anger" *(Suler, 2004, p. 321)*. In asynchronous online service-learning, students do not have to grapple with immediate responses to their actions, as community partners may not read or write back until later *(Suler, 2004, pp. 323–324)*. Furthermore, the absence of nonverbal cues, such as frowns, sighs, or body language that signals discomfort, can contribute to disinhibition as online service-learners may not be directly faced with the impact of their words on community partners *(p. 323)*. The lack of eye contact, in particular, can contribute to a sense of disconnection in online relationships, which allows negative emotions and comments to be expressed more freely *(Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012)*.

Deficit views, coupled with toxic online disinhibition, can exacerbate online miscommunications and lead to harmful digital dynamics between college students and community partners. For example, in online partnerships between college students and youth, such as the collaboration in this article, online disinhibition may raise concerns that college students will be tempted to interpret the online actions of community partners through a deficit lens and respond in problematic language. It is much easier to assume that a late or low-quality online post signals laziness when a student isn't interacting directly with the community member. In addition, while giving feedback is often a fraught activity, a college student may be much more likely to write harsh criticism on a youth's paper when the youth is not standing there, looking anxiously at the college student while waiting for a response.

Given the potential dangers of deficit views and online disinhibition in digital service-learning, service-learning practitioners may need to actively promote asset-based engagement, reimagining ABCD for online contexts. To do so, we offer a study of an eService-learning project in which college students collaborated digitally with middle school writers.

Study Context

The study detailed here involves examination of a digital community partnership in which college education students responded weekly to the writing of rural middle school students through an online collaboration platform. Similar service-learning partnerships exist elsewhere, such as the partnership described by Phegley and Oxford *(2010)* involving preservice teachers and rural high school students. The partnership studied here emerges from a long-

standing school–university partnership within a highly collaborative and justice-focused teacher education program.

University Program and Students

The service-learning project was embedded in a teacher education program at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a public research university in the Midwest. The program is explicitly committed to fostering justice-oriented educators, with participating faculty in the English and Education Departments meeting monthly to discuss the program and to coauthor articles, such as this one, as a way to foster a coherent programmatic vision. The program runs on a cohort model, involving two cohorts of 25 students each that operate in parallel structure. The first-year (junior) cohort is immersed in more theoretical courses, including Composition Theory and Practice, Reading Theory and Practice, and Linguistics for the Classroom Teacher; the second-year (senior) cohort translates theoretical knowledge into wide-ranging applications through methods classes and student teaching. The service-learning project described here occurred in the writing pedagogy class during the first semester of the junior year, meaning that students were just beginning to apply education theory and were newly exposed to the program's social justice focus. Following national demographic trends *(Villegas & Lucas, 2004)*, the majority of the preservice teachers in the class were White and female. Most had no previous experience with online instruction in a teaching role.

The Service-Learning Partnership: Online Writing Exchange

The online writing service-learning project has been a yearly fall activity since 2008, with the goal of connecting writers from very different communities. The partnership was initiated by author Robert Brooke, who is an English faculty member, and author Jennifer Troester, who is a middle school teacher, through their network with the Nebraska Writing Project. Author Rachael Shah, another English faculty member, continued the partnership when she began teaching Composition Theory and Practice. Although previous partnerships had also involved urban high school students, the fall 2016 service-learning project linked each college student with two eighth-grade students at a rural middle school located 4 hours from the university. In their interactions with secondary writers, the college students were encouraged to take on a "coach" role of "more experienced writer." The partnership aimed

to develop preservice teachers' ability to respond effectively to student writing while providing secondary students with regular individualized feedback that was more detailed than a classroom teacher could typically provide, to support students in practicing deeper revision. The college and secondary teachers hoped both sets of students would increase their audience awareness as they wrote for an audience beyond their classrooms.

The partnership began with an introduction post by college and secondary students, offering background information on hobbies and interests. Then, once a week for 10 weeks, the secondary students posted a piece of in-progress writing using Google Docs, along with an "author's note" to provide background on the piece and ask specific feedback questions (see Appendix A for the author's note handout given to the middle school students). The college students responded virtually with comments, informed by class readings on writing pedagogy, and the instructor offered feedback via e-mail to the college students about their commenting strategies. A culminating reflection project challenged the college students to write a case study that synthesized analysis of a secondary student's writing development with writing pedagogy scholarship.

Methods

Partnership texts from fall 2016 were collected and coded for ABCD strategies. With IRB approval, texts analyzed for the study included introduction posts written by the college students, college students' comments on middle schoolers' writing, written instructor feedback about college students' comments, instructor and college student e-mail communication about the project, and the reflection case study paper in which the college students analyzed the writing development of their middle school partners in light of scholarship on writing pedagogy. These texts were coded using Dedoose software for the three components of asset-based community development (asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused).

Although this partnership text analysis is the main data source, a limited amount of data was also collected from the community partners. With IRB approval, a survey was distributed to 13 middle school students who participated in the 2016 partnership, and 10 of the 13 who initially agreed completed the survey. The survey asked about youth perspectives on the partnership, including questions geared toward each of the three components of ABCD (see Appendix B). The survey was administered in fall 2017, using

opportunity sampling to identify students who were still at the school, accessible for contacting, and willing to participate with parental consent. Author Jennifer Troester, the partnering middle school teacher, offers her analysis of these surveys and the writing exchange in this article. Her insights are informed by her master's thesis *(Troester, 2015)*, which examined the community impact of the fall 2013 online writing partnership through surveys and short-answer questionnaires of 45 eighth-grade students. Together, these data sources shed light on how ABCD can be enacted in online spaces.

Study Analysis: Supporting Students in eABCD

The analysis of partnership documents revealed several strategies students used for enacting asset-based community development electronically, as well as areas in which college students had trouble creating healthy collaborations, given the particular dynamics of digital service-learning. The college students in their case studies described struggling to understand their partners' thought process "from the other end of a computer," finding it difficult to express their points without face-to-face conversation, and feeling unmoored as they were unable to know how their comments were being received. They were aware that this medium posed challenges for the youth as well, especially in the vulnerability required to share writing without a face-to-face relationship. One college student wrote to her partner, "Writing is personal. The fact that you have been sharing your writing with me (a digital stranger) is so trusting of you." So many of the tools that would normally facilitate the creation of trust and rapport, like smiling, eye contact, in-person small talk, or a warm tone of voice, were simply unavailable.

One theme that emerged in light of this struggle, cutting across all three facets of ABCD, was the centrality of language. This partnership was heavily text-based, with participants communicating through type. With text as the sole medium for the partnership, participants gained heightened awareness of the power of words as action. Several students made connections between the online partnership and a resource from their linguistics class, *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning (Johnston, 2004)*, that highlighted how even small phrases can significantly shape power dynamics. Johnston, drawing from linguistic theory, explained that all language conveys not just surface-level content, but also information about how the speaker views the listener and their assumed relationship. He gives examples of how phrases like "Any questions?

Let's start with these" *(p. 55)*, "Thanks for straightening me out" *(p. 57)*, and "Would you agree with that?" *(p. 59)* position the listener in an active role and create a relationship of joint inquiry rather than control. The college students in many cases brought this intensive focus on specific language choices to the online partnership, a focus that was reinforced by the instructor through class discussions and feedback on the students' commenting strategies. As one student wrote in her case study, "Educators must be sensitive to every word they type when that is the only contact with students." This awareness of language was an important starting point for pursuing all three aspects of eABCD—asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused—as small choices in written language became a primary medium for enacting each strategy (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: eABCD Language Moves

Asset-Based	
Offering praise	Example: There's wonderful sensory details here. I really felt like I was in the scene, feeling the same things.
Using strengths as base for growth	Example: The point is to practice. As a bow hunter, I'm sure you understand how important practice is (by the way I am still really impressed that you can do that).
Acknowledging strengths dominant society may frame as deficits	Example: I love how you incorporate Spanish into this writing! It makes it special to you and your story and gives the piece a strong feeling of how your family life is!
Internal Focus	
Responding to digital community preface statements (such as Author's Notes)	Example: In your author's note, you asked about transitions, and I think…
Stating intention not to control	Example: In my opinion, the most important part of your writing is your voice, so I will try my very best not to steamroll your writing in any way. In the end, it is your writing.
Highlighting personal subjectivity	Example: Something that I think you should focus on in your next revision is the organization of your piece. What is that most important information that should come first? To me, I would think describing what he did in the military should come before how he felt after he left it.

Note: Continued on next page

Explicitly affirming community agency	Example: I loved seeing which of my comments you chose to take and which you felt you didn't need to. That is one sign of a great writer: being able to pick and choose what critiques you want to apply to your own writing.
Incorporating choice	Example: Would you rather have the whole thing in your perspective, or have the whole thing from your mother's perspective? I think there are very good reasons for either choice!
Relationship Driven	
Beginning with introduction posts	Example: "I am From" poems
Offering relevant relational comments	Example: I also got picked on when I was little. I had a hard time making friends for a really long time, I'm sorry that it happened to you as well.
Blending personal connection with tasks	Example: One thing that I would like to hear more about are your emotions about leaving Ceresco. I moved a couple times when I was little too, and I always HATED moving. Was it hard moving?
Taking a posture of learning from community members	Example: I'm a terrible cook so I'd love to hear more on this! Maybe it would help improve my cooking, haha!
Remembering and referring to personal details from community members	Example: I appreciated how your essays showed your personality: your high regard for your friends, your homesickness for Colorado, and your love for playing videogames.
Using relational emoticons and salutations when appropriate	Example: :-D
Stating the relationship is valued	Example: I'm excited to get to know you, and hopefully together we can learn more about writing.

Asset-Based

Traditional ABCD focuses on assets in a physical neighborhood, such as the strengths of individuals, the local choir, and the park. These strengths are often discovered through *capacity inventories*, questionnaires usually administered face-to-face and geared toward identifying resident skills and interests *(Kretzmann & McKnight, 2003)*. Although such inventories could be administered digitally, college students in this partnership achieved a similar purpose by drawing on personal digital texts like introduction posts and narratives to inductively build an understanding of the strengths of the community members—including writing strengths

as well as other skills and interests the students wrote about in their pieces.

College students enacted an asset-based approach through online commenting on community member writing, which heavily featured praise, with marginal comments that highlighted effective descriptive words, pointed out where the reader was moved by the writing, and celebrated sophisticated thinking. The instructor affirmed this asset-based stance when it appeared and prompted students when praise did not appear; for example: "One thing to work on is making sure to include enough positive comments (e.g. Jalina's comments are almost all suggestions/critiques), and making sure the positive comments are just as specific as the suggestions (e.g. what makes Alberto's first paragraph 'great'?)." Prompting for asset-based approaches appeared more frequently early in the partnership, when the college students were learning the eABCD dispositions needed for the collaboration. The instructor also supported a positive view of youth writing by encouraging a "sandwich model" for feedback paragraphs: constructive criticism located between statements of specific praise. Thus, the sandwich model served as one strategy for structurally building an asset-based focus into online communication, a strategy that was often augmented by other asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused tactics.

One particularly effective strategy for eABCD that the college students initiated was using the strengths of the youth as a launching point for further growth. For example, one college student suggested a young writer develop a point as well as she had done in a previous strong paragraph. College students also used this strategy with strengths beyond language. Drawing from knowledge of an eighth grader's hobbies, one writing mentor wrote: "The point is to practice. As a bow hunter, I'm sure you understand how important practice is (by the way I am still really impressed that you can do that)." In engaging assets, the college mentors often tapped and acknowledged a wide range of strengths.

Notably, the college students also built from strengths that dominant society frames as deficits. For example, in response to a personal narrative by a young bilingual writer, a college student wrote, "I love how you incorporate Spanish into this writing! It makes it special to you and your story and gives the piece a strong feeling of how your family life is!" Other college students responded to personal narratives about food insecurity, separation from parents because of immigration status, and family members dangerously crossing the border with notes that moved beyond the

writing itself, acknowledging the "wisdom" and "motivation" of the young writers and their relatives. "I think this shows a lot about how strong your family is," one university student wrote, "and how persistent they are to provide for their family." Factors like English as a second (or third!) language, families with mixed citizenship status, recent immigration to the United States, and family structures beyond a two-parent household—all things that *could* frame youth through a deficit lens as "at-risk"—were often refigured as generative sources for writing, thinking, learning, and personal strength. This stance aligns with Kretzmann and McKnight's *(1993)* ABCD commitment to the strengths of stigmatized groups, as their book includes sections specifically on tapping the capacities of youth, seniors, people with developmental disabilities, and welfare recipients. They write, "The most powerful communities are those that can identify the gifts of those people at the margins and pull them into community life" *(p. 28)*.

Occasionally, students did slip into more deficit-based views of the young writers, worldviews made visible in the reflective case study essays, which provided opportunities for gentle redirection. One early draft included these sentences: "Of the two writers, Gustavo had the most noticeable issue with grammar. In his introductory essay, he told me his parents were originally from Guatemala. Reading through his drafts, the lack of mastery of the English language was quite obvious." After an instructor comment that raised questions about the assumptions behind these words, the revised last sentence read as follows: "Reading through his drafts, it became quite obvious to me that Gustavo was taking on the ambitious task of attempting to master another language." Especially by the final drafts, many of the case studies explicitly discussed the importance of asset-based framing, particularly in light of how dominant narratives delegitimize the writing of certain students based on race, class, home language, and other factors. Acknowledging the impact of asset-based language choices in responding to community members online, one student wrote, "The privileging and marginalizing of students' writing voices and choices spills over into how students see themselves as writers. . . . The act of writing (like all acts involving language use) is a socializing and identity-forming act." The student continued, "This commands a genuine partnership." Given the stakes involved, a true asset-based approach involves not only recognizing community members' strengths, but creating space for community members to exercise control and agency in using those strengths, and this leads to the next facet of eABCD: internal focus.

Internally Focused

Kretzmann and McKnight *(1993)* stress that healthy community development is directed by community members themselves, rather than imposed by outsiders: The focus of decision making should be internal to the community. In the online writing exchange, one tool for keeping control as much as possible in the hands of community members was author's notes. Author's notes place writers in the position of analyzing their own work and identifying the feedback needed rather than allowing the responder to control the feedback. In their most schematic form, author's notes consist of three statements by the writer intended to guide responders to give advice that will be useful to the writer:

1. What's the status of the draft? (e.g., brainstorming, a first draft, an exploratory draft, a highly polished piece evolved through many revisions?)
2. What is the writer thinking about the draft? (e.g., likes/dislikes; devices or approaches being tried; worries)
3. What kind of response does the writer want? (e.g., pointing to strengths; suggestions for places to expand; questions the reader had while reading; particular grammar support)

These three statements, when provided with full metacognitive awareness of the writer's place in the writing process, are incredibly powerful for facilitating discussion. They are a means of providing each person with full control over the discussion of their work, making sure that the topics discussed are related to the writer's stage in the writing process and the writer's wider rhetorical goals for the piece *(Brooke, Mirtz, & Evans 1994)*. Author's notes also serve to support writers in learning how to control their own growth, as they gain vocabulary and habits for identifying the response that would be most useful to them. In the words of one of the university students, an author's note "allows students to advocate on behalf of their drafts and set goals." Author's notes were especially important because the partnership was digital. As one student detailed,

> Since I could not sit down and chat with Blayne, I could not ask her where her mind was when she was writing. Thankfully, this limitation also posed opportunities that may be harder to come across in-person. She wrote author's notes with questions before every piece she wrote, so I could use those to guide my suggestions. . . . Having my only contact through online documents became an advantage in the sense that I could polish

> my reactions to her writing and tailor those reactions to fit her questions and needs, especially in responding to author's note questions.

In other words, author's notes became a tool for not only addressing the communication limitations of an online partnership, but actually sharpening the focus on the community member's goals.

Not all online service-learning partnerships center on writing, but the basic structure of an author's note can be adapted for a variety of digital settings: before an online interaction with service-learners, community members have an explicit opportunity to give background information about what they are working on, their context, and their goals, and to express what kind of response or interaction from the service-learner might be most useful. This statement should then shape the digital event.

In the online writing exchange, the youth posted an author's note at the top of each piece, and college students frequently relied on these notes to guide feedback. Sometimes the college students inserted a comment after each question in the author's note in direct response, and sometimes the feedback paragraph at the end of the paper drew on the author's note. A typical comment was, "In response to your transition question, you use the word 'also' a lot to start off your paragraphs. What other transition words do you know that would work in place of 'also'?" When college students ignored the author's note in their response, the instructor pointed this out, turning their attention to the community-identified areas of interest (e.g., "Also, try to respond to the key questions in the author's note when possible. It looks like this student was concerned with organization. What did you think about the organization?").

Another important area for internal focus had to do with the way feedback was framed, in ways that either controlled the writing and made changes for the community member or positioned the young writer as an active creator. In traditional ABCD, the "three questions" ask ABCD facilitators to identify what community members can do themselves, what they can do with the support of an institution, and what the institution must do *(Duncan, n.d.)*. The emphasis in answering these questions is that institutions or outsiders should not do things that community members can accomplish independently or with support. Over the course of the partnership, the college students gained in their ability to allow the young writers to control their own writing, rather than making improvements for the writer. Some college responses, especially early in the semester, included phrases like "Insert a comma

here!" "Merge this together into one sentence for better fluency!" and "This might fit better near the beginning as the second paragraph"—all interactions that told the community member what to do. In e-mail responses, the instructor emphasized that research shows fixing errors for students is not only ineffective, it also erodes ownership *(Weaver & Bush, 2008)*. Responses that better modeled an eABCD approach, which became more frequent later in the semester, left more space for community member agency. As one college student described, "My comments were usually in some question form . . . [and] I tried to structure my comments in a way that the ultimate decision of what to include could be interpreted to [fit] the writer's voice and goals." Here, this student echoes the questioning strategy in traditional ABCD, as the ABCD toolkit notes: "Asking questions rather than giving answers invites stronger participation" *(Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation, n.d. p. 3)*.

Students repeatedly acknowledged in reflection papers that the absence of in-person, real-time collaboration made it difficult to cede control in this way, but they found several useful strategies. Consider how the following statements allow for internal focus:

- "Something that I think you should focus on in your next revision is the organization of your piece. What is that most important information that should come first? To me, I would think describing what he did in the military should come before how he felt after he left it. Try it out and see what you think!"
- "I noticed that you change perspectives in the first paragraph. In the first sentence, you use your own perspective, but from the second sentence on, the whole narrative is written from your mother's perspective. Would you rather have the whole thing in your perspective, or have the whole thing from your mother's perspective? I think there are very good reasons for either choice!"
- "My whole class was excited to find out that you all posted your blogs so that we could see your finished pieces. I loved seeing which of my comments you chose to take and which you felt you didn't need to. That is one sign of a great writer: being able to pick and choose what critiques you want to apply to your own writing."
- "In my opinion, the most important part of your writing is your voice, so I will try my very best not to steamroll your writing in any way. In the end, it is your writing."

College students directly addressed their intent to pursue internal community control ("I will try not to steamroll . . ."), framed their suggestions as opinions rather than objective truth ("To me"), posed choices ("Would you rather . . ."), hinted that the final decision rested with the community member ("See what you think!"), and explicitly stated that they did not expect the community members to agree with all suggestions ("That is one sign of a great writer: being able to pick and choose which critiques . . ."). These language moves may be useful to other service-learners in digital collaborations, especially in asynchronous or text-based interactions that limit the potential for power-sharing in real-time, conversational collaboration.

Relationship-Driven

The final component of ABCD, relationship-driven development, undergoes some significant shifts when moving to online spaces, as traditional ABCD relational strategies like sharing snacks, filling downtime with informal conversation, going door-to-door, or reading nonverbal cues are no longer available in the same way. Instead, the college students and instructors had to find alternate ways to foster relationships between college and middle school students, and between students and other community assets.

One strategy was introduction posts that included personal information and a "Where I'm From" poem *(Christensen, 2009)* that featured details about the students' backgrounds. These introductory moves attempted to build what one college student described as a "personal foundation," reflecting, "Students will neither feel comfortable sharing their writing nor take revisions seriously if there is not an established trust and relationship with the person giving the feedback." The college students responded to the introduction posts by identifying points they had in common with the youth, a practice that can increase relationality in service-learning collaborations *(Shah, forthcoming)*.

Additionally, throughout the semester, the college students interspersed task-oriented comments with relational comments. Consider the following feedback, for example, which blends personal connection with writing advice:

> One thing that I would like to hear more about are your emotions about leaving Ceresco. I moved a couple times when I was little too, and I always HATED moving. I never wanted to leave the old house and all my neighbors and friends. I've never left a town before though!

> Was it hard moving? Did you miss your old school, your old friends, your old house? Those details would really help make your story even more relatable!

Other comments were purely relational: One college student responded to a paper on a middle schooler's father by revealing that her dad was also a construction worker. Shared sports interests, notes about pets, and upcoming travel to Mexico all made their way into the margins of Google Docs. In response to a paper that revealed social struggles, one university student wrote, "I also got picked on when I was little. I had a hard time making friends for a really long time, I'm sorry that it happened to you as well."

Sometimes, however, college students struggled to respond appropriately to personal revelations from community members online. Perhaps because the online disinhibition effect made it harder to recognize the person behind the draft, occasionally the college students missed opportunities for relational communication. For example, in the margins of a paragraph in which a young person revealed experiencing food insecurity, one service-learner offered the following: "Make sure you watch out for run on sentences! See if you can maybe break this sentence down into multiple different sentences." Instructor feedback often focused on supporting students in enacting relationality online, specifically around difficult moments shared by community members, in comments such as

> Quick reminder to connect to students on a personal level, especially when they share personal challenges. For example, while you're completely right that there's a dialogue punctuation problem when Becca mentioned being laughed at, how might you empathize and offer grammar feedback, rather than only respond to that painful moment with a grammar tip?

This feedback to service-learners was designed to highlight the importance of relationality to the instructor and the partnership as a whole, as opposed to only focusing on content-related responses.

An additional relational strategy college students used was crafting responses that scrambled power dynamics between the university students and community members by positioning the college students as learning from the youth. For example, "I'm a terrible cook so I'd love to hear more on this! Maybe it would help improve my cooking, haha!" One university student graciously

responded to a middle schooler's spelling correction of her work with, "I just looked it up and it turns out that backup *is* one word! Thank you for pointing that out!" These responses worked to counteract a paradigm in which "knowledge flows in one direction, from the boundaries of the university outward to its place of need and application in the community" *(Saltmarsh, Clayton, & Hartley, 2009, p. 8)*. To create a more reciprocal partnership for collaborative knowledge production online, college students need to use language to actively create digital relationships that position the community members as cocreators of knowledge.

College students also referenced personal details from youth in later communication, communicated explicitly that they were excited about the partnership, used friendly emoticons, and composed in letter format for a more personal feel (one student signed feedback "Your pal"). There were also a few instances of university writing mentors working to connect the youth to other assets in their home communities (e.g., "If you haven't already shown her [your grandma] your work, I would highly recommend you do so. She would be so proud!"). Although small, these strategies also fostered relationality.

Overall, several students wrote of being surprised at how well they were able to create a relational connection via computers—they built these relationships with the specific language choices of both college and middle school students. As one university student wrote in a farewell to the young writer, "I heard your voice come through your writing very strongly. Even though we haven't had time to discuss your writing face to face, I feel as if I've met you several times." Online service-learning does not mean abandoning the relational connections that are often at the heart of experiential learning with community members; it just means shifting relational strategies to connect in a different way.

Community Partner Perspectives

Asset-based community development is rooted in community capacity-building, so community perspectives and community impact are a key piece of examining ABCD strategies. Middle school teacher and author Jennifer Troester argues that the partnership's impact on students' writing will last a lifetime. When beginning the online writing exchange, some eighth-grade students felt unsure and intimidated about sharing their writing with college students who they felt were superior to them in writing. This feeling quickly dissipated: One student noted, "I am no longer hesitant to

submit my own writings for critiques," and another student commented, "Before this experience I was nervous to share my ideas with others but having them listen and give me feedback made things easier." Throughout the exchange the eighth-grade students became more analytical of their work when writing author's notes and after receiving feedback as they revised their writing. This is apparent from one student's description of the experience:

> The online writing exchange had a big impact on me. This really helped me better understand the skills you need to be a good writer. Having the older college student give us advice was very helpful because of the fact that they have way more experience.

In addition, this exchange of ideas follows student writers beyond the online writing exchange itself. One student commented, "The writing exchange impacted my writing by allowing me to see what I needed to work on. It allowed me to find my voice and make it stronger." The feedback students receive in the eighth-grade writing exchange has a positive influence on their writing even after the exchange is over. As another student wrote,

> Something that impacted me on the online exchange writing was that I am a better writer than I was before we did this. These kids are older and know what they are talking about, so I took their advice and now use it in my writing [even a year later]. For example, some feedback they gave me that was helpful was to give more description in my writing and now I try to use that to examine my word choice after I'm done writing to see if I could be using stronger words.

Giving eighth-grade students the chance to analyze their writing and present it to an authentic audience who will give them feedback allows them to understand the process of writing and to operate like true writers themselves. It also motivates the eighth-grade students to revise their writing and learn new skills they will use in the future. This real-world opportunity to share through peer review improves the effectiveness of student writing.

The positive student comments from the 2016 partnership echo results from a survey conducted in 2013 with 45 middle school students *(Troester, 2015)*, which revealed that the majority of students felt the partnership increased their capacities. When

asked their level of agreement with the statement "After taking part in this Online Writing Exchange, I can now better analyze my own writing," 80% of eighth-grade students "strongly agreed" or "agreed" and 20% were "neutral," with no one disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. In addition, the eighth-grade students were asked to rate the following: "After taking part in this Online Writing Exchange, I am more aware of writing for an audience rather than just writing for a grade." In response, 74% of students "strongly agreed" or "agreed" and 26% were "neutral," with no one disagreeing or strongly disagreeing *(p. 4)*. Self-reported student improvement was reflected in a jump in state writing assessment scores, which middle school teacher Jennifer Troester attributes in part to the online partnership. As reported in her 2013 study, the percentage of students scoring proficient or exceeding writing expectations in her small rural district was 73% in 4th grade and 74% in 11th grade, but in the 8th grade class, all of whom participated in the partnership, 85% had a proficient or exceeding writing expectations score. Although Troester's writing pedagogy certainly played a role in this jump, she suggests that the regular in-depth, individualized feedback on student work that her middle schoolers received through the partnership, along with the consistent opportunity for a real audience beyond the teacher, supported her students in achieving this higher level of writing proficiency.

The electronic asset-based community development (eABCD) strategies that the college students utilized may have contributed to this positive impact. To begin, youth often remarked in their 2016 surveys about the asset-based approach the college students employed. For example, when asked generally about what comments were most helpful, one student replied, "The most helpful feedback was when my person told me that she thought I was a good writer, and that I have the potential to take my writing to the next level." Students reported that the positive comments made them "feel comfortable with the [college] student." Students also mentioned relationality, describing the importance of being "kind" and "open." One young writer noticed how her college student blended relationship-driven responses with feedback, writing, "[The college student] would take things that I wrote about and make comments on them to connect. For example, I talked about my excitement going to a concert, and she would talk about her own excitement and experience [with concerts], mixing in helpful detailing tips with those." Even several months after the partnership ended, this student was able to recall the specifics of the concert comments, demonstrating their relational impact.

And finally, the youth were also able to articulate strategies the college students used to encourage internal focus and make sure the eighth graders felt as if they were in the driver's seat of their own writing process. One middle schooler wrote, "Some things that my person did for me was by saying, 'You could consider this, or maybe try this,' instead of saying, 'You need to change this, etc.'" Another youth noted, "Nothing was ever demanded, it was always suggested. They really understood how maybe we chose the specific word for a reason, or maybe we want our story to sound that way." The college students worked to communicate that the young authors had creative power over their work, trusting the intentionality of the youth. In particular, the eighth graders noticed that their partners did not make direct changes to the work: "What the college student did is put constructive advice on the comments instead of deleting stuff that we had worked on and putting stuff that they thought was good in." Keeping their comments to the margins of the paper was a way for the college students to spatially decenter their own ideas and keep the middle schooler's voice in the forefront. In this sense, internal focus was strong, as the college mentors worked to give advice while leaving the power in the hands of the eighth graders.

And in fact, one eighth grader asked for even more internal focus in a survey response. When asked about advice for future college students participating in the partnership, she replied, "Some kids need the criticism to be 'sugar coated'. Others like me want the cold, hard truth. . . . Do not be afraid to ask the person whether they want it straight out or not." As this student noted, internal focus can extend beyond the content of feedback received to how that feedback is communicated. While this internal control strategy of asking community members about communication style preferences was not used by any of the college students in the 2016 partnership, this is another strategy that could be added to the eABCD toolbox. Another potential tool for increasing internal control is involving the community members in assessing the college students, an approach that we initiated in our fall 2017 partnership. Feedback sheets filled out by the middle school students impacted the college students' final grades. [See Shumake and Shah *(2017)* for a theoretical rationale and description of this process as it appeared in a pilot secondary writing partnership.] Increasing community partner control of collaborations is a delicate task that can appear in a variety of forms, from small language choices to the structure of partnership design.

As the youth identified, the college students drew on asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused strategies to engage in community development online. Ultimately, these strategies led to a partnership that had a positive impact on not only the experience as a whole but also on the students' writing skills. This is illustrated in the following student's comment:

> The impact that the online writing exchange we did last year with the UNL students had on me was more than I had expected. At first I expected them to be grammar wizards and that their responses would be bossy and structured, but instead personally, I found them to be extremely helpful and sincere. I was lucky enough to have a partner who never really told me everything was wrong, but instead said how I could make it better. In doing so, it allowed me to still keep the voice and some of the specific word choice I had in my writings unique and personal without the feeling that it might be incorrect.

Using the eABCD strategies, the college-aged student was able to connect with this student by creating a safe space to share, focusing on how to improve the writing rather than pick it apart. This made the younger student able to feel that he was being mentored and not criticized. This partnership built on eABCD strategies created a foundation for an exchange of ideas where eighth-grade students could experience the writing process and learn the skills of a true writer without fear of judgment or shame. It motivated younger students to practice the skills suggested without losing their voice.

Recommendations for Fostering eABCD

Based on these findings and themes, we offer several recommendations for instructors to encourage electronic asset-based community development. These recommendations stem from the particular context of our secondary–college writing exchange, so these suggestions will not be transportable unchanged to all varieties of eService-learning. However, we hope the themes discussed here will become a starting point for conceptualizing asset-based community development in online spaces.

1. Explicitly discuss with service-learning students the importance of careful language choices in online communication, as language does not just communicate content,

but shapes the relationship. Discuss samples of online communication for the power dynamics implied by particular words, and practice answering sample communications before responding to a real community member online.

2. Practice with students how to identify and build from the assets shared by community members for the specific online partnership. For example, discuss e-mail interview questions that might highlight the strengths of a nonprofit staff member, or model how to provide asset-based comments on a community member's blog.
3. Provide digital opportunities for community members to control the feedback, support, or interactions they are involved in (e.g., through an author's note or posted statement about the community member's goals for the interaction).
4. Encourage initial digital communication focused solely on relationship-building and ongoing relational (not just task-oriented) interactions integrated with regular partnership activities.
5. Host a class discussion on how to build rapport in online spaces, tailoring the discussion to expressions that would be appropriate for the particular partnership (e.g., emoticons, choice of e-mail salutations and valedictions, warmth of tone, etc.).
6. Follow online communication between students and community members (e.g., have access to Google Docs, read wiki updates, watch screencasts of meetings) with an eye toward instances where online disinhibition or deficit views might be negatively impacting the partnership. Provide specific, regular feedback to students on ways to better implement asset-based, internally focused, and relationship-driven strategies virtually, along with guidance on correctly applying discipline-specific knowledge to the partnership. As Kuh *(2014)* noted, "Feedback is perhaps the most powerful pedagogical prompt in an educator's toolbox" *(p. 95)*.
7. Invite students to share difficult online interactions during class, in order to provide opportunities for the class to brainstorm together how to respond in ways that are asset-based, relationship-driven, and internally focused. Digital community member interactions can also be scheduled

during class time (if the class is face-to-face or synchronous) to provide real-time support.

8. Assign ongoing (not just summative) reflection assignments that will offer insight into how students are taking up asset-based or deficit-based views, and offer comments that redirect toward eABCD worldviews when needed.

Conclusion: The Exigence of eABCD

Battling deficit views of communities is highly complex and nuanced work, and no simple list of recommendations will "solve" the problem of how pernicious discourses shape students' and instructors' worldviews and interactions with community members. Yet the task of preparing students to engage openly and respectfully with a diverse range of community members online has perhaps never been more urgent, not only because of the digital expansion of service-learning, but also because of the changing textures of our culture. Digital social discourse can liberate our less constructive and rhetorically insensitive natures, and online disinhibition can make it easy to dismiss or demean those we may not identify as belonging to our social "tribes."

In this context, service-learning faculty have the opportunity to nurture *different* digital dispositions. The data showed that many of the college students in the partnership, for example, made small shifts over the course of the semester in responding to community members, changing from error hunting and slaying to conversation-based response, from solely task-oriented to relationship-infused work, from seeking to direct the words of others to creating space for others' voices. As they reported in their case study reflections, the college students gained a more nuanced understanding about fostering cyber climates conducive to engaged, exploratory, risk-taking communication across difference.

As illustrated in this study, these students demonstrated strategies that can be used to enact the themes of asset-based community development digitally, as well as areas where deficit views and online disinhibition can pose challenges for students working in online service-learning. This study contributes to the nascent field of eService-learning, addressing gaps in the literature on how foundational theories of service-learning can be adapted for online engagement. However, this study involves a relatively small and homogeneous sample, and it focuses on a single partnership. More research is needed on effective digital dynamics in community partnerships, particularly in a wider range of eService-learning part-

nerships. For example, areas in which additional research would be useful include synchronous partnerships, in which there is less time to think or revise communications; online forum moderation, in which large numbers of people participate and relationships may not be ongoing; and partnerships with nonprofit staff rather than directly with community members, in which power dynamics may be significantly different due to education levels and professional role. Furthermore, traditional ABCD's focus on physical spaces in addition to individual and associational strengths invites deeper exploration into how eABCD can draw on the strengths of digital spaces. And finally, this study focused primarily on individual community member development, whereas traditional ABCD privileges connecting members with similar interests to produce change, which opens questions about how digital engagement can facilitate connection and collaborative action.

As service-learning's focus on building engaged citizens shifts to take into account the forms of digital citizenship that are rapidly becoming central to civic life, scholars and practitioners have opportunities to deeply consider what postures and ways of being can be nurtured in digital service spaces. When students see themselves as part of a virtual community network that builds on the rich assets, internal agency, and relationships of community members, they are better equipped to be competent communicators and ethical decision-makers looking for opportunity wherever they go.

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Appendix A: Author's Note Handout Given to Middle School Students

Explanation & Expectations for Author's Notes

An Author's Note helps you analyze your writing. It also helps your readers have some direction for the feedback you need. An Author's Note, oral or written, gives responders the crucial context they need to know how to respond. It should include three sorts of information.

1. A statement of where the text is in the process of development (first draft, ninth draft, based on an idea I got last night, an attempt to fix the second half by switching it to dialogue, etc.).

2. Your own writer's assessment of the piece (I like this about it because . . . I am worried about this about it because . . .).
3. Any general sort of response you want, any specific questions you want answered. (For example, "Today I think I need Support and Encouragement because I feel fragile about this piece." "Please tell me how you imagine the narrator of this scene, because I'm trying to create a specific kind of voice here and I need to know what kind of voice you get." "I'm worried about how I describe my grandmother here, so I want you to tell me how you imagine her from what I give you.").

Author's Notes are the primary way to focus on the specific feedback you, as writer, need to improve your writing. Consequently, in writing author's notes my advice is to provide as much information to readers as you can, and then to experiment with what response to ask for.

Personal Narrative Author's Note: Format & Questions

Begin with something like: This week we started our personal narratives. We talked about writing about a moment in time when we learned a lesson or learned something about ourselves.

Next paragraph: (In this paragraph tell specifically what you like about your essay and what you feel you need help with).

Last part: Now list four questions you want your readers to address in their feedback. You may choose from the following or write questions of your own.

- Do I have an excellent lead that hooks my audience? If so, what do you like about it specifically. If not, how could I make it better?
- Do I have a good conclusion that wraps up my thoughts about the lesson learned?
- Is my essay well organized with a solid topic sentence and three main ideas with supporting details?
- Can you hear my "voice" throughout the essay? If not, how could I change it?
- What do you think of my word choice? Where could I add more detailed, vivid, and/or natural language?
- Do you feel my essay is clearly focused, and makes you feel like you're experiencing this moment in my life with me?
- Are there mistakes or inappropriate choice in usage?

- Do you feel like this is a solid personal narrative? If not, how can I make it better?

Appendix B: Survey Given to Middle School Students

Online Writing Exchange 2016

Thank you for agreeing to answer the following questions about the online writing exchange from the 2016 school year. I appreciate your honest answers. Please elaborate so we have a solid understanding of your thoughts. I know this was a year ago, but please do your best to answer the questions fully. Thanks again!

1. What impact, if any, did the online writing exchange have on your and your writing? Think about the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) along with anything else you can think of. Be specific.
2. What kind of feedback about your writing from the college students was most helpful? Do you remember any specific comments that you received?
3. What did the college student do—or what should they have done—to build a relationship and make you feel comfortable sharing your writing online?
4. What did the college student do—or what should they have done—to help you build off your strengths as a writer, as opposed to just criticizing?
5. What did the college student do—or what should they have done—to make sure they weren't taking control of your writing or doing it for you? How did they keep you in the driver's seat as author? (Think about how they made comments—how did they do this without doing the writing for you?)
6. What advice would you give to college students who are participating in a writing exchange, or the instructors setting up the writing exchange? In other words, since the objective is to help you become stronger writers, what could we do to better make that happen?

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Book Reviews

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Beckman, M., & Long, J. F. (Eds.). (2016). *Community-based research: Teaching for community impact.* Sterling, VA: Stylus. 360 pp.

Review by Miles A. McNall and Jessica V. Barnes-Najor

The territory of community-engaged (or, if you prefer, service-learning) student learning outcomes is well explored, and its major features have been mapped out (e.g., *Bringle & Steinberg, 2010*). Two domains of community-engaged learning are still relatively uncharted territory: the student learning outcomes and the community outcomes/impacts uniquely associated with community-based *research* (CBR) as an engaged-learning pedagogical strategy. In Beckman and Long's *(2016) Community-Based Research: Teaching for Community Impact*, the contours of these landscapes begin to emerge.

Beckman and Long's edited collection of five theoretical chapters and 13 case studies serves as an invaluable companion to Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, Marullo, and Donohue's *(2003)* earlier work, *Community-Based Research in Higher Education: Principles and Practices*. Both books are essential reading for both those new to CBR as an engaged learning strategy and old hands seeking fresh ideas. Referenced by nearly every author in Beckman and Long, Strand et al.'s classic work provides comprehensive guidance on key elements of a CBR project, including forming and managing partnerships, designing and conducting research, employing CBR as a teaching strategy, and establishing administrative structures and practices to support CBR as a long-term commitment. Beckman and Long's book moves quickly through these preliminaries in a set of four tightly focused theoretical chapters to get to the heart of what makes this book such a valuable contribution to the field of engaged teaching and learning—a rich set of case studies that address key questions about CBR as a strategy for engaged teaching and learning: How can CBR serve as a tool to enhance student learning? What student learning outcomes are uniquely associated with CBR? How can CBR be structured to yield meaningful benefits for communities? How can CBR achieve a balance between enhanced student learning outcomes and meaningful benefits for communities? What opportunities and challenges should practitioners of CBR anticipate across various contexts of application? What structures and practices within institutions of higher education and communities are needed to support both student learning and community outcomes and impacts?

Part I of the book succinctly orients the reader to historical developments and key concepts in community-engaged schol-

arship and frameworks for organizing CBR to achieve a balance between student learning outcomes and community outcomes and impacts. In Chapter 2, Beckman and Wood present the community impact framework (CIF), which is composed of four principles designed to increase the likelihood that CBR projects will benefit communities: (1) organize a group committed to long-term action using an institutional design best suited to the nature of the work, (2) engage in goal setting and other planning activities, (3) involve a diverse set of participants needed to accomplish the group's goals, and (4) regularly review and revise strategies and outcomes.

Part II consists of a single theoretical chapter followed by nine case studies of successful efforts to balance the twin imperatives of student learning and community benefit. In Chapter 5, Jennifer Pizga introduces the POWER model (partnership, objectives, working, evaluation, reflection), which serves both as a simple mnemonic device for teaching CBR and as a framework for planning and implementing CBR projects. Chapters 6 through 14 illustrate the broad variations possible in the application of CBR as a pedagogical strategy in terms of the types of institutions of higher education (IHEs) and community partners involved, the focal problem or issue addressed, and the particular engaged teaching and learning strategy used.

It is interesting that, with the exceptions of the University of Notre Dame and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, a majority of the case studies in Part II were written by faculty at small private liberal arts colleges. Upending the image of liberal arts colleges as nestled within bucolic campuses that isolate them physically and intellectually from the concerns of their surrounding communities, these case studies reveal that many liberal arts colleges are working closely with their surrounding communities to tackle problems of central concern to those communities. The overwhelming majority of community partners in these cases were small local nonprofit organizations whose work focuses on a wide range of issues, including supporting parent engagement in children's schooling, increasing access to fresh local foods, eliminating domestic violence, and reducing lead exposure in children.

The particular engaged teaching and learning strategies employed in these cases are somewhat less varied than their contexts of application. All involved students in some combination of the typical activities of CBR—identifying community concerns; background library research on the issue; gathering, analyzing, summarizing, and interpreting data; presenting findings and recommendations to partners; and reflecting on the implications of

the findings for next steps. The particular curricular structures in which these activities were organized were also very similar. Most cases (seven of nine) involved a single discipline–based course, although there were a few instances of courses, such as action research, that cut across disciplines. Less commonly, students progressed through a sequence of courses, with a CBR project serving as a capstone or senior thesis project. The most elaborate of these sequences, presented by Persichetti, Sturman, and Gingerich in Chapter 13, was the 4-year sequence of Engagement with the Common Good courses at Cabrini College, where students spend the first year exploring their personal beliefs and backgrounds, the second year completing service with a community partner, the third year working toward sustainable structural change through CBR and advocacy projects, and the fourth year developing a capstone project through which students integrate what they have learned with their personal and professional interests.

Part III consists of four case studies of engaged-learning CBR projects that took place within larger long-term efforts aimed at community-wide effects. Here, the IHE partners were more evenly balanced between small liberal arts colleges and large research universities, demonstrating that both kinds of IHEs are involved in long-term large-scale efforts. In Chapter 17, Anthony Vinciguerra describes the Global Solidarity Partnership between St. Thomas University, a small urban Catholic college in Miami Gardens, Florida, and Port-de-Paix, Haiti. This partnership involved establishing fair/direct trade projects between the United States and Haiti for Haitian coffee and artisanal products, as well as a solar energy initiative for a rural impoverished region of Haiti. In Chapter 15, Don Dailey and David Dax describe how Washington and Lee University engaged communities in Rockbridge County, Virginia in a long-term poverty initiative that led to the establishment of a poverty commission and ultimately to changes in local policies.

As noted previously, the book offers two simple frameworks for planning engaged-learning CBR projects—Beckman and Wood's CIF in Chapter 2 and Pizga's POWER model in Chapter 5—that are designed to help IHEs and their community partners collaborate to achieve the twin goals of enhanced student learning and community outcomes and impacts. Because the book presents 13 case studies that document successful efforts to do just that, it is worth pausing to reflect on what a remarkable accomplishment this is. After all, balancing benefits to IHEs and communities has long been recognized as a major challenge for the field of community-engaged scholarship *(Minkler, 2005; Wilson, Kenny, &*

Dickson-Swift, 2017). That so many IHE–community partnerships have accomplished this is worth celebrating. One hopes that this is an indication of the increasing maturity and capability of the field of community-engaged scholarship.

As program evaluators, we found it heartening to read that evaluation is a key element of both the CIF and POWER models and, as we reviewed the case studies throughout the book, the prominence of evaluation in these models drew our attention to questions about what was being evaluated and how. Judging from the details provided in the case studies, many of the CBR efforts appear to have lacked formal evaluations. Furthermore, most case descriptions did not provide sufficient details to independently judge the rigor of efforts to evaluate student learning outcomes or community outcomes and impacts. That is understandable. The addition of such details would have yielded a book of forbidding length. Indeed, one of the strengths of the case studies is their conciseness, which allows for a very broad range of examples of CBR applied in a variety of contexts to be presented in a single volume of manageable length.

Nevertheless, elements that could have been evaluated and succinctly reported include partnerships, processes, early project outputs (e.g., research reports), student learning outcomes, and community outcomes/impacts. In Part II, which is focused on projects striving to achieve both student and community outcomes, the reporting of project outputs, student learning outcomes, and community outcomes/impacts is about evenly balanced: Roughly two thirds of case studies report all three. However, given the prominence of partnerships in the CIF and POWER models, it is surprising that none of the case studies in Part II report assessments of partnerships or processes. After all, it is difficult to achieve intended outcomes and impacts when partnerships and/or processes are flawed. In Part III, which comprises case studies of long-term efforts to achieve community impact, although project outputs and community outcomes and impacts are consistently reported, efforts to evaluate partnerships, processes, or student learning outcomes appear to have been rare, with one exception: Chapter 16 describes a thematic dissertation group focused on the concept of coconstruction among IHE and community partners.

Given the centrality of community outcomes and impacts to the CIF and POWER models, it would seem that greater attention might also have been paid to two vexing issues: the well-known challenges of achieving community change *(Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, Buck, & Dewar, 2011)* and the difficulty of attributing any given

community outcome or impact to a particular project or initiative *(Gates, 2016)*, especially under the circumstances described in Part III, where CBR was embedded within larger long-term community-wide efforts. Welcome follow-ups to this volume might more directly address three issues. The first is the challenge of achieving community outcomes and impacts through CBR when employed as a pedagogical strategy. We believe the challenge of doing this is somewhat underplayed in this book, although Bartel and Nigro do raise the issue briefly in Chapter 8. Because such efforts sometimes fail, the field needs to provide guidance on what to do in such circumstances. The second is strategies for assessing CBR partnerships and processes; several tools for assessing partnerships are readily available (e.g., *Butterfoss, 1998; Oetzel et al., 2015*). The third is appropriate evaluation designs for assessing outcomes and impacts of CBR projects. In contexts such as those described in Part III, where causal attribution is a particular challenge and contribution analysis *(Mayne, 2012)* may be a more sensible strategy, alternatives to experimental and quasi-experimental designs for documenting outcomes and impacts—including outcome mapping *(Earl & Carden, 2002)*, outcome harvesting *(Wilson-Grau & Britt, 2012)*, ripple effects Mapping *(Rani, Templin, Messer, & Chazdon, 2017)*, and the most significant change method *(Davies & Dart, 2005)*—might be considered.

Despite these minor quibbles, we highly recommend Beckman and Long's *(2016) Community-Based Research: Teaching for Community Impact*, both to those who are new to CBR as an engaged learning strategy and to experienced practitioners who are seeking fresh ideas. The pairing of two concise theoretical frameworks for planning and conducting CBR projects—the community impact framework and the POWER model—with several case studies involving different settings, diverse issues, and various pedagogical models achieves two important objectives. First, it gives readers a strong sense of the potential power of CBR as an engaged learning strategy that is capable of simultaneously enriching the student learning experience and producing meaningful benefits for community partners. Second, it gives readers sufficient grounding in the realities of CBR as an engaged learning strategy to make informed choices about how to design their own efforts. As a follow-up to this excellent volume, we call for the articulation of frameworks that are suited to evaluating the partnerships, processes, outputs, student learning outcomes, and community outcomes/impacts uniquely associated with CBR. The use of such frameworks and the more routine reporting of evalu-

ation results will help move the field of CBR in the direction of evidence-informed practice and enhanced student and community outcomes/impacts.

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Shaffer, T. J., Longo, N. V., Manosevitch, I., & Thomas, M. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Deliberative pedagogy: Teaching and learning for democratic engagement*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. 372 pp.

Review by Fay Fletcher

In *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, and Thomas *(2017)* have curated a collection of works intended to demonstrate deliberative pedagogy as "a way of teaching and learning for democracy . . . [and] an essential component of the future of teaching and learning in higher education, especially arguing for this kind of civic purpose in how colleges and universities understand their mission" *(p. xxi)*. They challenge the reader to turn familiar classroom activities, "ordinary routines" *(p. xi)*, into activities that "prepare students to do the work of citizens" *(p. xi)*. They call on educators and institutions to incorporate deliberative pedagogy in their classrooms and *beyond*. In the introduction, Longo, Manosevitch, and Shaffer define deliberative pedagogy as "a democratic educational process and a way of thinking that encourages students to encounter and consider multiple perspectives, weigh trade-offs and tensions, and move toward action through informed judgement" *(p. xxi)*. As someone whose career has focused on social justice education, equity, and the privileging of marginalized cultures and knowledge systems within the post-secondary learning environment, I am intrigued by the priority given to multiple perspectives—the triangulation of engagement, deliberation, and community-based participatory research. As a classroom instructor whose teaching impact is often measured through student evaluations, I also appreciated the weighing of risks (temporary discomfort, student resistance, course evaluation) against the benefit of "space-making: creating and holding space for authentic and productive dialogue, conversations that can ultimately be not only educational but also transformative" *(p. xxi)* and equipping learners with the skills and knowledge to lead those conversations.

Part 1, Theory and History of Deliberative Pedagogy, provides valuable foundational information, including theoretical influences and models that shed light on the pedagogical approach. Martin Carcasson introduces readers to Kaner's model of participatory decision making, providing readers with an opportunity to "think through" the learning path from divergent thinking to the messiness of multiple completing positions to convergent thinking.

The goal of changing views about others' perspectives as opposed to changing people's minds sets a critical, realistic expectation.

In Longo and Gibson's chapter, "Talking Out of School: Using Deliberative Pedagogy to Connect Campus and Community," the authors very intentionally build a bridge between the acts of deliberation, deliberative democracy, and their contribution to solving complex problems with community. For those who see value in privileging other ways of knowing, participating in the cocreation of knowledge, and recognizing the valuable role of stories, this chapter opens space for the application of deliberative pedagogy in this work. The foundation for this approach is laid by Longo, Manosevitch, and Shaffer in the introduction:

> Through the sharing of information and knowledge, and careful listening to people's personal narratives and perspectives, public deliberation can transform individuals' understanding and grasp of complex problems and allow them to see elements of an issue they had not considered previously. *(p. xxiv)*

Part 1 provokes the reader to reflect on their own teaching practices and the ways that institutional systems may (or may not) be supporting learning for participation or leadership roles in deliberative democracy.

At this point, I am intrigued by the possibilities of deliberative pedagogy in my teaching activities. Part 2, Classroom Practices: New Ways of Teaching and Learning, is well placed in this regard. The authors answer the question "How?" through their personal stories of deliberative pedagogy, set in a variety of learning environments from undergraduate to international to discipline-specific applications in communications and science. Although not overly complex in terms of the issues or context within which the deliberative activities take place, be it classroom or conference, these success stories of deliberative pedagogy offer phases or stages of learning. In each case, students are first introduced to deliberative democracy (e.g., theories of public deliberation, deliberative democracy, or deliberative reasoning) and/or are given resources that ground the issue of interest (e.g., framing guides on climate change). Once students identify an issue of interest, they research and write issue briefs in preparation for an experiential activity, like a campus forum, student conference, or in-class deliberative practice.

An increasingly important discourse of local and global importance that could benefit from this framing of multiple perspectives is overlooked in Part 3, Comparative, Gender, and Cross-Cultural Deliberative Pedagogy Practice. Examples of comparative and gender deliberative pedagogy are well represented in the chapters written by Strachan and Al-Atiyat, as are examples of cross-cultural deliberative pedagogy from the international perspective in chapters by Lukianova and Musselman and by Hammer. Notwithstanding these contributions, the volume overlooks an important cross-cultural relationship close to home. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's histories, experiences, and perspectives on topics of national and international concern, including resource extraction, the environment, law and legal systems, education, health, and community social and economic development, contribute to ongoing mistrust. The omission of an example of this cross-cultural deliberative practice is a missed opportunity to contribute to Indigenous–non-Indigenous relationship building.

Part 4, Deliberative Pedagogy and Institutional Change, provides several examples of collectives of people (e.g., academics, centers, and institutes) that "operate at the intersection of the campus and the community . . . [to] . . . nurture and strengthen public life while at the same time enriching higher education" *(p. 128)*. Although not taking away from the exceptional achievements presented in this section, it leaves unanswered the lingering question raised by London of whether the value of this work is "adequately recognized" and will continue to get the support it needs from institutional leaders *(p. 132)*. Promotion and tenure policies that make innovation in teaching and community engagement risky for early-career academics, and the growing focus in post-secondary education on workplace preparation, are just two of the many potential barriers to the integration of deliberative pedagogy across the academy. If we are to realize the goals of deliberative pedagogy, how do we, as individuals and as a collective, participate in changing the culture?

Part 5, Bridging Campus and Community, picks up the call for framing problems or issues not only in expert terms but in terms of "what people hold dear" *(p. xi)*. Assuming this phrase refers to an interpretation and framing from the perspective of those affected by the problem or issue of concern, this approach is well aligned with community-based participatory research and participatory action research, which also make their way into the preface written by Thomas. This collection of stories, like those in the other sections, is thoughtful about breadth and depth of application of pedagogy.

In each case, the author takes the pedagogical approach beyond the classroom, bridging the prevailing divide between campus and surrounding communities.

The book concludes with Part 6, Assessing Deliberative Pedagogy. This section begins with a presentation of deliberative pedagogy as a means for achieving both the civic and economic goals of higher education and as the means for collecting the evidence of its impact using quasi control groups and longitudinal data (Harriger, McMillan, Buchanan, and Gusler). The assessment then takes readers to a rubric for assessing individual learning outcomes (Mehltretter Drury, Brammer, and Doherty) and concludes with a discussion of language and power (Gimenez and Molinari). Moving beyond postsecondary and government expectations for assessment, formative and summative assessments inform the practice of deliberative pedagogy.

Shaffer et al. successfully engage the intended audience of faculty members, academic professionals, and administrators who want to see community partners flourish through deliberative pedagogy efforts. I have not employed deliberative pedagogy in my classes, despite its appropriateness to my philosophy, teaching approach, and learning goals. The authors have not only sparked my interest, but encouraged me to bring deliberative pedagogy to my colleagues as a strategy for achieving our community engagement goals and defining our unique role within the academy. Although there are differences between postsecondary systems and prevailing issues from one state to another, even one country to another, there are many more similarities. The applicability and transferability of deliberative pedagogy to current sociopolitical events, the changing student body, and the critical importance of youth engagement in civic deliberation make *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement* a worthwhile read and a resource to share with others who want to link meaningful work and learning between campus and community.

About the Reviewer

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Hoyt, L. (Ed.). (2017). *Regional perspectives on learning by doing: Stories from engaged universities around the world.* East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. 194 pp.

Review by Elizabeth A. Tryon

Published in the *Transformations in Higher Education: The Scholarship of Engagement* series of the Michigan State University Press, Lorlene Hoyt's *Regional Perspectives on Learning by Doing: Stories from Engaged Universities Around the World (2017)* highlights practices for creating more equitable communities used by partnerships in Scotland, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, Malaysia, Egypt, and the United States. It is a welcome addition to the community engagement literature for practitioners, especially U.S. practitioners looking for program models for authentic, equity-centered engagement.

Looking outside our borders offers a fuller picture of partnerships between academics and communities. In many countries, such partnerships have been moving toward a philosophy of equity in engagement for years in a sophisticated—and in many cases, governmentally supported—fashion. Extensive global engagement networks such as Living Knowledge *(www.livingknowledge.org)* have supported knowledge exchange and collaboration opportunities between countries *(Martin, McKenna, & Treasure, 2011; McKenna, 2017)* for decades. A book-length global report commissioned by the UNESCO Co-Chairs in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education *(Hall, Tandon, & Tremblay, 2015)*, contains case studies in twelve countries that the stories in this volume echo in their collective approach to community development aligned with educational goals of creating engaged citizens. The Talloires Network, which was tapped for this project, is another such network, with institutional members in 77 countries *(http://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/who-we-are/)*. Hoyt invited members of the Talloires Network and their regional partners to help identify potential exemplars of university–community partnerships using a common set of criteria. From the identified partnerships, she and Derek Barker of the Kettering Foundation selected eight representative projects and programs from multiple continents to be profiled in this volume.

The researcher coauthors included academics, community partners, and students. They collaborated over 3 years through workshops, e-mail exchanges, and other meeting opportunities, and analyzed the research data together *(p. xviii)*. Among other commonalities of their work, they noticed several overarching and

instructive components of exemplary partnerships. Each partnership involved different methods and project particulars, but as the coauthors agreed, typically "too much attention is given to fitting learning-by-doing approaches into neat categories" *(p. xix)*, such as service-learning or engaged scholarship. They argued that what is necessary, and revealed by these stories, is *praxis*. They found two practices crucial to creating equitable communities: multidirectional knowledge flow and building inclusive systems of power. All eight institutions see community members as "collaborators, rather than recipients of service" *(p. 9)* to varying degrees, and many chapters describe some type of epiphany in student learning about equity through that process of validating community wisdom and accepting nonuniversity partners as coeducators. Students witness the courage that marginalized communities exhibit in dealing with daily challenges, which helps them to develop humility and empathy. Where national governments promote and fund innovation and systems change work, the projects illustrate the benefits of deep institutional support, as has been previously studied *(Hall, Tandon, & Tremblay, 2015)*.

Following an initial overview by Hoyt, the book is organized into chapters contributed by those involved in each partnership. Similarities appear in a grounded manner, gradually revealing themselves throughout the book. From Mexico's Tecnologico de Monterrey University's "Brigidas Communitarias" program, where a living-learning "prep-visit-plan" cycle is described, to Malaysia's "Learning Lab" in a remote village, being embedded in the community is seen as one crucial component of learning-by-doing. In some examples, conditions converged to create fertile breeding grounds for community–university exchange. In Mexico, synergy between the federal constitution's mandate of 480 hours of social service for a college degree, and the fact that over 53% of the population lives under the federal poverty level, led to programs being developed for students to live in underresourced communities to do project work. The project described here is that of a director of a rural religious organization approaching the university for aid with several initiatives, including seamstress training, K-6 education support, and incubation of small businesses. The story utilizes students speaking in their own words extensively to illustrate their learning outcomes.

The editor describes correspondences between the South African project "Amplifying Community Voices" and the "Living Democracy" partnership of Auburn students with an Appalachian community, drawing parallels in their work for inclusion and

sharing power. The story of the South African partnership begins with a tense recounting of an early attempt at community engagement gone horribly wrong in the postapartheid context. This narrative of a miscommunication with village members that could have ended in violence serves as a blueprint of everything not to do. There is mention of the historical distrust of researchers often written about in the United States *(Jones & Wells, 2007; Minkler, 2004)*. As researchers learned from their early mistakes, the program evolved. Traditional leaders are now asked permission for the students to implement projects, mobilizing mass participation from the villagers to "interrogate pressing issues and make collective decisions about how to address them" *(p. 61)*. Some unique qualities of this model include announcement methods ranging from a "loud hailer" to FaceBook and WhatsApp, and the program's commitment to developing transformative community leaders, "handing over the baton" *(p. 63)* for sustainable rural development. The program aligns with South Africa's National Development Plan to attack poverty, a form of government support similar to that discussed in the chapters about partnerships in Mexico and Scotland. The chapter contains some good charts and lists of student learning outcomes *(p. 69)*. I found that this story embodied a true gold standard of authenticity in CBPR, even including anyone in the village over the age of 7 as a voice in the project.

Although the United States has no federal service mandate or broad government support for engaged partnerships, the Appalachian story of "Living Democracy" shows a community's self-directed efforts through innovative programs that share power with disempowered communities to combat the effects of the abuse of the natural environment by the increasingly deregulated mining industry. The destruction of the natural beauty of the landscape has visited similar tragedies on oppressed families, who had little material goods or power to begin with but were attached and grounded by the beauty and bounty of the land for centuries. Community organizer Marie Cirillo contributes a very personal narrative about her teaching. One of her teaching practices is honoring and recognizing that—despite decades of exploitation, drug issues, and unemployment—there are hidden layers of courage and character that stereotyping this population doesn't serve *(Knight, Poteete, Sparrow, Wrye, & Cirillo, 2002)*. Her unvarnished writing tone contrasts with that in sections written by her coauthor, Auburn professor Mark Wilson, and clearer transitional framing would have helped readers shift mental "voice" gears. A simple but meaningful

table *(p. 159)* illustrates Cirillo and Wilson's philosophy of moving from service to political engagement/living democracy.

Reminiscent of the asset-based community development (ABCD) model *(Kretzmann, McKnight, & Puntenny, 2005)*, and referencing David Mathews's work with the Kettering Foundation, the "Activate" program at the University of Glasgow is a community development degree for working adults. Many participants are from Glasgow's East End, an area made victim of the "race to the bottom" impact of globalization—rife with unemployment and associated social issues. The brilliance of this model is its "grow your own" philosophy. Using a Freirean innovative curriculum, students are pulled from a pool of community activists who want to move beyond Band-Aid approaches to bring about systemic change. They receive training in community development and then set out as leaders back in their neighborhoods. Many of the participants reported historically having felt that they had received messages that they did not belong at a university. One Activate student shared, "Never in a million years did I think I would ever be going to university—except maybe as a janitor" *(p. 47)*. How compelling a story, considering that the University of Glasgow, founded in 1451, could be seen as epitomizing the ivory tower.

The "Refugee Action Support" program in Sydney uses mutual goals of teaching-while-learning to deal with refugees' culture and language problems, an approach that may be useful to many nations currently facing record numbers of people fleeing violence or political persecution. Students from marginalized backgrounds, some migrants themselves, are recruited as literacy tutors for Sudanese, Afghani, and other refugees. The chapter contains considerable detail on how the program works, including successes and challenges, the history, activities, funding, and a good rationale for the university's preference for the term *community engagement* instead of *service-learning (p. 88)*. This refugee settlement model offers some good lessons, including acknowledging and working within limitations and achieving sustainability through individual dedication and institutional commitment.

Also instructive of working across boundaries, authors from the recently created American University of Cairo recount that in the context of Arab Spring and the resultant political instability, its "Lazord Academy" internship program has built bridges between students and marginalized communities. The program pays close attention to mentorship of youth who, due to the "youth bulge," have little hope for employment, making them ripe for recruitment to less constructive activities *(p. 129)*. Inspired by a Talloires-

awarded program at Portland State University, the authors mention the volatile political climate and how they used an ecological perspective—chaotic versus strategic—for the program's beginnings *(p. 131)* to allow the "messiness" to gel organically. Within 4 years, the Lazord partnership has developed into a regional program with three locations, each supported by the U.S.-based Lazord Foundation, an achievement that seems amazing in the context of the dynamic, shifting political landscape.

The story that felt like an outlier in terms of the stated best practices of inclusion and power sharing is of the International Medical University (IMU) of Malaysia's "Village Adoption" partnership with the village of Tekir. Until the penultimate page of this long, detailed chapter, written by two IMU medical faculty members, charity-model language crops up repeatedly. With its undertones of neocolonizing superiority, the depiction of the health project that emerges seems stratified and unidirectional. However, in the conclusion, reflecting on Boyte and others they have cited, the authors come to the realization seemingly in real time on the page that the project began almost in direct opposition to good "civic professionalism" *(p. 122)*. Acknowledging this deficit-model start, the authors express their belief that the partnership is now beginning to evolve. The utility of this chapter would have increased had the authors begun with the caveat that they had learned the hard way to walk the talk of "creating more equitable and prosperous communities" *(p. xx)*—and that rather than having a 4-year lag in achieving the beginnings of equity, it's best to begin programs with intentional community stakeholder interest.

Most of these narratives are very accessible, although in the stories from the Global South, some sections could benefit from more situating context—in the South Africa chapter, one student talks of expectations for their participation in community engagement including "monetary benefits." This was surprising to me. In the United States, I've not read of students having an expectation that they will be paid for doing service-learning. Likewise, some country-specific language, such as the term *hailer*, could have used more explanation. I would encourage leaders of these programs to continue learning from each other and looking at other global exemplars to push the boundaries of their community capacity-building skills. Readers interested in furthering their practice can likewise gain much helpful knowledge from this book as a piece of their quest to create more equitable community and global engagement.

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