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Reflective Essays

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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.

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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.

Research Articles

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University of Denver

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.

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.

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.

Laura Boynton Hauerwas
Providence College

Meaghan Creamer
Vanderbilt University

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.

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University of Nebraska at Lincoln

Jennifer M. Selting Troester
O'Neill Public Schools

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.

Book Reviews