

Note from the Editor . . . Issue 23(2)

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An “occasional” section in *JHEOE* features “Dissertation Overviews” showcasing emerging scholarship in the field through summaries of recently completed dissertations. This issue features Farnier’s qualitative single-case study presenting an adaptive “braid” model for understanding and implementing community engagement on the institutional level, particularly through the impact of the actions of a “critical mass” of boundary spanners. What struck me about Farnier’s study is her observation that participants “advance community engagement efforts through action (rather than rhetoric)” (p. 150). Meditating on these words, it is the *action* of engagement and how those actions are understood, analyzed, and evaluated, that is omnipresent in this issue of the *Journal*.

To engage—the verb—means to become involved and immerse oneself in an action or occupation. It is the product of the various actions of engagement—immersion in community-based participatory research, service-learning in varied contexts, reflective dialogue between university-community partners, educational outreach that saves lives, to name a few—that is presented by the authors in this issue. How we, as engaged scholars, take action and make meaning from those actions rather than rely on rhetoric alone is an interesting perspective from which to examine the scholarship in this issue.

Leading off, the “Research Articles” section features Rodriguez and McDaniel whose community-based participatory research study analyzes focus group discussions between immigration researchers and practitioners (partners). Their discussion of the challenges and subsequent opportunities associated with conducting CBPR in the immigration field provides a useful primer to scholars interested in putting CBPR approaches into action. Additionally, the findings from a dialogue between re-

searchers and practitioners are also echoed in Shannon, Borron, Kurtz, Weaver, Otto-Wang, and Gilliam’s article, “Translating Across Registers: Pragmatist Inquiry in Engaged Scholarship.” The authors dissect how pragmatist inquiry can be used as a framework for community-engaged research through an analysis of a reflective conversation between university and community partners unpacking their collaboration on a previously conducted photovoice study of food bank clients. These conversations between university faculty and partners in both articles illustrate the various tensions and successes in this work, and provide valuable insight for other research teams and collaborators seeking to employ a CBPR or community-engaged research framework.

Finally, Lehmann’s study on the influence of spirituality, an underexplored and potentially misunderstood dimension of student engagement in service and service-learning in higher education, rounds out the research articles featured in this issue. This quantitative study examines dimensions of spirituality as predictors of intention to serve among students at a faith-based institution, with implications for more spiritually diverse populations at other nonfaith-based institutions.

The “Reflective Essays” featured in this issue examine aspects of leadership in community engagement from varying perspectives, such as, the leadership role of boundary spanning individuals; and the role of potentially boundary spanning institutions like public libraries that can serve as sites for community-based scholarship. First, Schyndel, Pearl, and Purcell present a critical analysis drawing comparisons and distinctions between Weerts and Sandmann’s (2010) boundary spanning model and Dostilio’s (2017) community engagement professional’s competency model. This essay, which also outlines areas for future research, calls for

employing these complementary models as a way to more broadly examine, understand, and support those individuals doing community engagement work at institutions. Conversely, Taylor, Pratt, and Fabes widen the lens from the individual to the institution, making the case for aligning the goals of public libraries—which often already function as community centers responsive to community needs—with the goals of community-based research. The authors present a compelling argument for how community-based research conducted between university researchers and libraries can inform programming, provide benefits for families engaged at the library, and benefit developmental scientists who are partnering with libraries.

A robust “Projects with Promise” section features a number of articles examining service-learning and other community-based learning experiences in a range of contexts (i.e., from county probation services to grant writing for non-profits), but from previously understudied outcomes and with an attention to community impact. Each article in this section describes community engaged work—whether engaged teaching and learning or engaged scholarship—along with the formative assessment and research associated with the project’s impact. Bigelow and Rodgers describe and analyze the student learning outcomes and partner impact of a service-learning experience that places students with non-profit agencies through the Social Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation (SEPA) grant-writing program at Austin College. Similarly, Ananth, Willard, and Herz analyze outcomes related to civic professionalism, or the ways professionals in all settings contribute to the public good, through a service-learning experience working with probation and criminal justice

partners. In anticipation of the upcoming 2020 election, Rank, Mushtare, Tylock, and Huynh present a valuable study measuring the impact of a voter mobilization campaign through interdisciplinary service-learning courses during the 2016 election cycle. In a “Handwashing Educational Toolkit,” the authors representing multiple university and community partners describe the iterative development and impact of a program designed to improve the health outcomes of farmworkers facing pesticide exposure, and the participatory process to connect farmworker outreach partners and university researchers. Finally, Doberneck and Dann present a visual tool for representing and measuring voice, authority, and aspects of collaboration in community-university-partnerships using the “Degree of Collaboration Abacus Tool.” The authors present multiple examples of the abacus’s application and uses as another tool to more fully understand and describe crucial elements of university-community collaboration that are often difficult to measure and assess.

We hope that you will find much inspiration for your own scholarship as well as a diverse collection of work in this issue that spurs you to action. In addition, JHEOE underwent a facelift this summer with a redesign that conserves paper when articles are printed, but that also improves screen readability for those browsing online. On behalf of the editorial team of JHEOE, we hope you enjoy the new “look” of the Journal, but find it is still the same quality scholarship that we have been publishing since 1996. Many thanks once again to the associate and managing editors, reviewers, and authors whose time, talent, and effort have resulted in this new collection of scholarship advancing our field.



References

- Dostilio, L. D. (2017). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field*. Boston, MA: Campus Compact.
- Weertz, D. J., & Sandmann, L. R. (2010). Community engagement and boundary-spanning roles at research universities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 81(6), 632-657.