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JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

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JOURNAL OF
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OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Volume 24, Number 2 , 2020

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From the Editor...

Shannon (Wilder) Brooks



As we put the finishing touches on this issue of *JHEOE*, I am mindful that all is not well in our world. The most devastating pandemic in a century still has our global community in its grips. Fear, anxiety, political unrest, and conflict seems omnipresent. How will we, as those who carry the banner for the importance of institutional engagement with community issues, respond to this moment? How will our response to COVID-19 change the practice of community engagement in higher education, and will it be for the better? Future issues of *JHEOE* will directly address the impact of COVID-19 on our collective practice and scholarship, and the engaged scholarship that emanates from this crisis.

In the meantime, it is easy to read the ordered pages of this journal and forget that all of the scholarship represented here was born from crises large and small. In reality, it was constructed in a much less linear fashion than our structured methodologies and findings would suggest; scholars are, after all, always looking for ways to create some sort of order out the epistemological chaos. As you read through what is a diverse and interesting collection of articles in this issue of *JHEOE*, I ask you to consider what it takes to create these neatly defined tables and findings, and how the tidily presented research questions may represent sleepless nights of concern for hurting people in our communities.

Responding to crisis is not new in community engagement. In a fundamental way, it our bread and butter. However, the life and death consequences of COVID-19 bring the question of the impact, relevance, and the role of engaged scholarship as a response to any form of crisis to the forefront. Are there spaces in our engaged scholarly practice to be more transparent about the pain, trauma, and search for justice we are striving for in our work now and beyond COVID-19? Could we use this crisis moment to seek ways

to make the humanity that motivates our research more transparent and accessible beyond these pages?

Our lead research article, "Because We Love Our Communities: Indigenous Women Talk About Their Experiences as Community-Based Health Researchers" strives for just this kind transparency, authenticity, and humanity. Cidro and Anderson's study examining the challenges of Indigenous women scholars is as provocative as it is personal. Through participant interviews, including interviews with each of the authors, this study examines how the identity and positionality of Indigenous women who are deeply engaged in community-based participatory research—often within their own communities—leads to complex and intertwining identities. As underrepresented scholars, they also face challenges and additional demands navigating the university promotion and tenure process.

In this issue's second research article, Heasley and Terosky tackle another dimension of faculty experience, as they examine how faculty perceive community-engaged teaching's affect on student learning using a conceptual framework of learning, which includes both the learner's experiences, identities, and perspectives, and the context for learning. For service-learning this context is translated to community settings, making this a promising framework for service-learning research.

Once again, articles in the "Projects with Promise" section represent an interesting collection of early stage studies of community-university outreach and engagement partnerships. Featured are three manuscripts focused on K-12 partnerships from a variety of angles, as well as a case study of one university's model for institutionalizing community engagement planning. First, "Striving for Equity: Community-Engaged Teaching Through a Community Practitioner and Faculty Coteaching Model,"

chronicles the Practitioner Scholars Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. In this program, community practitioners and university faculty are paired in a coteaching model designed to foster more equitable relationships in community-engaged teaching and learning courses. Orellana and Chaitanya present an initial study of this coteaching program that challenges scholars and practitioners in the field to critique what coteaching looks like in practice, unpacking the issues of equity and power in these relationships and the sometimes conflicted understanding of social justice goals amongst coteachers. This is an important foundational study for what it means to create equitable and practical coteaching environments.

Scott, Sharma, Godwyll, Johnson, and Putnam's article, "Building on Strengths to Address Challenges: An Asset-based Approach to Planning and Implementing a Community Partnership School," discusses the use of asset mapping and community needs assessments to engage a robust set of partners in the development of a comprehensive community school. In addition, the authors reflect on how they addressed a history of broken promises in the community from external partners, and the new relationships that had to be forged to create a partnership that values parent and community knowledge in the school environment.

In a novel partnerships that brings middle and high school teachers onto campus to observe and provide feedback to STEM faculty, "The University Classroom Observation Program" presents an NSF-funded outreach and engagement partnership between the University of Maine and the Maine Center for Research in STEM Education (RiSE Center), designed to improve science education and teacher preparation. Vinson, Stetzer, Lewin, and Smith dissect how the Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) tool was used in this study by K-12 teachers, and present findings that indicate clear mutual benefit to both university faculty and K-12 teachers who participated.

Turning from K-12 to higher education's commitment to institutionalizing community engagement, Cunningham and Smith add a new tool to the community engagement toolbox by analyzing the University of Louisville's implementation of unit level engagement plans to support institutional

community engagement goals and priorities. "Community Engagement Plans: A Tool for Institutionalizing Community Engagement," offers an interesting primer on one institution's process for creating flexible frameworks in support of academic and administrative units as they seek to expand engagement efforts without a "one size fits all" approach to achieving community engagement goals of the university.

The featured "Reflective Essay" in this issue is by a research team consisting of student and faculty coauthors. In "Student Engagement and Deep Learning in Higher Education: Reflections on Inquiry-Based Learning on Our Group Study Program Course in the UK," the authors reflect on a Canadian group study program in the United Kingdom in social work education and the application of inquiry-based learning. It is exciting to see student voices featured in this article as coauthors rather than participants, and even more valuable to hear their call to higher education broadly to further implement inquiry-based learning as a way to prepare students for global citizenship and community engagement.

Finally, the conclusion to our latest issue of *JHEOE* is Susan B. Harden's book review of two important resources: Dostilio's (2017) edited volume, *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for an Emerging Field* and a companion guidebook authored by Dostilio and Welch (2017). As Harden suggests, these complementary texts published by Campus Compact represent a valuable contribution to the professional practice of community engagement by articulating a competency model both from both a theoretical and practical perspective for those whose day-to-day roles are designed to support community engaged work in its many formats and institutional structures.

As always, I thank our *JHEOE* editorial team, associate editors, reviewers, and authors for the months of work and care that goes into the making of an issue of the journal. To all of our readers and supporters, I wish you good health, and the wisdom, compassion, and endurance needed right now to move through this unprecedented moment.



Because We Love Our Communities: Indigenous Women Talk About Their Experiences as Community-Based Health Researchers

Kim Anderson and Jaime Cidro

Abstract

An increasing focus on Indigenous scholars in faculty hiring across academic institutions in North America has led to burgeoning scholarship and discourse about Indigenous research methodologies. Indigenous health research has set the pathway around Indigenous research ethics and community-based participatory research. Embedded in this scholarship is the discussion of relationships as central to the research, so who we are, personally and professionally, is integral to the research that is done. This article explores the experiences of university-based Indigenous women who perform community-based participatory health research and how personal and professional identities factor into this kind of work. Several key findings emerged, including identity, emotional investment and responsibility, workplace challenges related to gender and Indigeneity, and the needs of university-based Indigenous women researchers.

Keywords: Indigenous health, community based research, research ethics, Indigenous research ethics, Indigenous academics



I think as researchers we engage in community-based work both because we love our communities, and because they love us. (Research Participant 1)

The last two decades have seen a burgeoning scholarship and dialogue about Indigenous research methodologies; this body of literature has included several monographs and collections (Absolon, 2011; Chilisa, 2012; Denzin et al., 2008; Kovach, 2009; Mertens et al., 2013; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Recent reviews of Indigenous research methodologies and methods have identified key and common characteristics, including involving Indigenous peoples in all phases of the research, recognizing and prioritizing Indigenous ways of knowing, and grounding the research in relationships and the interconnectedness of peoples and all things (Drawson et al., 2017; Levac et al., 2018).

In a systematic review of 64 articles referring to Indigenous research methodologies, Drawson et al. (2017) identified “contextual reflection” as one of three components that cut across the articles they reviewed, stating that “researchers must situate themselves and the Indigenous peoples with whom they are collaborating in the research process” (p. 15). Relationship building has been identified as critically important to Indigenous research methodologies (Flicker & Worthington, 2012; Marsh et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2017; Riddell et al., 2017) and, as Drawson et al. (2017) suggested, these relationships are built from contextual places and identities. Who we are, personally and professionally, is thus integral to the research that is done.

Although researchers have written about their experiences conducting community-based Indigenous health research in a number of recent articles (Baker, 2016; Dockstator et al., 2016; Gabel & Cameron,

2016; Gaudet, 2014; Henry et al., 2016; LaVallee et al., 2016; Tobias et al., 2013), discussion about the influence of researcher identity has been limited. Some researchers have written about insider/outsider dynamics of performing Indigenous research (Innes, 2009; de Leeuw et al., 2012; Marsh et al., 2015), and others have asserted the importance of being forthcoming about who we are when we enter into research relationships (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Riddell et al., 2017; Wiebe et al., 2016). Ball and Janyst (2008) have suggested that “researchers who hope to engage with Indigenous people need to be able to account for themselves, for example, by providing details of their ancestry, family life, scholarship, and intentions, not only during initial introductions, but throughout a project” (p. 38), and Kovach (2015) has stated, “In applying Indigenous methodologies, researchers are putting forth an identity standpoint (whether they desire this or not) and there is an expectation for them to engage in anti-colonial work” (p. 57).

As Indigenous women in higher education who perform community-based participatory research (CBPR), we (Author 1 and Author 2) were curious about how personal and professional identities factor into the kind of work we do; we wanted to know more about our peers’ experiences as female Indigenous university-based health researchers. Castleden et al. (2012) have expressed a similar interest in their exploration of the tensions involved between theorizing and practicing Indigenous CBPR. They concluded their paper by suggesting, “It would be interesting to expand on this study to look at whether more academic women are engaging in CBPR, why they are choosing this path, and how they juggle their academic-community-personal responsibilities” (Castleden et al., 2012, p. 176).

Methodology

In order to explore the experiences of university-based Indigenous women health researchers, we began by interviewing each other. We then invited eight of our peers to engage in “conversational method” (Kovach, 2010) one-on-one discussions with us about Indigenous research methodologies; Indigenous community-based health research; working in a post-Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®) environment; capacity challenges; issues

related to Indigenous identities; issues related to gendered identities; and any advice they might have for junior Indigenous colleagues taking up this work. We knew all of these women personally, socially, and professionally, and felt a kinship with them as part of a small national community of university-based Indigenous women health researchers. In some cases, our participants have been leaders in initiating the new research ethics and self-determined research practices in Indigenous communities and in fact have acted as mentors to us. Other participants, like us, “grew up” through these Indigenous health networks and practices that were established by such mentors. As authors of this article, and subjects deeply embroiled in the experiences we were asking about, we decided to begin our inquiry by interviewing each other. We have included our own interview material as data, as it was in keeping with the data we collected out of the semistructured discussions with our colleagues and suited the autoethnographic nature of our questions. We feel it unnecessary to discuss issues of bias and validity, as this article is based on not only the authors’ personal experiences, but also those of our closest colleagues.

We began by asking what the women understood and practiced as Indigenous research methodologies, and then we moved on to discuss the challenges and experiences particular to our identities as Indigenous women who are also university-based researchers. We wanted to know what it means to work in practice within the theories, principles, and standards that have been introduced. We were also interested in the lens that the women bring to this work, and what it means from their/our positioning as invested Indigenous community members. Interviews were conducted in person where possible, although due to distance, some were conducted over the phone. We then transcribed all of the interviews and coded this information in NVivo (Version 12), using the constant and comparative method and drawing from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to identify recurring themes. Using these same transcripts, we have already written about how our gendered, Indigenous identities have influenced our work, and how the work has influenced us personally and professionally (Anderson & Cidro, 2019). In this article, we will focus on how our identities and positioning as Indigenous women have influenced our experiences in conducting

Indigenous community-based research. We have drawn from all of the conversations, including conversations with each other, as our identities and experiences align, intertwine, and inform the questions we wanted to explore. The research underwent ethics review and approval through the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board. Several key findings emerged, including identity, emotional investment and responsibility, workplace challenges related to gender and Indigeneity, and the needs of university-based Indigenous women researchers.

Findings

Situating Ourselves: Identity, Emotional Investment, and Responsibility

Our first finding was that the participants' motivations and approaches in doing community-based health research were very much connected to personal identities, commitments, and responsibilities to community. Participant 8 equated her Indigenous identity with Indigenous methodologies, stating, "I feel like any research I do as an Indigenous person is going to be an Indigenous methodology . . . because of who I am and where I come from and the things that I care about." Another participant, who performs archival research as part of her health research, talked about feeling a duty to protect the identities of the participants she finds, even though this is not a requirement. When asked why, she explained, "Because I find my own relatives in the archives" and noted, "You have to be careful with the information because some of the things [you find] are not happy things" (Participant 1). A number of participants talked about being invested in the research because of kinship responsibilities and relationships, including close as well as extended kinship networks. Participant 5 stated, "Ninety percent of our [research] relationships have nothing to do with academia," noting that our work has more to do with responsibilities to our communities.

Situating ourselves as Indigenous women who are part of communities, however they are defined, was thus identified as a central part of our CBPR work. Participant 7 even talked about feeling awkward doing research with Indigenous peoples other than her own: "I don't know anything about research in the north. I'm from rural [province] and so I felt weird about [getting

an opportunity] to do research in an Inuit community. I was very, very uncomfortable doing that."

Some participants, however, mentioned that doing work in our own communities can be more difficult than doing it elsewhere. As one participant stated: "Don't do research in your own community; they will play you!" (Participant 3). This was said in a lighthearted manner but followed with a story about how one of her students was taken advantage of by her own community. This participant and another pointed out that having research funds can put one at risk of being pressured to use them in ways that are not suitable to the goals of the research. In cases like this, the researcher can get caught between the community and the institutions and funders they are accountable to as researchers.

Whether doing work in our own communities or in new ones, being grounded in one's own Indigenous culture and identity was deemed significant. Prior to beginning her own research project, Participant 6 was told by an Elder, "You have to go home, and be grounded in your roots. Know your culture. Know your own way. That way you don't go in asking misleading questions or making assumptions." The participant took away the message that she needed to be more grounded in her own people. She noted, "Don't assume because you're Ojibwe that you are going to understand the Cree way."

The expectation that we be culturally grounded in our own cultures as Indigenous women can bring added pressures, however, as noted by this participant:

The one thing that I have a hard time with in the community is the demand that we know our language, our culture. And then that we also have PhDs. That is the new standard. . . . So there is this new demand. We are supposed to publish books, get research grants and teach—and at the same time, we are supposed to go to language classes, become fluent in our adult years and speak the language. [People] can hardly speak [the language], but they want you to—then we will get the respect from the community. (Participant 5)

This participant reflected on the amount of work involved in increasing culture-based

knowledge. Finding the time required to master things like one's Indigenous language is very difficult, especially if one is a mother. She stated, "It's a very unfair demand by the community," adding, "It's just, almost unhuman. You just can't do it."

Engaging in research that involves other Indigenous peoples, whether near or far, can involve emotional investment as well as stress. Participant 6, for example, talked about doing research in a province far from her home territory, and how, in spite of the pressures she faced, she felt a duty to keep going:

[The community] needs to know we are doing this because we care. I've been thinking a lot about caring, and what occurs when we go into a community, especially as Indigenous researchers. I don't live in the community. I have this luxurious life and reality, and the more I go, the more I care, and the more I feel, and then the more I have things to say, and the more I want. Then I feel more responsible; a greater pressure to do a better job. I can't shut it off now. I couldn't quit even if I wanted to. I'm in—because of my investment, because of my relationship, and because I care. Once you go off that cliff there is no going back to turn that switch off and have amnesia. (Participant 6)

She talked further about how Indigenous researchers may need to "have good tools" for healing in the event that you hear hard stories in the community, pointing out that these tools are needed "when it touches a part of you that is unhealed" with reference to colonial-induced trauma.

Although this participant talked about feeling a duty to the youth in her research community in particular, other participants talked about having a primary responsibility to the Indigenous organizations they work with, especially if those organizations asked them to assist. A few participants talked about how they felt they weren't able to live up to the standards of community service, given the other pressures on their time they experience as faculty members:

I feel like I should be in [the community] more. . . . I do my best for capacity building, but again I still

feel like I should be doing more. But if I do more there, then I'm not doing a good enough job with my teaching or I'm not publishing enough. There's always that. (Participant 7)

Some of the women expressed the difficulties in negotiating their position as university-based Indigenous researchers. A few talked about how having a PhD can put you at odds with the community, and cause tensions in relationship building: "It's assumed that, because I'm a professor, I'm self-serving" (Participant 6). Participant 3 and Participant 2 offered corroboration:

Even if we don't try, just by virtue of having achieved this education, people feel intimidated. I sure as hell don't go around saying I'm doctor, blah blah blah. Even with my own family, they can get their head wrapped around teaching, but the rest of it—if I told them what I do, it would be a silent room. It's about how to be in that in-between space. (Participant 3)

I feel more restricted in terms of having to get over that barrier of people seeing me as a university-based researcher. You know what I'm talking about—"all you academics." I think anybody who has a PhD in Indian country—that's not really to your advantage. So you don't talk about that and you try to approach it from [a] different way—I think the big tension is getting over that level of trust, or lack of trust, resentment. (Participant 2)

Some participants talked about increasing pressures of being perceived as self-serving academics as the discourse of self-determined research evolves and is taken up uncritically. One participant gave the example of a long-term research relationship that she had with a community. The relationship had evolved respectfully and organically, but it changed after her community partner attended a workshop on OCAP® and community-driven research. The community partner left the workshop with the understanding that complete community control was the new bar. She began to criticize the researcher for how the project had evolved and limited research team access to the data they had collected, which

they needed to complete the project.

In terms of other identity challenges, participants acknowledged our power and privilege as university-based researchers. Some talked about how this identity can be hard to reconcile when we work in community:

We can do all that we can to break down some of those barriers but there's always tensions there. I'm the one who holds the grants. That feels sometimes icky to me for some reason, you know? . . . You can be the best community-based participatory researcher, and Indigenous person. But at the end of the day, [you are] the university researcher and they're the community. Even though you grew up in community—it's still going to be there. (Participant 4)

Participant 8 described the conflicting feelings we can have as Indigenous women when we are unusual in our families and communities by virtue of our privilege as academics:

I have a lot of guilt that I earn what I earn. People always say like "God damn it, you have worked so hard all your life. And you know overcame, pretty unimaginable things" . . . and you know, I did have crappy stuff happen to me because I am a Native person. (Participant 8)

Because of these conflicting spaces, some participants noted that it is all the more important to create "hybrid spaces" for Indigenous students where they can find research opportunities with faculty who are both members of community and academics.

Workplace Challenges Related to Gender and Indigeneity

Several participants talked about how the pace of their research is compromised by administrative and service loads related to their Indigenous identities. They noted that university service is often overwhelming for young Indigenous academics who are asked to take on responsibilities that would normally go to older, tenured faculty. Some felt a pressure to take these positions to support the work of "Indigenizing the academy," but also because they worried that the work

would not get done, or that it would fall to another one of their Indigenous colleagues. Two participants describe these experiences:

If you're a new researcher embedded in a university, you might be the Native at that university, and everybody and their dog wants you on every committee because you have to bring the Native perspective. (No pressure!) You know if you don't go there won't be anybody there who is speaking on behalf of Indigenous people. So you go and you end up working double time at everything because you're representing your community, and then you're doing the job that everybody else has to do. (Participant 3)

Being the [director-administrator] wasn't really a choice. I could've said no. [My Indigenous colleague] could have said no to being the director of [other area] too—she still didn't have her PhD. . . . Then I look at my non-Indigenous women colleagues who will go and take their vacations, and who can say "no"—who can pick and choose the administrative positions when it's convenient for them and their careers. As junior faculty, and as Indigenous women scholars, we just don't have that same sort of control. Everyone says, "You could say no." But then someone else gets it and then it puts on [Indigenous colleague]. (Participant 7)

Some participants talked about being invited to join research teams, take the lead on grants or apply for funding that is not of particular interest, mainly because their positioning as Indigenous scholars helps the grant application. These requests often come from departmental colleagues or community members or organizations, making it difficult to say "no."

You can be pulled in many directions; some well-intentioned, and some not well-intentioned partners want to engage with Indigenous communities. You [are asked to] become their partner, or their token partner, because you are Indigenous, and/or you have experience working with Indigenous communities. (Participant 9)

Gender also feeds into both the opportunities and challenges of the work of the women. The book *Presumed Incompetent*, which deals with the discrimination that women in general face in the academy—where men are presumed to be more competent than women (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., 2012)—was identified by a participant. Our participants made comments that supported the claims made by this research: “It’s difficult to be a woman researcher and negotiate everybody’s expectations, and then know that your male counterparts are getting a much more relaxed . . . not judgement, maybe but status. They achieve it much easier, without so much questioning” (Participant 5). Participant 2 also described this gender component:

I think people are more likely to take advantage of us as women, or be—maybe not downright disrespectful—but dismissive of our skills and training and just see us coming with money that they can use to do whatever they want to do. (Participant 2)

Some of the women talked about the advantages and disadvantages of being mothers and researchers at the same time. On the one hand, motherhood can be advantageous, as it provides a level of familiarity in terms of building relationships with research communities. Several of the women have taken their children with them on research trips; all of this is aided by the general welcoming that children are given in research communities:

I ended up bringing my child a lot to [the research community] from the time he was a baby until he was 2 and couldn’t fly for free anymore. I think that really helped because of the research I was doing on family health, in terms of legitimizing myself as having babies just like everyone else, and having poop on my elbow just like everybody else. (Participant 4)

In terms of disadvantages, participants noted that mothering also adds to the stress and increases overall workload. Some of the women talked about having to go back to work too early from maternity leave for financial reasons, and others talked about how they worked all through their maternity leave due to the demands of their

careers and professions. The mothers talked about how workload challenges are further exacerbated in contexts where women still do most of the caregiving. One (Participant 7) talked about the multiple pressures of “administrative responsibilities and home responsibilities and community responsibilities,” stating, “I think it’s a lot harder for women and Indigenous women in particular. I feel like . . . I’m a shitty mom sometimes, or a shitty wife. I’m so overworked, I just can’t seem to do anything really well.” Another compared her situation with male colleagues who might not have children or others they support, or who might not be the ones worrying about day care pickup or running home to cook supper. She referred to the pressures of being expected to work in community while at the same time being judged for the time this takes from family:

If I left my kids to run to ceremonies all the time, teach language, I know the community would judge me as being selfish. “When are you ever with your kids?” Like I’ve heard that. You know, because they want you to be a stay at home mom. So the fact that you are a working mom, [they are] already not thrilled with your mothering. And then if they see you at all these language classes—I have got that question: “When do you have time for your kids?” “Who is watching your kids?” (Participant 5)

In spite of the challenges related to identity, participants also offered positive comments about how their Indigenous female identities aided in the production of knowledge. As one participant put it: “The positives of being an Indigenous woman researcher is our growing together. One woman said, ‘You are really helping us turn new soil’ by simply asking the questions in the way that I do” (Participant 6).

Needs of University-Based Indigenous Women Researchers

Participants indicated that the effort and time required to build community relations and then produce deliverables in CBPR is still not recognized in the academy. Participant 7 mentioned completing a lengthy community-based report from one of her projects, which, in spite of taking years of work, went in as a “report” on her c.v. She noted that this does not gain much

recognition in the academy compared to an academic paper, “even though it was way more work than any publication.” Other participants talked about how community-based research work remains invisible and can threaten career advancement:

This problem has been noted in terms of the trajectory of Indigenous scholars in faculty positions. We often find that it’s longer points to tenure, and there are fewer people in tenure track positions to begin with. Often it’s because of the time that we devote to our students and these community-based research projects that we are in. We don’t publish as much, etc. We have been talking for a long time about having those things taken into consideration when you are going through tenure review. But my department would know nothing about that. (Participant 1)

Recognition of the time involved in doing Indigenous community-based research, especially for untenured scholars, is thus important. As Participant 1 noted, “You have to be prepared for some pieces of your work to take a very, very long time to reach the public.”

Having Indigenous mentors was noted as critical for both students and faculty. Participant 9 commented on the need for more Indigenous faculty members, stating, “You could have a supervisory committee that doesn’t have any Indigenous people on it. I can’t imagine what that’s like.” She added that Indigenous faculty members “are too few and far between—and they are overworked.” Another participant identified a need for more senior Indigenous women scholars and elders who are well versed in the academic world. She suggested that such mentors need to be “on the committees and in partnerships and every part of our research relationship” (Participant 6). Some of the women talked about being isolated in their departments; as Participant 6 remarked, “Who do you talk to about your experiences?” Others talked about the benefits of having Indigenous scholars in their academic environments:

We need to have a network, and not just to have a researching network, but a network where we can actually do things [together] and talk

about stuff. We are lucky. My office is like this little oasis of Indigeneity where people get my jokes and we can talk. But what if one was all alone? (Participant 2)

Indigenous mentors were thus considered critical. When asked for her advice to younger scholars, Participant 9 suggested, “Seek out a mentor, even beyond your supervisor if need be, because not everybody gets an Indigenous supervisor.” Some of the more senior scholars talked about helping younger Indigenous faculty learn how to access Tri-Council research grants and how to work with the system to be supported in their research.

In spite of all the challenges and needs identified in the conversations, participants typically began and concluded by affirming that they do the work because it validates who they are, where they come from, and their commitment to Indigenous communities:

Everything I’m learning or doing with the community is part of me. Yesterday at the address I talked about learning through our grandmothers. This young guy said, “When I think about the land, I think about my grandmother.” I feel like the benefit is that I can talk about my spirit getting fatter, and that is felt wherever I go. When I teach a university class I am always bringing the community, and it is always becoming more of a part of me. (Participant 6)

In some ways, I admire my colleagues who do [nonhuman research] because they can sit in the lab and just do it, and not be bothered by any of this relationship building. At the same time, I think about how empty that would be. I don’t think I would be a researcher if I had to sit in a lab. It wouldn’t be meaningful to me. I think that relationship building has provided me with—not self-esteem building, but building meaning—for me as a person, it has helped me. (Participant 4)

Participant 7 noted, “I feel as though I will never stop doing community work because that’s what I do.” She then added, “But I

also feel like institutions need to understand and be more supportive.”

Discussion

Our conversations with peers validated personal and professional experiences related to identities as university-based Indigenous women engaged in CBPR health research in an era of academic “Indigenization.” We were reminded that who we are does, indeed, influence our approaches, practices, and experiences in doing Indigenous health research, as well as how we account for ourselves, how we are measured, and how we, in turn, judge ourselves. These identities offer distinct advantages as well as pressures and challenges, as described by our research participants/peers.

First, when “we do it because we love our communities,” we are validated in our commitment to contribute to the health of our peoples, and we fulfill personal needs related to ongoing extended kinship responsibilities. However, as Participant 6 pointed out, this emotional investment can also mean that we experience vicarious trauma, and we need to work at being “grounded.” Emotional turmoil can also result when conflict arises with our own communities, as exemplified in stories we heard about communities who took advantage of researchers or disregarded their needs.

We were also reminded through this research that, as Indigenous researchers working in the academy, we experience distinct pressures. The awareness of our tremendous privilege vis-à-vis our families or the general Indigenous population can cause feelings of guilt or discomfort, and our identities can put us at odds with families and communities. Our university positions can also affect research and other relationships, especially when we need to negotiate through perceptions that we are self-serving academics. Elsewhere in the literature, we have seen evidence of this: Indigenous researchers who felt relationships changed once they began doing university-based research. Erik Mandawe, a Cree researcher, reflected on this experience as follows:

Before being affiliated with the [research] project, amongst my peers I was known as a cultural teacher, a volleyball player, a recruiter, and (most simply put) a Cree guy from

Toronto. I noticed that the further we went into this research and in putting myself more into the role of researcher, this perception in the community changed. I felt that my peers saw less of the other things I was involved with (ceremony, traditional teachings, etc.), and more to do with research. That word, “research,” has an inherent negativity in the eye of many who identify as First Nations, as it may bring up a history of colonial abuse in both an academic and governmental sense (Smith, 2012). I’ve seen first-hand how some community members view “researchers” in the community, and those community members have chosen to share their thoughts and emotions with me—usually nothing overly positive to say, unless they are coming from an Indigenous background . . . there were times where I felt, “why am I doing this if it’s making me feel like someone I’m not?” . . . This idea of “who am I and what am I doing?” has been a daily theme in wearing the researcher hat. (Smithers Graeme & Mandawe, 2017, p. 7)

In their article detailing their experiences doing action research, Dockstator et al. (2016) called for an “exploration of the ‘academic world’ as a monolithic generalization,” asking, “Is it accurate to characterize academe in this way, in light of research team members who may be members of both Indigenous communities and academic ones?” (p. 34). This may be an area for further research, not only with regard to Indigenous researchers, but also in light of the turn to responsible and relational CBPR among health researchers doing work with Indigenous communities.

We recognize that CBPR researchers in various fields might connect with some of the issues identified here, but it is important to highlight and address that the experiences included in this CBPR article are specific to Indigenous researchers. Although there are some parallels to the experiences of non-Indigenous female CBPR faculty, such as the academy not recognizing the research productivity in CBPR compared to published papers, it is important to identify and not diminish the specific experiences of Indigenous researchers (Castleden et al., 2012). Indigenous researchers in

Canada are working in the distinct context of Indigenizing the academy and the era of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As a result, there are additional pressures placed on Indigenous faculty to demonstrate their productivity, especially regarding Indigenizing the academy, yet their efforts are still judged through a colonial lens (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). The interviewees' experiences demonstrate the challenges that are unique to Indigenous CBPR researchers. For example, Indigenous researcher Erik Mandawe described how his community's perceptions of him changed negatively after he returned as a formal researcher.

In addition, Indigenous communities involved in CBPR often inherently distrust colonial institutions, such as universities, due to past negative relationships with self-serving academics (Lawrence et al., 2004; Mitchell, 2018). This distrust is a product of a colonial legacy and is something Indigenous researchers must actively work to repair in their research (Mitchell, 2018). We recognize that other marginalized communities have likely experienced similar situations, but we are explicitly referring to Indigenous communities and their experiences. This distrust is unique to Indigenous researchers and can cause tensions or resistance during the relationship-building process. Indigenous faculty are also put in a taxing position where they are forced to navigate their identity as both an Indigenous community member and researcher.

As with the participants we interviewed, other Indigenous researchers have expressed feeling caught between university and community identities and responsibilities. As some of the participants pointed out, being Indigenous can result in further pressures to be more culturally based or on a trajectory of Indigenous knowledge acquisition in addition to the credentials that we have earned through mainstream institutions. Feelings of not being "cultural" enough to measure up to community standards can translate into not feeling entitled to, or competent in, some of the Indigenous methodologies we undertake. These complicated identities and practices have been articulated by Amanda LaVallee in describing the process she undertook while performing her doctoral research. She writes about feeling "not Métis enough to engage in Métis methods," stating:

I felt as though my fair skin and education disenfranchised me from my Métis knowledge and culture. As a Métis scholar living and working in my community, I have been faced with tensions between our community knowledge and my academic training. I felt a consistent struggle between my feelings of legitimacy within my community and those within the academy. I was constantly negotiating Euro-Western and Métis knowledge. I was terrified about what my community might see or think of me; and I also felt the overwhelming pressure to complete and successfully pass my dissertation. I was fueled by the fear of what other people thought of me, the potential judgment of others, and the fear of the unfamiliar (Métis research methods: for example, Elder guidance and Sharing Circles). I felt completely vulnerable. (LaVallee et al., 2016, pp. 177-178)

Other pressures often felt by the university-based researchers we interviewed correspond to previous work that identifies a fault line between CBPR work and the recognition and support it is afforded by university systems. Scholars have written about how pressures to publish are incongruent with the time and relationship building it takes to do CBPR (Castleden et al., 2015; Gabel & Cameron, 2016; Tobias et al., 2013), and some have asked if this pressure is in the best interests of the research participant community (Dockstator et al., 2016). Scholars are presenting ongoing challenges toward tenure and promotion committees recognizing the work involved in Indigenous CBPR (McGregor et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2017). Castleden et al. (2015) have written about how engaging in CBPR with Indigenous communities can put researchers behind in academic measures of merit, which include publishing, speaking, and obtaining grants, and they have asked "whether the ways in which the requirements of tenure and promotion processes have the potential to create a conflict between researchers' relational accountability to Indigenous community partners, and their academic accountability to their disciplines and peers" (p. 2).

The added administrative workload often felt by Indigenous scholars can exacerbate

stress about having the time to produce work that will allow us to advance through university merit systems. This, too, has been noted for many years: Referencing a 2004 publication by Deloria, McGregor et al. (2016) have pointed out that “the Indigenous scholar will be the one most likely to do ‘double duty’ as members on university committees, and to serve as ‘authorities’ on any matter Indigenous” (p. 5). Junior scholars who do “double duty,” administrative and service, while also doing the invisible work building community relations can find their tenure and promotion progress at risk.

Finally, the discourse of CBPR sets a high bar that many of us struggle to meet, especially around engaging in research that is truly “community driven,” which nurtures relationships and fulfills responsibilities to Indigenous communities over the long term. The discourse can lead to anxiety caused by feelings of not measuring up to an Indigenous CBPR standard—feelings that can be exacerbated when we have other work and family commitments. In some of the conversations, what came out is that we are spread too thin and as a result judge ourselves to be inadequate in multiple domains. This is also a gendered experience, particularly when it comes to the expectations and demands of mothering, and it offers some response to Castleden et al.’s (2012) query about how well women scholars “juggle their academic–community–personal responsibilities” (p. 176).

Implications and Areas of Future Research

As the recent reviews have demonstrated (Drawson et al., 2017; Levac et al., 2018), we now have a robust body of literature demonstrating the need to empower Indigenous communities with self-determined CBPR. We also have an emerging body of research about how universities and other institutions can recognize and facilitate the needs of CBPR researchers, including identifying problems with university research ethics processes and working toward improvements (Alcock et al., 2017; Ball & Janyst, 2008; Glass & Kaufert, 2007; Guta et al., 2010; Guta et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2017; Riddell et al., 2017; Stiegman & Castleden, 2012), working out better funding and finance systems (Bull, 2008; Moore et al., 2017; Riddell et al., 2017), and developing systems that recognize the time and effort

that goes into CBPR (Alcock et al., 2017; Ball & Janyst, 2008; Dockstator et al., 2016; Flicker & Worthington, 2012; Stiegman & Castleden, 2012). What has received relatively little discussion is how community partners can understand and support the needs of CBPR researchers, and how both university and community can recognize the needs of Indigenous researchers. In interviews with health researchers, research ethics board representatives, financial services administrators, and Mik’ma’w community health directors, Moore et al. (2017) have pointed out that there is often limited understanding between distinct groups involved in CBPR research processes.

We acknowledge the limitations of our small sample, but hope that this article has shed some light on the distinct experiences of university-based Indigenous women health researchers, so that we may ease the personal and professional experiences of our next generation. Other areas that require further exploration are the impact of academic “Indigenization” on Indigenous scholars and on the research relationships with Indigenous communities. Often the connections between universities and Indigenous communities are formed by student interactions with the institutions as well as faculty engaging in research with communities. We increasingly see the addition of university executive-level officials, such as the vice president and provost levels, that are focused on engaging in external relationship building with Indigenous communities. Understanding how these newly created positions support the community-based research of Indigenous researchers (or negate it) would be an interesting exploration. In addition, exploring the impact of Indigenous female academics who often are placed in these executive roles in undertaking “Indigenization” efforts is critical to understanding the larger workload issues that Indigenous women in the academy specifically face.

Conclusion

The conversations that took place among our female Indigenous friends and colleagues as part of this work represent conversations that take place in many areas of research, not just Indigenous health research. The dialogue is often riddled with stories that are funny and absurd, but also demonstrate remarkable strength and determination to work through these tensions. We were once

those newly minted scholars trying to publish articles, secure grants, and eventually obtain tenure and promotion. As authors and participants described, many of us are now in a moment in time when we can reflect on our careers and determine how we can best clear the path for our Indigenous colleagues coming up into the academy.

Our participants described how the emotional investment and their identity were closely tied to the work they did. In many cases, the work of our participants is deeply personal and touches these parts of our being that are wounded from the effects of colonization. Although participants on the one hand are engaging in deeply meaningful work based on relationships with community, they are also challenged from a personal perspective because we are unable to step away into the role of an objective observer. The volume of administrative and service work that our participants experienced has meant a feeling of diminished control over our careers. As institutions work toward the lofty and, some would argue, unattainable goals of “Indigenization,” Indigenous faculty are often looked upon to fill multiple roles that usually are work intensive. In the best-case scenario, these roles provide us with an opportunity to better position our academic work and highlight our collaborative research relationships and the ability to “turn new soil.” In worst-case scenarios, the work is overly burdensome, and the negative impacts are compounded by the gendered pressures of mothering and home and family expectations.

The needs of Indigenous-based research have meant that the path to tenure is sometimes longer, or harder fought. Reports and other engagement opportunities are often not recognized as “counting” in annual reviews and tenure and promotion.

Participants described having Indigenous academic mentors throughout their career who clear the path. Despite these pressures, tensions, and stresses, participants felt that the work they engage in contributes to their personal development and, as one participant describes, makes their “spirit fatter.” As Indigenous women, we know we are also entrusted with responsibilities to carry knowledge forward and to extend our kinship responsibilities. Clearing the path for newer generations of Indigenous health researchers also means that we need to have difficult conversations with our communities and research partners. The struggle is how do we communicate to our research partners and communities the academic expectations that are required of us without making the university sound inhospitable and hostile? How do we avoid positioning ourselves as intellectuals while still being able to engage in research that matters to communities? How do we avoid being considered as consultants and in-service to community, while at the same time needing to stretch our skills as those with a PhD who are trained to philosophize about the world around us? These conversations are critical in a new era of “Indigenization” in our academic institutions. It is also important for academic institutions to recognize this type of academic labor that Indigenous scholars who do CBPR engage in and consider how tenure and promotion and annual reviews can be performed in ways that validate the extensive work that goes into building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities and the conflicting obligations that Indigenous female scholars face. Indigenous female scholars have benefited and continue to benefit from a path that has been laid out, and it is our job to continue to clear that path for those who are coming up behind us.



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Grappling With Complexity: Faculty Perspectives on the Influence of Community-Engaged Teaching on Student Learning

Chris Heasley and Aimee LaPointe Terosky

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine college and university faculty members' perspectives on whether and how community-engaged teaching influences their students' learning. We grounded our study in the tradition of interpretative study, as well as the conceptualization of learning put forth by Neumann (2005). Based on interviews with 14 faculty members (across a range of institution type, rank, discipline, geographic location, and demographics) who have conducted community-engaged teaching currently or within the past 5 years, participants' narratives highlighted a metatheme of their students learning to grapple with complexity. Grappling with complexity consists of three subthemes of learning: recognizing the intricacies of applying theory to real-world problems, shifting from deficit to asset thinking, and confronting power structures in society. Implications for theory and practice are included.

Keywords: community-engaged teaching, student learning, service learning, teaching, qualitative



Historically, the mission of higher education has included two of several key aims: enhancing student learning and addressing society's needs (Gunn, 2018; Kezar et al., 2005; Liang et al., 2015; Ozdem, 2011; Shaker, 2015; Weerts, 2014). For a significant part of its history, higher education was granted relative autonomy in carrying out those aims (Pallas et al., 2017) and, for the most part, was viewed positively in this light. However, over the past 5 decades, stakeholders and scholars have increasingly questioned whether higher education is effectively enhancing student learning and supporting society's needs (Fitzgerald & Primavera, 2013; Gunn, 2018; Hong, 2018; Jankowski & Marshall, 2017; Pallas et al., 2017). Thus, the autonomy once afforded to institutions of higher education was replaced, in part, by regulations for compliance and mandates for documented outcomes of student learning and community impact (Hong, 2018; Jankowski

& Marshall, 2017; National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2016; Pallas et al., 2017).

Some of the shift in confidence is viewed through the lens of the changing knowledge and skills needed by students in the 21st century. With the 21st century characterized as global, diverse, technology- and information-driven, and fast-paced (Society for College and University Planning, 2016), critics argue that current college and university teaching practices are not providing the type of education that fosters skills needed in the current century, or are not reforming quickly enough toward doing so. Facility in communicating and collaborating in diverse settings, proficiency in applying data to solving problems and decision making, capacity to think critically and creatively, and the ability to understand alternative viewpoints, among others (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013; Global Digital Citizenship Foundation, 2015;

Harris, 2015; San Pedro, 2017; Whitaker, 2018), are now considered essential 21st-century skills for students graduating from colleges and universities.

Another explanation for the shift in confidence in higher education's ability to meet its dual aims of enhancing student learning and addressing society's needs is a critique that colleges and universities increasingly focus on rankings and prestige, vis-à-vis faculty research productivity, rather than on partnerships with communities in need (Boyer, 1990; Calleson et al., 2005). At most types of institutions, the structure for faculty tenure and promotion rewards scholarship and research output and devalues teaching and internal/external service (O'Meara, 2006; Pelco & Howard, 2016; Weiser & Houglum, 1998); this is true even for teaching-centered institutions as they strive to emulate major research universities in hopes of increased reputational rankings (O'Meara, 2006; O'Meara et al., 2015). Consequently, stakeholders increasingly criticize higher education's move away from its historical commitment of applying knowledge and expertise to the real-world problems facing these institutions' local and regional communities, as well as society at large (Saltmarsh, 2010; Saltmarsh et al., 2015; Tierney & Perkins, 2015).

One means of addressing the concern that higher education is not fully meeting its historical mission of enhancing student learning and addressing society's needs is through community engagement, defined as a "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). This definition highlights "a shift away from an expert model of delivering university knowledge to the public toward a more collaborative model in which community partners play a significant role in creating and sharing knowledge to the mutual benefit of institutions and society" (Weerts, 2014, p. 136). In simple terms, both the college/university (i.e., students, faculty, the institution) and its surrounding community (i.e., social service agencies, community groups, neighborhood residents) give and receive in their collaborative partnerships.

Within higher education systems and faculty workloads, community engagement comprises a multitude of forms (i.e., re-

search, service, teaching); one variation is to situate it within faculty members' teaching and coursework, thereby striving for the dual goals of serving the common good and enhancing student learning. "Community-engaged teaching" (a term often used interchangeably with "community-engaged pedagogies" and "service-learning") is typically enacted through service-learning, an instructional strategy connecting the substantive content of a course to out-of-class experiences, community settings (e.g., nonprofits, community organizations, government agencies, advocacy groups, health care centers, etc.). Campus Compact (2018), a national coalition of more than 1,000 colleges and universities advocating for the public purposes of higher education, defines "service-learning" as "incorporate[ing] community work into the curriculum, giving students real-world learning experiences that enhance their academic learning while providing a tangible benefit for the community" (para. 1). In practice, service-learning typically falls into six categories: (a) pure, in which the intellectual focus of the course is service to the community; (b) discipline-based, in which course content is the basis for analysis around community engagement; (c) problem-based, in which students consult with community partners and develop potential solutions to problems; (d) capstone, in which advanced students integrate their cumulative knowledge (across semesters) into service to the community; (e) service internships, in which students work 15–20 hours a week in a community organization with ongoing reflection opportunities; and (f) undergraduate community-based action research, in which students work with faculty on research projects geared toward community concerns (Heffernan, 2001, pp. 3–4).

The literature on community engagement and service-learning is growing, with a common thread focusing on the outcomes of service-learning, in terms of both student learning and community impact. Past studies have indicated that service-learning improves students' critical thinking, moral development, commitment to service, interpersonal development, and real-world understanding. Moreover, students report high levels of motivation in their service-learning courses, as compared to traditional courses, and greater levels of faculty-student relationships (Astin et al., 2000; Currie-Mueller & Littlefield, 2018; Eyler et al., 2001; Fisher et al., 2017; McGoldrick & Ziegert, 2002).

In agreement, scholars have previously reported positive learning outcomes associated with integrating theory-to-practice in coursework and partnerships (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Fogle et al., 2017; Rizzo, 2018). For instance, Rizzo (2018) noted that community-engaged learning allows students to “examine their own assumptions and to intentionally forge activist alliances with community partners” (para. 1). In developing new perspectives, Valdes (2003) asserts students come to question power structures in society through education as “a form of praxis committed to anti-subordination principles and social justice activism, guided by multidimensional and contextual analysis of law and society, and grounded in critical and self-critical interrogation of knowledge, understanding, and action” (p. 89).

Over the past decade, service-learning has been labeled a high-impact practice (Kuh, 2008). A “high-impact practice” (HIP) can be operationally defined as an activity that sponsors interactions with faculty and peers, promotes high expectations and opportunities for feedback, encourages diverse and inclusive exchanges between peers, and requires substantial investment of time and effort to complete (Kuh, 2008; Zilvinskis & Dumford, 2018). In a report for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Kuh (2008) noted participation in HIPs resulted in strong positive effects on student learning and personal growth (see also Eyler et al., 2001). Specifically, students who participated in HIPs persisted at higher rates, received higher or equal grades, interacted with faculty, developed critical thinking and writing skills, and appreciated diversity and alternative perspectives at greater levels than students not participating in HIPs (Brownell & Swaner, 2009). Scholars also affirm significant benefits of HIP engagement for historically underserved students (Finley et al., 2013; Swaner & Brownell, 2009). Although some scholars question whether adequate empirical evidence exists for the positive claims of HIPs (Johnson & Stage, 2018), many institutions are investing in these practices and, in general, view HIPs favorably (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018).

Benefits of service-learning extend beyond students participating in the course. Although not widely studied, scholars report mutually beneficial relationships of learning by students and community members

when engaged in service-learning (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Roschelle et al., 2000). Reciprocal outcomes are maximized when community members participate “not merely as recipients of the service, but as partners in the design, implementation, and assessment of the activity” (Chupp & Joseph, 2010, p. 209). However, in a review of scholarly work on the community impact of service-learning, Bringle and Steinberg (2010) found several studies describing the advantages and barriers for community partners in community-engaged teaching, but not measurable ways in which the community was improved as a result of such partnership. As community-engaged teaching serves dual purposes in actualizing student and community partner learning, ways to appropriately assess community growth and development remain needed.

Although the extant literature on community engagement is growing, gaps remain in our understanding about connections between community-engaged teaching and student learning, as well as the impact on community, although the latter is not a focus of this study. In this article, we strive to better understand faculty perspectives on how their students’ learning is shaped by community-engaged teaching. Since community-engaged teaching is viewed as one pathway to achieving higher education’s mission of enhancing student learning and addressing society’s needs, we argue that in order to advance scholarship, institutional initiatives for community engagement, and teaching improvement, there is a need for additional studies focused on faculty members’ perspectives on whether and how their community-engaged teaching influences student learning. The faculty perspective is particularly salient because teaching and knowledge creation and dissemination are at the core of faculty work. We thus ask the following research question: In what ways do faculty members who conduct community-engaged teaching perceive that their courses influence their students’ learning?

Conceptual Framework

As a study focused on whether and in what ways students learn from their experiences in community-engaged teaching, we grounded this study in a conceptual framework of learning put forth by Anna Neumann (2005), in which learning is viewed through a lens of change. Neumann (2005) wrote, “Learning, as changed cognition, involves

the personal and shared construction of knowledge; it involves coming to know something familiar in different ways, or to know something altogether new, from within one's self and often with others" (p. 65). In defining learning, Neumann (2005) consistently referred to several interrelated claims about learning. Specifically, learning is connected to (a) the subject matter, (b) the learner, and (c) the context. In regard to subject matter, learning cannot be separated from the subject matter that is being learned. Learning thus calls on individuals to be exposed to, question, reflect on, and reconceptualize subject matter in ways that build on current understandings and develop new understandings (Dewey, 1902/1974; Neumann, 2005, 2009; Shulman, 2004a, 2004b). Neumann (2005) also stressed that "learning implies a learner (or learners)" (p. 66). She recognized that learning, and the process of learning, is influenced by individuals' frames of mind that have been shaped from their past and current experiences and reflections on those experiences. Finally, context, particularly the context of individuals' communities, shapes learning (Neumann, 2005, 2009).

Neumann's inclusion of learner and context in her conceptualization addressed past criticisms of theories of learning, namely that learning theories often elevated the knowledge and experiences of those in power (i.e., White, cisgendered men) and therefore overlooked alternative perspectives (see Ladson-Billings, 1995; Pallas & Neumann, *in press*, for expanded views on defining good teaching). All three of these elements—subject matter (course content), learner (enrolled students and their prior knowledge and cultural background), and context (community partners and sites and their cultural background)—are significant in community-engaged teaching and, in turn, in better understanding what participating faculty members perceive as their students' changed cognition within this form of teaching.

Methods

Focusing on the perspectives of faculty members conducting community-engaged teaching, this qualitative study follows an interpretive tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Erickson, 1985) that seeks to examine individuals' experiences and sense-making of their experiences rather than uncovering given facts. The interpretive tradition

was selected as this study's design because it seeks "to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1). By engaging participants through in-depth dialogue, this research generated information-rich data on their perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), interpretations, and meanings based on community-engaged pedagogical practices.

This article is part of a larger study that focused on the role of community-engaged work (teaching, research, or service) on faculty members' sense of vitality. Emerging from the larger study was a strong narrative around participants' views on community-engaged teaching and student learning, and thus we returned to the data for further examination in this regard. Next, we explain our methodological steps.

This study's second author conceptualized the initial study on community-engaged work and faculty vitality and collected the data (i.e., interviews, documents). Then both authors collaborated on data analysis and the writing of this article more specifically focused on community-engaged teaching and student learning. Following Institutional Review Board approval, purposeful sampling (Coyne, 1997) was applied to obtain participants; purposeful sampling is a qualitative research technique that intentionally seeks out and selects participants according to two criteria: (a) participants are "information rich" because of their experience with the phenomenon being examined, and (b) participants have demonstrated their availability and willingness to articulately communicate their experiences (Palinkas et al., 2016, p. 534; see also Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The second author contacted 30 members of her personal and professional networks via email, asking for nominations of faculty members who are participating in community-engaged teaching, research, and/or service currently or within the past 5 years. In the nomination email, nominators were asked to suggest faculty members from a range of ranks, institutional types, geographical locations, demographic backgrounds, discipline sectors, and categories of community-engaged work; 57 nominations were received. Next, a matrix on gender, rank, institutional type, and type of community-engaged work (i.e., teaching, research, service, or a combina-

tion) was developed to select a diverse participant pool. Thirty-two potential participants were invited via email, and 25 agreed to participate in the study.

Following participant selection, 60–90-minute interviews with the 25 participants were conducted. The interviews were either face-to-face, over the telephone, or through a virtual meeting platform. The semi-structured interview focused on three key areas:

(a) background information about pathway to academic career and discipline area, (b) discussion of participants’ community-engaged work and their perceptions on impacts and what helps or hinders their work, and (c) discussion of participants’ views on vitality and if, and if applicable in what ways, their community-engaged work has influenced their vitality. For this article, the questions pertaining to section (b) were most relevant. Following transcription

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants Community-Engaged Teaching

Demographic	N
<i>Total Participants</i>	14
Gender	
<i>Women</i>	8
<i>Men</i>	6
Institutional Type	
<i>Research</i>	7
<i>Comprehensive</i>	3
<i>Liberal arts</i>	3
<i>Community college</i>	1
U.S. Geographic Locations	
<i>Northeast</i>	5
<i>Southeast</i>	2
<i>Midwest</i>	3
<i>Southwest</i>	1
<i>West</i>	3
Discipline	
<i>Applied/professional</i>	5
<i>Arts or humanities</i>	4
<i>Social science</i>	3
<i>Science</i>	2
Rank	
<i>Assistant professors</i>	3
<i>Associate professors</i>	6
<i>Full professors</i>	5
Race	
<i>White faculty</i>	7
<i>Faculty of Color</i>	7

of interviews, all of the participants were sent their transcripts for member checking, which enables participants to review, clarify, and revise transcripts if desired (Glesne, 2015). Beyond interview data, we also collected publicly available documents or reviewed electronic sources related to items discussed in the interviews.

For analysis, we followed Saldaña's (2012) coding strategies. Because we focused on the narrative of community-engaged teaching and student learning for this article, we included only 14 (of the original 25) participants who perform community-engaged teaching (i.e., service-learning); the remaining 11 participants were excluded from analysis because they pursue community-engaged research or service, but not teaching (see Table 1).

For our next step, we independently read each of the transcripts and then collaboratively determined three analytic questions, grounded in our research question, that we would apply to our first-cycle coding (Saldaña, 2012): (a) Do participants discuss or express involvement in community-engaged teaching? If yes, how so? (b) Do participants discuss or express the ways in which their community-engaged teaching influences their students? If yes, how so? (c) Do and, if so, how do participants describe the role of community-engaged teaching in their students' academic, professional, or personal growth? During first-cycle coding, we coded (i.e., highlighted sections of transcripts responding to the analytic questions) and wrote memos (names and definitions of the different codes, reflective notes about the codes and their meaning) independently at first and then collaboratively discussed our coding and memos; we revised our code memos based on our discussions. During first-cycle coding, we developed 17 codes.

Following first-cycle coding, we next engaged in second-cycle pattern coding (Saldaña, 2012), in which we collaboratively combined similar codes into robust themes. For example, we collapsed the following codes: "theory to practice to theory," "real-world problems," "messiness in translating classroom to field sites," and "ideal versus real" into the one theme of "recognizing the intricacies of applying theory to real-world problems and practices." This process resulted in the 17 codes becoming three robust themes, which are discussed in the Findings section of this article.

In the third phase of analysis, we focused on how our conceptual framework of Neumann's (2005, 2009) work on learning informed, elaborated, or strengthened our analysis, as well as how our findings might contribute to theory-building and the extant literature.

We followed several strategies to protect the trustworthiness of our study. First, we provided member checking opportunities to review and revise transcripts to all participants (Glesne, 2015). Second, we collaboratively maintained and discussed our codebook, thereby allowing us to retrace our thinking and analytical decision points. Third, several colleagues with expertise in community-engaged work and/or teaching at the higher education level served as critical readers of our article drafts. Finally, the full article contains quoted sections from the transcripts so the reader has participants' voices to represent the themes we present.

Findings

In addressing this study's research questions, all of the 14 participants responded affirmatively that community-engaged teaching positively influenced their students' learning, specifically through a metatheme of grappling with complexity. We define "grappling with complexity" as a disruption to students' original ways of thinking and being, thereby calling into question the efficacy of past knowledge and practices, which aligns with Neumann's (2005) conceptualization of learning as well. The metatheme of grappling with complexity is composed of one or more of the following three subthemes: (a) recognizing the intricacies of applying theory to real-world problems and practices, (b) shifting from deficit to asset thinking, and (c) confronting power structures in society. We next discuss each theme.

Recognizing the Intricacies of Applying Theory to Real-World Problems and Practices

The theme of recognizing the intricacies of applying theory to real-world problems and practices, noted by all 14 participants, highlights the ways in which faculty participants observed their students wrestling with the challenges and opportunities of applying "clear-cut explanations" of subject matter presented in coursework and texts to "the messy world of real settings." According to

participants, students typically mastered subject matter content (e.g., theories, models, factual material) “in the abstract” but often confronted “gray areas” when the theories “did not fully stand up” or “apply neatly” in practical settings, such as community sites selected for service-learning courses. As our participants noted, these “disruptive” experiences pushed students to rethink the theories and models previously learned, specifically around the theory’s shortcomings and, consequently, ways in which the theory or model could be revised to better serve community practices.

As an example of this theme, we refer to the case of Steven, a business professor who teaches interdisciplinary courses on health care ethics at a private, liberal arts university in the northeastern United States. Steven explained that the majority of his business students arrive in his service-learning course with a “profit-oriented” mind-set, trained on the mantra of “selling as much as we can for as long as we can.” In Steven’s course, students continue to learn seminal business and sales models; however, they are also exposed to ethical issues in health care delivery. Coupled with weekly site visits to nursing homes and adult care centers, Steven’s course asks students to reconsider what is “appropriate care” and, in turn, what is the role of those in “the business” of health care delivery. He recalls how his very students who initially boasted about their abilities to “increase sales and profits” in pharmaceutical sales were visibly shocked by nursing home patients who were “completely zoned out due to over-medication.” Grounded in the experiences of the site visitations, Steven’s course pushes his students to consider “triple bottom line” alternatives in which they move beyond “just profit” and consider “how to treat someone.” In the end, the students’ reflective journals, overall, indicate they are now asking “Is there another way?” to lead a health care-related business while also prioritizing the care of the patients who rely on the system. Additionally, the students’ journals and class discussions also detailed a realization that their nursing home patients could be “someone they love” or “could be one of them in the future.” Thus, the “kind of quality of care” becomes more personal to the students, subsequently broadening their empathy around health care delivery and its “impact on humans.”

Beyond “triple bottom line” alternative

thinking, Steven’s service-learning course also exposes his students to the reality that the best theories and knowledge espoused in their health and medical courses are not always followed in or pertinent to “real-world situations.” He shared a story of a student who was conflicted during his weekly visitation to an adult care center because his 92-year-old patient insisted they spend their time together outside so she could smoke. Knowing full well that smoking is a habit with well-established negative consequences to individuals’ health, the student initially resisted. However, the patient became increasingly irritated and eventually yelled, “Listen to me, sonny. I do not have men anymore and I do not drink. This is my last pleasure. I am 92.” Going against what his medical theories taught him, he proceeded to spend the next several weeks of his visitations outside with his smoking patient. He went on to journal, “What was I going to do? Deprive this woman of her last pleasure? I know it is bad for her physical health, but maybe it is good for her mental health?” This student’s case demonstrated a tension between what the student learned in his health and medical courses (i.e., smoking is bad and should not be allowed) and the role of the individual patient’s desires and quality of life (i.e., smoking as a last pleasure in a long-lived life).

Shifting From Deficit to Asset Thinking

A second theme among 10 of the 14 participants’ responses was an observed shift from deficit to asset thinking about individuals and communities with which students had limited prior interaction. According to participants, the vast majority of their students initially held “negative” perceptions of underserved, minoritized populations, often using language such as “rough neighborhoods,” “poor,” and “uneducated” when initially describing populations served by their community partners. Moreover, students also entered into their community-engaged courses with a “savior mentality,” believing they could “swoop in” and “solve all problems with little to no understanding of the community or its needs.” Participants noted many of their students initially voiced rationales such as “saving disadvantaged people,” “pitying poor people,” or “fixing the community” when explaining their motivation for enrolling in service-learning courses.

However, with time and experience, participants observed, via reflective journals and classroom discussions, their students adopted more of an assets lens, rather than a deficit lens, when thinking about the communities in which they engaged. Asset thinking, according to one of our social scientist participants, recognizes the “wealth of knowledge, ideas, and skills that a community holds”; is rarely “tapped into”; and connects with the concept of funds of knowledge. “Funds of knowledge” is defined as how individuals obtain skills and knowledge that are historically and culturally developed, allowing them to function within a given culture (Moll et al., 1992).

The case of Quinn, an environmental science professor at a public research university in the southeastern United States, serves as an example of this theme. Building off networks from past research projects in Kenya, Quinn developed a service-learning course in which her U.S. students virtually teamed up with Kenyan students to explore an environmental issue affecting both locations—that of water conservation. At the start of the project, Quinn found most of her U.S. students espoused the following perspective:

a lot of youths tend to struggle with . . . and by youths, I mean U.S. youths . . . tend to struggle with “[water conservation issues] are problems that happen over there. Our water is relatively clean, the air . . . you know, we can breathe; somebody comes and picks up our trash.” So, they see these environmental issues as, “That stuff happens over there in those other countries” where [the U.S. is] really struggling with these sorts of [water conservation] things too.

Through ongoing virtual discussions between the two sets of students, the U.S. students learned Kenyan students followed a more sustainable daily life than their U.S. counterparts. The Kenyan students thus provided insight and strategies on water conservation, such as developing “water collection sites [or] creating rain gardens, which is just essentially planting indigenous plants to soak up more water.” Because the Kenyan students had more experience and success with water conservation, this project created an interesting dynamic for student learning, as Quinn explained:

[The water conservation collaboration] put Kenyan students in a . . . position of knowers because they were sort of experts in this. And they were able to sort of talk to the [U.S.] students as . . . “These are some of the ways that we’ve been able to solve these problems. You might try these.” It . . . shifted some of that power relationship and really gave the [U.S.] students a broader perspective of “Wow, maybe we aren’t doing everything as sustainable as we could over here.”

Quinn’s service-learning project demonstrated the evolution of her U.S. students—moving from one of deficit thinking of Kenya’s environmental sustainability to one of asset thinking in which they gained strategies and perspectives on water conservation from the Kenyan students’ funds of knowledge.

Confronting Power Structures in Society

Confronting power structures in society is the final theme representing slightly more than half (eight of 14) of the participants’ responses. In this theme, participants asserted community-engaged teaching pushed their students beyond a “shallow orientation of helping” to a deeper critique of power structures that create, maintain, and perpetuate inequities. As previously mentioned, many of the participants’ students entered into their courses with “savior mentalities,” thinking they would volunteer in a community setting for the semester and “solve the problems of the people there.” This philosophy purports that communities’ problems are easy to solve and overlooks the systemic obstacles hindering those without power. However, participants found, via their class discussions and students’ actions, engagement with the community facilitated students’ awareness that there are no “easy solutions,” and instead they developed a “deeper understanding of marginalizing power structures.” In some cases, students moved beyond awareness into the realm of social justice activism (Valdes, 2003), defined as working for transformative change of systems and cultural norms that oppress, exploit, and marginalize individuals.

As an example of this theme, we discuss the case of Robert, a professor of educa-

tion at a regional research university in the midwestern United States. Robert recalls how he shifted to community-engaged teaching after an “epic failure” in which his “best and brightest” student lasted only five months as a high school principal situated in a Native American community. Realizing his department was “missing the boat,” Robert developed a principal preparation course (and program) coupling coursework with a year-long practicum in a Native American school. The year-long practicum consisted of two key components: (a) authentic, problem-based experiences in Native American schools that augment and/or problematize what is learned through traditional coursework and (b) opportunities for aspiring school leaders to engage with and learn from Native American community leaders, students, and families.

Throughout the years of leading his course/program, Robert found his students shifting from “emphasiz[ing] school improvement to emphasiz[ing] social justice,” meaning his students first recognize schooling inequities and second, in some cases, strive to address social inequities by dismantling structures that discriminate against and hinder minoritized populations. As an example of his students’ engaging in social justice action, Robert created a professional learning community among his aspiring principals and current principals in the local area. Through conversations in their professional learning community, Robert’s students learned that the school administrator professional organization in their state—a powerful research and advocacy body—rarely focused on issues affecting Native American schools and their students. Consequently, the leaders of Native American schools did not attend the professional organization’s meetings or conferences, thereby constraining their input in the organization’s governance, research agenda, and policy initiatives. Realizing the current structure of the state’s professional organization was a structure disenfranchising Native American schools, the students wrote a proposal initiating a Native American schools division, something that would come to fruition after much advocacy and effort on their part. Robert discusses the outcome of his students’ social justice work:

Now Native American school leaders are attending the [name of the professional organization in the state]

. . . which has resulted in better communication about the [Native American] communities . . . and . . . [the Native American division] created a voice . . . and that voice then will benefit . . . it has benefited the community. By bringing people together, by acknowledging a different viewpoint, a different perspective and looking at the ability to refocus on assets as opposed to deficits. It’s been, you know, traditionally defined as, “The school is low-performing . . . it’s a deficit.” Well, what are the assets that the school possesses? And the leaders of other schools and the community members across the state who are working with [the Native American division] who are not familiar with the context, now have a better insight and understand more about the assets that the community brings.

By implementing community-engaged teaching after realizing his traditional principal-preparation methods were “falling short for our Native American schools,” Robert’s case highlights how his students not only recognized inequities facing minoritized groups, but also confronted one structure that perpetuated these inequities. From their engagement with Native American communities and schools, Robert believes his students learned “whose voices get heard; whose needs get met”; they also learned “how to be activists” against the structures of power that “silence voices.”

Discussion/Significance

In this article, we studied 14 faculty members who are currently participating in or have in the recent past participated in community-engaged teaching to learn more about their perspectives on whether or not and, if applicable, in what ways community-engaged teaching influences student learning. All of the 14 participants agreed that community-engaged teaching positively shaped student learning, particularly around the learning that takes place when students grapple with complexity, a metatheme of our findings. We define “grappling with complexity” as a disruption to students’ original ways of thinking and being, thereby calling into question the efficacy of past knowledge and prac-

tices. Per our analysis, it consists of three subthemes: (a) recognizing the intricacies of applying theory to real-world problems and practices, (b) shifting from deficit to asset thinking, and (c) confronting power structures in society.

Grappling with complexity resonates with Neumann's conceptualization of learning when she speaks to individuals "coming to know something familiar in different ways, or to know something altogether new" (Neumann, 2005, p. 65). In line with Neumann, our participants highlighted how their students saw subject matter knowledge in new and/or different ways as a result of their engagement with and in communities. Steven's students came to know business and medical models in a different way when empathizing with the people on the receiving end of these models. Quinn's students came to know environmental conservation in different ways when recognizing the assets of their Kenyan counterparts' advanced efforts in this area. Robert's students came to know organizational structures in different ways when they lobbied for greater representation of Native American voices in a statewide professional organization after recognizing systemic disenfranchisement. In these three cases, as well as in the larger narrative of all 14 participants, grappling with complexity through the integration of subject matter, learners, and community contexts propelled students to see the nuances of subject matter—nuances disrupting their current, often unidimensional understanding—and forge new, multilayered lenses in which to view subject matter.

The type of learning described by Neumann (2005) and the cases in this study align with calls for reforming higher education for the 21st century, a time period characterized by fast-paced, technologically driven change, globalization, and knowledge-centeredness (Society for College and University Planning, 2016). Over the last several decades, higher education experts and stakeholders have advocated for colleges and universities to elevate skills needed for the complexity of contemporary society, such as the ability to manage, interpret, and apply information for decision making and problem solving; the capacity to think critically and creatively; and the facility to communicate and collaborate with others (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013; Global Digital Citizenship Foundation,

2015; Harris, 2015; Whitaker, 2018). Other researchers have noted that the capacity to understand others' viewpoints and experiences is significant for contemporary and future societies. San Pedro (2017) speaks to this by writing:

Rather than centering safety, I argue that multiple truths should have opportunities to come into contact with others' truths. When our knowledges come in direct contact with those who may not fully share our reality, we have greater openings to learn with others the ways they have come to understand their realities. (p. 102)

In this study, participants perceived that their community-engaged teaching fostered 21st-century skills—particularly by enhancing students' capacity to face complexity, to confront the uncomfortable in hopes of "coming to know something familiar in different ways" (Neumann, 2005, p. 65).

Grappling With Complexity in Practice: Pedagogical Approaches

What pedagogical approaches or tangible teaching practices did participants follow in order to shape their students' learning through community-engaged teaching? First, all 14 participants described the process of community-engaged teaching using words such as "long-term" or "authentic commitments," meaning they spent considerable time cultivating relationships with community partners, deeply studying the community context, and reflecting on how the community context interacts with the core concepts of their courses' subject matter. By coming to deeply understand the community context, participants could design learning experiences that integrated theory-to-practice, as well as address common conceptual errors or assumptions that hinder learning and reinforce negative stereotypes about community partners.

What did this long-term relationship-building look like in practice? Some participants collaborated with community partners on research or service projects for years prior to embarking on a teaching collaboration; others developed service-learning course ideas and then employed their professional and personal networks to identify appropriate community sites and spent time (usually months or years)

“getting to know the community” and its potential as a site for student learning; still others relied on their institutions’ community engagement centers, when existing, to establish and develop community–higher education relationships. Regardless of the point of entry, all participants highlighted that successful community–engaged teaching requires an established and trusting relationship with the community partners and a full understanding of the context of the community site and its interaction with the course’s content.

In addition to establishing relationships and understanding community contexts, participants also highlighted the importance of connecting subject matter learning to the community context. All of the participants crafted syllabi, selected course readings, and created assignments that aligned foundational ideas in their disciplines (i.e., theory) with practical learning opportunities (i.e., practice) afforded through their community partnerships. In order to connect theory and practice, participants enacted many of the following teaching practices: (a) selecting texts that draw awareness and multiple theoretical perspectives to challenges facing a community context, (b) providing guided reflection questions grounded in course–based theories and concepts pre and post community site visit, (c) assigning journaling exercises calling on students to connect theory–practice–personal reflections on what they see and do in their community settings, (d) facilitating difficult, but supportive, classroom discussions around students’ reflections and awareness of their theory–to–practice experiences, and (e) coordinating and, when necessary, educating community partners on theories relevant to their work so the partners infuse references to theory while the students are on site.

In the aforementioned practices, participants noted another significant aspect for student learning: the balancing act of pushing student learning in new, sometimes uncomfortable, ways while also supporting and nurturing students throughout their personal and educational growth. Referencing an analogy of muscles, San Pedro (2018) coined the phrase “culturally disrupting pedagogy” (CDP) as a counter to the normalization of dominant narratives (i.e., Whiteness; p. 1221). He wrote: “In order for muscles to grow stronger, they must undergo small ruptures and tears in the fibers in order for new tissue to form as

it heals. CDP creates such ruptures (zones of contact) for new knowledge and new identities to take hold” (p. 1221). In this context, participants emphasized the value of classroom spaces that advanced trusting and authentic, yet challenging, dialogue for students, especially in light of the nature of the questions and discourse emerging from community engagement, particularly around race, gender, and class inequity. San Pedro (2018) referred to these spaces as “sacred truth spaces” in which “the goal . . . is creating a dialogic space between one another to share our truths and to listen and learn the truths of others” (p. 1207).

To promote trusting and challenging classroom spaces, participants invested significant, up–front time around community–building activities for and among students enrolled in the course, including following research–based curriculum or bringing in facilitators with expertise in holding challenging conversations (e.g., national programs, inclusion offices on campus). Further, most participants engaged in individual interactions with students, whether through one–on–one meetings or written exchanges in journal entries. The key for participants was to hold regular check–ins with each individual student so as to gauge their current learning, as well as their readiness for learning in deeper ways; the individual exchanges were seen by participants as part disruption of ways of knowing and part nurturing encouragement to continue grappling with complexity.

Beyond individual faculty members’ efforts, how might institutions support faculty in developing effective pedagogy for community–engaged teaching? In response to this question, we acknowledge community–engaged teaching requires resources, as this type of teaching and its coordination can be time consuming. Although a few of this study’s participants worked at institutions with centers for community engagement that assisted with the logistics of service–learning, the vast majority of the participants conducted their community–engaged teaching alone and with little to no support. If higher education endeavors to fulfill its public mission of serving its community, and if our educational system strives to enhance student learning for the 21st century, it behooves federal and state policymakers and higher education stakeholders to pursue and support community–engaged teaching. Although these types of support

are not widespread, some institutions and policymakers have, for example, provided seed grants or course releases for faculty to develop and lead service-learning courses; created centers for community engagement that provide networking, logistics, and advocacy for working with community organizations (e.g., campus-based centers, Campus Compact); and redefined the role of community-engaged work in tenure and promotion criteria (Aldrich & Marterella, 2014; O'Meara, 2006). As an example of these forms of support, the Faith Justice Institute at Saint Joseph's University (SJU), a classified Community Engaged University per the Carnegie Foundation, provides a myriad of resources for faculty interested in community-engaged teaching. The supports include (a) expert-and-peer mentoring for course development (e.g., constructing a syllabus, aligning course content to communities, and facilitating student reflections), (b) opportunities to observe and be observed by veteran service-learning teachers and personnel, (c) learning communities composed of new and experienced faculty, and (d) a full-time administrator responsible for facilitating community partnerships and managing student placement logistics and clearances.

Grappling With Complexity in Practice: Faculty Knowledge and Learning

The theme “grappling with complexity” is not only illustrative of student learning but also of teacher knowledge and learning. Participating faculty members explained that their effectiveness in facilitating the three forms of learning highlighted in this study's findings depended on their understanding of how students learn subject matter and how that learning is shaped by the specific contexts of a community partnership, all of which, in and of itself, is complex. Participants warned that without this understanding service-learning courses could, very simply, be void of authentic connections to the subject matter and/or reinforce negative stereotypes about marginalized populations served by community partners. For instance, without Robert's intentionally designing his course in ways that highlighted the structural inequalities of state-level professional organizations (i.e., theoretical examinations of power in education settings, reviews of organizational charts, discourse analysis of topics at conference presentations, reflective discussions with Native Americans served by the

schools), his students might have left his course thinking that the blame rested more on the administrators who failed to attend state meetings rather than on the marginalizing power structures that dissuaded their attendance.

How do faculty members develop their own understandings of connecting their course's subject matter with student learning in community settings, and how might institutions contribute to these efforts? In response, we first must acknowledge that conversations around what teachers know about their students' learning are overlooked or disregarded, typically by prioritizing standardized, quantitative metrics of teaching outcomes or characterizing teacher perspectives as conjecture or lacking validity. We therefore advocate for approaches to teaching improvement in higher education that, first, elevate and honor teacher knowledge and, second, provide space for faculty-driven conversations and initiatives that build on, deepen, and revise faculty members' knowledge of teaching and student learning. Although not solely focused on community-engaged teaching, Metropolitan Colleges Institute for Teaching Improvement (MetroCITI), run by Anna Neumann at Teachers College, offers an example of supporting faculty members' learning in their teaching. MetroCITI is a professional development program for faculty members teaching in high-access urban colleges serving large numbers of first-generation students. Throughout the year, MetroCITI participants engage in a learning community focused on teaching improvement, grounded in both the participants' current and evolving knowledge about student learning and in the extant literature on learning sciences, pedagogy, and discipline-specific areas. Moreover, MetroCITI participants develop a teaching improvement project for one of their current courses, all while receiving feedback from MetroCITI peers and facilitators, as well as engaging in reflective opportunities on the process. At the completion of their MetroCITI experience, participants are charged with creating similar learning communities at their home institutions. MetroCITI serves as a valuable model for how institutions might support a similar learning community around community-engaged teaching/service-learning, especially considering the extant literature that notes that institutional investment in faculty improving their scholarly expertise

and teaching is worthwhile in terms of faculty satisfaction, vitality, productivity, and retention (O'Meara et al., 2017; Terosky, 2018).

Recommendations for Research

As with all research studies, this study has limitations that could be addressed in future research. First, we strongly believe the perspectives of faculty—the very people entrusted with teaching students—constitute an important contribution to teaching and learning reform in higher education. Thus, we implore additional studies on faculty members' perspectives on the role of community-engaged teaching in student learning, perhaps also with larger sample sizes. Additional studies further exploring this study's metatheme of grappling with complexity through its three subthemes—the intricacies of applying theory to practice, the shifting from deficit to asset thinking, and the confronting of power structures—would be helpful. Likewise, we suggest that research methodologies that combine interviews of faculty and observations of classrooms and service-learning settings would deepen conversations on how participants' espoused views on teaching and their enacted practices interact. We also recognize that studies from the perspective

of the student and how they view the role of community-engaged teaching in their learning would strengthen the literature; a similar need is to better understand the perspectives and experiences of the community partners working with and alongside students.

Conclusion

Colleges and universities are charged with a mission to serve the public good and to enhance student learning. In this study, participants highlighted that community-engaged teaching achieved two goals: (a) serving the institution's public good mission and (b) enhancing students' learning for the 21st century through the metatheme of grappling with complexity. By grappling with the complexity of knowledge situated in communities, participant data reflected that students learned how to navigate through the intricacies of applying theory to real-world challenges, shifting their worldview from deficit to asset thinking, and confronting power structures in society. As the world becomes increasingly complex, students will have to grapple with this complexity. Based on this study's findings, community-engaged teaching is one effective pathway to achieve just that.



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The University Classroom Observation Program: Connecting Middle and High School Teachers with University Instructors

Erin L. Vinson, MacKenzie R. Stetzer, Justin D. Lewin, and Michelle K. Smith

Abstract

In the University Classroom Observation Program (UCOP), middle and high school teachers spend time on campus observing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes and engaging in discussions with colleagues and college instructors. The program provides a unique and reciprocal professional learning opportunity. Middle and high school teachers learn to use an observation protocol to collect data in STEM classrooms. These data serve as feedback for individual college instructors; help provide an aggregate snapshot of teaching throughout the university; and contribute to faculty professional learning opportunities, new teaching and learning initiatives, and the larger discipline-based education research (DBER) literature. UCOP offers middle and high school teachers discussion and networking opportunities to reflect on their own teaching and on ways to better prepare their students for college. Here we describe the program, articulate the benefits for stakeholders, reflect on lessons learned, and discuss important considerations for the development of similar programs.

Keywords: community engagement, professional learning, peer observation, instructional practices, reflective teaching



The inspiration for designing a community engagement program in which middle and high school teachers collect data and reflect on college science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) instruction came from national calls, such as those from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011) and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (2012), to reform how undergraduate classes are taught. These calls have largely focused on the implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies, such as active learning. Active learning strategies (e.g., asking students to discuss concept questions with peers) increase both retention and learning gains for undergraduate students, including those from underrepresented groups (Eddy & Hogan, 2014; Freeman et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2007). A recent study also found that increasing

the duration of group work in undergraduate biology classes, particularly with the use of worksheets, can lead to increases in student learning (Weir et al., 2019).

Aligned with these broader goals, the Maine Center for Research in STEM Education (RISE Center) at the University of Maine created the Maine Physical Sciences Partnership, or PSP (with funding from the National Science Foundation, Grant #DRL-0962805). The RISE Center's PSP (known today as the Maine STEM Partnership) was originally designed and continues to strengthen science education by facilitating community partnerships with K-12 schools and school districts, teachers, university faculty, and other organizational partners to improve STEM education and teacher preparation through research-supported practices. We wanted to extend the opportunities for professional learning to additional stakehold-

ers teaching STEM courses at the university level and to find ways for educators at all levels to discuss evidence-based teaching strategies with one another.

As institutions work to transform instruction, it is helpful to document current instructional practices so that results can be used to plan future transformation strategies and professional development (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). There are a variety of ways to document instructional practices, including surveying college instructors about what they are doing in their classrooms (Borrego et al., 2010; Henderson & Dancy, 2009; Macdonald et al., 2005; Wieman & Gilbert, 2014; Zieffler et al., 2012). However, college instructors tend to overestimate the amount of active learning that occurs in the classroom (Williams et al., 2015), so it can be difficult to use this information to gain insight into actual practices and plan for appropriate professional development.

Another strategy is for observers to visit classrooms and record what is happening. A growing number of observation protocols have been used to document instructional practices in undergraduate STEM classrooms, including the Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol (RTOP; Sawada et al., 2002), the Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol (TDOP; Hora et al., 2013), the Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS; Smith et al., 2013), the Practical Observation Rubric To Assess Active Learning (PORTAAL; Eddy et al., 2015), and the Measurement Instrument for Scientific Teaching (MIST; Durham et al., 2017). Classroom observers often come from within an institution (Cleveland et al., 2017; Pelletreau et al., 2018; Stains et al., 2018); typically such an individual is a colleague or a member of the campus center for teaching and learning. However, because instructors are often observed under high-stakes circumstances, such as consideration for tenure and promotion or in response to negative evaluations or feedback from students, it can be difficult to convince instructors to open their classrooms to observers.

To help avoid the sense that observations are high-stakes activities, we created the University Classroom Observation Program (UCOP) at the RiSE Center within the University of Maine (UMaine). UCOP is a unique professional learning opportunity that engages both teachers and college in-

structors. As part of this program, middle and high school teachers were trained to collect observation data in STEM classrooms on campus, using the Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS; Smith et al., 2013). COPUS characterizes the behaviors of both instructors and students throughout the class, without any value judgment from the observer. Using this protocol, observers mark at least one of 13 behaviors for students and at least one of 12 behaviors for instructors during each 2-minute interval of the class. For example, observers may indicate that the students are listening to the instructor, working in groups, asking questions, and so on. At the same time, the observer may indicate that the instructor is lecturing, showing a video, asking a question, answering a question, and so on. The COPUS was adapted from the Teaching Dimensions Observation Protocol, or TDOP (Hora, 2015; Hora et al., 2013).

In addition to COPUS observation data, the college instructors also submitted questions they have about their teaching (e.g., Am I paying attention to all parts of the room?), and the middle and high school teachers provided feedback. Since 2014, 84 middle and high school STEM teachers have completed 620 course observations of 191 college instructors in 26 UMaine STEM departments.

To our knowledge, UCOP is one of the first community engagement programs in which middle and high school teachers observe and provide feedback to college instructors. Overall the goals of the program include

- developing a clearer understanding of the current state of teaching and learning in undergraduate STEM courses by observing and documenting what occurs in the classroom;
- using observation data to better design college faculty professional development opportunities around evidence-based teaching strategies; and
- providing discussion and networking opportunities for middle and high school teachers to reflect on their own teaching and ways they are preparing students for college.

UCOP weaves together the guiding principles of community engagement as de-

fined by the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, including partnership and reciprocity as well as exchange of knowledge (Campus Compact, 2013). Here we describe UCOP, share the benefits for stakeholders (including the university, college instructors, middle and high school teachers, and education researchers), reflect on lessons we have learned from running such a program, and discuss important considerations for other institutions interested in designing a similar program.

The University Classroom Observation Program: An Overview From the Teacher and Instructor Perspectives

UCOP typically occurred during the spring semesters when there are two weeks, one in February and one in April, when UMaine is in session but middle and high school teachers are on week-long breaks. By scheduling the program at this time, we were able to avoid taking middle and high school teachers out of their classrooms.

Ahead of the spring semester, UCOP staff searched the UMaine course database for STEM courses that would work well for the observation schedule (i.e., meet two or three times a week at a time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.). A draft agenda was created and college instructors were sent an email requesting permission for two local

middle/high school teachers to observe their class on a particular day and time. The college instructors were also sent an informed consent form asking if the observation data collected by the middle and high school teachers could be used for research purposes (University of Maine, IRB protocol no. 2010-04-03 and 2013-02-06). Just prior to the start of the UCOP in both February and April, college instructors received an email reminder of the date and time when teachers would be observing in their class as well as a link to a short questionnaire that asked them to list their name, department, and course number. The college instructors could also use the questionnaire to request specific feedback from the middle and high school teachers who would be visiting their class (examples in Figure 1). Approximately 35% of the college instructors requested this feedback.

At the beginning of the spring semester, STEM middle and high school teachers from across the state were sent an email describing UCOP and linking to the application. The email was posted on a statewide education electronic mailing list and sent to teachers who previously participated in UMaine professional developmental events. We also emailed approximately 200 teachers by going through school district webpages and sending the email to teachers listed in STEM departments. The application included open response questions that asked

1) I am getting a lot of different students participating but they are mostly from the center section. Are there ways to get the "wings" to volunteer more answers?

I think that students around us in the wings had answers and they were willing to share with the TAs. They have the information and are willing to share in a smaller setting. One suggestion could be to have them sit in a different seat the next class and see if that changes the participation level.

2) Is the course staff getting around to everyone? There are pockets in the middle we physically cannot reach, but are we covering the more accessible ground?

We were very impressed with this. Most students were well served by the TAs.

3) Are students largely engaged in the material?

Absolutely, the topical and timely articles and short films are great as an engagement tool and for content. The students seemed to really respond to the real-world examples and the connections to these diseases and carrier probability.

Figure 1. Sample College Instructor Feedback Requests

Note. Examples of college instructor feedback requests (shown in bold) and middle/high school teacher responses.

teachers about their motivation to be part of the observation team for UCOP and for details about their instructional style (including, for example, a description of a favorite lesson). We also asked for the name of their school, how many years they had been teaching middle and/or high school, and what subjects they teach. Finally, we asked for their commitment to come to all of the February and April dates (three days in February and three and a half days in April). The average acceptance rate was 41.3%. We chose teachers based on their application responses and worked to select a group who taught a variety of STEM subjects at a variety of grade levels (middle and high school), came from schools throughout the state, and had varied levels of teaching experience.

On the first day of the program, middle and high school teachers introduced themselves and learned more about the goals of the program. We told the middle and high school teachers that their expertise and efforts were critical for collecting data, making improvements to the institution, and contributing to the larger field of discipline-based education research (DBER). Our emphasis on teachers' contribution to research is based on one of Barker's (2004) emerging practices in the scholarship of engagement, which includes participatory research. According to Barker, "participatory research stresses the active role citizens can play in the production of academic knowledge" (p. 130), and we wanted to ensure that the teachers involved in UCOP recognized the important role they play in the research.

Middle and high school teachers were then trained to use COPUS (details in Smith et al., 2013). There were several reasons why COPUS was used for this program: (1) It simply records what is happening in the class so middle and high school teachers do not need to make a value judgment about the teaching quality of college instructors, (2) behaviors are aligned with evidence-based teaching strategies (Lund et al., 2015), and (3) observers can be trained to reliably use the instrument in approximately two hours (Smith et al., 2013). A sample of the COPUS data collection sheet is shown in Figure 2. More resources for COPUS training can be found at http://www.cwsei.ubc.ca/resources/files/COPUS_Training_Protocol.pdf.

Training to use COPUS involved giving teachers a description of the 25 codes they would be marking during the observation and then discussing what each code looks like in a college classroom. For example, one of the student codes is CG: "Discussing clicker questions in groups of two or more students." Clickers are personal response devices that allow students to answer a multiple-choice question that instructors pose in class. Typically, a peer instruction method is used in which students vote on a question individually, discuss the question with those sitting near them, and vote again (Mazur, 1997). Monitoring students' answer choices allows instructors to gain immediate feedback from students about understanding and to structure classroom discussions. Clickers are used widely across university campuses and are one of many evidence-based teaching strategies for improving student engagement even in large-enrollment courses. Although clickers may not be as common in middle and high school settings, they are becoming more standard in university settings, and so we discuss as a group what a clicker is, how it is typically used in a college classroom, and when peer discussion is likely to occur.

The teachers were then shown three approximately 10-minute videos of instructors teaching (e.g., https://youtu.be/wont2v_LZ1E) with different types of active learning, and the teachers practiced coding using COPUS. We found it works best to play 2 minutes of a video while the middle and high school teachers each fill out the COPUS data sheet, pause the video, and then discuss the 2-minute time block as a group. At the end of each 2-minute time block, we called on different middle and high school teachers to tell the group what they selected and discussed whether or not the group agreed with the choices. After the group discussion, we projected a slide that showed what the UCOP staff members selected for the 2-minute time interval so observers could double-check their codes with a visual reference and to help everyone understand the correct codes. Then we moved on to the next 2-minute segment. For the third video, we played the whole segment (usually 8–10 minutes) for teachers to observe with COPUS without stopping every 2 minutes, as it provides the teachers a more realistic experience of what they will be doing in live classes. Then we compared the whole coded segment and discussed the codes as a group.

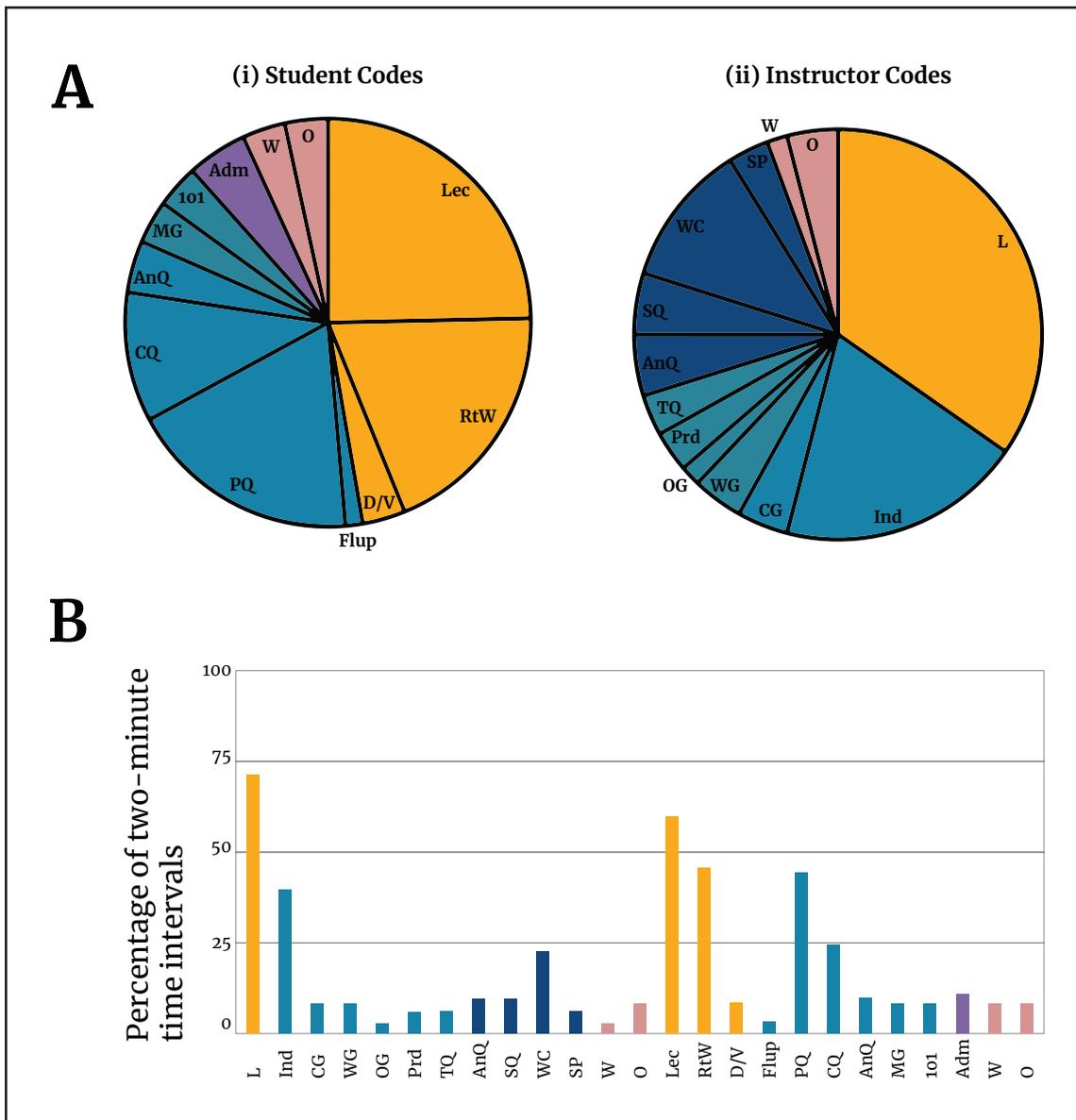


Figure 3. Graphic Results Based on COPUS Data Collection Sheet

Note. Sample results of a single Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) observation showing the (a) abundance of (i) student and (ii) instructor COPUS codes and (b) frequency of all COPUS codes as a percentage of 2-minute time intervals in which the behavior was observed during the duration of the class. The abbreviations are described in Figure 2. Colors in both (a) and (b) correspond to broader categories of codes as described in Smith et al. (2014).

Next, we talked about expectations for the classroom observations. These expectations included encouraging teachers to introduce themselves to the instructor, recognizing that instructors may be nervous about being observed, not asking undergraduate students to share their opinions of the instructor or class, and not reprimanding students for being off-task during class. We also stressed that the middle and high school teachers would be seeing a wide variety of classroom practices.

Teachers then observed a live class in pairs. During each class observation, middle and high school teachers sat with a partner and each individually completed the COPUS form for the duration of the class. The middle and high school teachers used a shared stopwatch, started at the same time, and proceeded in sync to a new row on the COPUS form every 2 minutes. When the observation was over, the middle and high school teachers turned in their data collection sheets and the data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet that automatically generates graphs showing the frequency and abundance of each code (example graphs shown in Figure 3. Sample data collection sheet and more comprehensive spreadsheet output may be requested by emailing author ELV. Abundance or percentage of each code was calculated by adding the total number of times each code was marked and dividing by the total number of codes. Frequency or percentage of time was calculated by counting the number of 2-minute time intervals in which each code was marked and dividing that by the total number of time intervals. Additional details about these calculations can be found in Lewin et al. (2016).

UCOP staff members calculated the Cohen's kappa interrater reliability scores between the two middle and high school teacher observers. Observations with an interrater reliability score of greater than 0.65 were used for research purposes (Landis & Koch, 1977); we found that about 98% of the observations reached this threshold.

After the first live observation, the middle and high school teachers convened to discuss what they had seen and ask questions about any confusing COPUS codes. Teachers often also wanted to discuss how the observation went, what stood out to them, what could be improved, and how what they saw was similar to or different from their own middle or high school classes.

After each observation, the middle and high school teachers filled out an online survey, the Instructional Practices Survey, developed for UCOP. The Instructional Practices Survey may be requested by emailing author ELV. The Instructional Practices Survey provides teachers with an opportunity to discuss the instructional practices observed and make suggestions for improvement. The survey included questions about teaching practices observed, such as, "Were students given the opportunity to discuss course material with their peers during this class period?" If the answer was yes, teachers responded to a variety of questions regarding the quality of the peer discussion. If the answer was no, teachers responded to questions about whether the course would be improved by using peer discussion and, if so, how. The survey included questions the college instructors submitted before the start of UCOP, and middle and high school teachers were able to provide specific feedback. Teachers were encouraged to discuss and reflect with their partner as they completed this survey. In addition, each teacher separately completed the Individual Observer Survey to reflect on their own teaching practices. This survey asked questions such as, "What additional skills, if any, would your students need to acquire to successfully learn in this course?" The Individual Observer Survey may be requested by emailing author ELV.

In addition to the first day, which included training and at least one live observation, the middle and high school teachers observed for two more days during their February break, with each teacher observing four to seven different courses each day. We changed observation partners each day so that teachers interacted with multiple members of the group. At the end of every day, UCOP staff led a wrap-up discussion to talk about the teachers' experiences that day as well as other issues relevant to teaching and learning. Middle and high school teachers often requested discussions around topics such as the frequency of particular instructional techniques such as clicker questions, strategies to use and skills to teach to better prepare their students for college, and the most effective teaching strategies that were observed and why they worked.

Middle and high school teachers returned for three and a half more days during their April break. The week started with a re-

fresher COPUS training during which teachers reviewed the codes and practiced coding another video. Every effort was made to observe the same courses in February and April; for example, if the class Introduction to Biology (BIO100) was observed in February, it was also observed in April. However, teachers often observed different courses in February and April (i.e., the two teachers who observed BIO100 in February were different from the two teachers who observed BIO100 in April) to expose them to a larger diversity of instructors and teaching practices.

On the last half day of the program in April, college instructors and middle and high school teachers were invited to discuss teaching and learning in small groups. The middle and high school teachers developed a list of topics to discuss with college instructors. College instructors were invited to participate for any length of time in a 3-hour open-house discussion with the teachers and select which small groups to join based on their interest. Topics included use of technology, classroom norms and culture, common ground among educators, assessment, student transition to college, student engagement, and broadening participation in STEM disciplines. After the small group discussion, the entire group met together, providing both middle and high school teachers and college instructors the opportunity to ask one another questions. By the end of the program, each middle and high school teacher had performed approximately 18 observations with a partner. With 10 teacher pairs (20 teachers), a total of roughly 180 observations were completed each year of the program.

After the April observations, the college instructors were sent an email asking if they would like to meet with a member of the UCOP staff to discuss their COPUS data and feedback from middle and high school teachers on the questions they asked. Approximately 73% requested a meeting, and they went through their individual codes and summary graphs, which were similar to material shown in Figure 3. College instructors often wanted to know how their teaching practices compared to those of their colleagues. To respond to this request, college instructors were also given aggregate data from all of the observations showing the relative percentage of different codes (examples of aggregate data are shown in Smith et al., 2014). A member of

the UCOP staff read through the middle and high school teacher feedback before sharing it with the college instructors to make sure the feedback had a constructive tone.

Benefits of UCOP to Many Stakeholders

The benefits of UCOP are experienced by a wide range of stakeholders involved with the project, including universities, college instructors, and middle and high school teachers. The program is one of community engagement (incorporating reciprocity to all stakeholders) and not simply a one-way outreach initiative—either from middle and high school teachers to college instructors or from college instructors to middle and high school teachers (Sandmann, 2008). We found that the unique role of UCOP is that it benefits all involved.

Benefits to Universities

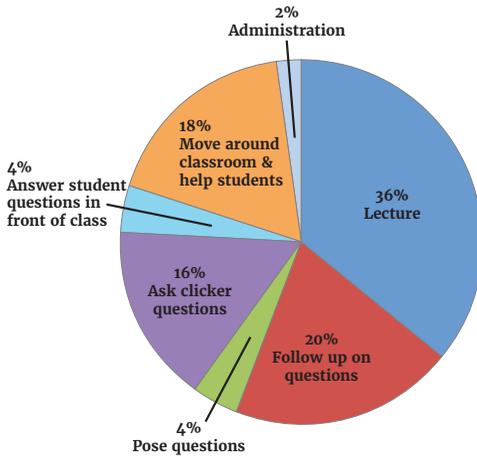
UCOP provides several benefits to the university, including generating a large amount of information about instructional practices in a short amount of time. At UMaine, the observation data have been used to design more targeted professional development opportunities for college instructors. For instance, when it was determined that the size of the class was not strongly correlated with the amount of time spent lecturing (Akiha et al., 2018), workshops were offered that focused on ways for both small- and large-enrollment classes to include more student-centered activities. In addition, it was found that only a subset of college instructors who were using clickers were providing students with the opportunity to talk to each other (Lewin et al., 2016), so workshops were designed around ways to encourage peer discussion. Using a data-driven approach to design educational development increased the number of college instructors who participated. Before COPUS data, about 10 college instructors would typically attend such professional development opportunities, but after aligning topics to faculty needs, attendance at these workshops often numbered 50 or more.

Benefits to College Instructors

College instructors also benefited from being involved with UCOP, as it provided them with an opportunity to engage in low-stakes observation by teaching professionals. Although many observations conducted

"As part of the University of Maine Classroom Observation Program, middle and high school teachers observed my genetics course from 2013–2017. The teachers used an observation protocol that documents different instructional behaviours the instructor and students engage in during the class period. The pie charts show the instructional behaviors I used in a single class period of my class, and reveal that students are asked to come to my class with their "minds on" ready to answer clicker questions, work in small groups, and practice solving problems."

What I do during a typical class:



What my students do during a typical class:

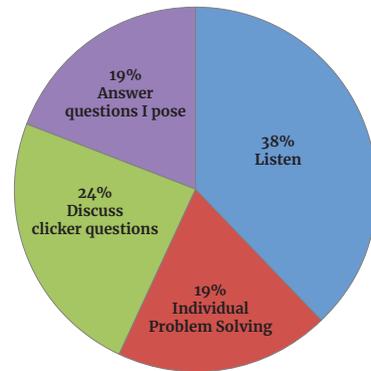


Figure 4. COPUS Data in Tenure and Promotion Portfolio. Example showing how a college instructor used Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) data as a part of a tenure and promotion portfolio.

at the university level are associated with high-stakes evaluation during tenure and promotion, UCOP gives college instructors the chance to simply learn from feedback, to engage in discussion with teachers, and to reflect on their teaching. Many college instructors involved with UCOP have used their individual COPUS results as a part of their tenure and promotion portfolio to provide evidence for their teaching philosophy and practices. An example of how the information was presented is shown in Figure 4.

Benefits to Middle and High School Teachers

Surveys of middle and high school teachers at the end of the program indicated that they also experience several benefits. A summary of the benefits they listed and example quotes are shown in Table 1. Also, UCOP provided a key community-building opportunity in a state as rural as Maine, which according to the U.S. Census Bureau is the most rural state, with nearly 62% of the population living in rural areas (Fields et al., 2016). Some of the middle and high school teachers who participated in our program have few, if any, STEM colleagues in

their home school district—often there is only one science or math teacher in a given school. UCOP provided an opportunity for all teachers to expand their professional network.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

We have found some key components that are critical for the success of UCOP.

Create a Competitive Application Process for Middle and High School Teachers

Our program received more applications than we could accept, which allowed us to select teachers based on a variety of factors, including reasons for wanting to participate, STEM discipline and grade level taught, number of years teaching, geographic location in the state, and socioeconomic status of various communities (based on Maine Department of Education data indicating percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch).

Table 1. Benefits to Middle and High School Teachers, Including Quotes From Teacher Evaluations of the Program

Benefits to Middle and High School Teachers
<p><i>Observe instruction in university STEM courses to help prepare students for college.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Teachers get the opportunity to observe the different teaching styles of professors and reflect on the skills they need to explicitly teach students to be college ready. We even got direct feedback from professors on what they felt students needed to be prepared.” • “[UCOP] informed my understanding of the expectations required of students headed to a University from the perspective of the professor.” • “Opportunity to understand where my students are headed and how I can better prepare them.”
<p><i>Reflect on issues of teaching and learning while observing college classes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was able to get a better understanding of how I teach through observing and reflecting.” • “The strategies that I have learned from UCOP have allowed me to facilitate a much more productive classroom climate and conversation.” • “Observing others also gives you an opportunity to see strategies in use, not just read about them. Ultimately, discussing what you saw with someone else allows you to view the lesson from more than one perspective.”
<p><i>Experience ways of evaluating classroom practices.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I will encourage my administrators to adopt a similar observation protocol for the administrator/teacher and teacher/teacher observations we are now conducting in my school district.” • “The COPUS protocol showed me one way of gathering quantifiable data on teaching practices” and “I think of how my [COPUS] pie chart would look! Are my kids listening all the time or are they engaged and doing multiple things during class time?” • “The COPUS tool has allowed me to look at my own practice with a greater focus on student vs teacher directed work. I have already begun reevaluating how I am teaching and guiding my students.”
<p><i>Feel valued for their professional expertise.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “UCOP is an invaluable experience that made me feel valued as a professional educator.” • “It was so refreshing to be viewed as a professional who has something to offer other instructors. I felt like my input mattered.”
<p><i>Contribute to research that focuses on institutional improvement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is always great to work with colleagues who are as invested in improving STEM education as I am. It is also so exciting to be part of such a great research program.” • “I like knowing (or at least thinking) that this program overall will lead to more engaging, student-centered instruction at the University.”

Establish a Professional and Welcoming Atmosphere for the Teachers

Throughout UCOP we stressed that the expertise of the middle and high school teachers was critical for the success of the program and our research questions. In addition, the teachers were awarded 52 continuing education unit contact hours for their participation, earned a stipend of \$1,300 (\$25/hour for 52 hours) for attending all six and a half days, and had the opportunity to have someone from the university observe their middle or high school class. Funding for the program and the teacher stipends was provided through grants from the National Science Foundation (Grants DUE-1347577 and DRL-0962805).

Set Clear Expectations and Protocols for Observers

Providing expectations for observing college instructors helped to prevent uncomfortable situations. One lesson we learned early on is to remind middle and high school teachers that faculty have anxiety about being observed. We also reminded teachers that college instructors are not typically trained in teaching or pedagogy, which helped teachers be more compassionate regarding observations. We asked teachers to observe a class with the utmost respect for the instructor—such as introducing themselves to the instructor ahead of time, being quiet and attentive during class, and avoiding an often strong desire to reprimand students who may be talking or off-task during class.

Involve Teachers in the Research Process

If you are collecting observation data for institutional improvement or research, it is helpful to share your research questions with the middle and high school teachers and get them involved with the process. Teachers often commented that one benefit of the program is being able to contribute to questions about institutional improvement (see Table 1). All teachers who participated in collecting data have been acknowledged by name in presentations and manuscripts (see, for example, Smith et al., 2014).

Provide Feedback to College Instructors After the Program

College instructors often do not set aside time to discuss their teaching with peers, so meeting with faculty one-on-one to share observation data provided an opportunity

for feedback about their teaching and to connect them with teaching resources (e.g., upcoming workshops, resources from teaching centers).

Use the Data to Improve Professional Development for College Instructors

It can be difficult to determine what professional development opportunities to offer college instructors. By using a data-driven approach, limited resources can be focused on topics where college instructors need the most help (such as how to encourage peer discussion during clicker questions). The UMaine Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning has also been using aggregate COPUS results to plan programming for campuswide events.

Offer Middle and High School Teachers the Opportunity to Provide Feedback

We gave middle and high school teachers online evaluation surveys in both February and April. Performing evaluation at these two time points allowed us to make changes in April based on feedback from February. For example, after the February week, a teacher suggested that it would be beneficial for teachers to be able to select the classes they wanted to observe, and we were able to implement such a system in April. The April survey allowed us to get feedback about the value of the UCOP professional learning opportunity and suggestions for future programming.

Outcomes From UCOP and Future Work

We have used the results of UCOP to write research papers. For example, we used UCOP data to help validate the COPUS instrument (Smith et al., 2013); write about instructional practices in STEM classes throughout a university (Smith et al., 2014); document different ways in which clickers are used (Lewin et al., 2016); contribute to a large-scale analysis of instructional practices across North America (Stains et al., 2018); and compare instructional practices in middle school, high school, and college environments (Akiha et al., 2018). Being able to use UCOP data to publish a number of studies has helped increase the visibility of COPUS, which is being used to document instructional practices as part of the Tufts University's HHMI-funded Listening Project; Mobile Summer Institutes

on Scientific Teaching, Transforming Education, Stimulating Teaching and Learning Excellence (TRESTLE); and the Automated Analysis of Constructed Response (AACR) projects. In addition to STEM-related projects, COPUS is used by university centers for teaching and learning as a service provided for all faculty (not just STEM faculty) who are interested in acquiring COPUS observation data from their class. Examples include University of California Irvine's Teaching and Learning Research Center (<https://dtei.uci.edu/tlrc-using-copus-as-a-research-tool/>) and the University of Southern Indiana's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (<https://www.usi.edu/cetl/teaching-and-learning/copus-observations/>).

UCOP data have also been used to launch new grant-funded initiatives. For example, we used COPUS data collected during UCOP and combined it with COPUS data collected at the middle and high school level (Akiha et al., 2018). We found that although middle and high school classrooms were characterized primarily by active learning teaching practices, those at the introductory and advanced university level predominantly used lecturing. We used these data as justification for creating new faculty learning communities (FLCs), which are networks of eight to 10 faculty members who work together over several months to discuss and reflect on particular educational issues (Cox, 2004, 2016). Our FLC project, which is sup-

ported by the National Science Foundation (DUE 1712074), is focused on understanding the instructional shift students perceive and experience in the transition from high school to the first year of college, providing a support network for college instructors who want to try active learning in the classroom, and developing instructional resources that college instructors can use to ease this transition period for students.

Conclusion

UCOP is a novel professional learning program that (1) supports middle and high school teachers' engagement with each other and with college instructors, (2) utilizes the teaching expertise of middle and high school teachers, (3) provides data that can be used to design new educational development opportunities and contribute to the research literature, and (4) launches new data-driven projects. This community engagement program answers several national calls to document current instructional practices and provides the information needed to implement nationally aligned initiatives that are tailored to a local environment. UCOP also provides an opportunity to open college campuses to middle and high school teachers, and honor their interest and expertise in transforming STEM education at a variety of educational levels.



Institutional Review Board Information

All college instructors and secondary teachers who agreed to be observed were given a human subjects consent form. The Institutional Review Board at the University of Maine granted approval to evaluate observation data of classrooms and survey instructors about the observation results (exempt status, protocol no. 2010-04-03 and 2013-02-06).

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Community Engagement Plans: A Tool for Institutionalizing Community Engagement

Henry R. Cunningham and Patrick C. Smith

Abstract

The University of Louisville guided the development of community engagement plans by its academic and administrative units to strengthen their ability to assess and improve their partnership, outreach, and engaged scholarship with community partners. Using a common template, each unit developed a process for engaging with the community, building on its particular strengths and interests. The engagement plans serve as a road map to get each unit engaged with the larger community and institutionalize engagement across the university. Discussion centers around the template used to develop the engagement plans and the role they play in institutionalizing community engagement. A further look is taken at the process used to develop and implement the plans as well as some of the challenges and opportunities that were encountered along the way.

Keywords: community engagement plans, institutionalizing community engagement, template, assessment



Higher education was challenged to address communities' most pressing needs in what Boyer (1996) referred to as a reaffirmation of its "historic commitment" (p. 11). He made a call for engagement, urging higher education institutions to partner with their communities in search of solutions to our most pressing community issues. This challenge was further emphasized when the Kellogg Commission (1999) issued a report calling on higher education to do more and go beyond outreach and service in what the commission referred to as "engagement." The commission urged that teaching, research, and service be redesigned to better address social concerns. Institutions that rose to this challenge and committed to mutually beneficial partnerships with their communities are known as "engaged institutions" (Kellogg Commission, 1999, p. 1). Colleges and universities have taken up this challenge to strengthen the town-gown relationship in an effort to address

the challenges facing their towns and cities (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999; Taylor & Luter, 2013). Much progress has been made with the infusion of engagement into the curriculum through service-learning or community-based learning courses, engaged scholarship, and outreach and partnership; however, full institutionalization of community engagement into the fabric of the institution is not always achieved.

For community engagement to be institutionalized, it must be transformational, conforming to Eckel et al.'s (1998) definition. This article explores how academic and administrative units' community engagement plans can institutionalize community engagement on campus, leading to a transformational change. It looks at how the engagement plans are intentionally tied to institutional priorities, explores the process used to develop the engagement plans, and describes strategies to get the respective units on board. The challenges encountered during the process and lessons

learned are also discussed.

The University of Louisville, a large, metropolitan, very high research activity (R1) institution located in Kentucky's largest urban area, is positioned to take another step in institutionalizing community engagement. It has a long history of involvement in the community through its professional schools and colleges and the many partnerships with the local school district, the city of Louisville, the Metro United Way, the Urban League, and other organizations. In 2006, the Signature Partnership initiative was developed in collaboration with community stakeholders to address areas of health, education, economic development, and social and human services. It involves every school and college and several administrative units in engaged scholarship, teaching, and outreach initiatives (Cunningham et al., 2015). The university's commitment to community engagement is evident in its mission statement, which includes the phrase "providing engaged service and outreach that improve the quality of life for local and global communities" (University of Louisville, 2016). A vice president for community engagement directly reports to the president, and the Office of the Vice President for Community Engagement is charged with leading the university in partnering with community entities in mutually beneficial ways to address the needs and interests of our diverse communities locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally through engaged research, teaching, and service. With the assistance of a community engagement steering committee comprising faculty, administrators, and students and a university-community advisory board made up of community and university leaders, the University of Louisville was able to develop and implement policies and procedures as well as initiatives to guide and enhance its engagement with the community. This commitment to engagement was evident in the university's receiving the Carnegie community engagement classification in 2008 and reclassification in 2015. As a result, the University of Louisville was well positioned to take another step in institutionalizing community engagement.

Although there appears to be limited literature on the institutionalization of community engagement, Furco (2000, 2002) and Kecskes (2008a) discussed institutionalization of service-learning through various self-assessment rubrics, and Holland (1997)

developed the Holland matrix for assessing institutional commitment to engagement. All three of these authors designed their respective assessment instruments for institutions to assess the degree of engagement either at the departmental level or across the institution. Sandmann et al. (2009) argued that it is critical for higher education to "engage with its community in authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships" (p. 1) as they analyzed the progress represented in the first wave of community-engaged institutions classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. For community engagement to be institutionalized, it must be part of the fabric of the institution and be embedded in its culture and priorities. Otherwise, it runs the risk of losing momentum or being disregarded altogether upon changes in administration.

Proponents of community engagement present several reasons why this work is important and should be institutionalized. Bringle and Hatcher (2000), in citing the work of others, argued that a greater emphasis on engaged scholarship can impact faculty work, enhance student learning, and improve the town-gown relationship. The Kellogg Commission (1999) also supported university-community partnerships, stating that at the heart of community engagement is the development of partnerships between the campus and the community. The AACSC Task Force on Public Engagement (2002), in its guide to leading public engagement at state colleges and universities, stated that engagement must, like other mission priorities, be embedded in the fabric of the institution if it is to achieve the Kellogg Commission's vision of being an engaged institution.

Bringle and Hatcher (2000) and Driscoll (2014) supported this argument, stating that institutionalization of community engagement must be evident in the identity of the institution and embedded in its culture. A commitment to community engagement must be reflected in the mission statements of colleges and universities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000, 2002; Cunningham et al., 2015; Driscoll, 2014; Franz et al., 2012; Furco, 2010; Furco & Miller, 2009; Kecskes, 2008a; Kellogg Commission, 1999). Beere et al. (2011) discussed the significance of mission statements in relation to community engagement. They argued that mission statements provide the rationale, direction,

motivation, and commitment for the institution to involve itself in community-engaged work. Another factor that must be taken into consideration for community engagement to be fully institutionalized is the support of administration (Furco & Holland, 2009; Kellogg Commission, 1999). This support should be evident through infrastructure and financial resources, which sends a strong message to faculty, staff, students, and the community that engagement with the community is taken seriously and is encouraged. Having a centralized office (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Kecskes, 2008a; Leiderman et al., 2003) to coordinate community engagement work across the institution is important; it demonstrates that such work is a university-wide effort, not a movement or interest of a particular department or individual.

Several factors aid in the institutionalization of community engagement. Key among them is building the infrastructure. Bringle and Hatcher (2000), in discussing the institutionalization of service-learning and building on the work of Morton and Troppe (1996), stated that institutionalization is multifaceted and must be connected to the mission statement, presidential leadership, budget allocation, and infrastructure, among other things. In further exploring infrastructure, Bringle and Hatcher stated that having a centralized office to coordinate university-wide service-learning initiatives is a key aspect of institutionalization. Beere et al. (2011) supported the concept of a centralized office with a high-level administrator who reflects the views of the president and chief academic officer. Campus leadership can greatly strengthen the infrastructure by supporting the central office with institutional funds rather than grant money to ensure permanency of the office. Kecskes, (2008b) and Furco (2010) also supported the idea of a centralized office with institutional support.

Institutionalizing Community Engagement Plans

For community engagement plans developed by academic and administrative units to be truly institutionalized, they must be tied to institutional priorities. Like service-learning, they must be tied to mission statements, strategic priorities, and goals (Brackin & Gibson, 2004), as well as broader institutional practices such as achieving student learning outcomes (Furco

& Holland, 2009). Connecting community engagement plans with the institution's priorities ensures relevance as well as buy-in from administrators and faculty, who will perceive the plans as important and a mechanism to drive development and implementation of those priorities.

This model focused on having each academic and administrative unit develop its own engagement plan as opposed to having one plan for the entire university. Because of the uniqueness and priorities of each academic and administrative unit, it was considered more effective to have each unit develop its own engagement plan guided by common university-wide goals and a common template. The Office of Community Engagement, along with the community engagement steering committee, comprising faculty, staff, and students, developed the goals to guide the university to further advance community engagement across the campus. The goals resulted from areas the university needed to address following the self-study for the Carnegie classification.

The University of Louisville, in developing its community engagement plans, connected the template for the plans to both the university's mission and institutional priorities. The university's mission statement called for "providing engaged service and outreach that improve the quality of life for local and global communities" (University of Louisville, 2016). The preamble to the community engagement plans mentioned the mission statement and the role the plans would play in helping units fulfill the mission of the institution as a metropolitan research institution. The community engagement plans also factored in the priorities of the institution when the concept of the plans was introduced by the Office of Community Engagement. This was to increase the likelihood that academic deans and vice presidents would support the development of the plans. The first priority connected to the community engagement plans was the university's strategic plan. The strategic plan identified five pillars on which to build the future of the university, one of which was community engagement. The pillars are all connected, with community engagement evident in such pillars as research and diversity and inclusion. The engagement plans were presented as a means to help the university meet the goals laid out in the strategic plan. Consequently, unit engagement plans should reflect the

university's strategic plan. The connection of academic and administrative units' engagement plans to the university's strategic plan is supported by Beere et al. (2011), who argued that units' engagement plans must be monitored for implementation and goals achieved in order to close the loop between the two.

The University of Louisville developed the 21st Century University initiative, the second university priority, which served as a road map to help the university achieve the goals of the strategic plan. The 21st Century initiative laid out specific strategies to accomplish the goals of the strategic plan, many of which were incorporated into the engagement plans. The third university priority to which the engagement plans were connected was the scorecard set by the president to measure progress within the university. Since all units, both academic and administrative, contribute to progress toward the scorecard goals, it made sense to connect the goals of the engagement plans with the goals of the scorecard.

During the self-study that led to the reaffirmation as a community-engaged institution from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the University of Louisville identified several key areas that needed enhancement. Addressing the identified areas would not only help prepare the university for the next round of Carnegie classification reaffirmation but would greatly enhance community engagement on the campus. As a result, the goals listed within the template to guide the development of the engagement plans incorporated the areas that were identified as deficient during the university self-study. The university community was pleased with the Carnegie designation for community engagement and wanted to maintain it; therefore, it was believed they would more likely support a plan that would help in maintaining the classification.

Because community engagement is included in the University of Louisville's strategic plan, as one of its five pillars, the university had to demonstrate to its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), how it was assessing community engagement across the institution. Consequently, the engagement plans developed by each academic and administrative unit were utilized as the mechanism by which such

assessment was conducted to ensure compliance. Connecting the engagement plans to the university's accreditation provided further evidence of their importance to the university and why they should be supported by all units to help the university remain in compliance with its accrediting body.

The Process of Developing the Plans

The university's Office of Community Engagement led the effort to develop and implement the engagement plans. The community engagement steering committee, consisting of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, provided feedback and guidance in developing the template for the plans. Getting the endorsement of the steering committee was significant since the members came from both academic and administrative units from across campus. The process was designed so that each academic and administrative unit would develop and implement its own community engagement plan with assistance and guidance from the Office of Community Engagement, leading to institutionalization of the effort across the entire university. This model allows units to determine how they will commit to and fulfill their role in community engagement (Beere et al., 2011). A draft of the engagement plan template developed by the community engagement steering committee was shared with a few key deans to get their input and support before it was shared with all the academic deans. Not only did this select group of deans provide valuable feedback that improved the template, they endorsed the idea of the engagement plans. Getting the support of key deans played a significant role in the plans' implementation. Their familiarity with the template and their support for it was critical when it was presented to the council of academic deans. Because this select group of deans spoke in favor of the template and the development of units' engagement plans, it was easier to get the remaining deans' support for the plans as an important mechanism to enhance and advance community engagement on campus.

Development of units' engagement plans was given a 2-year time frame from initiation to implementation. On being provided with the template and instructions to draft their engagement plans, units were allowed a year to complete this exercise, to enable unit heads to consult with faculty and staff

in their respective schools, colleges, and offices. At the end of the first year, the completed drafts of the engagement plans were submitted to the Office of Community Engagement for review and feedback. Over a period of several months, feedback was provided to each unit. This included individual meetings with each dean and vice president and detailed emails about the plans. All unit heads were given another year to revise their engagement plan based on the feedback provided and with further consultation with their respective unit. Final feedback was provided on the second draft of the engagement plans before they were implemented.

Goals of the Community Engagement Plans

In creating the planning process, it was important to provide a set of standardized goals to help leadership at the units understand the purpose of the engagement plans in connecting their work to the overall goals of the university as articulated in the university's strategic plan and the 21st Century University initiative. In addition, the goals would help to address deficiencies as identified by the self-study for the Carnegie classification.

Goals for Academic Units

The template for the academic units outlined four key goals: (1) promote engaged scholarship opportunities; (2) promote engagement in the Signature Partnership initiative; (3) promote local, state, national, and international engagement; and (4) promote documentation, assessment, and accountability in engagement.

Promote Engaged Scholarship Opportunities.

The university is committed to excellence in engaged scholarly work and working across the university to increase engaged research and teaching activities with community partners. Establishing goals for units in the plan around engaged scholarship helps them connect core mission elements involving research and teaching with their engagement efforts in the community. The hope is that through explicitly planning and striving toward targets related to resourcing and recognition for engaged scholarship, units will continue to improve in the quantity and quality of this work.

Promote Engagement in the Signature Partnership Initiative. The Signature Partnership initiative is a strategic university effort to enhance the quality of life and economic opportunity for residents in our urban core. The goal is to work with various community partners to improve the education, health, wellness, and social status of individuals and families who live in this geographical area of the city. Working closely with community residents, the Jefferson County Public Schools, the Metro Government, Metro United Way, the Urban League, faith-based organizations, and many others, the university has coordinated and enhanced existing programs and launched new programs designed to eliminate or reduce disparities experienced by residents in education, health, and economic and social conditions. The university draws upon the expertise and energy of faculty, staff, and students from every academic and administrative unit for this initiative (University of Louisville, Office of Community Engagement, 2018). As a major initiative to address the university's metropolitan mission of service, it is imperative that work related to the Signature Partnership initiative be included in the engagement plans.

Promote Local, State, National, and International Engagement.

In adopting the Carnegie definition for community engagement, which defines community as local, national, and international (Swearer Center, Brown University, 2018), the work of the university must include all these geographical areas. This inclusiveness is in line with a core component of the overall mission of the university to collaboratively address community issues locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Through strategic alliances and partnerships with public and private groups, the university will share expertise, interest, and scholarship as an involved citizen. Faculty, staff, and students use these community-based interactions to provide educational opportunities and as a vehicle for translational and applied research of university scholars. Given this centrality to the university, the template includes a goal for promoting this work throughout these geographic levels of impact, so that units can look more intentionally at their engagement activities here at home, in projects at state and national levels, and

in communities around the world.

Promote Documentation, Assessment, and Accountability in Engagement. With the development of the engagement plans there was an opportunity to strengthen and better formalize a connected system of measures for community engagement and its impact on students, faculty, the institution, and the community across the university and within units. The central office of community engagement at the university manages an institution-wide data collection process for activities with community partners. The engagement plans offered an opportunity to synchronize that data-collection effort with unit-level systems collecting information. In some cases, the centralized database was able to serve as a primary measure for units as they reported on their goals. The end result at both the institutional level and the unit level was improved documentation and assessment for engagement efforts, and a strong starting point for helping units further improve their ability to account for outcomes at the student, faculty, and community partner levels.

Goals for Administrative Units

The template for the administrative units outlined two key goals: (1) promote community service climate in the unit and (2) promote engagement in the Signature Partnership area. The template also recognized a third type of goal that acknowledges differences among administrative units.

Promote Community Service Climate in the Unit. Because community engagement is a university-wide initiative, it is important that administrative units, acting through staff, be involved in community efforts as well. This particular goal is to ensure that offices across campus are appropriately supportive of having staff members engage in service activities in the community. This goal further supports a university policy of granting staff members community service leave to engage in appropriate community activities.

Promote Engagement in the Signature Partnership Area. As with academic units' involvement in this geographical area, it is important that staff from administrative

offices be involved in the Signature Partnership initiative. It is a university-wide effort to enhance the quality of life and economic opportunity for residents in the west Louisville area, emphasizing educational attainment, health, and social and economic issues.

Other Goals Relevant to Your Unit. This third goal was included due to the uniqueness and differences among the administrative offices. The Office of Student Affairs and the Athletics Department are in a position to include students in their engagement with the community, but this is not the case with other offices. This goal enables units to focus on their work and its applicability to issues in the community and how each could connect to the community in a meaningful way.

Categories of the Engagement Plan

Goals

The template for the engagement plan was divided into related categories that stipulated how the plan should be written. Because these categories are all related, they build from each other. The goals are the guiding force of the plan and serve to determine the areas of emphasis and direction units take in developing and implementing their plans to align with university's priorities for engagement.

Strategies

The strategies describe the specific actions, activities, programs, or initiatives that units are undertaking or plan to implement in pursuit of the goals. Units were asked to provide a comprehensive listing of strategies that aligned with each of their goals, with assurance that upcoming or new strategies be practical, feasible, and sustainable.

Outcomes

Although units were asked to be detailed and comprehensive in describing strategies related to each goal, it was recognized that particular units may not have the capacity to align an outcome with every single strategy, assuming units were aligning many multiple strategies to a particular goal. Therefore, units were asked to select one outcome for a chosen strategy. However, units were encouraged to list multiple outcomes if their internal capacity for measurement and reporting was in place.

Assessment and Measurement

The assessment section of the plan details the measuring of outcomes and clearly indicates how progress and accomplishments will be reported. All outcomes described in the plan are required to be measurable through an existing or newly developed assessment or data collection system. Some units provide their own assessment tools, some units utilize data from the central office, and others use a combination of their own data and data collected in university-wide processes. The university's central office for community engagement serves as a source for data from the annual partnership data reporting, as well as other centrally administered assessments and databases, including a biannual survey of community partners, information about curricular engagement courses and enrollment, and results from student assessment of curricular engagement. A new university-wide survey of faculty involvement in community-engaged scholarship is also available for use.

Targets and Progress Reports

Targets for each of the outcomes help units report on the progress toward their goals. In most cases, targets should be quantitative: for example, a percentage or number increase over an established baseline. However, for some outcomes, the target is related to the scheduled implementation of a new project or an effort to change policy related to one of the goals. In these cases the target may simply be establishing a new initiative or policy.

Action Plan

The action plan section requests that units provide a narrative that discusses the "closing of the loop" in each goal area for that year's plan. Units use the findings described in the progress reports to indicate strategies for continuous program improvement to strategically enhance their community engagement efforts. If the targets related to a goal are not met in any area, units are asked to describe what improvements or course corrections will be made in order to meet targets in the following year's progress report. In the areas where the targets are met, units are asked to describe what factors led to success and how that will be supported for meeting targets in the upcoming year. In either case—meeting or not meeting targets related to a goal—units have the

flexibility to update or adapt elements of the plan to improve it. Those changes are discussed in the action plan section of the template.

Community Engagement Plans as a Means for Assessment

The engagement plans once developed and implemented become an assessment mechanism. As a measurement of unit-level involvement and progress in community engagement, the Office of Community Engagement and the Office of Academic Planning and Accountability established an annual reporting process for all colleges, schools, and applicable administrative units to provide updates on goals, strategies, and targets for the assessment of the unit's community engagement mission. These annual update reports indicate the extent to which units are making progress in meeting the target set for each goal and the plan of action they will undertake in the next academic year. Table 1 and Table 2 are examples of update reports utilizing the common template that are submitted to the Office of Community Engagement for review.

Lessons Learned

Transformational processes are slow and complex and bring many unexpected consequences. The process of introducing the development and implementation of community engagement plans by all academic and administrative units within the university brought with it some challenges, both expected and unexpected; consequently, many lessons were learned.

University Leadership Must be on Board With Building the Institutional Foundation

One of the most important lessons learned is that the university leadership must be supportive of any transformative change that occurs. For a university-wide, unit-level engagement planning process to get off the ground, the central administration and the deans of schools and colleges must all agree and be in support of the effort. A major enabling factor for the university was the inclusion of community "engaged service" as a part of the overall mission. This mission component filters through every school and college of the university, and administrators and deans understand

Table 1. A Progress Report Submitted by an Academic Unit

Goals	Strategies/Tactics	Anticipated Outcome	Measure	Targets	Progress Report	Action Plan
1. Promote engaged scholarship opportunities	Identify and publicize resources for faculty and student development in the area of community-engaged scholarship.	Increased number of courses integrating practice experience	University records of practice-engaged (community-based learning) designated courses	<p>Increase in practice-engaged courses 10% over baseline</p>	<p>Last year there were 12 undergraduate courses and 11 graduate courses offered that included practice-based experience. This year there were 5 undergraduate courses and 23 graduate courses offered that included practice-based experience</p>	<p>This provides evidence of “closing the loop” by utilizing the results described in your findings to indicate strategies for continuous program improvement to enhance community engagement efforts of your unit</p> <p>As we are in the process of reaccreditation, the curriculum is undergoing significant revision. The number of practice-engaged courses at the graduate level reflects that our master’s programs are practice based. That is expected to remain the same despite the revisions</p>

Table continued on next page.

Table 1. A Progress Report Submitted by an Academic Unit continued

Goals	Strategies/Tactics	Anticipated Outcome	Measure	Targets	Progress Report	Action Plan
2. Promote engagement in the Signature Partnership initiative	Develop engagement opportunities for faculty, staff, and students in target area	Continuing presence in the Signature Partnership initiative target area	Use data from University Community Engagement database	10 projects will be initiated in the targeted area	12 projects were initiated in the targeted area this academic year	Long-term ties with community are being supported to ensure sustainability of partnerships
3. Promote local, state, national, & international engagement	Communicate to department chairs the need to direct faculty to include community engagement activities on their annual work plans and specifically those considered "local"	An increase in overall number of "local" community engagement activities outlined in annual faculty work plans	Use of community engagement activities reported in this year and last year faculty annual work plans to compare amount of "local" community engagement	Next academic year, the college will increase its overall "local" community engagement activities outlined on its annual faculty work plans by 5 percentage points over last year	The College experienced an 8.6% increase over the number of local community engagement activities reported over previous year	Since the target was met, the College will work to maintain the same level of commitment to the community in the next academic year
4. Promote documentation, assessment, and accountability in engagement	Coordinate a demonstration of how to record activities in the database for faculty by the staff in the Office of Community Engagement	Inform and educate faculty about the importance and simplicity of documenting their community engagement activities in the Office of Community Engagement database	Compare the number of community engagement activities reported by faculty in the last and current academic years	Faculty members will be intentional about reporting their community engagement activities in the database. As a result, the College will experience a 5 percent increase in the number of activities reported last year	This year the College experienced a 48% increase over the number of community engagement activities reported in the previous year	Continuous support will be provided to faculty to ensure the level of activities reported remains high

Table 2. A Progress Report Submitted by an Administrative Unit

Goals	Strategies/Tactics	Anticipated Outcome	Measure	Targets	Progress Report	Action Plan
Promote community service climate in the unit	Highlight and recognize staff participation in community service in the Unit newsletter	Recognition of staff will lead to increased participation in community service activities	Numbers reported in the Community Partner Database will provide figures	Highlight at least two staff members per year	One staff member was highlighted in the Unit newsletter and one recognized with President's Volunteer Service Award. There were 26 instances of staff activities	Now that the division collects service hours from each area as part of our annual reporting process, it is easier to report. We will change the target for next year to getting 25% of Unit staff to participate in a service project during the University service week

Table continued on next page.

Table 2. A Progress Report Submitted by an Administrative Unit *continued*

Goals	Strategies/Tactics	Anticipated Outcome	Measure	Targets	Progress Report	Action Plan
Promote engagement in the Signature Partnership area	Develop new partnership as part of the Signature Partnership initiative	There will be new and additional partnerships as part of the Signature Partnership initiative	Numbers reported in the Community Partner Database will provide figures	Develop one new community partner as part of the Signature Partnership initiative	Connected with two partners to reignite former relationship with them. They had been partners in the past, but the relationship had dropped off over the past few years. Invited them to renew partnership	We were able to take time to visit the agencies in person and learn about what they offer and how volunteers could be used. We plan to change the target to promote service opportunities with these agencies at least five times per academic year
Other goals relevant to your unit This goal should be unique to your unit and the work you do						

that this core mission component must be measurable to be meaningful; hence the idea of unit engagement plans became an accepted framework for assessing implementation and improvement of engagement efforts across the institution within a standardized, centrally organized process. The university president and provost supported the development of community engagement plans by all units. They paved the way for the engagement plan to be introduced to all deans and vice presidents, who were less inclined to reject it when there was support from the highest level of the institution. This is in line with the argument presented by Furco and Holland (2009) and the Kellogg Commission (1999) described earlier, highlighting the importance of support from central administration to achieve meaningful transformation.

The Template Is Not Applicable to All Units

Early in the development of the plan template, it was recognized that some units may need different goals in some key areas. In the earliest iteration, the plan template was standardized in alignment with areas of community engagement prioritized in the university's strategic plan and the newer 21st Century University initiative. Along the way it was realized that some areas of institutional prioritization were understandably not applicable across every unit. In these cases, it was necessary to be flexible in the inclusion of the standardized goals in the template, or in the adaptation of goals to better reflect the mission and strategies of units with goals different from those in the original plan's template.

Academic and Administrative Units Must Have Different Templates

Differences between academic and administrative units necessitated the creation of different plan templates with slightly different goals. Because most administrative units do not have a research or teaching role, these units' engagement plans do not need to include a goal related to the university priority of supporting and increasing engaged scholarship efforts. A key difference between academic and administrative unit plan templates was that rather than having a goal to promote engagement at every level of possible geographic operation (local, state, national, and international) as in the academic unit plans, administrative

unit plans included a goal related to administrative unit staff developing a climate that supports community service and partnership activities. Work with external partners is not a typical part of the brief of many administrative unit staffers, but the framing of this goal by its nature encourages these units to develop measurable strategies that work best for them for engaging the community.

Educate Those Who Are Writing the Plan

A major factor in attaining initial acceptance for the template was outreach to deans and administrative leaders. Meetings with deans and vice presidents were scheduled in order to explain the importance of unit-level planning and measurement for their engagement efforts. These meetings were about the idea of the plans, but importantly, discussions were initiated to examine the mission-critical operations of units as related to community engagement, with an eye toward targeting efforts for efficacious outcomes for faculty, students, and community partners, and creating a pathway for measurement of those outcomes. After the initial meeting or meetings with unit leadership, it was necessary in some cases to continue meeting with staff responsible for developing and reporting on the progress of implementation of the plan. It was important for the Office of Community Engagement to provide ongoing technical assistance to help units report on their plans and use their plans to drive continuous improvement.

Entire Units Should Have Input in Developing the Plan

In improving the ability of the plans to result in measurable improvement, it is key to involve the full range of faculty, staff, and student leaders from the individual units. The process and plans are less than 3 years old from initial introduction of the concept to the implementation and reporting on the first round of the finalized planning template. In that span we have worked with leadership at the unit level and their key engagement staff and faculty leads. Going forward, the hope is to refine the process so all stakeholders from within a unit can contribute to the plan, creating buy-in from all parties in the ongoing development of a strong agenda for community engagement by their unit and a shared unit-level vision for what is acceptable in terms of continu-

ous improvement. Engaging everyone from the unit in developing the engagement plan helps to integrate it into the culture and fabric of the unit.

Be Prepared to Offer Assistance Throughout the Writing of the Plan

Ongoing assistance from a central office that understands community engagement is critical in establishing and maintaining an effort to plan for these activities at the unit level across the university. There must be a commitment to sustain the process, to work with unit leadership and the engagement-related staff on their terms, and to respect and understand their issues as they begin to develop these plans and as they take ownership of these plans over time. There were misunderstandings, differences in interpretation, questions, and requests for clarity, among other issues that required the assistance of the Office of Community Engagement. It is very important for units to understand that there is a central institutional resource to help and offer advice on these plans, which are not one-off, but meant to live and breathe over time. This level of support is necessary for ongoing sustainability of the plans. Having the Office of Community Engagement as the centralized office shepherding this university-wide initiative is key in institutionalization (Beere et al., 2011; Furco, 2010; Kecskes, 2008b).

Be Prepared to Review Drafts and Provide Opportunities to Resubmit

In some cases, even though units clearly have a community mission involving activities with external partners, they may not yet have strategically articulated language and thinking that relate an institutional mission of community engagement to their curricular engagement programs, their faculty-engaged scholarship, or opportunities for community service for their staff. In the beginning of the planning process this can lead to uncertainty in the plan language and in what exactly units might describe as sensible targets and measurements toward institutional engagement goals. An openness to reviewing drafts allows units to make better plans that can lead to continuous improvement. In addition, exercising flexibility in requiring that units adhere to established deadlines can support the creation of stronger and more meaningful plans that help units improve

their partnership and outreach activities with external partners.

Units That Are Large, Diverse, and Fragmented Are Problematic

Some units have a singular operational direction and can easily connect their core activities in the community with the goals of the plan. However, some academic and administrative units have many underlying departments, centers, and institutes, so that their collective efforts cannot be easily categorized within a standardized template at the unit level. In the early years of establishing and normalizing the process, we must make accommodations in adapting the unit-level plan template for these complex units. As the process becomes more understood and accepted, subunit or departmental plans could be established, using an intentional design for working through the within-unit complexities to develop targets that can be rolled up in a meaningful way to the unit level.

Conclusion

Engagement plans, if properly developed and introduced across the institution, can help institutionalize community engagement through their university-wide implementation within both academic and administrative units. These plans guide community engagement efforts within the institution, addressing core principles as outlined in an institution's strategic plan and mission, further enhancing the institutionalization of community engagement. In addition to serving as the vehicle to institutionalize community engagement, engagement plans can be used to address critical areas that are deemed lacking or deficient within the institution or areas of priority. These critical areas are often identified during an institution's self-study for the Carnegie classification in community engagement, where areas of weaknesses or deficiencies surface. The engagement plan, then, can act as a tool to develop goals and strategies to address these areas of identified weaknesses and deficiencies. These applications of engagement plans are valid for any institution regardless of size or type.

Engagement plans can also incorporate targets to enable assessment of engagement across the institution, as well as to determine courses of action for improvement, if necessary. This function represents

another value of engagement plans, as colleges and universities are being required to assess the success of their community engagement efforts. The engagement plans can be uniquely tailored for each institution, with goals that address areas of priority and relevance as they strive to institutionalize community engagement.



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Building on Strengths to Address Challenges: An Asset-Based Approach to Planning and Implementing a Community Partnership School

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Abstract

This article explores the planning and implementation process for a community partnership school for a historically low-performing elementary school using an asset-based community development approach. We offer insights into the community needs assessment process that enabled four key community partners to identify needs and projects for the school and surrounding community. The community partnership school draws its strength from four local organizations assimilating their expertise and resources on focal areas for community engagement. Beyond organizational resources, the partners also developed local networks and resources that could be useful for the community. Building on the asset-based community development model, insights and challenges are presented for others seeking to employ a similar approach to mobilize assets for student success and community engagement.

Keywords: community partnership school, asset-based community development, community-based organizations



This article presents a retrospective account of the planning and early phases of implementation for a community partnership model in a historically low-performing school serving a high-needs urban neighborhood. The four partners working in the Florida Panhandle region are Escambia County School District (via C. A. Weis Elementary School), Children's Home Society (CHS), University of West Florida (UWF), and Community Health Northwest Florida (CHNF, formerly known as Escambia County Clinic). Considerable attention is given to the specific process of identifying and cultivating resident resources (or assets) as a primary foundation for the work, as this has been a central focus of efforts to date and an element of the work that distinguishes it from deficit model approaches that are more commonly deployed in efforts to benefit high-needs communities (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006). Results obtained from this work directly informed

the prioritization of effort and resources in the early implementation phase, as well as longer range planning for growth and sustainability. Drawing on findings from our reflective analysis of the planning and implementation processes as well as the insights of varied stakeholders, we extrapolate lessons that inform the (ongoing) work and should inform similar work in other settings.

Following a review of literature about the community partnership schools and asset mapping or capacity mapping, the background of the project is discussed to provide an overview of the project site and demographic information. The authors then present the process of asset-based community needs assessment and the projects that have emerged from the process. This article offers insights from the initial stages of the project, where it was imperative for the four key partners to recognize the community needs and shared goals. Therefore,

this article could assist future university–community partners to participate in long-term projects within their communities and provide a foundation grounded in research for school and community need activities. Finally, this article highlights the role of the university to actively engage in the local community with long-term partnerships.

Review of the Literature

Community Schools

The origins of community schools can be traced back to Dewey’s speech “The School as a Social Centre” and his association with Jane Addams, founder of the Hull House (Longo, 2007). The basic tenets of democratic and civic education have evolved into community schools that support students, their families, and the local community. Contemporary community schools have taken inspiration from institutions like the Hull House, the Highlander Folk School, and the Neighborhood Learning Community, among others.

Community schools are a mutual partnership between schools and local community stakeholders. The integrated approach of community development and after-school academic and enrichment support serves the local community and provides essential

substance to the students (Longo, 2007; National Center for Community Schools, 2016). According to the National Center for Community Schools (2016), “Community schools maintain a central focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that families are integral parts of communities” (para. 2). Blank and Villarreal (2016) explained that the community schools work within public schools as “centers of flourishing communities where everyone belongs and works together to help our young people thrive” (p. 16). Sanders (2016) noted community schools are sites that provide “services for families, lower family stress, and increase family engagement in children’s education” (p. 158). Community schools are sites that foster interconnections between community members, school system, and community agencies to offer a broad array of services (Dryfoos, 2005). Community schools integrate health services and enrichment programs for students and their families as an untapped opportunity for raising academic achievement and improving learning. Lubell (2011) illustrated the pioneering approach of the Children's Aid Society in the Developmental Triangle (See Figure 1). Children are at the center of integrated learning opportunities, support services, and instructional programs to support the children, families, and community. In the

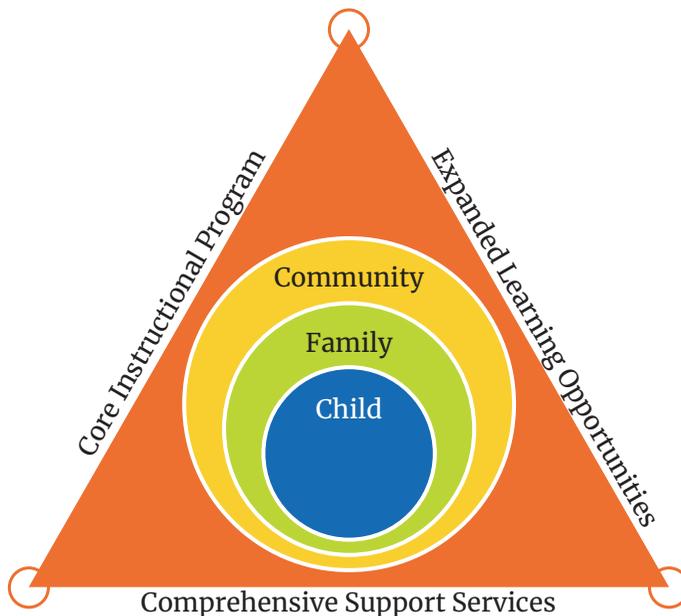


Figure 1. The Developmental Triangle

Note. Adapted from “Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action,” by E. Lubell, 2011, p. 3. Copyright 2011 by the Children's Aid Society.

traditional community school approach, integration of services is integral to the structure for providing an array of services.

Community Partnership School

The Community Partnership School represents a specific application of the community school model and was developed and piloted by the Center for Community Schools and Child Welfare Innovation at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in collaboration with Maynard Evans High School in the Orange County School District (in Orlando, Florida). The community partnership school model has been adopted for the community school initiative at C. A. Weis Elementary School. The key attributes of the Community Partnership School are similar to those of the community school model, with their local context offering opportunities for unique implementation processes. The key elements of the model are long-term partnerships and shared decision-making processes between the school, local community organizations, university, and health institution (UCF, 2016, p. 2). Partnerships are critical for sustainability of community schools, as they are “intentional, aligned, and focused on results” (Capers & Shah, 2015, p. 29). The Community Partnership School enshrined the partnership aspect in its title and structure. The main attributes of this model for students, parents, and local communities are the integration of instructional programs, expanded learning opportunities, and support services. The Community Partnership School includes

- (a) holistic services aimed at removing learning barriers;
- (b) academic success and healthy communities;
- (c) enrichment activities beyond a school’s curriculum;
- (d) understanding and meeting needs of the local community; and
- (e) encouraging opportunities for the parents as well as the larger community. (UCF, 2016, p. 2)

Additionally, the partners of the Community Partnership School commit to a shared vision for the school as well as the local community and pooling and providing access to resources.

This model offers prospects for creating a hub where students, parents, teachers, and local community members feel a sense of ownership (Capers & Shah, 2015). This hub

(termed “The Hub” within the organizational structures and systems of the Evans Community Partnership School) provides a long-term connection to students to enrich their community while achieving success.

Asset-Based Community Development

Asset mapping or capacity mapping is a participatory approach that is primarily utilized to support community revitalization (Kretzmann, 2010; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). It incorporates the combination of a broad set of strategies and practices as part of a collective process of harnessing the individual and collective skills within a particular community and the ability to strategically deploy those assets to support, sustain, and revitalize that community. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) identified the following three key aspects of asset-based community development:

- **Asset based.** This concept advocates a positive approach to sustainable development wherein the community building begins with a collective process of identifying the assets within the community.
- **Internally focused.** The collectivism at the community level acknowledges the need for an outside support; nevertheless, the focus is internally driven. The priority for asset mapping is to identify and leverage the resources from within the community.
- **Relationship driven.** Community building through asset mapping has strong impetus on “any identifiable set of activities pursued by a community in order to increase the social capacity of its members” (Mattessich et al., 2004, p. 11). This requires a continuous process of building reciprocal relationships among community members. Furthermore, conducting an inventory of the skills required to survive in the given environment can assist in maintaining and strengthening these relationships.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Kretzmann (2010) set forth a five-step process for community engagement utilizing an asset-based approach. Within this process, asset mapping is a participatory method that is used as the initial

step toward community engagement. The researchers (Kretzmann, 2010; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) identified the following five steps in the asset-based approach:

- **Asset mapping.** This first step is to map the assets within the community and interact with individuals, citizens' associations, business leaders, and local institutions. The underlying idea of this first step is to gain knowledge about the assets through strategies such as *transact walk*.
- **Building internal relationships.** This process allows building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem solving within the community. Collaboration between diverse groups of individuals will help to engage people with an insider's perspective in realistic activities.
- **Asset mobilization.** The process encourages mobilization of the community's assets for economic development. Asset mapping assists with the identification and utilization of local resources for local development.
- **Building a vision.** Asset mapping can assist in sustainably creating representative groups of local leaders and stakeholders for the purposes of building a community vision and plan. This helps to ensure the rights of the local people and their complete commitment to the proposed activity.
- **Establishing external connections.** Asset mapping captures the insider's perspective, and it also has the flexibility to engage the outsiders who may have a pertinent cause that aligns with the local community.

Asset-Mapping Activities Beyond School: Bringing Together Community and Schools

The cohesive approach to engage parents and children can stimulate and mobilize social, cultural, and human capital development within the community, with the school acting as a nodal point for every activity. Case studies by Green and Goetting (2010)

illustrated seven successful examples from the U.S. and other countries. Building upon the strategy of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), Green and Goetting (2010) focused on professional trainings and technical assistance at the community level with an overall commitment to looking inside the community and seeking professional assistance from within the community to avoid dependency on outside support. Within this type of model, a school can assume status as a nodal agency to facilitate a community-based center/forum (Johnson, Thompson, et al., 2009). This forum can encourage community members, students, professionals, technical experts, academicians, researchers, and others to find and assume their role in a communal effort. The purpose of such community-based activity is to bring together local community leaders as well as professional experts to undertake community building. Community building here is not limited solely to a community project; it includes personal assistance to individuals who need some specific help. Green and Goetting (2010) suggested economic activities such as credit trainings, personal finance management, and taxation workshops. They also presented guidelines—based on prior experiences—to reorganize community assets to promote community engagement. The asset-based community development strategies consider contexts and cultures as common issues, and concerns are addressed. Again, the idea is to understand the limitations and build upon the key characteristics for resilience.

Asset mapping can be an enriching experience provided the participation of stakeholders is a respected effort for everyone involved; thus, cultural sensitivity is essential for the efficacy of this development strategy (Green & Goetting, 2010). Linking human capital with social and cultural capital is crucial at every phase of the proposed activity. Communities, particularly those with marginalized populations and socioeconomic challenges, have sensitive aspects and fragility interwoven within the groups. Isolation can cause disagreement; however, asset mapping can positively impact the communities by bringing them together to create and initiate development from inside (Johnson, Thompson, et al., 2009).

Models of community education, such as the Al Kennedy Alternative School (<https://kennedy.slane.k12.or.us/>), Cincinnati's Oylar Community Learning Center (<https://>

oyler.cps-k12.org/), and the Promise Neighborhoods program (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html>), have created a niche in spaces left behind by large-scale school reform programs such as those initiated as part of No Child Left Behind (Coalition for Community Schools, 2015a, 2015b). The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCDI; <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx>) at DePaul University offers a framework for bringing together the community and educational leaders into a holistic learning experience for the students.

Development of C. A. Weis Community Partnership School

Context and Initial Work

The C. A. Weis Community Partnership School, initiated in 2016, has materialized through a long-term partnership (25 years) between the Escambia County School District (via C. A. Weis Elementary School), CHS, UWF, and CHNF. The four core partners bring together a committed superintendent and principal, a health care partner, a university partner, and a community social services partner. Escambia County School District includes 35 elementary schools, nine middle schools, and seven high schools. This project is based at C. A. Weis Elementary School, a Title 1 school within a high-needs community. Escambia County School District provides the project site for the Community Partnership School. CHS has been active in Florida since 1902 with a focus on children and families. CHS is the lead partner and provides high-quality academics, health care, counseling, support, mentoring, and more. UWF was established in fall 1967 and has almost 13,000 students. UWF's partnership contributions are led by the College of Education and Professional Studies, with faculty engaged in research and collaboration. The college also assists in identifying resources across the university that can be mobilized for community school projects. CHNF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community health center active in the region since 1992. CHNF provides resources for the C. A. Weis Community Partnership School Wellness Cottage, a pediatric clinic embedded in the school, to provide a range of services for the students and community members.

The long-term commitment between these

partners includes time, resources, and leadership commitment. CHS competed for and received a planning and implementation grant from University of Central Florida (UCF) that provided funding for 2 years contingent upon establishing the commitment to a long-term partnership. The implementation grant has been crucial in establishing the Community Partnership School and planning for a long-term project that includes establishing processes and affordances for resident voice, promoting stakeholder engagement, and providing services through The Hub (a one-stop service provider housed within the school). Planning became a priority to ensure sustainability of the organizational structures and systems of the Community Partnership School. To facilitate that planning, the four partners participated in a series of meetings and workshops at the initial stage to discuss and formalize the focal areas of the Community Partnership School. These workshops and meetings were structured to promote a broader understanding of the community needs in practice and to identify specific strategies for the Community Partnership School at C. A. Weis Elementary School.

Priority was given to forming committees for community leadership and outreach into the community, data collection, and communication. These committees, with membership from all partners, discussed and formalized the processes for supporting the structure of the Community Partnership School. The data committee took the lead in operationalizing the community needs assessment (CNA) and sharing data with partners to initiate implementation strategy. UWF was the lead partner for the CNA.

Initial work involved forming partnerships with relevant organizations and collaboratively conceptualizing roles and operationalizing responsibilities for the core partners. CHS served as a connector (Morse, 2014.) that facilitated dialogue and sharing among the various agencies involved. The multiple-step process was used to better understand challenges and will remain an ongoing and iterative process as we continue to learn and deepen our understanding moving forward, and we will use that deeper understanding to fine-tune the work. The process began with identifying and reviewing available extant data and reports to better understand the social, cultural, and economic contexts of the school and community. We fol-

Table 1. Demographic Data for C. A. Weis Elementary School Students

	%2016–17 n = 511	%2017–18 n = 544	%2018–19 n = 543
African American	79.5	80.5	77.9
Hispanic	4.9	4.0	4.9
Two or more races	5.7	5.7	5.7

Note. Source: Florida Department of Education (2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

lowed that process by surveying C. A. Weis Elementary teachers and conducting interviews and focus groups with parents and community members. This work was undertaken under the auspices of the planning grant, and we did not seek IRB approval for it. On the follow-up community needs assessment, we requested and received IRB approval from UWF. In all cases, we asked people to help us identify and understand (1) people, places, and things that can contribute to the work of promoting positive educational outcomes and community well-being (assets) and (2) the specific barriers faced by the community and the school in reaching those educational and community objectives (challenges). Additionally, core partner members participated in town hall meetings conducted by an outside community entity that addressed the needs of the Brownsville neighborhood in the zip code that overlapped with the C. A. Weis Elementary School zone.

Setting

We started by reviewing extant data and other information from various government sources (e.g., Census Bureau). These data can help with building a preliminary understanding of background and context but are incomplete/insufficient for getting a sense of the community to the extent that is necessary to consider appropriate services and interventions that might address the challenges. Moreover, these data do not allow for identification of assets or provide voice/agency among the members of the community—elements that are essential to effective community-based work, according to key figures in the field (e.g., Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Thus, we made use of these data but also moved well beyond to seek broader and deeper understandings.

Extant Demographic Data. The following data provide a picture of the characteristics of children and families served by C. A. Weis Elementary School. Over the last 6 years,

the number of students has slightly decreased, and there has been gradual change in composition of the minority communities (see Table 1). The total number of students was 570 in 2014–2015, decreased to 511 in 2016–2017, and increased to 543 in 2018–2019. The (proportional) Hispanic student population has more than doubled in the past 6 years, from 2.1% in 2013–2014 to 4.9% in 2018–2019. However, the (proportional) African American student population has slightly decreased, from 85.9% in 2013–2014 to 77.9% in 2018–2019. Similarly, the students who identified with two or more races remained consistent at 5.7%.

Extant School Performance Data. In recent years, student achievement scores for English/Language Arts has remained static, whereas mathematics and science have each shown a downward trend (see Table 2).

For the 2018–2019 school year, C. A. Weis Elementary School was among the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools in the state of Florida (Florida Department of Education, 2019). Low student achievement, especially among impoverished and minority students, was a primary motivation for the efforts that led to initiating a community partnership school within the C. A. Weis Elementary School.

Asset Mapping/Needs Assessment

An accurate and comprehensive understanding of needs posed by nonacademic barriers to effective teaching and learning is essential to the success of the proposed community partnership school. We approached the work of identifying needs and barriers through the framework of an asset-based community development model. In short, we wanted to identify the assets that are present in the community, as well as the challenges faced by members of the community (including C. A. Weis Elementary students and their families), in

Table 2. Summary of Weis Elementary Proficiency Levels on State Assessments

	2013–14 ^a	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
ELA		11%	11%	14%	18%	31%
Mathematics	25%	22%	16%	26%	27%	42%
Science	37%	26%	13%	21%	43%	32%

Note. Source: Florida Department of Education (2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

^a During the 2010–2011 school year, Florida began the transition from the FCAT to the FCAT 2.0 and Florida End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments (Florida Department of Education, 2020a).

order to (1) activate and marshal the assets we currently have to address the challenges that are present and (2) seek out and enlist additional assets and resources to address the challenges for which we currently lack corresponding assets. Beginning with assets is an essential feature of the model, as it grounds the planning in the possible, and it initiates the processes of community engagement and fosters empowerment of community members (Beaulieu, 2002).

As conceptualized in this model, community assets generally fall into four categories: (1) individuals, (2) institutions, (3) programs, and (4) physical structures/settings. Assets are existing people, places, or things that—if properly activated and cultivated—offer benefits to both the community and the asset itself (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The challenges that we wanted to identify and inventory are barriers to community well-being, student learning, and student growth (e.g., lack of access to appropriate medical or dental care, something that can cause students to miss school and thus negatively impact academic progress).

Our data collection approach was systematic and thorough. We began by accessing and reviewing extant demographic data from publicly available sources. To deepen and enhance our understandings, we then developed protocols to use in asking varied stakeholder groups to help us in identifying and understanding the assets and challenges in the community served by C. A. Weis Elementary. We checked those results for accuracy utilizing standard credibility techniques (e.g., member checking, negative case analysis) and then analyzed the results to identify consistencies and patterns that pointed toward areas of shared understanding and/or concern. Both the interview/focus group protocol and the online questionnaire were organized around the same set of nine questions. Utilizing indi-

vidual interviews, focus group discussions, and an online questionnaire, we solicited information from three primary stakeholder groups: (1) parents, (2) community members, and (3) teachers. Specifically, parents and community members participated in one of several interview/focus group sessions (conducted at C. A. Weis Elementary School, Oakwood Terrace, and the Boys and Girls Club), and teachers completed an online questionnaire.

Results from the interviews, discussions, and questionnaire indicated that the community has multiple and varied assets with the potential to contribute to the community and to the school, but they may be underutilized or ineffectively utilized because of lack of coordination, lack of resources, and lack of communication within and among community stakeholders. Assets that were identified through the data collection process included institutions, community groups, faith-based organizations, individuals, and organizations. Specific individuals named as assets included parents and caregivers of C. A. Weis Elementary students and the teachers at C. A. Weis Elementary (several were mentioned by name).

We also asked participants for suggestions about things that could contribute to C. A. Weis Elementary School and the community. Responses to this question included the following: (1) extended school day opportunities for students (academic and athletic/recreational), (2) educational opportunities for C. A. Weis Elementary School parents, (3) parenting classes, (4) closer relationship between the community and the police, (5) greater involvement of community members in problem solving (and greater responsibility for solving problems), (6) financial education for parents/other adults, and (7) access to health services. In light of what was learned through this initial assessment, the planning and imple-

mentation team pursued issues surrounding health, extended learning opportunities for students, and parent and community engagement.

Health. Health issues emerged as one of the major barriers to student achievement and academic success. Health issues included medical, dental, vision, behavioral/mental health, nutrition, and wellness. Health project activities were initiated with students, then parents, and later extended to the community through the Wellness Cottage in a much more expanded capacity than the traditional nurse's office found typically in schools. Parents are encouraged to enroll children and young adults (i.e., 18 years of age or less) with the Wellness Cottage. The cottage is staffed with a physician, and enrolled children have access to medical care even if they do not attend C. A. Weis Elementary School. The students at the school are required to submit a physical medical report and immunization card before they attend the classes. Previously, this process was an issue for the parents, since students could not attend the school. The Wellness Cottage provides ready access to services to ensure that students do not miss school on account of health reports. In 2016–2017, there have been 1,300 pediatric visits recorded, which indicates a high need for the accessible service. Further, a health services coordinator is working to link students and parents with the Wellness Cottage. The coordinator shares the updates and information about the health services with the parents and bridges the gap between many providers, such as CHNF. Additionally, the coordinator receives information from teachers about students' health issues. Recently, C. A. Weis Elementary School recognized that the health coordinator, along with the Wellness Cottage, have assisted in attendance success.

Extended Learning Opportunities for Students. As the convener, CHS attempted to reach out to existing community providers of after-school services to provide partnership-based after-school and summer programming on site at the school; however, these resources were not willing to realign their current efforts to focus on school-based interventions at the C. A. Weis Elementary School and instead continued to provide the same services in the neighborhood. In the absence of an existing provider, CHS secured funding and began on-site extended learning opportuni-

ties for up to an additional 90 children in August 2016. By engaging certified teachers, including some existing C. A. Weis teachers, the program provided additional learning opportunities and focused on incorporating project-based learning strategies that are not part of the core methodology of the daytime school standard curriculum.

Additionally, the program provides enrichment activities through volunteers and other organizations, including a local drug and alcohol prevention program providing groups focused on self-esteem and resilience building; volunteer teachers providing groups for children on manners and social skills development; a university intern teaching nutrition and health classes; Spanish classes provided by an existing program specializing in foreign language/culture; community volunteers to provide dance and drama classes; a group of military aviation personnel focusing on STEM skill enhancement and career discussions; school-based gardening provided by the area agriculture extension office from the University of Florida; and program team member support is provided to address potential gaps in technology, music, art, and sports. Additionally, the after-school program provides a snack immediately after school dismissal and a hot meal at the end of the program each day. These activities occur after the school day in the early evening, during the summer, and occasionally on the weekends. The programming is anticipated to continue to expand over time as assets are identified.

Parent and Community Engagement. The CNA is an integral strategic component of the program. The data collection and analysis from this assessment is an ongoing process. Parental engagement is encouraged through participation in school activities, family coaching, literacy/adult education, job preparation, financial literacy/education, employability training/support, crime prevention activities, community support, and community engagement. Parents indicated interest in enhancing their skills and using resources offered by the Community Partnership School. This strategy is still evolving to focus on parents who have shared interest in many activities; however, many are not able to attend classes and events because they have limited time available, because they work two or three jobs.

Initial Focus of Efforts and Plans for Ongoing Work

As described throughout, initial efforts focused on understanding the community in terms of strengths and needs, identifying and cultivating assets, and building a sustainable structure for engagement and governance/decision making. Specific activities that supported those efforts and upon which ongoing efforts will build are highlighted in the subsequent text.

Planning First. The initiation of the Community Partnership School at C. A. Weis Elementary involved several phases of planning. The planning stage involved learning from successful models of community schools and identifying key structural elements that were critical for success and sustainability. The partners created committees involving members from all four organizations. A Cabinet was formed with key executives from all four organizations. The Cabinet is responsible for all organizational decisions, and cabinet members delegate roles and responsibilities at different levels of their respective organizations for efficacious commitment to the community partnership school. The four partners also held regular meetings in groups, committees, and at the executive and operative levels. Attentive to the conceptual models guiding the work, the four partners ensured openness by engaging the community in a dialogue where key groups were a part of the planning, implementation, and evaluation process in a way that made the most sense. At the same time, efforts were made to develop the structure and processes in order to have effective implementation (e.g., standing committees, a process for creating ad hoc committees). Further, the focus of partners was on the need to facilitate and support engagement among people within groups that shared commonalities and were logically connected (i.e., community and faith-based groups, providers, parents, teachers, and others) in a structured way. Thus, the governance structure evolved to function as an implementation leadership team. Planning between the core partners was the priority in all the processes for implementation of the community school.

Learning Through Field Trips. To support the planning and implementation process, the core partners also recognized the value of exploring existing models for community schools. A workshop was arranged to understand the model and implementation

structure of Evans Community Partnership High School, and, further, the partners visited a community school in New York City. In all these workshops and meetings, all core partners had representation and engagement.

Supporting Clear Communication. The core partners have a long-term commitment for the community school that extends beyond their respective organizational commitments. The core partners perceived the need to have clear communication centered on the idea that expectations must be met at all levels. The four partners structured a communications committee to work together collaboratively for the success of community school and children. This communication channel also was considered effective for writing grants and formalizing memorandum of understanding (MoU) processes, collecting and sharing data, and seeking funding opportunities.

Fully Realizing Needs Assessment. Asset mapping was conducted prior to needs assessment with the logic that the identified assets can assist at the implementation phase. The university partners took the lead in designing and conducting the asset mapping and CNA. Using an asset-based approach, the university aimed at identifying and cultivating resident resources. As noted by a participant in the minutes of an early planning meeting, “It doesn’t do the community any good to identify problems that we don’t have assets to address” (Johnson, 2015). During the next phase, the focus was on the needs assessment, and focus groups were conducted to gain a broader and deeper understanding of community needs. The CNA was designed to identify and develop programs to address the needs of this community. Teachers from the local school were involved in the process of the CNA, and their experience became valuable for learning about the parents and the community. The CNA was conducted during 2015 to 2016. Events at the school (e.g., Back to School Bash) were used to interact with parents for interviews and focus group discussions.

Applying a Vetting Process. Since its inception, the community school attracted support from local businesses and organizations. Local profit and nonprofit organizations were interested in assisting the school as well as the community school through local resources and events. The support of external organizations was considered beneficial; however, at the same time, the core partners

recognized that there should be a vetting process for other organizations seeking to become involved. A protocol was established for any outside providers to determine alignment with the mission/vision of the C. A. Weis Community Partnership School and the expected efficacy of the proposed applicants/events. Prospective organizations complete an application, which is submitted to the community school director. The applications are then reviewed by a subcommittee for alignment with the mission of the Community Partnership School and expected efficacy; if approved by the subcommittee, the Cabinet votes to approve or reject each applicant. For example, an after-school dance program taught by a volunteer professional choreographer was approved by the Cabinet because it provided an extended learning opportunity for students.

Involving Local Organizations. In response to what we learned from the CNA, we began by maximizing and supporting existing partners with the school, such as ECARE, a local pre-K mentoring program for 4-year-old children who are involved in Head Start/VPK at C. A. Weis Elementary School. Head Start is provided by the Community Action Program Committee. The Committee added an Early Head Start unit at C. A. Weis Elementary School in 2016. As another example, well-organized members of the Jerusalem Project, an alliance of Greater Little Rock and First Baptist churches, adopted C. A. Weis as their ministry focus to provide and manage a weekend backpack food program for children identified as needing this level of support. In 2017–2018, almost 164 students received the backpacks. These members purposefully volunteer to become screened/trained school district mentors assigned as focused tutors for children needing specialized attention for improvement. They coordinate an annual Back to School Bash that includes a resource/service fair and the engagement of Baptist HealthCare as a key sponsor for volunteers and logistical resources such as food and drink. We intentionally pursued and engaged local church leaders and faith-based organizations because of their powerful impact on the social development of the community and neighborhood.

Instituting a Summer Feeding Program. In 2016, the school district applied for C. A. Weis Elementary School to be a USDA Summer Feeding Site to address the hunger issues faced by children in the school. Several teachers and staff members volun-

teered to provide extended learning classes for students in the summer hours between breakfast and lunch. The school district cafeteria prepared the meals and the CHS Community Partnership School personnel monitored participants and provided logistical support. Another food resource is offered through extended learning services included in a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. This USDA program provides breakfast and lunch for the children engaged in that effort. In 2017, the summer feeding program was widely publicized and extended to include children from the local community not involved in the extended learning program.

Expanding After-School Activities. The scope and size of the initial implementation of our after-school program was greater than originally conceptualized due to the receipt of a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. Although resources were available, challenges occurred in implementing a large program with a very short start-up time and funding restrictions. As previously mentioned, these resources have provided us with the opportunity to leverage additional involvement of provider partners and volunteers, resulting in a more robust community experience. The weaving together of provider partner and volunteer skill sets and resources provides the ability to tailor the program to the children, families, and community. Additional expansion in areas of the expressive arts, character development/social skills, career exploration, and sports/physical exercise will be a focus for future program enhancement. The average daily attendance increased in the past 2 years. Improved behavior is reflected in fewer discipline referrals, down from 773 in 2015–16 to 112 in 2018–19, and out-of-school suspensions, reduced from 425 in 2015–16 to 42 in 2018–19. These numbers illustrate the positive impact of the various community- and children-centric projects initiated by the Community Partnership School.

Facing Persistent Challenges. The implementation process for the community school has been a learning process for all of the four partners. At the initial stages, the learning from other models brought forward the understanding that every community has specific needs, and the community school will be a channel to support the local community in every possible manner. At the same time, it is also recognized that there will be challenges in implementation. At this time, we

would like to share an instance that gives insight into challenges that may persist even after continuous efforts to resolve them as the community school partnership school evolves. The Community Leadership Council was envisaged for active community participation. This particular council was structured to involve local stakeholders for community engagement. Prominent leaders of the community were approached (e.g., local church leaders, pastors, firemen, a disk jockey). These external stakeholders were expected to take a leadership role in the local community while being part of the community school. Further, the council's engagement with the community school was to ensure that community people are well represented and no specific group is alienated. However, this council remains in the formation process, and community partners make continued efforts to identify promising local leaders and encourage their participation. Local leaders have shown interest and support; however, the council is still being formed, as potential leaders have withdrawn from participating. Such challenges need to be acknowledged in studies to explore issues in community engagement for practitioners.

Ensuring Availability of Transportation. Asset mapping brought forward transportation as one of the challenges students, parents, and community members face daily. The information from the asset mapping was further substantiated by the GIS mapping undertaken by the University of West Florida's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences with the assistance of C. A. Weis Elementary School. The map is based upon student same address counts and provides a visual map of the access to public transportation and sidewalks for safe walking zones. The map illustrates families living in urban zones with no direct sidewalk access to school and limited public transportation. Many of the families do not have personal cars or have nonworking cars in need of repair; thus, parent and student mobility is limited. Transportation is an ongoing factor limiting student participation in after-school activities. The school bus was made available for one of the marginalized housing projects of the county. However, many students living in dispersed zip codes still face the challenge of enrichment activity involvement. The assistant principal obtained a commercial driver's license (CDL) to ensure that students had a backup plan for utilizing the

school bus for after-school activities. Other volunteers from the after-school program are also sought to undertake the CDL test to have an alternative plan for transportation. The community school partners discussed the matter in Cabinet meetings and sought assistance from the superintendent of the county schools to identify resources. Grants are under process for establishing safe sidewalks. Further, transportation assistance from local faith groups is being sought for community events.

Measuring the Impact of the Project. After the initial asset-mapping process, the university is currently assisting with a second CNA. The university and other partners are also working on a centralized process of data collection and sharing on a long-term basis.

Reflections and Recommendations

We learned from our preliminary work that the community served by C. A. Weis Elementary School has considerable assets with the potential to contribute to the community and to the school. These assets are far greater and have far more potential than were immediately apparent to the community school team. Additionally, these assets are far greater and far more than would be expected given the perception of the community within the general population. We also learned that many of those assets may not be fulfilling their potential because of a lack of coordination, lack of resources, and lack of communication among them. In short, these assets remain unrealized because of the lack of a coherent plan with systems and structures to allow for connecting the dots both internally (i.e., among community assets) and externally (i.e., between assets and external stakeholders). Assets that were identified through the data collection process included institutions, community groups, faith-based organizations, individuals (i.e., group representatives of formal groups and unaffiliated individuals), and formal and informal organizations.

We also learned that building trust with community members is essential to any kind of meaningful engagement. The aphorism "people must know what you care about before they care what you know about" is apt here. Trust cannot exist in situations where the unique expertise of parents is ignored (Capers & Shah, 2015). Moreover, low-resource communities,

such as this one, often experience long histories of short-term altruism driven by external funding for projects and services with abruptly ending relationships at the conclusion of the funding period (Johnson, Shope, et al., 2009; Johnson, Thompson, et al., 2009). The approach taken by the community schools' team here was explicitly attentive to that history and the negative feelings it has engendered and took steps to redress it by requiring a long-term commitment among the key partners that was not dependent upon a funding stream. Funding is necessary for much of the work, of course, but it can undermine that work if other essential factors are not in place and/or when funding drives the work rather than a shared vision developed collaboratively (Capers & Shah, 2015). The necessity of the long-term commitment of the partner agencies rather than reliance on individuals has been reinforced during the implementation year at C. A. Weis Elementary School as personnel departures occurred within two of the community partnership agencies. Had this effort been driven by interested individuals instead of agency commitment, it is likely that much of the work done to date might have been abandoned rather than delayed as has happened.

Drawing on these and related lessons learned during the planning and implementation phase, we offer two broad recommendations for those seeking to undertake this kind of work.

First, use an assets-based model to create synergy with existing partners—starting with assets and maintaining a focus on assets throughout the process so that relationships within the school and surrounding community are recognized, sustained, and strengthened. The substantive involvement of community assets changes the structure of the process from something that is enacted upon a community by well-intentioned outsiders into a collaborative structure where ideas and solutions are generated with and by community members and then filtered to external stakeholders with relevant expertise to complement and supplement resident resources. The asset-based model broadens the traditional no-

tions of who is an educator and who is a leader to promote and support a system where community assets are publicly and explicitly recognized, where everyone has something to contribute, and where everyone has a role and responsibilities. The grassroots egalitarian approach taken here unpacks and reverses traditional power dynamics to place community members at the center and to position (or reposition) external organizations as supports or affordances (Gibson, 1950) for work that is initiated through dialogue between and among the community and its partners. Finally, adopting an assets-based approach sends the message that there is inherent value in the community—that it is not an object of charity but a potential partner for doing meaningful work together.

Second, assimilate side-by-side rather than sidelining or pushing out. Recognizing that the community members and families served by C. A. Weis Elementary School have a unique perspective of the school is a primary component in overcoming mistrust. Involving the Community Leadership Council is paramount in fostering relationships and overcoming mistrust. Those parents and community members who expressed interest in being a part of this advisory group faced individual challenges in having the necessary time to devote to this effort. As a result, this important avenue for input into the Community Partnership School has been lacking to date. To be true to the model, give voice, and capitalize on the value of all partners, the community partnership needs to focus on recruiting and retaining Community Leadership Council members. This perspective differs from those of the partnership agencies and includes narratives based upon past intervention experiences. In this community partnership, the Cabinet repeatedly reminded one another to listen and learn from the community rather than to assume we knew the needs and solutions. This process prevented the community partnership agencies from imposing solutions or alienating any segments of the community and allowed us to engage more fully with all stakeholder groups.



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Striving for Equity: Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning Through a Community Practitioner and Faculty Coteaching Model

Cynthia K. Orellana and Anusha Chaitanya

Abstract

Based on the implementation and assessment of a coteaching pilot program called the Practitioner Scholars Program, this study draws attention to the need for equity in community-university learning partnerships, recognizing and emphasizing that the knowledge and expertise of community practitioners is as valuable as that of faculty in academia. The innovative nature of the pilot program encompasses mutual and reciprocal benefits to students, practitioners, faculty, and community through a unique design of community-engaged teaching and learning. The findings from this study provide evidence of the success and potential of this program while offering a reflection on how we understand equity in community-university partnerships. As a result, this study can inform and inspire new initiatives to infuse equity in teaching and learning, especially in urban public universities with a commitment to their urban communities. This article particularly aims to speak to practitioners interested in this program as a promising practice.

Keywords: equity, coteaching, practitioners, community engagement, university-community partnerships



Community-engaged teaching and learning (CETL) that connects theory and practice, and supports communities with reciprocity, is a critical pedagogical practice for improving student development (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Deeley, 2010; Saltmarsh, 2010), deepening civic participation (Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Saltmarsh, 2005), and strengthening university partnerships with communities (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Soska, Sullivan-Cosetti, & Pasupuleti, 2010). CETL is considered a high-impact practice (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008) and a strategy for decentering knowledge from the teacher as students engage in field-based experiences (Pribbenow, 2005; Saltmarsh, 2010).

Critical CETL scholars suggest community-engaged learning should include explicit intention toward achieving social justice, accomplishing social change, and respond-

ing to injustices in communities (Daigre, 2000; Hart, 2006; Mitchell, 2008; Santiago-Ortiz, 2018). Further, they suggest, community-university learning partnerships (CULP) should embrace new paradigms that redistribute power, focus on authentic relationships (Mitchell, 2008; Santiago-Ortiz, 2018), and lift up multiple ways of knowing from students, educators, and community members (El Ansari, Phillips, & Zwi, 2002; Mitchell, 2008). By embracing these paradigms, higher education can move toward more equitable and socially just CULP. CULP should build upon a framework that honors collaboration and interdependence in the knowledge creation process, whereby faculty, students, and community members collaborate and the approach to knowledge is centered on coproduction (Saltmarsh, 2010). Thus, we situate our work in the critical discourse that examines power, privilege, and oppression from a holistic perspective where the work involves both

considering the realities confronted by communities and removing the relational barriers between students, teachers, and community (Santiago-Ortiz, 2018).

However, CULP can take different forms with varying effects. There are several models describing different levels of community engagement and partnerships on a continuum (Doberneck & Dann, 2019; Farnsworth et al., 2014; Gorski & Mehta, 2016; International Association for Public Participation, 2007). At the most basic level, engagement can include outreach, information, or services to the community in a one-way direction. Progressively, the continuum of engagement further ranges from consulting the community for feedback to some community involvement and collaboration to partnering with the community in decision making to, finally, shared leadership and empowerment of communities in final decision making (Farnsworth et al., 2014; International Association for Public Participation, 2007). Reflexivity on where one falls and strives to be on the continuum is important in understanding whether the engagement leaves communities with unmet needs and inequitable distribution of benefits (Stewart & Alrutz, 2012). The community may not be viewed as a knowledge asset or coequal in the CULP, because in academe, faculty are regarded as the holders and creators of knowledge. Such a perspective may result in treating community as an object of study, producing outcomes that may be irrelevant to community needs because of lack of respect in consulting and codeveloping with communities (Ahmed, Beck, Maurana, & Newton, 2004). Our work strives for empowerment and shared leadership as the ultimate goal. Our belief is that community-engaged learning centered on equity and social justice should focus on transformation and reciprocity with the goal of building healthy relationships with community partners that recognize a commitment to mutual goals, benefits, and responsibility and are enhanced by the assets that communities offer (Hart, 2006; Mitchell, 2008; Saltmarsh, 2010; Stewart & Alrutz, 2012).

The questions guiding our project design and inquiry focused on how higher education can further CULP through an equity agenda. Such an agenda is defined by engaging holders of community and practice-based knowledge as knowledge assets, educational agents, cocreators, experts,

and connectors of social capital, and by regarding them as equal to academic faculty. How might higher education further a transformational pedagogy by positioning community practitioners as coteachers who plan, execute, and support deepened learning in the classroom? Coteaching between community members and faculty by itself may not lead to equity. Can institutions build intentional infrastructures that support equitable exchange and outcomes in their CULP?

Research on coteaching in higher education is limited to coverage of academic coteaching in teacher education programs (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Lusk, Sayman, Zolkoski, Carrero, & Chui, 2016). We could not identify studies that examined the impact of coteaching with community practitioners on both students and the coteachers. The literature does not discuss coteaching that uses an equity and social justice framework that disrupts what are and who possesses critical knowledge assets. This article contributes to an understanding of community practitioner and faculty coteaching by sharing findings from a pilot program implemented at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB). We are particularly interested in examining the ways in which our pilot sought to address equity and social justice in CULP, the outcomes from the program assessment, and the lessons learned for implementing a practitioner-faculty coteaching model.

Context

To better understand the origins of our pilot, some context on UMB and its communities is provided. It is important to share why equity-oriented CULPs are vital, particularly at a public, urban, minority-serving institution, and our institution's community roots. This serves as a launching point to our inspiration for activating the community practitioner as a scholar, as well as the conceptual framework for equity and social justice that guided the creation and implementation of the pilot program.

Minority-Serving Institution Context for Community-Engaged Learning

UMB is a minority-serving institution, one of three Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions in New England, and is moving toward becoming a Hispanic-serving institution.

The only public research university in Greater Boston, UMB has a student body that is majority underrepresented race/ethnic groups, with many first-generation college students and a high proportion of Massachusetts residents, a third of whom live in Greater Boston. Nearly 80% of students stay in Massachusetts postgraduation, contributing to the economic vitality of the Commonwealth. Although UMB's students bring cultural, linguistic, and intellectual wealth and curiosity, they may lack the personal and professional networks to gain skills, insights, and opportunities to further their goals. Most students work to support themselves and their families, making it more difficult to take on internships or experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom. However, these opportunities enable students to contextualize learning, gain field experience, and benefit from exposure to leaders advancing key issues in the greater community (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Many of UMB's students come from the communities with which the university partners and would benefit from drawing on their own lived experiences while building stronger bonds with community leaders.

UMB a *Comm-University*

At UMB's establishment in 1964, its founders sought to create a university that would "stand with the city" and provide students, regardless of background or socioeconomic status, with opportunities "equal to the best." Thus, UMB has a rich history of engagement with public and private partners through research, teaching, and service—often spearheaded by the entrepreneurial spirit of faculty and its numerous research centers. The university also established a College of Public and Community Service (1968–2018) that housed teaching and learning programs that facilitated seamless community–university connections—a "comm–university," as described by senior faculty. The Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) was created in 2011 to build from and support this tradition of engagement by identifying, strengthening, and supporting collaborative, reciprocal community partnerships that advance UMB's urban public mission.

Through the work of the office, we as co-authors and staff members at OCP have worked with partners who turn to the university's expertise and resources to solve pressing issues, but rarely does the

university turn to its partners as knowledge assets. Simultaneously, faculty have noted that students are looking for classroom experiences that help them connect to real people and issues and to activate their knowledge toward social change. Faculty also function with minimal resources in their community endeavors and seek ways to advance community projects, strengthen relationships with existing partners, and develop new community contacts. This is especially true for junior faculty, often women faculty and faculty of color, who join UMB passionate about the urban mission but may not know where to begin making connections. The issues they face resonate with research reflecting the limited extent of community-engaged faculty's opportunities for professional development and of support from institutions of higher education for community-engaged work (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Gelmon, Ryan, Blanchard, & Seifer, 2012). Community leaders are also seeking ways to tap into the university's resources.

Conversations with community leaders revealed a desire to teach postretirement. We wondered if they felt they must achieve a lifetime's work in the field before claiming knowledge expertise considered legitimate in the academy. Perhaps they believed their present experiences did not amount to knowledge assets for the culture of academia, or they were unsure how they fit into the academy. Clearly, community partners wanted to share their knowledge with young adults to take their lessons to advance the field.

UMB's history of engagement and current context, combined with community partners' feedback, encouraged us to further our CULP through an equity lens. We wanted to address inequitable access to community-engaged learning, a lack of networking opportunities for students, and the sentiment that community knowledge and expertise may not be validated in higher education.

Shifting Toward an Equity Paradigm

What could it look like if we responded to the aspirations of UMB's faculty, students, and community partners, and supported a new paradigm for teaching and learning that honored the knowledge assets of community leaders as equitable to those of academics? How do we further equity and social justice by not contributing to the exploitation of people from marginalized

backgrounds who are often asked to do more with no recompense for their efforts or intellectual capital? What if students experiencing limitations in their exposure to hands-on learning and networking opportunities could employ their learning beyond personal gain and answer a call for social justice by prioritizing the resources needed by communities (Mitchell, 2008)? Could students go beyond a typical “service”-oriented project, or visits into the community, and instead deeply explore an issue with the partner’s guidance in a cocreated process with benefits to the partner or a cause affecting the community at large? Rice and Pollack (2000) noted that “community partners are not just valuable supervisors of students’ fieldwork, but they are also valuable co-teachers, many of whom are also committed to building more just and equitable communities” (p. 132). Further, how can the university draw upon professionals from diverse fields, backgrounds, and experiences in Greater Boston to be in the classroom as role models and conduits of social capital for students? How can the learning experience be designed so students see themselves in the lessons, the people, and the community work they pursue?

To this end, in fall 2018 the OCP launched the Practitioner Scholars Program (PSP) pilot, which brings community practitioners into the classroom as coteachers with faculty. The PSP pilot is intentionally framed through an equity lens. *Equity* refers to resisting systemic forms of oppression and cultivating a more equitable world—one that centers democracy as a primary core value and in which everyone has equal opportunity to thrive regardless of their backgrounds and situations (Museus & LePeau, 2019). Thriving is achieved through access to opportunity, networks, resources, and supports to reach one’s full potential. The pilot reflects an equity agenda through a focus on *epistemic equity*. Enacting epistemic equity means

examining and responding to the impact higher education systems have on privileging whose knowledge is valued, what research is legitimized, and who gets to participate in the creation and spread of knowledge. It is

- Aimed at intentionally coupling diversity and inclusion commitments with organizational struc-

tures, policies, and practices.

- An asset-based approach that values the inclusion of voices that have historically been discounted, delegitimized, and marginalized through academic cultures and practices.
- Foregrounding identity and power in an analysis of ethics and justice countering systems’ default processes that silence and delegitimize certain knowers and ways of knowing, creating epistemic exclusion.
- Strategically shaping institutional cultures, structures, and practices to identify and address prejudicial exclusion of scholars from participation in the spread of knowledge through credibility discounting, and epistemic marginalization. (Saltmarsh, 2020, pp. 153–154)

Thus, the following principles were established for the PSP: (1) building equity between practitioners and faculty through shared power in the development and implementation of the course design and delivery; (2) valuing the practitioners’ and faculty members’ knowledge and expertise as equitable assets to the teaching and learning process; (3) ensuring the outcomes of the partnership resulted in practical value and impact on the greater community through projects identified by the community practitioner, coideated by the coteaching pair, and codeveloped with students; and (4) creating access and opportunities typically unavailable to students of our demographic: connection with practitioners, translating theory to practice, gaining exposure to careers in their field, and feeling empowered to impact their own communities. Further, to honor the expertise of community practitioners and further our equity agenda, practitioners were compensated a stipend of \$4,000 (comparable to the adjunct rate at UMB for one course), and faculty coteachers received an additional \$1,000 to support community projects.

These principles align with such high-impact educational practices as collaborative assignments and projects, applied learning, exploration of differences, community-based learning, and participatory action research, known to yield positive effects

for all types of students (Kuh, 2008). Unfortunately, it is students like UMB's that typically do not have access to this kind of education (Kuh, 2008). Thus, one cannot consider the PSP model without an intentional focus on equity and social justice to improve access to these practices.

Equity and Social Justice Framework

Guiding our focus on equity and social justice is the work of critical scholars urging a shift in the status quo paradigm for education toward liberatory education that honors multiple ways of knowing (Bernal, 2002; Freire, 2009; hooks, 2014; Rendón, 2009; Yosso, 2005). The focus on liberatory pedagogies that lift-up work in and for marginalized communities is central to the work of the OCP and the PSP, given our own origins and mission, and the student and city demographics. Bernal (2002) posited, "To recognize all students as holders and creators of knowledge, it is imperative that the histories, experiences, cultures, and languages of students of color are recognized and valued in schools" (p. 121). Students' backgrounds can be situated in the context of their communities, which can exist in affinity and geographic forms, e.g., their ethnic or linguistic communities, their neighborhoods (which might also reflect students' multiple identities), and so on. History, experiences, language, and culture are embedded in communities as repositories that they hold and create knowledge through. The culture of communities, like that of students, embodies assets that are often unrecognized or devalued in academe, and represent a collective experience of multiple individuals connected by shared experiences, values, and understanding. Thus, liberatory education must attend to the education of the whole person and support the development of a critical consciousness among students, as well as resist dualistic frameworks that separate the individual from the community (Rendón, 2009). Centering students and communities who are often marginalized as holders and creators of knowledge (Bernal, 2002) supports wholeness, critical consciousness, and social justice (Rendón, 2009).

We were influenced by the work of theorists who sought models to understand and share the assets brought into the educational process by students. Recognizing the assets of students from marginalized identities and their communities counters a deficit-based

orientation that often shadows communities of color (Rios-Aguilar, Marquez Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011; Yosso, 2005). The theories *community cultural wealth* (CCW; Yosso, 2005) and *funds of knowledge* (FOK; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011) posit that all students come into academic institutions with accrued social and cultural wealth that they have banked through their life experiences (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011; Yosso, 2005). These forms of wealth aid their resistance to marginality and galvanize their trajectories. The CCW framework proposes a communal definition of wealth that marginalized people use to improve themselves and their communities and to persist and stand against oppression experienced in education (Yosso, 2005). Numerous interrelated forms of capital fall within this framework: aspirational (hopes beyond the circumstances), linguistic (communication style and language), familial (sense of community, culture, intuition nurtured by family/familia), social (networks and community resources), navigational (maneuvering skills), and resistant (cultural knowledge of racist structures and motivation to transform them; Yosso, 2005).

CCW also includes FOK (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011), which has been used to describe the totality of experiences of the cultural structuring of the household that students employ for their survival (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). FOK signifies the interrelated relationship between households' resources and school practices and their connection to social class, beliefs, and power (Moll et al., 1992; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). These forms of wealth are insufficiently supported in educational institutions.

Our orientation to equity in CULP is also shaped by the influence of social capital theory (SCT) in education, which stems from sociology (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988) and is cited in education literature (Dika & Singh, 2002). SCT in education primarily borrows from James Coleman's (1988) interpretation that certain intangible assets intrinsic to relationships among people, as well as to social systems, can be accessed through social networks. The pilot sought to help expand students' social network and social capital through community practitioners. However, we also acknowledged the wealth of capital that already existed within our student population and saw the pilot as an opportunity to bridge and multiply their

assets through shared work with community practitioners.

Taken together, these theories inform an approach that validates the experiences of marginalized students and communities who are often treated as spectators to rather than cocreators of learning and development. In higher education, where the “wealth” of academics is knowledge, an equity and social justice framework can disrupt and reconstruct the concept of wealth and who has it. Equity and social justice in CULPs must elevate community knowledge and empower students to enact their learning through social action. Through this conception, our hope was to answer Paulo Freire’s (2009) invitation, in which “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 164).

The “Co” in Coteaching

Coteaching is not a novel approach in K–12 education, which has sought to promote inclusion of special education and English language learners with general education by integrating coteachers within these areas (Friend, Cook, Hurley–Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010). For higher education, it is a less common approach, but is in use in university teacher education programs (Bacharach et al., 2008; Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Lusk et al., 2016). Nonetheless, scholars have recognized that coteaching takes many forms and is generally defined as a team of professionals collaboratively working in a single shared physical space through the planning and implementation of instruction and assessment processes (Cook & Friend, 1995; Bacharach, Heck, & Dank, 2003). Wenzlaff et al. (2002) elaborated on the notion that the partnered relationship among the coteachers exists for the purpose of “achieving what none could have done alone” (p. 14).

Unfortunately, there is a void in the literature on coteaching with community practitioners in higher education. Only a few studies of coteaching among academics for teacher education programs recognize that faculty–faculty coteaching allows for greater collaboration and innovation in instructional practices to advance the learning community (Bacharach et al., 2003; Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Lusk et al., 2016).

Lusk et al. (2016) recognized challenges to faculty coteaching in higher education settings posed by institutional norms (e.g., academic freedom; tenure, promotion, and faculty evaluation; lack of administrative support for coteaching structure) and participant attitudes (personalities, differences in ideas, student expectations and comfort level, etc.), but they also recognized several benefits. Among these were the diverse perspectives students receive, along with different and often improved instructional practices because of the level of reflexivity in coplanning, increased professional development for coteachers through shared learning, and a proven advancement in student engagement and outcomes (Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Lusk et al., 2016).

The PSP Pilot

The PSP pilot sought to center community wealth in teaching and learning by bringing the wealth of knowledge and experiences of community partners into existing courses. It was developed to address gaps in students’ experiential education, provide professional development opportunities for faculty and practitioners, and build reciprocal learning partnerships with the objectives for students, faculty, practitioners, and community as shown in Figure 1.

The OCP implemented an 8-month cohort-based pilot program for four practitioner–faculty pairs who each cotaught a spring 2019 course. Collaborative course planning took place in the fall 2018 semester. Faculty were selectively recruited based on their association with the OCP, reputation as community-engaged scholars with demonstrated enthusiasm for integrating community into their teaching practices, and openness to flexibly remastering an existing course with community practitioner knowledge. OCP recruited practitioners with demonstrated interest in strengthening ties to the university and the prospect of working alongside faculty to support community work with students. In the recruitment process, benefits for faculty, practitioners, and students were communicated, as was the range of activities in which pairs were expected to participate. Benefits to the practitioners included compensation with their choice of payment to themselves or their organization, professional development, the project component, and access to university resources. The OCP encouraged faculty and practitioners to use this pro-

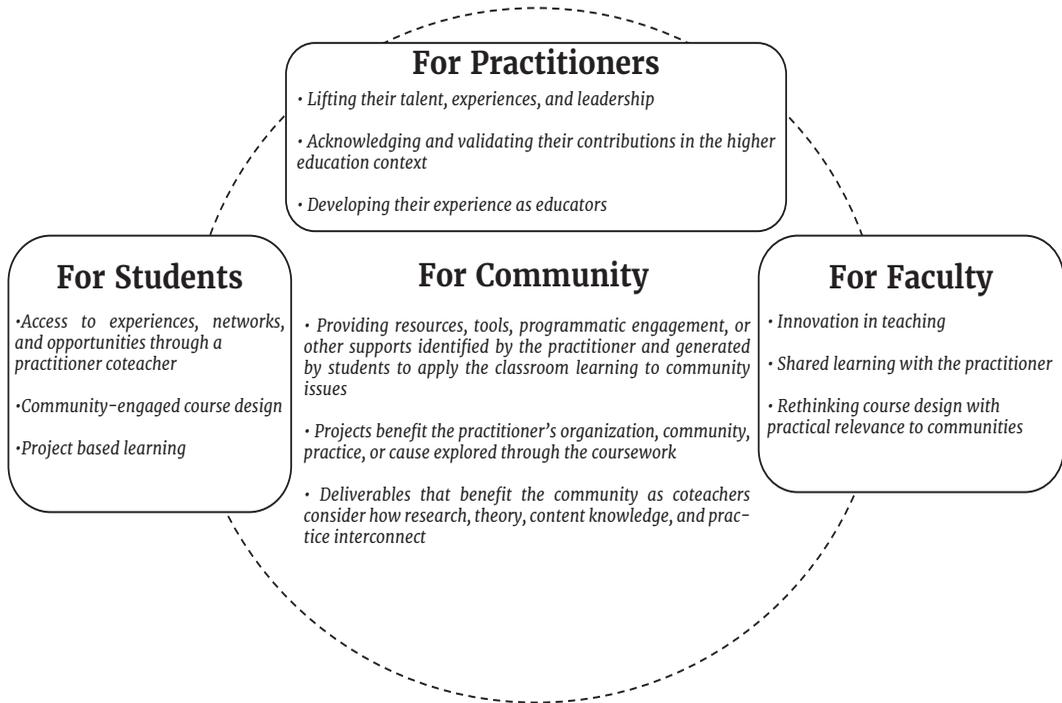


Figure 1. Objectives of PSP

gram to strengthen an existing relationship where possible. We then talked individually with candidates to ensure they understood the program's objectives and requirements while eliciting questions and concerns and seeking to relieve any sense of pressure for participation. Two of the four pairs had prior working relationships. The OCP intentionally recruited community practitioners of color from diverse fields to join faculty, resulting in participation by three women of color. Likewise, faculty (though less intentionally) were also very diverse. Two faculty members identified as female and two as male. Two of the four faculty identified as people of color.

The program began with a 1-day institute for the coteachers to develop a shared understanding of the values and goals of the program and to learn about coteaching and project-based and community-engaged learning pedagogy. The coteachers then met on their own in person and virtually. They were charged to infuse existing syllabi with the practitioner's expertise and to coconstruct curricula embedding community-engaged teaching and project-based learning. The program included networks of practice (Duguid, 2005) for coteachers once in the fall and twice in the spring as a communal space for reflection and sharing.

The PSP courses spanned disciplines in-

cluding music education, environmental studies, psychology, and Africana studies. The faculty were experts in their respective disciplines and were matched with practitioners who could complement and supplement education in these topics. All practitioners held senior leadership positions across art, youth development and education, environmental planning, and resilience and equity. Each course had 20–25 students except one, which had fewer than 10; altogether, 74 students participated in the pilot. The students were representative of UMB's student body, as shown in Table 1.

The student projects were codesigned by the coteachers with the practitioners' lead, given their expertise or their organization's needs. Projects had varying degrees of engagement and benefit to the community. In the course with the smallest class size, students were recruited to teach youth in the practitioner's organization and were paid a small stipend. They also organized a culminating community event with the practitioner's organization. In another course, students designed and delivered workshops in the community at the semester's end. In a third course, students worked on a project throughout the semester and consulted with a community practitioner in addition to the practitioner coteacher to shape their project, to maximize usefulness to the community. In yet another course, students

Table 1. Profile of Students in PSP

DEMOGRAPHICS	68% Students of Color		52% Non-Native English Speakers		4% International Students
	Self-Identified Gender*	Female 57%	Male 4.0%	Non-Binary 1%	Transgender 1%
	Age	22 years or younger 60%	23 to 30 years 32%	31 years or older 8%	
WORKING AND FIRST GENERATION	Working	At least 10 hours/week 81%	More than 20 hours/week 45%		
	53% First-generation college students (neither parent/guardian attended college)				
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	Class-level	Seniors 55%	Freshman 27%	Junior 13%	Sophomores 5%
	Majors	Psychology 29%	Environmental Science 28%	Biology 8%	Criminal Justice 7%
		Business 4%	Art, Computer Science, Early Education, Exercise and Health Sciences, Education, Music, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies 16%		
	50% Transfer Students				

*Figures for Gender were rounded and include all responses

made field trips for a classroom-based project designed with the practitioner's expertise in mind and based on what the practitioner exposed students to during the course.

For the pilot, "co" in coteaching implied shared values, responsibilities, and understanding of the work ahead, topics that each pair needed to understand clearly from the beginning of the program. The 1-day institute was intended to get this process started. The institute was designed to recognize that the introduction of practitioners into the classroom would require thoughtful and deliberate actions that demonstrated their equitable knowledge contributions and experiences. We produced "nonnegotiables" as a guide for ensuring that the "co" was fulfilled and community knowledge was honored. First, there could not be a dichotomy between theory and practice in the implementation of the program—the aim was to achieve praxis, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Further, coteaching should be a fusion of teaching from the faculty member and the practitioner rather than being two parallel disconnected streams. Second, the program was not an occasional lecture series by practitioners, though practitioners were encouraged to bring colleagues into class as guests to extend their network into the classroom. Third, although faculty were the "keepers" of the grade and had the greatest official responsibility, practitioners should also have a role in the evaluation of students' progress in meeting the agreed-upon milestones for success. Finally, students were to be considered active learners drawing upon their experiences and wealth and activating their learning through community action.

Measuring Impact

The pilot was assessed throughout. The goals for the evaluation of the pilot were to learn from this experience as OCP sought to continue the program into the future and share the learnings with others looking to experiment with community-centered pedagogies that employ community knowledge.

Methods

The impact of the pilot was assessed by capturing and analyzing data from students, practitioners, and faculty at the beginning, middle, and end of the pilot. We combined explanatory and exploratory

sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) through a three-phase process: collecting precourse survey data, including multiple choice and descriptive questions; obtaining qualitative data from focus groups and networks of practice; and administering a postcourse survey with multiple choice and descriptive questions. Each stage informed the subsequent stage. At the beginning, we captured the expectations of coteachers and students. In the middle, we captured the responses of the coteachers and students well into the program. At the end, we collected responses for comparison with the initial participant answers and received responses to themes that emerged at the beginning and midway. The data was collected primarily for pilot assessment purposes through (1) precourse and postcourse surveys with students and coteachers; (2) midcourse focus groups with students; (3) precourse, midcourse, and postcourse networks of practice with coteachers; (4) midcourse class observations; and (5) pre and post syllabi analysis. An IRB approval was provided under the category of exempt review as secondary data for the purposes of this study.

The initial precourse survey instruments were based on instruments developed for the assessment of similar programs run by the OCP. The student focus groups explored precourse survey responses and the pilot's objectives. The postcourse survey with students explored responses from the precourse survey and focus groups to check the representativeness of themes across students in the PSP courses. The postcourse survey for coteachers explored responses from the precourse surveys for students and coteachers and reflected themes derived from the networks of practice and student focus groups. The networks of practice served as informal, in-person discussion spaces for coteachers to share challenges and learnings, often prompted by broad questions crafted by OCP, while discussions unfolded based on participants' interests. A representative of the OCP took notes on the discussion to discern themes. Additionally, two versions of the syllabi for each of the PSP courses were collected. One version represented the syllabus that was used by the faculty member as a sole instructor, and the other was a version revised in collaboration with the practitioner coteacher. Finally, staff from OCP made a class observation for each course toward the second half of the semester. Data collection occurred between

October 2018 and May 2019.

The pre and post surveys with students in the PSP courses were conducted at the beginning of the spring semester after the add/drop deadline and at the end of the semester in the last week of classes, respectively. There were 74 students in the four courses, with 62 and 57 students responding to the pre and post surveys, respectively. All 74 students responded to at least one of these surveys. Forty-four students responded to both the pre and post surveys, which allowed for comparison. The surveys had statements that tested students' responses on the pilot's broad objectives.

The precourse and postcourse surveys for coteachers were conducted before the planning period and at the end of the coteaching period, respectively. One of the four faculty members did not complete the precourse survey. All the coteachers responded to the postcourse survey. The surveys with coteachers aimed to ascertain the interest in and hope for achieving the pilot's objectives through their participation. Questions were framed differently for faculty and practitioners based on the different ways that we hoped they were likely to participate in and benefit from this pilot. The pre and post surveys asked a few similar questions, which helped us compare scores before and after. The program aimed at reciprocity and mutual benefit for practitioners and faculty. On the surveys for students and coteachers, respondents rated statements from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* on a Likert scale (scored 1 to 5). Higher average scores between 3 and 5 indicated more desirable outcomes.

Data Analysis

Preliminary analysis of data collected at each stage informed the data-gathering tools for subsequent stages using an explanatory and exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. The two focus group discussions had four and 12 students, respectively. Each was an hour long and was audio recorded and transcribed. The quantitative data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to generate descriptive statistics, cross tabulation, comparison of means, pie diagrams, and bar charts. The qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo 12 for generating first-order themes, which were then aggregated into second-order themes.

Our intended audience is community en-

agement practitioners in higher education; thus, findings presented combine and summarize the results across the data collection methods, including the surveys, focus groups, class observations, and artifacts. We present a few figures and tables to help elaborate the findings, but they are not essential to comprehending the study. This is a deliberate attempt to make this information accessible and useful for practitioners. We hope to convey the key aspects of PSP as an innovative and promising practice that higher education professionals may be able to learn and draw from.

Findings

The findings are categorized as key themes in responses from students and coteachers. These themes are drawn from the data in the precourse survey, postcourse survey, and focus groups of students and the data from the precourse survey, postcourse survey, and networks of practice of coteachers. Further, themes emerged from class observations, comparison of pre and post syllabi, and the student projects across the four courses.

Key Themes From Student Responses

Nearly 40% of students attended courses where teaching assistants supplemented faculty instruction at UMB or were exposed to course guest speakers. Students recognized that coteaching by practitioners was significantly different from these experiences. Most students felt that coteaching contributed additional perspectives and ways of teaching, enhancing learning and critical thinking, building in cultural sensitivity, and improving the teacher-student ratio. A few students were indifferent to coteaching at the beginning but appreciated it by the semester end. The survey results demonstrated that students' expectations of the cotaught course had been mostly fulfilled, with some indicating an initial expectation and continued desire to have greater opportunities to connect with their practitioner coteacher. Student responses offered a rich source of information for helping understand the classroom experience. Below, we present the key themes from this source.

Equity Among Coteachers in the Classroom. Students were active observers, attentive to the content of the classroom discussions and to how coteachers shared space and

interacted, and they reflected on how this impacted their learning. They recognized structural power differences in an academic space that privileged a faculty member over a practicing professional. Some suggested that this differential be addressed more consciously to realize equity in coteaching. Students felt that the practitioner coteacher should get equal space and teaching opportunities in the classroom. Students in two PSP courses noticed that faculty were accustomed to having greater control over the class. Students indicated that providing a “level playing field” to coteaching practitioners and having their voice heard more in the classroom might enhance their learning from the coteaching. In lieu of a faculty member’s conscious effort toward practicing equity, the practitioner might be undervalued and seen as a teaching assistant or as supplementing with particular components rather than as an equal coteacher. For instance, a student shared how coteachers were able to create equal space for themselves and the students,

I think having the practitioner and scholar, like, lead the lecture, we get to observe their relationship and how they work as colleagues. And it opens up the dynamics between the students because we work in smaller groups. And we interact with both, so, it’s like, all three are the leaders of the classroom. . . . I have to say reaffirming that having the different points of view and the different experiences has brought us out of our comfort zones but in a safe place because we are allowed to say whatever we think, what we know and ask questions. . . .

Benefit to the Community Through Student Projects. It was clear to students that the cotaught course was intended to be community engaged. Students appreciated how practitioners enhanced their learning through the projects, were able to come out of their comfort zone, learned new skills, and felt more connected to the community to generate impact. They recognized how the projects for these classes significantly differed from classroom-based projects that might be smaller in scope, with unverifiable practical value and community impact. Students expressed their aspiration for projects to be designed and implemented in collaboration with community and to present their work in the community and

see the usefulness. They saw practitioners as valuable connections to the community to make this impact possible. For instance, a student shared,

We have a lot of simulation in classroom environments [but] nothing compares to being out and actually teaching actual students who are looking to you for guidance and that’s why having the community member and connection, the project all together helps with this experience.

Further, students reflected upon practical challenges such as feasibility of projects within a semester and the need for proper funding with input from local organizations for implementing proposals.

Practical Relevance and Career Exposure. Students appreciated the practical relevance of the cotaught courses, which was achieved through the practitioner’s coteaching, in connecting academic learning to the real world and offering professional insights. As a student shared,

[The faculty member] teaches the class from a very academic standpoint and we are talking from readings and from materials in class but with the co-teacher, we are talking about the real-world experiences, like, what does this look [like] outside of our classrooms? What is it like around the world? It opens up our learning past what we are doing. They will also give us recommendations . . . to push our learning outside of the classroom.

Students appreciated the connection to the practitioner, exposure to their work, guest speakers from their network, and career opportunities in their major. They broadened their knowledge of the field in thinking about grand challenges, applications of their degree, and their future careers. Students saw practitioners as role models with careers they could envision themselves pursuing, unlike a faculty member with a PhD. Finally, many appreciated the project-based model for the practical relevance to their learning and wanted to see this more in both lower level and higher level courses.

Comparing the pre and post surveys (see Figure 2), among students working more than 20 hours per week, more students

agreed that their coursework prepared them well for a career by the semester end. Similarly, within this category, there were fewer students undecided about the career relevance of their coursework. The number of students, irrespective of working hours, who disagreed on this matter in the precourse survey did not shift much.

The results for this statement were similar for first-generation college students and students of color. Although the statement referring to career relevance of coursework was not specific to their current PSP course, some of the shift in the responses may be attributed to the PSP course as well as indicating students' perception about their

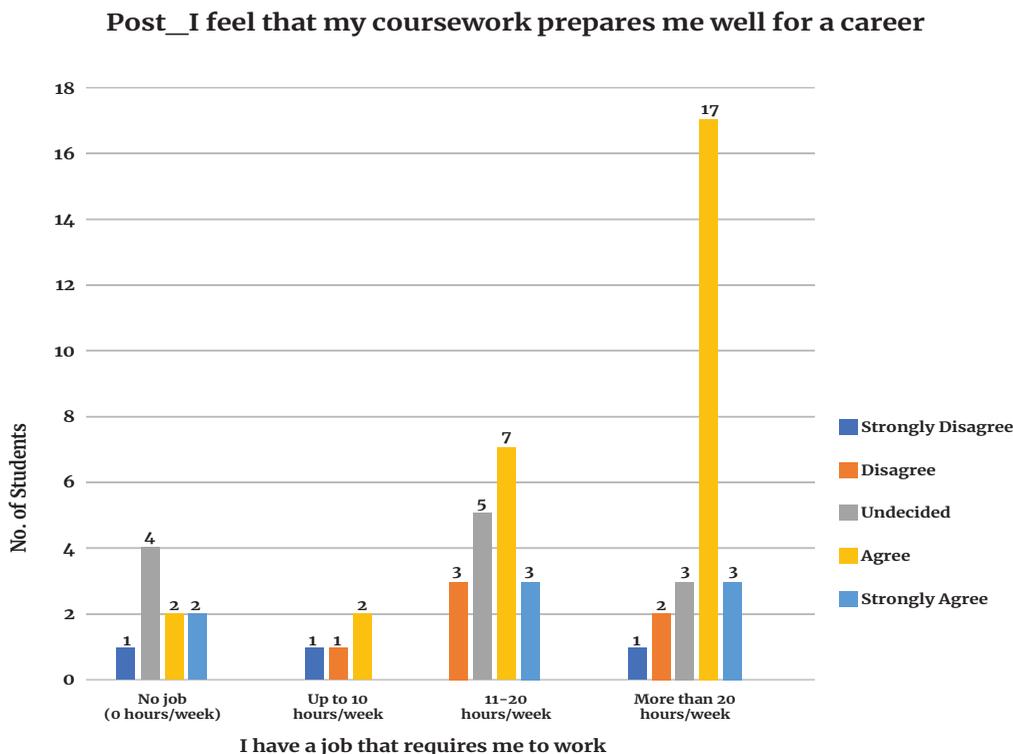
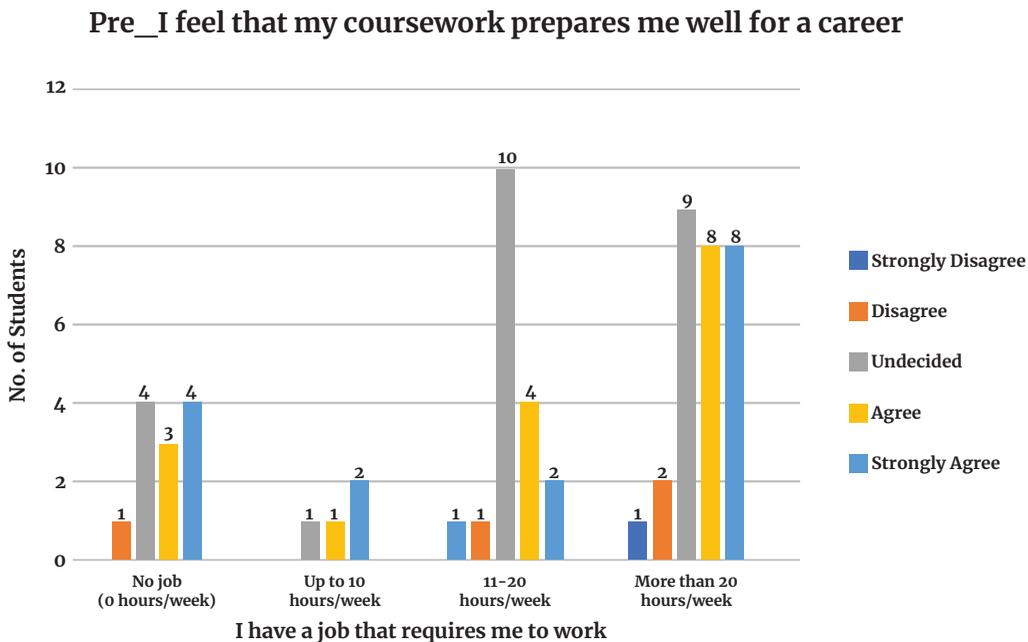


Figure 2. Coursework and Career Preparedness Among Working Students

coursework collectively.

Challenges and Scope for Growth. Students recognized the challenges with coteachers' different personalities or approaches and their need for more coplanning. Although students mostly agreed that coteachers supported each other, they wanted to see greater coordination in their teaching, providing feedback, and clarifying expectations. They suggested that coteachers communicate to students that they are on the same page, have common goals for the class, and build on each other more. A few students felt that "both [faculty and practitioners] had valuable information" to share but could have coordinated better in finding "the best way to present that and synthesize together." A couple of students noticed inconsistent feedback and disagreement between coteachers, while others shared, "even if they disagree on their approaches, they always respect and honor each other. I think this is really a good relationship." Responding to this issue, another student suggested,

I think we are very lucky how well they were able to work together but I think in general co-taught classes need some sort of structure or training of the professors to work together.

Class project planning also differed across the PSP courses, with some coteachers starting this process early in the semester and others waiting for students' input until midsemester. Students preferred having clear goals, including out-of-class time commitment to fulfill the project since many students worked while attending school. Those with prior information about these requirements appreciated it. Overall, students indicated interest in taking another practitioner-cotaught course.

Table 2 shows average scores from pre and post surveys and students' quotes that help make more sense of these themes.

Table 2. Themes With Average Pre and Post Survey Scores and Students' Quotes			
<i>Students rated survey statements from strongly disagree (scored 1) to strongly agree (scored 5). Below, average scores in pre and post surveys are presented in the columns "Pre" and "Post." Higher average scores between 3 and 5 indicated more desirable outcomes.</i>			
THEME 1: EQUITY AMONG COTEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM			
Survey Statement	Pre	Post	Students' Quotes
Practitioner and community-based knowledge is equal to academic and faculty knowledge	4.19	4.32	"If our practitioner had shared more of the spotlight ... I think the root of this issue is that the practitioner may have relevant information about this topic, they just don't get time to say that."
			"I think the only hard part really with having someone come out from the community is that they still have their job, so [they aren't at UMB] full-time, [they have their] own business, but they bring in different experiences. They are so into the topic and are excited."
			"One is the teacher and the other one who has the experience with working with the community, which my professor doesn't really have yet [and] it's definitely useful and important to bring in both, on one hand, the academic perspective with the professor and the professional perspective with the practitioner, they definitely complement each other very well."
<i>Table continued on next page</i>			

Table 2. Themes With Average Pre and Post Survey Scores and Students' Quotes *continued*

THEME 1: EQUITY AMONG COTEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM <i>continued</i>			
Survey Statement	Pre	Post	Students' Quotes
To have a real-world practitioner co-teaching the course alongside faculty	4.21	4.26	<i>“Our professors have been working really well together, it is a really collaborative experience; some things are planned but also throughout the class, one of them will add more information and they check in with one another consistently throughout the class and this shows that they are allowing space for both of them to talk and they build off of each other really well and it is really fun to be in class with them.”</i>
THEME 2: PRACTICAL RELEVANCE AND CAREER EXPOSURE			
Survey Statement	Pre	Post	Students' Quotes
Understand the real-world, practical implications of this course	4.31	4.32	<i>“In the department, there is a lot of talking about ways the world is doomed and they don't really tell you where you are going to go with that, so it is nice to see someone who is in the field, has [their] own business and [they] do the consulting group and helps monitor the building projects and makes sure that they are making improvements on what they want to work.”</i>
			<i>“I saw a wide range of what I can do with my degree [and] why I studied this for four years.”</i>
			<i>“I think that it will be very beneficial to have a practitioner and actually have that hands-on experience where you can say, I did this for my [course] project when you are going to apply for a job.”</i>
THEME 3: BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH STUDENT PROJECTS			
Survey Statement	Pre	Post	Students' Quotes
My voice has the power to influence how decisions are made in my community	3.9	4.02	<i>“Ultimately, going out and studying one thing for four–five months is interesting because it's kind of how it would be in the real world almost. Instead of being in a class where we are working on a bunch of little projects throughout the semester, it's just one large issue or large problem that we are trying to solve collectively as a group. So, I do see the greater impact that a project like that would have in the community and I appreciate it in that way.”</i>
Survey Statement	Pre	Post	Students' Quotes
I can make better connections with practitioners through this course	4.08	3.91	<i>“I feel like having these practitioners allows us to break into the community earlier. But I know people, if they had this opportunity earlier, to be in those environments, it would help them more. But I also appreciate that people were able to do it in the first place. I very much appreciate the experience that I'm getting from it because it reaffirms what I want to do.”</i>

Key Themes From Practitioners and Faculty

Coteachers felt more confident about collaborative coteaching and the usefulness of the PSP for their professional development by the semester end. There was strong agreement among coteachers about the hope and realization of the objectives of the PSP. Like students, faculty and practitioners agreed that the PSP could be useful for lower level and higher level courses; there was also agreement that they would consider coteaching with practitioners/faculty in the future. Below we present the key themes.

Professional Development for Coteachers. Coming into the program, the practitioners were looking for exposure to an academic environment, a chance to interact with our diverse student body, and greater opportunities of engagement with UMB. They wanted their knowledge to be valued in the classroom and hoped to develop teaching skills, especially those with no prior teaching experience. Toward the end of the program, they felt they had received the desired exposure and developed their pedagogical skills. They indicated that they found this experience enriching and rewarding, and they expressed interest in future opportunities. One practitioner shared,

The PSP program was impactful for me because it . . . allowed me to utilize pedagogical skills that I would not normally use in practice. It also exposed me to other scholars, literature, and student gifts that are beneficial to my organization and my personal growth.

Practitioners started to consider themselves advocates for students and recognized the unique role played by UMB in serving its urban mission. Faculty saw the PSP as a professional development opportunity to participate in a community of practice, meeting regularly as part of the pilot. They felt that the PSP helped them build a connection with the practitioner with whom they hoped to collaborate on projects in the future. Faculty appreciated the chance to coteach with professionals in the field with shared interests and to grow as instructors while providing students with hands-on learning and real-world career exposure. One faculty member shared,

The PSP impacted me as a faculty member because it helped me to

fill a gap in my teaching in a way that I think was beneficial to my students. I appreciate the ways that I have grown as an instructor through the coteaching and through the network of practice.

Faculty also saw the value practitioners brought in for students to better see their relationship to and impact on their communities through their learning.

Equity Between Faculty and Practitioners. Coteachers felt that an explicit conversation about shared power in the class might be helpful, with a caution by practitioners about whiteness setting the standard. In addition, some structural factors privileged faculty over practitioners. A tenured professor was by default seen as the person in charge. Further, faculty and practitioners did not have equal access to university resources: Specifically, practitioners had no designated office space or office hours. One faculty member shared their own office space with the practitioner during office hours for their course. Coteachers agreed that access to spaces also contributes to the exercise of equity between coteachers. Practitioners agreed that not all things had to be equal, given that faculty are teaching full time, whereas practitioners had full-time jobs in addition to the coteaching.

Class observations and student responses indicated the possibility of gender- and age-related dynamics reflecting unconscious bias that might need to be addressed. Two of the four pairs included older (ages 50+ years), more senior faculty members, whereas the others were younger (age 30s), junior faculty. We noticed that older faculty members with longer teaching experience were more “set in their ways,” as some students articulated, in how they chose to interpret and engage with the community and their practitioner. In contrast, junior faculty appeared more willing to shift the power dynamic with their practitioners, more openly following the practitioner’s lead in determining what and how work would unfold. Two faculty were male, and the remaining teachers were all female. It appeared male faculty exerted dominance in the classroom dynamic, with the female practitioners taking a second-tier role, so that students described these practitioners as sometimes seeming more like a “teacher’s assistant.” We noticed during observations that male faculty both physi-

cally and intellectually took up more space in the classroom. The female-only coteaching pairs seemed to operate more cooperatively and equally, both positionally in the classroom and as perceived by students. In fairness, only one classroom observation was conducted for the pilot, although these takeaways were also noticed in student responses and in cohort activities. Additional classroom observations would help illuminate the accuracy of these impressions.

Across the courses, there was a variety of teaching and collaboration styles. Some coteachers engaged in a more dialogic style of coteaching, whereas in other classes, faculty lectured primarily and practitioners shared their inputs as needed. Students appeared to turn to the faculty primarily, perhaps given the structural differences that privileged the faculty's role—an observation in a majority of the classes. Practitioners' ability to engage with students seemed somewhat dependent on the space and authority that faculty members relinquished. Students appeared to engage with practitioners more actively on projects and other class activities, exercises, and community-based experiences, such as field trips. In classes where coteaching involved more shared communication and delivery of content, we observed increased levels of enthusiastic engagement by students with both instructors and the material.

Community-Engaged Teaching With Practitioners and Benefit to Community. Practitioners and faculty strongly agreed on the value of community-engaged teaching and learning. However, most felt they did not realize its full potential in their courses, given their own planning challenges. Practitioners' role and community relationships helped students build their projects with potential for community impact. Practitioners hoped their participation would benefit the community and found this experience enriching. One practitioner found students working with their organization throughout the semester very useful. Others appreciated the enhanced visibility of their organization among students through their participation in the PSP. One practitioner shared,

I believe that community-engaged teaching is valuable because it allows students to “get their feet wet” in practice, while learning important theoretical truths about

the subject. It is also beneficial to the community because it often provides for additional resources to be poured into programs through student engagement.

Faculty found this experience helpful in reflecting upon what effective community-engaged teaching and learning represents:

Effective community-engaged teaching brings together the community and the classroom, and this approach is part of the root of UMB. [Having] the impact of benefitting students AND communities in a meaningful way.

Coteachers felt that students can also be considered community, as they were mostly local and representative of Boston's population. Coteachers agreed on the value of practitioners' representing and having connections in the community with which they work while also being professionals in their field who could provide students the necessary exposure. Finally, coteachers appreciated the PSP's flexibility in designing the community engagement components. They articulated the need for more resources to create community and to engage other community members in the classroom. Coteachers recognized that coplanning and integrating community-engaged projects required time commitment ahead of the semester to ensure a meaningful impact for students and community.

Table 3 shows key themes and their average scores from pre and post surveys with coteachers.

Challenges and Opportunities

Practitioners had full-time jobs and found it challenging to commute to campus for classes, some twice a week, and for networks of practice, to schedule with students outside class, though they felt informal interactions offered great value. They suggested having a program calendar early on to overcome scheduling challenges. Coteachers who attempted to plan student projects after the first half of the course, with an aim of coplanning with students, found it difficult to access the required resources because of UMB's bureaucratic hurdles.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), UMB is required to

Table 3. Themes and Average Scores From Precourse and Postcourse Surveys With Coteachers

Coteachers rated survey statements from strongly disagree (scored 1) to strongly agree (scored 5). Below, average scores in pre and post surveys are presented under the columns "Pre" and "Post." Higher average scores between 3 and 5 indicated more desirable outcomes.

THEME 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
Co-teaching with a faculty/practitioner can help develop important pedagogical skills and practices for my professional development	Practitioners	4.25	4.75
	Faculty	4.67	4.75
THEME 2: COLLABORATION FOR CO-TEACHING	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
I am working cooperatively with faculty/practitioner to improve students' learning experiences	Practitioners	4.75	5
	Faculty	4.33	4.75
THEME 3: COMMUNITY-ENGAGED TEACHING & LEARNING	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
Community-engaged learning can give students an opportunity to impact a community in a positive way	Practitioners and Faculty	4.75	5
I will consider co-teaching with faculty at universities in the future	Practitioners	4.75	5
I will recommend to colleagues to consider co-teaching with faculty at UMB	Practitioners	4.5	4.75
I will co-teach with faculty using project-based and community-engaged teaching as teaching strategy in future	Practitioners	4	5

restrict access to the grading system for nonfaculty. The coteachers were instead encouraged to build an assessment process for students, including the practitioner's feedback. Although not all practitioners had the leeway for grading, a few provided feedback on assignments. Coteachers reflected that grading signals power and that equal participation in the evaluation can enhance equity between coteachers.

Despite the challenges, faculty and practitioners found the program valuable and developed a vision for and beyond the PSP. Practitioners saw opportunities to build on-going relationships with UMB for fostering reciprocity and equity in higher education. They expressed their hope for this pilot to grow and be institutionalized with adequate resources so that more students, faculty, and practitioners would benefit. They also wished for the connections built through the pilot to strengthen ties between the university and Boston organizations.

Discussion and Conclusion

Practitioners, faculty, and students found participation in the PSP to be an enriching experience, and they appreciated its guiding principles. The success was evident in the strong agreement among students and coteachers about the usefulness and value of the PSP. Notably, prior to the PSP, none of the students, faculty, or practitioners were part of a practitioner-cotaught class model. Nonetheless, practitioners, faculty, and students readily saw its innovative value, had high expectations, and were excited to participate.

A possible limitation of this study is the lack of data on community insights on the impact of the PSP through the student projects. The practitioners were intended to be the connection to the community through their work. Also, evaluating this impact may be challenging because of the range in projects (from research proposals to workshops and youth concerts) and activities (small-group youth mentoring and collecting art) linked to the diversity of disciplines (music

education, Africana studies, psychology, environment). Another challenge was the quick onboarding of the pilot, which was contingent on limited funding and limited staff capacity.

Although the feedback from all participants was positive, we would be remiss to not acknowledge our personal reflections. In our naiveté and idealism in building this new program in higher education, we assumed the coteachers arrived with a shared understanding of equity and social justice in community-engaged learning and the objectives of the PSP. We hoped the practitioners would be elevated and integrated as full coteachers and members of the university community. We expected coteachers would arrive ready to transform the students' learning through community-engaged project-based learning. We hoped the projects would have a significant impact for the community through the practitioners' leadership as coteachers. We hoped to convince the administration and the higher education community at large that this model nurtures reciprocal engagement with community partners, and therefore needed to be sustained. We saw these outcomes emerge, but they did so to varying degrees, especially the community project and the equitable coteaching components. Although the PSP inspired empowerment and shared leadership, each pair had the autonomy to enact their work, leading to different levels of engagement (Farnsworth et al., 2014; International Association for Public Participation, 2007).

We assumed that coteachers' work at advancing equity and social justice in their professional and civic lives, and their excitement for the tenets of the PSP, would translate into effectiveness in the pilot. All coteachers were selected because of their work, reputation, and leadership in this regard. However, the pilot taught us to be explicit about equity and social justice in the context of the PSP and to ensure that these principles are consistently upheld. The pilot helped us better understand equity and social justice in the coteaching practice. For example, practitioners shared the barriers to being equal coteachers (such as not having dedicated office space or office hours for students, or even the capacity to conduct office hours because of their full-time jobs). At the same time, they welcomed not having to be the primary grader and preferred other ways to support evaluation. Also, the inflex-

ibility of the physical classrooms sometimes impacted teachers' ability to create collaborative learning spaces. In the future, faculty should request more adaptive learning spaces from their departments in advance of the semester.

With a new pilot program, unconscious biases (based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, the faculty-practitioner dichotomy, etc.), structural barriers, and power differences potentially continue to operate when not intentionally examined. Although the pilot included a 1-day interactive institute that covered the program framework, good coteaching standards, and project-based community-engaged learning, more professional development may be required to reinforce the principles of equity, community empowerment, and social justice central to the PSP's mission. In the future, we envision a 2-day professionally facilitated training institute with more structured opportunities for reflexivity on difficult topics, supplemented by intentional networks of practice and personal journaling. The institute and fall planning period can also provide more guidance around community projects.

Further, anonymous feedback loops between students and coteachers on key components of the PSP might help continuous real-time improvement. In addition, the PSP demands more planning than a course taught by a sole instructor. The fall planning period was not structured to the extent of requiring that coteachers get pedagogical supports for planning the curriculum. Although consultations for coteachers were offered, none took advantage throughout the program despite reminders. Subject to availability, more capacity and time could be channeled into facilitating, structuring, and reinforcing key components of the PSP and providing supports to coteachers proactively in the fall semester. Simultaneously, the program needs to offer adequate flexibility and academic freedom, balancing structure with room for innovation and relationship building. The lack of adequate resources for the PSP contributes to the challenge of getting additional planning time.

The PSP can have a larger scale sustained impact if institutionalized at the university through intercollege collaborations and hiring practitioners as adjunct faculty or paid consultants to coteach along with full-time faculty. The academic departments could support a PSP-type program

with pedagogical frameworks and professional development for coeducators, as well as consideration of community-engaged teaching toward faculty rewards. At UMB, although department chairs and deans seemed pleased about selected faculty's participation, a formal collaboration could yield greater impact.

For any pilot, it is important for institutional leaders to be in support of and informed about the program's developments and ready to champion its sustainability. Institutions could consider funding a paid summer internship for students to continue their work with the practitioner. Although we lacked the resources to support this, in one of the courses, students were hired and paid to continue serving the community for the summer by the organization. Surely, with availability of resources, other organizations could do the same.

The PSP aspired for the coteachers to use this opportunity to strengthen their relationship for future work. We do not yet know if these relationships continued or have led to other projects. However, several practitioners expressed a desire to sustain a relationship with the institution, either by offering to continue coteaching in the future or by finding other ways for their organization to collaborate with the university. The pilot was an experiment within an academic year, subject to minimal resources

and the imperfect serendipitous matching of faculty and their adaptable spring courses with community practitioners. Given the constraints, how does the PSP further current partnerships while still allowing new partners to participate in the pilot?

Most importantly, the PSP can serve as an innovation in CULP for universities for addressing inequities in higher education. Institutions can work toward more equity and social justice through CULP by making education practically relevant, honoring different forms of knowledge, and pursuing community-engaged pedagogies that are impactful for practitioners, faculty, students, and the community. This requires assessing and fine-tuning, the courage to reflect on strengths and areas for growth, and willingness to change the status quo in teacher-student-community dynamics.

Moving into a second pilot year, with our lessons learned and no additional resources, we continue to stretch academe's conception of who are the holders and creators of knowledge. Moreover, those knowledge assets exist in and for communities. We can engage with them, build closer bridges, and be change agents alongside them and all be the richer for it.



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Student Engagement and Deep Learning in Higher Education: Reflections on Inquiry-Based Learning on Our Group Study Program Course in the UK

Beth Archer-Kuhn, Debby Wiedeman, and Jeffery Chalifoux

Abstract

A group study program in the UK provides the setting for understanding deep learning in social work education through inquiry-based learning (IBL). Thirteen undergraduate and graduate students from a large university in Western Canada participated in a 15-day learning journey complete with a research methods conference and multiple exchanges with academics, service providers, and service users during their experiential inquiry. Two student coauthors and a faculty member discuss this unique active learning experience in this reflective essay using a constructivist lens to illustrate and make connections between IBL, student engagement, critical thinking, and deep learning. Students' deep-learning experiences are shared in relation to Sawyer's (2006) six deep-learning activities, adding to our knowledge about how IBL can support student learning preferences. Implications for consideration for social work education conclude the essay.

Keywords: inquiry-based learning, deep learning, social work education, group study program



This student and faculty reflection essay illustrates deep learning in social work education through the experiences and learnings of an undergraduate student, a graduate student, and an instructor in a social work course. We chose to write this essay following a 2-week Canadian group study program (GSP) course offered in the UK. Inquiry as a teaching method is one way we can explore student engagement in higher education in the broader learning environment. Specifically, student experiences and engagement with inquiry-based learning (IBL) can nurture deep learning (Sawyer, 2006). Deep learning occurs through interconnections of new and previous knowledge and experience (Friesen & Scott, 2013) while knowledge is constructed through active and deep learning (Brew, 2003; Fougner, 2012). Supporters of IBL credit this pedagogical approach with increased deep learning for students (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Sawyer, 2006),

whereas Sawyer (2006) also identifies six pedagogical approaches to teaching that promote deep learning.

IBL is viewed as a constructivist process (Miller-Young & Yeo, 2015). During the inquiry process, students construct knowledge from new and former knowledge to create subjective realities. As a pedagogic tool, IBL can help students develop the necessary skills to explore and find answers to their central question. Hudspith and Jenkins (2007) have discovered an increase in student engagement while using IBL as a teaching method. Once engaged, students can develop deep learning utilizing IBL. Specific to social work, Yesudhas et al. (2014) suggested IBL as a learning strategy yet identified the need for some preparation prior to the development of a central question. Adding a preparatory component to our course provided students the necessary guidance to support their engagement and skill development that together nurtured

deep learning. Through our reflections on our GSP, this essay illustrates how deep learning emerged.

Our GSP occurred within an international context, and we therefore describe our context and make explicit the facilitation of our learning process through the application of an international social work education model (Zubaroglu & Popescu, 2015) for enhancing student learning. We then reflect on six activities (Sawyer, 2006) to illuminate the connection between pedagogical approaches and higher education student experiences with deep learning.

Literature Review

Student Engagement

Students' engagement in their learning has become a much more focused topic in the research literature. This increased focus is in part due to what Friesen and Scott (2013) note as students' current need for different skills, such as the ability to think critically, synthesize, analyze, collaborate, and communicate effectively. The increase in technology that has given rise to a more connected global economy requires employees who are creative and collaborative to respond to contemporary complexities (Friesen & Scott, 2013). Student engagement has been noted to increase when using IBL (Parsons & Taylor, 2011; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2012).

Dunleavy and Milton (2009) found that students identify three criteria for increasing their engagement in the learning environment: (1) learn from and with each other and others in their community, (2) connect with experts and expertise, and (3) have more opportunities for dialogue and conversation. These findings are consistent with Windham's (2005) recommendations that learners require educational curricula that include interaction, exploration, relevancy, multimedia, and instruction, if they are to engage in their learning. The findings suggest a very different focus of teaching, from teacher-centered to learner-centered.

Learner-centered approaches have been shown to increase student engagement (Harris, 2008). Using a phenomenographic methodology, Harris (2008) found that teachers experience their pedagogic interactions with students in five ways: information providing, instructing, facilitating,

guided participation, and mentoring.

Together, these studies provide varied stakeholder input to inform important lessons for student engagement. A theme of connecting and relationship is noted as an integral and critical component for shaping the learning environment (Parsons & Taylor, 2011; Zepke & Leach, 2010). Through this relationship, engagement can no longer be assumed in the learning environment and instead must be negotiated between the instructor/facilitator and the learner (Zepke & Leach, 2010).

Inquiry-Based Learning

IBL is a learner-centered teaching strategy that facilitates active learning. Students are engaged in their learning through a self-directed, question-driven search for understanding that affords the opportunity to explore a subject and develop central questions through their exploration (Hudspith & Jenkins, 2007; Justice et al., 2007). Inquiry allows students to explore individual interests and develop critical thinking skills that lead to personal discovery and to deeper understanding of their central question. When used as a pedagogic tool, IBL is a process about discovery and systematically moving to higher and deeper levels of understanding. For example, in their recent report, the Alberta Ministry of Education linked IBL to the development of critical thinking skills (Alberta Education, 2010), while Hudspith and Jenkins (2007) have discovered an increase in student engagement while using IBL as a teaching method.

Within higher education, IBL has been explored in disciplines such as science (Apedoe & Reeves, 2006), math (Laursen et al., 2014), social work (Yesudhas et al., 2014), psychology (MacKinnon, 2017), and arts/humanities (Levy, 2012). The use of IBL in higher education has been found to produce generalist skill acquisition, including enhanced critical thinking (Aditomo et al., 2013; Hudspith & Jenkins, 2007; Woolf, 2017), problem solving (Justice et al., 2009; reflective practice (Gilardi & Lozza, 2009; Woolf, 2017), and collaboration skills (Justice et al., 2009). Specific skill acquisition has been noted as well, such as interviewing, active listening, writing, communication, and working independently (Woolf, 2017); research skills (Yesudhas et al., 2014); and improved information/technology literacy (Buckner & Kim, 2014; Gehring & Eastman, 2008; Levy, 2012; Little, 2010). Combined,

these generalist and specific skills reflect those sought after to help students become global citizens.

To contextualize our project, we highlight IBL writings within social work education. We found only four social work publications on IBL in academic journals and social work-related databases. First, Plowright and Watkins (2004) examined IBL within a UK social work program context. They differentiated IBL and problem-based learning (PBL) by situating IBL as exploratory, extending and promoting integrated professional understanding (Plowright & Watkins, 2004). Second, Braye et al. (2003) reported on an examination of IBL within social work law. Third, Yesudhas et al. (2014) reflected on the application of IBL outside the classroom in field education among social work students in Mumbai, India, noting the advantage of IBL as a teaching and learning strategy that permitted students to participate in the cocreation of knowledge. Despite this pedagogical advantage, the authors found that students require greater information literacy and more student engagement to fully take advantage of IBL (Yesudhas et al., 2014). Finally, IBL has been utilized in Germany by Zorn and Seelmeyer (2017) with information and communication technologies in a seminar course. These authors asserted that IBL as a pedagogical method is most appropriate for teaching technological literacy and preparing for future practice (Zorn & Seelmeyer, 2017). Student-centered learning in higher education requires the instructor to guide students to use the course concepts so that they might acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Wright, 2011).

Hudspith and Jenkins (2007) help us to understand the relationship between student engagement, IBL, and critical thinking. They suggested that student engagement is a precursor to developing critical thinking skills, and critical thinking skills can be developed through using IBL. Accordingly, student engagement and IBL are integrated concepts that collectively nurture critical thinking. Learners require the development of deep learning and critical thinking skills, which appear to be nurtured by student engagement.

The application of IBL as a teaching strategy encourages further student engagement because students take ownership of their learning and thus utilize IBL strategies (Friesen & Scott, 2013). IBL engages

students in active learning, ensuring that learners attend to the material in a meaningful way, which in turn fosters evolving understanding (Roy & Chi, 2005), producing transferable critical thinking skills (Hattie, 2009).

Dewey (1944) introduced and described experiential learning as a means to enable critical thinking, flexible problem-solving, and the transfer of skills and use of knowledge in new situations. He believed that these skills develop when students are afforded the opportunity to formulate problems related to their own experience through a process of inquiry, reflection, exploration, experimentation, and trial and error (Dewey, 1944). Similarly, Kolb and Kolb (2012) promoted experiential learning theory with the components concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. Deep learning occurs when these four modes of experiential learning (experiencing, reflection, thinking, acting) are integrated to respond to the learning situation (Kolb & Kolb, 2008).

Critique

The use of student-centered learning methods, such as IBL, can be challenging for both the student and the instructor. Traditional teaching methods expect little by way of student engagement (Wright, 2011). This dichotomy can create challenges in the classroom when students encounter student-centered learning. For example, students anticipate traditional decision-making by the instructor and can resist active engagement in the learning process, including decision making about their learning (Wright, 2011). Additionally, not all researchers have found IBL to increase student engagement, particularly when instruction provides minimal guidance (Kirschner et al., 2006), yet Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) suggested that the methodological choices made by Kirschner et al. (2006) challenged the study's results regarding the level of guidance necessary for student engagement through IBL. Given the range of relevant constructs in the face of conceptual ambiguity and a lack of evidence guiding teaching, the current study identifies the intersection of these elements in a recent higher education course. The question addressed is, "In what ways does IBL and student engagement nurture deep learning for students on GSP?"

In the remainder of this essay we illustrate the connection between Hudspith and Jenkins's (2007) working definition of IBL (students are engaged in their learning through a self-directed, question-driven search for understanding that affords the opportunity to explore a subject and develop central questions through their exploration) through our presentation of the IBL GSP course design and content, with author reflections on the learning process that led to students' deep learning.

Facilitating the Learning Process (Our Context)

Advocating for social change is a fundamental principle in the profession of social work, particularly in pursuit of social justice (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005). Consistent with social work values, Friesen and Scott (2013) found that when using inquiry-based teaching strategies, students can become advocates for social change, as they have a degree of control over their learning and can develop their own perspective. The authors posit that the teacher's role therefore should be facilitator and guide (Friesen & Scott, 2013). Utilizing IBL, teacher guidance might include helping students generate questions, investigate, construct knowledge, and reflect (Friedman et al., 2010), achieving dramatic improvement on academic achievement (Friesen & Scott, 2013) by including authentic pedagogy and assessment (Newmann et al., 1996), authentic intellectual work (Newmann et al., 2001), and interactive instruction (Smith et al., 2001).

The Course Experience

The GSP course was designed to integrate IBL and student engagement, including prelearning and course-based inquiry. Recommended by Yesudhas et al. (2014) was the introduction of IBL to students prior to their IBL experience. Additionally, Friesen and Scott (2013) identified three key IBL strategies leading to deep learning: scaffolding; formative assessment; and powerful, critical, and essential questions. For our GSP, we incorporated these strategies into the course design. For example, an online module was developed for this project, along with some prereadings, to allow students an opportunity to gain a basic-level understanding of IBL prior to our departure. Additionally, scaffolding of assessment tasks and formative feedback

were integrated. The development of powerful, critical, and essential questions, also known as the central question (Hudspith & Jenkins, 2007), was supported through the use of a structured controversy (Archer-Kuhn, 2013).

Thirteen undergraduate and graduate students from a large university in Western Canada participated in a 15-day GSP course that began in Glasgow, specifically for an international qualitative methods research conference. This provided students an opportunity to explore their substantive area of interest while also appreciating the linkages between research questions and the research process. The remaining stops of our GSP included universities in Edinburgh, Leeds, London, and Belfast. In addition to sessions with academics, we visited local social service agencies and engaged with service users, service providers, and others in each of our destination communities (what Dunleavy and Milton [2009] called connecting with experts and expertise). Learning opportunities included lectures, skill days, research seminars, visits to community agencies, and cultural tours.

Our GSP course included readings and the following four assessment tasks: (1) facilitation of a structured controversy (25%), (2) development of an inquiry question (15%), (3) reflective writings through three blog posts (25%) and two responses to colleagues' blog posts (10%), and (4) construction of an analysis paper (25%). Assessment tasks such as the structured controversy, development of an inquiry question, and reflective blog posts received formative feedback from colleagues and instructor. All assessment tasks received summative feedback from the instructor. Applying the international social work education model (Zubaroglu & Popescu, 2015) in three phases—preparation, knowledge building, and experiential learning (Figure 1)—supported an international context. Scaffolding of IBL (Figure 1) in the course included prelearning, knowledge building, and experiential learning. Figure 1 is not intended to suggest a linear nature to learning; for example, knowledge building continues to occur through experiential learning.

Preparation Phase

O'Mahony (2014) reported that study abroad learning experiences can only be realized when pedagogical practices receive attention. In careful preparation, a number of

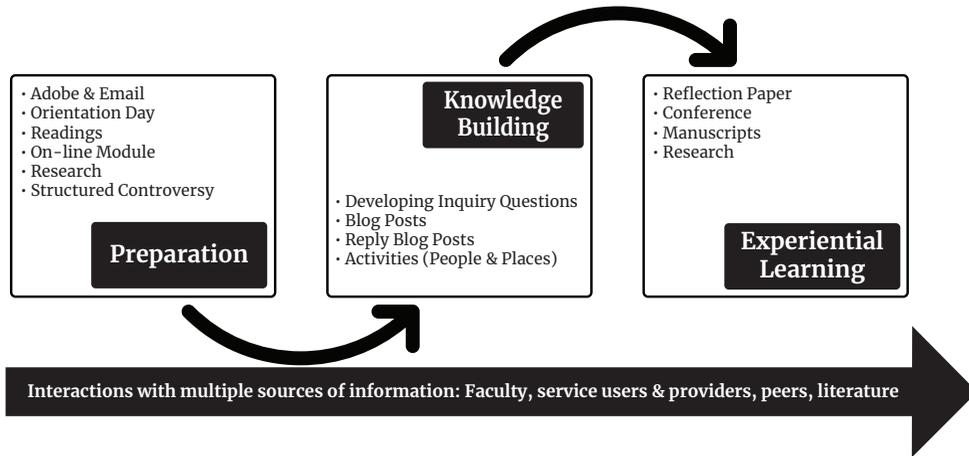


Figure 1. Application of International Social Work Education Model

activities occurred for students prior to their departure for the UK. Students were introduced to IBL through an online module and readings. They participated in orientation meetings (in person and online), including discussion of the course syllabus. Email and telephone calls addressed more challenging or complex questions. Participation in the instructor's formal research project about their experiences regarding IBL was optional for students.

Almost immediately after arrival students participated in a structured controversy based on a general theme of poverty and homelessness. This provided them an opportunity to debate a familiar, current, and meaningful social issue. In two large groups, students developed a thesis, then researched and presented compelling arguments through a critical assessment of the literature on their team's topic. This assessment activity provided opportunity for students to gain information, explore alternative perspectives, and prepare for the development of their inquiry question (Archer-Kuhn, 2013).

Knowledge-Building Phase

Inquiry questions are powerful and critical if they are important to the discipline, connect students to practice, reflect the outcomes of the course, and ask students to discern among options (Friesen & Scott, 2013). Inquiry questions are essential if they uncover the fundamentals of the subject (Friesen & Scott, 2013). On Day 2 of the GSP, students were asked to develop inquiry questions that were powerful, critical, and

essential; these inquiry questions could be changed and developed throughout the course.

As we arrived in new countries and met with our hosts, the students engaged in dialogue through introductory sessions that included information about the country's history; social, economic, and political structure; social problems; and effects of globalization. For example, a half day at Toynbee Hall chronicled social welfare from the origins of community development and settlement houses; case work to clinical work; and a social welfare safety net to a neoliberal era. Students were able to make linkages of influence to our Canadian social welfare system and take the opportunity through their blog posts and peer reply posts to connect these active learning sessions to their inquiry question. Further knowledge-building opportunities occurred when students were introduced to new models of practice in the UK, whereby involvement of service users was expanded beyond the Canadian context to planning and service delivery, education of postsecondary students, and policy development. In this knowledge-building phase, students had opportunity to learn from and with each other in addition to connecting with experts and expertise (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009). The excerpt below reflects a student inquiry process: They consider the ways in which their self-directed question is leading them to further exploration, engaging with multiple sources of information, and refining and further exploring their inquiry question. In this example, discovery emerged less from seeking an answer and more from

exploring greater understanding.

My inquiry process was ignited through integrating an inductive, critical reflectivity inquiry lens that propelled me to become engaged in purposeful, inquisitive interactions with scholarly professors, social workers, services users, and service providers. Additionally, the process of daily journaling often triggered further exploratory questions and I began to note several common themes, alternate thoughts, and opinions involved in understanding a problem. My curiosity unfolded by observing the intersections between theories, speakers and service users and I was challenged to reflect upon why those intersections occurred. The two meaningful tenets that challenged me to view how I was constructing my inquiry process were the use of language in asking questions to elicit further probing from others, and the use of client's voices to understand their experiences.

Another example of knowledge building occurred during a walk to the hotel, following a day of sessions at one of our host universities. Stopping at an outdoor café for a beverage and discussion, student reflections on the day's learnings led to an extensive dialogue about epistemology and theory, as the students began to integrate their knowledge into interrelated conceptual systems. They explored answers to their inquiry questions long after the "lesson" of the day and moved beyond surface learning into deeper conceptual discussions. This experience highlights that the classroom is but one learning environment, perhaps a nonoptimal one. Walking through communities provided a natural experiential environment for conversation and learning through being in context, critical reflection, and dialogue with peers.

Experiential Learning

This phase entails applied knowledge, contextualization and reflection, and knowledge sharing and dissemination. In the GSP, students appreciated the applied knowledge through the many opportunities to learn from community organization providers and service users. To assist with contextualization and reflection, the students had daily

debriefings and peer feedback for knowledge application, skills building, and reflection that further enhanced their self-directed learning and search for understanding. Here, all three findings from Dunleavy and Milton (2009) are clear. Students not only connected with experts and expertise but also expanded their understanding about how knowledge is created. The following student quote illustrates this point.

We visited Queens University (Belfast) where they were holding a conference on intergenerational trauma and the risk, resilience, and impact on children, families, and communities due to The Troubles in Northern Ireland that lasted from approximately 1968–1998. We later heard from service users from the Wave Trauma Center . . . about their experiences of trauma during The Troubles and the impact on their lives, as well as the impact on the lives of other intergenerational family members. These were just a glimpse into the stops made on this Group Study Program that contributed to my learning, the discussions with locals, other service providers, service users, students, and others all had a part to play as well in my inquiry-based learning journey.

Knowledge sharing emerged in many forms. Several of the students spoke of the ways in which they planned to share their learnings within their practice environment. This included a change in the way they perceived and wanted to practice social work. Dialogue with colleagues and reflection provided students multiple opportunities to consider their own understanding and process of learning, both of which were noted by Sawyer (2006) as requirements of deep learning. Upon our return to Canada, five students chose to participate in a major national social work education conference (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2016) to share their experiences of inquiry-based learning. Two students and the instructor then coauthored this article.

Application of Sawyer's Deep-Learning Activities

Beyond the enjoyment and passion for learning that emerged from the GSP, we sought to further understand IBL relative

to deep learning and the potential link to practice. Sawyer (2006) notes that learners need to engage in a number of activities to achieve deep learning. Accordingly, deep learning is gained when generalizing knowledge to broader contexts when the learning occurs within authentic, practical, and real-world settings (Sawyer, 2006). In the GSP, the authentic, practical and real-world experience was offered in a relational IBL context nurturing student engagement and critical thinking. These aspects of the IBL context emerged as components of deep learning for students.

Sawyer (2006) recognized six ways of achieving deep learning: (1) relating new ideas and concepts to previous knowledge experience, (2) integrating knowledge into interrelated conceptual systems; (3) seeking patterns and underlying principles; (4) evaluating new ideas and relating them to conclusions; (5) understanding the process of dialogue through which knowledge is created and examining the logic of an argument critically; and (6) reflecting on one's own understanding and process of learning. In the following section, we examine these six areas in relation to these students' experiences. This exploration aims to illustrate the ways in which IBL and student engagement have resulted in deeper learning in the GSP.

Learners Relate New Ideas and Concepts to Previous Knowledge Experience

Students' assumptions were challenged in a number of ways as they pursued their inquiry question. For example, one student experienced a challenge to their values while exploring an inquiry question and was able to relate new ideas to their previous knowledge about the etiology of poverty. As illustrated below, their understanding shifted.

In receiving new learning [IBL], I often reflect on how new ideas and concepts [connect] to my previous knowledge and experience. This became clear to me on the Group Study Program when I attended the session at Toynbee Hall. I reflected on my belief system that poverty needs to be tackled from a systemic approach and not seen as an individual issue. I was challenged [through my inquiry question] to look deeper. To understand and

mobilize changes to poverty I need to . . . challenge the view that the individual's poverty is a result of a moral shortcoming . . . to participate in meaningful social change.

Another student viewed IBL as congruent with their learning preference, the meshing hypothesis, according to Pashler et al. (2009). Through self-directed learning around a specific topic of student interest, this individual was able to explore new ideas and reflect on previous knowledge using the strength of interpersonal skills through dialogue with various sources.

As a student with learning disabilities, IBL utilized my styles of learning in linking new ideas around sexual and gender diversity (SGD) to prior knowledge that I held within the Canadian context. Rather than acquiring knowledge, IBL enabled me to construct it by continuously examining my practice frameworks socially; seeking out answers to my inquiry within the UK, reflecting on those answers, and how I can integrate new information into my practice.

This reflection provides an opening for us to consider the ways in which IBL might be an important teaching and learning strategy to support students with learning disabilities, a topic not yet discussed in the IBL research literature.

Learners Integrate Their Knowledge into Interrelated Conceptual Systems

The students related their conceptual systems variably to social work practice. While pursuing their inquiry question, one student related their learning to the research process and subsequently to understanding others' perspectives in practice:

As a learner, I integrate new knowledge, conceptualize and apply to other settings. . . . Attending the Qualitative Methods Conference in Glasgow Scotland provided me [the opportunity] to learn the deeper meaning of research; how inquiry into issues is brought about by being curious about a phenomenon. The key note speaker challenged me to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon I am curious about . . .

my task to understand is an inquiry task, which is in essence, a research task. Gaining deeper understanding of the person's experience is through authentically understanding their story.

Another student considered conceptual systems from the view of a particular population as they attended to their inquiry question. They explored sexual and gender diversity in the UK, as compared to Canada, in terms of acceptance of diversity:

In the UK respect for diversity has naturally progressed in ways of offering services to the sexual and gender diversity (SGD) population, and creating legislation, that in itself creates equality. . . . I met with [name of service provider]. He was able to express that AOP (anti-oppressive practice) was commonly known, and that staff training sessions occur regularly to inform staff of how to operate from this framework.

Learners Look for Patterns and Underlying Principles

One student discovered through their self-directed learning the power of language as they engaged people in dialogue about their inquiry question. Their reflections illustrated deep learning as they developed awareness of the ways in which language can encourage and generate dialogue, yet can also frustrate discovery. Attention to these underlying principles allowed this individual to adapt language and further explore inquiry:

Through critical reflection, I became mindful of the use and meaning of language in how I phrased my questions, as well as the importance of utilizing open-ended questions that may generate a deeper dialogue. Consequently, by deconstructing this important tenet of engagement, and how it contributes to the process of inquiry, communicating my questions to others while incorporating other perspectives has allowed my learning to progress.

A student discovered that they needed to shift their approach to learning. They came to understand that their learning was stifled

when searching for similar patterns between the Canadian and UK contexts, yet their learning deepened when exploring differences in patterns. Further, they concluded that by directing their own learning, their topic was explored more deeply.

Until I started inquiring about the differences that presented marked success in comparison, I felt that I was only learning what I already knew. In my research I was able to determine that London has a similar prevalence of SGD to that of Vancouver. I also learned that the law in the UK states that illegal sex acts exist regardless of sexual orientation, unlike Canada, which still does not have equality regardless of sexual orientation.

Learners Evaluate New Ideas and Relate Them to Conclusions

During the GSP course, students were encouraged to consider varied sources of information beyond the course reading materials to broaden understandings and application to practice. For one student, their self-directed learning helped them appreciate practice from a new perspective as they considered the social justice implications of poverty for people with palliative care needs. They came to realize that the inquiry process they were experiencing in the course could be applied in their practice relative to understanding of systemic barriers experienced by service users.

One of our guest lecturers shared an experiential exercise on critical reflexivity. By embracing a critical reflective perspective, I will be asking multiple questions in my practice. . . . Framing the question matters. . . . The meaningful connection for me has come with the realization that all of the palliative people with whom I work, are caught in the poverty trap. The lack of fair and equitable resources to support their end of life choices are not present. . . . I am challenged to mobilize my learning when I return to my practice.

For another student, the inclusion of service users' voices was discovered through the exploration of their inquiry question. New learnings were further linked to how

service user voice could be incorporated significantly in Canadian social work practice. Student appreciate knowledge construction from multiple sources as they engaged in the community with service users, providers, and researchers, as we see in the following description:

In what ways is work being done in the community alongside service users? In the UK, social workers were educating themselves on issues being faced by the SGD community, and working directly in the schools, organizations, and in the community. I have learned that being open about sexuality in the UK with professionals and trusted people, has allowed individuals to forego oppression, and in many cases eliminating consequences that are linked to sexual and gender oppression.

Rather than acquiring knowledge from instruction, the inquiry-based learning experience offered a way to construct new knowledge into a topic area of interest through dialog with professionals, service users, and the community at large. In the UK, I began a process of engagement in the community. With the ability to go into the community and exchange dialog face-to-face, new information lead [sic] to new lines of questioning. This is what the inquiry experience offers.

Learners Understand the Process of Dialogue Through Which Knowledge Is Created and Examine the Logic of an Argument Critically

One student's experience of deep learning involved critical reflection on multiple sources of information. Their self-directed learning helped them gain an appreciation of how dialogue shapes what we know, and that there is not always equal access to engagement in dialogue. Additionally, rumination was evident relative to the value of critical reflection with colleagues, peers, professionals, and service users, which helped them to engage in dialogue that in turn informed future inquiry:

The process of engaging in dialogue is valuable for deep learning. It allows me to see and hear others' experiences and knowledge through a lens that is different than [sic] my own. . . . The dialogue with my colleagues provide a discourse that helps me to frame my viewpoints and pursue my curiosity; engaging in dialogue with our guest speakers, and service users, have provided deeper meaning into our understanding of transgenerational trauma, and the day to day challenges for persons with disabilities. Hearing the perspective of persons who are at the center of their experience, allows me to reflect on my understanding, and challenges me to critically consider another viewpoint.

Deep learning for this student emerged as they engaged with multiple sources. They pursued their inquiry question utilizing research literature as one source as well as dialogue with multiple others to learn from their experiences. Ongoing consideration of what they knew provided opportunities for further questioning and critical reflection.

Learners Reflect on Their Own Understanding and Their Own Process of Learning

During this GSP course, a student learned both about themselves by exploring their inquiry question, and about their learning process through critical reflexivity. They identified important lessons from their self-directed learning during scheduled course events. This critically reflexive process facilitated deep learning, as is evident in the following passage:

The opportunities are daily and rich. I began to search inward on how I am formulating my inquiry questions. . . . It is through the deeper process of inductive reflectivity that I have gained a broader perspective. . . . I construct my inquiry through the lens of my personal values, culture, gender, experiences, and assumptions. Making a conscious decision to be mindful of these provides the foundation for me to advance my inquiry.

Self-directed learning helped another student appreciate knowledge construction from multiple sources as they engaged in the community with service users, providers, and researchers, as we see in the following description:

Inquiry-based learning was perceived by this student as a facilitator to learning. In

the following excerpt, they discuss ways in which their self-directed learning has facilitated their ability to pursue their inquiry question, and how their learning preference was supported by self-directed learning.

My style of learning is strongest in visual-spatial, kinesthetic, and social-interpersonal, and I found this Group Study Program certainly has complemented my ways of learning.

I usually have assistive technology and note takers for lectures and did not have that available for this course. Unfortunately, my hearing aids also failed to work which made lectures extremely difficult and I often found myself in one on one communication with the lecturer after presentations; one contributing reason the Group Study Program was of value as opposed to regular learning . . . I would talk one-on-one with our guests and receive enough information to lead me in directions to seek answers at my own pace from various sources.

For this student, IBL enabled their learning in ways that they had not anticipated, and their reflections are an illustration of deep learning and the development of an awareness about the ways in which learning can be accommodated.

Reflections on Learnings

These student examples illustrate elements and benefits of IBL in the GSP course, such as flexibility in the learning process, an increase in critical thinking and critical reflexivity, and greater focus on social justice. IBL within the GSP provided opportunity to intensively think and interact with others, time for one-on-one interactions with instructors, real-life occasion to compare systems (Canada and UK), direct experience (experiential learning opportunities), and access to multiple sources of information. This experience exemplifies IBL in providing preparation, knowledge building, and experiential learning to allow for student engagement. The findings support the work of Zubaroglu and Popescu (2015) and contrast with Kirschner et al.'s (2006) assertion that IBL lacks sufficient student guidance for engagement. Here, one student speaks to both their decision about engagement

and to how the use of IBL as a teaching and learning strategy has the capacity to nurture students in deep learning.

I needed to be open, engaged, and active in my learning throughout this opportunity. I made the conscious decision to authentically hear experiences from others. . . . It was important from the onset of my studies to construct a personal goal for myself to become fully immersed in any learning opportunities that lay ahead of me. The course syllabus and required readings began to guide and contribute to my learning. The readings provided theoretical knowledge of critical reflective theory that would allow me to analyze how to construct a deeper meaning of the process of inquiry.

IBL further enhanced student interest in research, and for some, IBL accommodated students with disabilities. One student identified that this experiential learning and inquiry approach had particular relevance to their learning preference because of their specific learning (reading and writing) and physical (hearing and vision) challenges. The student's self-identified kinesthetic learning preference was supported through this experiential learning opportunity, augmenting the visual-spatial challenges and enriching social-interpersonal strengths. For example, there are multiple opportunities for one-on-one discussions with presenters, professionals, and colleagues, allowing the student to pursue inquiry utilizing self-directed learning. The student writes, "IBL enabled me to construct it [knowledge] by continuously examining my practice frameworks socially, seeking out answers to my inquiry within the UK." For other students, having the experience of excitement and enjoyment with research was viewed as novel, and reportedly enabled a greater understanding of the relevance of research to practice, which reflected less about the topic of discovery and more about how the learning process unfolded (Little, 2010).

This essay illustrates the experiences and reflections from the GSP course: one graduate and one undergraduate sharing the ways in which IBL facilitated a process for them of deep learning. Deep learning for these students, captured visually in Figure 2, shows the relational nature of the interac-

tions between the IBL process and student engagement, which further led to critical thinking skill development and resulted in deep learning. We are not claiming IBL as the only teaching strategy that can lead to deep learning but rather that for these students on GSP, IBL, student engagement, and critical thinking supported their deep learning as defined by Sawyer (2006).

Discussion

Sawyer's (2006) conception of deep learning appears to have been reflected in this IBL experience. Students credited IBL with deepening their learning experience. Observing the students during the GSP course, it is apparent that deep learning can happen in a relatively short period of intensive immersion. In this case, the days of learning, although relatively few, were long and stimulating. The "environments in between," or the times before and after scheduled sessions, provided students multiple opportunities for dialogue and debriefing about their inquiry, challenging their values and thought processes and spurring further curiosity. A critical component for students

included checking their thinking with peers and faculty, corroborating Dunleavy and Milton's (2009) findings. Discussions often carried on during travel from one event to another, throughout mealtimes, and into the evenings. Self-directed learning meant that time for dialogue and reflection with peers was necessary after each session to allow space for critical reflection so that students could relate new learnings about their inquiry question to previous knowledge experience.

Students had frequent dialogue about their learning experiences and the implications of these experiences for their social work practice in Canada. Their social construction of new knowledge was evident in their deep learning of the service user model employed in the UK. Accordingly, student awareness was broadened through self-directed learning with IBL to include increased awareness of how knowledge is created and the implications for policy, practice, and research. Students clearly gained an appreciation for another way of knowing through their interactions with service users in different contexts. They were observed in dialogue about possibilities for their own social work

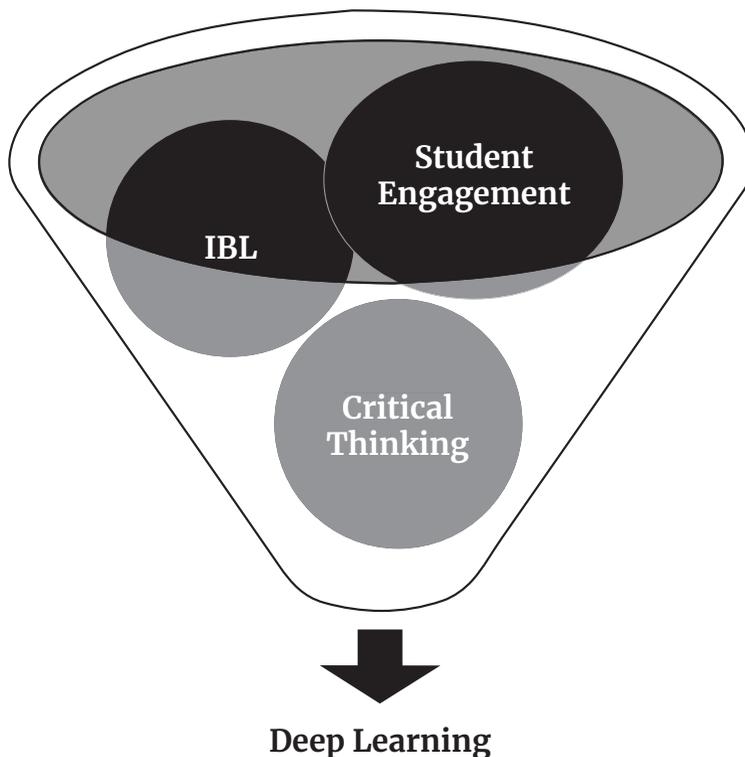


Figure 2. Deep Learning

practice, their shift in understanding about the use of language, and evaluating new ideas and relating them to conclusions. Already during the GSP, the students were making plans to influence policy within their organizations to include greater service user voice and participation in decision making; they considered multiple dissemination options and, importantly, developed knowledge and skills to support their lifelong learning. This is a reminder of the findings from Friesen and Scott (2013), which may not be relevant for all disciplines yet was for our students, that when using IBL students become advocates for social change, as they have a degree of control over their learning and can develop their own perspective, as is noted here by one student:

I began to reflect on what social action needs to occur in order to reshape social policies to address the needs of the persons with whom I work. The voices of those who are marginalized should drive the agenda for social justice to provide fair and equitable resources for the end-of-life choices. The inquiry into understanding my questions takes on a broader context of the tenets that contribute to, and silence people who are marginalized in society.

Finally, experiential learning in the global context can provide deeper learning for students in a different way than discussions in Canadian classrooms, as students make linkages to global issues in their learning. Multiple examples were noted. For instance, the presenters from the WAVE Trauma Centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland, had an impact on the students in terms of connections related to transgenerational trauma in Northern Ireland as compared to Indigenous Peoples and immigrant populations in Canada.

It is difficult to know if these students would have been as engaged or would have experienced learning as deeply had they participated in IBL in a local context. It may be that their experiences are specific to the UK context. Given that we have largely reflected on the experiences of two students, we cannot generalize more broadly but rather acknowledge and consider potential implications for future research and education abroad. The authors' reflections

on their experiences suggest that IBL has supported students to engage in their learning, and we argue that they have engaged in deep learning (Sawyer, 2006).

Implications for Higher Education

Higher education needs to reflect curriculum that provides students the necessary skills to prepare them as global citizens (Okech & Barner, 2014). These skills include critical thinking, problem solving, and the ability to synthesize, analyze, collaborate, and communicate effectively (Friesen & Scott, 2013; Parsons & Taylor, 2011; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2012). Learning activities need to be interesting and engaging and allow critical reflection and dialogue with peers and mentors. The student reflections in this article on deep learning suggest that IBL can support higher education students to increase their engagement in learning and practice skill development.

Some of the ways deep learning has been achieved in this GSP may transfer to a Canadian education context. For instance, we found that multiple sources of information (beyond textbooks, videos, and peer-reviewed articles) provided ways for students to interact with information (such as conferences; various lectures; and interactive sessions at postsecondary settings and community organizations with faculty, service users, providers, and peers): These approaches seemingly supported deep learning. Further, opportunities for reflection that can enhance deep learning included (1) individual reflections alone, verbally with others, and in writing and (2) peer reflections in dyads, small and large groups, and in writing to peers. Interactions with people and places within communities provided students with authentic learning experiences that allowed them to engage with and challenge their ways of knowing, being, and doing. These real-world activities provided opportunities for students to relate their learnings to their Canadian practice in authentic and deep ways.

We know IBL has shown benefits within some higher education disciplines such as science, math, and psychology. Little is yet known about the potential uses of inquiry-based teaching and learning in social work education, yet in this analysis IBL facilitated deep learning. Social work education along with other disciplines may benefit from further exploration of the ways in which

curriculum might include IBL as a teaching strategy to increase students' engagement in their learning. Although our experience includes an international learning experience, IBL similarly may be applied locally on campus and within the broader community. Indeed, we are currently exploring the ways in which IBL might support student learning within field practicum education.

We conclude with a few questions for reflection. Are we sufficiently utilizing in-

quiry as a teaching and learning strategy in higher education disciplines? Do our present teaching strategies ignite excitement and engagement in course material in ways that lead to deep learning? Finally, is there an appetite for how IBL can be more broadly applied in various disciplines, including social work education? The findings of this initiative clearly advocate for further engagement in this promising area of pedagogical innovation.



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Review by Susan B. Harden



Being perceived as competent is very important to me. When working in a one-of-a-kind community engagement role at a research university, the almost daily query, “Now . . . what is it you do?” contributed to a sense of insecurity. Regardless of whether it was noted explicitly, what I heard in that question was the lingering doubt, “And why are we doing this at our university?” Few colleagues understood what I did, and fewer understood why I was so good at it or why it was critical to our institution’s success.

I learned that my experience as a community engagement worker was not unique when I and a handful of others working in higher education across the country formed OEPN, the Outreach and Engagement Practitioners Network, in 2010. OEPN is a community of practice convened and supported by the Engagement Scholarship Consortium. We often describe our group as “having found our people.” Unifying aspects of our experience as community engagement workers include misunderstandings about our roles, underappreciation for our contributions, and attributions of any success as unique to our personalities rather than to a set of professional practices and beliefs. At OEPN, we recognize and appreciate the skill set and values that are foundational to success in our roles. Many OEPN conversations focus on how we make these skills and values clearly visible to coworkers, administrators, and peers. We also have common questions about career paths and best practices:

- What do we call ourselves?
- What are the fundamental values

and skills of our work in community engagement?

- How and when do community-engagement roles evolve into a profession with promotion pathways?
- How is competency as a community engagement professional consequently identified, embraced, and measured?

These existential questions asked by community engagement workers are the basis of two important new books from Campus Compact, *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for an Emerging Field*, edited by Lina Dostilio (2017) and its companion text, *The Community Engagement Professional's Guidebook*, authored by Dostilio and Marshall Welch (2019). For the purposes of this review, the former will be referred to as *A Competency Model*, and the latter will be referred to as *Guidebook*. *A Competency Model* is a discussion of a systematic collection of 103 competencies, in areas of knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions, for community engagement professionals and the process undertaken to develop the set. Chapters 1 and 2 describe the model, and Chapters 3 through 9 discuss the literature review research methodology used to create the model. The *Guidebook* is a compilation of advice, questions, and reflections to assist the reader in deep engagement and application of the competencies. I would suggest reading the two texts in sequence. Though the *Guidebook* stands alone, the primary text gives readers context and an explanation of the research methodology used to

develop and select the competencies. This background is helpful because readers of the *Guidebook* may question why certain competencies were included or excluded.

Readers should be aware that the two books differ in tone and intention. *A Competency Model* is an academic introduction to the model and is an edited volume, with different authors explaining their academic contributions to subsets of competencies. It reads like a formal panel presentation at an academic conference, with each chapter representing a research team's contributions to the whole. An authored text, the *Guidebook* feels more like a coaching session with a mentor—a singular voice in an informal tone encouraging reflection.

Job Classification: Community Engagement Professionals

Readers of *A Competency Model* are provided immediate satisfaction with an answer to a perpetual question that plagues community engagement workers: "What do we call ourselves?" Many of our titles and job descriptions are opaque, often defined by project titles, administrative descriptors, or language from the practitioner legacy of outreach and Cooperative Extension. In Chapter 1, "An Explanation of Community Engagement Professionals as Professionals and Leaders," chapter coauthors Dostilio and Perry put forward their preferred occupational title. "Community Engagement Professionals (CEPs) are professional staff whose primary job is to support and administer community-campus engagement" (p. 1). The use of the descriptor "professional" is a foundational precondition in establishing the need for a competency model, as a profession connotes a framing of work with specialized and distinct occupational knowledge, practices, identity, community, and ethics (Bowman et al., 2004; Dingwall, 2008; Keith, 2015). The authors then make their case for the need for a competency model, observing that although there is an abundance of research on community engagement practice, little research exists on the demonstrated behaviors and dispositions that describe CEPs as competent in their roles. Dostilio and Perry make it clear that the intention of the model and underlying research is aspirational, to improve the practice of CEPs through compiling a comprehensive set of skills and dispositions that are nuanced and complex.

Dostilio and Perry attribute this complex-

ity to an evolution in the work of the CEP from logistical and instrumental (first generation) to transformational, democratic, and change oriented (second generation), spurred in higher education by calls for deepening public commitments, an accumulation of engaged scholarship, and an increase in institutionalization through infrastructure and centers. The authors perceive the second-generation CEP role as more leadership focused and nuanced, benefiting from the direction provided by a comprehensive set of competencies. The first generation/second generation CEP taxonomy (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013) informs much of the interpretation of the competency model and is referenced frequently throughout the text. The authors attribute creation of the competencies to a desire to improve on the "trial and error" (p. 45) approach of first-generation CEPs.

In Chapter 2, "Planning a Path Forward: Identifying the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions of Second-Generation Community Engagement Professionals," Dostilio provides a review of literature for occupational competencies and a description of the methodology utilized in the development of the competency model. Benefits of professional competency systems include establishing a threshold of knowledge for success, providing a road map for professional development and learning, understanding effective practice, and influencing the field toward certain aims. Much of the literature for competency systems, when analyzed critically, describes models that can be used to create barriers to entry into the field, impede advancement, or rigidly police the profession through an inflexible or simplistic system that privileges a narrow or dominant cultural context or a group in power. In response to these concerns, Dostilio offers a disclaimer: "As for the use of the competency model, our genuine hope is that the model is used as a formative and path-making device into iterative and reflexive professional development (rather than as a tool for hiring and firing)" (p. 30). I appreciate the author's hopefulness with regard to the positive application of the competency model for CEPs. However, we owe it to the profession to recognize the historical marginalization of CEPs and lack of job security, especially when compared to that of tenured faculty and, therefore, to carefully monitor how the model is used.

In the second half of Chapter 2 Dostilio

describes the methodology she and her colleagues selected to develop the set of competencies. The methodology consisted of four major steps: a literature review of competencies, pilot testing the competency framework, a review by community engagement leaders, and a survey to gather feedback. The starting point of the competency list was grounded in a review of literature, rather than field observations of CEPs. To assist in the research, 15 research fellows from across the country were selected to conduct a large-scale literature review. Researchers were combined into research groups that reviewed specific categories of literature. Because the literature review yielded very little data speaking directly to competencies of CEPs, research groups used inference to identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, or dispositions required of CEPs to effectively practice within the context of the literature. This methodology has been validated through a similar approach in the development of competencies for the occupational field of professional evaluators within higher education.

The literature review and inference process yielded a first draft of 102 competencies across seven areas of focus. Drafts were peer reviewed at community engagement conferences and revised based on feedback. An online survey was distributed to all Campus Compact members to capture additional feedback. The final set of 103 competencies describes knowledge, skills and abilities, dispositions, and critical commitments in six areas: leading change within higher education (Chapter 5), institutionalizing community engagement on a campus (Chapter 6), facilitating students' civic learning and development (Chapter 7), administering community engagement programs (Chapter 4), facilitating faculty development and support (Chapter 9), and cultivating high-quality partnerships (Chapter 8). The final six chapters in *A Competency Model* detail the inference methodology utilized for each respective area.

Critical Commitments: A Special Category in the Competency Model

Within the process of deliberation among the research group, a high priority category of behavior, "critical commitments," was identified as requiring special attention. In Chapter 3, "Critical Perspectives and Commitments Deserving Attention From Community Engagement Professionals,"

authors Hernandez and Pasquesi frame community engagement work within a set of critical theories and practices that acknowledges the power within relationships, commits to the elimination of oppressive structure, and works for social justice. This chapter presents research about the deeply problematic aspects of occupational competency models. Hernandez and Pasquesi acutely point to literature that grounds competency models, and the underlying values of competition, universality, and decontextualization from moral and ethical considerations, within a positivist, neoliberal, and oppressive ideology. Therefore, "even carefully crafted guidelines for practice can do damage if they are not placed in context of social realities, namely different and competing interests as well as outright conflict . . . for example, class, race, gender and even nationality" (Cruz, 1990, p. 322).

It is in light of the critique of competency models presented in Chapter 3 that the CEP competency model menu has three categories of competencies—knowledge, skills and abilities, and dispositions—and a separate break-out menu for critical commitments (which are not the same as competencies, according to the authors). The literature influencing the development of the critical commitments was drawn from research in the areas of social change, power, and authenticity. Examples of the critical commitments in the CEP model (pp. 46–51) include

- understanding the dynamics of power and privilege in faculty roles in moving toward emancipatory and democratic practices
- ability to name injustices and power differentials
- ability to challenge problematic language use (e.g., paternalistic, dehumanizing, oppressive).

I applaud Dostilio and the research team for acknowledging the contradictions and the paradox of designing a competency model that prioritizes social justice within broader systems of oppression. With the inclusion of critical commitments, the authors make clear their intentions and attempt to create an explicit counternarrative to offset an exploitative application of the competencies.

Guidebook: A Way for CEPs to Dig Into the Competency Model

If *The Competency Model* describes the

“what” for CEP competencies, the *Guidebook* provides the “how.” The book is intended to help CEPs integrate the CEP competency model into practice. As the competency model is a large set, composed of 103 competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities, dispositions, and critical commitments) divided into six areas, the *Guidebook* is organized to help the reader by breaking the model into smaller pieces. Chapters are divided into eight practice contexts, generally in alignment with the model: for example, Chapter 5, “Knowing Community Engagement Administration”; Chapter 7, “Facilitating Students’ Civic Learning and Development”; and Chapter 9, “Cultivating High-Quality Partnerships.” Each chapter begins by presenting the relevant competencies and critical commitments for each practice context. Chapter 2, “Adopting and Promoting the Public Purposes of Higher Education,” explores 10 competencies and critical practices associated with adopting and promoting the public purposes of higher education. Examples include Competency 2.1, “knowledge of ideologies and political, social, and historical contexts underpinning higher education,” and Competency 2.2, “knowledge of and ability to encourage a democratic engagement orientation (participatory processes, co-creation of knowledge, co-planning, inclusivity, etc.)” (p. 14). The authors, Dostilio and Welch, provide useful theoretical frameworks, resources, advice, stories, and self-reflections as tools for readers to assist in the integration of the competencies into practice.

In Chapter 1, “The Pathway,” the authors encourage readers to understand competency as a process rather than a destination and therefore use metaphors of journey, path, road, trail, and guide throughout the text. Chapters 2 through 10 can be read as stand-alone works so readers can jump between chapters as needed. Within each chapter, Dostilio and Welch take an inquiry and critical self-reflection approach to engage readers. Each chapter has multiple break-out features, “compass points,” which are an extension of the journey metaphor and invite readers to answer thought-provoking questions, such as “The word *competency* conveys a range of notions and meaning. What does the word *competence* mean to you?” (p. 10).

The compass point activities vary in length and depth. Some activities span multiple pages and encourage the reader to undertake detailed and involved actions. Readers

may find themselves dwelling in a chapter for weeks, as many of the compass point questions require extended activities and reflections. For example, Chapter 3, “Leading Change in Higher Education,” challenges the reader with a CEP competency associated with leading change, Competency 3.3, “able to articulate connection between institutional mission and community engagement” (p. 36). Dostilio and Welch provide eight compass point activities in this chapter to facilitate competency integration. The compass point activity Leading Change—C asks the reader to collect the following institutional artifacts: mission and vision statements, history of the institution’s founding and any major historical moments, most recent strategic plan, recent accreditation self-study documents, peer institutions, presidential speeches, alumni newsletters, and website content, then asks the reader to answer a series of questions about how these documents convey and propel institutional community engagement. Compiling the relevant documents alone might take the reader weeks. Although highly involved, it is easy to see that this artifact inquiry activity is necessary and helpful for a CEP in developing competency. Furthermore, many of the compass point activities can be beneficial activities for groups, teams, or departments.

I found Chapter 5, “Knowing Community Engagement Administration,” and Chapter 6, “Doing Community Engagement Administration,” particularly interesting as an emerging area of importance for CEPs as centers, offices, and staff in this area continue to proliferate. Understanding the context knowledge ground in community-engaged pedagogy and scholarship, and managing staff, students, partners, programs, and budgets are critical to successful administration. Improving our performance as community engagement managers and administrators seems underresearched and little discussed in CEP literature, and I was pleased to see two chapters devoted to its importance.

Most chapters in the *Guidebook* end with a feature called “Our Critical Commitments: Questions to Ask,” which helps readers to consider deeply the social justice aspects of the competency model through a series of queries about power, privilege, and equity. For example, Chapter 7, “Facilitating Students’ Civic Learning and Development,” discusses eight competencies and two critical commitments from the CEP competency

model. Under “Our Critical Commitments,” the authors ask readers: “What is your current ability, or level of skill, to have discussions with students about critical consciousness?” (p. 154). As a reader, I found it difficult to answer this question without a baseline level of knowledge regarding what levels of skills look like.

This question points to a truth in the *Competency Model and Guidebook*. The competencies are aspirational statements. For example, a competency in the area of institutionalizing community engagement on a campus is “able to advocate for community engagement and communicate its value, vision, and goals in your context” (*Competency Model*, p. 47). The behaviors that comprise proficiency or high-quality practice are left unstated. The CEP competency model gives us a comprehensive list of things to do, which is helpful. Of course, a logical next question is, “Am I performing the competency at a high level?” The *Guidebook* prompts us to ask these questions, but answers about high-quality practice are left to readers to determine for themselves. I am certain that future areas of research on the competency model will start to consider descriptions of high-quality practices.

Readers of this review might wonder if the CEP competency model is applicable for

all varieties of community-engaged work. Although this model clearly speaks to the predominant CEP role within teaching and learning, it is important to question the relevance of these books for community-engaged work that does not involve students. The daily composition of CEP work is different for professionals in areas such as policy analysis or program evaluation, and many of the 103 competencies nonetheless describe the work of professional staff whose primary job is to support and administer community-campus engagement regardless of the presence of students. These texts may be even more significant for these CEPs because of their marginalized and often hidden roles in a higher education system that functions around students. The ability to describe and independently nurture career paths for these non-student-centered CEP roles may be even more critical.

Without question, Dostilio and her coauthors have made a monumental contribution to the field of community engagement with the CEP competency model. Surely this model will ignite more research on the profession of CEPs, provide a framework for professional development, and enhance community-campus partnerships. These texts should be required reading for all CEPs.



About the Reviewer

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