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Service-Learning Outcomes in Florida Higher Education: An Analysis of Predictors

Amanda M. Main, Jarrad D. Plante, and Melody Bowdon

Abstract

This study sought to examine how service-learning and student volunteer opportunities shape educational experiences for students by surveying 437 students currently enrolled in service-learning courses from nine participating Florida Campus Compact institutions. The researchers found several predictors that impacted student perceptions of their service-learning experiences, including gender identity, academic discipline, course model, and type of organizational partner. This article presents the current state of service-learning in higher education and presses with an increased urgency for institutions to adopt or expand service-learning programs. The results of this study will better inform service-learning program design as well as future service-learning research.

Keywords: academic discipline, Campus Compact, course model, service-learning, organizational partners

Service-learning has been defined as an experiential learning opportunity that engages students in activities that address community needs through intentionally structured and reflective activities designed to promote student learning and development (Jacoby 1996; Jakubowski, 2003). Kronick (2007) defined service-learning as "the process of integrating active assistance in the community into the learning that is occurring in the classroom" (p. 300). Prior research has indicated that academic service-learning enables students to apply theory to practice, understand issues facing the community, enhance personal development (Darby et al., 2013; Eyler & Giles, 1999), and improve academic performance, leadership development, and self-efficacy (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999).

Benefits of Service-Learning

Service-learning participants receive benefits inside and outside the classroom, including increased social integration and feelings of belonging on campus, increased satisfaction with their collegiate experience, improved class attendance, and improved academic skills such as writing, time management, exam performance, and critical thinking (Fredericksen, 2000; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Madsen & Turnbull, 2006; Rosing et al., 2010). Engagement in academic service-learning has been linked to greater complexities of understanding social topics being learned in the classroom and in the communities being served (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Additional benefits, including increased academic motivation, problem analysis, and cognitive development, have also been identified (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne et al., 1998). Students taking service-learning courses have also demonstrated gains in academic self-efficacy, confidence when interacting with faculty members outside the classroom, and willingness to seek help from campus administrators (Astin et al., 2000; Astin & Sax, 1998; Kuh, 2008; Yeh, 2010). These benefits distribute across unique student populations, including honors students (Stewart, 2008), low-income and first-generation students (McKay & Estrella, 2008; Yeh, 2010), and first-year students (Stavrianopoulos, 2008).

Institutional Benefits

Institutions facilitating service-learning programming accrue benefits, such as increased student retention and higher persistence and graduation rates (Bringle et al., 2010; Kuh, 2008; Lockeman & Pelco, 2013). These benefits have been attributed to heightened feelings of fit with, and commitment to, the campus and stronger relationships with faculty and peer groups (Bringle et al., 2010; Kuh, 2008). Bringle et al. (2010) determined that students who participate in service-learning coursework in their first year are more likely to be retained into their second year and ultimately graduate from their institution. First-generation and low-income students report greater institutional commitment and motivation to graduate after participating in service-learning coursework (McKay & Estrella, 2008; Yeh, 2010). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) identified a within-college effect demonstrating the importance of service-learning as a tool for students to make friends from diverse backgrounds, attend diversity-themed workshops, and take diversity-centered courses, all while participating in civic involvement activities. Many studies note that female students are more likely to engage in service-learning activities, whether the activity occurs domestically or internationally, whether it is voluntary or an academic course requirement. Female students also tend to have significantly higher levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for college (Brouse et al., 2010; Cox et al., 2014; Dienhart et al., 2016; Kiely, 2005; Miller & Gonzalez, 2010).

Service-learning has different effects based on institution type. In a study on the institutionalization of service-learning as a best practice of community engagement in higher education, Plante (2015) investigated three institutions by type—a small private liberal arts college, a small private teaching university, and a large research university, all within the same geographical area. Although each institution approached community engagement in its own unique way, all three institutions earned the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification in 2008 and reclassification in 2015.

"Besides enrolling for classes, getting involved is the single most important thing one can do as a student to not only succeed in college, but to get that perfect first job" (Plante et al., 2014, p. 89). Community colleges represent one of the largest sectors of American higher education, and they offer an opportunity for yielding major impact on the implementation of service-learning around the country. Community colleges have been at the head of the "community-building" movement for several decades, and many of their mission statements call for them to meet community needs and provide services to local organizations and surrounding communities.

> They are, after all, of, by, and for the communities in which they dwell. Today they are being recognized in the service learning field for combining what they do best—teaching, serving, and modeling civic responsibility. More than any other segment of American higher education, community colleges play a unique role in their own communities. (Barnett, 1996, p. 7)

In a study that investigated students' worldviews during an international service-learning experience, students gained knowledge and open-mindedness in the areas of community and civic engagement (Murray et al., 2015).

In Florida, service-learning has become an established pedagogy within postsecondary education. The Florida Campus Compact (FLCC) consists of over 50 college and university presidents committed to engaging students in active citizenship via participation in public and community service (FLCC, 2019, Welcome). Other key aspects of the organization's mission include inspiring "leadership, philanthropy, conscientious citizenship, critical thinking and civil discourse in the next generation" and working to develop a more knowledgeable workforce (FLCC, 2019, Goals). Using national data collected via an annual membership survey, the national organization reported that 95% of partner institutions offer service-learning coursework to their students, with an average of 66 courses offered per campus in 2012. The report also suggested that 62% of its 566 member institutions nationwide require service-learning as part of the core curriculum of at least one major, representing an 11% increase since 2010 (Campus Compact, 2013). In a recent study that featured service-learning across Campus Compact institutions, "an overwhelming majority of student participants in this study agreed or strongly agreed with the statements connecting their service-

learning experience as it relates to career employability and community identity" (Plante et al., 2019, p. 110).

Service-learning impacts should be designed at three critical levels—students, higher education institution, and the larger community (Chupp & Joseph, 2010). The case for service-learning in higher education remains compelling at each of these three levels. Indeed, the demonstrated benefits of service-learning programs for students, institutions, and communities argue for expanding and improving service-learning opportunities.

The Study

The case for service-learning is clear and urgent, as demonstrated in the sections above, but there are many models and frameworks for service-learning with variable outcomes depending on unique characteristics of student population, curriculum design, and institutional type. What does the literature offer Florida instructors and program directors regarding these specific factors? To answer this, we researched students attending Campus Compact colleges and universities within the Sunshine State. The nation's only campus-based civic engagement association in higher education, Campus Compact promotes community and public service that forges partnerships and provides training and resources for faculty seeking to incorporate service-learning into their curriculum (Campus Compact, n.d.).

Campus Compact has conducted various studies on the impact of service-learning in higher education institutions; however, there has been no statewide study on the implications of service-learning in Campus Compact institutions of higher education. To address this gap in the research, the present study aims to assess the effects of service-learning participation on students pursuing postsecondary degrees within the state of Florida. This study seeks to identify the ways in which colleges and universities implement service-learning coursework at their institutions. Specifically, we examined how service-learning and student volunteer opportunities are shaping educational experiences for students and impacting the communities around them. Survey questions were from a previous study, "Perceptions of Service-Learning in the Sunshine State" (Plante et al., 2019), which had a different focus and different outcomes.

Methods

Participants and Procedures

Students from nine colleges and universities participating in the FLCC initiative served as participants in this study. College and university partners were selected from and recruited at a Florida Campus Compact training. Survey links were sent to faculty of record for service-learning courses for distribution to students. Of the approximately 1,181 students enrolled in 49 classes taught by 23 instructors who were invited to participate, 437 students completed the survey, yielding a 35% response rate. Instructors had discretion as to whether to incentivize their service-learning class to complete the online survey. Students were given 6 weeks to complete the survey and received two follow-up communications throughout the study's duration.

A total of 437 participants responded to the survey, with 22.7% male respondents and 71.2% female respondents with 6.1% of participants not answering. There were 285 students aged 18–21, 70 students aged 22–25, 22 students aged 26–29, 18 students aged 30–39, 20 students aged 40–49, two students aged 50–59, and 20 students who did not respond to the question. Further, 40.5% of the sample identified as Hispanic, 29.7% as White/Caucasian, non-Hispanic, 23.7% as Black, non-Hispanic, 4.1% as multiracial, and 1.9% as Asian/Pacific Islander (percentages total less than 100 due to rounding). Nearly half the student participants (46%) indicated that they had taken one service-learning course; for 18%, it was their second service-learning course; for 16%, their third; for 9%, their fourth; for 5%, their fifth; and 5% indicated that this was at least their sixth service-learning course.

Measures

The predictor questions used in the survey requested information such as demographics, majors, course model used, type of service-learning partner, and type of educational institution.

The outcome variables were measured using instruments developed for this study. The first scale measured perceptions of career enhancement resulting from participation in a service-learning course using six items with a 6-point agreement Likert response scale. A sample item is "As a result of en-

gaging in service-learning, I have discovered or clarified my career goals." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .88 in this study. The next scale measured community engagement resulting from participation in a service-learning course using six items with a 6-point agreement Likert response scale. A sample item is "Participation in service-learning increased my confidence in my ability to bring about change in my community." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .88 in this study. The third scale measured perceptions of learning enhancement resulting from participation in service-learning using seven items with a 6-point agreement response scale. A sample item is "Service-learning helped me to understand how what I am learning in school applied to the real world." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .92 in this study. All tests of research questions were performed using linear regression in IBM SPSS 23.

Results and Discussion

Scale Development

Four scales were developed to measure student outcomes of service-learning courses. Specifically, these scales measured career enhancement, connection to community (community engagement), and learning enhancement, in addition to key demographic measures. Following the recommendations of Hinkin (1998), interitem correlations were run, and those items that failed to correlate at least .40 with other items were dropped. Additionally, all remaining items were endorsed by at least 5% of the sample in order to ensure adequate variance. Each instrument was analyzed through a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis in Amos (Version 7.0) (Version 23; Arbuckle, 2006). Model fit was established through the chi-square statistic (χ^2), confirmatory fit index (CFI), non-normed fit index (NNFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). It should be noted that although the chi square statistic was applied in this analysis, this measure is heavily influenced by sample size, and thus the CFI, NNFI, and RMSEA are more accurate estimates of fit for this sample.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the single-factor career enhancement scale demonstrated acceptable fit, χ^2 (9) = 91.806, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .14, CFI = .93, NNFI = .84, and factor loadings (Table 1). Further, the Cronbach's alpha for this scale indicated an acceptable level of reliability at .88.

The single-factor community connection scale also demonstrated acceptable fit, $\chi^2(9) = 84.379$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .14, CFI = .94, NNFI = .87, and factor loadings (Table 2), as well as a Cronbach's alpha of .88.

The single-factor learning enhancement scale additionally demonstrated acceptable fit, χ^2 (14) = 122.190, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .13, CFI = .94, NNFI = .89, and factor loadings (Table 3) as well as a Cronbach's alpha of .92.

Predictors of Service-Learning Outcomes

To establish the predictors of service-learning outcomes, linear regression analyses were conducted on the variables in IBM SPSS 23.

Demographic Predictors

We first examined the impact of demographic characteristics on service-learning outcomes. Results demonstrated that gender was significantly associated with outcomes, with females perceiving higher levels of career enhancement ($M = 4.86$; $F(1,397) = 4.042$, $p < .05$), community engagement ($M = 4.89$; $F(1,395) = 5.786$, $p < .05$), and learning enhancement ($M = 4.86$; $F(1,395) = 5.786$, $p < .05$) than males ($M = 4.62$, 4.60, and 4.62, respectively). Additionally, educational standing was significantly associated with outcomes, with those earlier in their educational careers perceiving greater levels of learning enhancement ($F(1,399) = 4.420$, $p < .05$) than those later in their educational careers. Specifically, first-year students reported a mean of 5.01, sophomores a mean of 4.72, juniors a mean of 4.52, seniors a mean of 4.87, and graduate students a mean of 4.17. Age, race, citizenship status, being a first-generation student, being a part-time versus a full-time student, and whether or not the student worked in addition to taking classes were not significant predictors of service-learning outcomes. The following tables show the relationship of demographic predictors to respondents' perception of career enhancement (Table 4), community engagement (Table 5), and learning enhancement (Table 6).

Academic Discipline Predictors

In examining the effects of the disciplines in which students majored, results demonstrated that students majoring in education

Table 1. Career Enhancement Scale Items and Factor Loadings

Item	Factor Loading
Overall, I feel that my service-learning experience added value to my degree.	.73
I believe my service-learning activities will be relevant to my future career.	.69
I expect to find a better career when I graduate.	.64
I have established contacts for future jobs, scholarships, or school references.	.76
I have discovered or clarified my career goals.	.79
I have gained real-world professional experience.	.83

Note. N = 421.

Table 2. Community Connection Scale Items and Factor Loadings

Item	Factor Loading
I understand the complexities of a social or political problem in my community better than I did before my service-learning course.	.77
Participation in service-learning increased my confidence in my ability to bring about change in my community.	.82
I will be more likely to volunteer my time in the community.	.75
I have benefitted from interaction from people from different ethnic/social/political groups that are different from mine.	.79
I established strong new connections to my community as a result of my service-learning experience.	.76
I am more likely to remain a resident of Florida and/or the community where I attended college because of my service-learning experience.	.63

Note. N = 421.

Table 3. Learning Enhancement Scale Items and Factor Loadings

Item	Factor Loading
Overall, I learned more in my service-learning course than I believe I would have in a comparable course without service-learning.	.79
Service-learning helped me to understand how what I am learning in school applies to the real world.	.80
Participation in service-learning made me want to learn more about the subject I was studying.	.79
I understand my own values and ethics better than I did before completing my service-learning course.	.76
I have improved my problem-solving skills.	.71
I understood the course material better than I would have in a traditional class as a result of my service-learning experience.	.81
Service-learning helped me develop a greater excitement/enthusiasm about learning.	.84

Note. N = 418.

Table 4. Demographic Predictors of Career Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Demographic Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Gender identity	399	.243	.121	.100	2.011	.045	.010
Age	408	.008	.046	.009	.178	.859	.000
Race	408	.021	.041	.025	.505	.614	.001
U.S. citizenship	408	.046	.169	.014	.274	.785	.000
First-generation student	408	.170	.108	.078	1.566	.118	.006
Enrollment status	408	.119	.138	.043	.866	.387	.002
Educational standing	408	-.056	.046	-.061	-1.220	.223	.004
Work status	408	.006	.032	.010	.194	.847	.000

Table 5. Demographic Predictors of Community Engagement Outcome in Service-Learning

Demographic Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Gender identity	397	.283	.118	.120	2.405	.017	.014
Age	406	-.023	.045	-.025	-.509	.611	.001
Race	406	-.006	.042	-.007	-.149	.882	.000
U.S. citizenship	406	-.190	.165	-.057	-1.155	.249	.003
First-generation student	406	.087	.107	.040	.813	.417	.002
Enrollment status	406	.194	.136	.071	1.427	.154	.005
Educational standing	402	-.074	.045	-.083	-1.662	.097	.007
Work status	406	-.021	.031	-.034	-.680	.497	.001

Table 6. Demographic Predictors of Learning Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Demographic Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Gender identity	396	.240	.121	.099	1.978	.049	.010
Age	405	-.011	.046	-.012	-.236	.814	.000
Race	405	.032	.042	.037	.749	.454	.001
U.S. citizenship	405	-.133	.172	-.039	-.775	.439	.001
First-generation student	405	.186	.109	.084	1.701	.090	.007
Enrollment status	405	.162	.137	.059	1.180	.239	.003
Educational standing	401	-.097	.046	-.105	-2.102	.036	.011
Work status	405	-.003	.032	-.004	-.089	.929	.000

perceived the highest levels of career enhancement (M = 5.23; $F(1,419)$ = 4.428, p < .05) and learning enhancement (M = 5.27; $F(1,416)$ = 5.603, p < .05).

Conversely, students majoring in business demonstrated a negative relationship to career enhancement (M = 4.32; $F(1,418)$ = 8.593, p < .01), community engagement (M = 4.87; $F(1,416)$ = 8.470, p < .01), and learning enhancement (M = 4.41; $F(1,415)$ = 5.094, p < .05). Additionally, students majoring in computer science also demonstrated a negative relationship to career enhancement (M = 3.62; $F(1,419)$ = 9.313, p < .01), community engagement (M = 3.67; $F(1,417)$ = 9.362, p < .01), and learning enhancement (M = 3.69; $F(1,416)$ = 7.977, p < .01).

Majors in the arts, health sciences, humanities, life sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences did not demonstrate significant relationships with service-learning outcomes. The following tables show the relationship of academic discipline predictors to respondents' perception of career enhancement (Table 7), community engagement (Table 8), and learning enhancement (Table 9).

Course Model Predictors

Regarding the effectiveness of different course models to influence service-learning outcomes, the "fourth-credit option" model showed significant positive relationships to career enhancement (M = 5.37; $F(1,418)$ = 6.147, p < .05), community engagement (M = 5.23; $F(1,416)$ = 3.773, p < .10), and learning enhancement (M = 5.23; $F(1,415)$ = 4.032, p < .05). Having service-learning make up the majority of the course grade was significantly positively related to career enhancement (M = 4.91; $F(1,312)$ = 5.365, p < .05), community engagement (M = 4.93; $F(1,312)$ = 5.034, p < .05), and learning enhancement (M = 4.90; $F(1,311)$ = 3.999, p < .05).

Having service-learning as the focus of the course was also significantly positively related to career enhancement (M = 5.07; $F(1,418)$ = 3.935, p < .05). Having service-learning as a transparent requirement, requiring service-learning, making service-learning a major project or independent study and having service-learning as a partial or small part of the course were not significant predictors of service-learning outcomes. The following tables show the relationship of course model predictors to respondents' perception of career enhancement (Table 10), community engagement (Table 11), and learning enhancement (Table 12).

Organizational Partner Predictors

Regarding the type of community partner that students worked with in their service-learning project, large national nonprofits significantly positively predicted career enhancement perceptions (M = 5.03; $F(1,419)$ = 4.888, p < .05), whereas local nonprofits

Table 7. Discipline Predictors of Career Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Discipline Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Arts	.193	.189	.050	1.018	.309	.002
Business	-.523	.178	-.142	-2.931	.004	.020
Computer science	-1.203	.394	-.147	-3.052	.002	.022
Education	.451	.215	.102	2.104	.036	.010
Engineering	.136	.275	.024	.495	.621	.001
Health sciences	.038	.110	.017	.341	.733	.000
Humanities	-.119	.266	-.022	-.447	.655	.000
Life sciences	.039	.187	.010	.210	.833	.000
Physical sciences	-.131	.259	-.025	-.506	.613	.001
Social sciences	.139	.130	.052	1.071	.285	.003

Note. N = 421.

Table 8. Discipline Predictors of Community Engagement Outcome in Service-Learning

Discipline Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Arts	.066	.185	.018	.360	.719	.000
Business	-.506	.174	-.141	-2.910	.004	.020
Computer science	-1.176	.384	-.148	-3.060	.002	.002
Education	.352	.210	.082	1.679	.094	.007
Engineering	.265	.268	.048	.989	.323	.002
Health sciences	.149	.108	.068	1.385	.167	.005
Humanities	-.270	.259	-.051	-1.042	.298	.003
Life sciences	.060	.182	.016	.327	.743	.000
Physical sciences	.011	.252	.002	.044	.965	.000
Social sciences	.068	.128	.026	.534	.593	.001

Note. $N = 419$.

Table 9. Discipline Predictors of Learning Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Discipline Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Arts	.077	.193	.019	.397	.692	.000
Business	-.416	.185	-.110	-2.257	.025	.012
Computer science	-1.120	.297	-.137	-2.824	.005	.019
Education	.509	.215	.115	2.367	.018	.013
Engineering	.202	.276	.036	.733	.464	.001
Health sciences	-.004	.110	-.002	-.034	.973	.000
Humanities	-.124	.276	-.022	-.447	.655	.000
Life sciences	.035	.188	.009	.188	.851	.000
Physical sciences	-.014	.260	-.003	-.055	.956	.000
Social sciences	.145	.131	.054	1.110	.268	.003

Note. $N = 418$.

significantly predicted learning enhancement perceptions ($M = 4.90$; $F(1,416) = 4.286$, $p < .05$). The following tables show the relationship of organizational partner predictors to respondents' perception of career enhancement (Table 13), community engagement (Table 14), and learning enhancement (Table 15).

Predictors That Impacted Student Perceptions

This study was designed to identify best practices in the development of service-learning courses to ensure maximal effectiveness for students, faculty, and institutions. To that end, we analyzed data from 437 students in nine participating Florida higher education institutions. From the predictors we examined, several patterns emerged regarding students' gender, academic discipline, course model, and organizational partners.

Gender Identity

The existing service-learning literature shows that women are much more likely than their male peers to participate in service-learning, whether domestic or

Table 10. Course Model Predictors of Career Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Course Model Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Service-learning requirement is transparent	412	.166	.103	.079	1.612	.108	.006
Service-learning is required	416	-.012	.134	-.005	-.093	.926	.000
Service-learning is majority of course grade	414	.280	.121	.130	2.316	.021	.017
Service-learning is major project	420	-.045	.161	-.014	-.282	.778	.000
Service-learning is independent study	420	.095	.198	.023	.480	.631	.001
Service-learning is focus of course	420	.305	.154	.097	1.984	.048	.009
Service-learning is "fourth credit"	420	.588	.237	.120	2.479	.014	.014
Service-learning is partial focus of course	420	.084	.104	.039	.807	.420	.002
Service-learning is small part of course	419	-.132	.113	-.057	-1.165	.245	.003

Table 11. Course Model Predictors of Community Engagement Outcome in Service-Learning

Course Model Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Service-learning requirement is transparent	415	.155	.101	.076	1.539	.125	.006
Service-learning is required	414	.013	.130	.005	.102	.919	.000
Service-learning is majority of course grade	414	.259	.126	.126	2.244	.026	.016
Service-learning is major project	418	-.077	.157	-.024	-.488	.626	.001
Service-learning is independent study	418	.096	.199	.024	.484	.629	.001
Service-learning is focus of course	418	.267	.150	.087	1.780	.076	.008
Service-learning is "fourth credit"	418	.431	.222	.095	1.942	.050	.009
Service-learning is partial focus of course	418	.065	.102	.031	.640	.522	.001
Service-learning is small part of course	417	-.079	.111	-.035	-.711	.478	.001

Table 12. Course Model Predictors of Learning Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Course Model Predictors	*N*	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Service-learning requirement is transparent	414	.137	.104	.065	1.312	.190	.004
Service-learning is required	413	-.015	.134	-.006	-.115	.908	.000
Service-learning is majority of course grade	413	.239	.119	.113	2.000	.046	.013
Service-learning is major project	417	-.023	.163	-.007	-.142	.887	.000
Service-learning is independent study	417	.002	.199	.000	.008	.994	.000
Service-learning is focus of course	417	.236	.155	.075	1.524	.128	.006
Service-learning is "fourth credit"	417	.459	.229	.098	2.008	.045	.010
Service-learning is partial focus of course	417	.094	.105	.044	.890	.374	.002
Service-learning is small part of course	416	-.074	.115	-.033	-.648	.517	.001

Table 13. Partner Predictors of Career Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Partner Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Large national nonprofit	.282	.127	.107	2.211	.028	.012
Local nonprofit	.120	.102	.057	1.276	.240	.003
Public school (K-12)	-.004	.123	-.002	-.033	.974	.000
Club or other organization on college campus	-.019	.119	-.008	-.161	.872	.000
Office on college campus	-.087	.141	-.030	-.619	.536	.001
Religious or faith-affiliated group	.080	.163	.024	.489	.625	.001
Government agency	.219	.198	.054	1.108	.269	.003
Business	-.041	.245	-.008	-.166	.868	.000
Private school (K-12)	.204	.294	.034	.694	.488	.001

Note. $N = 421$.

Table 14. Partner Predictors of Community Engagement Outcome in Service-Learning

Partner Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Large national nonprofit	.157	-.124	.062	1.268	.206	.004
Local nonprofit	.181	.099	.089	1.823	.069	.008
Public school (K-12)	-.010	.122	-.002	-.083	.934	.000
Club or other organization on college campus	.038	.116	.016	-.327	.744	.000
Office on college campus	-.015	.138	-.005	-.108	.914	.000
Religious or faith-affiliated group	.070	.161	.024	.436	.663	.000
Government agency	.036	.193	.009	.184	.854	.000
Business	-.163	.245	-.033	-.683	.495	.001
Private school (K-12)	.097	.298	.016	.324	.746	.000

Note. $N = 419$.

Table 15. Partner Predictors of Learning Enhancement Outcome in Service-Learning

Partner Predictors	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*	R^2
Large national nonprofit	.135	.128	.052	1.053	.293	.003
Local nonprofit	.212	.102	.101	2.070	.039	.010
Public school (K-12)	.036	.125	.014	.291	.771	.000
Club or other organization on college campus	-.123	.120	-.050	-1.026	.206	.003
Office on college campus	-.156	.142	-.054	-1.097	.273	.003
Religious or faith-affiliated group	.210	.162	.063	1.294	.196	.004
Government agency	.010	.199	.003	.051	.959	.000
Business	-.038	.247	-.007	-.152	.879	.000
Private school (K-12)	.245	.296	.041	.829	.407	.002

Note. $N = 418$.

international, mandatory or optional (Cox et al., 2014; Dienhart et al., 2016; Kiely, 2005; Miller & Gonzalez, 2010; Murray et al., 2015). The current study furthers these findings by demonstrating that females report the greatest gains in career enhancement, community engagement, and learning enhancement. The current literature suggests that women spend more time engaging in activities such as preparing for class, meeting instructors' standards, rewriting papers, and completing challenging assignments than do their male counterparts (Kinzie et al., 2007). Since men appear to be less engaged in the traditional classroom, it is not surprising that they are less likely to be engaged in academic work beyond the classroom. Further supporting this argument is the evidence that male students are more likely to have an independent learning style and not participate in class discussions, presentations, and team projects (Drew & Work, 1998; Kinzie et al., 2007). These collaborative experiences more closely mirror the tasks needed for service work and may contribute to our understanding of male reluctance to engage in service-learning.

Academic Disciplines

Our research suggests that academic disciplines may influence service-learning outcomes. Although business majors exhibited negative correlations with all three outcomes, education majors showed positive relationships with the outcomes. Other disciplines, including the sciences, humanities, and arts, demonstrated no significant relationship with the outcomes. This correlates with the current literature, with service-learning apparently receiving more emphasis in disciplines that focus on qualitative inquiry, in contrast to quantitative disciplines (Butin, 2006). This finding suggests that service-learning courses may be most effective when applied in education classrooms, and that further research is needed to maximize effectiveness for business, sciences, humanities, and arts classes.

Although the primary purpose of service-learning is not career preparation, it is worth considering that service-learning opportunities in education most closely resemble the work that future teachers will perform, and therefore create connections that lead to employment. If this is the case, it would make sense for education students to have more positive attitudes toward and outcomes from the experience than those in other majors, such as business. Supporting this idea, prior research examining the syllabi of university business courses that incorporate service-learning has found that only 18% of them focus on civic responsibility and community involvement in their course objectives, so that service-learning is out of alignment with the stated goals of the course (Steiner & Watson, 2006). Students likely devalue the experience because of this incongruity.

Course Model

The "fourth-credit" model showed the most gains for students in terms of career enhancement, learning enhancement, and community engagement, followed closely by having the final course grade predicated largely on the service-learning project. Enos and Troppe (1996) described the fourth-credit option as an add-on to a traditional three-credit course whereby students sign a learning contract with the professor to contribute to service-learning components. These components often include engaging in a significant amount of volunteer hours (approximately 40–50 per semester), keeping an active journal, and writing a reflection paper that synthesizes the service to the course criteria. Several colleges and universities are effective at implementing the fourth-credit option because it enables students to become the initiators of the service-learning component; they may introduce other faculty members to the concept and advocate service-learning to their instructor and classmates. Such advocacy can yield a fourth-credit option in subsequent courses or the redesign of a course to integrate service. The fourth-credit option model showed significant positive relationships to community engagement, learning enhancement, and career enhancement.

Organizational Partners

In examining organizational partners as predictors of outcomes, students who were placed in larger national nonprofit organizations had positive outcomes when predicting career enhancement. Students who served at smaller, more local nonprofit organizations, however, demonstrated significantly positive learning enhancement outcomes. This finding aligns with the supposition by Handy and Brudney (2007) that larger nonprofit organizations, such as Goodwill Industries, pair volunteers

with paid personnel to produce their desired output. This arrangement provides a work environment with the opportunity for engaging with staff and the operational side of an agency, which may be the first exposure to such a setting for many students. Conversely, smaller and/or independent nonprofit organizations may use different approaches when engaging their volunteers: not as laborers, but as learners of their organization and its mission—concentrating on outcomes rather than outputs (Handy & Brudney, 2007).

Limitations to This Study

Although the results of this research are promising, they should be interpreted in light of the limitations. In this pilot study, the researchers were interested in casting a broad net to capture how the survey instrument was implemented, as well as the results from the study. This approach may have resulted in respondent fatigue. Additionally, this study was completed through a relationship between FLCC and its partnering institutions, which may be more community engaged than institutions not associated with Campus Compact.

This study presented challenges when collecting data, such as communication and accountability. The structure by which we communicated to the Campus Compact institutions prohibited us from speaking directly to those instructors who were implementing the instrument in their service-learning classes. The researchers spoke only to the administrators, who then reached out to department heads, who then reached out to their faculty members seeking participation. Despite our efforts to be strategic, there was no accountability for which disciplines, classes, or faculty members were associated with the participating students, making it difficult to measure effectiveness within and across the institutions.

Implications for Future Research

On a micro level, focus groups could be conducted in the nine participating FLCC schools to elucidate the data elicited by the "why" questions pertaining to gender identity, academic discipline, course model, and type of organizational partner. The study was confined to higher education institutions connected to FLCC. The goal was to identify those participating in deep, meaningful community engagement activities, specifically service-learning, through the lens of FLCC as a relatable baseline for the study. We recommend performing a similar study with Florida higher education institutions that are not associated with FLCC to compare and contrast the depth and pervasiveness of service-learning in the two groups to analyze the benefit of infrastructure provided by an outside entity like FLCC.

On a macro level, the instrument could be used in comparative analysis studies of other Campus Compact institutions in different states as well as to compare Campus Compact institutions to non–Campus Compact institutions to identify parallels and gaps in community engagement through service-learning at each of the higher education institutions. The study reflected the ways in which colleges and universities implement service-learning coursework at their institutions. Another possibility is comparing the FLCC-affiliated institutions with those who have received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification to overlay the theories and practices happening at a deeper level.

There is no one definition of service-learning, according to the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (PLAC, 2015). However, a common element uncovered in this study was active participation with the state's Campus Compact, which supports community engagement endeavors, like service-learning, in higher education. The researchers were able to determine what was "good service-learning" by utilizing a reputable organization, Campus Compact, that connects community engagement to higher education. A future recommendation is to provide an institutional survey and hope that our instrument can be replicated to capture institutional service-learning.

Further, future research on service-learning will benefit from an examination of individual student academic and career goals, which are likely a large driver of perceptions and outcomes of the projects, rather than focusing on project models and hours. Bringing alignment to the values and developmental needs of the students and the components of the service-learning experience will likely result in positive outcomes across the board.

Conclusion

The purpose of the project was to examine how volunteer opportunities and service-

learning are shaping educational experiences for students and impacting their communities around them. Participation from the 437 students at nine Campus Compact institutions in the present study provided a complete and accurate assessment of students' perceptions of the effect of service-learning in terms of career enhancement, connection to community, and learning enhancement as impacted by their gender identity, academic discipline, course model, and type of organizational partner.

Results from the study will be applied to shape service-learning policies around the state and add to existing service-learning literature. Results of the research will inform future studies at other Campus Compact institutions. Student perceptions of service-learning can then be compared to those at other participating Campus Compact institutions by state, by region, and across the nation and the larger public scholarship. Additionally, there is an opportunity for other colleges and universities to replicate this survey in the future to capture the efficacity of institutional service-learning.

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"We Are About Life-Changing Research": Community Partner Perspectives on Community-Engaged Research Collaborations

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Abstract

This study examines the ethics and politics of knowledge across 15 distinctive community-engaged research projects. We focus our analysis on interviews with community partners and consider their perceptions of research, academic research partners, motivations for partnering, and the benefits and challenges of community-engaged research. We highlight three themes: Community partners' (1) motivations to know better and more systematically what they already know, (2) interests in legitimating community-based knowledge (i.e., knowledge produced beyond the academy), and (3) efforts to navigate often inflexible university timelines and budgetary processes. Our findings highlight concerns at various ethical, political, and epistemic intersections and connect to the possibilities and limits of equity-oriented collaborative research methodologies for redressing epistemic and social injustices. We suggest that these challenges need systematized attention if the field of community-engaged research is to achieve the epistemological and social justice missions that are often articulated as the aspirations of such partnerships.

Keywords: community-engaged research, community partner, knowledge production, ethics, social justice

In the 1990s and early 2000s, activist scholars, policymakers, community leaders, and students posed critiques of the insular nature of higher education and contributed to the formation of what later became known as community-engaged research, or "research that is conducted *with* and *for*, not *on*, members of a community" (Strand et al., 2003, p. xx; emphasis in original). Community-engaged scholarship facilitated more responsible approaches to social scientific inquiry that aimed to respond to urgent societal problems in marginalized communities (Boyer, 1990, 1996; Burawoy, 2005). Such approaches aimed to forge "complex, institutional, lasting collaboration[s] between academic institutions and communities" (Strier, 2014, p. 160) and emerged as promising alternatives to hierarchical modes of extractive research on communities. Proponents of these engaged practices—which are variously referenced in different fields and disciplines as research–practice partnerships, community-engaged research, action research, university–community partnerships, participatory research, and similar framings—argue that well-designed collaborations enhance the rigor, relevance, and reach of academic research projects (Balazs & Morello-Frosch, 2013; Gutiérrez & Penuel, 2014; Warren et al., 2018). Although multiple institutional barriers constrain possibilities for faculty to partner with/in communities (e.g., tenure and promotion criteria; Eatman et al., 2018; Ellison & Eatman, 2008), community-engaged research remains a meaningful strategy for producing knowledge that advances long-term, sustainable, community-based

and community-driven change (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Farley-Ripple et al., 2018).

Collaborative research is in many ways antithetical to the individually based and competitive nature of traditional academic research (Bowl, 2008). To open space for and justify this research modality, some collaborative researchers have studied the partnerships themselves for clues about their efficacy, focusing largely on how the university researchers describe the specifics of the partnerships and projects. These studies position community partnerships as a way for universities to fulfill their public mission and serve local communities (Boyer, 1990; Brown-Luthango, 2013; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Strier & Schechter, 2016) and to mitigate historically unequal and extractive university–community relations by rooting them in more equitable relations of trust and power-sharing (Denner et al., 2019; Werkmeister Rozas & Negroni, 2008; Strier & Schechter, 2016). Because community-engaged research is grounded in the lived experiences of community members, the research itself is poised to be both more relevant to the issues at hand and more rigorously interrogated, investigated, and analyzed by people who have the most at stake in the outcomes of the studies (Balazs & Morello-Frosch, 2013; Farquhar & Dobson, 2004; Glass et al., 2018; Strier, 2011, 2014). The multiple epistemological gains from more relevant research questions, ethically attuned methods, and community-responsive findings strengthen the warrants for social science research and can transform the terms of policy and practice (Gutiérrez & Penuel, 2014; Smyth, 2009; Strier, 2011; Subotzky, 1999).

Critical efforts to theorize and reimagine university research in community partnerships are ongoing (Nelson et al., 2015; Peacock, 2012), as the research community has raised concerns about the persistent colonial and racist entanglements that challenge even those researchers intending ethical and epistemological interventions (Glass et al., 2018; Sabati, 2018). However, this literature still primarily relies on researchers' reflections and experiences in relation to their own institutional contexts (e.g., Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Mirra & Rogers, 2016; Nelson et al., 2015) and more generally lacks in-depth empirical analyses of community partners' perspectives about collaborative research. Our study focuses on *community partners'* motivations to collaborate and their experiences with/in collaborative research partnerships. We offer insights drawn from projects that received seed funding from the Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California (CCREC), a systemwide research initiative across the University of California campuses. These collaborative research partnerships articulated specific ethical, epistemic, and relational values that CCREC identified as central to the praxis of "equity-oriented" collaborative, community-engaged research (CCREC, n.d.).

We approached this investigation as exploratory, seeking to learn from community partners about their motivations for pursuing research partnerships, their experiences with research, and what they have learned about the process of collaboration. We were particularly interested in community partners' insights into the early stages and overall aims of project formation, selection of research topic and design, and expectations of social change from the work. We also wondered about the labor of research and what material "asks" are made of community partners to initiate and sustain research collaborations. Finally, we were seeking to listen deeply with the kind of embodied, reflexive analysis called for by activist-scholars who build with and alongside communities to transform institutions and our society (Gillan & Pickerill, 2015).

Based on in-depth interviews with community partners from 15 different research projects, this inquiry illuminates how community partners understand the epistemic relevance and dynamics of collaborative research. Community partners identified three main themes that point to how they strategically navigate and intervene in the ethics and politics of knowledge and knowledge production. These negotiations of epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007; Kidd et al., 2017) manifest in their intentions for the research, their interests in reshaping whose knowledge counts, and their everyday interactions with researchers that reinforce for them that the timespace of knowledge production and dissemination in academia does not align well with that in communities. We explore these themes across multiple equity-oriented projects with differing topical foci, geographic and regional characteristics, and social and political contexts. This overview reveals distinctive frameworks for understanding key ethical, political, and epistemic dimen-

sions of collaborative research as well as for guiding structural institutional change, field development, and equity-oriented university-community research partnership formation.

Methodology

This study is based on in-depth interviews with community partners to examine the early dynamics of partnership formation in community-engaged research projects. Partners invited for interviews represent projects that were funded in response to calls for proposals designed to address both significant gaps in the research literature and significant challenges confronting disadvantaged and marginalized communities.

Equity-Oriented Community-Engaged Research Partnerships: Early Stages

The projects were selected in annual competitions between 2011 and 2015 that were open to faculty members across the 10-campus University of California system. Conceived in part as a response to the 2008 Great Recession, CCREC supported problem-based collaborative research aimed at addressing the state's interrelated crises precipitating in the economy, education, employment, environment, health, housing, and nutrition. These projects were grounded in and generated from the actual complex, entangled situations confronting communities and policymakers. Projects were positioned to investigate the crises harming local communities and to identify possible solutions to those crises. Collaborative research methodologies were also envisioned as central to facilitating public learning processes that would enable community residents and other stakeholders to deliberate about the challenges they face and to make reasoned, evidence-supported decisions for the common good.

CCREC's approach foregrounds ethics by positioning an equity orientation as the driver of the research collaboration, entailing active engagement with/in aggrieved communities when connecting justice-driven research to policy settings. It therefore raises epistemic and ethical issues that are not satisfactorily addressed by traditional research methods, existing codes of research ethics, and the requirements of institutional review boards (Anderson et al., 2012; Glass & Newman, 2015; Ross et al., 2010). For example, developing careful, respectful relationships and valuing this process of relationship building as central to the research itself—not as simply assumed or as a side issue—is understood to be part of the ethical, epistemic, and political *necessary preconditions* for beginning an equity-oriented, justice-driven research project, as well as *necessary ongoing conditions* for accomplishing it. However, universities and funders rarely support the time- and resource-intensive processes of bringing together diverse partners and stakeholders in meaningful and respectful ways.

To make an ethical and epistemic intervention that could address this gap, CCREC awarded up to $20,000 for one year of support for these crucial formative stages of collaborative research projects. The 15 seeded projects in this study addressed a variety of issues at the core of their work, and can be categorized as having the following primary foci: labor (3), youth organizing (3), incarceration (2), environment (2), leadership development (2), immigration (1), community organizing (1), and Indigenous rights (1). However, given that these projects were intentionally designed to cut across multiple issues and communities, these categories are largely placeholders to help generally locate the projects and the community partners we interviewed.

Data Collection: Seed Grant Project and Respondent Selection

We purposefully selected 15 from among 20 funded projects to be solicited for interviews in the summer of 2015 at the conclusion of the four cycles of seed grant competitions. We considered their diverse geographic contexts, research questions, and activities as documented in their annual reports. We excluded from the analysis only those projects that were not research-focused, were only partially funded by CCREC, or that were focused on developing infrastructure within their institutional settings. Specifically, we excluded a grant that funded only the post-production workshop dialogue portion of a research and film project, two grants that funded research infrastructure to support local projects at two law schools and a campuswide center, and a grant that supported only a forum with policymakers concerning research that had already been completed. For each grant-funded project included in the study, we conducted separate interviews with the researcher partners and community partners, asking similar questions.

This article focuses on community partner responses because of how they illuminate the ethical, political, and epistemic intersections of community-engaged research and the challenges and opportunities thus revealed for researchers who pursue these methodologies.

For each funded project, the specific person interviewed came at the recommendation of the lead researcher, although one project referred us to an additional community partner whom we also interviewed. One community partner could not be reached, and one agreed to the interview to contribute to the analysis but did not agree to allow their words to be quoted in a research article. In the end, we conducted and coded 33 interviews, with 15 respondents identified as "community partner" and 18 as "researcher."

We use the terms "research partner" and "community partner" broadly to distinguish the primary affiliations of partners within projects, although this distinction does not necessarily bear on the research practices themselves where roles were often shared or blurred. The research partners all had formal university affiliations because this was required to be a principal investigator and receive a grant. Community partners, in contrast, had varied backgrounds and affiliations. Nine of the 15 respondents worked at or led community organizations and had no affiliation with the university of their research partner. The remaining six community partners were at one time connected to or involved with the university as a student, staff member, or instructor. These intersecting affiliations are perhaps unsurprising, given the ways that people meet and relationships are built, and how they affect community partners' interest in research, their familiarity with research methods, and their positionality in the social and research dynamics of a collaboration.

Our interviews with community partners probed four aspects: (1) the factors motivating the formation of the collaborative and the project's early ontogenesis; (2) the development, design, implementation, and evaluation of the research process; (3) the partner's reflections on opportunities or challenges in the project; and (4) the partner's expectations of and aspirations for anticipated change both within the project and with regard to broader issues of justice and social change that had a bearing on the work of the community organization. The 60–90-minute interviews, conducted in person, by phone, or on Skype, were led by one of the three coauthors who, at the time, were doctoral students and were part of a larger team studying our own work as a Center to gain perspective on its strategic initiatives. Prior to conducting the interviews, we held an interviewer training to ensure interviewer consistency in contacting respondents, conducting interviews, and following postinterview procedures.

Analytic Frame and Process

We employed an inductive and iterative analytic process in which we reviewed interviewers' analytic field memos and constructed lists of emergent themes and findings. The study team noticed some striking alignments with a four-part conceptual framework that had been developed in a collaborative, reflexive, iterative process grounded in a different database of interviews emanating from a tandem CCREC project on ethical decision-making in community-engaged research, and collected by an overlapping research team. The emergent themes and findings were then reanalyzed, using the conceptual framework of the CCREC Ethics Project that was developed in dialogue with an internationally distinguished group of scholars and scholar-activists who participated in an invitational conference to interrogate and extend the framework through visualizing their analysis in real time (Baloy et al., 2016). The four-part conceptual framework includes attention to knowledge, relationality, place, and time (Table 1).

The category *knowledge* helped us delimit passages where partners discussed the intentions and aims of their collaboration, the agenda and design of their research project, and the sources of knowledge that were drawn upon to generate and produce knowledge in the research project, as well as discussions about knowledge sharing and stewardship. The category *relationality* helped us focus on the architecture of the partnership; that is, how partners established communication practices, negotiated obstacles, and delineated responsibilities. The concept of *place* pointed us to the ways in which partners described the unique social locations through which they entered into partnership, as well as the broader historical and material locations in which the collaborations unfolded. Finally, the category *time* was meant to capture the challenges of balancing real, immediate, on-

Table 1. Conceptual Framework for Understanding Community-Engaged Research Collaborations as Developed by the CCREC Ethics Project	
Knowledge: The generation, mobilization, and dissemination of knowledge within and beyond the project and the alignment of these relations to project purposes.	
	Mobilizing and leveraging knowledge: What is the work we want our work to do? What motivates the collaboration?
	Agenda and design: How are research partners framing or articulating the inquiry, including emergent concerns, questions, and needs?
	Generating and producing knowledge: What sources of knowledge do partners draw upon, need, and produce?
	Knowledge sharing and stewardship: How does the collaborative discuss audience, venue, authorship, and representation?
Relationality: The components of working collaboratively, including communication, negotiating obstacles, and delineating responsibilities.	
	Positionality, accountability, and responsibility: What are the roles and responsibilities of partners, including opportunities and challenges around issues of power, race, gender, class, ability, citizenship, language, and other identity markers?
	Communication: What systems of communication do collaborations utilize? How is positionality considered in the communications that are prioritized?
	Negotiation: How do partners navigate contentious issues, disagreements, or other obstacles when they emerge?
Place: The unique social locations through which partners enter into partnerships and the broader historical and material spatial contexts in which collaborations unfold.	
	Placing ourselves: How do participants place themselves in relation to systems of power and institutions, and in relation to land? What specific contexts influence the partnership and the work?
	Borders, scales, intersections, and proximities: What are the borders that partners navigate to collaborate and how does the research disrupt these?
	Positioning our work and materials: Where does the work of collaboration take place? Who "owns" these places?
	(Re)imagining places: What and whose visions of social change guide the project?
Time: Time deals with the challenges of balancing real, immediate, on-the-ground needs with long-term visions of change.	
	Project's history, process, and timeline: What were the origins of the project and how is the partnership sustained over the course of its lifetime?
	Past, present, and future of problem: How do collaborating partners juggle short- and long-term, urgent and future needs? Near- and long-term aspirations?
	Valuing people's and communities' time: How does the partnership recognize differences in who has the time to do the work, and how the work is or will be recognized remuneratively and otherwise?
	Institutional and organizational temporal rhythms: How are the demands of what is considered research/data/knowledge in the partnership met within the institutional and organizational variances in other temporal demands (such as around funding)?

the-ground needs for warranted knowledge with long-term visions of change, including the way in which institutional contexts structured relationships in the collaboration. In the absence of interrater reliability tests for NVivo 10 for Mac, we adopted an intentional process to ensure consistency in coding across multiple coders. The three coauthors who conducted the interviews coded three interviews independently and then came together to discuss and articulate the nuances of the coding schemes before going back and recoding these and the remaining interviews.

Findings on Ethically and Politically Fraught Knowledge and Knowledge Production

Three main findings emerged from the analysis and contextualize discussions of the rewards and challenges of community-engaged research, revealing how community partners strategically navigated and intervened in the ethical and political power dynamics of knowledge and knowledge production. The first finding highlights community partners' intentions toward research and their focus on the material impacts and opportunities that the collaboration afforded for their respective communities. The research itself was a means to an end for community partners, an end that rarely included speaking to the academic literature. Our analysis of these intentions invites discussions that enable community-engaged research projects to become more responsive to community partners' expressed desires, needs, and aspirations for collaboration.

The second finding pertains to community partners' long-term interests in reshaping prevailing cultural and institutional assumptions about whose knowledge counts and about the processes of knowledge production. Community partners repeatedly expressed frustrations with local, state, or federal agencies that assume community-based research is biased or illegitimate. We explore community partners' efforts to establish "community" as a viable space for knowledge production and their acknowledgments that this is not the norm.

Third, community partners detailed their perspectives on the material realities or impacts of the disjunctions in place, time, and processes that demarcate knowledge production in university settings from the knowledge dissemination and mobilization needs in the everyday workings of community organizations. A variety of ethical, political, and epistemic challenges arose in disparate timelines, student turnover, and university processes that slowed the process of partnership formation and research.

In the sections below, we draw on the words of community partners to illustrate these three thematic findings. To maintain respondent confidentiality, we have not described the projects in great detail, nor have we identified specific respondents with names or pseudonyms. We took care to ensure that all voices were represented and have not quoted any one respondent more than three times (in short or longer quotations).

"We Are About Life-Changing Research": Why Community Partners Collaborate

Understanding community partners' epistemic intentions, desires, and motivations for collaborating with university-based researchers provides important insight into the structural conditions that prefigure university–community collaboration. Key factors motivating community partners to engage in research collaborations were their desires for better data, or for analysis of existing data, in order to inform their organization's ongoing practices as well as their broader visions of community-based change. Other community partners expressed more urgent desires to secure further funding to sustain the work of their organizations, often in the face of skepticism. As one interviewee explained, the communities were not "being heard by the [funder's] program managers," so it was important that the assessment of their coalitional work across various communities be "academically sound." Interviewees from two projects discussed the research collaboration as an opportunity to explore what the organizations knew anecdotally in order to better understand how their program was working and to document its effects; as they put it: "So, we are about life-changing research; that's the kind of research projects we're interested in." That is, they explicitly recognized ethical, political, and epistemic intersections as motivations for their research collaborations.

Community partners from three projects that were focused on labor justice issues discussed research as *knowing better and more systematically what was already known*

among the leadership as an important component of developing policy strategies and/or bolstering existing policy campaigns. One community partner described wanting to test the limited evidence of the organization and extend the impact of what they were experiencing: "We had these individual cases of semi-anecdotal evidence . . . what can we do to broaden it out and make a bigger story?" The research provided an opportunity to quantify an understanding of the problem and to use the "numbers" for a variety of beneficial outcomes, including advocacy in the public arena, policy design, and sustaining the organization through solicitation of additional funding. The research also enabled them to "get a broader picture of how widespread the issue is" and conduct "some original research to understand that." Another partner described the importance of gathering data to inform policy specifically from "the point of view of the actual workers." The research was also described as something that could feed into developing policy proposals and to strategize organizing around the issues at hand to build power to enact change. A third community partner described how the research supported a later stage of the work and policy development:

> All we had done was document the problem exist[ed] . . . we were trying to get to the next level . . . to figure out the solution, we needed [the researcher's] expertise both thinking about other sectors [and] analyzing the data.

In this case, the researcher provided needed technical expertise for the data collection and analysis. Because the organization was embedded and trusted in the community, its staff facilitated access to the research participants, thus improving the validity of the data.

Community partners from five other projects discussed how research provided opportunities to learn skills, build capacity, and/or engage their given community in an educational process that linked knowledge production to knowledge mobilization, evoking a lineage of adult education and community-based research for justice (Freire, 2018; Horton & Freire, 1990). These educational processes, which were geared toward the developmental stage of the research and partnerships, included (1) workshops to build capacity for research, including specific skills such as data mapping; (2) convenings to document organizing strategies and learn from one another; and (3) public fora of stakeholders, community members, and policymakers to debate and shift local policy. Another project framed the research collaboration as a learning opportunity for youth and young adults that folded into existing programs. This involvement benefited the broader community, and added to the skill sets and resumes for participants' job and college applications.

These sorts of near- and long-term utilitarian material advantages were explicitly recognized by the community partners as vitally important in their commitments to building the research collaboration. Interviewees were far more likely to mention advantages such as these than views that regard research, knowledge production, or learning as intrinsically worthy activities independent of navigating problems and achieving outcomes.

Traditional notions of research were regarded with some suspicion; community partners expressed frustration in relation to prior projects in which researchers had not shared their findings with community members who had been central to the research. Participatory projects gave them cautious hope for generating findings that could, in fact, be useful to their work. One project originated from what could be described as an "overly researched" community that had previously experienced extractive approaches by researchers who collected data and left without sharing findings. A community activist with that project who had previously served as a point of contact for such researchers said it this way:

> And the problem is that people like me who stay in the community, people constantly ask, "What happened to that interview that I give two years ago, three years ago?" There's nothing I can say. All I can say is, "Well, there might be a publication," but they also want to know, how can this change my life? How can this better my community? So when I learned about participatory action research in which the community themselves become their own storyteller, doing all the research, that's why I got interested.

This activist was part of a project imagined to begin in the community and stay in the community, but the desire and opportunity to "tell our story" and have the research travel and circulate to "better my community" was also important for this community leader. Given their prior experience with extractive research practices that were not able to inform practice or policy, curating the research to inform wider communities and policymakers was of the utmost importance. Still, this community partner also recognized the potential impact of participatory research on the academic research literature, which often overlooks or misrepresents experiences like those in their community.

Only one other community partner noted the importance of speaking back to the formal, academically legitimated research literature as a key objective of the partnership. This partner emphasized organizational strategic gains from the research, and discussed the significance of the researcher's academic knowledge and networks as unexpected bridges that bolstered their existing policy work and augmented its impact:

> [Research partner], because they were at the university, was much more connected and had a sense of that kind of research and academic work that was going on and helped identify opportunities that could help connect the issues . . . to make that more accurate and robust. Also, helped us think about what indicators might be useful to help policymakers understand the impacts around [topic] in our area . . . really helped us connect the two worlds.

In two thirds of the funded projects, community partners described being heavily involved in the design of the research questions or focus of the work. Indeed, these community partners were particular about the sorts of researchers with whom they would work, noting that it was of utmost importance to learn how to better prioritize their community's needs through the research. As one community partner whose program served low-income rural families noted, their research was intentionally designed

> to see if our work was effective and if it was . . . impacting families in a positive way. We knew anecdotally that it did, but we wanted something solid. So that was the impetus for the partnership. . . . It was definitely collaborative because we couldn't have done this without them. They're researchers and know all the protocols to do a survey that's going to be valid in the world outside of [region]. We don't have those kinds of skills here, but we have the families . . . and we have good relationships with the families.

Generally, community partners did not articulate a desire to speak back to or even with the academy or research literature itself as a motivating factor for their collaborations, nor did they see academic networks as sites holding knowledge of immediate value to their own work. Rather, what was important was that the research have explicit ethical–political aims and practices that could materially improve opportunities for the community, inform the organization's practices and programs, increase funding, contribute to policy development, or bolster participants' individual skills for future job and educational opportunities. Research was desirable as a source of power to do real work when engaging with the dominant systems, structures, and institutions that had long relegated their communities to the margins.

"It's Not Fair, but It's the Reality": Legitimacy and Community Knowledge

Although community partners were not specifically interested in contributing to academic knowledge production, they were in fact interested in reshaping the terrain of knowledge production more broadly, especially in ways that recognize the legitimacy of community-based knowledges. They described various scales of (mis)recognition at local, state, and societal levels, and how they expected collaborative research to counter prevailing assumptions about whose knowledge counts and allow them to speak back to those in power who marginalize, discount, or entirely disregard what their communities know. As has already been made evident here, there are complex intersections among ethics, politics, and knowledge, and when these intersections are made explicit in collaborative modes of research with aggrieved communities, the stakes get amplified. The community part-

ners describe multiple sorts of "epistemic injustices" that are constitutive of material injustices that exclude or marginalize certain individuals and groups of people as holders and producers of knowledge, or in other ways undermine their civic agency through the marginalization of their knowledge claims (Fricker, 2007; Kidd et al., 2017).

We take up the notion of epistemic injustice broadly to capture what emerged inductively in the interviews, often in response to questions that asked community partners to describe the benefits of collaborative research. They repeatedly expressed how those in power—such as local political leaders, policymakers, or funders—often considered their research findings or knowledge claims subjective, biased, or illegitimate because they and their organizations were advocates for social justice. These respondents faced a form of "compound injustice" by "having one's agency compromised by an epistemic limitation for which one bears no culpability and of nevertheless being judged or blamed for the lack of agency" (Simpson, 2017, p. 254), and they experienced it as a kind of double bind of legitimacy. Here is how one respondent described the bind of their local inequitable epistemological conditions in a discussion of the benefits of collaboration:

> So one benefit is [collaboration] gives our work . . . it's not fair, but it's the reality . . . is that it gives our work legitimacy in the eyes of people who otherwise wouldn't think our work is legitimate, or [who think] that our work is fluffy, "Oh, all you need to do is care about people."

This particular respondent had just finished a highly detailed description of the organization's systematic and strategic approach to research, and yet, they also enumerated how those in positions of power interpreted their findings as lacking sophistication and "objectivity." The recognition that "it's not fair, but it's the reality" highlights the ethical, political, and epistemic binds they face that produce motivations for community partners to seek university research partnerships. This underscores the need for research to be attentive to the varieties of epistemic injustice within the dynamics of the relationships at the core of collaborations, as well as within the structures of the research projects and of universities, in order for research to also impact the larger dynamics and structures of social and political power (Glass & Stoudt, 2019).

Another respondent described the challenges of not being recognized as a legitimate knowledge producer by contrasting the community organization's positionality with the assumed legitimacy of university spaces and knowledge emanating from there:

> When [information] comes to someone from somewhere . . . from the community, [it] might not be valued as something important, or as something [where] there was actual knowledge. But when it comes from researchers, specific prestigious universities and they think it's, "Oh, wow. 'So-and-so' said it, so it must be."

Other community partners also explicitly recognized that knowledge produced in university spaces or with university authorization exists as a kind of truth that has material impacts on policy and practices. Further, this "university-legitimated knowledge" contrasted with their community-based truths or knowledge, even when it was supported by research, if that research was undertaken by the community itself. These contradictions illuminate various conditions of epistemic injustice that prompt collaborations with the university, as even a community's research-based findings might not register on a plane of "actual knowledge" and thus have limited effect within policy, funding, and academic research contexts. The emphatic ontological claim at the end of this interviewee's statement is worth reemphasizing—university-sanctioned knowledge, once uttered, "*must* be"—though we can note how this might be misplaced hope in the material power of academe's truth in the struggle over whose knowledge counts at the moment of decision in legislatures, in school and foundation board rooms, and in city council and judges' chambers. In this way, community partners rely on particular university–community partnerships to mitigate conditions of epistemic injustice even though simultaneously this reliance indirectly delegitimizes the community's epistemic authority through the sanctioning and circulation of university-authorized knowledge as the source of legitimacy.

In response to multiple forms of epistemic

injustice, community partners strategically leveraged their collaborative research with university partners to garner recognition at varying scales: from local audiences, which included other community-based organizations and local businesses; regional or statewide audiences, including regulatory agencies; and also society writ large. Reflecting on the benefits of the research collaboration in a project with numerous community stakeholders, one community partner stated, "A lot of folks felt grateful that there was a report that they can reference instead of saying, 'You know, we're hearing this from [community people].' There was an academic report that actually showed what we've been saying." Thus, the contextualizing and repackaging of a community's knowledge claims about the harms it suffers into the language and form of an academic report evokes this interviewee's expression of the value of collaboration; however, the report provided little new information or understanding to them. Their need for the academic-style report with which to leverage the power of their knowledge remains a testament to, or an explicit acknowledgment of, the concomitant epistemic injustice they face in the presence of historically produced hierarchies of knowledge that accompany and reinforce social, economic, and political power.

In a youth participatory action research project that extended a local policy struggle to build a youth-led, statewide demand for interconnected issues experienced by young people of color, one participant reflected on how collaborative research fostered civic engagement and power, both in the present and the future:

> For the community in general, for the community in talking to the people in power is to hear that these youth are here. That they're active now and they will continue to be active and they're not the future, but they're the now, because we are already starting to participate. We're not going to stop participating later on, for them to know of our needs, and to address the needs.

This respondent expressed an urgent demand for recognition and engagement tied to a particular spatial and temporal location, a demand for action to remedy historically produced inequities lived in the present tense. They also articulated a demand to recognize youth and young adults, especially those of color, as not some future force to be reckoned with, but as a current and growing presence, a group with a clear understanding of its needs and an expectation that community institutions serve them. This resistance to the discursive positioning of youth and young adults as relevant only to a future society, rather than a currently existing one, led the respondent to regard research as an opportunity to build the kind of knowledge that could mobilize and organize the local community around young peoples' needs. This positioning challenges the histories of delayed recognition and inclusion that have pervaded their local politics and for so long disadvantaged their parents, grandparents, and previous generations.

Another community partner described similar demands for recognition of an empowered knowledge as a primary motivation for participating in collaborative research projects:

> So, this is what I was saying before, this is why I'm so picky about academics, because I insist that every time we put out a report it says by [X-organization] with research support from [X-researcher], or whoever else. But it's so important that it's authored by our organization. We are up against [Established Organization], which is this huge, very powerful lobby. When they put out a report nobody questions anything. Is this real? Is this credible? Is this academic? When we put out a report there's immediate questioning. So we have worked very hard over the last decade really to establish ourselves as a source of our own credible expertise and research. That workers are just as much experts on the industry as employers are. That's why the byline being "By [Our Organization] with support from whoever." That's how we always handle it.

For this respondent, the assignment of authorship was another strategic intervention to counter the epistemic injustices that were integral to maintaining dominant political structures, which earlier in the interview they had described as "a general perception that community organizers are not smart." By insisting on lead authorship, this re-

spondent worked within the existing rules and processes of knowledge production to reposition their organization as credible knowledge producers. The point of the order of authorship was not to tacitly or explicitly affirm a hierarchy of knowledge, nor to advance within university-based rules of prestige and career. Rather, the point was to advance on the terrain of advocacy and policy, and on the articulated terrain of struggle in regard to epistemic injustice. This same partner went on to say:

> There aren't as many universities in the region as in some other places, so yeah, it's, it's especially valuable in places where—like ours where there's not a lot going on. And if we don't have any research, then we allow the, the powers-that-be to control the conversation, and they can say whatever they want, because nobody's questioning.

These findings highlight the importance of understanding the intersections of the ethical, political, and epistemic terrain of knowledge production and of taking action to establish more equitable epistemic standings for community partners. Community partners intimately understand how one benefit of collaborative research is the broader social, economic, and political legitimacy conferred on knowledge claims when an academic scholar is involved. They turn to research collaborations to subvert the epistemic injustices present as they work to have their knowledge recognized and valued as the foundation for their political agency, even if it is articulated through the voice and in the language of an outside researcher. "It's not fair, but it's the reality." "'So-and-so' said it, so it must be." Indeed, these double binds mean that much needs to be done to develop the practices and strategies needed to reshape the prevailing institutional and cultural assumptions that reinforce a wide range of epistemic injustices. As these community partners have articulated so forcefully, they seek researcher partners who are ready to make explicit the ethical, political, and epistemic intersections that produce complex double binds as they navigate whose knowledge counts, for whom, where, and how. In other words, university researchers can learn from and follow the lead of community partners to strategically position their research collaborations in ways that are attentive to and respond to such context-specific epistemic injustices. These complexities offer productive starting points for reimagining how researchers might accompany community partners and oppose long-standing conditions of material and epistemic injustice.

"It's Not Anybody's Fault, Right?": Responsibility for Disjunctions in Place, Time, and Processes

Community partners experienced challenges of collaborating across vastly different institutional and organizational structures, priorities, timelines, and processes. University researchers recognize how time-consuming community-engaged scholarship is relative both to many other research forms and to its impacts on their career assessments (Foster, 2010; Jordan et al., 2009), yet their community partners' impacted timelines are often made invisible in the academic context of the research. The ethics of whose timelines are prioritized, where and in what ways, and for whom, similarly reveals a variety of double binds for research and community partners that force them to grapple with the enduring effects of differences in institutional, social, and political power. These effects reach beyond the capacities of any one individual or project to contest or transform, and yet each individual and each project must be accountable to their own times, places, and peoples without unduly blaming individual persons for the difficulties that must be faced in these binds.

For example, one community partner commented on negative consequences and lost opportunities because their policy and organizing timeline was not the primary driver of the research process:

> I would have liked to . . . turn around and get the reports out quicker. . . . It was almost a year between when we finished the data collection and when we actually got the report out. So if we're able to do it quicker, we could've brought the group together.

University timelines are notoriously rigid and slow moving. Those who work predominantly in universities become so accustomed to their own annual calendars and weekly schedules that they often do not recognize the challenges these time frames pose to other frames of reference, organizational demands, and human relations

(Denner et al., 2019; McLaughlin & London, 2013). Another partner echoed a similar concern about timelines and research processes as they related to advocacy, highlighting tensions that can arise when research-based materials may be needed before the researchers feel they are ready for public scrutiny. Quicker turnaround is something that these partners identify as missing in their work, and they point to ways these binds can be more ethically navigated, and partnerships can be strengthened and made more impactful, when a diversity of products gets defined and clarity about the flow of the output gets established at the outset of a collaboration.

Another community partner struggled with an often-noted thorny aspect of managing time differences in university partnerships: integrating undergraduate and graduate students into the collaboration. The involvement of students in community-engaged research, which can be a key advantage in terms of research project staffing and student experiential learning, can also entail significant personal and organizational challenges for community partners if not structured in ways that are community driven and valued added (Glass & Stoudt, 2019; Greenberg et al., 2019). As the community partner put it,

> I'll be the first to say, I love working with students. I think there's lots of advantages for everybody, [in the] collaborations, but they leave, either for the summer or they graduate. Sometimes projects don't end in the same—on the same schedule. Someone who may've been really immersed in the data is now—we can track them down, but their head may not be as—it's not like having someone still here, and that's just a function of the way—[people] should move on. It's not anybody's fault, right?

The "faults" that get revealed at these disjunctions in institutional calendars, in the different temporalities a student may have in connection to a particular project, organization, or place, constitute a myriad of challenges specifically connected to navigating community-based methodological approaches that center an equity orientation. These "faults" indicate institutional and ethical breaks that occur in the double binds of working within institutions that have always structurally marginalized the needs of the least advantaged communities and even been party to harming them. In these binds, the challenge is not to regard the "fault" as revealing moral guilt on a personal level, but rather as pointing toward hard individual and collective responsibilities.

Ethically attuned collaborative research paradigms are not only challenging for university-based researchers, but also for community partners who are generally more accustomed to disengaged, expert-driven models of research, even if that old form was not what they desired. Old, familiar problems can seem less complicated than the arduous work of explicitly negotiating complex double binds and honoring commitments to equity. One community partner described the everyday difficulty of bringing together and valuing all community voices in the project, which was essential to the work:

> It's so hard when many people are involved and when this is a participatory action research. I mean, if this is somebody from a [university] who just wants to ignore the community now that you've done the interview . . . to me that's easier.

This respondent characterized as "easier" the model where researchers come in, interview people, and then go off to do the analysis and writing. However, they also recognized that ultimately, that form of research could not generate the quality of warrant for the truths established, nor the equity engendered through more participatory forms. Another partner similarly lamented that a participatory research process demanded a lot of labor for their small staff:

> I was just surprised how many meetings it took. Because I didn't know the steps. . . . I didn't know they had to submit the idea to some board to, I forget what it was called, to approve it and make sure that all the protocols and all the questions were appropriate for the study. . . . So it was a lot more involved than I thought it was going to be. Not over the top, it was still manageable, but it was more than I thought it was going to be. . . . But, again, to me it was worth it.

For an organization with a staff of four who were already overcommitted, the time demand surprises that came along with the research process—like many meetings and a separate application for the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects—were unexpected and insufficiently explained. This again demonstrates the importance of clear communication in the early stages of collaborative research projects as well as adequate preparation and planning. Still, even when care is taken within partnerships seeking to disrupt fragmented relationships and dynamics, community partners can be inequitably positioned to structurally support research.

Another community partner expressed frustration that universities and academia more generally were not better prepared to support the goals of community-based research, while they had better readiness to work with industry and other more lucrative sectors.

> Well, I guess I feel like, you know, public universities are for the public and you know, otherwise I think so much of the research that goes on in all the knowledge and expertise and time that people have at universities can go toward, you know, research that is fulfilling needs of industries or people with money to fund research and not communities that don't have money to fund research. So, I think it's really vital that actually, there be a mechanism or funding to ensure that research can be done that is directly addressing community needs and communities that don't have the funds to support it on their own.

For this community partner, the link between research and funding was especially challenging because when "the priorities on the ground" did not match up with those backed by money, then researchers and universities would turn to industry or other funding sources to define research aims. The hope and intention was that community-engaged research approaches would open spaces for these "on the ground" issues to surface so "research can be done that is directly addressing community needs" that would not be distorted by how those in power or with funds viewed the issues. Another community partner expressed this sentiment and also cautioned researchers:

> Don't, don't come with a mentality of, like, I'm the savior, you know, and "I'm going to create something." . . . The community is already there, so you just have to find ways to plug in. You have to find ways to support what's already happening as opposed to . . . oh, "I got money and [I can create] something."

The paradigm that the work of research is for the researchers was deeply entrenched among the grantees, even in equity-oriented projects, and although respondents acknowledged time for research was a challenge, none questioned whether the grant funds were appropriately allocated. Yet when asked, just two of the community partners we interviewed reported receiving funding to compensate the time of one of their staff members for participating in the research. Another four reported being compensated for expenses like travel and lodging, but not for their time, and the rest of the community partners either did not know how funds were spent or did not receive any. To be fair, the grantee principal investigators (who were all required to be university-based researchers) were also not directly compensated by the grants, and because they were faculty whose job it is to conduct research, we assume that their time was indeed covered. However, we also know from spending reports that they used funds to pay for student researchers, convenings, and research products. As is commonly recognized, budgets embody values, and when the material labor of research was paid for, a majority of projects did not split the allocation between the community organization and university, even though both partners were expected to contribute to and participate in the research process. We also note that despite the ethically and politically fraught nature of how funds get spent, there was little actual discussion of these matters among the partners in consideration of the work of the research.

Valuing and honoring the community partner and its existing programs, policies, and processes is essential for community-engaged research to bridge the knowledge gap and create actionable research that can make a difference with/in/for communities. And even if "it's not anyone's fault" that disruptions and inequities occur along these seismic boundaries that can lead to cataclysms in projects, it is everyone's re-

sponsibility to engage across these fault lines in institutional and organizational structures and time scales, and in their related benefits, rewards, and costs. This engagement enables both community and university partners to understand and make explicit these various ethical, political, and epistemic intersections and their dynamics so as to design impactful and transformative research programs and interventions. It is critically important for all parties to recognize the difficulties and their particular responsibilities in these struggles and double binds, but researchers and university programs, especially, need to take the lead to work across spheres to address the material conditions that structure collaborative community-based research that aims to be equity oriented. At minimum, this includes paying community partners for their time to collaborate in research partnerships, and working collectively as a field to normalize budgets that reflect these values. It includes improving communications at the outset about the products and timelines of research processes, and collaborating to design projects that also center the products, timelines, and needs of community partners.

Discussion: Being Responsible in Research for Justice

This analysis of community partners' experiences with collaborative research highlights the fraught ethical, political, and epistemic intersections that create the need for equity-oriented collaborative modes of research. It also reveals how the public sanctioning of university knowledge as legitimate is sometimes both the problem and the solution to these fraught conditions. It demonstrates that community partners have strategic aims with their research that reach beyond the particulars of the project to intervene in the ethical and political power dynamics of knowledge and knowledge production. That is, collaborative modes of research offer some measure of promise for community partners to redress not merely gaps in knowledge but ethical breaches and political exclusions. Still, the "rewards" of collaborative research are in part rewards only in relation to broader contexts of epistemic injustice; they are rewards relative to specific histories of exploitation and oppression that shape the work of community organizations and the lives of the community members they serve. These double binds are painful to experience and navigate, though necessarily also generative. We found this type of deep, historical theorizing and intervention into ethical and epistemic injustices happening alongside and through the research collaborations even as community partners and researchers were working to address more particular, immediate, community-based needs within inequitable political and economic contexts.

This study raises critical questions about the ethical and political basis of university–community partnerships, the framings of their epistemic projects, and the understanding of research in this field. First, community-engaged research partnerships need, from the beginning, to formalize a recognition that research is not an inherent social good and may carry forward multiple forms of epistemic injustice in the research, policy, and funding worlds, and thus must be repositioned with equity and justice as orienting principles. This entails a thorough "from the ground up" review of how the benefits and harms of research are appraised (Blodgett et al., 2011; Glass & Newman, 2015; Tuck, 2009), as well as how the frames and procedures of the disciplines and practices of the academy are implicated in what can be known, by whom, and for what purposes.

Second, community-engaged research partnerships must attend to the complex intersections among ethics, politics, and knowledge production—the stakes of which are amplified in collaborative modes of research with aggrieved communities. These partnerships have the potential for deeper transformations of the knowledge production enterprise, beyond elevating the voices of aggrieved communities to better warrant understanding of those communities. They also have the potential to engage a wider landscape to secure the inclusion and legitimacy of community-generated knowledge. Dominant modes of knowledge production are entrenched epistemologies that ground the leading public and private institutions as well as common sense, even among equity-oriented community partners, whom we heard lament, "It's not fair, but that's the way it is" and "'So-and-so' said it, so it must be." Universities and university-based researchers need to openly acknowledge their relatively privileged positions in these intersections, and create processes for ensuring ethical responsibility and accountability for how the knowledge they

produce and warrant circulates within and moves the public sphere. This is not just a simple fix to the research process. Rather, it involves a reorientation at all levels of the research university to acknowledge the value of community-engaged research and the time spent in ethical, equity-oriented coconstruction of knowledge with aggrieved communities.

Third, collaborative research projects must become more responsive to community partners' expressed near-term and long-term material needs, desires, and aspirations for specific research and research products, as well as timelines for product development and dissemination. A third of the projects we explored missed this mark, and therefore did not fully deliver on the promise of equity-oriented community-engaged research to intervene into the unjust hierarchies of knowledge with which community programs must contend for funding and for recognition and inclusion at policy levels. True equity-oriented research requires building partnerships established on trust and mutual interests, and on the long-haul commitment that transformative research for justice requires.

Although among the first investigations of community-engaged research from the community partner perspective, this work has several limitations. First, it focuses on projects all seeded through the same structured solicitation that made an "ethical" approach to the research collaboration a funding consideration. Community partner perspectives might be different in collaborations that had not been required to address how they intended to approach ethical and equity issues within their work prior to receiving funding. Second, it explores only the period of early project formation, although several partnerships were longer term in nature. We do not know how the partnership dynamics in these ethical, political, and epistemic intersections might look at later stages of development.

We hope that our brief exploration of university–community partnerships from the community partner perspective offers an alternative to the notion that community-engaged research, like social science and other research more generally, exists uniformly as a public good. The social sciences "enter into a whole range of power relationships" (Luker, 2008, p. 8), and scholars who situate the intersection of ethics, politics, and epistemology at the core of their work are better able to make their research matter in addressing some of the most vexing social problems (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Our findings reinforce existing literature that emphasizes the importance of trust- and relationship-building in research (Wilson, 2008) and a focus on the ethics of engaged research (Denzin & Giardina, 2007; Glass et al., 2018). Our analysis expands our understanding of these issues, however, by detailing ways that community partners negotiate their unjust treatment as knowledge holders and producers, while they must simultaneously labor alongside authorized researchers in the production, dissemination, and mobilization of knowledge that counts in the halls of power. Community-engaged research can be understood as residing at fraught ethical, political, and epistemic intersections that challenge fundamental structures and practices of universities, of university researchers, and of community partners as well. To be ethical, we must apply close attention and collective action to address these dynamics in research collaborations.

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Critically Engaged in a Predominantly White Institution: The Power of a Critical Service-Learning Course to Cultivate a Social Justice Stance

Jessica Shiller

Abstract

This article examines how a particular set of critical pedagogical strategies was used in a critical service-learning course to shift student perspectives and serve community partners. A self-study of a critical service-learning course that asked university students at a predominantly White institution to serve in urban schools was performed to ascertain how effectively critical service-learning may have addressed the weaknesses in traditional service-learning by (1) dismantling hegemonic discourses White students bring to the classroom and (2) engaging in service that would address inequities present in urban schools. By examining 2 years of data from student assignments, interviews with community partners, and course evaluations, this article argues for the efficacity of several pedagogical tools that can contribute to shifting the perspectives of White students as well as students of color.

Keywords: university partnership, critical service learning, race and racism

Service-learning, which the Association for American Colleges and Universities has recognized as a "high-impact practice" for university students, has been a largely White domain (Kuh, 2008; Seider et al., 2013). Enrolling mostly White students and taught by mostly White faculty, service-learning, Dan Butin (2006) has observed, "may ultimately come to be viewed as the 'Whitest of the White' enclave of postsecondary education. . . . a luxury available only to the privileged few" (p. 482). Because students engaged in service-learning are often serving low-income people of color, there is a danger that service-learning will reinforce the idea that White people are the givers of help but never the recipients, giving students an inflated sense of their ability to cause change in communities and a sense that communities do not have power to bring about change on their own. At predominantly White institutions, in particular, this mindset can have deleterious consequences. Courses that ask students to engage in service-learning in urban communities, in this context, can reinforce stereotypes, encourage deficit perspectives, and maintain a deep lack of knowledge regarding people of color, low-income communities, and/or urban spaces. As Mitchell et al. (2012) stated, left unexamined, service-learning led by White faculty and students can lean heavily on a pedagogy of Whiteness. This pedagogy involves "strategies of instruction that consciously or unconsciously reinforce norms and privileges developed by, and for the benefit of, white people in the United States. These norms and privileges are based on color-blind and ahistorical understandings of social problems in society where race is indeed a crucial factor" (Mitchell et al., 2012, p. 612).

Critical service-learning, on the other hand, can counter such stereotypes and biases because at its core this form of service-learning is about creating a much more authentic and reciprocal relationship between a university and a community (Butin, 2015).

Moreover, critical service-learning provides students a historical, political, and social context, and engages them in addressing the inequities that led to the context in the first place. According to Kinloch et al. (2015),

> Critical service-learning should be guided by selfless collaborations of groups of people who are committed to both addressing identified community issues and seeking ways to eradicate forms of social inequalities that impact the economic, educational, social, and political choices. The connection between critical service-learning and social justice education cannot be understated. They both critique hegemonic discourses and practices that are at the root of injustice, and they both interrogate forms of oppression such as discrimination, marginalization, exclusion, and the various *isms* that exist in the world while acknowledging differences and diversities, inequalities and oppressions, at the same time that it serves as a conduit that meaningfully connects school to community and learning to active engagement. (p. 41)

This is easier said than done, as much of university-based service-learning is still steeped in volunteerism that keeps traditional power structures and roles in place, and often ignores the significance of race. As Mitchell et al. (2012) stated:

> Service-learning, lacking a critical focus on race, can reinforce socially constructed understandings of whiteness. The language of service-learning, "underprivileged" and "at risk" for example, can reinforce stereotypes based in white supremacy. Similarly, defining white, middle-class students as automatically and necessarily capable of serving reinforces white supremacy. (p. 614)

To disrupt the traditional service-learning course, and the ways in which it reinforces White supremacy, one must draw on a different set of pedagogical strategies (Kajner et al., 2013). One set of practices, Mitchell et al. (2012) suggested, comes under the banner of reflective practice, which allows students to understand and check their privilege, use an asset-based framework (Moll et al., 1992) when referring to service sites, and make race a central part of the discussion.

To that end, this article examines how a particular set of critical pedagogical strategies, as well as intentionality around discussing race and privilege, were used in a critical service-learning course to shift student perspectives and serve community partners. Through a self-study of a critical service-learning course that asked university students at a predominantly White institution to serve in urban schools, this article sought to explore how effectively critical service-learning may engage in the following: (1) dismantling hegemonic discourses White students bring to the classroom, (2) developing an asset-based perspective of urban communities, and (3) engaging in mutual partnership between university and community. By examining 2 years of data from student assignments, interviews with community partners, and course evaluations, this article argues that the course examined employed several pedagogical tools that can contribute to shifting the perspectives of White students as well as students of color. Although it constitutes early steps toward engaging deeply in social justice work, a critical service-learning praxis can benefit both university and community partners.

Background: Critical Service-Learning

Although service-learning courses and/or service requirements are commonplace at many universities, service-learning in practice can range widely from course to course and campus to campus. The experience can even vary within a campus or a course, and service-learning can reify stereotypes or disrupt them, depending on the type, level, and length of engagement. Espino and Lee (2011), for example, found that service-learning experiences could reverse or confirm stereotypes that university students held. For some students, a course in which White university students were asked to mentor young Latinx students awakened a political consciousness and desire to work for racial justice; for others, it reinforced the idea that students of color were not as capable as they were. Espino and Lee suggested that myriad factors influence the degree to which and the ways in which

students change throughout a service-learning experience, especially one focused on challenging racial stereotypes and educational inequity. Marichal (2010) suggested that students bring their own ontological experience to service-learning, which influences the impact of the service-learning in terms of civic engagement, which makes the impact highly dependent on the student. Thus, intentionality around working to reverse stereotypes has to be a goal of service-learning with White university students. As Pompa (2002) asserted, "In a society replete with hierarchical structures and patriarchal philosophies, service-learning's potential danger is for it to become the very thing it seeks to eschew" (p. 68). Even when the intention is to reverse hierarchies and stratified systems, service-learning can fail in these aims.

Critical service-learning provides a framework for teaching and engaging with community in order for faculty to work toward a "justice-oriented" experience (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). As Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) have stated, critical service-learning is about "placing an emphasis on community problem solving through critical thinking that raises questions about the roots of social inequality" (p. 90). Or, as Mitchell (2007) wrote, in what she describes as "social justice service-learning," this kind of service-learning helps students pay "attention to the political foundations of social matters, question the distribution of power in society, develop productive relationships between post-secondary institutions and their communities, and create social-change agents" (Mitchell, 2007, p. 104).

Proponents of critical service-learning argue that the work of service must make an impact on the community, and the benefits must be truly bidirectional. Butin (2015) went even further to explain that critical service-learning needs to follow a very clear set of "tenets for practice" which demand that the community partner clearly benefit from the service-learning project. These tenets are important in creating the structure for a critical service-learning project, but they do not help lay out a pedagogy for ensuring that students understand why they are engaging in the way that they are with the community partner. However, without a strong and explicit critical pedagogy, a critical service-learning project may not meet its own goals of teaching students about social justice. Consequently, I argue that critical pedagogy must be central to any critical service-learning experience.

Critical Service-Learning Pedagogy

Kizer and Jones (2014) asserted that critical service-learning does the following: (a) works to redistribute power, (b) develops authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and (c) takes on a social change perspective. To accomplish these goals, a critical pedagogy is essential. Kajner et al. (2013) began to describe the pedagogical dimensions of critical service-learning that must be embedded in any course that purports to provide a critical perspective to its students. They listed three essential elements: (a) disrupting power and co-constructing knowledge, (b) encouraging praxis through course assignments, and (c) reflecting on the social world.

These three elements of critical pedagogy are central, but as Mitchell et al. (2012) argued, not quite enough. They wrote, "The invisibility and normative privileges of whiteness shape service-learning and are reinforced by service-learning" (p. 615). Service-learning, even critical service-learning, can privilege faculty and students, who are often White, by engaging in a color-blind discourse that obfuscates the role of race, for example by using terms like "inner city." Such unconscious privileging is especially likely when a predominantly White university is partnering with a community of color in a service project. Thus, in addition to the practices mentioned by Kajner et al. (2013), a critical service-learning course should also (a) employ a pedagogy of race and privilege that presents an asset-based view of communities of color with which the students may be working and (b) cultivate a reflective stance among students. Much of the literature on critical pedagogy uses the elements described by Kajner et al. (2013) but leaves out the notions of race and privilege described by Mitchell et al. (2012). This article uses recommendations by both to create a new framework for analysis to understand how a critical service-learning course begins to address inequity and social justice.

Method and Data Collection

In the spirit of critical self-reflection (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006), this article uses a self-study method to examine

the impact of a critical service-learning course on its students, and how, in particular, it shifted their perspectives. With roots in phenomenology (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), self-study acknowledges that teaching practices and the subsequent analysis of these practices grow out of our ideological assumptions. Therefore, as Sullivan (2009) has suggested, "to understand one's practice, it is necessary to examine one's practice in relationship to the perspectives, biases and assumptions one may form as a result of one's historical, social and cultural context" (p. 339). From this perspective, we need to view individuals as always situated in their unique and intersecting social contexts and locations, which then affect the way we analyze and act in the world (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). In this regard, I acknowledge the larger university context and my own role in it, as well as the city in which the university is situated.

I am a White, female professor at a predominantly White institution (PWI) that suffers from a legacy of racism that has infected the campus with an unhealthy and hostile climate. Further complicating these dilemmas that many institutions of higher education face, my particular institution has hosted White supremacist student groups on campus, but has also had strong groups led by students of color who have demanded that the university deal with its problems around race and racism. Historically, the university sits on land that was a plantation during the antebellum period, and when it was founded, did not admit Black students. It became a teacher training institution for Whites until 1955, about 100 years after its founding. In 2015, the campus exploded in protest prompted by incidents of police brutality across the country. Students occupied the president's office to demand recruitment and retention of Black faculty and required coursework on cultural competence. Neither of these demands took hold; however, under a new incoming president, the university opened an office of diversity and inclusion.

With this larger context in mind, I wondered how my students' attitudes and beliefs were directly impacted. My institution is a PWI that purports to engage in service-learning programs through numerous courses across campus, but in many of them White students are not being asked to confront their biases or their social position. I wondered if critical service-learning could begin to pick away at the reproduction of White supremacy. Could it address the color blindness that Whites engage in to ensure "not knowing" about racism and White supremacy (Mueller, 2017)? How would this kind of class address the needs of Black and brown students at the same time?

In response, as a White female professor who had a relationship with students, as well as connections to local majority-Black schools and Black-led community-based organizations, I developed a course that would try to answer these questions and, in particular, develop White students' capacity for understanding who they were and shift their perspectives on race and racism as well as validate the experiences of Black and brown students. I thought that this would contribute to changing the campus culture and respond to the demands that the students of color were making on the university, as it is the duty of all faculty, I believe, to respond to this call.

Data were collected over four semesters to understand the impact of the critical service-learning course. I also included data from fall 2020 to update the data and to serve as a check on my original data set. Table 1 shows which data were collected.

Student assignments are described below, and were reviewed after the course was complete for themes that arose. University-generated student evaluations were examined after each semester, focused on the question "What did you like about the course/was most impactful?"

After IRB approval and data collection, I conducted a first round of analysis to detect emergent themes. I started with an open coding process using NVIVO software (Saldana, 2015). I generated a memo using the results of this process, which I shared with two of my community partners. Ultimately, my interest was to answer the following questions: (1) What pedagogical techniques have been central to shifting hegemonic discourses, in this case White students' perceptions of race/racism and urban schools and communities? and (2) To what degree can critical service-learning address inequity in urban communities and schools? Therefore, I followed the open coding process with a second round of analysis to detect the connection between the data and the frameworks of critical pedagogy and critical service-learning set out by Kajner et al. (2013) and Mitchell et al. (2012). I shared this second round of analysis with two community partners once again. This round honed the analysis further and made

Table 1. Data Collection

Data source	Time period of collection	Number of participants	Race/ethnicity of participants
Online discussion board, Service-learning project, Reflection project, Student evaluations	Fall 2016–Spring 2018; Fall 2020	97	87% White 7% African American 3% Asian 3% Latinx
Interviews with community partner representatives	Spring 2018	3	100% African American

the conclusions that I drew more reliable and trustworthy (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

A Critical Service-Learning Course: Race, Inequity, and Education

Race, Inequity, and Education is a critical service-learning course taught at a predominantly White university. Using the city in which the university sits as a case study, students study how racial inequity in urban schools came to be and how to combat it. As a central part of the course, students learn about urban schools and spend time in them, working with community school coordinators. The main expectation for the university students is to support a project that the community school needs. This is their service-learning project. The students are supervised by community school coordinators, who are often people of color from the neighborhoods that the school serves, for 30 hours to gain quality experiences inside and outside the classroom. To further express the desire for a reciprocal relationship, the university also hosts students from the schools and the service-learning students lead college tours, which are essential for K-12 students to begin imagining their postsecondary future.

The idea that students are expected to work in relationship with others, and not to simply volunteer, is made explicit early on. The following is taken verbatim from the syllabus:

> Students will not simply be completing service to the schools. They will engage in service-learning projects which require students to be participants in diverse settings, to require them to work with and help people different from themselves, and to reflect on their experience and grow. In the end, students will see themselves as agents of change, and that their efforts might help minimize intolerance and discrimination while positively impacting and building community around them. This work will be the core of the course and will ask students to formally prepare, reflect throughout the service-learning experience and to make a presentation where they link the course themes to the service-learning experience.

The goal for the main service-learning project is that it supports and sustains the work of that school after the university students leave. The project centers around going to and working in the school under the supervision of a community school coordinator, who works with the students, helping them to understand the inner workings and contribute to the work of community schools. In addition to the service-learning project, students perform other assignments along the way that ask them to reflect on who they are while they are learning the course content about the history and current context of urban schools, structural racism, and privilege, among other concepts.

Findings

Using Kajner et al.'s (2013) description of the pedagogical dimensions of critical pedagogy for service-learning, as well as Mitchell et al.'s (2012) notions of race, privilege, and reflection, the following findings are drawn from student assignments and evaluations. The findings are organized

by the themes that emerged: (a) reflection on the social world, (b) encouraging praxis through course assignments, (c) cultivating a reflective stance among students, and (d) employing a pedagogy that presents an asset-based view of communities of color with which the students may be working.

Reflection on the Social World: Reexamining Beliefs About Racial Inequity and Developing a Reflective Stance

One critical pedagogical practice is reflecting on the social world, which is an important precursor to performing critical service-learning. To take a critical stance, to think about disrupting power and engage in praxis, first students need to interrogate hegemonic ways of looking at reality and reexamine taken-for-granted beliefs about urban education, urban spaces in general, and race. The course, therefore, begins with the question What comes to mind when you think of urban schools? Students answer this question before they go into urban schools, and during our conversation, I take copious notes. They respond, discuss, and feed off each other. A number of words come up frequently: unsafe, violent, chaotic, underfunded, diverse, disorganized.

After that discussion, I ask where their ideas come from, and whether it is experience or some other source. Frequently, students say that they have little to no experience in urban spaces, even students of color who grew up in suburban communities, so their impressions come from media portrayals. We unpack this so that students begin to see what reliance on media portrayals can do to their ideas and opinions. They begin to see how media can reify hegemonic discourse and ideology, distort their views, and imbue them with stereotypes around race and class.

Through this first third of the course, students learn about the larger social-political-historical contexts of redlining, the creation of the suburbs, the conditions of school segregation and efforts at desegregation, and inequity in school funding. They read histories of race and schooling, as well as personal accounts, like D. Watkins's *The Beast Side* (2015), watch videos, have discussions, and examine their own personal and family's choices of where to live and go to school.

By Week 5 in the course, one third of the way in, students are reexamining the ideas that they brought in with them in the first week. They begin their visit to urban schools and have done much more reading. The following is a post from the class discussion board by a student of color who is beginning to reflect on our discussions and readings in class:

> These readings were eye opening to me. The stereotypes of urban students not wanting to learn are not true. I have learned that the problem is not that they don't want to learn, it is that it is far more difficult to learn in urban schools due to the conditions that the students face and the extreme lack of funding that is needed to keep the schools in proper condition. Three billion dollars are needed to bring the buildings back up to standards!! Where is this money going to come from? It also appears as if the politicians are looking out more for themselves than they are for the city's students. They want to avoid backlash from the public for re-allocation or tax increases by delaying funding. We need politicians that are willing to confront problems and face the repercussions. In these readings, I saw all of what we have learned come together. I finally saw the connection between history and the conditions of urban schools now. (Student assignment, 2016)

This student is beginning to identify some of the structural problems that created the conditions in which urban schools exist today. This breakthrough is critical for undoing the stereotypes and biases that the students bring. Although such realizations are especially important for the majority White students in the course, they are also important for students of color, who often come from middle and upper middle class suburban backgrounds and who can have some of the same misconceptions about urban communities as White students. For White students, however, this critical reflection is especially important since they frequently embed their notions of the poor conditions of urban spaces in a racial context. They often talk about race as culture and use the language of "cultural deprivation" when referring to people that have to live in those conditions rather than recognizing the structures that have been set

up to produce those conditions (Moynihan, 1965). A White student wrote:

> With the communities mostly effected [*sic*] being of African American, low income, red lined neighborhoods, it's no wonder that they have been so disenfranchised by the state by lack of funding, lack of action, and lack of compassion. But what I, and what I believe most of the authors in the articles would agree upon, is how come they are just now getting attention? Where was the public outrage when school building temperatures reached almost 100 degrees? Where was the public outrage that these building[s] were nearly falling apart? Where was the public outrage when there were 30 students to one classroom with an ill prepared teacher? Why now? I am of course glad that these injustices are being seen on a larger scale and being called out because our children deserve better than what they have, but what does that say about the poor children who endured these conditions up to this point? (Student assignment, 2017)

Words of anger and disappointment come from White students just learning about the history of structural racism. Many of them have enrolled in the class not knowing the history of structural racism in how cities were formed, how school funding is meted out, or how intentional the role of racism was in setting up structures that benefit them. But by the end of the course, students have gained a more nuanced understanding of the ways race and class are implicated in how structural inequity is formed and reproduced. Students of color are familiar with structural racism; they feel validated in hearing it expressed in their university classrooms, and often would make connections to their personal experiences.

Most students become quite skeptical of dominant narratives about issues of race and urban education. In anonymous student evaluations at the end of the term, students made comments like the following:

> This class forced me to look at the causes of systemic poverty and how structural racism plays into that. (Course evaluation, 2016)

> Despite being uncomfortable at times, this course helped change my thinking, the truth is not always pleasant. (Course evaluation, 2018)

> It forced me to come to terms with . . . the benefits I have in my life based upon my ethnicity and upbringing, opened my eyes up to the continued racism and inequity that we have today. (Course evaluation, 2017)

Although students were not forced to shift their perspectives by the instructor, most students experienced a major shift in their thinking: They reflect on the social world as they have learned it and come to understand it after their study. The course urges them to go through this process of critical reflection. Students' use of the word "forced" suggests that they felt compelled to confront previous understandings of inequity in new and more personal ways, acknowledging their individual role in maintaining inequitable systems.

In the course we discuss how power is in the hands of privileged people, and that they maintain that power through structures that reproduce their power and privilege. This is new for many students. They begin to come to a new understanding about their own privilege, especially those who are White, middle class and upper middle class students, as well as how the maintenance of that privilege contributes to an inequitable system. As one student wrote in one final project:

> This course taught me that we benefit in society but we cannot see it. We may not think we are racist, and we may not be willing to give up the privileges that come with being in the majority. So we are not doing anything about it. (Course evaluation, 2016)

It is confusing for some students to see that they wield power. Because of their privilege, many White students do not think about themselves as being part of a race or a social class group, so when they begin to, it is eye-opening. The readings and discussions enabled students to cultivate a reflective stance, to think about their own positionality, and to connect their experience to the larger social world. The course engaged in a critical pedagogy that set students up for a

critical service-learning experience. Before they went to a service-learning site and while they were there, they continued to learn from this perspective, and were able to experience the service differently, with a deeper understanding than if they did not engage in this way.

Students of color shift perspectives as well. This is impactful, and indicates how misleading it is to assume that Black and brown students have a singular experience or perspective. This student described herself as very knowledgeable about Black history and inequality in the United States, but she said:

> I learned so many lessons that I will carry on to my everyday life. It has encouraged me to take an active role in ensuring that our policies are no longer made to suppress black and brown people, but instead uplift them. This course has taught me to look beyond the surface and understand the "why" behind many patterns in this nation. Many patterns persist because of the way our system was founded. Everyone should investigate where they have some privilege in their lives whether it be class, race, occupation, etc. and figure out how to use it for good because everyone has at least a little bit of privilege. Being active and engaged in the fight is necessary to make a difference. Everyone must play a role if we want to see a change in the system. (Final student reflection paper, 2021)

Perhaps this kind of reaction grew out of the larger context of Black Lives Matter protests of summer 2020 after the murder of George Floyd. Whatever factors may have influenced her reflections, her insight suggests that the critical pedagogy of this course was able to awaken students' desire to move beyond awareness to activism.

Frank Discussions About Race and Racism

As mentioned earlier, it is not enough to critique the social world; students need to have direct discussions about race, especially White students in a predominantly White institution. Throughout their experience carrying out projects in urban schools and reading about urban spaces, students learn about the two social worlds, one Black and one White, with unequal access to power but that exist side by side. We examine the city of Baltimore, its history of racial segregation, and the legacy of enduring segregation. Lawrence Brown recognized this duality when he coined the terms "Baltimore's Black Butterfly and White L," referring to the physical shapes one can see on the map showing the population distribution in the city (Brown, 2016). Following this, we read D. Watkins's *The Beast Side*, a book by an African American man who reflects on his life growing up and observing these differences. Through such readings, students acquire the vocabulary to talk about phenomena that they did not know how to describe before. As one White student said about police brutality, after reading the book:

> D. Watkins outlines the various stressors people from the city face. I was able to just get a glimpse of many stories through D. Watkins' stories. They are surrounded by a structure that encircles them and continues the cycle of the social reproduction. To actually leave a dent and/or permanent change to the structure would mean an "economic and educational calculus" more complex and effective than the "self-styled saviors." (Student assignment, 2016)

While being struck by the structural racism that "encircles" Black communities, students are also impressed by Watkins's friends who show drive and effort. As Watkins describes in this passage:

> A guy who guts houses for $50 a day, a rack of uncertified tax preparers, many single moms with triple jobs, some freelance freelancers, infinite party promoters, squeegee kids, basement caterers, back alley auto mechanics, dudes of all ages selling water, and a collection of Mr. Fix Its. We are all American dream chasers, all trying to start our own businesses, all working our asses off. (Watkins, 2015, p. 22)

This particular section of the book teaches students about the assets of the poor Black community in Watkins's world, and describes a serious work ethic, deftly countering a stereotype that my university students often associate with Black people, especially poor Black folks. This text is quite impact-

ful, and through our guided discussion, university students, White and students of color, develop an asset-based perspective from it, which is essential before going into work in schools that serve a majority low-income Black and brown student body and community. The text helps them acknowledge how the structures of segregation, gentrification, and structural racism can coexist with the resilience, skill, and ingenuity of Black folks, including D. Watkins. My students of color are familiar with structural racism, but the realization that class and classism has impacted their view of urban communities is quite a shift and leads them to think about race from a more intersectional perspective.

Praxis: Modeling a Humility in Relationships

By the time they enter an urban school, students are primed with discussions of race, racism, privilege, and reflections on their social worlds. From there, we move to praxis, the idea of bringing theory into practice. The service project is the main way that students engage in praxis and apply what they have learned. To make their participation effective, I needed to teach students to develop a new understanding of how to engage in an authentic way with community, and to foster a mutual relationship, rather than an understanding of service as volunteerism like helping in a soup kitchen or a neighborhood park cleanup. Now that they had begun to see the humanity of low-income Black people, the goal was for students to understand service as working in an ongoing, respectful relationship in which they would take the lead from community partners. Consequently, one initial aspect of reexamining beliefs focuses on what service-learning is. In the course I teach, several readings are aimed at upending student notions of service. One particular reading that resonates with students is by Rachel Remen, in which she writes:

> Helping is different than serving. Helping is based on inequality, it is not a relationship between equals. When you help, you use your own strength to assist those with lesser strength. . . . People feel this inequality. When we help, we may inadvertently take away more than we can ever give them; we may diminish their self-worth and wholeness. . . . Helping incurs debt, when you are helping, they owe you one, but serving, like healing, is mutual, there is no debt. (Remen, 1999, p.8)

This is a powerful reframing for students because they had often not heard the distinction between helping and serving before. Even though many of them come to the university with some previous volunteer experience, the work that they have performed often falls in the category of helping, and they need to learn to serve.

However, it is not enough to read about ideas of mutuality, reciprocity, and building relationships. Students must live these concepts through praxis. Therefore, students assimilate the concepts through their service in urban community schools. Community schools are public schools that provide wraparound services, offer after-school programming, and work to engage families into the life of the school (Dryfoos, 2005). Each student spends 30 hours per semester in the school under the supervision of the community school coordinator. In this experience, the students co-construct a project that serves the community school in some way. Examples have included food pantry setup, organizing a drama club, organizing families to participate in school-related meetings and events, coordinating a health fair, setting up a community garden, creating a library of culturally responsive books, and designing and leading college tours at the university for K-12 students. These projects all respond to the needs of the community schools and are executed in dialogue with them.

The community school coordinator role is central to making these projects work, and to teaching the students the humility that they need to enter the space. The coordinators, who are all African American, are influential teachers for the university students. Students in the course spend many hours during the semester at a community school under the supervision of a community school coordinator who is deeply embedded in the school community. The school coordinator's impact is invaluable; they are not formally recognized as instructors in the course, but are given a stipend for their work. Coordinators do everything from seeking out new partnerships to conflict resolution between students to ensuring that families get counseling services to providing after-school programming for young

people. Through this work, they model how to form relationships and how to interact with youth, families, and communities. Through their actions, they teach the university students a set of practices that help them see how people, regardless of race and class background, should be treated. As one student of color recalled in her reflections:

> My school welcomed me with smiling faculty that seemed genuinely happy to have me. After signing in, I made my way to the coordinator's office. I could feel the warmth of her personality the moment I walked through her door, and after shaking hands and introducing ourselves, she took me on a tour of the school. As we made our way through the halls, she made sure to greet every hall monitor with genuine appreciation for their presence, and expressed her love and care for every student that we passed as if they were her own children. (Student assignment, 2017)

To describe working with university students, one community school coordinator said:

> The college students and myself have helped to build this library here. We worked together to create the library, because we don't have one here at school. We were able to collect about 400 books as a community partnership, and then we're able to get those books in the hands of kids, and not just any kind of book, but books that kids are going to read, predominantly books by African American authors that kids are familiar with, and I say that because most of the curriculum that you'll see in the city are not African American friendly in the sense of, if you have a population of predominantly African American students in the school or a population of Hispanic students in the school, then we want to be able to assign books [about] the African American experience as well as the experience of other folks as well. And I think that's a critical piece in how we can build our society in a better place so we're able to help one another and see one another as equals. (Community school coordinator, personal communication, 2017)

After the service is finished, students come away with a sense of humility and a new appreciation for how mutual relationships might work. The coordinators expect and welcome the students each semester; the students understand that they need to listen and follow their lead. Often this results in a relationship that continues past the semester, where the students continue to work with the schools beyond the scope of the course.

Limits of the Findings

Although the study did show success in raising awareness among students and in addressing hegemonic discourses, it did not fully address the tenets that Butin (2015) suggested anyone claiming to perform critical service-learning ought to abide by. It will take more work and time to break down the institutional barriers that keep us constrained by semesters and hours, as well as more planning with partners to develop a closer teaching relationship. Furthermore, we will need to work harder to ensure that the schools are truly impacted and to document the ways in which this impact happens in order to show real reciprocity, in the way that Butin (2015), Kinloch et al. (2015), and others imagine. As of now, the study showed that the university students certainly have some impact on urban schools, but exactly how they impact is less clear.

Conclusion: Toward a Critical Service-Learning Pedagogy

The pedagogical strategies of reflecting on the social world and cultivating a reflective stance, combined with the explicit attention to race- and asset-based views of people of color, have been critical in shifting hegemonic discourses and attitudes among our predominantly White student body. Both White students and students of color gain a consciousness around their language and attitudes that reflect a social context in which they are a privileged and powerful group. White students begin to see that their privilege and power are at the expense of people of color. All students come away with an increased awareness of structural inequity, privilege, and the kinds of mechanisms that leave inequity in place. The findings of this study indicate that these practices need

to be made more accessible for instructors who want to engage in this work.

Although a critical service-learning course can achieve only so much in terms of addressing inequity, engaging in praxis helped to develop humility in university students that gave them the capacity to approach urban schools and communities in productive ways. Praxis has been essential for creating a relationship between the university and urban schools that is more reciprocal in nature and that acknowledges the need for ongoing, respectful work to continue. Through critical pedagogical strategies and praxis, the university students moved away from thinking of communities of color as always in need of White people's help to lift them up.

Finally, critical service-learning can be a real pathway toward meaningful change on college and university campuses and in their surrounding communities. In this new context in which universities are dedicating themselves to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work, wherein many campuses are offering trainings and hiring staff to develop the capacities of faculty and students in DEI, critical service-learning can offer a helpful model for university students and faculty to work toward social justice and go beyond simple awareness of diversity issues to making real change on and off campus.

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Academics to Serve the Communities: Examining the Hierarchical Structure of a Multidimensional Servant Leadership Model in Academia

Majid Ghasemy, James A. Elwood, and Mansoureh Roshan Nejad

Abstract

Although servant leadership is practiced in higher education (HE), most literature on servant leadership has utilized samples with diverse occupational backgrounds and applied single-level analytic approaches. Recognizing the association between servant leadership and community citizenship behavior, our study investigated the factorial validity of a well-developed multilevel servant leadership model, the SL-28, in the HE context. We grouped 1,864 lecturers from Malaysian institutions into 120 clusters, then estimated a seven-factor second-order servant leadership model at two levels using EQS. Results indicated that servant leadership in academic settings was a single-level five-factor second-order model rather than a hierarchical model. Of the seven hypothesized factors, empirical evidence was not found for two, *emotional healing* and *putting subordinates first*. We also investigated the model's consistency with the principles of servant leadership for HE to provide more insight. Finally, practical, theoretical, and methodological implications of the findings and future areas of research are provided.

Keywords: servant leadership for higher education, community engagement, Multilevel Structural Equation Modeling (MSEM), Bentler-Liang method, Satorra-Bentler method

Introduction

Globalization and the aspiration to become world class have led to competition and collaboration among universities worldwide, resulting in major changes in university management and culture (Kok et al., 2010). Such changes include shifts in the types of academic positions and the demand for increasing entrepreneurial activities (Webber & Rogers, 2018), as well as pressure to act more as businesses and seek competitive advantages (Kok & McDonald, 2017). As a consequence, universities in the new global environments have influenced countries' economic growth and development via technological transfer, talent development, and preparation of a skilled and empowered labor force (Wan & Morshidi, 2018a).

To engage in this tide of globalization, higher education (HE) systems around the world have formulated and implemented numerous strategies to internationalize (Duong & Chua, 2016). In general, institutions of higher learning, as organizations with an organic structure, adapt themselves to the changing demands of the environment (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). More specifically, because these institutions and their academic staff have experienced increasing pressure to be accountable while undergoing a continuous cycle of internal and external performance monitoring and quality audits (Weiherl & Frost, 2016), they appear to have become adept at strategizing and navigating in unprecedented situations. In addition, for an individual to become an academic in the current situation requires not only research competencies but also skill in time management, communication,

presentation, leadership, management, and networking skills (van der Weijden et al., 2015). These requirements imply that the present academic ecosystem is highly competitive and challenging, with extensive workloads and related duties. Moreover, requisite qualifications such as a set of high-quality research articles and teaching experience might no longer be sufficient to secure a job and be successful in an academic career (van der Weijden et al., 2015). Lecturers are now also expected and often required to fulfill leadership and management roles (Deem, 2010). Institutions of higher learning are striving for improved performance through better leadership and management, yet it is not clear exactly which behaviors, attitudes, traits, and cultures are required for high-level performance (Kok & McDonald, 2017).

This context evidences the need for a relevant leadership style in university settings to make necessary changes in the present globalization era and to ensure the achievement of organizational outcomes. Although the importance and practice of different leadership styles in academic settings have been scrutinized in previous research works (e.g., Bryman, 2007; Fullan & Scott, 2009; Ghasemy, Sufean, & Megat Ahmad Kamaluddin, 2016; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Scott & McKellar, 2012), the literature includes relatively few studies on the implementation of servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019; Greenleaf, 1970, 1977) as well as its antecedents and outcomes in university settings. Thus, to further understand types of leadership germane to the current situation, an emerging strand of research has focused on leadership types intrinsically tied to moral, prosocial, or people-oriented behaviors, and particularly on servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019). It is crucial to identify the main aspects of such leadership styles in the context of institutions of higher learning, and in this study we focus on servant leadership.

Other justifications exist for the practice of servant leadership in academic settings. Indeed, servant leadership appears particularly pertinent in today's business world because when leaders exhibit behaviors that transcend their self-interest to serve the interests of all stakeholders, employees themselves adopt a serving orientation similar to that of their leader and behave in a way that benefits the organization and its members, the surrounding community, and beyond (Franco & Antunes, 2020). This scenario is transferable to institutions of higher learning. Specifically, one of the main roles of universities as socially responsive entities is university–community engagement (Cook & Nation, 2016; Shuib & Yew, 2017) through initiatives such as research collaboration, consulting activities, exchange of human capital, and supply of resources (Shuib & Yew, 2017). These initiatives are completely compatible with the principles and characteristics of servant leadership, such as serving first and selflessly focusing on others' needs (Panaccio et al., 2014), as well as focusing on followers' development and empowerment, altruism, empathy, sense of ethics, and community stewardship (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). This inclusion of surrounding parties indicates that servant leadership will encourage organization members to serve both their organization and people around them (Greenleaf, 1977).

Although the practice of servant leadership in HE has proven valuable, the organizational research literature shows a lack of agreement about the dimensions or components that distinctly mirror the servant leadership style (Grisaffe et al., 2016). In addition, from a methodological perspective, many empirical studies on servant leadership have considered neither heterogeneity within the data nor the hierarchical structure of the data in the process of data analysis. Therefore, as noted, identifying the dimensions of servant leadership in HE contexts was our other motivation for conducting this multilevel study. More specifically, we were interested in identifying the dimensions of the servant leadership style of academics who have been clustered based on their departments and previous work-relevant experience.

To do so, we focused on Malaysia, a developing country that has plans to base its tenable economy on a more knowledgeable and creative nation (Wan, Morshidi, & Dzulkifli, 2015). This country is a well-established education hub in Southeast Asia (Lee, 2014) that has been grappling with the globalization process and its consequences (Morshidi et al., 2012). Moreover, its HE system consists of public and private sectors (Wan & Morshidi, 2018a). Since the establishment of the University of Malaya in 1949, Malaysian HE has been improving steadily, thereby enhancing the roles of universities in society and their relationship with the government

(Wan, Sok, et al., 2018). Based on statistics published by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in January 2022 (MQA, 2022) public sector comprises 20 public universities, 36 polytechnics, and 268 community colleges/institutions, and the private sector comprises 83 universities, 45 university colleges, and 396 colleges. Although the 20 public universities operate under the purview of the government (Wan & Morshidi, 2018b), private universities have been established and owned by financially sound corporations (Norzaini et al., 2011), and a number of these private institutions have some form of twinning and joint programs with Malaysian and/or foreign institutions (Wan, 2018). The Malaysian institutions offer a wide range of academic programs. Focusing on programs that are classified as services, public universities tend to focus on sports, environment-related programs, and security programs, whereas the private universities tend to offer only courses in tourism (Wan, 2018). In terms of employment, permanent positions in public universities are reserved exclusively for Malaysian citizens, but this restriction does not apply to private institutions (Wan & Morshidi, 2018b). With respect to academic leadership, Malaysia established the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT in the Malay language) in January 2008 with objectives such as strengthening the governance and organization of Malaysian higher education institutions and generating a culture of creative and innovative solutions to the critical issues on leadership in HE (Ghasemy, 2017). In addition, considerable attention has been paid to leadership in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education). Nevertheless, public universities have faced a leadership crisis in terms of positioning effective university leadership (Morshidi et al., 2012). The top five challenges faced by the academic leaders in this country have been (1) staff affairs management; (2) finance, budgeting, grants, and fundraising; (3) time management; (4) achieving goals, key performance indicators, and standards; and (5) proper workload and assignments (Ghasemy, Sufean, Megat Ahmad Kamaluddin, et al., 2018). Given that promoting soul-driven leadership in institutions of higher learning has been one of the main missions of AKEPT, servant leadership with its special ethical behaviors is an appropriate leadership choice for academic institutions. This conclusion is consistent with Wheeler (2012), who maintained that, given the challenges faced by the leaders in academic settings, it is time for servant leadership to play a significant role in governance and administration in academic institutions.

To guide the reader, we have structured this article as follows. First, the theory and practice of servant leadership in both organizational and HE settings will be introduced. Next, methodological details of the multilevel modeling utilized and then results are presented. The article concludes with implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Servant Leadership: Theory and practice

The notion of servant leadership originates with the choice to serve, which results in an aspiration to lead (Greenleaf, 1970). Therefore, the main element in servant leadership is the effort by leaders to both provide for the needs and well-being of their subjects and to inspire their development (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). In more succinct terms, the servant leadership style underscores the welfare of others by decreasing interpersonal conflicts and thus cultivating a sense of community (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). The emphasis of servant leadership on serving others shifts the nexus of leadership studies from solely leading to simultaneously balancing the dyad of leading and serving; this altruistic focus thereby offers a critical mechanism in the workplace to ensure ethical behavior of an organization while also fostering satisfactory performance (Saleem et al., 2020). Inasmuch as a leader's behavior affects subordinates' performance (Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2013), the behavior of a benevolent servant leader will result in high levels of engagement and loyalty (Saleem et al., 2020), which will likely produce advantageous organizational outcomes (Harter et al., 2002). Expressed in a different way, considering its exemplary impact on organizational performance, servant leadership offers an alternative to such leadership styles as autocratic, performance-maintenance, transactional, and transformational (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

Given its special attention to the leader's role as a servant and the importance of the followers' needs, servant leadership has attracted organizational researchers in the last decades (Liu, 2019). McNeff and Irving (2017) found that the company owners'

servant leadership attitudes and practices leave a desirable impact on employees' job satisfaction. In another study by Russell and Stone (2002), the followers' organizational performance, attitudes, and manners were viewed as the outcomes of servant leadership. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2016) observed a positive connection between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior of followers, which is not an unexpected finding since servant leadership encourages and promotes moral reasoning in followers, which leads to higher levels of citizenship behavior (Graham, 1995).

With respect to HE research, Aboramadan et al. (2020b) found that academics' intrinsic motivation, psychological ownership, and person–job fit fully mediate the relationship between their servant leadership style and their level of engagement with their work. In another study, empirical evidence was found for the impact of academics' servant leadership style on their affective commitment (Aboramadan et al., 2020a). Moreover, using data from a multicountry sample, servant leadership was found to positively and significantly affect both the career and life satisfaction of academics (Latif et al., 2021).

With this background, we thus focus on the seven-factor SL-28 servant leadership model (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Based on this model, conceptualized as a second-order multilevel model displayed in Figure 1, seven key dimensions constitute servant leadership: conceptual skills, putting subordinates first, helping subordinates grow and succeed, empowering, emotional healing, creating value for the community, and behaving ethically. Many studies have operationalized servant leadership using the SL-28 (e.g., Al-Asadi et al., 2019; Peterson et al., 2012; Hu & Liden, 2011). It is notable that a short version of SL-28 was later developed by Liden, Wayne, Meuser, et al. (2015), consisting of seven items (SL-7); it has been used in empirical studies such as Stollberger et al. (2019), Lemoine and Blum (2019), and Karatepe et al. (2019) as well. In our study and based on the servant leadership model developed and validated by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson (2008), we postulate the following hypothesis to test the factorial validity of this model at two levels in HE contexts:

> With respect to both the lecturer-level and the department-level model, the servant leadership scale is a multidimensional seven-factor second-order model.

It is noteworthy to highlight that, in our study, academics have been clustered at two levels based on institution name, disciplinary background, and experience relevant to HE.

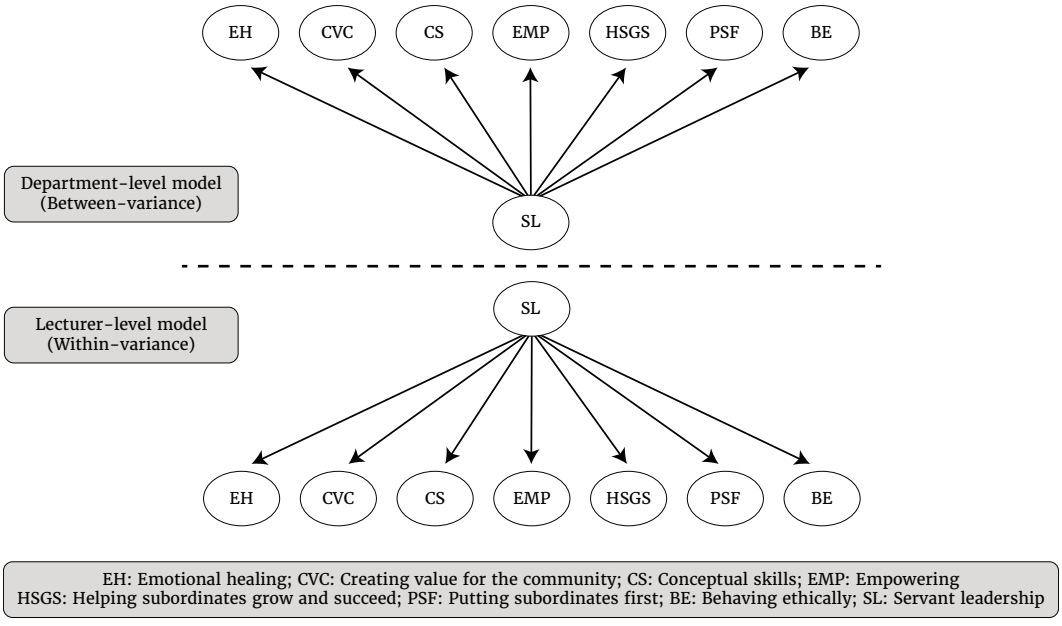

Figure 1. Seven-Factor Second-Order Multilevel CFA Model of Servant Leadership Behaviors

Method

Research Design and Analytic Procedures

The primary aim of this quantitative inquiry is to verify the factorial validity of the seven-factor second-order servant leadership model (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). More specifically, this assessment involves a multilevel assessment (Bentler, 2006) in which we considered both the lecturer-level and the department-level components. Given the reflective nature of the constructs in the multilevel model, we adopted the covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) approach (Byrne, 2006) for analyzing the data. Given different procedures available in this approach to deal with clustered data (e.g., the maximum likelihood [ML] approach for structured data, Liang & Bentler, 2004), CB-SEM represents a rich methodology for analysis.

We specified and estimated the seven-factor second-order multilevel servant leadership behavior model using the EQS 6.4 (Build 120) software package (Bentler, 2006; Bentler & Wu, 2018). We chose a two-level model for servant leadership chiefly to avoid underestimating standard errors and inflating the Type I error rate that can result from disregarding the hierarchical structure of the data (Bovaird, 2007). We also made this choice because EQS is capable of ML estimation with unbalanced cluster sizes through a multilevel analysis (Byrne, 2006). More specifically, the method developed by Liang and Bentler (2004) conducts all estimation using the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm.

Measures

Data were collected using the servant leadership scale developed by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson (2008). This measure contains seven subscales: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. Each subscale consists of four items that are answered on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by 1 (*completely disagree*) and 5 (*completely agree*). The items of the final model and their corresponding descriptive statistics are presented in Appendix A1.

Population and Sampling Method

The target population in our study were academics in all types of Malaysian institutions of higher learning except private colleges.

To collect data, a database of 31,493 email addresses of the academics was created, and the electronic version of our survey was sent to the academics using an online survey administration platform. The mailing included a cover page that contained the guidelines to complete the survey and addressed ethical issues in our study. Overall, 2,040 surveys were received through a simple random sampling method (response rate = 6.47%), of which 76 surveys had been partially completed and were thus removed. Fewer than 5% of the values were missing per indicator in our final data; the missing values were replaced with the median of the respective indicator (Hair, Hult, et al., 2017). Given that the clustering variable in our multilevel analysis was constituted based on the academics' institution name, disciplinary background, and relevant experience, we removed another 88 cases to maintain at least four cases per cluster in our multilevel analysis. This procedure yielded a sample size of 1,876 cases for our 120 clusters. Next, to identify outliers, a seven-factor second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model of servant leadership was specified and estimated. This process resulted in detecting 12 multivariate outliers, which were also removed from the data set. As a result, our main analysis was based on a sample size of 1,864 academics. Table 1 displays the demographic profile of the sampled academics.

Although the removal of the multivariate outliers decreased the normalized multivariate kurtosis statistic from 155.69 to 123.350, this value was still greater than 5 and thus indicative of the multivariate nonnormality of the data (Bentler, 2006). Nonetheless, we did not consider this to be a major problem because our analysis was based on the likelihood ratio (LR) statistic (Liang & Bentler, 2004), which follows a chi-square distribution and is asymptotically robust for many nonnormal distributions (Yuan & Bentler, 2005).

Common Method Bias (CMB)

We next tested for common method bias (CMB) from a statistical perspective based on a CFA approach to Harman's (1960)

Table 1. Demographic information (*N* = 1,864)

Demographic variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	668	35.8
Female	1,196	64.2
Age		
Under 30	52	2.8
31–40	680	36.5
41–50	678	36.4
51–60	379	20.3
Above 60	75	4.0
Marital status		
Single	315	16.9
Married	1,549	83.1
Leadership position		
Yes	430	23.1
No	1,434	76.9
Disciplinary background		
Science	425	22.8
Social science	885	47.5
Engineering	328	17.6
Medical and dental	226	12.1
Institution type		
Public university	1,349	72.4
Public polytechnic	228	12.2
Community college	25	1.3
Private university	170	9.1
Private university college	63	3.4
Other public institution	29	1.6
Academic rank*		
Professor	191	10.2
Associate professor	293	15.7
Senior lecturer	819	43.9
Lecturer	457	24.5
Other	104	5.6

Note. *Percentages add up to less than 100 due to rounding

one-factor test, known as common latent factor (CLF). To run this analysis, we built a seven-factor CFA model, added a CLF to this model, set the variance of the CLF to 1, connected all the items to the CLF, and constrained the paths between the CLF and the items to be equal. Next, we estimated this model using the ML estimator. The results showed that the unstandardized factor loading of the constrained paths was 0.33; this indicated that the results were not biased since the common method variance (0.33^2 = 0.1089 or 10.89%) was below the threshold of 50% (Eichhorn, 2014).

Results

Examining the Multilevel Structure of the Data

In our study, to create the clustering variable we collected data for three demographic variables: work experience outside HE, institution name, and disciplinary background (sciences, social science, engineering, and medical/dental). Based on the collected demographic data and assuming that people with a particular disciplinary background work in a department closely related to that background, a clustering variable was created that could simultaneously cluster the respondents based on their university/college departments and their HE work-relevant experience. We did not consider clusters with fewer than four cases in our study, and, as mentioned earlier, our final department-experience clustering variable had 120 clusters. The clusters varied in size from 4 to 69 with a mean value of 15.53.

Upon estimation of the two-level servant leadership model based on the robust methodology introduced by Liang and Bentler (2004), we focused on evaluating the model-based intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs). ICCs range from 0.0 to 1.0 and represent the proportion of between-group variance compared with the total variance (Byrne, 2012). As noted by Selig et al. (2008), the ICCs within the range of 0.05 to 0.15 inflate the model χ^2 and bias in estimation of both parameters and standard errors (Julian, 2001). In our analysis, the ICCs of the items ranged from 0.007 to 0.048 with a mean of 0.024, thus falling below the 0.05 threshold. Given that these ICCs were close to zero, we concluded that it is meaningless to model the within and between levels of the structure. In other words, a conventional single-level SEM analytic approach could yield reasonable and unbiased estimates (Julian, 2001). Hence, we specified the seven-factor second-order servant leadership model as a single-level model (lecturer-level model) and utilized Satorra-Bentler robust methodology (Satorra & Bentler, 1999, 2010).

CFA at a Single Level

We specified a single-level seven-factor second-order CFA model using EQS 6.4 (Build 120) statistical package (Bentler, 2006; Bentler & Wu, 2018) and estimated the model using the Satorra-Bentler methodology through which the corrected χ^2 and standard errors under nonnormality are generated (Satorra & Bentler, 1994, 2010). Then we evaluated the quality criteria with respect to the psychometrical soundness of each factor (Byrne, 2006). Specifically, factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values were used to assess reliability and convergent validity. Notably, any items with low factor loadings should be dropped from the model to meet the validity and reliability requirements (Byrne, 2006, 2012). In addition, AVEs greater than 0.5 and CR values above 0.7 indicate convergent validity and composite reliability, respectively (Hair, Black, et al., 2014).

Following these guidelines, 10 noncontributing items were deleted from the model to meet the quality criteria for validity and reliability. The 10 items included all four items of the emotional healing factor, all four items of the putting subordinates first factor, one item from the conceptual skills factor, and one item from the empowering factor. As a result, the model became a five-factor second-order model. Also, the evaluation of the results of the Lagrange multiplier (LM) test (Bentler, 2006; Byrne, 2006) showed that the covariance between the error terms of CVC1 and CVC2—two of the items of creating value for the community factor—should be freely estimated in a subsequent run. Statistically speaking, the test that this parameter is equal to zero produced a univariate LM $\chi^2_{(1)}$ of 90.23 ($p < .001$), suggesting that this hypothesized restriction was not tenable.

Table 2 displays the standardized loadings as well as the measures of the reliability and validity of the final five-factor second-order CFA model. For other parameter estimates, see Appendix A2.

Table 2. Factor Loadings, Validity, and Reliability Measures of the Final CFA Model

Factor	Item/ Factor	B	β	Robust S.E.	Robust Z	AVE	CR
CVC	CVC1	1.000	0.666			0.551	0.831
	CVC2	1.140	0.747	0.038	30.052		
	CVC3	1.483	0.772	0.063	23.541		
	CVC4	1.454	0.780	0.063	23.239		
CS	CS2	1.000	0.749			0.535	0.775
	CS3	0.975	0.672	0.041	23.642		
	CS4	0.981	0.769	0.034	28.729		
EMP	EMP1	1.000	0.762			0.620	0.830
	EMP2	1.101	0.847	0.041	26.631		
	EMP3	0.996	0.750	0.042	23.915		
HSGS	HSGS1	1.000	0.795			0.596	0.854
	HSGS2	1.014	0.871	0.025	41.296		
	HSGS3	0.855	0.758	0.029	29.554		
	HSGS4	0.860	0.648	0.033	26.349		
BE	BE1	1.000	0.780			0.551	0.830
	BE2	1.034	0.781	0.033	30.960		
	BE3	1.073	0.662	0.040	27.137		
	BE4	0.902	0.741	0.034	26.285		
SL	CVC	0.291	0.715	0.016	18.741	0.538	0.853
	CS	0.403	0.809	0.017	23.381		
	EMP	0.350	0.711	0.019	18.187		
	HSGS	0.462	0.759	0.017	27.181		
	BE	0.326	0.667	0.016	20.443		

Note. B: unstandardized parameter; β: factor loading; S.E.: standard error; Z: Z statistic; AVE: average variance extracted; CR: composite reliability; CVC: creating value for the community; CS: conceptual skills; EMP: empowering; HSGS: helping subordinates grow and succeed; BE: behaving ethically; SL: servant leadership; $|Z| \geq 1.96$ indicates a significant parameter at 5% confidence level in a two-tailed test.

The evaluation of the psychometrical properties of the five-factor second-order CFA model was followed by an assessment of the fit of the model to the data. Focusing on the residuals, we observed that the average absolute standardized residual value was 0.031 and the average off-diagonal absolute standardized residual was 0.035. These values indicated a very good fit of the CFA model to the data. In addition, we assessed the fit indices and other related statistics based on our five-factor second-order CFA model (Model 1), and a unidimensional CFA model (Model 2) as displayed in Table 3. The fit indices of the five-factor second-order CFA model indicated an adequate fit of the model to the data, whereas the unidimensional CFA model exhibited poor fit. In other words, the lack of fit of Model 2 provided more substantial support for the first-order factors of the second-order servant leadership model being distinct from each other based on Model 1.

Table 3. Fit Indices of the Five-Factor Second-Order and One-Factor CFA Models

Fit indices and related statistics	S-B χ^2	DF	ΔS-B χ^2*	ΔDF	NFI	NNFI (or TLI)	CFI	IFI	MFI	RMSEA	90% CI of RMSEA
Cut-off criteria					> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.90	< 0.06	
Model 1[a]	509.03	129			0.951	0.956	0.962	0.963	0.903	0.040	(0.036, 0.043)
Model 2[b]	3,748.52	134	1,189.27**	5	0.636	0.593	0.643	0.644	0.379	0.120	(0.117, 0.124)

Notes. S-B: Satorra-Bentler; DF: degrees of freedom; NFI: Bentler-Bonett normed fit index; NNFI: Bentler-Bonett non-normed fit index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; CFI: comparative fit index; IFI: Bollen's fit index; MFI: McDonald's fit index; RMSEA: root mean-square error of approximation; CI: confidence interval. Cut-off criteria are based on Hu and Bentler (1999).
[a] Multidimensional second-order servant leadership model.
[b] Unidimensional first-order servant leadership model.
* ΔS-B χ^2 is not χ^2-distributed, and to compute this statistic we followed the procedure provided by Byrne (2006, p. 219).
** $p < .001$

Table 4. A Comparison Between the Principles of Servant Leadership for HE and the Factors of the Validated Model

Servant leadership principle	Relevant factor in our model
Principle 1: "Service to others is the highest priority."	"Helping subordinates grow and succeed" & "Creating value for the community"
Principle 2: "Facilitate meeting the needs of others."	"Helping subordinates grow and succeed"
Principle 3: "Foster problem solving and taking responsibility at all levels."	"Empowering"
Principle 4: "Promote emotional healing in people and the organization."	*Not empirically supported in our study*
Principle 5: "The means are as important as the ends."	"Behaving ethically"
Principle 6: "Keep one eye on the present and one on the future."	"Conceptual skills"
Principle 7: "Embrace paradoxes and dilemmas."	"Conceptual skills"
Principle 8: "Leave a legacy to society."	"Creating value for the community"
Principle 9: "Model servant leadership."	"Helping subordinates grow and succeed"
Principle 10: "Develop more servant leaders."	"Helping subordinates grow and succeed"

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was undertaken in order to better understand the hierarchical structure of the multidimensional servant leadership model (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008) in Malaysian HE contexts. In this regard, we collected data from academics in public and private institutions in Malaysia, created a clustering variable, and to avoid the problems of single-level analysis (Byrne, 2006; Selig et al., 2008), estimated the two-level seven-factor second-order servant leadership model at both the lecturer and department levels using the straightforward robust ML-based methodology introduced by Liang and Bentler (2004). Next, we followed Julian's (2001) guidelines to evaluate the ICC values, as the proportion of between-group variance compared with total variance (Byrne, 2012), and to check whether conceptualizing the servant leadership model at the lecturer and department levels would be appropriate and meaningful. This evaluation revealed that all the ICCs were below 0.05 and, in fact, close to zero. Therefore, we concluded that the servant leadership model is a single-level model in the Malaysian HE context. Consequently, this model was specified at the lecturer level, and given the multivariate nonnormal nature of our data, we estimated it using the robust Satorra-Bentler methodology (Satorra & Bentler, 1988, 1994).

In this analysis, to fulfill reliability and validity requirements, we dropped 10 noncontributing items of the original seven-factor second-order servant leadership model, resulting in a five-factor second-order model. More specifically, our analysis revealed that *emotional healing* and *putting subordinates first* factors were not perceived by academics in Malaysia to be dimensions of servant leadership. Additionally, although we observed that all the dimensions of servant leadership were of similar importance, the conceptual skills factor was identified as the most important dimension due to its factor loading. In an unexpected finding, behaving ethically was the least important dimension of the servant leadership model in academic settings, although servant leadership in the literature is usually strongly related to ethical behavior.

To provide more insight about our findings, we compared and contrasted the items and the factors of our model with the 10 principles of servant leadership for HE proposed by Wheeler (2012). Although Dean (2014) raised concerns and criticisms about the servant leadership principles for HE, Barnes (2015) has seen these principles as essential principles for HE leadership. Our comparison, as presented in Table 4, shows that except for Principle 4, the remaining principles correspond with the items of the factors in our model (see Appendix A1 for more details). Therefore, we considered this finding to be strong empirical evidence for the applicability and pertinence of these principles (at least nine principles out of 10) in academic settings since academics in this study included both those in leadership positions (n = 430) and those in nonleadership positions (n = 1,434), any of whom can practice servant leadership behaviors. Arguably, although Principle 4, which is related to the emotional healing factor, was not supported in our model, the recent applications on academics' emotions (e.g., Ghasemy, Mohajer, et al., 2020; Ghasemy, Morshidi, et al., 2021) show that affect and emotions have considerable impact on organizational outcomes.

Moreover, we compared our model with a more recent multidimensional servant leadership model developed and validated by Latif and Marimon (2019) in the Spanish HE system using data collected from 148 academics. Based on this model, servant leadership in Spanish HE contexts consists of seven dimensions: behaving ethically, development, emotional healing, empowerment, pioneers, relationship building, and wisdom. In contrast to our study, but in line with Wheeler (2012), the concept of emotional healing in the study by Latif and Marimon is viewed as an integral part of servant leadership. We also observed an extensive overlap between the items and factors in our model (e.g., behaving ethically, empowering, and helping subordinates grow and succeed) and the items and factors of their model. Nonetheless, the study by Latif and Marimon utilized a rather small sample size, so their proposed model would benefit from a revalidation with a larger sample.

In conclusion, we validated the well-established servant leadership model (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008) in the Malaysian HE context. Our analysis showed that this model is a single-level model that translates almost all the principles of servant leadership for HE (Wheeler, 2012) into actions. Therefore, given the importance of values in the current academic environment characterized by increasing complex-

ity, rapid change, and uncertainty (Dean, 2014), and in consonance with arguments made by Eddy (2010) in terms of the need for holistic approaches to HE leadership, we conclude that although a combination of leadership models is better suited to the new HE context, the principles and practice of servant leadership should be encouraged in academic settings as an essential part of a comprehensive academic leadership model.

Implications of the Findings

From a practical perspective, policymakers are advised to create and implement policies to promote servant leadership behaviors—especially the five dimensions based on our study—as this type of leadership reduces interpersonal conflicts and promotes a sense of community (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). HE literature testifies to the negative impact of interpersonal conflict on academics' emotions, which can subsequently lead to undesirable organizational outcomes (Ghasemy, Erfanian, et al., 2020).

In addition, servant leadership has been found to be associated with other desirable outcomes such as community citizenship behaviors (Ghasemy, Akbarzadeh, & Gaskin, 2021; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008), organizational citizenship behaviors (Hunter et al., 2013; Liden, Wayne, Meuser, et al., 2015), and work engagement (Aboramadan et al., 2020b; Orazbayeva et al., 2019; Stouten & Liden, 2020). Given the impact of servant leadership on work engagement and since academics' work roles and university functions are traditionally conceptualized under the triad of teaching, research, and community service (Lawrence et al., 2012; Shuib & Yew, 2017), it is expected that the practice of servant leadership, as conceptualized in our study, will increase community engagement and service (e.g., the socioeconomic impact of universities on societies and community work) in the context of civic universities (Koekkoek et al., 2021). Importantly, de Sousa and van Dierendonck (2014) found evidence for the strong influence of servant leadership on work engagement under conditions of high uncertainty in academic settings, thereby providing more support for the relevance of servant leadership in the current unprecedented situation. Indeed, servant leadership encourages academic citizenship—which is related to serving institutions, the scientific community, and the larger society (Tagliaventi & Carli, 2019)—and thus, servant leadership uniquely combines service to people and service to the organization's goals (Greenleaf, 1970, 2002).

In addition, leadership training and development programs should be updated and modified to reflect the main servant leadership behaviors. Undeniably, while being properly trained, academics with a drive for knowledge seeking, knowledge production, knowledge sharing, collaborative research, and community engagement (Webber, 2019; Webber & Rogers, 2018) would be able to effectively achieve these objectives. Relatedly, policies should encourage the concept and direction of university–community engagement programs to attract staff, students, and alumni who wish to engage in these programs.

From a theoretical standpoint, we validated a comprehensive servant leadership model that is consistent with the proposed principles of servant leadership for HE (Wheeler, 2012). Specifically, we demonstrated that servant leadership operates on a five-factor second-order model in the Malaysian HE context, thereby enriching the HE leadership literature.

Limitations and Future Directions

In our study no support was found for emotional healing as a dimension of servant leadership, although it has been viewed as an important dimension of servant leadership (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Despite this finding supporting the argument made by Dean (2014) in terms of the unworkability, irrelevancy, and impracticability of this dimension of servant leadership in the HE domain, we encourage researchers to further investigate this variable in HE research for two reasons: (1) Recent HE literature (e.g., Ghasemy, Erfanian, & Gaskin, 2020; Ghasemy, Alvani, et al., 2019) has suggested the meaningfulness of academics' emotions in determining organizational outcomes in university settings, and (2) the Spanish model of servant leadership for HE (Latif & Marimon, 2019) and the principles of this leadership for HE (Wheeler, 2012) indicate the importance of emotional healing in HE contexts.

In addition, given the consistency of our model with the principles of servant leadership for HE, we invite researchers to utilize our validated model in future research studies on antecedents and consequences

of servant leadership in academic settings. Notably, although our model captures the proposed servant leadership principles for HE, it represents a parsimonious multifaceted model with a reasonable number of items per factor.

Last, given the inadequate number of qualitative and mixed-methods research studies on servant leadership in general (Eva et al., 2019) and in academic settings in particular, we encourage researchers to consider qualitative and mixed-methods research studies to explore this important style of leadership.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

No conflict of interested declared by the authors with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethical issues

All procedures performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee of the lead author and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Data Availability Statement

Based on the final model, we have provided the sample covariance matrix of the observed data in Appendix A3.

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Appendix A1

Table A1. Items of the Final Five-Factor Second-Order Model

Code	Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
CVC1	I emphasize the importance of giving back to the community.	4.33	0.612	−0.508	0.352
CVC2	I am always interested in helping people in the community.	4.30	0.623	−0.48	0.318
CVC3	I am involved in community activities.	4.02	0.783	−0.698	0.707
CVC4	I encourage others to volunteer in the community.	4.04	0.760	−0.586	0.434
CS2	I am able to think through complex problems.	3.96	0.664	−0.560	1.078
CS3	I have a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals.	3.97	0.722	−0.596	0.727
CS4	I can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.	3.96	0.635	−0.407	0.836
EMP1	I give others the responsibility to make important decisions about their own jobs.	4.03	0.645	−0.602	1.520
EMP2	I encourage others to handle important work decisions on their own.	4.05	0.639	−0.612	1.563
EMP3	I give others the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way they feel is best.	4.04	0.653	−0.602	1.423
HSGS1	I make others' career development a priority.	3.81	0.766	−0.412	0.289
HSGS2	I am interested in making sure others reach their career goals.	3.99	0.709	−0.495	0.661
HSGS3	I provide others with work experiences that enable them to develop new skills.	4.02	0.686	−0.599	1.095
HSGS4	I want to know about others' career goals.	3.70	0.808	−0.573	0.604
BE1	I hold high ethical standards.	4.28	0.627	−0.436	0.143
BE2	I am always honest.	4.28	0.647	−0.503	0.149
BE3	I would not compromise ethical principles in order to meet success.	4.28	0.792	−1.438	3.128
BE4	I value honesty more than profits.	4.28	0.595	−0.851	0.827

Note. SD: Standard deviation. The standard error of skewness is 0.057 and the standard error of the kurtosis is 0.113.

Appendix A2

Table A2. Variances and Covariances Based on the Final Model

Variances/ Covariances	Estimate	Robust S.E.	Robust Z
SL (SL)*	1.000		
E23 (CVC1)	0.208	0.009	21.995
E24 (CVC2)	0.171	0.010	17.795
E25 (CVC3)	0.248	0.014	17.266
E26 (CVC4)	0.227	0.015	15.219
E28 (CS2)	0.193	0.011	17.987
E29 (CS3)	0.286	0.016	17.379
E30 (CS4)	0.165	0.010	17.068
E31 (EMP1)	0.174	0.011	15.776
E32 (EMP2)	0.115	0.014	8.299
E33 (EMP3)	0.186	0.013	14.467
E35 (HSGS1)	0.216	0.013	16.568
E36 (HSGS2)	0.122	0.008	14.854
E37 (HSGS3)	0.200	0.011	18.905
E38 (HSGS4)	0.379	0.017	21.810
E43 (BE1)	0.154	0.009	16.552
E44 (BE2)	0.163	0.010	16.166
E45 (BE3)	0.353	0.033	10.706
E46 (BE4)	0.160	0.008	19.517
D2 (CVC)	0.081	0.007	11.114
D3 (CS)	0.086	0.009	9.468
D4 (EMP)	0.120	0.010	12.228
D5 (HSGS)	0.157	0.014	11.353
D7 (BE)	0.132	0.009	14.254
E23, E24 (CVC1, CVC2)**	0.068	0.008	8.616

Note. * The variance of SL is fixed to 1.

** The correlation between the error terms is 0.359.

Appendix A3

Table A3. Sample Covariance Matrix Table

Item	CVC1	CVC2	CVC3	CVC4	CS2	CS3	CS4	EMP1	EMP2	EMP3	HSGS1	HSGS2	HSGS3	HSGS4	BE1	BE2	BE3	BE4
CVC1	0.375																	
CVC2	0.258	0.388																
CVC3	0.233	0.285	0.613															
CVC4	0.241	0.265	0.372	0.578														
CS2	0.130	0.135	0.166	0.146	0.441													
CS3	0.128	0.137	0.166	0.164	0.237	0.522												
CS4	0.123	0.133	0.164	0.153	0.251	0.229	0.403											
EMP1	0.118	0.117	0.140	0.146	0.157	0.177	0.168	0.416										
EMP2	0.093	0.121	0.138	0.134	0.135	0.145	0.144	0.264	0.408									
EMP3	0.099	0.118	0.125	0.134	0.121	0.137	0.126	0.227	0.275	0.426								
HSGS1	0.138	0.147	0.176	0.205	0.171	0.192	0.167	0.196	0.187	0.171	0.586							
HSGS2	0.152	0.163	0.180	0.214	0.153	0.197	0.165	0.190	0.182	0.170	0.391	0.503						
HSGS3	0.147	0.157	0.180	0.207	0.182	0.189	0.181	0.199	0.182	0.172	0.295	0.314	0.471					
HSGS4	0.112	0.115	0.161	0.186	0.148	0.188	0.148	0.155	0.140	0.124	0.312	0.321	0.294	0.653				
BE1	0.137	0.135	0.134	0.146	0.163	0.158	0.143	0.145	0.120	0.120	0.140	0.135	0.148	0.102	0.393			
BE2	0.136	0.145	0.151	0.153	0.151	0.157	0.142	0.125	0.112	0.105	0.135	0.132	0.138	0.093	0.252	0.419		
BE3	0.145	0.135	0.138	0.118	0.154	0.142	0.125	0.124	0.116	0.096	0.129	0.131	0.137	0.098	0.248	0.255	0.628	
BE4	0.136	0.134	0.122	0.134	0.117	0.110	0.105	0.098	0.092	0.089	0.121	0.118	0.107	0.078	0.207	0.221	0.260	0.354

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Social Participation and Theoretical Content: Appropriation of Curricular Concepts in Service-Learning

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Abstract

In recent years, higher education has lost its monopoly on the transmission of specialized knowledge. In response, it has sought to expand its contribution to society in areas such as equipping students with practical skills and fostering social engagement. New pedagogical approaches such as service-learning emphasize the importance of these new directions. However, a question arises: In this context, what role should be played by specialized knowledge and its acquisition? It is generally accepted that theoretical learning should not take place in a parallel, self-contained universe, isolated from practical concerns and social commitment, and therefore we must examine how these processes interact. Accordingly, this article analyzes the content learning processes of students participating in service-learning experiences. The results obtained show a diversity in the roles that curricular concepts play, ranging from mere definitions oriented to evaluation, to tools for reflection and action in practice.

Keywords: cultural-historical approach, service-learning, reflection, higher education

One of the core objectives in higher education (HE) is to develop students' command of specialized knowledge. However, practical experiences at this level are often based on transmitting abstract, decontextualized content and on determining whether students' responses are in line with predetermined standards (Matusov et al., 2016). These reproduction-based practices do not necessarily have inherent value and can result in educational alienation (Sidorkin, 2004; Taylor, 2017), generating difficulty in acquiring knowledge beyond mere rote repetition. However, HE, like most other areas of formal education, is losing its monopoly on specialized knowledge (Manzano-Arrondo, 2012; Vila & Domenec, 2004), and the resulting (and inevitable) obsolescence of the traditional educational paradigm obliges policymakers to acknowledge and respond to novel challenges and demands if they are to survive and prosper. One such challenge is the growing trend toward professionalization in education (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Taylor, 2017), in which students acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to apply this knowledge to real-world situations. Furthermore, a rising tide of voices is calling for education systems to focus on the need for social justice (Manzano-Arrondo, 2012), which in practice means they should train professionals capable of constructing knowledge critically and positioning themselves with respect to social needs (Clifford, 2017).

Both currents of opinion are represented in the perspective of education for community-engaged professionals, which focuses on educationalists' ability to develop graduates whose professional skills are accompanied by a concern for social justice (Pasquesi et al., 2019; Trebil-Smith, 2019). This outlook is in line with teaching methods such as service-learning (SL) and community-engaged learning. Moreover, both aspects address an important underlying issue, questioning the value of educational theo-

ries that are disconnected from practical and social considerations. This realization leads us to view the academic world in a critical way, from a contextualized, real-world perspective. This outlook, far from relegating theoretical matters to the background in favor of practice, fully addresses the standard theories, but weighs their usefulness in terms of today's HE interests. This innovation includes the promotion of critical knowledge and thinking, and the provision of training in professional skills.

The topics of professional competence and social commitment are both related to experiential learning, according to which learning is integral to and rooted in human transformation. Dewey (1958) advocated an active form of education in which learners make their own decisions and are connected to the rest of the world. He defined this approach as "life itself" compared to other perspectives, which viewed education as preparation for life. Subsequently, Kolb (1984) advocated experiential learning, emphasizing its potential for amalgamating theory and practice via cycles of action-reflection. A similar vein of thinking was expressed by Freire (2000), who criticized "the banking model of education" based on the accumulation of knowledge for later recovery or use. Both authors advocated learning derived from reflection, whereby knowledge becomes meaningful only in relation to one's experience and personal and/or political standpoint.

The growing acceptance of these ideas has led to the emergence of new educational models that combine curricular learning with practical experience. In these models, reflection is a connecting tool that enables the generation of new theoretical knowledge through the activity itself, in association with real needs (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010; Taylor, 2017). The SL model forms part of this paradigm of experiential learning (Bringle et al., 2011), in which real interactive platforms are developed to connect both spheres of learning—theory and practice—into a single entity, in which social commitment is a key component (Lalueza et al., 2016).

SL has been described as a space of intersection, a boundary, between HE institutions and the community (McMillan et al., 2016), where the acquisition of curricular contents is related to real, practical activities, shared with others, and where learning takes place within an eminently social process involving a shared enterprise (Taylor, 2014). In this sense, many studies have examined the effects of SL and the variables relevant to optimizing the acquisition and development of competence and understanding (Pelco & Ball, 2018; Whitley, 2014). They have considered these aspects both as products of SL (Clifford, 2017) and as manifestations of the link between SL and social commitment (Latta et al., 2018)

The aim of the present study, thus, is to shed light on the process, and in particular to clarify the role of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge through SL in HE. If we view learning as a holistic process, then we cannot assume that theoretical learning is merely an accessory, or a process undertaken in parallel to practical considerations. We seek to understand how practice and disciplinary theories interact and combine in order to facilitate teaching decisions that acknowledge students' priorities regarding theory and practice, and thus help them to learn. Furthermore, we need to show exactly how pedagogical approaches such as SL can contribute to achieving these goals (Pelco & Ball, 2018). In this line, although many educational studies have focused mainly on the learning process, most have examined the results obtained according to the inputs provided, and few have considered how learning occurs and how it is articulated within the students' own subjectivity (García-Romero & Lalueza, 2019; Trebil-Smith, 2019). In our opinion, further theoretical investigation is needed into the sociopsychological processes involved, in terms of meaning-making and the relation between theory and participation (Deeley, 2016; Lalueza & Macías-Gómez-Estern, 2020).

In undertaking these tasks, it is mandatory to look beyond the products of learning, and to focus on the process (Clifford, 2017). To this end, in our study, we present the analysis of focus groups and field journals written by students on a SL experience, in which they report on how they construct their knowledge about the community of practice in which they are immersed (Wenger, 2001).

Three Research Pillars: Learning, Practice, and Reflection

Notions of Learning in Practice

Cultural-historical theory provides a solid

foundation for examining the learning process, underpinned by a questioning attitude toward the dichotomies underlying many educational studies. These traditional dichotomies are (a) the separation between knowledge and practice in the learning process and (b) the separation between social and individual facets of learning (Taylor, 2014).

The cultural-historical perspective emphasizes the importance of overcoming the "how to connect theory with practice" approach, which is underlain by one-directionality from one to the other (Taylor, 2014). Instead, it suggests reformulating the question as "how theory and practice work together," with the understanding that there is a dialectical relationship between both. Thus, knowledge should not only be connected to practice, but situated within practice (Vygotski, 1978). According to this theory, we should address learning holistically, shifting the focal point of observation from "the student's individual learning" to "learning as appropriation and participation in the joint goal-oriented practice" (Rogoff et al., 2007). It is also the domain of relevant meanings for engaging in the students' practical context (Wenger, 2001). Human activity is intrinsically social, and learning should be constructed in association with a cultural activity targeted at a collectively constructed goal.

Forms of abstract knowledge such as definitions and theories are reifications or materializations of social practices and meanings (Wenger, 2001) that demonstrate how the world is seen through our experience and practice. Knowledge is therefore meaningless if detached from a social practice. Furthermore, for learners to make a theory or conception meaningful, they must relate it to a practice that is meaningful in itself, and which contextualizes this theory or conception. This understanding is related to what Schön (1987) termed "frame," the contextual knowledge that serves as a springboard for practice. Thus, the appropriation of theoretical knowledge can serve as a frame for a meaningful practice.

However, this connection is not always possible in HE systems, where abstract knowledge represented in curricular concepts and theories is commonly detached from practical goals and acquired solely as an object to be memorized for subsequent evaluation (Matusov et al., 2016). In contrast, SL experiences allow just such an intersection of theoretical and practical activities, which is what gives this approach its special value in HE.

Service-Learning as a Practical Context

One of the keys of our study is to consider SL as a hybrid activity system in which there is a convergence of diverse activities, contexts, goals, functions, and even natures of knowledge (McMillan et al., 2016). In academia, the primary aim is to create and transmit theories and knowledge in order to help understand the world. In this context, being competent means mastering fundamental theory or demonstrating (through good grades in the subjects) the acquisition of curricular contents. Therefore, practical experience has an instrumental value and is valid to the extent that it is useful for the acquisition of knowledge. On the other hand, in community intervention settings, the activities carried out, although diverse and practical, are always aimed at achieving specific purposes. Knowledge in this context corresponds to competence in managing the psychological and physical artifacts needed to attain the specific goals addressed (Rogoff et al., 2007).

Theory and concept function as psychological instruments, and therefore have an instrumental value. Theoretical knowledge is valuable if it contributes to attaining the stated goals, that is, to performing or improving their execution in practice. The activity common to the HE setting, therefore, is distinct from others in that the purpose of the activity is to acquire theoretical knowledge, whereas in other settings its purpose is to put this theory into practice in order to manage the activity itself.

In SL both contexts, with parallel cultural-historical development, converge. This activity system can be viewed as a "boundary space" (McMillan et al., 2016), a border between the HE activity system and a community activity system. At this border, a transactional effect between contexts takes place, combining and exchanging the service and the knowledge. HE and community service programs exist as two different systems, where the border is composed of SL as a hybridization space, different from each of the original systems and creating a third space (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010), with dual referents and dual objectives. In this hybrid space, students participate simultaneously in two different contexts and in a twofold activity, oriented toward both

service and learning. Students thus have two communities of reference, HE and a community activity, and must achieve two different objectives, a theoretical curricular learning and a practical commitment to society and community service.

But in this third space in which the SL experience takes place there are sometimes contradictions among the rules, the roles, or the mediating artifacts and goals of each individual context. To overcome these contradictions, the agents involved, including students, must negotiate meanings and priorities, thus connecting the knowledge from one context with the reality of the other. This intersystem negotiation means that SL, as an activity system, is in constant evolution (Lalueza et al., 2020), whereby students must construct, through learning and participation, their own knowledge of the practice they are immersed in, and theory must be the tool that helps them to construct it.

In summary, meaning-making and, therefore, learning, takes place along with participation in socially valuable practices (Rogoff et al., 2007). SL creates a context in which different agents (teachers, technicians, community stakeholders, etc.) share goals and practices, forming a community of practice (Wenger, 2001) in which learning is contextual and active, and meaning is acquired within the target action, helping the students to make decisions and participate as full members of that community (Macías-Gómez-Estern et al., 2014).

However, to consolidate this statement we need to understand whether, why, and how this process of learning concretely really happens. Having presented the above assumptions about learning, we should now articulate the connection between theory and practice. In this sense, reflection should be considered as a key factor.

Reflection as a Learning Process

Theoretical-abstract knowledge is not necessarily learned automatically with participation in practice (Wenger, 2001). When undertaking a new activity, we usually do so using our current frameworks (Schön, 1987), that is, our assumptions about how to intervene and what the intervention means. Furthermore, implicit theories of the moral ethos of the action underlie students' understanding of the service (Rissanen et al., 2018), and, consequently, a SL action might not be supported by academic theories. On the other hand, theories in the HE curriculum often refer to very general principles, losing sight of the concrete reality in which students live. Reflection is the cognitive tool that allows us to compare our theories and previous assumptions with new experiences, and thus connect practice with general knowledge (Bruner, 1997).

In this sense, Clarà and Mauri (2010) referred to reflection as a mental activity with which the subject attempts to understand situations that are unknown or uncertain, or that present an incoherence that must be resolved. According to these authors, reflective process is the psychological mechanism where we have the representations of experienced reality, and the curricular concepts are harnessed and connected. This is precisely one of the main functions of HE, to design contexts that encourage reflection, where theories can be seen as relevant sources of questions and answers (Lalueza et al., 2016).

Analyzing how these curricular concepts are used in reflection on practice, that is, how university students learn theory through SL experiences, is thus our main objective here. For this, it is important to analyze what happens when students make use of reflection tools (Arias-Sánchez et al., 2018), and to shift the focus of attention from the product to the learning process itself (Clifford, 2017).

Empirical Research: Exploring the Value of the Concepts

Context of Activity and Research Design

The SL activities in which this research was developed were inspired by the fifth dimension model (Cole, 2006) devised by the Comparative Human Cognition Laboratory, and the proposal of *La Clase Mágica* by Vásquez (2002). Both proposals were developed at the University of California–San Diego and are action research platforms through which psychoeducational interventions are directed at populations at risk of exclusion. HE students participate through mandatory recreational/educational activities together with children and youth from cultural minorities, as part of their degree studies. The projects included in this tradition share a robust learning principle grounded in a cultural-historical approach, and all of them are oriented toward trans-

formative ends through mutual relations of exchange (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010). These projects combine teaching, social intervention, and research; Bell (2004) labeled them cultural psychology design-based research. To use Gutiérrez and Vossoughi's term, they are social design research, in that they seek to create and study social change (Gutiérrez, 2008). In our case, the adaptation of these models to our contexts has generated two different projects, the Shere Rom Project and La Clase Mágica-Sevilla.

The Shere Rom Project is a partnership between the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the municipality of Barcelona (Spain), and schools and social entities in zones where the population is composed of different cultural origins and where there is a high risk of social exclusion (Lalueza et al., 2020). Specifically, this project was carried out within Roma communities. The recreational-educational activities developed in the program are mediated by ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies, such as computer for chatting, digital storytelling or videomaking). These activities consist of creating digital stories inspired by the children themselves, in order to make the activity meaningful to them. HE students, through horizontal relations, guide children via cooperation and negotiation, for which they must learn and understand this unfamiliar context and culture.

In La Clase Mágica-Sevilla, the activity arose from a partnership between the University Pablo de Olavide (UPO) and a school located in a marginal and peripheral zone of Seville (Spain; Macías-Gómez-Estern et al., 2014). The main participants were, as in Barcelona, children from Roma families at risk of social exclusion. This school forms a learning community (Elboj Saso & Oliver Pérez, 2003), where the job of the HE students is primarily to facilitate the activities of small interactive groups, in which they serve as learning guides.

In these SL experiences, we follow in the tradition of a design-based experiment, by combining educational improvement with research (Bell, 2004). Our aim in this research is to show how abstract knowledge, concretely the curricular contents, is learned and used through reflection; we focus not on the results of learning but on the process itself, underlining at the same time the instruments that are in play to promote that reflection (Arias-Sánchez et al., 2018). Concretely, in our SL courses we have introduced field journals and discussion groups, two narrative tools whose production has been studied in order to analyze this learning process. These tools are turned into boundary objects that combine theory and practice. As they create new processes in learning and affect students' social intervention, they constitute the main instrument of our research.

Student Participants

The students participating in Shere Rom did so in conjunction with several courses for undergraduate psychology majors: for first-year students, Developmental Psychology; for fourth-year students, Cultural and Communicative Psychology, Social and Community Intervention, or Children and Families in Contexts of Difficulty. Students from La Clase Mágica were in their first year of an undergraduate degree in social education and were enrolled in the courses Psychological Bases of Human Functioning or Didactics of Education.

Of the 120 students participating in the SL activities during the academic year 2015–2016, in both contexts, 34 were chosen for this study, according to the following criteria: (a) They must have participated in the discussion group, and (b) they must have provided complete field notes. These criteria were applied in order to ensure the students included in this study had performed the complete experience of reflection.

The Shere Rom sample consisted of 20 students, 12 (all women, average age 19) in their first year, and eight (1 male and 7 female, average age 23) in their fourth year. The La Clase Mágica sample consisted of 14 students in their first year (2 male and 12 female, average age 19). All of them were middle-class and White.

For the development of this study the necessary ethical standards have been applied (Christian, 2011). In addition, we have considered communication with students and their right to information as epistemologically fundamental (Estalella, 2011). The participants of the course gave their consent for the use of their written texts and their recorded interventions. The participants' words were quoted verbatim and the researchers were very careful not to impose their own ideas on them. All personal names have been anonymized and replaced with pseudonyms. The focus groups

were the scene of a dialogue with the students about their own participation in the research. We recognize, however, that the communication could not last until the end of the research process because at the end of the academic year we lost contact with the students, although they were aware that the research was continuing. Even at this point, the students knew they had the right to contact the researchers if they wanted to delete their research data.

Narration as Instrument for Learning, Evaluation, and Research

The students' observations were part of their active participation in the SL activities, which took place once weekly throughout one semester. The students wrote their observations in a field journal, which collected the field notes taken during their service activity. Each student produced an average of nine field notes.

To write the field journal, the following instructions were given: (a) provide a detailed, rich description of the activity and of your participation in it; (b) reflect on the practice at two levels: in relation to the theoretical content of your studies, and in relation to your personal feelings, emotions, and role in the practical experience. The students drafted the notes using a word processor and submitted them to their course teachers (the researchers in this study) once weekly. The teachers answered three of the field notes (first, third, and seventh) of each student as feedback, adding comments with questions, reflections, and other prompts for learning.

These field notes were an instrument of reflection about changings and learnings and were also used for course evaluation purposes. In this sense, and in the hybrid context of SL, they can be considered what McMillan et al. (2016) termed boundary objects. They are tools that are oriented toward two different goals: on the one hand, the purpose of the intervention (to analyze and improve the practical experience) and, on the other, academic goals—that is, learning or student evaluation. Accordingly, these field journals constitute narratives of the students' experience and practice (Foste, 2019), in which dialectic relationships between students and teachers, or between theory and practice, are likely to appear. The field journals allow us to analyze both the reflection processes and the participants' subjective flux (Arias-Sánchez et al., 2018; Foste, 2019).

Another aspect of the SL course was the work developed in the focus groups, which took place at the end of each semester and optionally during this period. For these sessions, students were divided into groups of eight to 12 to facilitate discussion. The main aim of the sessions was to reflect on the experience: Students were seated around a table, offered snacks and drinks, and the teacher-researcher suggested discussion topics, loosely structured regarding (a) the effectiveness of the practical, skill-learning experience, (b) the process of theoretical learning, and (c) the emotional and social implications of the experience. The students were invited to respond spontaneously and to offer questions and suggestions for discussion. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and was recorded on video. The content of the videos was later transcribed verbatim. All students authorized the use and analysis of their journals and of the discussion group recordings and gave permission for the research findings to be published.

The field notes and discussion group transcriptions were analyzed using Atlas.ti 7.0 (Muñoz-Justicia & Padilla, 2011). This qualitative analysis software had three main functions in our research. First, to create categories of quotes on different labels, helping us to simplify the information; second, to mediate and coordinate a collective analysis process, where the analysis instructions were shared and the analysis files of the different researchers were merged; and finally, to establish relationships between quotes and elaborate theorization from them.

The content analysis has been performed by dividing the text into quotes and labeling them with codes. The systematization of the software allowed working in an iterative process of inductive-deductive analysis. We considered the variety rather than the frequency of codes, to show the whole breadth of psychological processes happening.

Analysis Procedures

This study is part of a broader research process, as described in Arias-Sánchez et al. (2018), where different researchers focused on different dimensions of the learning process. The text corpus considered in this research was composed of 34 field journals (each containing nine to 10 separate field notes) and the transcripts obtained from the discussions of four focus groups. The

strategy was a common content analysis of the data in an iterative inductive-deductive process that was conducted through the following phases.

Phase 0: Design and Teaching. At the beginning of the academic year, the nine researchers met to discuss the study process and define the objectives of the research. Instructions for carrying out the field notes and how to perform feedback were agreed. During the course, the researcher-teachers read the field notes weekly and gave feedback on three occasions, which implies an informal first approach to the data and a dialogue with the students.

Phase 1: Familiarization. The collected data were divided among the nine researchers for reading. Each researcher read the field notes of the assigned students chronologically as well as the assigned focus group transcript. At the end of the familiarization phase, a seminar was organized among the researchers. In accordance with theoretical and methodological criteria (Strauss & Corbin, 1997), it was decided how to orient the research and the unity of analysis that we would use. Regarding the orientation of the study, it was decided to look separately at different types of learning: theoretical, procedural/professional, and personal. Regarding the unit of analysis, it was decided that was the quote or text fragment with meaning by itself.

Phase 2: Inductive Coding. Once the main research foci and the unit of analysis had been decided, the data were analyzed separately by different researchers, using Atlas.ti software. A workshop and a seminar with Dr. Muñoz-Justicia (coauthor of the Atlas.ti manual) was organized to train researchers in the software and define instructions for use. Free coding was decided, with the meaning of each code and category explained in a "memo." This allowed each researcher to classify the quotes into categories and category families, which were later shared with the other researchers.

Phase 3. Discussion of Categories. In a third seminar, the different inductive analysis was discussed and an agreed coding system defined by all, with clearly established definitions of categories. A common Atlas.ti file (HU-1) was created with the primary documents, and a preset "codebook" was shared among the researchers to coordinate the analysis.

Phase 4: Deductive Coding. The common file data were randomly distributed in pairs, so that each field note was read by two different researchers. After coding, agreement between pairs was verified to ensure validity, with more than 90% concordance found between pairs. All Atlas.ti files were merged into a new one (HU-2) and distributed again for the next research step.

Phase 5: Integration (Inductive Coding). In this phase, the researchers divided into three groups to work separately on different learning dimensions (theoretical, procedural/professional, and personal). Data related to theoretical learning were analyzed through a new inductive or grounded analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1997), guided by the question "What role do curricular concepts play in the activity in which students are participating?" During this coding, the researchers worked together, reaching common agreements.

Phase 6: Group Discussion and Conclusions. The work of the different subanalysis was shared to the whole group for discussion. The entire research group discussed and validated the preliminary results in a final seminar.

Sharing work among researchers and triangulating data added validity to the process, leaving the research both grounded on evidence and connected with theory (Martínez & Moreno, 2014). The interobserver dialogue and the data triangulation are instruments that help us to control the researchers' bias (Foste, 2019; Matusov et al., 2016). In fact, Phases 1 to 4 focused on this validation, whereas Phases 5 and 6 focused more on theoretical elaboration.

Next, we will expose the different uses that students made of curricular concepts and the role they play in the narrative and reflective activity. For that, we present verbatim quotes from the field journals, which illustrate how students used theory in their reflection on practice. The quotes are identified with a pseudonym, the source of the text (focus group or field journal), and the student's major (also the year in the case of psychology majors). In sum, the quote attribution is expressed as (Pseudonym, source, major).

Results and Discussion

Roles of Curricular Concepts in Reflection

Analysis of the students' field notes and focus group transcriptions highlights the different ways in which curricular concepts are used, in relation both to the practical experience and to the students' own participation. The analysis showed three different roles that students gave to theory: theory as object in the reflection by itself, theory as instrument for reflecting about practice, and theory as mediator of processes of agency taking.

These differential uses illustrate the gradual appropriation that students make of theoretical concepts (Taylor, 2014). Below we will analyze these uses in detail, including examples and describing the motives behind each of them.

Theory as the Target of Reflective Activity

Field notes show that students' reflections are often directed only at curricular concepts and theories by themselves, without saying much about their implications in practice. However, these reflections on theory are expressed in different ways, and these differences can inform us about the differences in the motives that students have when writing about the theory. For example, some students may be especially driven to obtain good grades, whereas others have an intrinsic interest in the theory. Below, some examples are presented to illustrate.

Reproduction of the Curricular Concepts for Evaluative Purposes. Some of the quotes analyzed literally reproduce concepts or definitions studied in the theoretical part of the course.

> Lalueza et al. (2001) explain, "their socializing practices are based on children's participation in the social world and on guided learning techniques." (María, field journal, 4th year psychology)

> Social reinforcement is a gesture or sign from one person to another that conveys a positive intention. A smile, a high-five, an approval or a compliment can make positive attitudes become common and extremely efficient in the classroom. (Ángela, field journal, social education)

Here students are reporting their knowledge of the curricular content, which makes it very likely that a primary goal in writing these entries is to provide the "correct" answer for the evaluation of field notes.

Reflection on Curricular Concepts. Other types of writings focus on curricular concepts. Unlike the previous case, now the students seem to be trying to explore the theory in greater depth, trying to connect it with practice and resignifying it, seeking to gain a deeper understanding of it.

> In this execution phase, we may realize that some changes need to be made to the project, and therefore make some adjustments between the scheduled program and the contingent, imponderable aspects of our immediate reality. In the theoretical sessions on Social and Community Intervention, we are examining the topic of project evaluation, which consists in making a systematic, objective assessment of the project both when it is underway and when it is finished, regarding its design, its implementation, and its results. The objective is to determine its relevancy and whether the objectives were met, in addition to its efficiency, efficacy, impact and sustainability for its development. An evaluation should provide credible, useful information, which allows the lessons learned to be incorporated into the decision-making process. (Juana, field journal, 4th year psychology)

In this example, the student may well be writing with the evaluation in mind, but she is also developing the theory in a way that is connected to the specific situation of the project, contextualizing the phases encountered in an intervention.

Many students make use of their experience and their observation to interpret the curricular concepts, filling them with their own contextualized reality and giving meaning to the concepts through their own practice.

> It is very difficult to decipher . . . the concept of "socialization." I didn't understand it, so I set out to investigate it a bit, and later I related it to the school, to how these children have a socialization that is different to ours because

> they were born where they were. (Maricarmen, focus group, social education)

> The use of a source of motivation outside the individual, or more accurately, the use of positive reinforcement (presenting an attractive/pleasant stimulus after a response), as a reward for the most original card, creates in students what we call "extrinsic motivation." That is, what pushes the student to do the task is external, like a gift, which encourages them to do it more successfully. (Helena, field journal, social education)

In both cases, students are oriented toward the curricular concept, but their practice helps them understand it. In the first quote, it helps the student understand there may be different socialization processes, and in the second, it helps the student create a real picture of motivational processes.

This orientation is related to the evaluation too, since in both cases the object of the activity is the curriculum, which meets an academic goal. The difference is that the second role implies the appropriation of the theory taught in the academic context, transforming it from abstract to concrete through real experience in the community, thus going beyond mere rote repetition (García-Romero & Lalueza, 2019).

Instruments of Reflection Between Theory and Practice

Curricular concepts also can serve as tools for understanding practical experience and making it meaningful. The theory gives meaning to the new, uncertain, or complex events that students are experiencing. Theory in this case assumes the role of psychological artifact that allows a better understanding of the practice.

Curricular Concepts as Psychological Artifacts for Understanding Practice. For these students, the curricular concepts are constituted in psychological artifacts, in cognitive resources that help them understand the practice and allow them to construct a coherent narrative. This understanding, essential in itself, also helps to contextualize the concept and give it a real meaning.

> In addition, as time goes on, I keep finding an explanation for why many children stop doing an activity, and it's because the content of the activity is too far from their zone of proximal development. There is a gap between what children can do by themselves (zone of actual development) and what they are capable of doing with my help. . . . Now I remember that one of the days in class a boy said to me, "I don't know how this is done, I'm not going to do it," and I answered, "It doesn't matter, I'll explain it to you until you understand it and can do it." I didn't attach any importance to this sentence, but now I know that Vygotsky [*sic*] classified these situations as "zones of proximal development." (Sara, field journal, social education)

This student is trying to understand her own actions and experiences using the concept of zone of proximal development, giving meaning to her action as an educator. In the examples below, the student uses concepts from cultural psychology to signify the process of cultural otherness, which she is experiencing.

> Family ties within the Roma community are understood as stronger given its system of interdependence, which is seen again thanks to the relationship established between two of the boys present in the association, where a strong family bond is appreciated. Therefore, the responsibility is collective, and the actions of each one commits the group. (Marta, field journal, 4th year psychology)

> In the field of work, we also see how this affects authority and power, since most of jobs carried out in the Roma culture is based on its own principles and its own laws, which collides with the imposition of schedules and pronouncements by the state, which imposes its power and creates a conflict between the two. (Marta, field journal, 4th year psychology)

This student has come to understand the idiosyncrasies of Roma culture in its values, which differ from those of the culture with which she is familiar, as this other student

explicitly describes:

> Through Cultural or Sociocultural Anthropology, whose studies are centered around the human being via their customs, beliefs and other habits acquired by society, I managed to understand the values and particularities of Roma culture. (Ramón, field journal, social education)

This quote describes how the student used curricular concepts to resolve situations of uncertainty (Clarà & Mauri, 2010) associated with understanding a new context, that of Roma culture in Seville. This reflection allowed him to understand these new situations by putting into practice the available psychological artifacts (curricular concepts). In this example, the student also resignifies the theoretical concepts presented, namely motivation, customs, values, beliefs, and habits. Through their practical experience, students add nuances and specificity to the curricular concepts, giving them contextual meaning and a personalized interpretation (Kiely, 2005).

The difference between these roles assigned to concepts, in contrast to our observations in the previous section, is that here the focus of the reflective activity is the intervention. It is the practical experience that is acquired, and the new reality being discovered, that capture the students' interest. In consequence, they adopt a more prominent position in the community of practice and appropriate its goals and priorities (Taylor, 2014). Their objective is no longer just to report on the theory or to elaborate on it to obtain good grades, but to understand it in order to participate in socially valuable practice (Matusov et al., 2016).

These two processes (developing the theory and explaining the practice) are often contiguous and complementary. Practical experience supports the appropriation of concepts and is a key factor in the learning process, as envisioned by the experiential learning theorists (Dewey, 1958). At the same time, theory provides a valuable framework for practice (Schön, 1987), helping transform the meaning of what Clarà and Mauri (2010) called "practical knowledge." This twofold application of the field journal, oriented toward both theory and practice, is what interests us and leads us to see it as a frontier artifact in which curricular concepts are connected to practical activities. On the one hand, the practice helps students understand and learn the theory, and on the other, the theory is a support in the development of practice, all of which enables a real learning process (Macías-Gómez-Estern et al., 2014).

In the focus group discussions, the students made various references to this twofold process, in which the practical experience is seen as an important means of providing the theory with real-world meaning:

> Where the practice helped the most was in Psychology, because one thing is theory . . . but you understood it when you could relate it to the school; it was automatic. (Carlos, focus group, social education)

> It's not about learning a definition; it's about learning what it means. (Nerea, focus group, social education)

Moreover, theory is important for making the practice meaningful:

> The theory not only stays there in the books, but we can also apply it to the practice, and more than anything you realize that there is more . . . that there are children to whom you can give. (Ángela, focus group, social education)

Thus, we see how theory and practice complemented each other in reflection, which leads students to become more involved in practice, acquiring a more central participation (Taylor, 2014) and entering into meaningful learning processes. At the same time, this learning also leads students to confront their own implicit theories (Rissanen et al., 2018), forcing them to deconstruct and resignify them in order to adjust them to the new knowledge.

Implications in Agentive Processes

In this final section is shown a third level of the use of curricular concepts. It is a deeper use, in the sense that it is related to the students' agency and to achieving personal objectives. In this study, it has been shown how theory has been instrumentalized in two directions: (a) as a tool to design future actions and (b) to take positions and assume

commitments related to their closest reality.

Curricular Concepts to Take Decisions in Practice. Theory is directly involved in taking, fostering, and guiding initiative and providing students with arguments to support their views and to reach decisions.

> For the time being, what most worries me is M. . . . I think that we still haven't established good enough rapport for me to get closer to him. Therefore, my job next week will be to get all four to participate equally. (María, field journal, 4th year psychology)

> Having made a previous diagnosis of the class helped me get to know them even better and set the goals that I want to accomplish. That is, I was able to detect capacities and needs that I was unaware of before; I became aware of each student's priorities and so I was able to set the goals I considered appropriate. (Esther, field journal, 4th year psychology)

In these quotes, we can see that the students' decision-making is mediated by the psychological concept of rapport and/or the diagnosis of capacities and needs. These resources inform the students' analysis and underlie their planning.

The students also use the theory from the curriculum to explore possible solutions to real problems, as we shall see in the next two quotes.

> As a solution for achieving positive attributions in S. and eliminating the negative ones, we could get the teachers to attribute success in other tasks to internal factors like capacity, energy, or effort, or to attribute her failures only to internal, unstable, controllable factors, such as effort. Alternatively, we could train in attributions, where tasks in which S. has been successful, and drawing or another task where she occasionally fails, would be interspersed in an activity. In this context, the teacher could interpret the successes by referring to the energy and decisiveness with which she performed the task. (Ángela, field journal, social education)

> I think that the teacher should adapt more to R. . . . One of the possible methodological techniques would be viewing songs in Spanish Sign Language or teaching him instruments that vibrate so he can feel them. Also, he could learn about different instruments through drawings, even if he can't play them. (Diana, field journal, social education)

In both quotes, students apply curricular theory in the formulation of future practice aimed at improving educational processes. They go beyond observation and the application of practice to perform a more central participation, proposing modifications, seeking to achieve objectives that are shared by the community of practice (Wenger, 2001). The curriculum thus is important in that it helps students contribute by sharing practice and participating more fully.

Personal Position-Taking. Cultural concepts are also used to clarify doubts and compare different possibilities, naming and describing the phenomena observed in everyday reality. This fact helps students position themselves in relation to the social situation in which they participate.

> To compare the field journals with the theory . . . I began to do it and saw that each teacher's educational system is their own . . . that, while one is more behaviorist, another focuses more on positive reinforcement. . . . I don't know which is better or worse. There is even a girl whom I told, "I'm not going to give you this bracelet until you behave properly" and I don't know if I'm doing the right thing because it doesn't seem to promote her interest, right? If you behave properly, I'll give you the bracelet, I don't know if that's good or bad, I don't know if. . . . (Cristina, field journal, 1st year psychology)

Although, ultimately, this student does not take a position, she is using the theory of educational models to name what she found and is trying to adopt a position based on critical reflection, and this process opens the way to agency-taking (Sidorkin, 2004). In other cases, position-taking is clearer:

> To establish positive affective relationships that help in conflict

> resolution and decision-making, as well as meaningful learning, it is essential to respect and know their beliefs and values, without being surprised by practices that are frowned upon or unthinkable in the cultures from which we come. (Esther, field journal, 4th year psychology)

In this case, the theoretical understanding of the curricular concepts helps the student distinguish a pedagogical methodology as universal from the reality associated with the hegemonic culture. Based on understanding, she takes a position about what should be the correct or ethical approach to the case at hand.

Curricular theories may offer students a cultural guide with which to examine their position and consider their commitments to the practical experiences in which they are participating, thus becoming what Pasquesi et al. (2019) call drivers.

> What makes us fearful of expressing what we feel are the consequences. As we can see in the book Summerhill, if children are aware that a teacher is "superior," simply because she is a teacher and older, they will not reveal themselves as they actually are and will be afraid of the repercussions of saying what they think, for fear of punishment, of failing and of countless other things. For this reason, we must fight to ensure that the children do not see us as their superiors; we are all people with the same rights and the same duties, free to express what we feel, and we should not be inhibited by the consequences that might come from our thoughts. A FREE EDUCATION is the foundation of our future to be shaped as true people. (Raquel, field journal, social education)

In the quote above, the libertarian ideas of education from *Summerhill* led the student to reconsider the power roles in the educational system and to commit herself to a free education that respects learners' individual rights. This is evidence of how curricular concepts mediate in identity-based and personal narration (Bruner, 1997), helping students recognize the options available and their implications. These theoretical elements allow students to analyze and formulate their own life positions, which develop within a specific context, but are gradually generalized and extrapolated to broader social and educational phenomena. Thus, the student takes a position in a reality and society broader than the immediate practice, which produces a transition in the community of practice and constitutes an important episode in forming students' identities (Naudé, 2015).

In addition, in these last quotes it can also be seen that curricular concepts are mobilized to elaborate critical ethical discussion, which is essential for genuine education (Matusov et al., 2016). Higher education must involve a process that facilitates position-taking and awareness about the reality students live in (Freire, 2000). Thus, students become part of a decision process about which objectives have priority and how they can participate in the achievement of those goals. In sum, students become fully aware agents within the communities of practice in which they take part, as well as agents capable of determining future paths of identity and participation (Wenger, 2001).

Conclusions

SL is clearly framed in the field of experiential learning (Deeley, 2016; Foste, 2019; Naudé, 2015), with numerous efforts by the academic community to use it as a basis for educational methods that facilitate not only practical competence, but also critical, meaningful, and authentic learning (Kiely, 2005; Latta et al., 2018; Taylor, 2014; Wilson et al., 2015). In the present study, we show how students' relationships with curricular concepts and theories go far beyond their mere acquisition, or a focus solely on evaluation or application. The theory also becomes a fundamental part of the activities carried out in practice, supporting the students' reflections while shaping their way of seeing the world and even guiding them in making personal commitments.

All this is possible thanks to the students' participation in boundary spaces such as SL experiences (McMillan et al., 2016), where they find a scenario grounded in two different contexts: academia and community service. In this dual participation, students experiment in a new territory in which they must confer meaning on the theory and on the lived reality and their own participation

in it. In this sense, curricular concepts are used to achieve different purposes and objectives, corresponding to both contexts of practice. For some students these concepts might be considered peripheral, of value merely to obtain good grades, but for others they are a key element within a process of real learning (Macías-Gómez-Estern et al., 2014).

The main contribution of this study is to highlight the different roles or uses those curricular concepts can assume, showing that their function is neither predetermined nor stable, and pointing out as well the relevance that reflection has in all this learning process. In the following figure, we present a concept map, based on our findings, that illustrates the complexity of the process that intertwines practice and theory. Curricular concepts can be used as objects of evaluation or reflection in themselves, as instruments between theory and practice, and as promoters of agency making.

Considering the academic context, one of the main aims is to learn and understand theory by itself. Acquisition of knowledge is fundamental in the activity context of formal education that is HE. Therefore, we found that students write to show their mastery of concepts to achieve good marks. At the same time, in the same category of concepts as targets in themselves, we have found that some students develop the theory beyond what is needed for evaluation, showing evidence of a genuine reflection about theory.

In the second place, theory relates to practice in two senses. Theory becomes a fundamental part of the activities carried out in practice as instruments aimed to develop a better understanding of the context, people, and participation. Therefore, as Kiely (2005) pointed out, lived experience promotes personalization of theories and awareness, and therefore also promotes resignifying curricular concepts in concrete lived experience. So, the existence of a circular process in learning is evident, as suggested by Kolb (1984), using concepts to explain practical reality, and at the same time practice appears as an instrument that gives genuine meanings to theory.

Finally, some students used curricular contents as mediated tools in their agency-taking processes in the community activity. First, students used the curricular contents to act and reach new levels of participation in the community of practice (Wenger, 2001). Second, curricular concepts crucially involved students in critical reflection, prompting them to make conscious efforts to raise their own awareness (Freire, 2000), and at the same time guiding them in taking positions and contributing to the development of their own identities (Naudé, 2015).

Considering the processes marked in the map by the red circle, we find that the mastery of curricular knowledge is key to the students' full participation in the community of practice (Wilson et al., 2015),

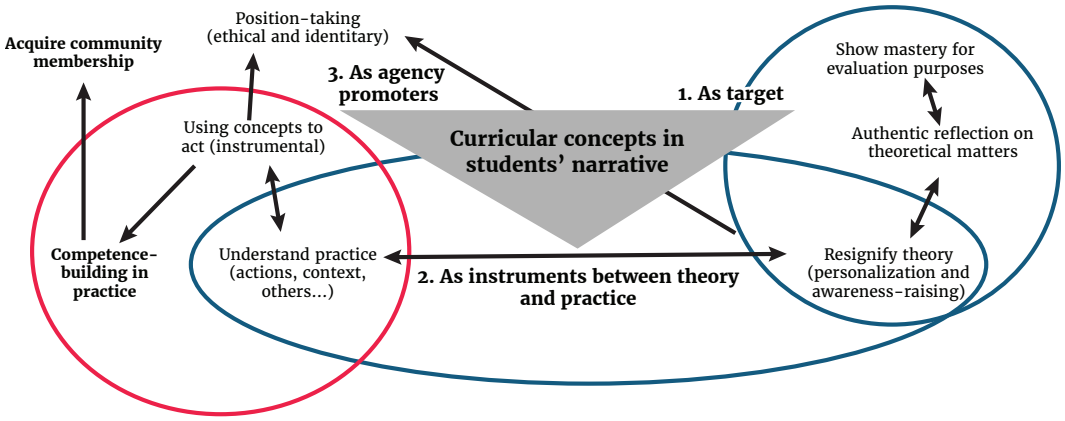

Figure 1: Functions of Curricular Concepts on S-L Narrative

contributing to the development of socially valuable participation (Matusov et al., 2016). As a result, theory becomes another inseparable part of the activity, just as theorists of experiential learning have advocated (Dewey, 1958; Kolb, 1984).

The findings of this empirical research show us the relevance of this kind of hybrid experience in the learning process, underlining the great pluralism in the usefulness of curricular concepts in SL activities, with important implications both in theory and in practice. If we are attentive to the students' motives and interests, the theoretical learning that these experiences promote can help to overcome the problem of educational alienation (Sidorkin, 2004; Taylor, 2017) as well as to promote students' commitment to social issues (Freire, 2000). Moreover, theory might constitute an area of reflection by means of which students could adopt a proactive ethical standpoint (Matusov et al., 2016).

However, this synthesis would not be possible without the fundamental role of the teacher as a guide in these learning processes (Deeley, 2016), scaffolding and helping students to understand and achieve the proposed objectives. The pedagogical work of the teacher must be focused on building bridges between the two activity scenarios in which the students participate, establishing connections between them and merging the goals pursued in both. In this sense, we highlight the relevance of the field note as a frontier tool that serves the interests of both contexts (García-Romero et al., 2019). Field notes are configured as key elements in the learning process, since they constitute a dialectical artifact between teacher and student that helps to understand this process, as well as to know the limitations and personal objectives of each student, thus allowing teachers to propose new alternatives or future challenges that motivate new learning (Foste, 2019).

Curricular concepts are not accessory or parallel to community service in SL experiences, but they are part of a complex sociopsychological process in a boundary context (McMillan et al., 2016) that must be taken into account if we want to design quality SL experiences. Together with Clifford (2017), Haddix (2015), and Latta et al. (2018), we consider SL an authentic learning opportunity that highlights the social value of theoretical and expert knowledge.

Research has yet to delve into these authentic learning processes. In this article, we have tried to demonstrate how the spaces created through SL support convincing scenarios for these processes to take place, facilitating the internalization of concepts and their use in real practices. We hope that the concept map we have presented can illuminate ideas for these future studies.

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Sustainable Arts and Health: The Role of a University in Facilitating an Intergenerational, Interdisciplinary Community Arts Project

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Abstract

There is growing interest in the use of intergenerational practice in arts and health to support psychological well-being and community cohesion. However, little research has addressed the facilitation of such projects, or how higher education institutions can support them. Here we examine the role of the University of Bedfordshire in Generations Dancing, an 11-week dance and photography project for older adults and young people in Bedford. Focus groups were conducted with the older adults, young people, artists, independent living centre leaders, and schoolteachers involved. Inductive content analysis highlighted the university's role in brokering between community sectors, promoting the project, and offering resources. These factors appeared to play a significant part in enabling the project to develop beyond what smaller organizations working independently might have achieved, and in facilitating a sustainable model for its perpetuation.

Keywords: arts and health, intergenerational, sustainability, community arts

In recent years there has been growing understanding of how engagement with arts practices can supplement and support medicine and care in the context of public health. The term "arts and health" is used to define these practices, which are increasingly recognized and valued as multifaceted tools for supporting mental and physical health, well-being, and community engagement (Daykin & Joss, 2016; Gordon-Nesbitt, 2017; Varvarigou et al., 2016). Arts and health is a growing area of activity because it has the potential to play a significant role in supporting the challenging conditions of the UK public health and care service (e.g., limited access to funding, resources, and staffing). Often these kinds of activities offer more cost-effective ways of addressing issues such as fall prevention (Vella-Burrows et al., 2017), social isolation (Hawkley et al., 2003; Nordin & Hardy, 2009), well-being (Nordin & Hardy, 2009; Park, 2014), and particular diseases such as Parkinson's disease and dementia (McGill et al., 2014; Vella-Burrows & Wilson, 2016). The intersection between arts and health can create challenges, however, in terms of how the different working processes established in particular fields align. Multidisciplinary practices, relationships between stakeholders (Jensen, 2018), sustainability, and evidence-based evaluation (Daykin et al. 2013; Daykin et al., 2017; Stickley et al. 2016; Swan & Atkinson, 2012) are all competing factors that affect the quality, success, and viability of arts and health projects. There is limited literature that specifically examines the logistical and practical factors that facilitate collaborative arts and health projects of this nature. Partnership working is recognized as a tool for integrating fragmented landscapes of practice, bringing together multiple perspectives and utilizing resources and knowledge from different sectors (Angus, 2002; Jensen, 2018; Kendall et al., 2018; Lester et al., 2008). The role that cultural providers, including higher education institutions, play within the arts and health ecology can be significant in

terms of the multidisciplinary knowledge and expertise that they offer and their capacity for long-term project management. The aim of this study is to explore how a university can facilitate arts and health activity that connects diverse stakeholder groups in sustainable ways.

Within the field of arts and health there is a growing trend for intergenerational practices. Local governments increasingly promote the benefits of intergenerational activity to enhance social cohesion and community engagement, with many offering guidelines and toolkits for how best to deliver intergenerational projects (Carter, 2007; CIP, 2005; Granville, 2002; Springate et al., 2008; Welsh Government Association, 2012). These are generally informed by the Beth Johnson Foundation's (2011) definition of intergenerational practice and its subsequent guidelines and highlight how intergenerational arts and health projects can meet the expectations of public health bodies. For example, the Care Quality Commission, which independently regulates health and social services in England, specified that care should make a difference to a person's health and well-being (CQC, 2017); the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2013) advised that older adults should have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities, including social participation and engagement; and Ofsted (2018) has stated that all schools must provide spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development opportunities for young people. These stipulations recognize not only the need to meet basic care or educational needs, but also the importance of enhancing quality of life in terms of the socialization and well-being of both younger and older people. As a result, service and educational providers increasingly look outward to the cultural sector to implement health and well-being projects, forming cross-sector collaborations with artists and arts organizations and drawing upon arts practices as a mechanism to connect participants from different sectors of the community.

The guidelines published by the Beth Johnson Foundation (2011) highlighted how the implementation of intergenerational practices can take many forms and that the higher the level of contact between participant groups, the greater the impact. They identified a seven-step scale that ranges from learning about other age groups as the simplest form of engagement, to creating intergenerational communities with opportunities for meaningful engagement embedded in social norms and traditions. The guidelines go on to identify the many practical and organizational demands of intergenerational practices, signalling the challenges that could prevent small organizations or providers, such as schools and care settings, from being able to establish this kind of work. Jensen (2018) stressed that although interdisciplinary work can offer valuable insights from different sectors, it also presents difficulties in terms of the often ambiguous roles and sometimes conflicting logics of those involved. Many projects have short timelines and therefore create only fixed periods of intergenerational contact rather than the kind of sustainable community cohesion that the Beth Johnson Foundation recommends. As a result, the integration of the different process and practices can be underdeveloped and prevent follow-on activity from taking place. Networking and brokerage to meet potential collaborators and funders, publicity, access to space, and advice concerning evaluation methods have all been identified as valued contributions that external agencies like local councils or higher education institutions can offer to support cross-sector partnerships (BOP Consulting, 2014; Jensen, 2018).

Understanding how collaborative partnerships between arts, care, and educational providers can be facilitated is fundamental to the sustainability of intergenerational arts and health practices. In response to the outlined concerns, this article explores the role of a university in managing an intergenerational, interdisciplinary community arts project called Generations Dancing. Themes such as institutional logics (Jensen, 2018), brokerage (BOP Consulting, 2014), and sustainability are considered in relation to the project, which used arts practice as a mode of engagement to connect school students with older adults living in Bedford.

About Generations Dancing

The University of Bedfordshire is a widening access institution with a civic mission to engage with the local community that is delivered collaboratively between academic faculties and the university's central Arts and Culture team and Access and Outreach team. Generations Dancing was a partnership facilitated by the university

between two artists, two older adult independent living centres (ILC) run by Bedford Housing Association (BHA), and two secondary schools. The researchers worked with the Access and Outreach team to build relationships with local schools who were part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, which aims to support and increase the progression of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to higher education. The project was funded by Arts Council England as part of a larger bid to support the development of dance activity in the East of England.

The project had three goals: to foster artistic collaboration between different sectors of the Bedford community; to improve social inclusion and enable different sectors of the community to connect; and to improve participants' quality of life (outcomes relating to participant well-being and social inclusion are reported in Douse et al., 2020). The project also served as a pilot both to generate data and to develop relationships with various stakeholders to inform a larger project of activity in the future. Prior to project commencement, several local care providers and schools were contacted to seek out their interest, and the university recruited a dance artist and photographer. The artists worked outside the institution but were known to the researchers (for example, they had previously delivered guest lectures) and were thus informed about the nature of the project and the particular processes of the university. Led by the university, this group developed the aims of the project and created a plan to ensure the project would meet the varying needs of the participants. The artists in particular were consulted so that their expertise could inform the development of the project, but ultimately the researchers were responsible for coordinating and planning the project. In doing so the researchers were able to draw on their networks with schools, their student interns, and to capitalize on access to studio spaces and internal marketing teams. A launch event at the university was attended by staff from the various organizations, young people and older adults who would have the chance to participate, and various members of the local community. This event provided an opportunity to take part in a taster workshop, meet each other, see the university spaces, and hear about the research that would accompany the project.

The project took place over an 11-week period. In the first 5 weeks, artists worked with the group of older adults in their residential activity room and, separately, with the school students in their schools. The participants developed dance skills and recorded short films of themselves that were watched by the other group to establish an initial relationship. The artists were supported by four university student interns each week. The interns were dance students recruited from the university's undergraduate and postgraduate dance courses, each of whom had undertaken modules in community dance. The interns also received an afternoon of training and planning with the artists. The specific duties of the interns included keeping a register, engaging participants, assisting with travel and mobility where appropriate, joining in the workshops to offer practical support, communicating with participants to ensure their needs were met, and reporting back to the artists at the end of each session. The final six weeks of the project were delivered in a dance studio at the university. During this period, the older adults were brought to the university in taxis, supported by the interns. The sessions involved dancing together and photographing each other.

Over the 11 weeks, the dance artist created a 15-minute performance called Generations Dancing. It explored the experience of living in Bedford and drew upon stories and inspirations from the two age groups, who had both divergent and shared experiences. An accompanying exhibition documented their process and the photography skills they had acquired. The performance and exhibition were attended by over 150 people, consisting of friends, family, local Bedford community members, university staff, housing scheme leaders, and members of the schools' leadership teams. During Week 7 of the project the BBC filmed a short documentary that was highlighted on the Three Counties news page and later shared across the BBC's national news website page.

The academics involved in the project had dance and performing arts backgrounds and were active as practitioners and researchers focused mainly in the areas of contemporary dance, professional practice, and dance psychology. The project created an opportunity for the researchers to undertake evidence-driven research using sound research designs that drew upon established theories around health and psychological

well-being (for details of measures and outcomes, please see Douse et al., 2020). Consequently, they were able to contribute much-needed evidence-based research in the fields of arts and health (Daykin et al., 2017; Swan & Atkinson, 2012).

Methodology

In order to understand the operational factors and relationships that shaped this project, focus groups were held at the end of the project with the various stakeholders involved. This approach enabled the researchers to build an understanding of how the participants' various perspectives came together from a constructivist perspective (Guba, 1990; Lincoln et al., 2011). Prior to data collection, ethical approval was granted by a higher education ethics committee. Information sheets were provided for all parents and carers informing them of the nature of the project, and participants provided informed consent in order to take part in the research aspect of the project (young people under the age of 16 provided consent from a parent or carer). All of the older adults who took part in the focus groups were deemed to have provided meaningful informed consent (Sugarman et al., 1998).

Participants

Six separate groups of participants took part in focus groups: two artists (aged 36 ± 2.83 years), two schoolteachers (aged 32.5 ± 10.61 years), three scheme leaders (aged 58.33 ± 3.79 years), six older adults (aged 81.75 ± 11.48 years), four young people from School A, and four young people from School B (schoolchildren were aged 14.15 ± 1.21 years). The schoolteachers, students, older adults, scheme leaders, and photographer were all local to Bedford. The dance artist was from the West Midlands. Prior to embarking on the project, participants were informed about the research and invited to take part in focus groups at the end of it. Throughout the delivery of the project, the researchers engaged with the various participant groups through their organizational communications, on some occasions observing and participating in sessions. There is a growing body of literature about the engagement of service users and care staff in research projects and how building meaningful relationships between participants and researchers prior to data collection can promote genuine and high-level involvement that protects the needs and concerns of those taking part in a study (Frankham, 2009; Ray, 2007). In this project, researchers were present during the weekly sessions to familiarize themselves with the context of the project and the participants in order to support their needs during the focus groups (Ray, 2007).

Procedure

The focus groups took place during the week after the final performance at convenient times and locations for each group. They lasted between 20:22 and 1:12:27 minutes. Focus groups were undertaken by the first and second author and were recorded using a Dictaphone. Participants were informed about the nature of the research process and assured that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions asked. Participants were asked about their experience of the project through open-ended questions. The questions asked of the scheme leaders, artists, and teachers focused on why they took part, their experience of the organization and facilitation of the project, how they understood their role and the collaboration in general, and their perceptions of the young peoples' and older adults' experiences. The young people and older adults were asked about their experiences of the project, what they found positive and negative about it, their motivations to be involved, and how they felt a project like this could continue.

Analysis

The focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim, and NVivo 10 qualitative analysis software was used to code them. All of the transcripts were coded inductively by the first author, and the second author independently coded 15% of the transcripts to ensure parity and agreement between the researchers (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The views of the different groups were triangulated to develop an understanding of how the various operational elements of the project affected the people involved. We organized these views into a hierarchy and analyzed each theme in relation to thick descriptions and quotes that would give readers an informed understanding of the authors' interpretations (Patton, 2002). The participants are referred to using their roles within the project: artist, teacher, scheme leader, student, older adult.

Results

The key themes that emerged from the data were around organization, delivery, and sustainability. These are presented in Figure 1 and discussed in order throughout the following section.

Organization

Establishing the Project

Several housing associations in the area were approached to take part, and BHA was the only organization to respond. The lack of responses could be due to several factors, including limited time and capacity to commit to a project or lack of understanding about what it would entail or how it might benefit residents. BHA explained that although they had had visits from a local school group at Christmas time to sing carols, the residents had never been involved in a long-term exchange with an external group, nor had they worked toward a performance or event in an external location. When asked about their motivation to take part in the project, one scheme leader explained:

> I just thought it was a good opportunity to kind of, go out into the community a bit more. Something new, something interesting to see how it worked. Something that involved either end of the spectrum, which is always a good thing. Making younger people aware of older people's needs. (Scheme leader)

The housing association offered the support of their scheme leaders to inform and remind residents about the project and the use of the activity room in one of their centres to hold the first phase of classes.

The two schools were approached because of their proximity to each other, the university, and the care homes. They were both developing their dance curriculums and offering a dance GCSE (a subject-specific academic qualification) for the first time, and they described how this project provided them with an opportunity to highlight to both colleagues and students how versatile dance could be:

> Dance was going to be new on the curriculum next year. So, I was like, "Oh, this would be a really good project to get dance out there in the school," to be like, "This is why you've chosen it" and almost publicize it a bit more. (Teacher 2)

In addition to enhancing their students' understanding of dance, the teachers also noted how a community-focused project could support other areas of the curriculum and the students' awareness of local

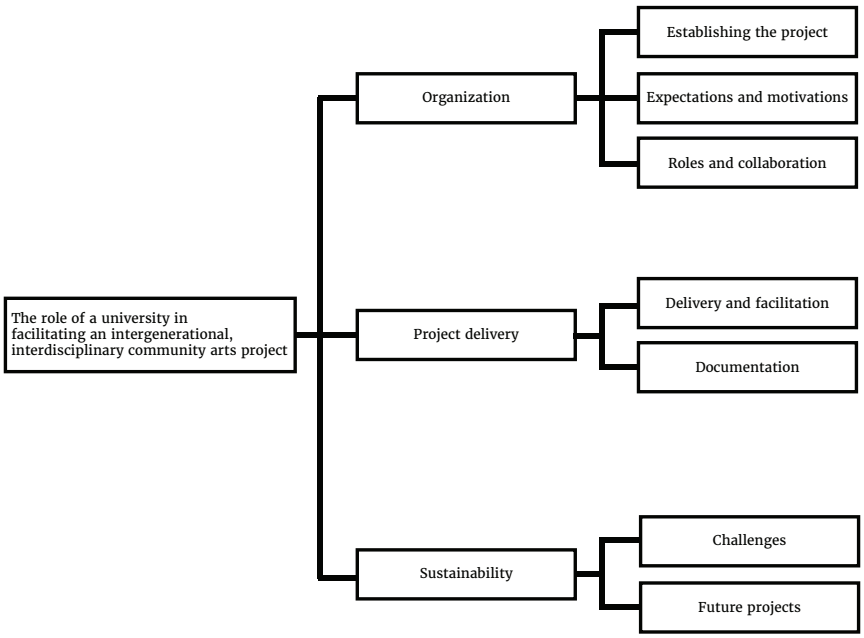

Figure 1. Key Themes Emerging From the Data

citizenship, which they explained had previously been only "very generic-type global community, and that kind of stuff" (Teacher 1).

Expectations and Motivations

Generations Dancing was described as a dance and photography project for young people and older adults. However, because this type of project was so new to both groups of participants, the teachers explained that it was difficult to know how to label it, which meant some young people who potentially could have benefited missed out:

> I didn't really know what it was going to look like from that first meeting and I found it hard to visualize what the end product was going to be—how to talk to the kids about that. (Teacher 1)

> In hindsight, knowing that's what had been produced, I would have gone, "Oh, actually the drama group might have been interested in this." (Teacher 2)

When the young people were asked about their motivation to be involved, they explained that they either "wanted to meet new people" (Student) or were "just excited to try something new" (Student). The older adults shared similar motivations:

> Out of curiosity and to meet young people, because people with families aren't necessarily able to see them frequently. And it was nice to meet younger children. (Older adult)

> I had never danced before so I just thought it was an opportunity. (Older adult)

Interestingly, the young people expressed that their experiences of the project and the performance outcome were as they had expected, perhaps because they had already experienced school or extracurricular events leading to a performance. In contrast, the older adults were surprised by the scale of what they had been involved with: "I just thought it was going to be keep fit . . . not on the scale we had" (Older adult). This contrast highlights the significance of how projects are articulated to participants from the outset, as their varying levels of experience appeared to affect their ability to envisage or understand what they were getting involved in.

Roles and Collaboration

The complexity of the project, which brought together several sectors of the community as well as two distinct artistic practices, was not to be underestimated. The university played a key role in bringing together the different groups and managing the project. The teachers and scheme leaders appeared to be very aware of the significance of this, noting that the extent of work that goes into a project of this nature was sometimes underestimated within their own organizations: "There's an expectation: 'Why aren't you doing that?'"; "Oh, it's really easy" (Teacher 1). Thus, they recognized and valued the coordination that the university offered in terms of securing funding, organizing timelines, recruiting artists and participants, and offering resources: "The pros are definitely that you're doing the hard work for us. We're reaping the benefits" (Scheme leader).

For the participants, connecting with a university appeared to be a significant factor of the project that enhanced their experience. For the older adults, having the opportunity to socialize with different people in a new environment gave them a sense of achievement and acceptance. When asked about how they found their visits to the campus to work with the young people, one explained: "I loved it. It was a real challenge and a real experience" (Older adult). The younger participants spoke positively of the professional standard facilities they were working in and were aware that this was not always easily accessible for them:

> The space where we danced was really nice as well, because we don't have that kind of space normally. (Student)

> It was nice seeing the facilities they have there . . . you're never going to get it again unless you go to university. (Student)

The teachers also commented upon the significance of the university's role in terms of promoting the project internally to their colleagues and senior leadership teams. They described working with a university as adding "gravitas" to the project, and

how important that was in relation to arts activities that were easily overlooked in favor of more academic subject activities. The combination of community activity, spending time at the university, being part of a research project, and press engagement all appeared to enhance how the project was perceived by senior leaders within the schools:

> They've been really engaged by it . . . they love the partnership, they love the glory of it all, they love the collaboration and the high-brow-ness of it . . . the idea that it's a broader community project. (Teacher 1)

> I think the BBC video helped because it was like, "That's an actual BBC video." (Teacher 2)

The teachers recognized that in addition to fostering positive relationships between the young people, having access to the university and other teachers also enhanced their own networks and provided them with new professional relationships that supported career development. Speaking of the relationship they had made with the university staff and other local schools, Teacher 1 said: "We've met . . . we've been able to link up, and now we can go on and do stuff together after this." Finally, the artists noted how the project shifted their perceptions of how a university could support the arts, bringing into question the role that educational institutions play in terms of civic duty.

> It's been weird because you see university as a place that lectures and researches, so it's the first time I've seen the university in more of an arts facilitative way. I know it's part of your research, but then you have been like arts managers, which has been exciting I think for a university. . . . Having the university name has been great and I think it's positive because then the community can see actually the university's trying to help its area. It's not just there for students. (Artist)

It became apparent throughout the project that the roles of the scheme leaders and teachers were also significant for ensuring a high-quality experience for the participants. Acting as gatekeepers, they played an important role in sharing information and reminders with the groups, and passing on their knowledge of how best to support and work with the various needs of the participants. This was particularly evident with the older adults who, despite living independently to some extent, did require additional support, and there were points during the project where this posed challenges to the artists and interns working with them. Initially, the scheme leaders were not present during the sessions; however, they noted afterward that greater involvement or more regular conversations between the different partners would have been beneficial, particularly with the coming and going of residents who took part:

> You'd mentioned people's care needs. Obviously it's been a learning curve for both sides . . . so possibly a bit more involvement certainly from my perspective, because I didn't actively involve myself with the project. . . . Where you have people dipping in and out, maybe that is where we could come into play. (Scheme leader)

For the teachers, establishing their role within the project was more challenging, and they commented upon how they felt like observers or a "taxi service," as they were primarily responsible for bringing the students to the sessions. Once they were there, the students were very independent, and the teachers realized that in hindsight they could have joined in and also supported the older adults rather than feeling they should only observe from the side. Despite the teachers' playing a crucial role in facilitating the students' involvement, this lack of connection to the activity meant they felt less ownership over the work: "I feel like a bit of a fraud. . . . 'You [the teacher] haven't really done anything, you [the teacher] haven't really engaged yourself'" (Teacher 1).

Project Delivery

Delivery and Facilitation

In response to initial consultation with the scheme leaders and teachers, it was decided that the project would be run over a short amount of time as a pilot. They felt that working toward an end point would engage participants more and change their perception of the project by encouraging them to

view it as something "unique" (Teacher 1) or "something that not many people can say they're involved with" (Student). The regularity of weekly sessions coupled with the sense of excitement and progression that was created by working toward a performance seemed to increase the older adults' engagement in a way that the scheme leaders felt was not achieved by previous fitness classes they had run: "I think it was a build-up because they had known they were going to do that [performance] yesterday. They were so excited today" (Scheme leader). Speaking of two residents who travelled each week to attend from a different home, one of the scheme leaders noted how their commitment had been a surprise: "It was good that they came up here, they just loved it. They were always ready to come up . . . they put it in their little diaries there ready" (Scheme leader).

In terms of facilitating the coming together of older adults with the schoolchildren, the artists recognized the different needs of the two groups and that although the school students might have adapted to the new environments very quickly, it was beneficial to allow the older adults to have more time to get used to the new artistic practices they were experiencing before they were introduced to the other group.

The delivery of the project allowed the young people to foster positive relationships with each other, as well as the older adults. They commented upon the noncompetitive nature of the activity and how this enabled them to take part without feeling self-conscious about their own background or ability:

> I learned that socializing with children our age isn't actually as bad as it seems . . . we'll miss each other and everything. (Student)

> It was cool to meet the [School B] people as well as the older adults, because you made new friends from the other school, which I didn't think you would. I also made friends with the older adults, which was just as much fun! (Student)

The teachers noted that working together toward a shared goal enabled the young people to feel part of something new, rather than only associating themselves with a particular school or age range: "Everyone can work together . . . they've lost that 'We're from this school, you're from that school' . . . they've almost formed a new community . . . they're the cast of Generations Dancing!" (Teacher 1).

Having an artistic output was also a significant feature of this project that differed from the previous experiences of some participants who had only engaged in weekly dance or art classes. They recognized the skills of the artists and agreed that it was a benefit to work with external practitioners who they might not usually have the opportunity to meet. For the young people in particular, exposure to professional artists raised their aspirations and understanding of arts in a professional context. Both participant groups noted that they enjoyed the final performance and felt this was a positive culmination of the project. Holding the performance in a professional theatre in the university again added to the artistic quality of the work and meant that many of the participants experienced something new. When discussing the performance, both participant groups appeared validated by having an audience witness and celebrate what they had worked on:

> My family thought it was quite impressive how they managed to organize that, the older adults and then the younger people joined together to do something. They didn't expect, like myself, that it would have been such a good thing that came out of the whole experience. (Student)

Documentation

The scheme leaders and teachers commented upon how evidencing the activity in ways that could be shared with friends, family, and senior management within the organizations was important. The university undertook a leading role in documenting the process through the weekly photography of the sessions and press releases and promotional films that were commissioned. BHA also made its own promotional film and press release, and the schools held special assemblies highlighting the project and shared information about it through their newsletters and social media channels. Although this activity did not directly benefit the participants, all parties agreed that it was a significant part of Generations Dancing in terms of raising awareness of

such a unique project and championing the positive impact of the arts:

> Absolutely, I think you've touched on something that I've never seen before. I've been teaching 16 years in dance schools and different schools, with really massive arts departments . . . never ever been involved in a project like this. (Teacher 1)

> It's sort of rehighlighted to my school, I suppose, actually the other side to arts. It's not just about going up on stage and learning a script. It's actually like, what it can do for the community. (Teacher 2)

The scheme leaders noted how having the photographs displayed in the foyer of the home had drawn lots of attention to the project. The residents were very proud of what they had been involved with and were very keen to show them off to visitors. This promoted the activity to family members, many of whom commented that they were positively surprised to see how much their elderly family members had achieved and were capable of. Similarly, sharing the promotional footage appeared to have a positive impact upon how the friends and family of the schoolchildren responded to the project:

> I think looking at the comments from that video on social media, people are like, "I would have loved to have been involved in this"; "Oh, can my school do this if you ever do it again?" I think that shows actually how unique it was. (Teacher 2)

Sustainability

Challenges

Bringing together so many community groups was a positive feature of the project; however, it was a complex and challenging process that had implications for its sustainability. It was recognized that working with a university created many positive opportunities, but also presented some challenges. For teachers, taking students off site regularly to visit the university campus added to their workload in terms of paperwork, and for the artists, having to respond to university procedures did not always align with their own artistic interests:

> There are lots of resources, but that's also one of the cons; they're there but going through the infrastructure of the university to get to them. (Artist)

The locations of the project caused challenges at times. For the young people, traveling between schools and to the university created time constraints and affected some of their rehearsals. For the older adults, coming to the campus was challenging in terms of travel from their home and navigating the spaces:

> We had the taxi, didn't we, which was very nice. But it was too far away from the hall and that's what I find difficult, to walk. I've got to walk across the hall and come back. That was very difficult and I didn't want to fall down. (Older adult)

> The only thing they commented on was how dark it was in the theatre, and they were conscious of it. (Scheme leader)

As a result, some of the participants who had been regulars at the care setting stopped attending when the rehearsals moved to the university. It is worth noting, however, that several of the participants who did continue to come to the university described it as a highlight of the project, and the scheme leaders felt that it was positive to see them getting out of the home.

In terms of delivery, the artists also commented upon some of the challenges they faced in trying to work with such a diverse group of people under time pressures. In particular, they found it difficult when the groups were together, as they had different demands in terms of the pace and focus of the sessions:

> I think I slightly lost their focus when we brought the young people in, even though they've enjoyed it. But I think it's been hard to balance focus between the secondary school kids and the older adults. I think the older adults thrived on having us focusing just on them. But I think they're still loving it, I'm not being negative, I've just noticed a shift in energy. (Artist)

The photography artist in particular found it challenging as they moved toward the final performance as the attention naturally fell toward ensuring that the participants felt confident for the performance.

> I think it's hard to balance. . . . I think it is that actually, ultimately there is a performance at the end so there needs to be a piece, which I think has probably impacted . . . because it's short sessions and to make a piece and teach them photography skills too . . . I mean there's been a massive compromise on that in terms of teaching them photography, because it's just not possible in that timeframe. (Artist)

The immediacy of the performance meant that the photography element was less prominent, and in hindsight the artists agreed that they needed to rethink how they facilitated two art forms if they were to find more balance in the future. However, it is important to note that all of the participants responded well to the final exhibition (many requested copies of the images), suggesting that good quality documentation of the process was valuable both in evidencing an otherwise transient experience, and in using it to share and discuss with friends and family.

The number of older adults who took part increased throughout the project; however, four participants stopped coming over the last few sessions as they felt vulnerable leaving their home. As indicated in the Roles and Collaborations section, the vulnerability of the older adults in relation to their independent living status posed some challenges, as although they had given their own consent to take part, there were instances where the artists and interns felt they also needed more information or support from the scheme leaders to ensure participants had the best experience possible. The scheme leaders recognized that this was a challenging situation for the artists and agreed they could play a role in terms of communicating the needs of the participants and sharing information about what they were doing with their families.

Future Projects

The final theme that was discussed in the focus groups was about future directions and how the project might continue in some capacity. The scheme leaders were very positive about continuing to deliver some kind of dance in the ILC and felt that it would be more beneficial for it to take place there so it was easily accessible to residents. They commented that being part of something so high profile to initiate the activity meant it would be easier to set up a regular class:

> I think if it was a regular thing you'd probably get more people trying and becoming involved because of the enthusiasm that's gone back to the scheme . . . we would certainly support and drum up business. (Scheme leader)

The scheme leaders also recognized the expertise of the university in facilitating this kind of activity and that it had enabled their home to connect with different sectors of the community in a way that would usually have been challenging to them. They expressed an interest in continuing a collaboration with the university and the schools in order to maintain the positive relationships that had been built.

The school students and teachers felt that they already had a lot of access to regular classes throughout their curriculum and existing dance classes, and that for them it was the uniqueness of the engagement with the university and care home that was special. When asked about how they would want to develop the project, several students spoke about expanding upon these unique elements to involve more age ranges and collaboration:

> Involve one school, then another, then another, then older people. It could involve loads of people and we all make dances and we all put it together in one big thing. (Student)

> It would have been cool if we'd added different abilities. Like our age group and adults working with us, like just normal adults that could volunteer. (Student)

The artists and teachers also appeared to recognize and value the sense of community that the project had created, suggesting that in the future it could move toward being less about separate schools coming together and more about forming a new group that could potentially be run outside school time

at the university. The teachers and students also all commented positively about wanting to visit the care home, and it was agreed that this could be a way of overcoming the barrier of vulnerable older adults leaving their home. Due to the positive response from participants, intergenerational dance activity has continued on a smaller scale (see the Discussion section). The university continues to support the activity in a brokering and facilitating role, while being less hands-on in order to empower the different community groups to continue working together.

Discussion

The aims of Generations Dancing were to foster artistic collaboration between different sectors of the Bedford community; improve social inclusion and enable different sectors of the community to connect; and improve participants' quality of life. Although the well-being outcomes of the project are reported in detail elsewhere (Douse et al., 2020), it is noteworthy that the older participants in particular reported high levels of enjoyment, enhanced confidence, an increase in meaningful social connections, and greater openness to trying new things. The project also served to address negative stereotypes and break down barriers between the different generations of participants involved.

Throughout the Generations Dancing project, the university played a key role in facilitating the activity, and it was evident that the extended reach and capacity of a higher education institution was significant in establishing such a complex program of activity. The university had access to funding streams, facilities and resources, artist networks, and public relations opportunities that enabled the scale and visibility of the project to move beyond what might usually have been facilitated at a local level in schools or care settings. Springate et al. (2008) explained that although intergenerational projects share many standard organizational features, they also present particular challenges. Springate et al. further observed that two factors—ensuring staff are skilled and experienced in working with both age groups and allowing time for the prepreparation of participants—have been identified as crucial in the success of intergenerational practice. Where these factors might have been challenging for the school or care provider to address independently, the university was able to draw upon its network of artists to ensure that those delivering the project were experienced in working with both participant groups.

In terms of promoting and delivering the project, the university was also able to drawn upon its resources to add value to the activities beyond what might have been accessible to the individual organizations. A launch event was held on campus, and the various stakeholder groups were invited together as an opportunity to meet each other and learn about the project. This event led to increased public awareness of the activity, as the artists involved were able to connect it more widely back into the community sector, and local residents, friends, and family members were able to learn about the project through the launch and subsequent press attention. The need to engage senior management and promote or "sell" the value of arts in what are often considered nonarts settings is often raised in the literature (Aston, 2009; Jensen, 2018). The university's capacity to hold this kind of event eased the process, as the teachers and scheme leaders felt they had tangible resources that they could use to promote the activity. During the weekly sessions and final performances, using the university's studios and theatre enhanced the experience for the participants and eased the pressure on the schools and ILCs, who would not have had the capacity to invite such a large audience to watch.

In addition to university resources, the experience of those working in a higher education institution was also valuable for this kind of partnership. Although schools and care providers function under very particular operational processes with one set of clearly identifiable beneficiaries, a university is well suited to work across sectors, with many academics assuming teacher/researcher/artist/outreach roles (Doughty & Fitzpatrick, 2016). Consequently, they are skilled in negotiating multiple stakeholder needs, a challenge regularly cited in arts and health partnerships (Angus, 2002; Jensen, 2018). Where different approaches to facilitation might have been favoured by the various stakeholders involved, the university was able to act as a mediator and support the negotiation of processes. Jensen (2018) wrote that in order to best share expertise and ensure safe practice, it is essential to understand stakeholders and their interactions, recognizing that they will make sense of circumstances based on the often

tacit assumptions, values, and logics that constitute a particular sector or institution. Within this project, it was evident that the artists, schools, and care homes worked at different paces and naturally had different priorities. Although the aim of the project was to foster awareness and understanding of these differences, it was also important to acknowledge them. By assuming an overarching responsibility for the organization of the project, the university was able to listen to the needs of the various stakeholders and propose models of work that supported the collective. It was also observable that the participation of student interns, who were not aligned to either of the community groups, had a unifying affect. The students built relationships with the young people and older adults that enabled a sense of trust and were therefore well placed to support their needs when they came together. They acted as a support network to interpret what the artists were saying, and they gave the artists feedback about any issues that arose.

This project also demonstrated how the university's flexibility enabled the project to grow and evolve in a way that made it more sustainable and resilient to the changing pressures of education and care. The Beth Johnson Foundation guide (2011) describes different modes of community cohesion that can be facilitated with varying degrees of intergenerational contact. Generations Dancing was able to transition between varying levels of contact in order to meet the needs of the different stakeholders while establishing longevity. In the early stages the regular meetings and exchanges between groups involved working together toward a demonstration and sharing, which was followed by termly visits and an annual summer sharing that brings friends and family to the care home with young people. The program of activities that the university now facilitates happens on a smaller scale, in order for it to continue to take place and create meaningful connections that are part of the functions of each stakeholder and tailored to their individual needs and capacity. Learnings from Generations Dancing were used to inform a further successful funding grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to support a regular class at BHA delivered by a dance lecturer at the university who embeds it within her teaching around community dance practice. She is supported by student interns and recent graduates who act as assistants in order to gain experience that informs their own careers in dance with the view that they can take over future delivery of the sessions so that the activity is sustainable. The number of older adults who attend has increased, and there are many new participants who did not take part in the original project. The classes take place in the ILCs to reduce resources required (such as taxi costs), but some visits to campus continue in order to retain some of what made the project special. The young people have also made termly visits to the care home with their teacher to perform to the older adults and take part in a shared seated dance class all together. The university is also working with BHA to host a summer tea dance that will bring together the schoolchildren and older adults with their friends and families for an afternoon of dance and celebration. This day will mimic the performance sharing that took place at the university on a smaller scale and is led much more by BHA. These activities create an intergenerational community (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2011), fostering a sense of connectedness between the different community sectors that is flexible and responsive to their needs. The university also utilized its access to support with bid writing in order to secure further National Lottery funding that will be used to continue the partnership and set up another project between a new ILC and school. Evidently the infrastructure that is in place within a higher education institution is significant in supporting the sustainability of this kind of activity. Access to structured support and resources, like bid writing, paid internship schemes, and specialist staff—with the flexibility and autonomy in their roles that enable them to undertake such work—has played a significant part in the continuation of the work, despite the ownership of it shifting to be shared more evenly among the partners.

In order to ensure their success and sustainability, intergenerational arts and health projects need to offer high quality, well-organized activities that are flexible and responsive to the varied needs of those involved. Universities have the capacity to promote and champion community arts projects in ways that may be challenging for smaller organizations and can play a significant role in mediating between different sectors of the community. The key to facilitating this project was finding a balance between raising the profile through engagement with established art-

ists and media engagement while ensuring it remained manageable and sustainable by drawing upon student interns, local artists, and the accessible resources of the university, schools, and care homes. The support structure of the university has enabled this intergenerational dance activity to continue. Given the criticisms that arts and health projects are often short term (Ings et al., 2012), this support seems particularly important and evidences how higher education institutions can play a role in ensuring the longevity of such activity. As the NHS moves toward models of social prescribing to bridge the clinical and social care needed within the UK public health system (Polley et al., 2017), this article highlights the potentially more formalized role that these sorts of projects could play and the roles that education institutions could have in sustaining them.

Intergenerational partnerships, particularly within the field of arts and health, can be greatly enhanced by the support and/or facilitation of a higher education institution. Projects should ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the planning stages and that there is discussion of the roles and expectations of each partner. Consideration should be given to how a project is labelled and described to prospective partners and participants, in order to ensure that it is accessible to those from a range of perspectives. During the delivery of a project, it is important to maintain communication across partnerships, particularly in sharing the needs of vulnerable people. Involving individuals with experience working across sectors can assist in negotiating these aspects in order to enable projects to develop in manageable but ambitious ways.

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Learning to Increase Access to Higher Education in a New Latino Destination

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Abstract

Barriers to higher education persist among the Latino population across the United States. This project (IRB approval 18-001240), framed within the Engagement and Outreach Scholars Academy at East Carolina University, aimed to identify the obstacles to accessing higher education faced by the local Latino community and evaluate some ways to make higher education opportunities more accessible for Latino students. Although cultural barriers are low, lack of financial resources and knowledge should be in the center of an intervention.

Keywords: education, university, Latino/a, university-community collaboration

Going to college has historically been considered an important step to achieve social change. However, access to college or university in the United States is not equal, with Latinos and African Americans representing some of the lower percentages in higher education, particularly in North Carolina (where this study took place), despite a growing population. The Latino population in North Carolina is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups: According to Excelencia in Education (2021), North Carolina has the 14th largest Latino population in the United States. In Pitt County in eastern North Carolina (where the authors were located), the Latino population from 2011 to 2017 recorded a growth rate of 30%, higher than the 26% experienced by this ethnic group statewide, consolidating this county over time as an important destination for Latinos in North Carolina (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). In Pitt County, however, only 18% of Latino adults have a bachelor's degree or higher; in contrast, 44% of all adults in the county have some college credits (Data USA, 2021). In addition, the Latino enrollment in East Carolina University and Pitt Community College—the two main institutions of higher education in the region—represents only about 8% of the total number of students (*IPEDS data feedback report 2020* and Data USA. *East Carolina University*) which suggests that it is important to increase efforts to make higher education more accessible to Latino youth in order to meet the growing demand that will continue as long as current levels of migratory flow of Latinos to Pitt County are maintained.

Considering this information, this article presents the results of the project Barriers to Higher Education Among the Latino Population in Pitt County, which was developed by East Carolina University (ECU) and Grady-White Boats/E.R. Lewis Family Unit Boys and Girls Club (referred to as the Grady-White Club) to understand and combat barriers to higher education among the Latino community. The project received IRB approval (18-001240) in August 2018, renewed and amended as needed. East Carolina University, located in Greenville, North Carolina, in the eastern part of the state, forms a part of the UNC 16-campus system. ECU is a leader in eastern North Carolina, particularly in medicine, education, and business. In fall 2018 enrollment was 28,718 students, with 23,010 as under-

graduate students. Seventy-seven percent of these students were enrolled full time. Hispanics/Latinos of any race accounted for 6.3% of the student body. Among executive administration, faculty, and staff, Hispanics/Latinos were 2.6%. Although the Latino population in the state, in particular in the eastern part of the state, has increased over the last decade and more, the university has yet to see an increase in percentages among the student body and the employees. For this reason, it was deemed necessary to apply a more concerted effort between the university and the community to increase access to higher education.

The main purpose of this project was to understand the perceived barriers to accessing higher education faced by the local Latino community and to evaluate some ways those barriers can be overcome to make higher education opportunities more accessible for Latino students. To do this, a research team was developed over an academic year consisting of, from the university, one faculty member, two graduate students, and three undergraduate students (one of whom formed a part of the group for one semester only). On the community partner side, the unit director from the Grady-White Club and the vice president for program initiatives formed a consistent part of the team. It was and continues to be the intent of this community–university partnership to understand better the barriers to access to higher education in the Latino community and to begin to implement interventions that would counteract these barriers.

This article is organized into sections as follows: synthesis of the literature; a description and the development of the project; methodology of the project; the results and analysis of the survey; conclusions and recommendations; and future of the project and future research.

Literature on Barriers to Higher Education in the Latino Community

The relevant literature is divided into different areas. One body of literature considers the issues that define the barriers to access to higher education among Latino communities and surveys the communities to understand the perceptions and experiences of the Latino community. Another body of literature reviews current programs that attempt to eliminate the barriers and can serve as models for other communities.

Barriers to Higher Education in the Latino Community

We will first consider the literature on the most important barriers faced by Latino students to access higher education in the United States.

Parental Knowledge

Although the empirical works show that Latino parents recognize the importance of higher education and motivate their children to continue their studies, they lack the information and knowledge to navigate the U.S. educational system. The chief obstacles are their lack of proficiency in English and their low educational level. However, even in the case of first-generation parents who have obtained bachelor's degrees in their home countries, it is difficult to understand the different options of higher education in the United States and the requirements to access it (Castellanos et al., 2013).

Lack of Financial Resources

The majority of Latino families have low incomes that make higher education seem unattainable. Additionally, in some cases, although parents understand the importance of higher education, they encourage their children to work and contribute financially to the family. Likewise, the lack of knowledge of the U.S. educational system makes them overestimate the cost of higher education, and they do not know where to look for financial aid (Bohon et al., 2006; Castellanos et al., 2013).

Low Interaction Between Parents and Schools

Although in recent decades the United States has experienced a growing migratory flow of Latinos, school systems have not responded adequately to the needs of this population. In most cases, school personnel do not recognize the parents' language barriers, their limited understanding of the institution, and their complicated work schedule. Therefore, teachers and counselors have stigmatized Latino parents as lacking interest in their children's education, while parents experience alienation and a sense of not being valued within the school system (Castellanos et al., 2013; Clark et al., 2013). Conversely, schools need to adopt alternative concepts of parental engagement as outlined in the digital home model (Gil, 2019). In this model, learning is transformational because people's different

strengths are taken into account and used to frame the relationship.

Role of Peers

Although peers may be important motivators for continuing postsecondary education, research has shown that in the case of Latino students, this is not necessarily true, since by sharing similar characteristics such as low income level, low educational level of parents, and lack of information, this group of peers is not particularly encouraging. The empirical research has shown that peers discourage one another because they promote the idea that it is not necessary to study to be successful and it is better to work than to enter higher education (Clark et al., 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2017).

Language Barriers and Acculturation

As mentioned previously, one main barrier for Latino parents is that they may not be proficient in English, which makes it difficult to access information and have closer contact with teachers and administrators. In the case of students that are first generation, language is a particular barrier in facing tests such as the ACT and SAT that are necessary to apply to higher education (Becerra, 2012).

Although these are the most important and widely seen barriers to accessing higher education, it is important to consider the heterogeneity of the Latino population. Aspects such as nationality, citizenship status, and generational status intensify these barriers and make it difficult to generalize about the entire Latino population. It is also important to bear in mind that many of these barriers are faced not only by Latino students, but also by other underrepresented minority groups. Therefore, they cannot be attributed exclusively to the fact of being Latino, but they respond to the dynamics of a system in which the less privileged groups face more difficulties to access higher education (Gonzalez, 2015).

Literature on Overcoming Barriers

As mentioned above, another body of literature reports on programs that have been implemented to attempt to eliminate barriers to access to higher education. This sometimes consists of acknowledging that parents and students do not know the appropriate steps to take to access universities and recognizing the resulting need to design interventions that acculturate families into this system (Arriero & Griffin, 2018).

Additionally related are other programs that attempt to increase access among the Latino community to other areas. This can be seen in studies that evaluate programs that join language skills to health care through community sites (Soto Mas et al., 2015). Fernandez (2018) studied community engagement among Latino residents to improve health outcomes to show that a close connection is needed to overcome distrust. Although these programs' aims differed from ours, their analysis points to the effectiveness of community-based programs within Latino communities.

Development of the Project

This project has been developed within the framework of the Engagement and Outreach Scholars Academy (EOSA) belonging to the Office of Community Engagement and Research at East Carolina University. EOSA exists to educate faculty on community-engaged research and to support a community-engaged research project. Faculty members selected for this program participate in cohort-based workshops on community-engaged research to then develop a research project with a community partner over an academic year. Once the project is designed by the faculty member and the community partner, the project is subject to Institutional Review Board review. When a project is approved, graduate and undergraduate students are assigned to work on the EOSA project and participate in the Student Engagement and Outreach Scholars Academy.

This project emerged from the first author's work in her home department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and in the Honors College. As a professor of Hispanic studies, she worked for many years at ECU with heritage speakers of Spanish, usually of Latino descent. A heritage speaker is a speaker of a language who learns it at home and usually has little to no formal education in the language. The language proficiency of these speakers exists on a spectrum of ability. In eastern North Carolina, there are more and more heritage speakers of Spanish, many of whom would be first-generation college students. However, as seen in the statistics, many of these students are not accessing higher education. This disconnect is what led to this project.

The main purpose of this project was to understand barriers to accessing higher education faced by the local Latino community and how those barriers can be overcome to make higher education opportunities more accessible for Latino students. The project had two objectives:

- identify barriers to access to higher education among the Latino community in eastern North Carolina via an anonymous survey and
- evaluate the efficacy of interventions for addressing barriers to accessing higher education among the Latino population in eastern North Carolina.

To develop this project a partnership was established between the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain and East Carolina University. This partnership evolved between the two because of a shared interest in better serving the local Latino community to succeed in postsecondary education. The Boys and Girls Club has worked for 45 years in eastern North Carolina promoting different activities for young people in the areas of education and career development; character and leadership development; health and life skills; arts and culture; and sports, fitness, and recreation (Boys & Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain, n.d.). Annually they serve about 1,300 youth through membership and community outreach in the Club's 17 facilities throughout the region. For this project we worked specifically with the Grady-White Boats/E.R. Lewis Family Unit, which is in Greenville, North Carolina and is the club with the greatest number of Latino participants of any of the three clubs in Pitt County.

The partners mutually determined the research problem and framed the research design. The Grady-White Club assisted the project in several ways, including recruiting participants for the surveys and the intervention, providing space to administer the surveys, and transportation for participant tours of postsecondary institutions. For its part, East Carolina University contributed to the design and administration of surveys, data management, analysis of survey responses, and the development of interventions based on survey data.

Methodology

The project had two phases. In the first phase—developed during fall semester 2018—the purpose was to identify the perceived barriers to higher education among the Latino population. In the second phase the objective was to design short- and long-term interventions to address the barriers to higher education identified in Phase 1.

Phase 1

To achieve the first purpose of the study, a structured survey was designed and administered to Latino youth and their parents. Using a convenience sample given the characteristics and objectives of the project, the criteria to select the target population were that the participants were attending the Grady-White Boats Boys and Girls Club, were middle or high school students, and identified themselves as Latinos. In this way, the sample for this project consisted of 11 Latino students and 10 parents. All students were born in the United States; nine parents were born in Mexico and one was born in the United States. Thus most of the students were part of the second generation of immigrants.

For students, the questionnaire included 39 questions about demographic characteristics, education, preparation for college, and aspirations and perceived barriers to higher education. To prepare the questionnaire, we referenced different quantitative studies that have investigated the Latino population in the United States as well as the educational barriers experienced by Latino youth in this country. For the demographic section specifically, we adapted questions from *Latino National Survey 2006* (Hu-Dehart, 2015), which included questions related to demographic characteristics such as ancestry, birthplace, education level, marital status, and use of the English language. Additionally, we worked with some questions included in the article "Achieving the College Dream? Examining Disparities in Access to College Information Among High Achieving and Non-High Achieving Latina Students" (Kimura-Walsh et al., 2009). Regarding education questions, we used those included in the Current Population Survey (Flood et al., 2021). Meanwhile, for the preparation for college aspirations and perceived barriers to higher education, we selected and adapted questions from "Sex and Ethnic Differences in the Perception of Educational and Career-Related Barriers and Levels of Coping Efficacy" (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001), whose authors developed

a Likert scale instrument to measure the perceived educational and career-related barriers among a group of Latino undergraduate students.

For parents, the questionnaire included 40 questions that incorporated the same topics that their children were asked, with additional questions related to income and household size. In this case we took as a reference the same sources mentioned above and adapted questions from "How Mexican Parents' College Knowledge, Perceptions, and Concerns Influence the Emotional and Behavioral Support of Their Children to Pursue Higher Education" (Castellanos et al., 2013), to explore the aspirations and perceived barriers to higher education among the group of parents.

In both cases, the respondents had the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire in either English or Spanish, and both surveys were evaluated by the Center for Survey Research at East Carolina University prior to the IRB approval and use.

Phase 2

In the beginning of the project, we projected that in Phase 2 we would evaluate the efficacy of interventions for addressing the identified barriers to access to higher education among the Latino population in Eastern North Carolina. This intervention would be designed based on the analysis of the survey results and the identified needs of the students and their families.

After analysis of the survey results, in this phase, the research team designed three different pamphlets on the following topics: types of higher education, applying to institutions of higher education, and how to pay for higher education. We translated these texts into Spanish and solicited input from the community partner, the students and the parents we had surveyed, and another community organization closely tied to the local Latino community (AMEXCAN). While receiving feedback from the students and their parents, we took photos of the students that we would include in the pamphlets. Our objective was to distribute these pamphlets at a visit to the local community college and university. Additionally, we gathered branded items such as pens and cups from both campuses and purchased copies of *Mi Voz, Mi Vida: Latino College Students Tell Their Life Stories* (Garrod et al., 2007). All these items were given to the students on the day of the campus visit. The day consisted of a tour of each campus together with a talk from Admissions. Additionally, students ate in one of the university's dining halls and met with university students. The objective of this visit to both campuses was to encourage students to see themselves at a university as well as to understand what they could study when they arrived.

Results and Analysis of the Surveys

In this section, we discuss the results and analysis of the surveys and then subsequent steps in the development of the project.

Demographic Characteristics for Parents and Students

As shown in Table 1, most of the parents who completed the survey were Latina women. This is consistent with observations from the project fieldwork that, in these homes, mothers are responsible for the care of the children and therefore for accompanying them in both academic and extracurricular activities.

The average age of the parents is 38. Five are married, three are not married but live with a partner, and two are single. All nine mothers were born in Mexico and on average have lived in the United States for 19 years. In the years since their first arrival in the United States, none of them have left the country. In terms of citizenship, only one of the mothers is an American citizen, two are DACA recipients, two identified themselves as undocumented, and four preferred not to respond, which may suggest that they are also undocumented. Of the students, five of the respondents were male and six female. They ranged in age from 11 to 17 years with a mean age of 12. All reside with their parents, and all report their relationship status as single. In contrast to their parents, all the youth were born in the United States; therefore, all of them are American citizens who have lived in Greenville most if not all of their lives.

Regarding the size of the household, most are nuclear families with four people on average, the average number of people under 18 years of age is two, and in all cases, school-age people are currently studying. The average age of this population is 10 and most of them are in middle school. Considering that the poverty guideline for a household of four people in the year 2018

Table 1. Frequencies of Demographic Characteristics for Parents and Students

Variables	Parents (*N* = 10)		Youth (*N* = 11)	
	N	%	*N*	%
Gender				
Male	1	10%	5	45%
Female	9	90%	6	55%
Mean age in years	38		12	
Marital status				
Married	5	50%	0	–
Not married but living together	3	30%	0	–
Single	2	20%	11	100%
Born in the United States				
Yes	1	10%	11	100%
No	9	90%	0	–
Citizenship Status				
American Citizen	2	20%	11	100%
DACA recipient	2	20%	0	–
No legal status/undocumented	2	20%	0	–
Prefer not to respond	4	40%	0	–
City of residence				
Greenville	9	90%	10	91%
Grimesland	1	10%	1	9%
Years in the United States	Min: 16 Max: 27		Min: 11 Max: 17	
Years living in current town	Min: 2 Max: 26		Min: 1 Max: 17	

was $25,100, it could be said that 80% of these families live below the poverty level (Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2019).

Education of Parents and Students

The results of the survey revealed that the educational level of the parents is relatively low. Half of them did not complete high school, two finished high school, two earned a GED, and only one parent has an associate's degree. In the case of the students, 10 of them are in middle school: four in sixth grade, three in seventh, three in eighth. Only one of the students is in 12th grade.

Nearly all students (80%) reported they had not received academic counseling in their schools, and only three reported having received some training or preparation for applying to college/university. However, these forms of preparation seem to be isolated actions and not articulated in a program of preparation for college. Regarding the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Test)—typical exams students take to apply to higher education—only the student who was in 12th grade had taken the ACT. The rest of the students,

since they were in middle school, had not yet received preparation for these tests nor taken them yet, but most expressed their intention to do so. On the other hand, only three students responded that they had received specialized English courses (ESL) at school for children who speak other languages.

Both parents and students were asked about the future educational aspirations for the children. In the case of the students, they were asked what the maximum educational level they aspire to is, and the parents were asked how far they think their children will go academically. Even though most of the parents and the students had high aspirations, the children had higher aspirations than their parents since six of them aspired to receive a graduate or advanced professional degree and four of them aspired to graduate from a 4-year institution. Meanwhile, six of the parents aspired for their children to graduate from a 4-year institution, two expected their children to get an associate degree, and two of them aspired for their children to attend some semesters of college.

Perceived Barriers to Higher Education

In order to identify the perceived barriers to higher education, parents and students responded to different statements measuring their agreement on a Likert scale. (These statements were adapted from "Sex and Ethnic Differences in the Perception of Educational and Career-Related Barriers and Levels of Coping Efficacy," Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). First, these results show that both parents and students are aware of and understand the importance of education; however, though most parents think that entering college is easily achievable, the children think the opposite and that there are difficulties in achieving it (see Table 2).

In regard to the different opportunities of getting into college/university—sources of information, as well as requirements that are needed to be admitted to a higher education institution—most of the parents have a lack of knowledge whereas, in contrast, most of the students responded that they know. However, since most students are in middle school and have not received preparation for college application, it is possible that they have partial or superficial knowledge.

In terms of financial resources, only a few parents and students stated that they don't have enough money to attend college/university, though this may be due, in part, to the lack of knowledge of the costs of higher education. On the other hand, the number of parents that know the different funding sources is very low; in contrast, most students claim to know them, which again is not consistent considering that they have not had preparation for applying to college. Factors associated with being Latino or being a woman are not recognized as barriers to accessing higher education by either parents or children. Likewise, most of the parents think that their children are adequately prepared and have the mathematical and language skills needed to attend college, similar to the students.

Regarding parental and family support, all parents stated that they support and encourage their children so that they can reach the goal of entering university, and all the children perceive that support since they agreed with these statements. Additionally, the results suggest that neither marriage nor having to work are a priority for the children or their parents, and therefore these factors are not perceived as barriers to accessing higher education. Finally, other actors who play an important role as support for entering college such as teachers and friends also have had a positive perception within this group of children: All the students acknowledge that their teachers support and encourage them to enter college, and the vast majority affirmed that their friends also plan to attend college, which constitutes an important motivation for them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite the desire of students and parents to access higher education and although from the cultural point of view the perception of barriers is low, there are important obstacles that prevent Latino students from achieving their goal of accessing higher education. A first barrier is the economic one. As was presented, most of the families surveyed in our project live in poverty conditions, and with the level of income reported, it is very difficult for them to pay the high costs of higher education. Although there are financial aid options that students could access because they are American citizens, their parents could not apply because they are mostly undocumented. This will affect the level of support awarded.

Table 2. Frequencies of Responses Agreeing With the Statements Related to Barriers to Higher Education

	Parents		Youth	
	N	%Yes	*N*	%Yes
You do not need to attend college/university to be successful.	2	20%	2	18%
Getting into college/university is easily attainable.	6	60%	4	36%
I know the different opportunities that exist for students to enter college/university.	3	30%	11	100%
I know where to look for information about how to enter college/university.	3	30%	10	91%
I know the requirements that are needed to be admitted in a college/university.	3	30%	8	73%
I do not think I have enough money to attend college/university.	3	30%	3	27%
I know the different funding sources that help students to enter college/university (scholarships, loans, etc.).	3	30%	8	73%
Because I am (my child is) Latinx, I have (he/she has) less chance of attending college/university.	0	0%	2	18%
Because I am (my child is) a woman, I have (she has) less chance of attending college/university.	0	0%	1	9%
I feel I am (my child is) not prepared enough to be successful in college/university.	2	20%	2	18%
My (child's) English level is not high enough to attend college/university.	2	20%	3	27%
My (child's) Math skills are not high enough to attend college/university.	1	10%	0	0%
My parents (I) encourage me (my child) to attend college/university.	10	100%	11	100%
My family (I) supports me (my child) to continue my (his/her) studies.	10	100%	11	100%
I (my child) will not attend college/university because I have (my child has) to work to help my family.	0	0%	0	0%
I (my child) will not attend college/university because my (child's) priority is to get married and start a family.	1	10%	0	0%
I don't know anyone close who has attended college/university.			1	9%
My closest friends plan to attend college/university.			8	73%
I feel like I don't belong in college/university.			0	0%
My teachers don't encourage me to attend college/university.			0	0%

The second barrier is associated with the lack of knowledge of the educational system of the United States. Most parents do not know the different options (college, community college, university) and also do not know what the requirements are to be admitted. On the other hand, although their children said that they do know, considering their ages and educational levels, they may know the generalities but not in detail everything that is required to access higher education. This lack of knowledge puts them at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

The discrepancies described above are linked to the lack of preparation for college received so far. Although most of the students are in middle school, it is nonetheless important that they already start to receive college preparation, which should be accompanied by vocational training so that the young people can identify their professional interests. Once the students have identified their career interests, they can start a focused process of academic preparation that allows them to be more successful in their application to college. These forms of preparation can also enable them to apply for scholarships that otherwise might present lost opportunities because the students lack the academic performance required.

Based on the survey results and after discussing these findings with the Grady-White Club, an intervention was recommended in the short and long term. In the short term, the intervention that was proposed consisted of compiling the basic information on types of higher education, applying to higher education, and funding sources in order to prepare three documents both in English and in Spanish that were delivered to the students surveyed. Additionally, a visit was made with the students to Pitt Community College and to East Carolina University so that the students could get to know these facilities, the admission process, and the services offered by these institutions. This visit was particularly important to give the students a physical experience that would enable them to visualize their futures on a college campus. Additionally, this experience included eating at the dining hall and meeting with university students who had similar paths to their own.

Beyond Phase 2: Future of the Project and Future Research

The analysis of these surveys led to the second phase of this project—developed in spring semester 2019 and outlined above—where we attempted to design an intervention that would respond to the survey results. Although these are important first steps for this issue, it is clear that we need to expand our understanding of the issues and our intervention beyond this initial group of students. After careful consideration, we have decided to survey more students and their families, as well as understand the needs of teachers and guidance counselors working with Latinx students. At this point we are revising the survey for students and families and creating another survey for educators. We plan to administer this survey to a much wider audience beyond the Boys and Girls Club chapter. After receiving and analyzing these results, we will be able to plan a more expanded intervention for students and their families, as well as advise schools and universities.

To make the project sustainable into the future, we want to partner with College of Education faculty to widen and strengthen our impact. Doing so will also help us find financial support so that we can propose and enact educational interventions with other schools or organizations.

The analysis of barriers to access to higher education among the Latino population is a relevant issue, considering the growing number of Latinos in the United States and the need to increase the percentage of Latinos who obtain an associate's degree or higher, currently at 22% (Excelencia in Education, 2021). Additionally, it is important to analyze the factors that may hinder access to higher education in regions like Pitt County that have been understudied in the past.

In that sense, for future research, it would be important to include Latino students with profiles different from those in the sample: for example, those born outside the United States, those born in the United States to parents also born in the United States, youth who have dropped out or never been enrolled in school, and so on. In this way, the possibilities of analysis could be extended, which in turn would facilitate identifying the effects of the different processes of acculturation and assimilation on the perception of barriers to higher educa-

tion. Likewise, other ethnic groups should be included in the sample to determine if the perception of barriers to higher education is different for Latinos.

Although we are proud of the potential of these accomplishments with this club, we understand the limited scope of working with one club and want to expand this initiative to other Boys and Girls Clubs in Pitt County and to expand the Boys and Girls Clubs' reach to connect better with the local Latinx population. To that end, we aim to widen the collaboration beyond this particular club to include AMEXCAN—a Latinx advocacy organization in Pitt County—or other Latino community organizations in the county, in order to better understand the Latinx community and create appropriate interventions that will serve the community. Through this wider collaboration, we want to strengthen our connection to the community and double the number of students and families that will benefit.

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Rural 3.0: A Case Study of University–Community Engagement Through Rural Service-Learning in Croatia

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Abstract

As part of the project Rural 3.0: Service-Learning for the Rural Development—RURASL (https://rural.ffzg.unizg.hr/), to ascertain the needs and gaps relevant to implementing service-learning in rural Croatia, we surveyed three target groups: university students, rural community organizations, and potential service-learning beneficiaries. We discovered three main challenges: *insufficient human capacities*, attributable mostly to *difficulty in obtaining funding*, which *hinders development and implementation of new service-learning projects*. Croatian local action groups (LAGs) and rural NGOs were found supportive of rural service-learning. The older population recognizes a great opportunity to get support for basic living needs, and the younger population shows a great interest in engaging university students in improving the tourist and cultural sector. Higher education institutions' implementation of innovative service-learning will improve the quality of education for sustainable development and promote university–community partnerships in rural areas.

Keywords: higher education, local action groups, rural service-learning, RURASL, rural development

This article describes the early-stage project Rural 3.0: Service-Learning for the Rural Development—RURASL (https://rural.ffzg.unizg.hr/) and its early implementation in one of the project partner countries (Croatia). The project represents a knowledge alliance between eight higher education institutions from their respective EU countries (Portugal, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Croatia, Italy, and Germany) with expertise in service-learning and social entrepreneurship and eight community organizations: six local action groups (LAGs) that deliver the EU LEADER program (a European Union initiative supporting rural development projects) and two NGO foundations. Together with the community partners, higher education institutions in this alliance will develop new rural service-learning and social entrepreneurship courses and guide their students during the implementation and evaluation of the new academic module. LAGs in this alliance function as multistakeholder organizations encompassing the private, public, and civil sectors; they aim to support diversification of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas, and to improve quality of life and biodiversity protection. These grassroots organizations work with the rural population on developing innovative and environmentally benevolent entrepreneurial activities. Finally, NGO foundations in this alliance will share their experience and expertise in preparing action plans for rural development that includes many stakeholders: public administrations, village councils, politicians, residents, and civil societies.

One of the main goals of the RURASL project is to help develop the core skills and entrepreneurial capabilities of the rural community (for which such development is not easily accessible). The other important goal is to improve the quality of education for sustainable development and promote

university–community partnerships in rural areas through service-learning. Moreover, the project aims to establish a Virtual Hub with a broad network of academic and rural stakeholders that will offer teaching and learning content (dedicated transnational academic modules with courses on service-learning and social entrepreneurship, community training materials, and digital collaborative and learning tools) and promote interactions between universities and rural community stakeholders.

The main benefits of the project include the creation of an international university–rural community alliance that promotes education and entrepreneurship of people in rural areas, bringing higher education institutions and rural community enterprises together to work on the common issue—development of the necessary knowledge and skills needed to make a change in the rural communities. Other benefits include strengthening the skills and the innovative capacity of adult rural social entrepreneurs, providing practical service-learning and social entrepreneurship experiences to university students in specific rural settings, and developing core skills and rural social entrepreneurship among the high potential rural community in an ecologically sustainable and socially sound way.

In this article we present the initial results of the project in one of the partner countries (Croatia), where a common body of knowledge of all stakeholders (university students, rural community organizations and their beneficiaries, and university instructors) is created based on a detailed needs analysis.

Context of the Project

Rural communities constitute over 91% of the territory of the European Union and are home to more than 60% of the population. More than 112 million people inhabit rural territory (Directorate for Communication, 2017). By 2030 the EU total population is projected to increase by 2%, and the rural population is expected to rise by 0.6% with significant (>10%) increases in rural population around most capitals (Bucharest, Budapest, Dublin, Madrid, Prague, Rome, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vienna, Warsaw, etc.), driven by the lower cost of living near major labor markets (Perpina Castillo et al., 2018).

Rural areas in the EU face multiple challenges. They offer limited opportunities for networking and collaboration, resulting in labor forces with low skill levels, low skill diversity, and a structural mismatch with the local labor market caused by outward migration of professionals, the young, and the well-educated ("Daring to succeed," 2011). Moreover, rural areas in the EU are facing limited access to health, educational, and governmental services (Zavratnik et al., 2019).

Rural areas in Croatia follow this trend. According to the Eurostat urban/rural typology, the majority of the population in Croatia (79.1%) live in predominantly rural and intermediate rural regions (Eurostat, 2018). The lack of stable income (only 5.1% of the total number of employees work in the countryside), high average age, low level of education, neglect of architectural heritage, inadequate provision of basic services and infrastructure, and disorderly property management result in neglect of rural settlements and the loss of the younger and able-bodied population (Ministry of Agriculture, 2019). These combined factors pose a serious threat to the further development and even survival of the rural areas.

It is necessary to address these challenges through interdisciplinary perspectives, engaging all relevant stakeholders in a variety of contexts. Zavratnik et al. (2019) advocated the creation of promising conditions for entrepreneurship, equal opportunities for people living in rural areas, and making rural communities attractive to live in. LAG initiatives in Croatia carried out as part of the LEADER program advance the development of rural areas with supporting projects initiated at the local level to revitalize the rural environment and create jobs. Unfortunately, university students are not yet actively encouraged to use their knowledge and skills to contribute to the improvement of rural communities.

In their paper about challenges of rural America, Brown and Swanson (2003) pointed out the falsity of widespread beliefs that "rural" equals "agricultural" or that rural social relationships differ significantly from those in urban society. Today, rural communities are decreasingly reliant on agricultural industries and more interconnected through access to technology and social media (Goodman, 2014). The same applies to rural areas in the EU, although the EU member states differ in their socioeconomic, demographic, landscape, and

climate characteristics.

Theoretical Framing

The RURASL Knowledge Alliance aims to set a framework for an integrated transnational approach of academic teaching and learning that contributes to the development of rural residents, meeting their needs through an innovative methodology. The alliance builds on knowledge of rural service-learning models and infrastructures to support their implementation through the active collaboration between higher education institutions and community organizations, among which the most numerous are LAGs or rural NGOs.

Service-learning is a pedagogical approach that offers students academic credit for learning derived from active engagement within the local community and work on real-world problems (Mikelić Preradović, 2015). In mission statements and university strategic plans, it is recognized as a tool that increases the effectiveness of education for sustainable development and the promotion of university–community partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

Service-learning strengthens learning; facilitates the development of professional competencies; and improves motivation, critical thinking, social responsibility, and active citizenship (Billig et al., 2005). Students who pursue service-learning "gain higher levels of problem-solving skills, critical and creative thinking, communication skills, teamwork, interpersonal and intercultural skills, leadership as well as academic skills and personal and civic values" (Astin et al., 2000; Carrington & Selva, 2010; Harris et al., 2010; Milne et al., 2008; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Rochford, 2014, cited in Josić & Mikelić Preradović, 2019, p. 167). Furthermore, skills and innovation gained from partnerships between rural partners and universities foster innovative development in rural areas in need of human resources and entrepreneurial skills and could provide support for rural beneficiaries (Sanchez Ramirez, 2011). Research (Stoecker & Schmidt, 2017) suggests that rural communities lack access to service-learning and that rural issues are rarely addressed in contemporary service-learning (Campus Compact, 2008). Universities can play a powerful role in rural communities (Watson et al., 1997), addressing rural needs and providing students with engaging learning experiences and opportunities through rural service-learning. Moreover, rural service-learning implementation shows the potential to respond to the needs of rural areas and work with them to develop sustainable economic, social, and environmental solutions to their changing landscape (Buchanan et al., 2017; Maakrun, 2016; Stoecker & Schmidt, 2017).

In Croatia, service-learning is gaining popularity only within urban higher education institutions and is completely absent in rural areas. The explanation for this difference lies partly in an enduring communist heritage and historical legacy, along with special features and trajectories related to citizenship, civil societies, and civic participation (Mikelić Preradović & Mažeikienė, 2019).

In their paper on the importance of social innovation for rural areas, Tirziu and Vrabie (2017) exposed five fields of social innovation that can contribute the most: new services in rural areas, new education courses, ecological farming, formation of local action groups, and electronic and social innovations. The RURASL project focuses on two of these areas: new education courses and collaboration of universities with LAGs.

Materials and Methods

To identify the needs and gaps of the main target groups in Croatia, three different surveys were conducted. These surveys aimed to identify

a. the needs of community organizations (LAGs and rural NGOs);

b. the needs of the beneficiaries of LAG 5 (e.g., local farmers, unemployed youth, retirees, rural homemakers, rural entrepreneurs, and social businesses); and

c. the needs and competencies of university students.

The list of questions was created to be used as an online survey or as an interview guide. The online survey is part of the Virtual Hub where community groups and higher education institutions can find a collaborator for service-learning and/or social entrepreneurship (http://hub.rural.ffzg.hr/Survey/LAG).

Informed consent was established for all respondents, answering questions was voluntary, and participants could opt out of the

questionnaires and interviews at any point. IRB approval for the needs of community organizations (LAGs and rural NGOs) was not necessary, due to the nature of the interaction with participants (expert interviews, soliciting professional experiential information rather than personal information). IRB approval for the needs of university students was secured through the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, as described in the paper that analyzes those needs (Josić & Mikelić Preradović, 2019). IRB approval for the needs of the beneficiaries of LAG 5 was not necessary, as this was not a research project but a service-learning educational program conducted following institutional procedures for quality improvement projects.

Needs of Community Organizations

The questionnaire about the needs of community organizations (LAGs and rural NGOs) was completed online, resulting in 20 responses. LAGs and rural NGOs were asked for general information about their organizations, such as the type of organization and target group. They were asked to describe their biggest challenges for the coming years and how students could help to address them. As described below, they had to choose their organization's rural development focus area, domain, rural development priorities that they would like to support through university–community collaboration, as well as study fields of university students that would be helpful to cope with their challenges.

Rural Development Focus Areas Defined by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)

- Innovation and cooperation
- Links with research and innovation
- Lifelong learning and vocational training
- Farm's performance, restructuring, and modernization
- Entry of skilled/younger farmers
- Agri-food chain integration and quality
- Biodiversity restoration, preservation, & enhancement
- Water management
- Soil erosion and soil management
- Water use efficiency
- Energy use efficiency
- Renewable sources and waste management
- Carbon conservation and sequestration
- Diversification & job creation
- Local development
- Information and communication technologies

Domains of Rural Development

- Elderly
- Market development
- Migrants
- Mountain area
- Natural resource
- Nature conservation
- Networking
- Organic farming
- Producer groups
- Product quality
- Protected areas
- Public goods
- Renewable energy
- Renewables
- Risk management
- Rural business
- Rural proofing
- Rural services
- Rural SMEs
- Short supply chains & local markets
- Smart Villages
- Social inclusion
- Social services
- Soil management
- Stakeholder involvement
- Sustainability
- Tourism
- Vocational training and skills acquisition
- Water management
- Women
- Young Farmers
- Youth

Rural Development Priorities Defined by the ENRD

- Knowledge transfer and information actions
- Consultancy (advisory services, farm management and farm relief services)

- Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs
- Investments in physical assets
- Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events and introduction of appropriate prevention actions
- Farm and business development
- Basic services and village renewal in rural areas
- Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests
- Setting up of producer groups and organizations
- Agri-environment-climate
- Organic farming
- Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments
- Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints
- Animal welfare
- Forest–environmental and climatic services and forest conservation
- Cooperation
- Risk management
- Financing of complementary national direct payments
- Support for LEADER local development (CLLD—community-led local development)
- Technical assistance

Study Fields Represented in More Than 10% of the LAGs/Rural NGOs Surveyed

The list of study fields that would be helpful to cope with LAGs' challenges are listed in alphabetical order and not in order of importance.

- Accounting and taxation
- Architecture and town planning
- Audiovisual techniques and media production
- Biochemistry
- Biology
- Business administration
- Computer use
- Database and network design and administration
- Economics
- Education science
- Electronics and automation
- Environmental protection technology
- Environmental sciences
- Fashion, interior, and industrial design
- Finance, banking, and insurance
- Fisheries
- Food processing
- Forestry
- Handicrafts
- History and archaeology
- Horticulture
- Hotels, restaurants, and catering
- Journalism and reporting
- Language acquisition
- Law
- Management and administration
- Marketing and advertising
- Mathematics
- Natural environments and wildlife
- Political sciences and civics
- Secretarial and office work
- Sociology and cultural studies
- Software and applications development and analysis
- Sports
- Teacher training with subject specialization
- Travel, tourism, and leisure
- Veterinary
- Work skills

Needs of Rural Beneficiaries

The survey of needs among rural beneficiaries was conducted as face-to-face interviews in the activity area of LAG 5. The LAG 5 area belongs to the southernmost region of Croatia, Dubrovnik-Neretva County, and includes the Pelješac peninsula and three islands: Korčula, Mljet, and Lastovo. Most of the area is coastal, and all parts have the same or very similar geomorphological and climatic characteristics as well as economic, social, cultural, and historical features. The LAG 5 area has a land surface of 790.71 km with 25,203 inhabitants (Figure 1).

Apart from the general information about themselves, their neighborhood, and engagement in the local community, the rural residents were asked to define ways in which LAG 5 can help improve their living and ways in which university students can help them satisfy their needs.

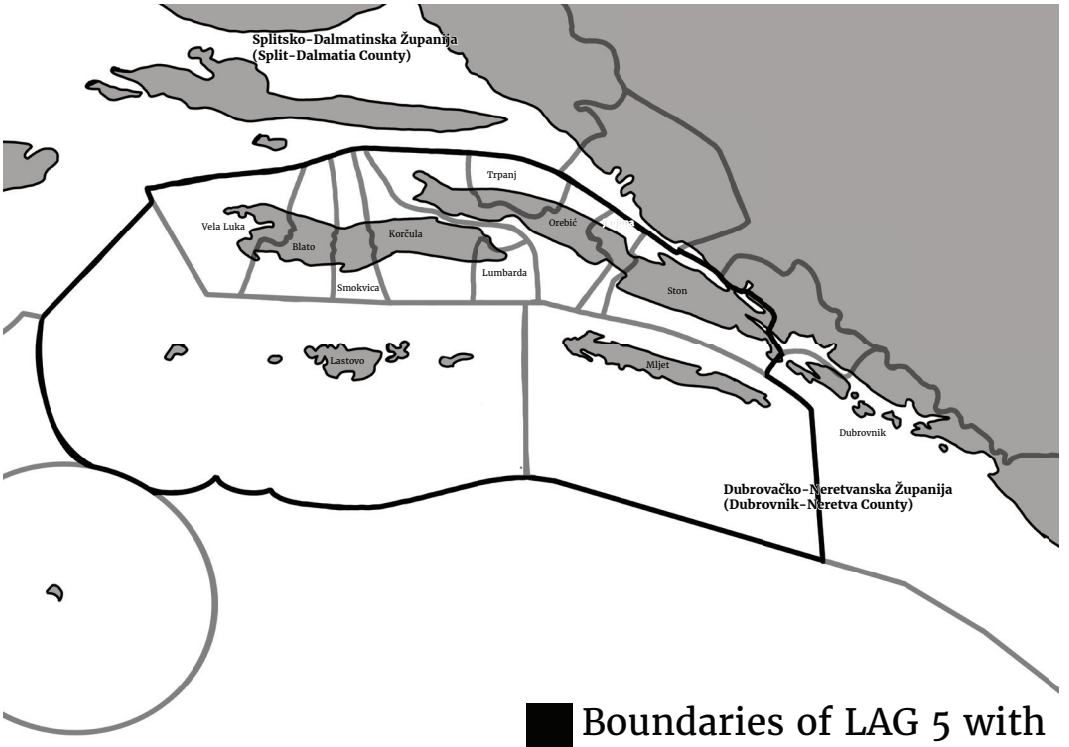

Figure 1. Area of LAG 5

Data collection resulted in both quantitative and qualitative data. Through face-to-face interviews with rural beneficiaries of LAG 5, responses from 32 participants were collected. Most of them were local farmers (15), homemakers (5), and tourist workers (4). The results of these interviews were merged to summarize and systematize the stakeholder needs.

Needs and Competencies of University Students

A survey of students' needs and competencies was conducted in four Croatian public universities: University of Zagreb (the largest public university in Croatia), University of Zadar, University of Osijek, and University of Rijeka. A questionnaire for higher education institution students was based on the Entrecomp conceptual model (Bacigalupo et al., 2016) and aimed to research the attitudes of students toward acquiring entrepreneurial skills during their study, the level and frequency of students' community engagement, and the relevant set of skills required to implement the change in the local community (Josić & Mikelić Preradović, 2019).

Results and Discussion

The implementation of the LEADER approach in the Republic of Croatia through LAGs is an important instrument that can contribute to rural areas' development. LAGs and rural NGOs covered by this research come from different parts of the Republic of Croatia and have different experiences in cooperation with higher education institutions This cooperation is based mostly on the implementation of joint projects from different fields of applied science where LAGs provide local support for higher education institutions. Many LAGs carry out education or work assignments at local primary or secondary schools.

LAGs in Croatia face three main challenges: (1) insufficient human capacities, which are mostly attributable to (2) difficulty in obtaining funding, leading to (3) the suboptimal development and implementation of new service-learning projects. Croatian LAGs have shown interest in service-learning where students could participate in day-to-day activities, from general affairs to the preparation and implementation of various development projects. Inclusion of students into the work of the association

is more than welcomed, and each LAG can offer good working conditions and several hours of mentoring.

Although originating from different rural areas in different parts of the country, the needs of Croatian LAGs' rural beneficiaries are, in their essence, very similar. The system for knowledge transfer that would acquaint beneficiaries with the best and latest solutions to foster the uptake of innovation is still insufficiently developed. Digital and financial illiteracy are reflected in the mismanagement of short-term and long-term assets, poor financial management, and investment risk increase. However, universities are rarely recognized as a force for rural social innovation with highly skilled manpower that can help speed up rural development.

In the area of LAG 5, most of the population lives near the Adriatic coast and is oriented toward fishing and mariculture, as well as olive and vine growing. The area has a long tradition of dealing with tourism, which has been a growing sector during the last decade, although the development of infrastructure and local production has not kept pace with tourism-related demands. In this isolated area, the difficulty of transporting goods and managing water, energy, and wastes has led to a higher cost of living, resulting in migration or abandonment of rural areas, especially by the younger population (LRS LAG 5, 2020).

The local population covered by this research had no experience with service-learning. Respondents were mostly farmers, retirees, and homemakers over 50 years old. Their interest in service-learning is largely tied to meeting basic living needs and closely related everyday activities such as primary and specialist health care or education and help with agricultural work. Younger respondents (less than 50 years old) come from the cultural and tourism sectors that reflect their needs. The results obtained through interviews with the local population (mainly from the Pelješac peninsula and the island of Mljet) are presented in Table 1. Respondents have highlighted many services that could be improved in their community, but the most significant are singled out in Table 1.

The most important needs highlighted by most rural beneficiaries are medical care (15 responses) and crop and livestock production (18 responses). Such needs reflect the age group of respondents—mostly people older than 50 years. In addition, the rural community lacks common activities and public events, so they pointed out music and performing arts (15 responses) as two of the important needs. The analysis of the needs and gaps of rural organizations (LAGs and rural NGOs) and their beneficiaries (rural residents) revealed both a wide range of rural challenges and recognition that available fields of study will enable students to contribute to the solution of several challenges through service-learning projects or programs. LAGs, NGOs, and their rural partners could implement service-learning programs and use the students' services to ensure more economically sustainable development of local partnerships and improve the living conditions of rural beneficiaries through service-learning.

The results of the survey conducted in four Croatian public universities (Josić & Mikelić Preradović, 2019) revealed that students lack opportunities for service-learning and community engagement during their study, especially at the undergraduate level. All surveyed students were very motivated for rural service-learning and eager for increasing competencies for entrepreneurship. The results also show that there is a need for an undergraduate course that will link service-learning and (social) entrepreneurship and enable students to acquire skills that they perceive as relevant for their future careers, as well as community engagement.

From the perspective of the LAGs, engaging students already living in the rural area would bring them closer to an entrepreneurial perspective in the local community, which could encourage younger people to remain in rural areas in the future. Also, as Davis et al. (2020) pointed out, service-learning might be used to ameliorate rural personnel shortages. Doing so, however, would require engaging community organizations (e.g., LAGs) to nurture connections between all stakeholders (students, rural community organizations, university instructors) through the entire duration of the project and to provide a sustainable plan when the project ends.

Next Steps

The RURASL project will set up a common framework and online space at the European level to stimulate rural social entrepreneurship, the development of rural residents'

Table 1. Rural Population Needs for Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship Implementation (*N* = 32)

Occupation of respondents (Contribution %)	Stakeholder needs
Public bodies (3.1%)	Public services do not have enough capacity to improve the work and functioning of their organizations themselves and require domestic services, sustainability of electricity and energy, and work skills. They expect support from local associations and the LAG in reviving entertainment in the community such as music and performing arts, sports, and leisure.
Farmers (46.9%)	Farmers pointed out a problem of fulfilling obligations related to business administration, as well as a lack of knowledge regarding marketing and advertising. They have shown great interest in assistance with crop and livestock production. They expect help from the LAG with applications for EU funds for rural development to improve their businesses.
Homemakers (15.6%)	Homemakers spend a lot of time taking care of their family and food production. Areas of interest for the implementation of service-learning are mostly related to their daily activities such as domestic services, crop and livestock production or horticulture, but also medical care that includes nursing and midwifery, medical diagnostic, therapy, and rehabilitation. They expect the local LAG and NGOs to organize informal education for rural children in music and performing arts or handicrafts and foreign language acquisition.
Cultural workers (9.4%)	The cultural sector wants to involve students in the activities in the field of audiovisual, technical, and media production or music and performing arts. They need support from the LAG with business administration, marketing, and advertising, as well as teacher training in art specialization.
Retirees (9.4%)	Retirees mostly need company and fulfillment of free time. They would like to acquire basic computer skills and get domestic services but also need increased availability of medical diagnostics, nursing, therapy, and rehabilitation. They need support from the LAG to learn foreign languages and organize activities in their leisure time.
Tourist workers (12.5%)	Tourism employees need to improve their knowledge and work skills in the hotel, restaurant, and catering business; business administration; and marketing and advertising, as well as horticultural skills. They need support from the LAG for better positioning and promotion of locally grown food and beverages in tourism.
Teachers (3.1%)	Teachers in rural areas seek better working conditions and more training in subject specialization, as well as to improve their skills in psychology, sociology, and cultural science. They expect support from the LAG for applying to educational programs and funds, primarily the EU education and training program ERASMUS+.

core skills, and university students' responsiveness to the needs of rural areas so they will work with rural communities to develop sustainable economic, social, and environmental solutions.

Based upon the results of our needs assessment for all three groups (students, rural LAGs and NGOs, and rural residents), the following steps are planned:

1. Develop academic courses with a service-learning component targeting specific student skills and rural needs.
2. Establish community training based on the analysis of rural needs in Table 1.

As enterprises that foster rural development, the LAGs and their partners provide twofold contributions: They will develop their skills in funding rural development needs in a financially self-sustainable way, reducing their reliance on subsidies; at the same time, they will disseminate skills and practices of social entrepreneurship to tackle the gap between available social services and access to publicly funded social services.

Also, the RURASL project will address the following national strategic objectives in higher education:

a. improve key competencies of students, particularly in the less developed areas with lower levels of education;
b. improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of higher education; and
c. improve the collaboration of higher education institutions and community organizations, educating socially responsible citizens and thereby contributing to the overall development of the community.

RURASL results will be disseminated to a broad network of stakeholders, including academic and rural communities. This network will achieve sustainability through promotion of community–university rural networks among the national rural networks that are part of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) hub in many EU countries.

In the short term, LAGs and rural residents should benefit from the student services, knowledge on how to effectively utilize students, and education on the possibilities of social entrepreneurship to provide income for funding a broad array of public services in rural areas that lack finances. LAGs will bring together rural beneficiaries to choose the issues to address and direct the abilities of universities to access knowledge about those issues.

In the long run, LAGs and rural residents should benefit from the community–university partnerships. These partnerships will leverage local assets to increase the social capital in the community, create more independent models for funding, and implement innovative projects that will bring a new layer of grassroots empowerment to the existing LEADER approach.

Conclusion

Not a single Croatian university currently offers a curriculum that includes rural service-learning because such a curriculum would require collaboration between different (and sometimes remote) stakeholders and would involve a teaching and learning context much more demanding than the urban context. Higher education should respond to these challenges.

In all Croatian rural areas, the potential exists to support innovation in education and strengthening of social capital. Partnerships with universities could provide skills and innovation that would enable LAGs to foster innovative development in rural areas to bolster scant human resources and entrepreneurial skills and provide support for rural beneficiaries before and after the students' civic engagement period.

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A Case Study of a Multiyear Community-Engaged Learning Capstone in Computer Science

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Abstract

We present a case study of a multi-year, academic civic engagement (ACE) collaboration in a computer science capstone course. ACE projects in computer science provide an avenue for students to apply software development concepts to real-world projects with actual clients, and can offer meaningful engagement with ethical issues. The typical time-limited nature of ACE projects within a single course leaves little time for reflection, iterative development, maintenance, and evolution of priorities, centering student learning outcomes over community partner goals. The model presented here is sustainable and robust to changes in personnel on both the community side and the academic side, including student participants. We highlight the importance of an involved center for civic engagement to facilitate relationship formation and frame civic learning for students. We address how longevity facilitates a true iterative and collaborative development process, supports the development of trust relationships, and opens up space for transformational change.

Keywords: academic civic engagement; case study; collaborative software development; computing for good

Academic civic engagement (ACE) projects have long enabled students to apply curricular concepts to real-world projects with a community service benefit. Such projects pair students in a course, or a capstone experience, with one or more community organizations. In the best-case scenario, the students and the community organization collaborate on a project of joint interest that serves as a mechanism to apply learning to real-world problems for students and results in a tangible outcome or product for the community partner.

Within computer science, ACE projects provide an avenue for students to apply software development concepts to real-world projects with actual clients. Designing and implementing real software for real people forces students to confront user-centered and algorithmic design issues that are easy to ignore in class projects. Such experiences provide professionalism practice for students who are likely to work in similar scenarios once they complete their degrees—practice that is difficult to replicate in a classroom environment. ACE projects also can offer meaningful engagement with ethical issues in a way that classroom readings, discussions, and simulations cannot.

In well designed and executed ACE projects in computer science (ACE in CS), community partners benefit from the technical assistance that student projects provide. Often, money for IT, software procurement, and/or software development projects is tight, nonexistent, or better spent in other areas of the nonprofit. Outsourcing these tasks to computer science students ideally saves the community partner the expense of a commercial solution and/or saves time spent researching various alternatives, time better spent in the core work of the nonprofit. Additionally, student–community partnerships expose students to the work and goals of the nonprofit organization and provide students a broader context of the needs and daily workings of the surrounding community.

On balance, such partnerships tend toward more favorable outcomes for the students than for the community partner, due largely to the projects' structure and nature (Mitchell, 2008). Chief among the limitations: time. Projects tend to last for a semester or quarter, leaving little time for reflection, iterative development, or meaningful progress. Because students fit in ACE work with their other coursework, their commitment to the project is part time. Software rarely works correctly 100% of the time, and requires bug fixes and updates over time. The needs of the organization may change, rendering the project obsolete, often sooner than either party expects. A short-term collaboration addresses none of these issues, forcing partners to either abandon the solution altogether or spend time and money to fix the issues on their own. Increasingly, both sides are questioning the ethics of this particular model of "drop-in" collaboration, from both the community partner's perspective and the curricular perspective.

One solution is to create multiyear collaborations between community partners and an evolving group of students, either over several offerings of the same course or, as we discuss here, in capstone projects spanning several years. Such longer lived collaborations address some of the issues around maintenance, iterative development, testing, and morphing of goals and priorities, as well as some of the ethical issues. Executed well, such a model has the potential to strengthen community–academy relationships, specifically allowing for the development of deeper trust relationships. It may also provide a stronger model for ethical software development for computer science students, addressing many of the ethical issues outlined above.

This case study presents a model of a sustainable and sustained collaboration between community members and the academy that is robust to changes in personnel on both the community side and the academic side. Our case study demonstrates effective ways to onboard new project members from both the community side and the academic side, lessons we learned from trial and error. We highlight how aspects of an iterative software development process facilitate the community–academy feedback process and enrich the development process on both ends.

The case study also describes lessons learned in the course of this partnership, lessons about developing trust between the parties and about developing respect within the students (and faculty) for the lived experiences and expertise of the community partners. It highlights the importance of an involved center for civic engagement to facilitate relationship formation and frame the academic and social aspects of the work for the students—as well as providing space for necessary and fruitful reflection by students on their learning, positionality, and experiences. It describes some of the unexpected mundane details that have proven important, such as producing documentation. Finally, it presents a mechanism for project maintenance and growth once the formal academic partnership ends.

Situating Civic Engagement in a Computer Science Context

The literature situating civic engagement, sometimes called "service-learning" within the broader academic context, is well established. Reviewing a range of existing literature, Mitchell (2008) explored the divide in service-learning between a traditional approach that emphasizes course-based service without attention to the structural nature of inequity on one hand, and a critical approach that explicitly seeks to challenge the systems of injustice on the other. She highlighted a social change orientation, working to distribute power, and developing authentic relationships, as characteristics that distinguish a critical service-learning project. She contested that the goals of student development (preprofessional experience, leadership skills, etc.) and community change are mutually exclusive, suggesting that focusing on community partners' goals will also lead to positive outcomes for students. Although the Center for Community and Civic Engagement at our institution (Carleton College) uses the terminology of academic civic engagement, Mitchell's conceptualization of critical service-learning certainly echoes the CCCE's student learning objectives:

- Understanding issues in their real world complexity.
- Recognizing and honoring different forms of knowledge.
- Awareness of positionality.
- Doing—how can students take the course content and do something

with it beyond the classroom while learning in the process.

- Developing leadership skills.
- Nurturing a commitment to lifelong civic engagement. (Center for Community and Civic Engagement, n.d., Vision Statement)

Mitchell's discussion of critical service-learning also resonates with the aspirational best practices the Center hopes to promote, via workshops, training, and events, among Carleton faculty.

Whitney et al. (2016) discussed the interaction and tension between academic goals and community needs. With the aim of understanding and addressing future opportunities and challenges for reforming service-learning and community engagement in higher education, they examined the on-the-ground efforts of two community organizations to illuminate some of the recurrent issues associated with democratic engagement. The coauthors—a combination of academics and leaders or staff of the two organizations—highlighted several areas of tensions, namely asset-oriented norms and cocreation, place-based partnerships, and a process orientation toward impact. The organizations' work illustrates the complexities of democratic engagement, which can sometimes be exacerbated by partnerships involving the academy, especially with an orientation primarily toward student learning outcomes (Trebil-Smith, 2019).

The field of civic engagement at large has paid increasing attention to the serious risks of one-time, transactional student–community engagement. The work of Susan Gust, a community organizer, and Catherine Jordan, an academic, reflects the process of recognizing and working through such risks in the long-running partnership between community activists and the University of Minnesota that led the Phillips Neighborhood Healthy Housing Collaborative (PNHHC), a group of local residents, to make transformative change in the community, the university, and the lives of the participants (Jordan & Gust, 2011). Gust and Jordan described their own disparate backgrounds as collaborators, explicitly naming the self-interest that led them to become involved in the project, and recounted how the challenges of learning to work equitably across lines of difference through the PNHHC affected their collaborative practice and provided profound personal benefits. This work has led them to develop a community impact process for potential higher education–community collaborations (Gust & Jordan, 2006). Another vital example comes from scholars Katie Johnson-Goodstar and Jenni Sethi, who worked in collaboration with attendees of a 2014 presentation to create the "But Do *I* Want to Work With *You*" checklist to support community organizations in having more agency to decline proposed collaborations with institutions of higher education that do not align with their values or advance their goals (Johnston-Goodstar & Sethi, 2014).

Literature over the past few decades has explored placing, or centering, civic engagement projects within computer science courses. Similar to Mitchell, Connolly (2012) questioned the prevailing approach of "service-learning as internship" in computer science, with outsized benefits to the students at the expense of the community partners, and argued for an "advocacy orientation" to service-learning instead. Perhaps the most similar model to the one we discuss here is the software design course discussed in Davis and Rebelsky (2019). Students in this course developed non–mission critical software for local nonprofit organizations, following a more traditional client/contractor structure than the cocreator structure we describe here. Teams in one semester hand off code to teams in subsequent semesters. Vennekens (2020) presented a small case study of a web technology course where students partnered with a single nonprofit organization to develop games for the organization's platform. The partnership's main goal was to increase student engagement in the course and develop a greater sense of student empathy, which fits Mitchell's model of traditional service-learning.

Dekhane et al. (2018) described an elective course where students designed outreach activities to introduce children and nonmajor first-year students to computing, with a focus on retention of minoritized students in computing through service-learning. Sabie and Parikh (2019) reported on a master's-level service-learning course partnering students with nonprofit organizations to work on open-ended problems. The course prioritized the development of relationships of care over the creation of artifacts and finished products, and focused

on the act of cocreation between students and community partners; the collaborations end when the course ends, with no carryover to subsequent course offerings. Syeda et al. (2020) introduced a framework for integrating service-learning design studies into semester-long data visualization courses. The service-learning model in this course fits Mitchell's (2008) definition of traditional service-learning, focusing almost exclusively on student learning outcomes. Although not part of a classic course per se, Lee et al. (2019) described a MOOC-like environment where students contributed to the development of websites for nonprofit organizations through "microroles." Although the microroles allowed students to collaborate on increasingly complex tasks, the structure precluded true cocreation between the nonprofit organization and the learners.

Humanitarian free and open source software (HFOSS) projects (Parra et al., 2016) overlap the service-learning space: the open source nature means anyone can contribute, and the humanitarian aspect means the software development project focuses on fostering some social good. Because students take time to learn the norms of the project and the project's developer community, such projects are well-suited for multiterm courses such as capstones. Braught et al. (2018) reported on five different models for capstones engaging students in HFOSS projects, some of which, like the project reported on here, lasted over multiple semesters. HFOSS projects share the cocreation structure of transformational service-learning projects, but do not necessarily tie students to their local communities, as the projects may literally be hosted all over the world. In addition, many HFOSS-based courses prioritize knowledge about software development workflows and tools in open source software development over cocreation of knowledge.

The ethics of working with community partners and nonprofit organizations through ICTD (Information and Communications Technology for Development) research is a commonly explored theme in literature from the computer science subfield human–computer interaction (HCI). Bopp and Voida (2020) presented an important overview of the space, delving into the biases inherent in existing research in terms of types of organizations represented, types of methodologies, which stakeholders are given "voice," and so on. Dell and Kumar (2016) critically examined the field of HCI for development (HCI4D) via literature review and interviews with domain experts, concentrating on understanding the current landscape and prevailing attitudes about what HCI4D is and what role it plays in HCI. Voida (2011) outlined the challenges inherent in working with nonprofit organizations, particularly as their resources, goals, and operations shift in response to events in the public, private, and household/community sectors. Value sensitive design (VSD) is often used as a framework for approaching ethical research with community partners; Borning and Muller (2012) discussed the limits of VSD as traditionally practiced, and provided suggestions for addressing issues of defining values, giving voice to stakeholders, and so on. Similarly, Dombrowski et al. (2016) described a social justice orientation for research addressing large-scale social issues, focusing on six dimensions—transformation, recognition, reciprocity, enablement, distribution, and accountability—and three commitments—to conflict, to reflexivity, and to personal ethics and politics. These works resonate with the themes in Mitchell (2008) as well as the learning objectives of Carleton's CCCE office.

Project Structure

Academic civic engagement or service-learning has long been discussed among the "high impact practices" that leave lasting imprints through active student learning. Building off Kuh's (2008) work on high impact practices, which in addition to civic engagement include academic capstone and undergraduate research experiences, attention has increasingly focused on the particular benefits for students from underrepresented groups in higher education: BIPOC, first-generation college, transfer, and low-income students. Finley and McNair (2013) noted the "equity effects" of high impact practices because, while they influence learning across groups of college students, their impact appears to be *more* significant for students from groups who are historically and currently underserved by higher education. Additionally, Finley and McNair's analysis bolsters the claim that participation in *multiple* high impact practices over the course of a college experience can influence self-perceptions of learning, particularly for students from underserved groups. The case study explored in this article, an academic

civic engagement project embedded across a two-trimester computer science capstone, is an example of multiple, simultaneous high impact practices.

Academic civic engagement provides vital space for students and faculty to grapple with the ethical dimensions and potential public purposes of their fields. The resulting class-inspired discussions and reflections are microcosms of the larger conversations about the public purpose of higher education. In their seminal white paper, Saltmarsh et al. (2009) envisioned this purpose as the site of reciprocal collaboration to aid in "public problem solving." Because access to technical knowledge of computer science is often limited in the small nonprofits or grassroots organizations with which the Carleton courses often collaborate, computer science has an especially potent potential to expand the capacity of people doing transformative work in communities through public problem solving. By the same token, computer science collaborations present unique challenges in achieving the "full participation" of community collaborators (Strum et al., 2011) and require a heightened attention to communication, positionality, trust building, and agenda cosetting.

The long-term and iterative structure of the project featured here provided more space for community partner participation and revision than a typical, single-term ACE project. As a collaborative capstone project, it is also the culmination of an informal "pathway of civic learning," which along with various recurrent and one-time computer science, math and statistics, and physics ACE courses, showcases avenues for applying students' technical STEM skills for the public good. As we discuss in greater depth later, this particular project structure, within the long-established framework of academic civic engagement, provides powerful benefits to student learning, the community partner relationship, and the actual impact of the product of the collaboration on the community partner's workflow.

Senior Comprehensive Exercise "Comps"

Carleton College mandates a capstone experience, "Comps" (short for senior comprehensive exercise), in the major for every student, typically completed in the student's senior year or last year at Carleton. It is a cultural norm at the college that students take their Comps project seriously, putting significant academic as well as emotional weight on "Compsing."

Computer science's Comps spans two consecutive trimesters of an academic year, counting as half of a course credit in each term. Computer science majors work in teams of four to six students, assigned by the department, on a project chosen by their faculty advisor that engages some subset of their major coursework. Most commonly, students draw heavily on Algorithms and Software Design, two required courses in the major. Increasingly, projects rely on some student knowledge of artificial intelligence, machine learning, statistics, data visualization, and/or HCI. Besides practicing effective teamwork strategies, a valuable life skill and career skill in the software development industry, students also practice using the tools of the trade to manage code repositories, conduct code reviews, and keep track of milestones and work in progress. Projects range from more traditional software development projects, a subset of which are performed with community or campus partners as ACE projects, to more academic projects, such as conducting research or analyzing algorithms. Students take ownership over the ill-structured problems, with light guidance from faculty.

In the first term, students immerse themselves in the problem space. In software development projects, they conduct research into the audience and goals and develop user stories. The group produces a project proposal, which includes a timeline of milestones and deliverables, along with artifacts like architectural diagrams, a literature review, and an algorithm outline. By the end of the term, the team completes an alpha version of their solution based on the project proposal.

In the second term, students refine and complete their solution. They present their work publicly at a Comps symposium; the community partner attends if they are able. At the conclusion of the project, they release source code or other artifacts and publish their results on a website hosted by the department. For projects that are likely to continue in a subsequent year, students produce handoff documentation for the next team.

Identifying and Building Relationships With Community Partners

Two mechanisms exist to match community

partners with courses. In one model, the campus Civic Engagement office acts as a clearinghouse, identifying and vetting community partners and connecting interested faculty. This model places the burden on the Civic Engagement office to develop relationships with community partners and faculty independently, identify potential fruitful connections, and identify potential faculty/course fits for a particular community need. The advantage of this model is that information about work between the community and the campus is centralized, giving the Civic Engagement office the most complete knowledge of the number and nature of community/academic connections.

In another model, faculty develop relationships with community partners independently of the Civic Engagement office, looping in the Civic Engagement office once the partnership is established. This model places the burden on faculty and community partners alike to identify and build upon potential curricular connections. In a new partnership between the community partner and the campus, the onus is on the partner to vet the faculty member, and on the faculty member to assess the suitability of the match. Of course, the Civic Engagement office, once looped in, can perform or at least assist with these tasks, given the strength of their community knowledge overall. However, it also recognizes and takes advantage of the relationships that serendipitously arise when faculty and community members meet and connect in any number of contexts.

The faculty–community partnership described here began serendipitously via a student connection. The student attended a panel of community organizations hosted by the Civic Engagement office, where they heard the community partner describe their need to keep better track of the youth utilizing their services. The student connected with the community partner after the panel, simultaneously mentioning the encounter to the faculty member and asking if this could form the foundation of a computer science Comps project.

Relationship building proceeded on several levels. The faculty member met with the community partner and the student to create a project outline. The faculty member and community partner codeveloped a Comps project proposal for the following academic year based on this outline, with the goal of moving the partner from paper-based attendance tracking to electronic attendance tracking. The faculty member looped in the Civic Engagement office to designate the project as an "ACE course" and acquire necessary course support. The faculty member and community partner met several times prior to the start of the project to discuss project and support details and to clarify expected outcomes. By the time the project started, a process and structure were already in place to support the students.

The faculty member leveraged preexisting strong relationships with the Civic Engagement office forged through previous course and capstone civic engagement projects. The Civic Engagement office was already well-versed in the faculty member's interests and strengths, and knew what the faculty member would bring to the partnership. The Civic Engagement office also knew, based on past experience, that the faculty member would be an appropriate match for this community partner. The Civic Engagement office thus provided valuable vetting to the project, a critical factor in the project's success. Additionally, the student was both primed to reflect on how their computer science major could be utilized to facilitate community change, and empowered to initiate connections with community members independently. This is a key example of student-directed pedagogy at work and a clear demonstration of civic agency (Boyte, 2009).

These early meetings between the community partner and the faculty member are crucial for building trust between the two, and for managing expectations. The faculty member needs to be honest about what students can and cannot bring to the partnership. It's also helpful if the faculty member can anticipate potential pitfalls that may affect the project's progress and/or deliverables, and work with the community partner to develop a contingency plan. Being honest about outcomes, and then delivering on those outcomes to the extent possible, facilitates and expands trust between the two parties.

Having clear expectations up front helps the community partner fit the project deliverables and timeline into their important community work. Taking the worry about the project off their plate, to the extent possible, allows them to concentrate on their core work. The relationship with campus should be a benefit, not a burden, and the

faculty member, in addition to the civic engagement center staff, needs to play a major role in making this so.

About the Community Partners

The Key is the oldest youth-run youth center in the nation. It is run by Northfield Union of Youth Key youth board, which is democratically elected by youth. They hire and review all staff as well as make programming and policy decisions about The Key.

A community partner's commitment to participatory, democratic engagement is an asset to an academic civic engagement collaboration. First, an organization such as this one lends itself particularly well to what Mitchell (2008) defined as "critical service-learning" pedagogy, where students are encouraged "to see themselves as agents of social change, and use the experience of service to address and respond to injustice in communities" (p. 51). Again, this approach seeks to counter the long history of paternalism in university–community partner relationships, urging faculty to incorporate ideas about systems of power into the courses, as opposed to "traditional" service-learning's focus on only direct service. Because youth self-determination and systemic issues around equity and access are fundamental to the work of The Key, the computer science student collaborators are compelled to design a tool with those concepts in mind. The Key staff too, because of their organization's culture and values, are also adept at naming and managing relational power dynamics, which can support effective communication between collaborators. Lastly, when students see mission-driven organizations in action, through site observations and active collaboration, they are able to gain a greater sense of the potential impact of their project, which can inspire deeper student investment.

The Key has an extensive history of collaboration with Carleton's Center for Community and Civic Engagement, regularly partnering on several academic civic engagement projects a year. This frequency has established a level of trust and has even shaped some overlapping philosophies around collaborations. Trebil-Smith (2019) is among the scholars of civic engagement who have noted that a solid foundation of collaboration is often an element of successful civic engagement projects, especially around community partners having space for an expansive vision of potential longer-term outcomes. "For those with more established partnerships, the vision tended to include long-term, sustainable programs and full-circle, student-led initiatives (i.e. students designing, implementing, and sustaining a project or program)" (p. 21).

The Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) joined the collaboration in the second year of the project. Like Carleton College, HCI is located in Northfield, Minnesota; it self-defines its mission as "cultivat[ing] a collaborative community that supports, values and empowers youth" (HCI, 2020, We Support Local Youth Programs). In addition to its own in-house programming, it frequently serves as a convener for stakeholders invested in youth empowerment in Northfield and, increasingly, in surrounding Rice County. The organization also coordinates relevant efforts, and because of its successful grantmaking, plugs in staff resources or available funding to bolster the work of partners on shared priorities. HCI became involved in this project because The Key and HCI routinely share data in order to identify and allocate resources to youth within the community. HCI thus had an interest in what data was collected, and how this data could be shared with them.

Similar to The Key, HCI has a long-standing relationship with Carleton's CCCE. The HCI director is a College alum and has served as a community partner representative on the CCCE's oversight committee. Having a project that, as it develops momentum, involves additional community partners is also a way to showcase to students that, for the goals of a community change agenda to be met, the effort often needs to include various stakeholders. For example, the project eventually incorporated attendance data from the high school so that The Key's staff could be more agile in identifying youth in crisis.

Project Lifecycle

Multiyear projects such as this one require attention to multiple timelines: the day-to-day structure of a single Comps cycle, as well as the between-cycles planning and reflection. In addition, the nature of this particular collaboration required special considerations around data privacy and confidentiality.

Structure of a Single Comps Cycle

An individual Comps cycle begins with a kickoff meeting, where the student team and the community partner review and codevelop goals and deliverables for this cycle. The students hear firsthand from the partner about what's been working well, what's not working at all, and other problems or issues with the current system. Because the CCCE and The Key have an established relationship, The Key's leadership staff are practiced in this cocreation process, and thus take both a leadership and a mentorship role as the students navigate this process for the first time. The community partner sets the agenda and shares ownership of the cocreated goals, resetting the typical power structures as discussed in Mitchell (2008).

Students then meet as a team without the community partner to conduct their own review of goals and deliverables. They review notes from the previous cycle, if applicable, including the list of unimplemented deliverables and features, prioritizing the ones the community member highlighted as important. They develop a plan to review the existing codebase.

Site observations are an especially important element in this process, and occur early in the cycle. Through observation, students get a much clearer picture of what it looks like for The Key to deliver its services and live out its mission. They see for themselves the strengths and limitations of the existing workflow. Although early discussions and meetings are fruitful, the group's focus and temperament change after these observations. We discuss the benefits and challenges of observation as a research method in the section Discussion and Lessons Learned.

The team meets at least once a week with the faculty advisor to review their progress and to hash out design or technical issues. Team members meet on their own several times between faculty advisor meetings, either as coworking sessions or for further discussion of technical and design issues.

The team meets at least once with the community partner during each term, although ideally these meetings occur on a more regular basis. During the second year of the project, for instance, the team met every other week with the community partner. At these meetings, the partner and team review and refine goals and deliverables, and the team demonstrates the latest progress. The meetings help to keep the team on track and accountable to the partner, and remind the team to center the partner's agenda. They also help prevent "drift," where the actual development deviates from the partner's goals and needs.

To ensure the system would run robustly when deployed, the students conducted both usability tests and soft deployments. Students conducted the former during meetings with community partners, to get one-off feedback on, say, the placement of buttons and fields or the understandability of labels and functionality. During soft deployments, students monitored the database to verify that records remained stable and updated properly. They stress-tested the system to confirm it could handle peak loads. Volunteers and staff at The Key provided valuable feedback on how to streamline data entry and on bugs that popped up while in use.

In the term following the completion of Comps, students meet with the partner one last time for an official "handoff" and release of the production version of the software.

Between Comps Cycles

At the conclusion of a Comps cycle, the advisor and community partners debrief, without students present. The meeting focuses on practical questions: What went well in this partnership? (How) are you using the software? What are the main issues you are encountering with the software? Should we continue this partnership next year? Having this established space for honest community partner feedback at the end of a cycle of working together is an important equity practice that acknowledges the power dynamics a faculty person can bring into a collaboration.

The decision to continue is largely based on the goals that the software is not meeting, or not fully meeting. In the original conception of the project, one of the long-term goals stated by the community partner was the ability to demonstrate to donors, grantors, and potential donors and grantors, the effectiveness of The Key's programs, using actual data. Our year-over-year decisions have largely hinged on whether continuing the project for another year would move The Key closer to this goal. This decision is balanced on the academic side by asking, Would students' work in continuing the

project meet the learning goals of computer science Comps? If the project instead seems chiefly an exercise in maintenance, it would not continue as a Comps project for the next year.

Once the decision is made to continue, the community partner and faculty member set goals and objectives for the next Comps cycle. This iterative codevelopment of objectives and deliverables is crucial to the continued success of the project. It honors and centers the community partner's knowledge and experience, integrating it holistically into the learning objectives of Comps, so that the needs of both sides are met to the extent possible (Jordan & Gust, 2011).

Finally, the faculty member facilitates the onboarding process for the new project team. The incoming project team meets with the outgoing project team in late spring the year before the next cycle, once the teams and projects for the next year are established. The outgoing team shares accomplishments, known issues, and next steps. The incoming team peppers them with questions about the project. The outgoing team provides access to the code repository, along with any other information necessary (Amazon Web Services keys, etc.) for getting started with the codebase.

Special Considerations

The clientele of The Key consists largely of minor children, some of whom fall into additional underserved groups: they are unsheltered or housing insecure, food insecure, and so on. This meant we needed to take extra care with data privacy, ensuring, to the extent possible, that data was available only to certain parties on a need-to-know basis, while still allowing staff members, volunteers, and youth the ability to take attendance. The addition of HCI to the project, and the ensuing integration of school-related data, lent an additional importance to data privacy considerations. The data privacy issues were most salient when structuring the reporting functionality and some aspects of the sign-in functionality.

Results

Figure 1 shows the progression of the site development over the span of the project and the evolution of project goals. The site progression summarizes the core work in each year of the project: the foundational work in Year 1, and the iterative refinement of both the vision and the implementation in Year 2 and Year 3.

Year 1: "Throw One Away"

There is a saying among software developers that the first version of any product you develop is the one you throw away. This is the version where you figure out what the problem actually is as you are trying to solve it, and where you make the majority of your design mistakes. The saying acknowledges that software developers, like writers, need

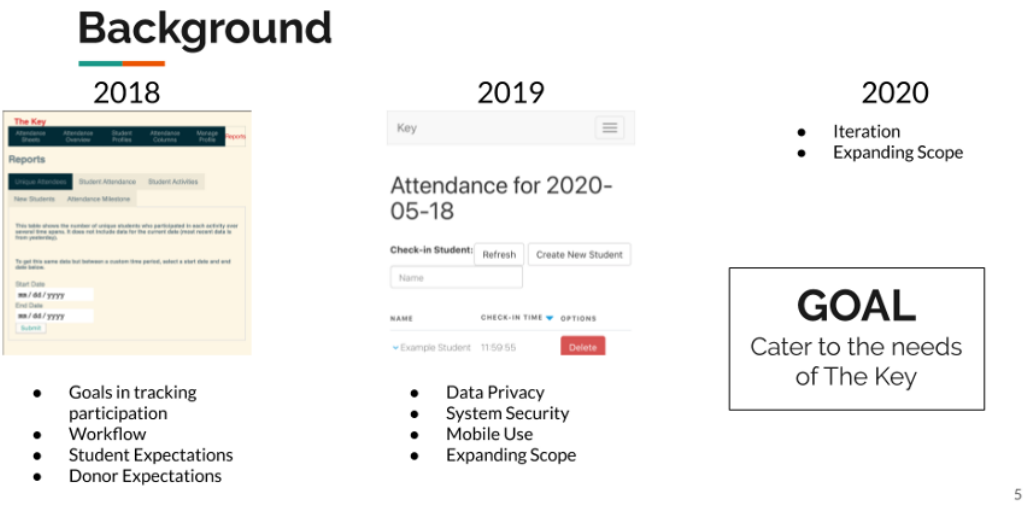

Figure 1. Summary of Deliverables Year Over Year
Note. Slide generated by the Year 3 Comps team.

the rough draft to figure out exactly what they want to say and how to say it. In the first year of the project, the students wrote the version of the software that we threw away.

Throwing out what we did was of course not the goal of the project. At that point, it was not even clear that the project would expand beyond the first year. As far as the students were concerned, they were writing *the* version of the software that would be used moving forward.

The major goal of the project in Year 1 was to move The Key from paper-based attendance tracking to electronic attendance tracking via a database-driven website. The system modeled attendance as "one sheet per day," based on the team's observations of the volunteers' workflow at The Key. The Comps team wanted their system to mimic the paper-based workflow as much as possible while providing vital enhancements, to avoid cognitive dissonance and the stress of learning a new workflow.

The website (Figure 2) mimics a spreadsheet with multiple tabs representing multiple views of the data. Entering student names is front and center, in the first (default) tab. From this tab, users can also view and download past attendance "sheets." The Attendance Overview tab provides an ability to download attendance sheets within a date range for offline processing, useful when generating reports for grant agencies. The Student Profiles tab allows volunteers to view and edit information about students. The Attendance Columns tab allows The Key's leadership to add and modify the programs and activities tracked over time—a need identified in the course of codevelopment. The Reports tab tracks how many unique students participated in a programming category, total student attendance by date range, activity participation by date range, new attendees by date range, and other attendance milestones. All of these features were either noted as important during the observation phase or indicated as important during the requirements-gathering phase.

The final version fulfilled most of the requirements, but left others incomplete. "Manage Profile," an attempt to merge multiple records of the same person (for example, under different names and nicknames), never completely worked, and the team was unable to implement uploading student pictures to their student profiles. The site proved unstable, performing differently on different web browsers and occasionally losing data. The team designed and implemented the site to work optimally on a desktop or laptop, yet the volunteers used mobile devices to record attendance—a fatal flaw that quickly became evident to the team at the site's soft rollout. In addition, the site was not secure: None of the actions required a login, which meant anyone had

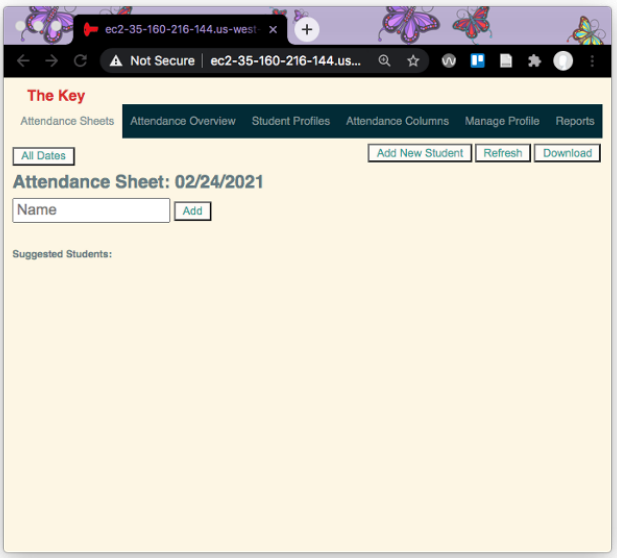

Figure 2. Screenshot of the Main Tab Showing the Attendance Entry Page in the Year 1 Prototype.

access to any of the data within the system.

In Year 2, we had to start over.

Year 2: Revamping the Model

The major goals of the 2nd year of the project were to fix the security issues in the original website and to improve the mobile experience. To accomplish these goals, the team redesigned the site from the ground up. They reimplemented all of the previous year's features and redid the entire database to make it more robust. They added basic authentication, requiring users to login before performing any operation, albeit with a single sign-on username and password for all volunteers and leaders, with no differentiation between roles.

The team modified some of the reporting capabilities of the site, allowing some online analyses and "heat map" visualizations, as Figure 3 shows. The Reports tab retained the ability to download data for offline analysis. In practice, the visualizations proved a little too clunky for The Key's purposes.

Although the site was a major improvement over the previous year's offering, issues remained. The lack of differentiated roles left minors' data exposed to anyone with login credentials, a violation of the system's data privacy requirements. The system documentation was also lacking, which made it hard for the Year 3 students to get up to speed, and for The Key's leadership to figure out why certain bugs occurred.

Year 3: "Putting Out Fires"

The Year 3 team faced two significant challenges: a switch in faculty advisors from the first 2 years of the project, and the arrival of the global COVID-19 pandemic mid-project. The advisor was new to the project and new to Comps advising, and grappled with both the complexity of the project and with learning how to effectively advise Comps. The pandemic moved Carleton immediately from in-person learning to remote learning, requiring the team to figure out how to work together on the codebase remotely for the entirety of the second term of the project. The pandemic also shut down The Key to all in-person programming, which would impact the team's ability to test and roll out any changes to the codebase—a point we return to later in this section.

This cycle's work expanded the scope of the site to assess and articulate program out-

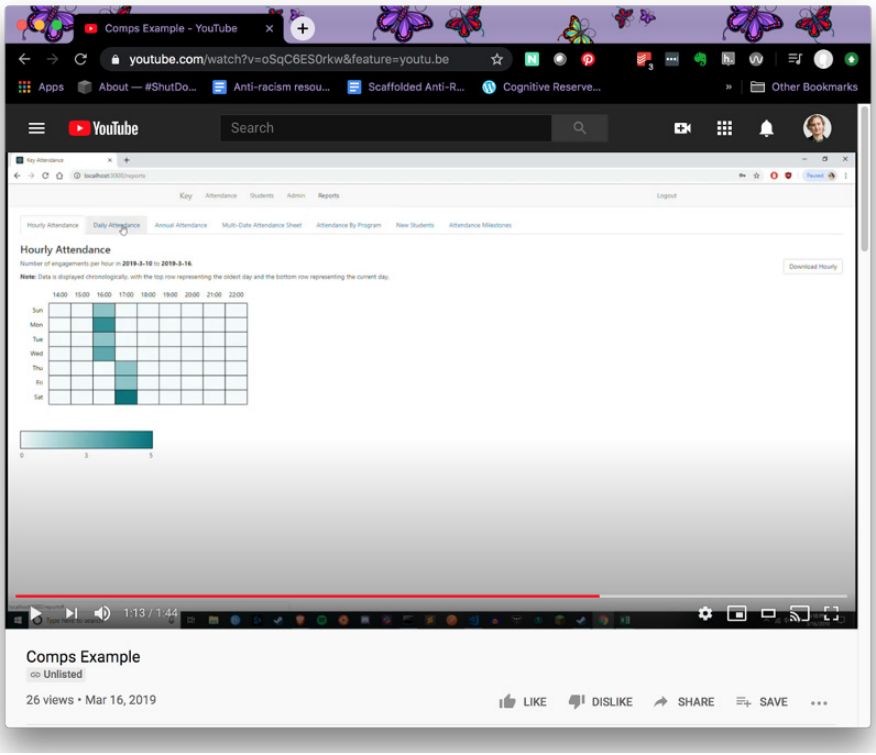

Figure 3. Screenshot of the Reports Tab in the Year 2 Prototype

comes and effectiveness for The Key staff and donors, including a mechanism to track volunteers and a "flag" system to track student needs such as food, housing, mental health, and employment. The team implemented the ability to search by student key (ID number), providing another way to connect multiple profiles for the same student and to connect The Key's information with school data.

The team struggled to make sense of the codebase, even with the assistance of a mentor from the Year 2 team. Eventually, they paused development to create better documentation for the codebase, and to verify that they could integrate a small change to the existing codebase. Although producing documentation and integrating small changes to the code at first is a strategy we have used when advising Comps projects that contribute to open source codebases, we had not thought to apply it in this context. This process uncovered structural and security issues with the code that needed to be addressed immediately, which took priority over other development tasks.

The team improved site security by implementing user roles and multiple logins, addressing the issues with information sharing of data associated with minor children. They fixed various software bugs and resolved a number of code dependencies stemming from outdated packages. They cleaned up the interface to address some of the usability issues that arose in day-to-day use.

These deliverables were absolutely necessary for the code to remain viable, but the team's contributions felt less like the fundamental system design of previous years' work. The team spent more time reacting to the needs of the project than to proactively advancing a design vision. Although managing these practical details was absolutely necessary for this part of the project, the project had a different "feel" in Year 3 than in the previous years.

Several factors contributed to this shift. First, the global pandemic shifted the priorities of the community partners from this collaboration to more fundamental community needs, such as getting wireless hotspots to families without internet access. Regular meetings with the Year 3 team took on a higher cost and a lower benefit in this landscape. Second, The Key was largely satisfied with the Year 2 system and had already adapted its workflows accordingly. It was more difficult for them to reimagine workflows when more immediate changes, like bug fixes and feature modifications, would have a greater impact on easing their stress points. Recognizing the need for work on these immediate changes may have contributed to the impression that students were providing "Band-Aid fixes," rather than transforming the project through their own design and implementation contributions. Finally, having a first-time faculty advisor likely played a role—the advisor needed to figure out how to manage the relationship between the students and the community partners, and manage her own relationship and teaching voice with students, while simultaneously managing those relationships in real time. Any faculty advisor will need to manage student–partner relationships differently each year, but more seasoned Comps advisors can fall back on established best practices that they have honed over time via trial and error. In hindsight, the advisor for the first 2 years of the project, herself a seasoned Comps advisor, should have been more proactive in providing more hands-on guidance and onboarding into both project management and Comps mentorship strategies.

As of this writing, none of the Year 3 modifications have been tested or integrated into the production system. The code cannot be tested or rolled out until it is safe for The Key to go back to in-person programming, a date yet to be determined. The Year 3 students have all graduated; even though a couple of Year 3 students agreed to advise the eventual rollout, the testing and rollout will be directed by faculty and students who are not intimately versed in the codebase.

Discussion and Lessons Learned

In this section, we consolidate the key takeaways from the collaboration. Our hope is that these points will prove useful to other institutions considering implementing a similar multiyear collaboration.

Community Partner Impact

The sustained partnership between the students and the community partner yielded both practical and transformative benefits. A long-term partnership allows for a focus on process, instead of only on outcomes. When collaborations happen on short time scales, they need to onboard students

quickly in order to achieve a specific outcome by the end of the course. The burden often falls on the community partner, as the domain expert, to frame this out. A sustained collaboration lent itself to a gradual introduction to the project, with some guidance from the community partner and some observations of "a day in the life" by the students (S. Wopata, personal communication, December 18, 2020). The students did not have to rely on the partner's view and telling, but could integrate their own observations and experiences. Thus, students became equal partners in imagining and planning the eventual solution.

The space to iterate over solutions moves the relationship between the community partner and the students from transactional to transformational. Students, and community partners, gain room to try, fail, reflect on, and retry various approaches, along with room to modify the parameters of the deliverables and the scope of the solution. This method results in less pressure for any deliverable to be "perfect," because both parties know that revisions can occur in the next iteration (S. Wopata, personal communication, December 18, 2020).

This project operated initially under the assumption of data upload and management as the primary bottleneck, and the initial set of solutions concentrated on relieving this bottleneck within The Key's workflow. When the Year 1 students performed a live test of the system, everyone quickly realized that data *entry* posed a bigger bottleneck to the workflow. The partner and students realized that the goal—freeing up staff resources to contribute back to the core mission of serving youth—could not be addressed by simply streamlining data entry; staff mobility when entering data was equally important (S. Wopata, personal communication, December 18, 2020). Rather than losing a year's worth of work and abandoning the effort, the partner recognized that the Year 2 students could build upon these insights and address the new bottleneck. Similarly, once the Year 2 students addressed the data entry bottleneck, the community partner had freedom to envision transformative uses for the data to inform and modify The Key's reach and programming.

Iterative Development

Iterative development is a central tenet of user-centered design, yet the time limitations of a typical term or semester rarely allow students to fully engage in this practice. Effective iterative development reserves time not just for active software development, but also for the necessary space to reflect on project goals and needs, noting how these evolve and change over the lifetime of the project. Removing the time limitations allowed both the students and the community partners to participate in iterative development in ways similar to real-world software development.

The community partners benefited in multiple ways from the iterative development process. The time within each iteration of Comps, and between iterations of Comps, gave the partners space to reflect on their own goals and how these goals were and were not reflected in the current software product. This reflection, along with the need to provide somewhat frequent feedback to students on their design iterations, helped the partners better recognize and articulate their needs—including, and especially, needs that were not apparent at the start of the project (such as the ability to add, modify, and delete activity types). Indeed, the reflection time between the first and second years of the project enabled The Key to recognize the importance of bringing in HCI as a partner on the project—an enabler of systemic change. As we note in the Results section, the need to provide frequent feedback to the student teams imposes costs in time and energy for the community partners—costs that are easier to bear when the community partners have the appropriate bandwidth, and that may change over the lifetime of the project.

The students benefited from participating in a realistic iterative development process that few of our students get to experience in a course. Deliverables like the project proposal became living, breathing documents, rather than academic exercises. Instead of creating requirements from scratch each year, students in Year 2 and Year 3 had the benefit of an existing requirements document and proposal. They used these artifacts to reflect on the choices made by previous groups, match this with their own observations, and *refine* them accordingly. Students brought fresh perspectives to the project that might have been lost the previous year(s) in the scramble to finish deliverables by the project deadline. They had space to notice when project development

deviated from these goals. In addition to learning for their own edification, students simultaneously developed assets to leverage toward a community partner's goals and interests. Finally, from a pure software development standpoint, building upon and maintaining code written by others, for clients, over multiple months requires skills that most of our majors go on to use in their careers.

Students derive numerous benefits from having a project and relationship with the community partner that extend beyond a single class and over multiple years. It allows space for "throwaway" drafts, for learning the hard way, for both sides to envision and reenvision how a tool can best serve a community partner's goals. It more accurately models adult professional life, where failure, and sometimes a series of failures, often leads to innovation.

Project Continuity

Onboarding Students and Teams

Transitioning the project from one Comps team to the next proved surprisingly difficult. Although Comps teams are nominally expected to provide adequate documentation for any code they produce, in reality computer science majors lack the skill to produce documentation that is useful to anyone other than themselves. Even when the faculty advisor primed the students to think about producing a record of development that others could follow, the documentation fell short.

Our solution—designating a mentor from the previous year as the point person for the current year's team—worked most effectively when the designated mentor had a strong grasp of both the codebase and the system architecture. A good choice for this role is the student who served as the technical lead for the project in the previous year.

It is also important for the incoming team to work directly with the codebase right away, rather than reading through the code solely in order to understand it and delaying contributions to it. This philosophy is similar to joining an open source coding project, where new members learn the norms of the community and the codebase by contributing a small code modification, as described in Braught et al. (2018). Future collaborations could follow a similar model.

Similar attention needs to be paid when the faculty advisor changes. We experienced "growing pains" between Year 2 and Year 3, when the switch uncovered the extent to which the original faculty advisor served as "institutional memory" for the project. The outgoing advisor should take an active role in onboarding the new advisor, and should also ensure that advisor-level documentation is clear and complete.

Long-term Maintenance

Long-term software maintenance was a known (and unsolved) issue heading into the project, as it is on many software development collaborations with community partners. We learned the hard way the cost of kicking this problem down the road. We did not have a contingency plan in place for the pandemic-related shutdowns, believing that we would have time the summer following Year 3 to finalize maintenance details. Fortunately, the version delivered by the Year 2 team works sufficiently well for most of the community partner's needs, but in some circumstances not having a working system at the conclusion of the collaboration poses a major issue.

Several maintenance models could work. When the core software is not proprietary, the codebase could be open sourced and community maintained, perhaps with a faculty member or a former project participant as the "point person." Alternatively, student volunteers could maintain and grow the project in a more formal manner, perhaps marshalled by the civic engagement office or as an independent study.

We recommend that groups undertaking a collaboration like ours work out long-term maintenance details up front. They do not need to be 100% complete, and can and should morph as the project proceeds. Having such a structure in place can smooth the eventual code handoff, account for unforeseen circumstances, and provide some measure of guarantee to the partner that they will not be left in the lurch at the project's completion. It is important that the maintenance plan contain information about who is responsible when the software fails or when bugs are discovered, and who bears the cost of factors like website hosting.

Curricular Goals

As a capstone experience, Comps needs to

fulfill a set of curricular goals and requirements for the major. At the end of each project cycle, the faculty advisor weighed the work required to make the software product viable for the community partners against whether this work met the threshold of Comps curricular content. As the required work became less "novel" over the course of the project, these decisions were more murky. It is difficult to determine when a project passes from "active development with curricular benefits" to "maintenance and growth outside the scope of Comps." How to make this distinction remains an unsolved question.

Relationship Building and Maintenance

There are many facets to managing the relationship between the community partner and the student team. Foremost among these is the establishment of trust. The faculty advisor plays an important role in setting expectations—for the community partner and for the students—and in establishing trust with both parties. Meeting with the community partner before the start of the project helps the faculty advisor assess the partner's needs and working style, and sets expectations with the community partner about outcomes, based on the advisor's (likely imperfect) information about individual students' skill sets. Preparing students to meet with the community partner at the project's onset also sets expectations about professionalism, positionality, and so on.

Civic engagement offices also play an essential role. They provide resources to students about the role of civic engagement in their academic exploration, about the community partner relationship, about their positionality, and about many of the other fundamental considerations in critical service-learning (Center for Community and Civic Engagement, n.d.; Mitchell, 2008).

An important aspect of establishing trust between students and the community partner, and in helping students gain a holistic understanding of their work's impact, came from having students perform observations at the community partner site. Being invited into the community partner's space was itself an act of trust on the part of the community partner—trust that students would respect the space and honor the partner's domain knowledge and experience. The observations provided the students with an understanding of place and helped them figure out how the eventual software would fit in with the partner's workflow. Observations also required students to decenter themselves and their expertise, a necessary step for effective and equitable community engagement.

Students need to manage their own relationships with the community partner, including how often to communicate with the partner, how to communicate, and the structure of meetings. Faculty advisors tend to provide "light touch" guidance to the students. Only rarely does the advisor step in with a slightly heavier touch, to assist the flow of initial conversations with the partners or encourage more frequent meetings with the community partner.

Teams tend to have their own "personalities" and ways of working. Such individuality affects not just how well teams work together (Duhigg, 2016; Edmondson, 1999; *Re:Work*, n.d.) but how teams interact with community partners. We saw this play out in both the frequency and the content of team–partner meetings. Year 1 and Year 3 teams met with the partner a couple of times each term, but the Year 2 team met with the partner approximately twice a month. Each team spent time demonstrating the system in its current form and soliciting feedback from the community partner, but only the Year 2 team consistently discussed how features and changes tied back to the community partner's primary goals (rather than just taking the feedback at face value). The team mentor from the previous year can contribute to this aspect of project management by introducing the new team to the cultural expectations and norms set by previous teams. Current teams could then have a framework within which to develop their own working style without jarring the community partner's expectations.

In all 3 years of the project, demoing became a key mechanism of communication between the students and the partner. Demonstrating the current version of the software provided a common language between the students and the partner. Students could translate technical concepts into tangible software interactions, and community partners could communicate technical needs via these same tangible interactions. This highlights a crucial lesson: Differences in specialized understanding are surmountable when students attend to them by facilitating this type of communication.

Managing Expectations

In many cases, the Comps project is students' first experience with independent, client-facing software development. Although many computer science majors complete one or more summer internships in software development, their experiences are likely to be mediated through a manager or mentor. In the Comps project, students interact with the client directly, gaining an entirely different perspective on professionalism and professional software development. Whereas as interns they were likely protected from repercussions of their design and implementation decisions, as Comps students they are fully responsible for all such decisions.

This background, combined with the students' limited exposure to user-centered design and development in our curriculum, skewed students' expectations about the client's interaction with the software. In Year 1, insufficient usability and system testing led to an unstable system, forcing the partner to roll back to the original paper-based attendance system. Students in each year made unrealistic assumptions about how much system troubleshooting clients could and should do. Documentation, both client-facing and developer-facing, improved slightly each year, but was still suboptimal.

Although the multiterm and multiyear nature of the project facilitated iterative development, students did not always take full advantage of this process. Engaging computer science students in best practices in user-facing software development, such as requirements gathering and review and frequent usability testing, is a struggle that was not magically resolved just because students were accountable to real clients. The computer science curriculum, like the curriculum at many higher education institutions, does not focus on nor reward this type of engagement. Computer science majors at Carleton are exposed to this modality in one of the core courses, with the degree of exposure dependent on the individual instructor, and a couple of elective courses.

Curricular changes could address some of these issues, as can targeted mentoring by previous participants and the project advisor. To some extent, however, these are lessons most effectively learned the hard way, in the day-to-day practice of developing software for a client. Those adopting this model should keep this aspect of student development in mind and plan for it when designing and advising such a project.

Final Thoughts

Multiyear, established collaborations between community partners and multiple iterations of the same course provide fertile ground for transformative civic engagement. Long-term collaborations allow for iterative and reflective codevelopment of project goals, artifacts, and deliverables, increasing the potential for transformative impact. They leave space for trust relationships to develop between the partners, faculty advisor, and students, opening up more avenues for authentic engagement. The project described in this article provides a valuable proof-of-concept of this approach. The collaboration demonstrates how thoughtful pedagogy, an active and engaged civic engagement center, and an informed advisor can bring together students and community members to foster real and lasting change in the surrounding community. This project has already had important domino effects. The word about this partnership with The Key has spread, and since, other community organizations have reached out to inquire about computer science Comps groups building systems for them. Building partnerships like the one described demonstrates what's possible and can create ripple opportunities for students as well as organizations. We hope the blueprint we provide here serves as a starting point for similar projects at other institutions, in computer science as well as other disciplines.

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Tides of History: Utilizing Service-Learning to Prepare and Preserve Local Historical Resources for Climate Change

Catherine Wilkins

Abstract

As storms become more intense and sea levels rise, coastal cultural institutions are seeking ways to protect and preserve their collections within the challenging context of limited budgets and human resources. These institutions are not alone in their consideration of climate change risk; coastal colleges and universities, which are also threatened, are striving to develop strategies of adaptation and preparation. Collaborations between institutions of higher education and local communities have developed general municipal climate change adaptation and mitigation plans, but historical and cultural resource preservation have not been a focus in this work to date. This article describes a service-learning collaboration between a public R1 university and a small local history museum in coastal Florida, including methods and outcomes of three major course projects, to model how student labor can help meet historical preservation and adaptation needs while also fulfilling the learning outcomes of a public history course.

Keywords: climate change, service-learning, public history, local history, community engagement

In 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida as a devastating Category 4 hurricane, causing $50 billion in damages and putting hundreds of historic structures and cultural resources in the state in jeopardy (National Hurricane Center, 2018). As storms become more intense and sea levels rise, coastal cultural institutions in Florida—and worldwide—are seeking ways to protect and preserve their collections within the challenging context of limited budgets and human resources. These institutions are not alone in their consideration of climate change risk; coastal colleges and universities are also threatened and are striving to develop strategies of adaptation and preparation. Collaborations between institutions of higher education and local communities have proven effective and productive at developing general municipal climate change adaptation and mitigation plans (Gruber, 2017), but historical and cultural resource preservation have not been a focus in this work to date. This article will describe a service-learning collaboration developed in the wake of Hurricane Irma's landfall, between a public R1 university and a small local history museum in the Tampa Bay area, to illustrate the potential benefits and work that can be accomplished via such a partnership and provide a model for other institutions similarly threatened by climate change.

Background

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (2018) has identified climate change as a profound threat to America's cultural heritage, delivering complex repercussions for historic structures, collections, and preservation practices alike. For coastal communities, sea level rise and increased risk of severe storms represent the greatest dangers. Global sea levels have risen more

than 8 inches over the last century and are projected to rise an additional 12 to 48 inches by 2100 (Melillo et al., 2014). Even greater rates of change are predicted for areas where coastal subsidence is already naturally taking place, such as the eastern seaboard of the United States (Mitchum, 2011). Meanwhile, higher surface temperatures and moisture in the air are contributing to the formation of extreme weather events. A 2019 report by a team of World Meteorological Organization researchers predicted that tropical cyclones will become more frequent and intense over the coming century, presenting emerging evidence to suggest that this phenomenon may already be taking place (Knutson et al., 2019). Thunderstorms, which themselves may cause localized flooding, also are getting stronger and more common, with 76% of weather stations in the United States seeing an increase in extreme precipitation since 1948 (Brooks, 2013) and another analysis finding that extreme downpours are happening 30% more often (Trapp et al., 2007).

Like the communities in which they can be found, coastal historic structures and cultural resources are threatened by these rising seas and intense storms: with increased intermittent flooding that makes access more difficult, with damage to buildings and infrastructure, and, perhaps ultimately, with permanent inundation. At stake is our national history and memory; a 2018 study of 1,232 archives in the United States found that 98.8% were "likely to be affected by at least one climate risk factor" (Mazurczyk et al., 2018, p. 111). These small museums and archives "play an important role in protecting and preserving the historical record and also interpret[ing] the past to the public" (Doyle, 2012, p. 39) yet by definition have very few staff members and budgets of less than $250,000 per year (American Association for State and Local History, 2007). The reality for most local cultural institutions is likely even more bleak: In one state, more than 50% of the 150 historical museums have an annual budget of less than $25,000. Furthermore, according to a poll by the American Association for State and Local History, 15% of local historical societies are staffed entirely by volunteers, 25% by volunteers and a part-time staff member, and only 25% have more than one professional staff member (Doyle, 2012).

Historic and cultural heritage sites are not alone in contemplating how best to preserve valuable resources and cultivate adaptation strategies to address climate change within a context of limited budgets and human resource challenges. A 2017 feature in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* identified more than 100 U.S. coastal colleges and universities at risk from sea level rise and storm surge; over a dozen were located in the state of Florida (Myers & Lusk, 2017). Such educational institutions, themselves on the front lines of climate change, play a critical role in addressing the crisis by cultivating awareness of environmental issues through their curricula while also providing a testing ground for new adaptation, mitigation, and intervention strategies that engage scientific as well as humanistic dimensions of life in a changing climate (Dyer & Andrews, 2014; UNESCO, 2017). The expansion of climate change education has led to an enhanced awareness of environmental threats on college and university campuses across the United States, and calls for administrators to develop strategies to ensure the safety and resilience of the learning environment itself (Anderson, 2012).

Although efforts to "green" campus operations—for example, by embracing clean energy options or expanding recycling opportunities—are meaningful contributions to the fight against climate change, the *Chronicle*'s study suggests that attempts to protect campuses themselves have been less successful. Such preparations require long-term strategic planning and a grappling with risk uncertainty represented by the range of possible outcomes in predictive data (Ellard & Swieter, 2015). Protecting or adapting existing campus structures, facilities, and material resources is a costly venture (Myers & Lusk, 2017) poorly timed, given the last decade has seen declines in state higher education budgets nationwide (Mitchell et al., 2018) as well as steep reductions in federal funding for climate adaptation and resilience activities under the Trump administration (Committee on the Budget, 2019).

Shared concerns and challenges about the ability to prepare for the risks posed by climate change in a resource-scarce environment unite vulnerable historic and cultural heritage sites with coastal colleges and universities. Although large-scale funding and long-term planning issues may be beyond the scope of individuals at these institutions to solve, each type of facility neverthe-

less has something valuable to contribute, whether it be knowledge or technology, people power or collections of significance. The pedagogy of service-learning speaks to these shared interests and mutual ability to contribute, and service-learning methods have been applied to issues such as sustainability and climate change education (Coleman et al., 2017; Gold et al., 2015) and urban planning (Gruber et al., 2017). However, historical and cultural resource preservation has not been a focus in climate change–related service-learning to date. How to Make History, a course I have taught as a collaboration with the University of South Florida (USF), the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum (GBHM), and the St. Pete Beach Public Library, illustrates the ways that service-learning partnerships between local historical organizations and nearby institutions of higher education can be mutually beneficial to all stakeholders, and how such a partnership can be executed by other coastal institutions facing the risks of climate change.

Partnership Formation

As a state, Florida is particularly threatened by climate change. Historically, it is the most hurricane-prone area in the United States, in terms of both the volume and intensity of the tropical systems that have made landfall over the past 150 years (NOAA, 2005). As storms become stronger and more frequent due to climate change, the risk of catastrophic damage and loss of life increases; the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (2009) has predicted 2,000 people dead and $250 billion in economic losses from a direct hit of a Category 5 hurricane in the area. In addition to the acute threat of stronger storms, the insidious creep of sea level rise represents a significant danger to a state with low elevation overall, more than 1,200 miles of coastline, and an estimated 75% of the population living in coastal counties (Wilson & Fischetti, 2010, p. 4) that generate 79% of the state's total annual economy (Florida Oceans and Coastal Council, 2010, pp. 1–2). According to a 2013 report by the Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resources, just 1 meter of sea level rise will affect 16,015 historical resources in the state, from historic structures to archaeological sites to National Register locations (Florida Division of Historical Resources, 2013). With 228 colleges and universities in the state also at risk, Florida is the perfect location for a case study on collaboration between institutions of higher education and historical resource partners in the community within a context of climate change risk.

On September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys as a devastating Category 4 hurricane. By the time the storm moved north over land toward Pinellas County, its strength had diminished to that of a Category 1 storm, and storm surge was negligible due to the eye moving inland, east of Tampa Bay (National Weather Service, 2017). Nevertheless, wind gusts of 100 miles per hour battered the region, downing trees and causing structural damage (Henry, 2017). On the barrier island of St. Pete Beach, the 1917 converted church that houses the collection of the GBHM sat shuttered, just 50 yards from the turbulent waves of the Gulf of Mexico and at only 3 feet of elevation. Although rising waters were initially believed to be the greatest threat to the museum's collection, the damage during this specific storm came from a roof leak. Aging roof tiles failed to hold fast in the high winds, and water penetrated the historic structure from above, damaging several exhibits and artifacts about pioneering beach families—some beyond repair.

The GBHM (Figure 1) has an extensive collection of nearly 10,000 historical documents that tell the story of the Pinellas Gulf Beaches, including photographs, early maps and navigational charts, yearbooks, letters, journals, real estate records, and postcards. The collection is housed in a historic structure that was the first church built on the Pinellas Gulf Beaches, erected in 1917. In 1952, the building was slated for demolition, but was purchased by Joan Haley, a journalist from New York who made the former church her residence. Upon her death in 1989, she deeded the building to the county, which replaced some windows and added climate control before opening the structure as a museum in 1993. Nevertheless, the building is highly vulnerable due to its age and location on a barrier island, and although Pinellas County is dedicated to maintaining this historic structure, resources with which to do so are scarce; Pinellas County staff is still down 25% over 2008 levels, property tax revenue in the General Fund (which funds most of the county's nonenterprise operations) is down 26.6% or $102.2 million from 2007

Figure 1. The Gulf Beaches Historical Museum

levels, and the GBHM is but one building in a large portfolio of holdings (Pinellas County, 2015).

Therefore, whereas the GBHM is owned and maintained by the county, the museum is staffed entirely by volunteers, with a volunteer board responsible for collection development and preservation. Though the volunteer force for the GBHM numbers approximately 80 dedicated and passionate people, the museum nevertheless experiences the same top three challenges identified by the American Alliance of Museums (Zwerling, 2017) in a 2017 report on managing museum volunteers: capacity, availability/reliability, and training. This last factor—lack of professional development opportunities—is of particular concern at the GBHM, where only one volunteer is properly trained in AAM cataloguing standards. At the time of Irma's landfall, no collection development policy or disaster management plan existed in writing, though informal procedures were understood by those with institutional knowledge. Perhaps in part due to the age of the volunteer force—more than 90% of the GBHM's volunteers are 65 or older—few items in the collection had been digitized, and none of the digital files had been made public as of 2017. The collection catalogue, as well as the digital representations of the artifacts, existed on only one hard drive, which itself was not evacuated from the museum during Hurricane Irma.

As a volunteer at the St. Pete Beach Public Library, I became aware of the situation at the GBHM in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane when the library director, Betcinda Kettells, was bemoaning her inability, due to staffing shortages, to assist the museum with digitizing its resources to prevent future loss. As a trained historian and a faculty member in the Judy Genshaft Honors College at the University, I perceived an opportunity for institutional collaboration. Students in the Judy Genshaft Honors College represent every major on campus and have demonstrated academic excellence and a commitment to global citizenship and community engagement. The diverse interests of the students who enrolled in the course were integral to the creation of the partnership and its future success. With majors ranging from environmental science to education, communications to history, students would be able to bring their disciplinary skills to bear on the challenges facing the GBHM, merging the strengths of humanities and STEM perspectives while learning how to apply their training in a real-world context. Honors classes are interdisciplinary special topics courses and strive to utilize active learning approaches to illustrate for students how their area of expertise can contribute to an engagement with the subject at hand. Capstone honors courses specifically train students in group research methods and encourage experiential learning, so an on-site collaboration with the GBHM was in keeping with the pedagogical preferences of the College.

Six months of relationship-building conversations and needs articulation with county staff and the volunteers of the GBHM followed, during which these organizations expressed their priorities for the partnership, as well as their concerns. The volunteers of the GBHM were particularly keen to have assistance with digitizing fragile artifacts, as well as developing new exhibits for the museum. Lack of knowledge about the digitizing process, the absence of a preservation plan for the GBHM, and concerns about intergenerational communication were challenges voiced by the community partners, which the author strove to address when she developed a capstone course called How to Make History. The class was designed to leverage USF's technology and students' interdisciplinary interests and labor to meet the preservation and adaptation needs of the GBHM while imparting useful skills to students, such as record-

ing oral histories, producing documentary photography, digitizing visual and print artifacts, cataloguing and contributing to an online historical archive, and using Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. Best practices in service-learning were utilized to ensure equity in the partnership between the institutions and to help students develop a real connection to the community they were serving. How to Make History is an ongoing partnership, with the course offered for the first time in spring 2018 and three additional times since.

Service-Learning Structure and Assignments

How to Make History meets at the GBHM for 8 weeks during the semester, and on campus at USF for the remainder of the term. Although being on campus is convenient, comfortable, and provides access to needed resources such as the library and the Digital Media Commons, spending extended time on site with the community partner is essential both to provide students with a deeper understanding of the GBHM's collection and needs and to ensure that the voice and agency of the partner institution are present throughout the collaboration (Figure 2). Scholarship shows that extended and sustained presence on site demonstrates commitment to the community partner and helps generate a sense of trust, while deepening learning for students (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Petri, 2015). How to Make History meets once per week for a 3-hour session that encourages extended engagement and focus. Generally, each meeting consists of two distinct components. The first hour of each session, modeled after a traditional classroom experience, is spent exploring assigned readings focused on the methods of public history and the content of local history, ranging from peer-reviewed research to instructional manuals. Weekly topics include subjects such as handling and storage of historical artifacts, conducting an oral history, and history-writing for the web. Volunteers from the GBHM were invited to attend all on-site class meetings, not only to share their perspective on past museum practices and the applicability of the topics discussed to the work of the museum, but also to learn alongside the students. During the remainder of each class period, students practice the topic or skills they just discussed, utilizing the time together for group work and to get one-on-one guidance with these tasks.

The skills students are learning contribute to their completion of three major course assignments intended to help the GBHM prepare for and respond to negative aspects of climate change: a SWOT assessment, artifact digitization, and the creation of online exhibits. SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, op-

Figure 2. Students on a Walking Tour
Note. University of South Florida students get to know the community via a walking tour with GBHM volunteer Elizabeth Britt.

portunities, threats) analyses are common tools in community-engaged teaching; often, they represent the final product that students deliver to their community partner (Harkins, 2017). In professional contexts, outside facilitators typically engage in a period of observation and experience and facilitate conversations with individuals inside an organization in order to determine its internal, near-term strengths and weaknesses and external, long-term opportunities and threats (Sarsby, 2016). Such SWOT assessments are useful in developing a strategic plan and priorities for immediate action. During the planning period for the partnership, the GBHM's volunteer staff described the lack of a preservation plan as a challenge the museum faced when preparing for climate change–induced risks. The SWOT analysis was proposed to the community partner as a first step in developing a comprehensive preservation and emergency management plan.

Given the scope of work to be completed in How to Make History, the timeline for completing the SWOT analysis for the GBHM was compressed into 4 weeks, during which students journaled their own observations about the museum, interviewed volunteer staff, and heard from two guest speakers from the fields of museum conservation and archiving. In order to make the work more manageable and focused, students were assigned to teams investigating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to certain aspects of the museum's operation and context: environment (built and natural), collections, staffing, and communications. Not only is group work such as this an example of the complex, situation-driven teamwork that is a paragon of active learning approaches to education (Barnes, 1989; Sharan & Sharan, 1992), teams also enabled students to work on areas of personal interest and exercise knowledge and perspective from their major disciplines.

The primary goal of the SWOT analysis for the GBHM was to familiarize students with the museum's operations while providing volunteer staff and county officials with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the institution's current state and potential future, particularly in light of climate change. Ongoing challenges with humidity and temperature control, improper storage of artifacts, and an aging volunteer force were weaknesses immediately apparent to students, but identifying strengths such as the volunteers' dedication and local knowledge, breadth of the collection, and location of the museum in a historic district helped make clear the need to balance change with maintaining the identity of the organization. Meanwhile, climate change–induced sea level rise and extreme weather dominated the discussion of external and future-oriented threats, providing students a chance to brainstorm opportunities emerging in that context—such as stabilizing damaged artifacts, developing a disaster management plan, and getting younger volunteers involved in the digitization effort. The first two semesters the class was offered, students worked on crafting a thorough and professional SWOT analysis; in the most recent semester, students utilized the SWOT assessments made by their peers to craft a preservation plan for the museum, following guidelines from the American Association of Museums. Next semester, students will be tasked with developing a disaster management plan, a project identified in the SWOT analysis as having great importance for the museum's future in a changed climate.

Students also have utilized the results of the SWOT analysis to inform the most significant preservation project of the class: artifact digitization. Although the field of public history initially viewed digitization primarily as a means of expanding access to a collection, there is a growing acceptance of digitization as a preservation strategy (Conway, 2010; Matusiak & Johnston, 2014). Digitization is not intended to replace a physical collection, but it can ensure the preservation of a visual representation of the artifact and all of the information it contains—a vital function in a changed-climate context where unpredictable storms and flooding increasingly threaten collections (Tansey, 2015). Although there is and was much digitization to be done at the GBHM, the manageable expectation was set that each student would be responsible for digitizing nine artifacts of increasingly greater complexity over the course of the semester. This target takes into account the significant amount of preparation required for students to participate in this process. Students and GBHM volunteers first learned best practices for handling fragile artifacts from an employee at a local art museum who donated her time and expertise in preparation and conservation. Next, the staff of the Digital Media Commons at USF hosted a workshop training students to

employ scanners and DSLR cameras to digitize at industry-accepted quality and resolution, and to utilize Photoshop to ensure the digital image matched the appearance of the original artifact. Finally, students learned the Islandora interface in order to upload their digitized artifacts to the Pinellas Memory Project (PMP), where they also generated extensive metadata for each item, using required style and vocabulary. The majority of students had no experience with the tools or methods of professional archiving and digitization; through this project, they gained an appreciation for the profession as well as experience that may be valuable as they seek careers or embark on personal digitizing projects for family or friends.

Given the limitations of their workload, students were required to participate in prioritizing GBHM artifacts for digitization, taking guidance from the strategic plans of the National Archives (2014) and the International Federation of Library Associations (McIlwaine et al., 2002) and utilizing information from their own SWOT analysis to inform their selections on the basis of item value, risk, and use. Value took into account informational, artifactual, associational, evidentiary, and monetary value; risk considered the condition of the artifact, its inherent material composition, and environmental risk; use referred to the popularity of the item among both researchers and casual visitors to the GBHM. Evaluating the artifacts this way not only created priorities for digitization; it also helped students and museum volunteers think more deeply about motivations and priorities for collection development, preservation planning, and disaster management in a changing climate by identifying the items in the collection that were most essential to the mission of the GBHM. Over the course of four semesters, students have digitized more than 450 artifacts, including a diary written by an early female pioneer in 1911, hand-tinted postcards from the 1890s, 19th-century nautical maps, and original oil paintings produced by veterans staying at a local rehabilitation facility during World War II (Figure 3).

Students uploaded these digital artifacts along with metadata identifying and reflecting research about the items to the PMP, a free online archive operated by the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative. Adding the St. Pete Beach Public Library as a collaborator in How to Make History enabled the GBHM to present its digitized artifacts in a more broadly accessible format by providing a foray into the PMP. Though a relatively new venture, the PMP hosts digitized historical artifacts from libraries, museums, and archives representing six municipalities in the Tampa Bay area. The administrators of the PMP have immediate plans to link it to the Sunshine State Digital Network, which itself feeds into the Digital Public Library of America; this would make the digital collection of the PMP more visible and easily searchable, and increase access not only for local community members but also for researchers worldwide (R. Landa, personal communication, February 28, 2020).

However, the goal of uploading digital artifacts to the PMP was not just to improve general accessibility of the GBHM's collection; it was a specific response to climate change risk. Housing digital artifacts both on GBHM computers and on the PMP provides an extra layer of protection from the risk of servers being compromised by storms or water intrusion, by diversifying the location of the stored data (Haskins, 2019). Based on information from the nearest local measuring station (8726520), researchers anticipate an increase from the current 4–6 days per year of high-tide flooding in southern Pinellas County to 25–127 days per

Figure 3. Digitizing Artifacts at the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum
Note. University of South Florida students David Martinez and Michael Schuller collaborate on scanning the only extant copy of the 1929 city charter for Pass-a-Grille, the beach town where the GBHM is located.

year by the year 2050 (based on two models of low vs. high emissions). By 2100, the number of high-tide flooding occurrences is predicted to be 254–365 (Sweet et al., 2018). Such "sunny day flooding" will make the GBHM physically inaccessible to visitors; the online archive provides an alternative way to view highlights of the collection at such times, while also protecting the digital data at a safer server location.

In a similar vein, students developed digital exhibits to address the challenge of climate change–induced inaccessibility and to diversify both the audience for the museum's displays and the historical narratives they conveyed. An initial step in beginning the exhibit curation process was identifying topics of current and ongoing interest to the local community that were underrepresented in the GBHM's collection. In addition to readings on local history, students got to know the community through a bus tour, walking tours of two neighborhoods, and informal conversations with a broad spectrum of residents. These intimate interactions provided sparks of curiosity and leads on potential research projects.

Individual reflection, classroom discussion on observations made in the community, and explorations of personal areas of academic expertise allowed students to find others with similar interests and form small teams of three to six people. Group investigation, as an accepted strategy deployed in service-learning, promotes positive interdependence, increased face-to-face interactions, individual and group accountability, improved interpersonal skills, and opportunities for group processing (Johnson et al., 1990). In How to Make History, teams were tasked with developing a research question about an aspect of contemporary local history, conducting investigative research, writing compelling narratives geared toward public consumption, conducting at least one oral history interview, and supporting their work with multimedia evidence (in the form of historical artifacts from the collection of the GBHM as well as contemporary self-produced documentary photography). Finally, the groups were required to share their work with the public through a well-designed, cohesive webpage of their own creation, under the class's main website, Gulf Beaches Today (https://sites.google.com/honors.usf.edu/gulfbeachestoday).

While creating digital exhibits over three semesters that cover a range of topics pertaining to local contemporary history, multiple groups have also sought to explore and share information about the impacts of climate change on the community via this assignment. In addition to online exhibits about hurricanes, erosion, and the changing fishing industry, one group's focus was on the red tide of 2018. The worst incidence of red tide in over a decade, this toxic bloom of *Karenia brevis*, a species of algae, lasted 16 months, cost Florida businesses more than $90 million in lost revenue, and killed countless fish and marine mammals (Fears & Rozsa, 2018). As climate change increases water temperatures and causes larger rain events that flush fertilizers and nutrients from soil into the Gulf of Mexico (Hallegraeff, 2010), algal blooms have already become more common and are expected to become even more frequent in the future (Watson et al., 2010).

The student team conducted research, documented the algal and fish-kill event with their own photography, and recorded oral histories with two marine biologists, a physician, and a restaurant owner and city commissioner—all of whom reside in the community—to create a compelling exhibit (https://sites.google.com/honors.usf.edu/gulfbeachestoday/red-tide-2018) focused on how the historic Red Tide bloom was impacted by human activity and, in turn, impacted human activity itself in the local community. The engaging digital exhibit not only represents a commemoration of an event that will have significance in years to come; it also serves as a means of educating the public about another dimension of climate change–induced environmental changes. The exhibit's location online enabled students to share their environmental history story with a broader and more diverse constituency, including those who may have stayed off the beaches thanks to red tide. Likewise, the classes' other online exhibits will continue to provide access to the history of the Pinellas Gulf Beaches even when climate change makes physical access to the GBHM more difficult.

Logistical Concerns, Outcomes, and Future Directions

The major course projects—conducting a SWOT analysis to inform a disaster management plan, digitizing artifacts, and creating online exhibits—represent a meaningful contribution to the GBHM's attempts to mitigate the impacts of climate

change, without a significant outlay of capital for either partner. Aside from a $40 flatbed scanner capable of 600 dpi resolution (the archival industry's standard), all other technology and software required for these projects was already owned by USF and accessible to students through the Digital Media Commons. The Pinellas Public Library Cooperative sponsors data storage for the PMP, allowing the digitized artifacts to be stored and shared without cost to the GBHM or USF, and Google Apps enables students to create free Google Sites for their digital exhibits. A minigrant of $500 from the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships at the University of South Florida funded the bus tour and field trips; in the future, funding will be sought to reimburse students for mileage, since they were responsible for their own transportation to the GBHM.

Although the financial cost of these projects is minimal, a partnership like this does require an investment of time and labor. Following Hurricane Irma's landfall, museum volunteers, representatives from the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, and the USF faculty member met at least once a month (with several phone and email conversations in between) to determine the parameters, goals, and logistics of the collaboration. Though representing a significant investment in time and trust, service-learning scholarship identifies this as essential for ensuring an equitable and ethical partnership (Jacoby, 2003). When the How to Make History class was initiated in spring 2018, the museum did need to furnish a volunteer to familiarize students with the workings of the GBHM and provide access to their collection. The time commitment totaled 24 hours in a semester, distributed over eight class meetings on site at the GBHM. The investment of student time and labor was significant, but by embedding the projects in a capstone class where research and service were part of the course learning outcomes, student work was acknowledged and valued as graded components of the class. The integration of service-learning projects into How to Make History is supported by scholarship that demonstrates how community partnerships can provide students with unique opportunities to conduct applied research in ways that can reinforce course content and make it more relevant to students (Hamon, 2002; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2008; Stark, 2013).

The payoff for this labor has been tremendous and multifaceted. From the perspective of the GBHM, the primary goals of the collaboration were to digitize fragile artifacts to preserve them from the threat of climate change. Monica Drake, operations manager for Heritage Village and the GBHM's liaison with Pinellas County, stated,

> With only a volunteer staff, the student commitment to helping the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum is invaluable. They have brought their perspectives and technological know-how to bear on preserving artifacts; producing new and critical sources of information from local and often historically ignored communities; and helping the museum address the realities of a changing climate. (Personal communication, June 14, 2021)

Over the course of 3 years, more than 450 artifacts have been digitized and archived (https://pinellasmemory.org/islandora/object/clearwater%3Astpetebeach) on offsite servers to reduce the risk of data loss in case of flooding or catastrophic loss at the museum. Although this represents a small fraction of the museum's overall collection, the students' SWOT analysis helped identify the most at-risk, valuable, and useful artifacts, which were prioritized in the digitization effort. Students have created 14 online exhibits (https://sites.google.com/honors.usf.edu/gulfbeachestoday) that highlight and expand the museum's collection while helping preserve the history of the at-risk island community and improve accessibility as part of the preservation plan of the GBHM, which they helped create. In spring 2021, staff from USF's Digital Heritage and Humanities Collection created a 360-degree virtual rendering of the museum (https://arcweb.forest.usf.edu/dhhc/GulfBeachesHistoricalMuseum/VirtualTour/) that, in upcoming semesters, students will enhance by embedding digital exhibits within the three-dimensional environment while continuing to digitize artifacts for the Pinellas Memory Project archive. As a future direction for this partnership, the 360-degree virtual museum will enable the GBHM to meet its goals of digitizing its collection, creating new exhibits, and remaining accessible to a broad public in a changed climate, while also documenting the appearance of the museum itself in case of catastrophic loss.

Betcinda Kettells, director of the St. Pete Beach Public Library, wrote that "the goal of the class, from the library's perspective, was to digitize local materials and connect with a county-wide vehicle to share the materials via the Internet" as a direct response to Hurricane Irma. Yet, according to Kettells, "the class accomplished so much more . . . the accomplishments of this class were not only wide-ranging in scope but will last for generations" (personal communication, July 30, 2018, p. 1) as the collaboration seeks to preserve the museum's collection through a period of great flux caused by climate change as well as teach the community about environmental and cultural risks and how public history projects can help address them. Each semester the course has been offered, students have shared the work they completed with the public through a presentation at the St. Pete Beach Public Library (Figure 4).

In addition to disseminating helpful information about the risks of climate change and the importance of disaster management planning and digitization, the public presentation strives to increase awareness of and access to the digital resources of the GBHM. Future directions for the partnership include expanding on these public presentations with student-led workshops at the library to teach local residents how to digitize and store online their own family artifacts. Since the entire community served by the library is itself on a barrier island at risk due to climate change, and public history as a discipline is concerned with the everyday experiences of ordinary people, this effort would be a way of advancing and expanding the goals of the How to Make History course by making the practices of the class accessible to the general public. Already the existing public presentations have garnered the attention of the mayors and city commissioners from local municipalities such as St. Pete Beach, Treasure Island, and Madeira Beach, who have not only praised the students' work but have since sought out additional collaborations with USF to help their communities prepare and adapt for climate change. How to Make History received coverage from the local newspaper The Island Reporter and won a SirsiDynix 2019 Power of Libraries award (https://www.sirsidynix.com/power-of-libraries/), with the course professor receiving USF's Outstanding Community-Engaged Teaching award for 2019 as well as the Florida Campus Compact Engaged Scholarship faculty award for the State University System in 2018.

The service-learning strategies deployed to complete the course projects not only benefited the GBHM and surrounding community; they provided students with the

Figure 4. Presentation at the St. Pete Beach Public Library
Note. University of South Florida student Nada Blassy delivers a portion of the end-of-semester class presentation to a public audience at the St. Pete Beach Public Library.

opportunity to develop critical competencies through experiences in the classroom and museum setting (Paulson & Faust, 1998). Students' feedback about the course via the Student Assessment of Instruction Survey supports this assertion. One student wrote,

> This course was different than any other course I have taken at USF because I could tell the immediate effect that it had on the community. There is clearly a difference from learning about the world in a classroom and actually going out into the world and getting hands-on experience with the topic that you are learning. This is a class that I will never forget, and I was able to utilize my strengths to help the class.

Another commented, "This Honors Capstone project has been super informative and full of community based [*sic*] engagement. It has deepened my understanding and appreciation for history and the artifacts that all tell stories that reflect the past" (University of South Florida, 2018). Future directions include developing and implementing an evaluation tool to assess the impact of the course on students' awareness of climate change risk, knowledge of basic tenets of public history, and attitudes related to service-learning.

Cultivating an interest in local history among a younger generation will be essential in preparing, protecting, and remembering coastal cultural resources in the face of climate change. Nonprofit organizations—whether small-scale museums and archives or colleges and universities—will need vocal allies to ensure that proper long-term planning is taking place at the federal, state, and local levels of government, and resources are being directed to support the preservation and adaptation work of vulnerable institutions. Hanging in the balance is our community's collective memory. Documenting local history is especially important in helping keep a record of the past and a sense of current identity in places that are changing rapidly due to climate threats, and where communities may be contemplating managed retreat. In the interim, service-learning partnerships between coastal cultural institutions and institutions of higher education can begin the labor, leveraging their existing resources to accomplish and model preservation, adaptation, and commemoration strategies for the community at large.

About the Author

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A Town–Gown Collaboration to Reduce College Student Alcohol Misuse

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Abstract

The quality of the relationship between a university and its host community both reflects and helps determine the effectiveness of the work they jointly pursue. Through the single issue of partnering to reduce college student alcohol misuse, we examined the quality of town–gown relations using a well-established typology grounded in the marriage and family literature. In describing the evolution of town–gown relationships over the dual factors of effort and comfort, we explored the circumstances and conditions that helped to create a (presumably mutually desirable) "harmonious" town–gown relationship—one characterized by high levels of effort as well as high levels of comfort.

Keywords: alcohol misuse; town-gown; evolving relations; partnerships

In fall 2017, the Town–Gown Initiatives Team (TGIT), a partnership between the City of Oxford, Ohio and Miami University, or what we will refer to as "Oxami," jointly administered the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) to its community members. Roughly 1,000 Oxford community members and another 1,000+ members of Miami's faculty, staff, and student body took the time to complete the voluntary response survey. This strong community response served as a symbolic culmination of several years of intensive town–gown partnership work focused largely on the shared town–gown objective of responding to and reducing highly visible student alcohol misuse in the community.

In this article, we describe and reflect on how the work of reducing high-risk alcohol misuse in a college town evolved over 50 years, from a nonissue to an increasing source of town–gown tension to an issue that helped bring a somewhat fractured city and university together in a common cause. The last segment of this tale witnessed an evolution of the work from being the almost sole responsibility of an underfunded and overworked university office to a high priority issue for both the university and the city. We argue that the shared concern about high-risk alcohol misuse opened communication channels that allowed discussion of other long-standing (and related) issues of concern and ultimately strengthened the partnership across related town–gown offices, leading to the creation and recognition of a more formal infrastructure for enhancing town–gown partnerships and measurable progress toward the shared goals.

As a largely qualitative study, this paper draws upon the 3-year experience of a town–gown workgroup in which two of the authors were engaged as university dean of students and as city mayor. The article is both an analysis of the historic context of the town–gown relationship in one college town and an eyewitness account of intensive work that included planning and administering the OCTA survey. The study thus draws on an interpretive ethnohistory approach and, in the final conclusion, offers impressionistic "lessons learned" from reflection on the experiences that led up to and included the OCTA assessment process (described here in Phase 4; Quantz, 2005; Thorne, 2014). This article contributes to an emerging body of literature that describes, interprets, and makes recommendations for what are commonly called town–gown relationships, relying on a conceptual

framework for understanding perceptions of campus–community relationships, with a particular focus on a community-wide effort to address student alcohol misuse.

This work was further inspired by the scholarship of engagement. In 1996 Ernest Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, urged universities to apply their professional and scholarly expertise to current civic, social, economic, and moral problems in the local community (Boyer, 1996). The goals of community-engaged scholarship include the development of strong university-community partnerships that are mutually beneficial and that involve the exchange and application of socially useful knowledge and practices (Engagement Scholarship Consortium, 2020).

However, effective and egalitarian partnerships between town and gown are notoriously hard to come by because of differing power relations between universities and their communities and procedural conflict between university reliance on theory and expertise and community members' reliance on the experiential and local (Fisher et al., 2004). Differing expectations also lead to distrust, often fed by long histories of poor communication (and relations) between town and gown. Thus, critical to effective engagement of town and gown are purposeful relationship building and the institutionalizing of practices of "mutual respect, equal status, and mutual give and take" (LeGates & Robinson, 1998, p. 312). Effective town–gown work involves "taking advantage of strategic opportunities, remaining fluid, and establishing a level of trust and accommodation" (Feld, 1998, p. 286).

The case of Oxami's collaborative efforts to reduce college students' extreme alcohol misuse is one example of how a shared goal in town–gown relations can develop such trust and accommodation.

Conceptualizing and Measuring Campus–Community Relationships

Gavazzi et al. (2014) employed two related yet distinct dimensions that can be used to illustrate the quality of campus–community exchanges. The first dimension involved the level of *effort* being put into the maintenance of the relationship. The second dimension centered on the level of *comfort* that campus and community stakeholders experience together as the result of those activities. Four types of relationships (see Figure 1) resulted from combining the comfort and effort dimensions: harmonious, traditional, conflicted, and devitalized. The harmonious relationship—characterized by higher comfort and higher effort levels—is the most desirable form of campus–community relationship. All other types are regarded as suboptimal in descending order of functionality: traditional, then conflicted, and finally devitalized.

Gavazzi and Fox (2015) reported on the development of the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA), a measure that operationalized the conceptual framework offered by Gavazzi et al. (2014). The OCTA was designed to evaluate perceptions of campus–community relationships as the combina-

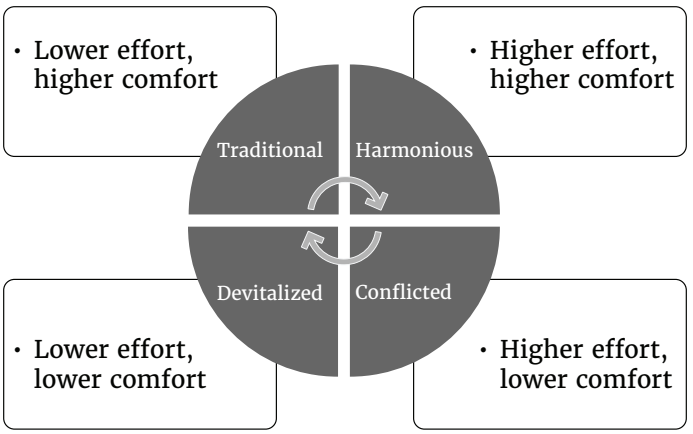

Figure 1. A Campus–Community Relationship Typology (Gavazzi, 2016).

tion of effort and comfort levels, capturing participants' direct personal experiences of these two dimensions as well as their opinions about overall community sensitivities. Gavazzi (2015b) also demonstrated how the quantitative approach to relationship assessment embedded in the use of the OCTA should be balanced by the collection of more qualitatively oriented information. For one recent report on an OCTA survey of another college town, see Coryell (2021).

The gathering of this kind of quantitative and qualitative information has been described as part of a "mobilization cycle" by Gavazzi (2015a). This mobilization cycle contains two pre–data collection phases—awareness raising and coalition building—that involve identifying and reaching out to the primary campus and community stakeholders whose voices should be heard through the data collection process. Two post–data collection activities—data interpretation and evidence-based planning—round out the mobilization cycle process, as they comprise organizing, analyzing, and reporting information that is understandable to the intended audience(s) and can be used to build a strategy to develop more harmonious campus–community relationships. Finally, Gavazzi (2018) has discussed how all these activities are impacted in both positive and negative ways by the leadership of universities and municipalities alike.

That the Gavazzi framework for describing and assessing town–gown relations was derived from marriage and family research represents a reality for many small college towns, where the university often plays the role of stereotypical "big brother," reflecting the entitlement, position, and size often characteristic of older brothers that can manifest in loving but painful ways. College–town relationships, like many sibling relationships, can be marked by long histories and deep grudges, as well as the recognition that the two entities are reliant on each other.

Although many issues have impacted town–gown relationships over the last 50 years in Oxami, we speculated on the nature of that relationship within the Gavazzi framework exclusively through the lens of the town–gown response to student alcohol-related issues. Concerns about alcohol misuse and the associated negative consequences—those directly experienced by users as well as the indirect costs imposed on the broader community—were not new. Much like the impact of *Not Alone*, the report by the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault (2014), on the recognition and measurement of sexual violence as a campus scourge, the Harvard College Alcohol Study (Wechsler, Davenport, et al., 1994; Wechsler, Lee, et al., 2000) brought the extent of and the costs associated with collegiate alcohol misuse into the national spotlight.

The National Institutes of Health and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) have since worked to keep awareness of collegiate alcohol misuse on the front burner for most college presidents. The urgency of the issue has been reinforced by its significant overlap with the campus sexual assault crisis, as well as the well-documented increase in mood disorders and mental health service utilization on U.S. college campuses (Duffy et al., 2019; Eisenberg, 2019; Lipson et al., 2019).

Analysis of Evolving Town–Gown Relations

We have divided our analysis into four chronological phases of the town–gown relationship as defined by the Gavazzi typology.

Phase 1: Pre-1970s. We argue that this period was likely characterized by a "traditional" town–gown relationship: high comfort and low effort.

Phase 2: 1970–1990. This period was largely characterized by diminishing levels of comfort, thereby moving the town–gown relationship toward "devitalized" (low effort, low comfort).

Phase 3: 1990–2010. Increasing effort levels represented the predominant trend over this period, moving the city–university relationship toward "conflicted," with high effort and low comfort.

Phase 4: 2010–present. OCTA was administered at the end of this period, and it also represents the endpoint of our story. In our view, the enhanced effort that characterized the prior period was not only sustained but intensified, and it actually served to enhance comfort as well, so that the town–gown relationship approached a "harmonious" (high

effort and high comfort) relationship.

In recognition that town–gown relations are ever evolving, a short epilogue is also included after our Phase 4 discussion. The article closes with a conclusion and a summary of lessons learned.

Before discussing the four phases of our ethnological reflection on the state of town–gown relations, it is important to note that our analysis was speculative in that it was not directly informed by any prior administration of the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) instrument. The 2017 administration of the OCTA provided our only data explicitly designed to formally measure the quality of the Oxami town–gown relationship. In addition to providing a snapshot of that relationship at a very specific point in time, as will become evident later in our narrative, the OCTA survey was important to our work for a number of other reasons as well. For example, simply reaching agreement that the survey should be launched served as validation of our town–gown efforts to work productively toward common goals. Likewise, effectively executing the survey took a high level of town–gown coordination and communication, much of which occurred under the coordinated leadership of the university dean and the city mayor, both contributing authors of this article.

The shared desire to better understand where our town–gown relationship stood at a specific moment in time also naturally stimulated serious reflection about where we had been, as well as how and why our town–gown relationship had evolved over time. So in a sense the OCTA instrument and process, in and of themselves, helped motivate this review. Together, we hoped that having a better sense of how our relationship evolved and the factors that shaped that relationship would serve to inform our actual evaluation and interpretation of the OCTA data collected in 2017 in deep and meaningful ways. Likewise, we hoped that this sharper focus on the town–gown relations snapshot might in turn help more clearly identify the best route forward for even higher future levels of effort and comfort and a more productive working relationship.

In fact, a more formal analysis of and reflection on the OCTA data collected in 2017, and how those survey results can be used to enhance town–gown relations, is a parallel project to this article, and is currently under preparation. As the formal analysis, presentation, and discussion of those data are the focus of a separate project, in Phase 4 we will simply provide a few brief and general highlights from the OCTA that focus primarily on our overall perception of the state of the town–gown relationship at the conclusion of the assessment process.

Phase 1. Pre-1970s: Traditional

In Oxami, in part because of its broader rural location, historically there had been a good deal of overlap between the citizens of the town and the employees of the university. Until the 1980s, most of the faculty of the college also were permanent residents of the town, as were many staff members. Thus, the children of faculty, staff, and unaffiliated citizens were educated together, and their parents mingled and connected in all the ways that parents often do through the activities of their children. As a result, many citizens of the town were either directly connected to the university, or closely but indirectly connected as spouse, neighbor, parishioner, or fellow coach.

This dynamic was probably rather typical of American college towns from the 1950s through to the 1970s (Gumprecht, 2008; Rousmaniere, 2021). In 1950, Oxford's census population was 6,944, and full-time student enrollment was 4,916. Of these, 3,405 of the students were housed on campus, leaving 1,511 full-time students residing off-campus. Similarly, the 1960 census population was 7,828, and there were 2,608 students living off-campus and 3,928 residing on-campus (18th Census of the United States Census, 1960; Miami University - Oxford Campus, 2020). Additionally, the town's permanent population included a high percentage of the college's faculty and staff. Because the residential neighborhoods were disproportionately populated by permanent residents, including faculty and staff known by students, organic community standards had a moderating effect on the behavior of those students who lived in town.

With respect to student alcohol use, for most of the 20th century prior to Prohibition the city itself was "dry"—the sale of all alcohol was outlawed through a local referendum in 1905. After Prohibition (established by the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, and effective 1920–1933) was lifted through the

21st Amendment, the city followed state law, which allowed the sale and consumption of beer containing 3.2% alcohol by volume. At the time, this beverage—colloquially known as 3-2 beer—was considered a "nonintoxicating" beverage according to an influential study by A. J. Carlson et al. (1934; cited in *Studies on the Possible Intoxicating Action*, 1934) that received at least $6,000 of funding from brewers (Pauly, 1994). After the repeal of Prohibition there was significant variance in legal drinking ages across states, and some states set different ages for different alcoholic beverage types (distilled spirits or fermented beer and wine). In Ohio, post-Prohibition, the legal drinking age was set at 21, with the exception of 3-2 beer, for which the legal age was 18. Thus, most students in the college could legally consume 3-2 beer, and only 3-2 beer.

Community disruptions (and the resultant tension) related to student alcohol misuse were relatively infrequent in this period because the local, legal availability of alcohol to students was limited to 3-2 beer, the student residential population in the city was "outnumbered" by permanent residents, and many permanent residents were directly affiliated with the university. And, perhaps in a signal that the community acknowledged and wished to maintain this relative peace, in 1969 local voters—mostly permanent residents, given the 21-year-old voting age—rejected a referendum that would have widened the availability of alcohol in the city beyond 3-2 beer.

Thus, before 1970 it appears likely that there was a high level of comfort between the university and the town: The university staff and town residents overlapped significantly, and adult community standards prevailed in the residential neighborhood closest to campus (referred to as the "Mile Square"). Further, it seemed that there was little need for town–gown effort related to combating high-risk alcohol misuse. Thus, in the Gavazzi typology, the town–gown relationship prior to 1970 was likely "traditional," characterized by high comfort and low effort, particularly as it related to student alcohol misuse.

Phase 2. 1970–1990: Devitalized

The 1970–1990 period was largely characterized by diminishing levels of comfort, thereby moving the town–gown relationship toward what the Gavazzi framework identifies as "devitalized" (low effort, low comfort). This change was due largely to enrollment changes at the university in the significant Baby Boom growth of the 1970s and 1980s. Full-time student enrollment at the university had grown steadily, increasing from 6,536 in 1960 to 11,251 in 1970. Over this same period, the number of enrolled full-time students living off-campus increased from 2,608 to 4,647 and, by the end of the 1970s, to 5,655 (Rousmaniere, 2021).

A 2005 study by the local League of Women Voters (League of Women Voters of Oxford, 2005) highlighted some of the changes that occurred over this period, and reported that by 1990, the percentage of owner-occupied housing in the city was only 35%. Moreover, many of the remaining permanent residents of the Mile Square were segregated into the northwest section of the area, which butted up against a public K-5 grade school.

In Oxford as in other college towns, a variety of forces acted to both pull away and push out permanent residents of the Mile Square during this period. Growth in the student body in excess of the number of available residence hall beds on campus created higher demand for off-campus housing. Simultaneously, local city zoning related to rental properties at the time was generous, leading some homeowners to be "pulled away" from residency by the opportunity to earn a handsome flow of rental income, or sell their property at a premium price. At the same time, the increasing density of student residents eroded the organic community standards of behavior normally associated with single-family owner-occupancy, and effectively "pushed out" other homeowners who decried the growth of noise, litter, and student parties, much of which was the result of changes in alcohol use and availability.

What happened over this period echoed the experience of other American college towns, which some scholars term "studentification." In studentification, specific neighborhoods become dominated by student residential occupation, properties are architecturally reshaped for student occupants, and rents rise in an increasingly closed market (Allinson, 2006; Fox, 2008; Hubbard, 2008; Massey et al., 2014; D. Smith, 2008; D. P. Smith, 2005; N. Smith, 1979; Unsworth & Smales, 2009).

National and local alcohol laws also underwent significant change over this period.

Prior to 1970, most states had adopted 21 as the legal drinking age for all alcoholic beverages. Between 1970 and 1975, however, 29 of those states reduced the legal drinking age to either 19 or 18 for all or some alcoholic beverage types, and additional states followed by 1980 (Wagenaar, 1981). These drinking law changes were driven by two important historical events. Due to the Vietnam War, the United States was drafting 18-year-olds into military service and possible combat duty, and so there was a sense that those developmentally ready to risk their lives for their country also surpassed the maturity threshold necessary for consuming alcohol. In addition, the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1971, extended voting rights to those same 18- to 20-year-olds who were deemed old enough to defend their country (Toomey et al., 2009; Wagenaar, 1993).

This change in the voting age in particular had a profound impact on Oxford. Virtually overnight, the growing proportion of 18- to 20-year-old students residing in town became a powerful voting block—a block that also was restricted by state law to purchasing only 3-2 beer. As the city lacked home rule authority to deviate from the state's 21-year-old legal age (for alcoholic beverage types other than 3-2 beer), the new student voters nevertheless helped to expand the overall availability of alcohol in the city by helping to pass, in 1975, a referendum that permitted the carry-out sale of all forms of alcohol (e.g., spirits, wine, higher gravity beer) in the city. As a result, a state-regulated liquor outlet opened, making available to students and all city residents, for the first time, alcohol stronger than 3-2 beer. Another referendum was approved in 1979 that allowed, again for the first time, on-site (bar/club) consumption of alcoholic beverages other than 3-2 beer.

Shortly after this expansion of alcoholic beverage types available for sale in the town, the legal drinking age in the state for beer was increased—first to 19 for 3-2 beer in 1982, and then, in 1988, to 21 for all beer as all U.S. states moved to adopt the 21-year-old standard established by the 1984 National Minimum Drinking Age Act. Even with the higher legal drinking age, however, the expanded availability of all forms of alcohol within the Mile Square residential area now dominated by undergraduates (including over 25 fraternity chapter houses) resulted in increasingly widespread student alcohol misuse in town, creating a new source of town–gown tension, challenging the prevailing "comfort" that was characteristic of the earlier period. Moreover, since high-risk collegiate drinking had not yet been identified as a pressing national public health concern, there was neither a significant university nor town-led effort to formally respond to the growing problem. Thus, retrospectively, at least on the issue of high-risk alcohol misuse, using the Gavazzi framework, this period is likely best described as "devitalized"—low (and certainly diminishing) comfort and low levels of effort.

Phase 3. 1990–2010: Conflicted

Although the state (and town's) legal drinking age increased in steps to 21 by the end of the 1980s, state and local conditions still contributed to a growing challenge with alcohol misuse by college students who now dominated the Mile Square residential area of the town. Furthermore, even after the increase in the drinking age, state law still did not explicitly prohibit 18- to 20-year-olds from entering bars and clubs, and the decision to admit underage patrons—who might come to dance, socialize, and so on but not (legally) consume alcohol—was left to each permit holder. Those younger than the legal drinking age could still attempt to access alcohol in clubs and bars through the use of a fake ID that misrepresented their true age and through "drink passing" whereby a patron evaluated to be of legal drinking age purchased a drink for someone not of legal drinking age. Generally, state law insulates permit holders from legal liability related to underage consumption. Instead, those who accessed (or provided) alcohol in the ways described typically faced the legal risk, as permit holders could argue that they had not knowingly sold (in the case of a fake ID) or furnished (in the case of drink passing) alcohol to anyone below the legal drinking age.

The university has a long-standing and strong Greek community, and historically, members of collegiate social fraternities would drink more, and more frequently, than nonaffiliated students (Borsari et al., 2009; Wechsler, Kuh, et al., 2009). Although fraternity membership nationally began to decline in the 1960s, interest and involvement in Greek organizations rebounded in the 1980s and 1990s after the establishment of the national minimum drinking age. With

a 21-year-old legal drinking age, most students on a residential college campus reached legal drinking age during their third or fourth year on campus. With declining access to alcohol, fraternity chapter houses—large residential structures often occupied by a mix of students over and under 21—began to play a much greater role in collegiate social life in part because of their lack of age discrimination with respect to alcohol access, both for members and for party guests (Nuwer, 2001).

Between one quarter and one third of the undergraduates on campus had a formal Greek affiliation in this period, and due to their role in accessing alcohol and social networks, the campus Greek community became increasingly prominent. By the mid-1990s, as many as 30 fraternity off-campus chapter houses dotted the residential area of the city, housing as many as 2,000 men. Many more fraternity members also resided in private "annex" houses characterized by rental agreements that were traditionally "passed down" from older to younger members of the same fraternity chapter. These annex houses often served as de facto extensions of the associated formal chapter house, especially with respect to hosting parties with easy alcohol availability and minimal formal oversight. The Greek chapter and annex houses were all located within what was now the student-dominated Mile Square residential area, and a short walk to as many as a dozen bars and clubs catering to college students located in the business district bordering campus.

In addition, many of the student rental houses had front porches and large front yards relative to backyards. This latter quality reflected, in part, municipal zoning that allowed backyards to accommodate several off-street parking spaces earmarked for multiple unrelated residents sharing a single home. Thus, within a very concentrated three- or four-block area directly abutting the campus, regular and highly visible displays of alcohol (mis)use at fraternity chapter houses and front yard/front porch parties in "annex" and other student rental houses were very common. Because of the small size of the town, these alcohol-related activities were clearly on display for students, permanent residents, and visitors, including prospective students and their families. This magnification of student drinking likely served to inflate the prevailing student-perceived "drinking norms," while also impacting the type of student attracted to the university. Internal school data show that students on this campus both entered college with, and then sustained, binge drinking rates higher than the national average.

The issue of problematic collegiate alcohol misuse and, in particular, binge drinking, gained national prominence during this period in part due to the pathbreaking 1992–2006 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS; Wechsler, Davenport, et al., 1994). The research flow from the CAS in turn triggered the 2002 NIAAA task force report *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges* (Task Force of the National Advisory Council, 2002). Jarringly, the NIAAA report noted that alcohol misuse was responsible for the death of over 1,400 college students annually, a statistic that is still regularly updated and reported by the National Institutes of Health (and currently stands at around 1,800; NIAAA, 2019).

The Oxford community indeed already was aware of student alcohol misuse. By the mid-1980s, local concerns about high-risk alcohol consumption and related behavior led to the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Community Relations, which in 1986 evolved into a permanent standing committee of the city council called the Student Community Relations Council (SCRC). The SCRC formally brought together university students, members of the city council, and university administrators to "investigate, explore, and discuss any and all matters . . . related to student/community relations'' (Oxford, OH, 1986, Ordinance No. 1897). Importantly, the SCRC was also "expressly authorized and directed to make . . . recommendations to Council . . . determin(ed) to be in the interest of student/community relations" (Oxford, OH, 1986, Ordinance No. 1897).

Roughly a decade later, in 1997, the local Coalition for a Healthy Community—an organization composed of city, school district, university, and local hospital leaders—was established, funded in part by a Federal Drug Free Communities Grant that spanned the years 2000–2010. Like the SCRC, the Coalition as a structure was significant because it very intentionally connected city and university members behind the common goal of studying and responding to a clearly articulated community-wide concern about high-risk alcohol consumption.

Although the SCRC and the Coalition were not created exclusively for the purpose of responding to student alcohol misuse, the Coalition, in particular, made it a focus of their work over this period. The increasing town–gown focus and cooperation on the issue was bolstered not only by the federal grant funding, but by the visible support of high-level university administration. In the late 1990s the university president cochaired a statewide initiative focused on reducing youth alcohol misuse. After three students died in an alcohol-related fire in an off-campus house in 2005, the president used his State of the University address to publicly condemn and challenge student alcohol misuse. At the same time, he named an Alcohol Abuse Prevention Task Force charged with making "bold, forceful, and imaginative recommendations to deal more effectively with (the) complex, chronic and disruptive problem of alcohol abuse" (President's Task Force on Alcohol Abuse Prevention, 2006). The 2006 recommendations of the Alcohol Abuse Prevention Task Force served as the de facto strategic plan for town–gown efforts around alcohol misuse for roughly the next decade.

Over the 1990–2010 period, both the town and the university had clearly identified student alcohol misuse as a major point of concern that, in turn, elevated the overall tension with respect to town–gown relations. Given this declining level of comfort, with respect to the Gavazzi typology, this period can best be described as "conflicted": increasing levels of effort driven largely as a response to increasing levels of discomfort associated with high-risk student alcohol misuse.

Phase 4. 2010s–present: (The Journey Toward) Harmonious

The 2006 Alcohol Task Force report effectively served as a strategic plan for the town–gown work to combat high-risk alcohol consumption, and the Coalition and the SCRC provided two formal community structures helpful in sustaining the momentum and linking the university and the town in these efforts.

The area within the university most directly responsible for leadership on the alcohol misuse issue—the Division of Student Life—experienced significant high-level leadership turnover during this period, which could have slowed progress on the work. However, the new administrators and staff zeroed in on the problem and coordinated with the President's Office to create, in 2014, a new alcohol-related task force. In his call to action that fall, the president acknowledged some level of university responsibility for and ownership of the negative impact of student alcohol misuse on the community. At the same time, he also emphasized that a successful response to the challenge would require a community-wide effort. This leadership and support from the very highest level of the organization served as a powerful signal to all stakeholders that decisive action was imminent yet would also be grounded in meaningful input from a broad range of stakeholders, including, for example, students, faculty, and staff; the local medical community; K-12 educators; and business owners (landlords and alcohol permit holders in particular).

Consistent with this community-wide approach, the president also called for an external environmental scan, which was executed in fall 2014. Using this analysis as one of its inputs, in spring 2015 the final report of the task force led to the creation of a permanent oversight entity—the Alcohol Coordinating Council (ACC)—to help guide and coordinate the university and town response to the specific task force recommendations and more generally lead the ongoing work of reducing high-risk student alcohol misuse. Rather than using standing subcommittees with broad charges, the ACC opted instead to create task-specific workgroups. Workgroup members were selected based on a connection to the narrow task under consideration, and each workgroup was designed to dissolve after task completion—likely to be replaced by a new workgroup with a different membership and focus. Initially, five workgroups were created, with titles reflecting their tasks/charges: Academic Policy, Education and Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, Off-Campus Partnerships, and Policy and Enforcement. As with the composition of the ACC, all of these workgroups were broadly inclusive, drawing from students, faculty and staff, and community stakeholders. By design, many of the new workgroup members also sat on the Coalition and/or the SCRC, the two other permanent structures with goals largely overlapping those of the new ACC.

Two of the broadest strategies that emerged from the 2015 task force report were to (1) better understand, respond to, and reduce the prevalence of highly visible, deviant

alcohol misuse and (2) increase alternative social activities and general support for those who abstain from or seek to stop or reduce their alcohol use. The ACC workgroups aligned with these strategies and intensified the work by including community partners in their efforts. The ongoing work in this period led to four key results: the creation of formal town–gown teams, policing partnerships, a policy on addressing off-campus house parties, and improved data collection. Although, as we will later note, there was some disconnect between the campus and the town on the amount and/or nature of the effort over this period, the remainder of this section highlights how town–gown effort intensified over this period through these four significant partnerships that helped to both define and advance our work.

Town–Gown Teams

The level of town–gown cooperation over this period was energized by the creation of the ACC and the appointment of important stakeholders to the issue-focused, stakeholder-inclusive workgroups. The city mayor, as well as half of the members of the city council and multiple city employees, had membership on at least one of the ACC workgroups. In turn, university staff members were invited on multiple occasions to update the entire city council on the strategies and progress related to alcohol initiatives. There was also a significant (and somewhat related) increase in university and city staff participation in the International Town Gown Association over this period.

Beginning in 2015, city and university staff began to regularly attend and present at the annual conference of the International Town Gown Association (ITGA)—an organization dedicated to strengthening city–college partnerships. These annual events furthered idea gathering, and town–gown team/relationship building, while helping to create a new esprit de corps that positively and significantly impacted the work for the next few years. In Oxami, the stakeholder participation and increased visibility of the town–gown work, due in part to the active engagement of the dean of students and city mayor, also served to hasten some of the initiatives that required formal city or university endorsement. The ITGA as an organization provided visible validation of an increasingly shared belief that community problems required community responses.

Enthusiasm for the ITGA work motivated those most closely involved in the work to develop a formal structure—explicitly linking the city and the university at the highest levels—that was designed to promote town–gown cooperation on all issues. This core group, which included the mayor, the dean of students, the director of wellness, the city manager, and several other critical city and university staff members, developed an enabling document and philosophical statement to help guide its work. The enabling document was drafted to define the composition and the purpose of the new group; the philosophical statement ("Guiding Concepts") very directly described the spirit and ideals of town–gown cooperation that they hoped would guide the work. The resulting entity—the Town–Gown Initiatives Team (TGIT)—was formally endorsed by the city mayor and the university president by January 2017.

In its first year (academic year 2016–2017) the TGIT planned and executed a statewide town–gown conference that focused on high-risk student alcohol misuse and served to rally multiple state institutions around a common call to action for greater support on that goal from the state government. The group followed this up by sponsoring a community-wide "listening luncheon" at which virtually every existing community organization was invited to share information about its work in order to identify opportunities for collaboration toward common goals.

Policing Partners

Given the nature of law enforcement work, some amount of distancing, rivalry, and mutual posturing is perhaps inevitable when a collegiate police force coexists with a city force, particularly where the city population and school enrollment result in forces of comparable size. Although a shared jurisdiction agreement was in place, prior to this period enforcement activities outside each unit's formally defined area remained rare, as did formal coordination and cooperation. Various leadership changes in the forces may have contributed to a period of warming relationships, and the two chiefs began to meet regularly in 2015. These meetings eventually included the dean of students, and they served to greatly enhance communication and general good will between the two departments. The meetings often

focused on strategies for reducing student alcohol misuse in the community, as well as the related issue of sexual assault and the university's Title IX reporting obligations.

In response to the shared town–gown concern over highly visible alcohol misuse, as well as regular complaints from both businesses and community members about student misbehavior during the daytime hours on Saturdays, joint city–university "Saturday patrols" were increased in the bar-heavy business district close to campus. Although the shared jurisdiction agreement formally allowed for these enhanced joint patrols, the university and city both dedicated additional resources to the patrols. The university's decision to formally commit resources to an area outside its direct oversight was viewed by some as both an overdue recognition of the negative impact of (some) student behavior in the host community and a clear signal of the school's commitment to the town–gown partnership.

Good Neighbor Policy

The town–gown alcohol strategy targeted not only highly visible alcohol misuse in bars, but also large "open" house parties in student rental properties. In the ACC Off-Campus Affairs workgroup, conversations about joint university–city enforcement options took place across multiple forums that included representatives from both police forces as well as the city council. Although ultimately deferring to the city on all matters related to ordinances and/or enforcement, the increasing comfort levels in the town–gown partnership allowed the university to raise questions about whether there were ways to utilize limited community enforcement resources that would better complement and reinforce policy changes that the university had enacted.

Perhaps the most significant output of this work was the "Good Neighbor" policy, aimed at discouraging highly visible, high-risk "open" house parties. In and of itself, the hosting of a house party neither directly violated the school's code of conduct nor state or local law. Although house parties are not, per se, illegal, city police typically responded to problematic house parties through those common symptoms that are in fact illegal (litter, excessive noise, public urination, etc.). Although litter and noise infractions did not directly violate the school's code of conduct, the code did prohibit general "violations of the law." Police citations are matters of public record, and in a small town in particular, these public records were easily obtained and reviewed. The overarching objective of the Good Neighbor policy, as the name implies, was to educate students about being responsible citizens.

Given that the city police had experience with and were intimately familiar with young-adult behavior, litter and noise citations written in response to house parties almost always indicated (mis)behaviors highly unlikely to be practiced in the homes where the students were raised (or in the homes they would occupy after graduation). In light of this, the policy workgroup—working closely with city workers, elected officials, and university students and student leaders—took an education-oriented, three strikes approach to house party violations that explicitly connected the city's and university's notification and sanctioning systems. Under the Good Neighbor policy, the university reviewed all litter and noise violations, and responded to student infractions with increasing communications and sanctions, beginning with a letter to the residents, penned jointly by city and university officials, which clearly articulated the expectation that students would be good neighbors in their communities, followed by a required meeting of house residents with a group of student leaders and town–gown stakeholders. This meeting was essentially an informal, nonconfrontational conversation about community behavioral expectations, and it included an exploration of alternative ways that the residents might achieve their social goals without negatively impacting the community. A third and final citation led to referral to the school's conduct office, which resulted in each student facing one or more university code of conduct violations.

The specific details of the Good Neighbor policy were shaped by the input received from students during the development process, in which students explained that they were more concerned about facing a charge from the university conduct office than a civil violation from the city. The integration of these city and university processes also clearly signaled to students that high-risk alcohol misuse was viewed as a significant community challenge, and one that required a coordinated community-wide,

town–gown response. The adoption of the Good Neighbor policy also sent an important message to the city that the university was aware of, and intended to respond to, unruly and unacceptable student behavior off-campus, leading to the adoption of new city ordinances and enforcement strategies, designed in consultation with university staff.

Improved Data

In 2014, both the external review and the Alcohol Task Force report identified the need for better data related to student alcohol use. In response, the school's Division of Student Life developed a new, annual, comprehensive campus health survey, the Student Health Survey, that invited responses from every student to a broad range of questions related to the overlapping areas of alcohol and drug misuse, sexual and interpersonal violence, and mental health challenges. In addition to allowing all undergraduates to complete the survey, faculty members also were invited to partner with the university to enhance response rates by allowing the administration of the survey during class time.

These data allowed the school to better understand and respond to the major challenges to student success posed by the interconnected issues of sexual violence, alcohol and drug misuse, and student mental health. Response rates have been around 25%, and the results over the first 3 years of the survey were consistent with a reduction in student alcohol misuse and, more generally, an improvement in the campus culture related to alcohol use and positive bystander behavior. To those involved in the work, the results were a welcome validation of, using the Gavazzi framework, their high level of effort.

The Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) Survey

In addition to the Student Health Survey, in summer 2017 the TGIT received a grant to participate in a multicampus study focused on environmental strategies aimed at reducing high-risk alcohol misuse. A major component of this project was the administration of a modified version of the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) survey. In addition to the core questions measuring town and college perceptions about the effort and comfort in the working relationship, the survey was expanded to include a set of questions about the extent and consequences of student alcohol use/misuse in the town.

Members of the TGIT were enthusiastic about this project for at least two reasons. One, there was a sense that the working relationship was evolving toward harmonious—characterized by high effort and high comfort—and there was a desire to test this hypothesis and document the results. Two, as argued in this article, there was a recognition that the town–gown relationship was unlikely to be static, and a feeling that regular measurement—say, every 3–5 years—could help to identify deviations from the harmonious goal while also providing specific, actionable data to inform the ongoing efforts to maintain a productive relationship.

The successful planning and administration of the OCTA in and of itself seemed to validate the participants' sense that they had achieved or were approaching a harmonious relationship around the town–gown work to reduce high-risk alcohol misuse. There was a unified and consistent call to both university and town stakeholders inviting a range of voices to be heard through survey completion. On the town side, the TGIT communicated with and sent survey links to all of the following stakeholders: members of city council; all city employees; all city police; local business owners (through the Chamber of Commerce); local nonprofits (through the United Way and the university's Office of Community Engagement); members of the faith community (through the local spiritual leaders association); area senior citizens (through a local advocacy group); the local NAACP; the local League of Women Voters; local alcohol permit holders; trustees of the "township" within which the city resides; local public school district teachers and staff; and the Coalition for a Healthy Community and SCRC.

On the university side, the TGIT was able to connect with and encourage responses from each of the following: the President's Executive Cabinet, the Council of Academic Deans, the University Senate, the Student Senate, Greek (IFC/Panhellenic) leadership, student organization presidents, members of the Unclassified Personnel Advisory Council, members of the Classified Personnel Advisory Council, and the Academic Administrators group.

In all, there were over 2,000 responses to

the survey, with comparable numbers from the city (1,301) and the university (1,020). It was not possible to calculate the exact response rate, because in addition to the specific groups mentioned above, in theory every citizen of the town and every student, faculty, or staff member from the university had an opportunity to complete the survey. Still, in a town with about 8,000 permanent residents and a college with about 16,000 students, we viewed the number of responses as a clear sign of interest in the town–gown relationship.

As described, the Phase 4 period, starting in 2010, witnessed an increasing level of town–gown effort around the issue of student high-risk alcohol misuse. In addition to the points raised above, there were several other significant projects and partnerships over this period: the recruitment into the city of a collegiate outpatient recovery center; ongoing communication and negotiation with permit holders and state representatives regarding underage alcohol consumption; and an expansion of the school's infrastructure and a strengthening of the town–gown partnership regarding the prevention of, and response to, sexual and interpersonal violence, an issue closely linked to alcohol misuse.

In the aggregate, these disparate successful initiatives seemed to suggest a harmonious period of town–gown relations, characterized by high effort which, in a positive feedback loop of sorts, may have been both facilitated by and helpful in building high comfort. Interestingly, the actual OCTA survey results did not fully support this conclusion. The OCTA maps survey responses into individual scores across the effort and comfort dimensions of the town–gown relationship. Through these scores, based upon whether effort and comfort are perceived as high or low, each respondent then falls into one of the four mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories in the Gavazzi typology: conflicted, devitalized, traditional, or harmonious.

Overall, most (over 80%) of the respondents to the OCTA survey indicated (through their survey answers) that they perceived high comfort in the town–gown relationship. In total, 33.5% also perceived high effort (harmonious category), and 47.3% viewed the relationship as traditional (low effort with high comfort). Of the roughly 20% who viewed the relationship as having low comfort, 2.4% viewed the relationship as conflicted (high effort), and 16.7% felt effort was low (devitalized).

Interestingly, the most common perception of the town–gown relationship among city respondents was harmonious (44%), followed by traditional (30.7%). Compared to the university perceptions of the relationship (25.6% harmonious, 60% traditional), the results suggested that the university may feel more comfortable with the relationship while also perceiving less effort. Indeed, individual evaluation of the two factors in the Gavazzi typology may very well be correlated. Although we do not seek to explain the town–gown impression discrepancy here, conversations among those closely involved in the work as well as responses to specific questions on the survey suggested the following as a possible explanation. On average, survey respondents from the university may in fact have dedicated less effort than their survey-completing counterparts from the city, and, as a result, appropriately report less effort. Moreover, this lower level of actual/perceived effort may in fact derive in part from the perception of high comfort in the relationship, which might reduce the perceived need for high effort.

Given the small size of the town relative to the university, and the degree to which a broad set of stakeholders in the town were involved in the work (as described above), a greater proportion of those responding from the city may in fact have been directly involved in or knowledgeable of the level of town–gown work/effort. This level of awareness would then explain the higher harmonious (high effort as well as high comfort) score. It is precisely results such as these from the OCTA that have the capacity to fuel important conversations and inform the work of town–gown teams everywhere.

Thus, although the broader community responses to the survey tended to view the town–gown relationship (traditional) differently from those closely involved in the work (harmonious), the most common perception from those responding from the town also was harmonious. Given that perceptions often lag reality, we might expect the high effort levels to be more widely recognized on future surveys, which might then more closely align the city and university perception with those most closely involved in the work. At a minimum, the town–gown relationship clearly was moving toward harmonious over this period, with

high comfort and significant effort.

Epilogue

Despite the successful town–gown partnership described in the Phase 4 years, shortly after the administration and processing of the OCTA, multiple staff transitions led to what some may characterize as a decline in the enthusiasm and activism that had been building over much of a decade, highlighting the inherently fragile nature of town–gown relationships. For example, the leadership dynamic of the TGIT group changed when, in the same year, the dean of students and the city mayor both left their positions. Simultaneously, new tensions developed between the city and the university, including some university building projects that tested the nature of community trust. These new frictions often had (lack of) communication at their core, highlighting the importance of the second principle outlined in the TGIT *Guiding Concepts* document:

> We commit to becoming an international model for how excellent communication and thoughtful partnership can improve an entire community, with goals that are well defined and effectively communicated, and actions that are considerate of the entire community (City of Oxford/Miami University Town Gown Initiatives Team, 2016, p. 3).

Regarding the focal point issue of our study, although the first 3 years of the annual health survey suggested movement in the desired direction, certain highly visible aspects of the student drinking problem remained. Examples of the problem include trash around the churches close to campus on Sunday mornings; open drunkenness on Saturdays in the uptown business district due to the persistence of (legal) daytime drink specials; vandalism to businesses in close proximity to the student bar district; and the taxing of community resources (EMS) related to student overconsumption. Thus, the issue of substance misuse clearly represented one of the core "edge and wedge" issues that create campus–community friction—that is, events that occur on the edge of the boundary between the campus and community that generate wedges between otherwise harmonious partners.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

After a long period of shifting enrollments, important changes in law, and changing town demographics, beginning around 2010 an enhanced town–gown effort that focused on combating student alcohol misuse resulted in the development of a broader and deeper set of relationships between increasingly well-placed staff members from the city and the university. These productive relationships, in turn, enhanced town–gown comfort levels, and the increasing levels of effort and comfort spawned a partnership that secured a grant enabling the local administration of the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) survey. The grant itself was grounded in the larger objective of reducing high-risk alcohol consumption in college communities, which was the central (but not exclusive) focus that had brought the town and university together over this period.

With respect to our central focus of managing and mitigating high-risk alcohol consumption, our reflection on our experience of this process generated what we believe to be the most important lessons learned that may help other communities facing similar challenges:

1. *Acknowledge the problem.* University recognition of the impact of off-campus student behavior on the community is the essential first step (and, as educators, it is our duty to recognize and respond).
2. *Size probably matters.* In large towns, problematic behaviors may be sufficiently dispersed so as to be much less of an issue. We believe that the peculiar geography of Oxford greatly magnified the issue of misuse, but at the same time presented a very visible target for a coordinated response.
3. *Students must drive change.* This is not a battle between the university and students; it is a community battle against inappropriate behavior, and thus any successful intervention must be developed with student help and leadership. Although we recognize that students and permanent residents, overall, likely have different goals and behaviors, most students are, and all should want to be, good citizens.
4. *It takes a community.* The work on an issue this big cannot be the respon-

sibility of a single university office. Specialized university offices are essential to the work, of course, both from a leadership and a "compliance" perspective. However, such offices often are funded with an eye toward "maintenance," so they may lack not the talent or drive but rather the resources for the types of innovations that are required for a project of this scale (DeJong, 2016). And, as is the theme of our reflection, student leadership and a town–gown coalition are essential for many other reasons.

5. *It takes champions.* Related to the point above, highly visible (and vocal) champions from both the town and the university are essential. Although positional or titular cachet is neither necessary nor sufficient to make a champion, it certainly serves to amplify one's call to action.

6. *Road trips help*. The best practices, role models, and opportunities to connect provided by International Town Gown Association (or other similar organizations) can be an important accelerant for a strong town–gown partnership. Road trips can make better partners.

7. *Build to last.* Developing a permanent infrastructure is essential, because office personnel and champions will come and go. In fact, this may be the most essential requirement for long-run success. The permanence of a strong infrastructure can help keep the work moving forward in light of inevitable staff changes, and it can also provide a form of memory/history, which—as we hope we have demonstrated here—can be so important to the work.

8. *Use the dashboard.* Data are essential, and victories are small. However, even small victories, when the stakes can be so large, justify the efforts. As a related point, you cannot become discouraged by highly visible individual incidents, and you should not rush to celebrate one-year movements in the data. And, as with most critical functions, there is a deep performance recognition asymmetry: There are few or no pats on the back for successes, but often very quick reprimands for failures. With respect to data, tools such as the OCTA can play a big role.

9. *The road goes on forever.* The goal of the work should not be to "solve a problem." The goal of the work should be to build a better community. And success along that broader dimension will pay dividends far beyond any progress made on the single issue of mitigating the negative effects of high-risk alcohol misuse.

Although not the only town–gown issue receiving attention over the period of our study, the shared goal of reducing alcohol misuse became a powerful force for building a town–gown partnership. Interestingly, this focus on alcohol misuse was grounded, in part, in the desire to reduce the town–gown tension that student (mis)behavior had been creating in an increasingly student-dense residential neighborhood abutting campus. The effort–comfort dimensions of the Gavazzi typology provided those involved in the work with a very useful framework for evaluating the quality of the town–gown relationship. Although we have attempted to retrospectively evaluate the evolution of the town–gown relationship within the Gavazzi typology, our efforts were necessarily speculative and inferential. Thus, one huge appeal of the OCTA is that it provided a way to consistently quantify at least some important dimensions of the town–gown relationship *as well as its evolution over time.* Likewise, it provided an important target—the harmonious ideal—that can presumably help drive productive conversations and shape the actual work accomplished by town–gown partnerships.

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Transforming Barriers Into Opportunities: Teaching Environment and Sustainability Service-Learning Courses During the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many institutions of higher learning locked down their campuses and altered their ways of teaching. This article discusses changes made to courses at five highly varied public universities in New England participating in the multiyear Campuses for Environmental Stewardship (CES) program. The primary aim of the CES program is to integrate environmental service-learning (SL) into college curricula through workshops, faculty fellowships, and mentoring. We detail how teaching strategies were altered in fall 2020 to accommodate the threat of COVID-19 in the classroom. The authors transitioned significant portions of their instruction to online formats or outdoor classrooms. Specifics about the impacts of the shift to virtual teaching–learning are discussed, with particular focus on the impacts to the service-learning components of each of the courses.

Keywords: campus garden, community engagement, environmental sustainability, outdoor classroom, service-learning, COVID-19

Higher education service-learning (SL) increasingly plays a crucial role in training the next generation in environmental stewardship (Singletary, 2013; Smith et al., 2011). By definition, SL "incorporates community work into the curriculum, giving students real-world learning experiences that enhance their academic learning while providing a tangible benefit for the community" (Campus Compact, 2019, para. 1). In practice, SL takes many forms and has been variously defined (Celio et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2011), but most definitions of SL share a common integrated approach to blend service, guided reflection, and engaged application of academic content in a way that can be dynamically and mutually beneficial. SL continues to grow in its presence on many campuses, in part as a result of increased evidence that SL is an effective way to meet many learning goals (Celio et al., 2011). SL takes numerous forms, but all involve students being given opportunities in and across courses to move the ideas they are learning in college to action. The "ivory towers" come down (Hart & Silka, 2020), and students see pathways to use their learning beyond the classroom.

The Campuses for Environmental Stewardship (CES) program offered through Maine Campus Compact, in partnership with Campus Compact for Southern New England and New Hampshire Campus Compact, offers training in SL pedagogy and helps faculty follow an interdisciplinary model to create community partnerships and address critical sustainability and food insecurity challenges (Maine Campus Compact, 2021). The CES program is built around hands-on and experiential SL in which students work with partners to engage in environmental stewardship and food insecurity challenges to address student learning outcomes and

21st-century skill development (Bednarz et al., 2008; Buckingham-Hatfield, 1995; Minor & McCourt, 2021). The CES program offers a faculty fellowship program to support development and enhancement of SL in environment and sustainability-related courses via a collaborative network of scholars from many New England campuses.

The 2018–2020 CES Fellows cohort, including the authors of this article, was successfully approaching its final semester of collaboration when COVID-19 broke out in the United States in March 2020. We spent the remainder of 2020 responding to steep and unprecedented challenges for maintaining SL goals at our respective campuses. We adjusted and adapted, often in unpredictable and rapidly changing circumstances. We pursued important opportunities for change, and have learned lessons from our collective experience. We see value in reflecting on teaching SL courses during a pandemic, including the skills we have gained in forging adaptive capacity as educators, and the challenges we observe in effectively training our students and fostering a healthy community of learners. By the fall semester, for example, some universities restricted off-campus student activities, and travel became impractical under social distancing requirements. At other campuses, face-to-face contact was reduced or eliminated through a conversion to online or hybrid coursework, which made it difficult or impossible to continue community-based work with partners as it had occurred before.

We take seriously the need to continue community and partnership-based environmental SL work, even as that work was and remains altered by a global pandemic. Similarly, we recognize the need for sharing successes and lessons learned to foster and incubate educational innovation to address pressing societal issues. Our experiences reinventing environmental stewardship and responses to food insecurity in the face of rapid and unpredictable change may provide useful insights for other faculty engaged in SL pedagogy. An important theme is that abrupt change exposes factors that impact students in different ways that are crucial to consider. These factors, such as race, class, and gender, have been researched as playing significant roles in relation to SL (Becker & Paul, 2015; Green, 2003). Although student identities are not central to all our case studies, we recognize the need for future analyses in relation to the changes we identify under COVID-19 and which we anticipate will continue. A second theme is increasing awareness and incidence of student mental health struggles related to illness (their own or that of family members), financial challenges, or other changes to living and learning conditions (Anderson, 2020; Czeisler et al., 2020; St. Amour, 2020). A third theme is that reflection, a core practice of SL, can on the part of faculty lead to continuous curricular improvement and innovation.

After briefly summarizing goals of the CES program and campuses involved, we use five case studies to describe and reflect on the innovations and changes made to our environmental and sustainability coursework. Each case study describes course adaptations for navigating the pandemic, how the adaptation differed from original plans, and an explanation of these decisions. We discuss how we retained the CES program's overarching goals while accommodating COVID-related instructional changes. The case studies contain practical solutions that can be adapted and applied in different circumstances. We conclude by describing what we continue to learn from each other as we teach amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brief Summary of Goals of the Campuses for Environmental Stewardship Program

Maine Campus Compact is a 17-member coalition whose purpose is to catalyze and lead a movement to reinvigorate the civic mission of higher education (Maine Campus Compact, n.d.). Maine Campus Compact's Campuses for Environmental Stewardship (CES) program is funded by a multiyear grant from the Davis Educational Foundation that supports SL enhancements on their campuses and with partners aimed at creating innovative environmental stewardship through strengthening curriculum and student learning outcomes. This competitive program provides start-up funding and facilitates opportunities for campuses to learn from and with each other. Ten campuses obtained CES faculty fellowship funding to support their innovative plans (Figure 1).

Aware that today's young adults are entering a world of unprecedented change and complex challenge, we directly engage students through the CES model to develop

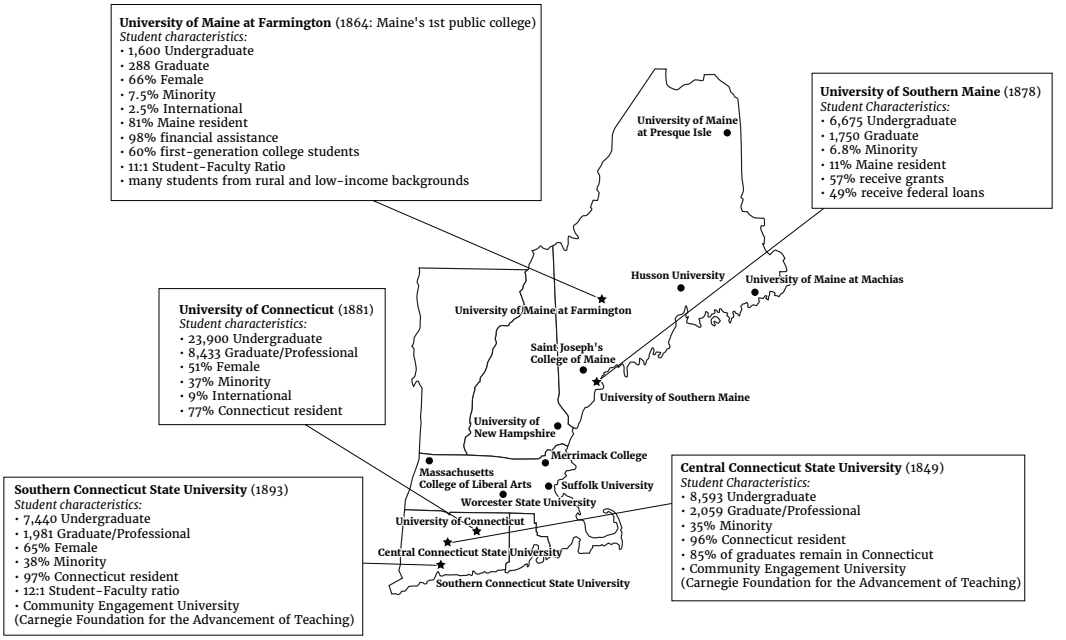

Figure 1. Campuses for Environmental Sustainability (CES) Program Locations, 2018–2020
Note. Locations of the 14 2018–2020 Maine Campus Compact faculty fellow participants in the Campuses for Environmental Sustainability (CES) program. ★= Case study locations described in this article, with information provided in the text boxes. (Map by Jesse Minor).

competencies needed to function, thrive, and effect positive change in an increasingly interdependent world. The development of 21st-century skills is embedded in our project design, implementation, and assessment to ensure that students are well equipped to address similarly complex issues in future workplace and citizen roles. Because of their interdisciplinary nature, critical issues, such as environmental stewardship and food insecurity, translate into timely community projects that allow students to develop and apply real-world skills like self-motivation and resiliency that can be used to respond to other real-world challenges such as COVID-19.

SL is an especially valuable approach at campuses serving students from historically underrepresented groups or who represent a number of intersecting marginalized backgrounds. The universities profiled in the case studies below serve precisely these diverse students, who are disproportionately vulnerable to pandemic-related disruptions to their educations and workplaces. Continuation of SL-based courses described in these case studies is believed to have been especially important, given the student bodies served by participant campuses (Table 1).

Case Studies and How They Reflect Needed Innovation and Changes

Case Study 1: University of Connecticut, Turning Service-Learning Inward: Applying Intersectional Compassionate Pedagogy (ICP) Online

Pre-COVID-19

Previously, in writing with several students about our experiences in my 2018 Sustainable Societies class, we prioritized student mental health alongside other overlapping social and ecological crises and in relation to the intersecting identities of race, class, and gender, resulting in our proposal of what we call Intersectional Compassionate Pedagogy (ICP; Godfrey et al., 2018). We recognized that "ICP seeks to create classroom climate conducive to helping students repropagate their 'mind-body-spirit-nature unity' (Sipos et al., 2008) and thereby begin a very intimate, yet collective, healing journey" (Godfrey et al., 2018, p. 58). As the instructor I used ICP with the class

> to challenge power inequalities in micro spaces, as in students' socially constructed concepts of self/others and macro places, as in the

Table 1. Universities and Courses Described in the Case Studies

Case study #	Institution: instructor, departmental affiliation	Course title	Course description
1	University of Connecticut: Phoebe Godfrey, Department of Sociology	SOCI 2709W, Society and Climate Change	*Enrollment:* 19 students (as for all UCONN writing-intensive classes) *Major assignments:* 12 hours of self-healing SL; individual reflective journal using readings and SL experiences; 15-page research paper revised over semester; 10 discussion postings; final paper presentation
2	Southern Connecticut State University: Suzanne Huminski, Division of Research and Innovation/ Sustainability	HON 300, Introduction to Service Learning	*Enrollment:* 20 students (required for Honors minor) *Major assignments:* 15 hours community service as class; free choice book review; reflective reader/service responses; research paper on environmental topic; interview service professional; final presentation
3	University of Maine at Farmington: Jesse Minor, Department of Geography & Environmental Planning	EPP/GEO 207, Environmental Field Methods	*Enrollment:* 15 students (required for Environmental Policy and Planning major) *Major assignments:* 13 labs; 8 field observation sets; 4 analyses of scientific literature; 2 full environmental research projects; final poster, oral, and PowerPoint presentation
4	University of Southern Maine: Sara Ghezzi, Tourism & Hospitality Program, Muskie School of Public Service	TAH 222, Food & Beverage Management	*Enrollment:* 27 students (required for Hospitality Management Concentration within the Tourism & Hospitality B.A.) *Major assignments:* Plan, execute, and serve a three-course meal; restaurant management simulator; food waste plan; farmer's market standardized recipe
5	Central Connecticut State University: Charles Button, Department of Geography	SUST 140, Introduction to Sustainability	*Enrollment:* 24 students *Major assignments:* 5 critical thinking essays/discussions; 1 community engagement event; 1 group poster

> social structure of the classroom, including the furniture, the use of the board and other traditional educational geometries of inequality. (Godfrey et al., 2018, p. 58)

The goal was to "invite our class to become 'sustainable souls' individually/collectively" (Godfrey et al., 2018, p. 58) by offering them information and tools to better navigate their lives in relation to their personal and social struggles. Given my seeming success using this approach (including coauthoring the aforementioned article with students from that class), I have sought to use ICP in my other classes, including my SL-based Society and Climate Change course. As a result, in fall 2019 we again focused on addressing student mental health along with other overlapping social and ecological crises, taking the University of Connecticut campus as our community partner. After many collective brainstorming classes that built on recent student activism on campus focused on climate change and racial justice, we initiated what became known as Buddy Bench Project for Difficult Dialogues, wherein students built two wooden benches that are now placed on campus across from each other (we had noticed that none of the

benches on campus faced each other). The benches have signs on them stating their purpose: to bring people together for "difficult dialogues" on topics such as racism and climate change. This SL project involving the campus community via writing-intensive research papers and that resulted in a new addition to our campus in the form of two beautiful student-made benches, could be deemed a SL success. Yet, how does one go about translating such dynamically in-person pedagogical approaches to a newly designed online SL class that accounts for all the CDC requirements, my specific campus's pandemic protocols, and my own health needs as well as those of my students?

COVID-19

Given the combination of my ICP pedagogy and concern for student mental health, which has only worsened under COVID-19 (Anderson, 2020; Czeisler et al., 2020; St. Amour, 2020), I decided not to seek SL opportunities that would require students to spend even more time on the computer. Rather, I sought to continue my commitment to ICP while having them actually "do something" by applying it loosely to SL, wherein the community partner this time was the students *themselves*, under the mantra of "physician, heal thyself." The class was conducted online through a combination of asynchronous prerecorded lectures and synchronous student group meetings (monitored by me and three upper level student mentors who had taken the course previously). I sought to invite students to use their group meetings to look at themselves and to question *who* they are as socially constructed intersecting identities, in order to gain a deeper understanding of themselves in relation to others and their own intersecting identities, as well as in relation to physical spaces and places. In relation to the course's focus on SL, in the syllabus I wrote,

> We are going to frame your SL as an act of "self-healing" / "grounding" / "creative recovery" . . . or however else you would like to think about what in you needs to be "healed" / "made whole" so that you may be of *service* to your family / community and to play a role in creating a more just, peaceful and verdant world.

I provided a list of embodied activities (dance, meditation, cooking, hiking, painting, playing, etc.), all of which if performed intentionally can support mental health (Payne, 2020). Further, students were advised to

> choose something that makes you happy . . . that is non-competitive and that you can do without judgment but also that invites you to move outside of your comfort zone and that your "spirit" feels drawn to even if your mind / thoughts resist.

As for helping see connections to climate change, I stated,

> Once we frame climate change as a *social* problem, as we will be doing in this course, we can begin to recognize that a society that would *knowingly* destroy its life support system, thereby engaging in self-destruction, is obviously *not* healthy either in mind or body.

Students kept a log of their hours (2 hr/week for 6 alternating weeks), listing what they did for embodied activities, what it meant, and what it led to. Finally, they had to journal about their experiences from an intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) perspective (the theoretical lens of the course), reflecting on how during the activities they chose, their feelings and experiences were connected to their race/class/gender identities, as well as how all those identities connected to their spaces and places, thereby engaging ICP.

An example of how this all came together can be illustrated through one of the few activities still accessible to the students: going outside to walk, bike, hike, and so on. Many students, and in particular those with class privilege and who were White, chose these options. For one class, students were asked in their online groups to draw mind maps using Google Draw and to critically analyze their SL activities from the perspectives of their intersecting identities. They were also invited to explore readings by and about people of color critically analyzing their experiences "outside," such as the now notorious racist incident inflicted upon Christian Cooper, a Black birder in New York's Central Park, in which a White woman called the police and theatrically

claimed that Mr. Cooper was threatening her, to help all students see their SL activities in a larger social context. Other examples included viewing cooking and knitting specifically in relation to gender, and horseback riding specifically in relation to social class, as well as the other intersecting identities. Although the link between engaging in an intersectional analysis and promoting self-healing would be difficult to prove, student reflections shared informally with me and/or with their mentors indicate that the overall outcome has been a positive one. Students expressed being "better able to understand myself," that "taking care of myself is a responsibility," that it "helped me get through difficult times," that "I was able to become more in touch with myself and the Earth," and that "being still for ourselves is all we got when we begin to become adults." Of course, these are just selected vignettes, but I think that, in context, they stand out as significant.

Post-COVID Reflections

In the future, hopefully we will be able to go back to more campus/community-focused SL projects, but it is nevertheless essential that SL students are increasingly invited to unpack their intersecting identities, and in particular, where applicable, their Whiteness (Becker & Paul, 2015; Green, 2003), while, as shown here, additionally "turning SL inward." In fact, I plan to keep this aspect of my SL courses, combining it with the external community partners for more balanced and holistic SL experiences. For, as predictions for ever more extreme social and ecological crises become the new reality, all our students, including our SL ones, will need more and more support as provided through ICP, as well as self-healing tools to better navigate their complex and unpredictable ways through an ever-changing world.

Case Study 2: Southern Connecticut State University, Practicing Fundamental Service-Learning Principles in Teaching: An Experiential Approach During COVID-19

HON 300: Introduction to Service Learning is a SL course required in the Honors program at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). Taught by interdisciplinary faculty, HON 300 sections are capped at 20 students, mostly sophomores. The HON 300 section described here is titled Service Learning for Sustainability Solutions and meets once a week for 2.5 hours to enable service fieldwork during class.

Pre-COVID-19

Prior to the pandemic, students typically spent three to five class sessions and one 5-hour Saturday service day helping community partner organizations build rain gardens that divert water from city sewers and revitalize public green spaces in New Haven neighborhoods within walking distance of campus. The remaining class sessions focused on engaging and exploring course content in a more traditional indoor classroom setting: climate change and environmental solutions, principles of service leadership and followership, and experiential learning as a didactic model. Students maintained a reflective journal throughout the semester to explore their own learning through course materials and through activities and interactions with community partners and with each other. One challenge of teaching this course prior to the pandemic was effectively engaging students of diverse backgrounds, academic majors, and varying motivation to actively contribute to climate change solutions and invest themselves in SL activities.

COVID-19

With a sudden move in March to online operations followed by a strictly enforced 6-month campus closure because of the pandemic, it was abundantly clear that fall 2020 course planning for HON 300 would need to accommodate continued unpredictability. Extensive course revision was required, which in turn meant a significant time commitment in unstable circumstances. For context, Connecticut was in the midst of a significant COVID-19 outbreak throughout spring and early summer 2020. Infection levels gradually dropped as summer progressed. From my spring viewpoint, I did not know what fall would bring, and the safest way to mitigate unpredictability was to plan online courses. I was concerned this would compromise SL goals, reduce interactions with community partners, and increase risk of social isolation for students and faculty. In late spring, SCSU announced a hybrid fall 2020 semester with options for courses to run one of four ways: on-ground, synchronously online, asynchronously online, or through a hybrid mode. Each option had boundaries

so students knew what to expect: an online asynchronous course needed to be *fully* asynchronous. Hybrid courses were required to be offered simultaneously in-person and online for all sessions. Online synchronous courses would run with virtual classrooms in real time, and on-ground courses would meet in person with no online classroom. Teaching HON 300 as an on-ground or hybrid course was not a workable option for me, since I made a choice for safety reasons to teach in person only if I could do so outdoors for all sessions. Our class was scheduled for early evening, and with the possibility of darkness, rain, or snow during class meetings, those options wouldn't work.

The fundamental nature of the course presented a second set of challenges: For safety reasons, SCSU prohibited off-campus fieldwork during fall with community partners. A foundation of HON 300 SL is an experiential approach to teamwork, group dynamics, and camaraderie through participating together throughout the semester in environmental projects in the local community. It was important to preserve in-person teaching and learning if possible. I elected to offer the course online synchronously, and I *hoped* to invite students to SCSU's Campus Community Garden, maintaining social distancing and wearing masks, as an option for completing service work. However, any student electing to complete the service requirement online would be able to do so. Prior to the pandemic, the SCSU Campus Community Garden donated its annual harvest, approximately 800 pounds of fresh produce, to soup kitchens in New Haven. This seemed to be the best available solution for maintaining close community ties and offering meaningful service to the local community in a time of crisis while still adhering to university COVID-related restrictions.

To address the challenge of time management for adaptive capacity, I invited a coinstructor, Elisabeth Ott, to teach with me. Coteaching lowered my pay for the course, but this decision was critical to adapt academic course content to focus on the campus garden rather than rain gardens, and it was extremely helpful for effectively managing student activities online and in person simultaneously. It also was much more fun, which is highly important in a crisis. When SCSU campus facilities partially reopened in August for the fall semester, faculty, staff, and students were allowed on campus for the first time since March. The garden, abandoned for the whole season, was overgrown with weeds and invasive plants and needed extensive work to clean up, grow any late-season harvest, and prepare for the 2021 season. The pandemic brought a notable benefit: As part of SCSU's COVID-19 response, outdoor campus Wi-Fi range, speed, and reliability had been upgraded to encourage and accommodate socially distanced learning and teaching. Because of this upgrade, we could teach at the campus garden synchronously, both in person and virtually.

Post-COVID Reflections

It was only with hindsight and discussion with the CES faculty cohort that I realized planning and teaching HON 300 during the pandemic helped Elisabeth and me better incorporate the SL fundamentals of shared governance and experiential education into course activities and assignments, fostering our learning community's resilience in notable ways. HON 300 students have always examined *principles* of SL as part of the curriculum, but this semester necessitated a greater shift from studying principles to developing *practices* for all. Much of the result was born of necessity in real time—I cannot claim truthfully that we strategically planned it all in advance. During the first class session, which was online, multiple students reported feeling lonely and experiencing elevated anxiety and stress related to isolation caused by the ongoing pandemic. We observed together that most students were joining the class online while sitting in their dorm rooms alone, even though most people were in the same building. Elisabeth and I sat alone in our respective homes. We asked students to specify their preference for attending class sessions at the campus garden, weather permitting, until Halloween, or for attending class online. I was not sure this was allowed, but no one had told me I could not. All students except one elected to attend class at the garden. We talked about it as a group and decided that the student attending online could contribute meaningfully to our class experience by creating and managing a class blog chronicling our garden service experiences. She participated in class discussions and activities by having her classmates carry her, via iPad, to see, hear, and experience everyone's activities at the garden site. This arrangement worked well for small group

discussions and activities, for student blog interviews, and for learning specific gardening tasks like invasive plant identification and preparing root-bound potted plants for raised beds in the garden. We all planned together that if students needed to quarantine during the semester, which happened to several of them, this method of online participation could be expanded.

Elisabeth and I adopted an additional shared governance strategy that improved our time management by directly involving students in planning two assignments. For Assignment 1, students each designed and facilitated a 10- to 20-minute class activity and follow-up discussion to share with their peers, demonstrating and practicing one of seven service leadership and followership principles included in course readings. Students' activities were imaginative, fun, and increased their investment in our learning community and willingness to share with each other as a way to learn. Many of the activities they planned were game-based, and all maintained social distancing. For Assignment 2, we asked students to "crowdsource" a 3-week unit of readings. The first week's assignment was a common read of "Landscape and Wellbeing" (Abraham et al., 2010) to introduce the topic of green space access as a potential health determinant for individuals and communities, to ensure students understood the concept of peer review, and to instruct them on how to independently search academic journals in campus databases. For Week 2, every student searched for and selected a journal article on this topic and prepared a single summary slide with a link to the article to share with the class in a short oral presentation. For Week 3, each student selected and read articles from two of their peers' slides, then wrote a two- to three-page reader response exploring what they learned from synthesizing the three articles. The range of reading choices and autonomy to synthesize and share what they learned seemed to result in a higher level of engagement with topics than occurred during semesters in which I chose the readings.

Teaching during the pandemic provided a stark reminder that student affect and disposition for learning can play a significant role in achieving learning goals. The pandemic has heightened overall need for stress relief, calming, and fostering positive emotions, which spending time outdoors and with peers, in person, can provide (Abraham et al., 2010), as similarly discussed in the UConn case study. Spending time outdoors also enhanced safety and reduced risk of COVID-19 transmission because of natural air movement and sunlight. The assignments described above, coupled with service work at the garden, meant that as a learning community and as individuals, we were maximizing the time we spent outdoors and learning about the importance of spending time outdoors *while we were outside.* It is possible that this additional time outdoors improved students' learning and would be an interesting avenue of future study. Increased outdoor instruction and activities for my students seemed to heighten their value of the garden as a shared community learning space (Abraham et al., 2010) and reinforced bonds and active communication with each other. Because of the course revisions described in this case study, the garden served as a safe and inviting location for group camaraderie, relaxation, informal conversation, physical separation from daily stress, close observation of intricate natural detail or wide landscape views, and multisensory experience. These changes improved the course in important ways, and I will maintain them postpandemic. Students responded positively to increased freedom to choose and shape activities and readings according to their personal interests, and to assignments and activities designed for fostering a sense of investment and belonging in the learning community. These shared governance practices are central to improving a didactic model for service-learning, and teaching during the pandemic helped me better understand how to "walk the talk."

Case Study 3: University of Maine at Farmington, Campus as a Service-Learning Partner for Environment and Sustainability Coursework

EPP/GEO 207: Environmental Field Methods introduces the fundamentals of fieldwork-based research methods and scientific report writing. The class focuses on concepts, techniques, and equipment pertinent to physical and environmental geography and related fields. Students develop a toolkit of basic skills for fieldwork, data analysis and interpretation, data visualization, and presentation of results through oral, poster, and digital media. Along with a class project, students work on a group research project that results in a final report and presentation based on fieldwork they have planned

and data they have collected and analyzed.

This course is offered in the fall semester to take best advantage of weather for field-based lab activities and student-led research. In the first half of the semester, outdoor lab activities teach a variety of tools and techniques for field-based work, with additional labs providing background in map reading, analysis, and orienteering; data types and scales of analysis; and how to plan and implement a field study. Lectures and activities introduce the content and background necessary to understand and conduct the lab assignments. As a class, we design and conduct a pilot research project using the campus environment, which provides additional practice with data collection and field techniques, and introduces data analysis, visualization, and reporting. In the second half of the semester, students identify and plan off-campus research projects that they conduct in groups of three or four.

A series of assignments provides structure to the group research projects, supporting students as they conduct a literature review, make maps of their field site, collect and analyze data, and accomplish the challenging tasks of reporting their results. Lab assignments in the latter portion of the semester stress scientific reporting in the form of poster, oral, and PowerPoint presentations, and a series of iterative writing assignments involve peer editing and revisions of the sections of the research report as the various groups conclude their projects. Environmental Field Methods is an unusually comprehensive class in that it scales beyond individual assignments and the lab-based activities in a typical science class. The course concludes with genuine and meaningful environmental research projects that pose considerable challenges: working in groups across multiple time horizons and deadlines while simultaneously collecting and making sense of data and contextualizing those results in light of previous research. In this way, this class targets multiple levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) in nearly every assignment and across the entire semester.

In a typical semester, the class would partner with a local land trust or watershed organization to conduct field-based SL research that benefits local conservation or resource management, or helps answer questions or provide data for ongoing monitoring of environmental change. In 2018, the class conducted a rapid geomorphic analysis and a biological and physical assessment of the input stream to Wilson Lake in the nearby town of Wilton, Maine on behalf of the local watershed organization Friends of Wilson Lake (FOWL). This partnership yielded valuable data for the watershed organization, which they have used to apply for grant support, while simultaneously providing a real-world project for the class. The partnership represented a robust integration of community-engaged service-learning in which the service and the learning were productive and met objectives for both the college students and the community partner.

COVID-19 Challenges: Conversion to Campus-based Research Projects

After courses were abruptly shifted to online delivery in March 2020, UMaine Farmington's fall 2020 semester was offered with a blend of fully in-person, hybrid in-person/online, and fully online (synchronous and asynchronous) web-delivered classes. Because of limitations on university travel, including restrictions on how many students could ride in a 15-passenger van (two), and concerns about potential exposure of our students and community partners to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, course activities in fall 2020 were limited to the UMF campus. By necessity, we had to eliminate the community-engaged SL research projects, which meant that the community partner with whom we were previously scheduled to work had reduced access to data collected through our SL partnership.

The Environmental Field Methods course proved ideal for a conversion to almost entirely outdoor delivery: Many of the lab assignments and activities are conducted outdoors even in a normal semester, and Maine's 2020 summer and fall drought provided unusually good weather for field-based instruction. To accommodate outdoor learning, I converted what would typically have been short in-class lectures to remotely delivered online discussions, and I took more time for hands-on practice with the field equipment and data collection techniques. Students were masked and physically distanced in this outdoor environment, which further improved general safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The positive result of these instructional adjustments was that I had to move more slowly through content and concepts, and students reported greater comfort and familiar-

ity with the field tools and data collection techniques.

As a class, we embarked on two side-by-side environmental research projects that represent SL work with the UMF campus as our community partner. One project investigated the microclimate conditions in the brand-new UMF campus community garden, which had been designed and built by students in summer 2020. This project involved transects of microclimate variables (air and soil temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction) in relation to features of the garden and the campus built environment that could create heat island effects or otherwise alter growing conditions for plants. This project was supplemented by a 5-week campaign of remote data collection in which students installed iButton data loggers in various features of the garden to capture time series data on the important microclimate features. Because the UMF community garden is a new feature of the campus environment, understanding how built-environment features and microclimate variability might affect plant growth is useful for the upcoming growing seasons and supports the important work of improving this vital space. Environmental Field Methods was one of several classes that used the campus garden as an outdoor meeting space and an object of study, but this was the only course in fall 2020 that applied scientific research methods to the garden. In future semesters, my courses will expand on this relationship, providing data and results in support of the campus community garden project.

The second campus-based SL research project was a study of the carbon sequestered in the UMF campus forest. Students conducted plot- and transect-based measurements of trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, and ground cover. In these plots and transects, students measured tree diameters, tree heights and crown heights, and the proportion of canopy cover versus open sky, while also tallying seedlings and saplings. This allowed the students to characterize the current forest in terms of structure and species composition, and also make projections about future species compositions based on regeneration patterns. Students then designed a study in which tree diameters were sampled using belt transects. Diameter measurements were fed into allometric equations that convert diameter into standing biomass, and from there, the amount of carbon contained in each tree. Students then estimated the total aboveground carbon sequestered in the UMF campus forest, as well as finer estimations of carbon sequestered by species, by tree type, and across biomass components such as foliage and coarse roots. This project is ongoing and will be expanded to include the remainder of the UMF campus, which contains small groves, isolated landscaping trees, and patches of wild forest along a stream, as well as a 4.3 acre (1.7 ha) hemlock forest surrounding a quaking bog. The carbon-sequestering peat in the quaking bog was mapped using ground penetrating radar in spring 2021, in concert with tree-based measurement of aboveground carbon sequestered in the hemlock forest. This class project and its follow-on extension support UMF's environmental and sustainability initiatives, and provide a basis for understanding UMF's capacity to capture and store carbon.

Post-COVID Reflections

The SL partnership with the campus community garden had direct benefits to a newly established and rapidly growing part of the campus environment and UMF's educational and community-serving programming. The course-based learning was robust and equally successful compared to pre-COVID SL projects. The benefits to the garden program were also good, although its multifunctional programming and the horizontal "ownership" of the garden program make it less certain who should own the data and take recommendations based on our research project. The campus-based carbon sequestration has similar limitations: The course-based learning was likely better than that conducted in pre-COVID conditions with community partners, but the service to the community is much less clear. The campus-partner SL project does set the stage for ongoing course-based surveys of campus carbon sequestration, which may yield benefits to the university through carbon credits in the future. It is clear, however, that by turning inward during a global pandemic, the university campus community and some of its environmental programming likely benefited from activities that would typically be performed in partnership with local organizations.

Both of these campus-based SL projects provided meaningful, real-world applications of environmental research methods, analysis, and reporting while simultane-

ously supporting campus sustainability efforts and initiatives. The UMF campus environment proved to be a robust outdoor classroom in which course-based objectives could be safely and efficiently conducted while collecting useful data on important elements of the campus environment. These data provide a baseline by which future change can be assessed, as well as the first year of data that can be added to by future iterations of this project-based SL class. In both cases, the campus environment projects will be extended and built upon, with the SL "partner" being the campus itself. The UMF campus community garden will help guide data collection based on their identified needs, and the campus forest project will build onto a larger initiative, the Abbott Park Project, as well as my larger research agenda.

Case Study 4: University of Southern Maine, Service-Learning in Hospitality Education: The COVID-19 Impact

TAH 222: Food and Beverage Management introduces basic management principles and practices for the food and beverage service industries, such as preparation, safe food handling, budgeting and operations, menu development, human resources, marketing, catering, and event planning. Instructors and guest speakers from the industry offer expertise and guidance on day-to-day management, strategic planning, and other areas of restaurant and food service management. Students become acquainted with the social, economic, and environmental context within which the foodservice sector of the hospitality industry operates. The course offers an understanding of the history, structure, nature, and operating characteristics of the foodservice sector while promoting an appreciation of the various functions of management and the interrelationships of these functions with other key concerns of managers, such as marketing, finance, and human resource management in the context of foodservice operations. The course brings attention to identifying the role of managers in all major types of foodservice operations and highlights their principal responsibilities. In addition, the course gives students the opportunity to work collaboratively in groups to achieve various specified goals. SL is vital in hospitality education and helps build on important skills such as leadership and teamwork, which are essential to success in the hospitality industry (Lin et al., 2017). The course satisfies the University of Southern Maine's Core Engaged Learning requirement by giving students an opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond the traditional classroom through sustained application, reflection, and collaboration on issues of relevance beyond the university.

An example of an assignment included in the course that allows students to demonstrate their mastery of the key learning goals is the development of a standardized recipe. Students are instructed to develop such a recipe from ingredients obtained at a local farmers market. The assignment brings focus to the importance and benefits of using local food items. A culminating activity involves student engagement with local vendors and farms to obtain donated food goods. Students are directed to incorporate the donated items as part of a special dinner to be planned and carried out by the class. The dinner is also a collaborative effort as USM students work with culinary students at Southern Maine Community College. The SMCC culinary students prepare the food for the dinner; the USM students are expected to carry out the preliminary logistics, serve the food, and create a food waste prevention plan. As part of their food waste prevention project, students are expected to coordinate and carry out donations of any leftover food to the local community.

COVID-19 Challenges for Food and Beverage Management Courses

Hospitality education demands a hands-on practical approach. The COVID-19 pandemic halted this teaching method. Due to the regulations and safety concerns created by the pandemic, major adjustments had to be made concerning the culminating assignment of the class. In an ideal situation, students would develop a marketing campaign to sell tickets for a dinner that they planned and developed. The main goal of this activity was to allow students to practice management skills, including financial aspects of running a kitchen. Unfortunately, the usual routine of this assignment was altered. Students continued to work in groups but planned the dinner in a mock online restaurant setting, instead of actually cooking and serving the dinner. Students still developed their leadership and team-building skills by their engagement in the mock sessions. It was important and helpful to allow students to maintain a sense of community and continue their participation.

A major learning objective included in the course is to highlight the environmental and sustainable benefits of using locally sourced food. Students contacted local vendors and farmers online instead of meeting them in person when choosing their food items to be used in a standardized recipe of their choice. Because the dinner was cancelled, an alternative to allow the students to observe and engage in implementing a typical restaurant dinner service was needed. An online restaurant simulator was used to mimic the experience. To ensure that all the students were comfortable in the use of the software, they were coached through Zoom sessions and teamed in breakout rooms. It was also necessary to be available for any student concerns and questions to help foster a supportive atmosphere as the changes took place. The introduction of the farm-to-table mindset gave students a better understanding and appreciation of the local economic impact of locally sourced food. In addition, students gained an understanding of how shipping in out-of-state foods can bring about negative environmental impacts. Eliminating the face-to-face engagement due to the pandemic did hinder the teaching effectiveness of the course; however, new learning outcomes emerged that showed the students the importance of practicing resiliency, patience, and adaptability in a real-world setting.

Because several activities of the course could not take place, students were given the option to complete a food safety certification. This useful certification was incorporated as a class assignment on a voluntary basis. Students were encouraged to complete the food safety course ServeSafe, which provides valuable instruction concerning food safety and the prevention of foodborne illnesses. Students were given class time to complete the ServeSafe training, with a lenient timeframe to alleviate any additional stress. ServeSafe certification is a valuable asset when seeking employment in the foodservice industry.

The original plan concerning the dinner would have donated leftover food to a local homeless shelter. The students decided to donate what they could on their own, with several students donating nonperishable food items. Their participation in finding and providing food to hunger organizations proved to be a worthwhile community involvement during a troubling time. Even though the students did not actively participate in the actual dinner setting, the course led to several positive experiences. The simulation activities did provide a benefit in the reinforcement of learning objectives and could be an asset in a post-pandemic course.

Case Study 5: Central Connecticut State University, Challenges to Adapting Service-Learning Course Components to COVID-19 Crisis Limitations

SUST 140: Introduction to Sustainability introduces students to the concepts and tenets of sustainability. During a typical semester, students learn about actions and activities they can initiate and engage in that promote the broader concepts of sustainability (Purvis et al., 2019). During a standard semester, students are expected to seek out nongovernmental organizations or governmental agencies located in one of the communities bordering the CCSU campus that are seeking to improve social, economic, and/or environmental justice. As the semester unfolds, students learn about systems operating individually and collectively within each of the three pillars of sustainability (i.e., environmental, social, and economic). More important, students learn that when humans change the dynamics of a system within one of the pillars of sustainability, they paradoxically change all the other operating systems within all three. The objectives of the course are for students to develop (1) a thorough understanding of the concept of sustainability, (2) an empirical grasp of systems thinking, and (3) a critical understanding of how individuals and modern civilization can shift to a sustainable existence. To achieve these objectives, students are taught about actions, methods, policies, and procedures that can move humanity toward a more sustainable coexistence with other living creatures and the life-sustaining forces of the Earth. This course employs an applied approach to teaching about geography, environmental science/management, and sustainability science that is useful for most academic disciplines. Students develop a set of skills for researching, analyzing, interpreting, presenting, and applying improvements to social and economic systems. Students work on individual and group projects throughout the semester and present the concepts of their work through verbal, visual, digital, and poster modalities.

Typically, the first half of the semester is focused on defining the three pillars of sustainability, discussing some sustain-

ability challenges facing society (e.g., overconsumption of natural resources, climate change, and overpopulation), and introducing tools (e.g., poster design, PowerPoint) that students will use to complete their individual and group projects. In addition to absorbing information from lectures, videos, and the online textbook, students are expected to elaborate on certain sustainability concepts by writing critical thinking essays that require each student to research an aspect of sustainability, define the challenges it represents, and discuss possible solutions and changes needed to improve a "system" that has been degraded and/or depleted. Each student is required to engage in a "community engagement" event or activity, because community engagement is an effective tool in teaching students about environmental justice, economic justice, and social justice (Clark & Button, 2011). Community engagement is integral for students as they work on their two group projects. Each student group consists of three or four students that work together for the entire semester. The first group project was to require each student group to develop and host an hour-long Earth Week event on the Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) campus. To do this, each group was to collaborate with a CCSU student group, off-campus community nongovernmental organization (NGO), and/or local and/or state governmental agency. The second group project was to require them to create and present a poster about an environmental sustainability challenge at the Annual Global Environmental Sustainability Symposium on the CCSU campus.

COVID-19 Challenges for Conversion to Campus-based Research Projects

In March 2020, COVID-19 had reached the CCSU campus, and all courses immediately switched to online modalities. By the end of March, the university had instituted a prohibition on all faculty and student travel and on-campus group gatherings and events. Students were required to vacate all the residence halls, and faculty were not permitted to return to campus until further notice. For the Introduction to Sustainability course, as with all courses at CCSU, this meant all course materials, activities, lectures, in-classroom activities, and other components now had to be converted to online formats. Choices were limited to facilitating the course online and live during the normal scheduled class time (i.e., synchronous) or online but not live (asynchronous). The best option for this course was to conduct the remainder of the semester asynchronously. This afforded students the greatest flexibility to deal with all the challenges they faced in order to complete the semester successfully. This decision was driven by an understanding that many students do not own a computer or other device that would enable them to access course content easily and instantaneously. As a result, significant changes were implemented to the Introduction to Sustainability course assignments and community engagement components.

All community SL activities had to be eliminated or altered. For the "community engagement" assignments, this meant altering the expectations from in-person events and activities to online opportunities. Now, students would be required to attend an online webinar, conference, workshop, TED Talk, or similar activity. The two group projects were also impacted. The most significant impact to this course was the elimination of the group project that entailed the students collaborating with NGOs, governmental agencies, or community groups to host an Earth Week event on the CCSU campus. With the loss of this component of the class, students were not afforded the benefit of learning how to organize a community event centered around the tenet of public action to educate students, citizens, and politicians about an environmental challenge and working together to institute corporate and political change to ameliorate an environmental and/or social injustice.

The assignment to create a poster regarding an environmental injustice facing society was retained, but as mentioned earlier, students had no opportunity to deliver their research at a peer-reviewed, professional conference (the Global Environmental Sustainability Symposium). This represents yet another significant loss of course content and lessons to be experienced by the students. The remaining critical thinking essays were retained, and WebEx software was used to conduct online, live discussions with all students in the synchronous mode. This was the one component of the class that was impacted the least. Students were still able to engage in live class discussions, and true transdisciplinary learning was realized by all students and the professor (Clark & Button, 2011).

Because of all the instructional adjustments made to the course, lectures unfolded at a significantly slower pace, resulting in the loss of a substantial amount of academic material. This was a necessary sacrifice to reduce student stress because of mental health, computer and technology, economic, and other challenges while still covering a significant amount of the intended course content, concepts, and outcomes. It is worth clarifying that although the course was completed and students received grades, much content and learning was lost for the students. Teaching this particular course online is far from ideal, and there is no intention of teaching it fully online again unless an emergency situation requires it. However, as a result of the lessons learned, there is potential to teach the course as a hybrid course that provides some material and activities online in combination with a reduced number of in-classroom meetings.

Conclusions

Much can be learned from seeing the range of approaches adopted within environmentally focused service-learning courses. In the examples above, which represent very different courses at very different academic institutions, we can see how an abrupt change such as COVID-19 required innovation, problem solving, and new forms of SL. Despite the differences, three themes emerged across all the cases. One theme explored through our case studies is that abrupt change exposes factors that impact students in different ways and are crucial to consider. These factors, such as race, class, and gender, have been researched as playing significant roles in relation to SL. Although student identities are not central to all our case studies, we recognize the need for future analyses in relation to the changes we identify under COVID-19 and that we anticipate will continue even as the pandemic recedes in severity. A second theme has been that of increasing awareness and incidence of student mental health struggles, related to illness (their own or that of family members), financial challenges, or other changes to living and learning conditions. A third theme undergirding this work is that reflection, a core practice of SL, can on the part of faculty lead to continuous curricular improvement and innovation.

These three themes will undoubtedly continue to be important because COVID-19 has demonstrated in stark terms that accelerated, volatile, and unpredictable change can and will occur on a continuing basis. At the time of this writing, our society remains in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we still struggle in almost all facets of education to offer curriculum in meaningful ways. It is critical for educators to foster interdisciplinary pathways for us to adapt together, to contribute to shared platforms with best practices and lessons learned, and to reflect on ways that we can build resilience in education, from preschool levels all the way through higher education. Reflection and resilience are equally crucial within our students and within us as faculty. How then do we do so, *especially in such difficult times*, given that conditions may improve in the future but will never fully return to "normal"?

As indicated by these case studies, the importance of resilience cannot be overestimated. Resilience of any type includes capacities to avoid harmful impact, reduce harm when it is unavoidable, and recover readily afterward. The case studies presented in this article illustrate the need for coherent and institutional-level strategies to address unexpected, unpredictable, complex change. Our diverse approaches to teaching in the pandemic illustrate ways we tried to maintain overall goals in the face of extreme change and reflect shared belief that the significance of SL as a didactic model is that it can promote resilience for a learning community as a whole, which is especially valuable in times such as the current pandemic. However, as creative as our individual crisis-based adaptations may have been, what stands out is the need for more collaborative and institutional-level preparedness. The case studies that retreated from community-based SL into campus-based partnerships were effective and pedagogically sound, but likely left community needs unmet as an unintended consequence. Similarly, shifting from in-person and off-campus SL with community partners to remote learning does not eliminate the possibility of SL work, but it requires considerable forethought and planning and proved nearly impossible to achieve under emergency conditions. It is clear that teaching postpandemic will be altered and that need for innovation in how we deliver educational content will not revert to prepandemic conditions. The need for capacity to teach in unpredictable circumstances will not go away as the pandemic recedes. The capacity for managing

and buffering unpredictability is, itself, a key way that educators and their supporting institutions can offer value to students, and addressing complex real-world problems is a cornerstone of the CES model.

The preceding case studies illustrate individualized strategies, opportunities, and innovations to increase resilient capacity. Future research to examine what works and what does not, as well as analyses of student identities, health, and learning goals, will improve and adapt SL models and help to create a new and emerging version of "best practices." Innovating during a crisis is difficult and yields imperfect results, but this process presents an important opportunity and critical need to do so, since some past practices may no longer be available and developing innovative approaches will build the future. Incorporated in whole or part, the innovations described in the preceding case studies aim to contribute to innovating and problem solving, while still meeting the changing and diverse needs of students and communities, as well as the world.

Statement of Research Ethics

Institutional Review Board (IRB) human subjects approval was not required for this article, as no systematic investigation of information obtained by observing or interacting with people, or by collecting and examining any form of identifiable private information about people, was conducted.

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Identifying Key Partners and Stakeholders in Community-Engaged Scholarship Projects

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Abstract

Making sure all key stakeholders are included in community-engaged partnership projects is a difficult but important task. A systematic methodology for identifying partners would help avoid this problem. The double rainbow model is a systematic approach designed to identify all potential partners that can contribute to or might be affected by the project. This model was introduced almost 30 years ago and has been tested, implemented, and found to be effective numerous times. Its development, theoretical bases, and several examples are provided here.

Keywords: community-engaged research, partner identification, partnerships, stakeholders, double rainbow model

In this article we present a model for the crucial but often difficult task of identifying the key constituents and stakeholders for a community-engaged partnership in a systematic and thorough manner. The article addresses the model's theoretical roots as well as its practical development. Three case studies demonstrate its implementation in different disciplines. The article also provides specific guidance for applying and using the model.

Background and Literature

According to Achterkamp and Vos (2007), "Although (the relevance of) stakeholder management receives considerable attention in literature, the problem of actual stakeholder identification is yet unresolved" (p. 3). This challenge confronted investigators at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) after it received a multiyear Community Partnership Program for Health Professions grant from the Kellogg Foundation in the early 1990s to build educational and health promotion partnerships in the Appalachian region of East Tennessee. A subsequent grant expanded this approach to include non-health-science colleges at ETSU. Determining the community partners and stakeholders as well as the university's partners and its stakeholders was one of the first challenges that confronted the investigators. Stakeholder identification was not unique to this project. Although stakeholder identification has been recognized as essential in community-engaged partnerships, proponents rarely go beyond the "usual suspects" (Colvin et al., 2016). Others, however, have even tried to determine a typology for stakeholders (Reed et al., 2009). This challenge led to development of the double rainbow model.

Recognizing the specific parties relevant to a community partnership is essential (Pruitt et al., 2019). These parties include stakeholders from the community and university that can identify issues that enable a partnership to have influence, establish meaningful relationships, and conduct effective, cooperative programs. The parties engaged directly in planning and implementation should also be the ones affected by its outcomes. Parties often organically self-identify during a developmental process. However, a foresightful engagement process can benefit from a systematic approach that identifies potential stakeholders at an early stage to create reciprocal relationships. The double rainbow model was designed recognizing that each partner is typically not monolithic, but instead has complex social networks and organizational structures in its own right. Although each

stakeholder may have differing reasons for participating, each should maintain its own sense of identity as defined by its interests, place, and other characteristics.

The double rainbow model blends the concept of units of identity and solution (Steuart, 1993) with social-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Every individual has multiple social units of identity. Individuals are defined by self-concept, as well as by standard demographic and ethnicity labels (Gorvine et al., 2008). Family and social groups are defined by kinship, social networks, and memberships (Keddie, 2014). Individuals are also community residents defined by geographic proximities and social interactions (Erstad et al., 2009). Finally, individuals are members of a wider society defined by a regional and national culture and affected by social policies and economies (Cooley, 1909). Each of these units of identity can be reframed and named for different sets of stakeholders—individuals, social and work groups, communities of residence and interaction, and the wider societal and organizational structures that Steuart (1993) described. Multiple units of identity can be characterized as units of solution when they act to create relationships and partnerships that lead to effective programs for improvement. Seen in this way, units of identity become units of solution when they participate in program design, operations, and evaluation. Building on images portraying the social-ecological model (NCI, 2005, pp. 10–12), a generic set of titles for different units is displayed as mirror-imaged concentric layers in Figure 1. This double rainbow model is not designed to be hierarchical nor as an exclusive list of stakeholders. It is designed to serve as a group process planning tool to help partners identify multiple stakeholders to participate in a partnership. The double rainbow model encourages analogous thinking across the mirror-imaged concentric rings for each partner. Figure 1 was adapted from McLean and Behringer (2008) to illustrate the model for a partnership between a university and a community.

Further Discussion of Theoretical Underpinnings Using an Example

As an example, partnerships between a university college of education and local schools are frequently formed to place university students in school settings. The school's students and their families can be defined as stakeholders because they usually benefit from the presence of the university students. The students and families also directly contribute to the university student learning professional practice. University and public school faculty represent a mirrored unit of identity. They influence university student experiences through parallel instruction, guidance, and super-

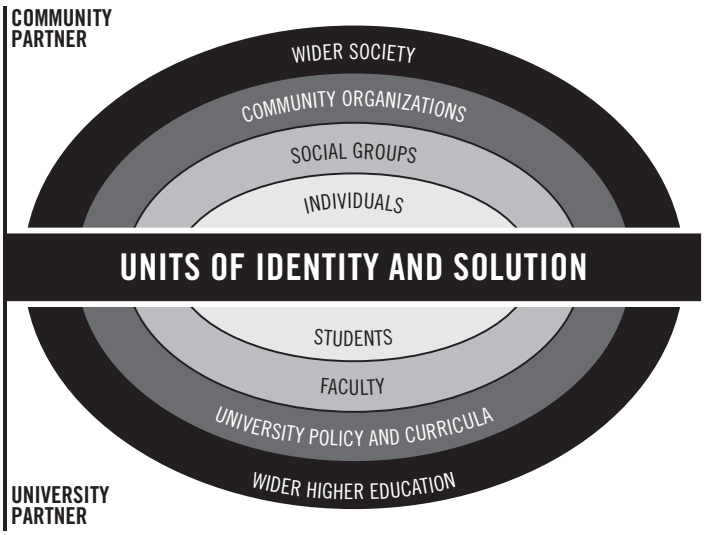

Figure 1. Illustration of Double Rainbow Model for a University–Community Partnership. Adapted from "Establishing and Evaluating Equitable Partnerships," by J. E. McLean and B. A. Behringer, 2008, Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship, 1(1), p. 68. Adapted with permission.

vision responsibilities for student learning. Taken more broadly, a university college of education and local school systems become stakeholders because they jointly control institutional, system, placement, and instruction policies. Finally, wider state and national standards, professional trends, and societal expectations of public education should be recognized as stakeholders. By using the double rainbow model to guide planning discussions, partners are encouraged to recognize all these stakeholders as units of identity and potentially consider each when discussing and implementing a partnering project.

Once identified, partners should consider the relevance and importance of each stakeholder in forming and sustaining a proposed partnership and project. The value of each stakeholder is weighed to recognize the stakeholder's potential contributions to and benefits from the partnership relationship and the proposed project. This step identifies which stakeholders may be defined as potential units of solution (Steuart, 1993). This step can be achieved only through gaining a mutual understanding of each partner's interests and then assessing each stakeholder's short- and long-term interests. This exploratory process discovers mutual and sometimes competing stakeholder interests. The process guides an invitation to become a unit of solution. Not all mirror-imaged units of identity become units of solution, but reviewing each unit of identity while planning partnerships ensures that none are ignored or forgotten.

The model can also be used to prospectively frame evaluation questions (McLean & Behringer, 2004). For example, community-engaged scholars can assess the presence or absence of stakeholders representing influential units of solution. The interactions between mirror-imaged stakeholders can be studied (e.g., student teachers with classroom students and teachers, school and university faculty). Characteristics and factors that act to facilitate or impede successful involvement of important units of solution can be investigated.

From a practical standpoint, the double rainbow model can help avoid a major pitfall often seen in community-engaged partnerships. Using the model can help avoid omitting key collaborators on both sides of the partnership. The model helps participants recognize the broader array of stakeholders who should be involved because they might influence or be impacted by the program. The model also assists in framing evaluation questions and potentially identifying unanticipated outcomes. Although the model does not ensure all stakeholders will be included, it guides the planning process to avoid myopic thinking so that all stakeholders are considered.

Case Studies

The double rainbow model was conceived by ETSU as a tool to ensure engagement of multiple community stakeholders and to identify potential topics for partnership activities. These partnerships were initially funded through grants from the Kellogg Foundation from 1991 through 2002. The double rainbow model proved instrumental in identifying and then engaging stakeholders for these partnerships and was valuable for developing the evaluations of these partnerships (McLean & Behringer, 2008). The model helped us see how stakeholder involvement introduces new valuable university and community resources needed to address issues through partnerships.

Three case studies describe the process and outcome of the use of the model at ETSU. Figures are displayed and roles of important units of solution described for each case.

Case Study 1: Community Partnerships for Health Professions Education

As one of only seven universities selected by the Kellogg Foundation in 1991 for this prestigious grant, ETSU committed to create an interdisciplinary, experiential, community-based curriculum in partnership with two rural, underserved Northeast Tennessee counties (Behringer et al., 1999; Behringer & Richards, 1996). The Kellogg Foundation challenged the university to move medical, nursing, and public health student learning from campus classrooms, laboratories, and large hospitals to rural community settings. The long-term goal was to provide a fulfilling educational experience to encourage graduates to choose their future practice in rural communities and with underserved populations. Like the two rural counties that chose to participate in the program, many rural Central Appalachian communities suffered from health profession shortages and lacked primary preventive health services. The community partners saw their involvement as addressing both short- and long-term needs. The innovative 13-course

Rural Track curriculum developed by a joint university–community curriculum committee, tested from 1992 through 1997, has subsequently been sustained with university resources as a 2-year interdisciplinary continuity experience for cohorts of students from an expanding number of colleges.

Findings

The double rainbow model's generic descriptors helped identify stakeholders, define units of solution, and understand the potential breadth of the community partnership.

Groups (University and Community). To turn parts of a traditional campus-based health sciences curriculum into one built upon resources of rural communities, partners required lengthy, extensive, and rigorous engagement. A few brave and creative faculty joined the Kellogg Rural Track curriculum committee. Community members were appointed by county program advisory boards. Members included an array of community stakeholders from schools, local government, senior centers, churches, hospitals, home health agencies, public health, and local businesses. The resulting curriculum was negotiated with often-skeptical college-specific curriculum committees. Over time, the value of these stakeholders as units of solution became apparent, and their role in educating the next generation of physicians, nurses, and public health professionals was recognized as innovative and effective in reaching the long-term program goals.

Organizations (Community). The two partnering counties were among the economically poorest in Tennessee. Both were intensely interested in beginning university faculty practices and student teaching in the county to help alleviate the shortage of care and to stabilize health services. The county governments and rural hospitals contributed their limited resources to support space for student learning centers, overnight accommodations (when the medical school added a 2-month 3rd-year residential community medicine clerkship to the curriculum), and primary care office space for university physicians' and nurse practitioners' practices.

Individuals (University). Dubbing themselves rural pioneers, students who enrolled in the curriculum saw themselves as important stakeholders in the partnership. Students were intensely involved in curricular evaluation and continuous improvement activities. Many who voluntarily chose to participate in the Rural Track were from rural and Appalachian backgrounds. They were imbued with a personal sense of obligation to serve, a willingness to participate in experiential learning, and a desire to bond with members from the rural communities. They collaborated with county advisory boards as a new highly visible unit of solution to promote attention to healthy living.

Individuals (Community). As part of the discussion about the partnership's mutual contributions and benefits (Behringer et al., 2018), community partners committed to encourage county residents to utilize new university health services and participate in community health projects that were planned, conducted, and evaluated by county advisory boards with student teams.

Institutional (University). The community partnership and the experiential, interdisciplinary curriculum became a very visible asset in recruiting students, faculty members, and administrative leaders. This interest was achieved because university leaders continually promoted the importance of institutional community responsiveness. Mission statements were amended, the president and deans publicly acknowledged partnership activities, and internal policies like those encouraging promotion and tenure committees to recognize community-engaged scholarship were adopted.

Wider Environment (University). Among the worries expressed by university leaders was a potential negative response from conservative-leaning accreditation agencies. The efficacy of a community-based pedagogy was a particular concern. However, ETSU documented positive outcomes of student performance in national examinations, new graduate competencies in community health and communication, and measures of student appreciation for the curriculum that would prepare them to address rural health shortages. Powerful external advocates emerged, including the Kellogg Foundation, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and local and state elected officials. These allies were critical units of solution that shared institutional success stories over time. Figure 2 shows a double rainbow model for this case study. The actual units of solution are displayed in place of the generic units of identity.

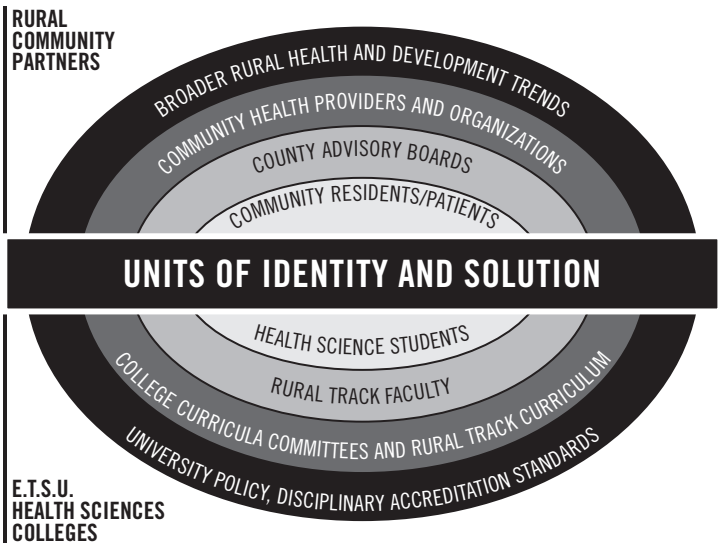

Figure 2. Double Rainbow Model for University Health Professions Community Partnership

Anticipated and Unexpected Outcomes

One strongly desired community outcome of the partnership was reduction of the long-term threat posed by the persistent health professional shortages in rural Appalachia. Despite continuing challenges of job loss and population out-migration, the two partnering counties, with the university as a partner, were able to avoid rural hospital closures by maintaining a strong primary care services base (Goodrow et al., 2001). Supported by the continuous presence of university students who conducted primary prevention projects with county advisory boards, health became a broader community focus, and county health status statistics improved (Behringer & Richards, 1996). The partnering approach learned through this Kellogg grant became a living and lasting institutional ethic. ETSU sustained Rural Track beyond foundation funding, and it continues to be a successful recruitment attraction for students, faculty, and administrators. Strong community partnerships enabled ETSU to attract significant research and service dollars that addressed topics of concern identified by community partners like cancer, diabetes, obesity, and substance abuse. Faculty members generated a wide array of academic papers largely based upon the institution's interdisciplinary, community-based partnership approach. The community satisfaction in the partnership enabled expansion of the approach as noted below.

Case Study 2: Engaging the University with the New and Growing Regional Hispanic Community

A later Expanding Community Partnerships grant from the Kellogg Foundation (Behringer et al., 2004) provided an opportunity for non-health-sciences colleges at ETSU to initiate or strengthen their interdisciplinary, community-based learning through community partnerships. The grant enabled expansion to four rural counties as partners. A small grant process was designed that initiated 44 different community-based curriculum projects. A short proposal was required from an interdisciplinary faculty team with at least one community partner from the counties. Each project proposed to change existing curricula to integrate new community-based interdisciplinary learning objectives to address a community-identified issue. The advisory board structure ensured identification and involvement of community stakeholders. Advisory boards were hosted on campus visits by university leaders. These boards then organized reciprocal van ride visits to introduce their communities to interested university faculty. The boards met monthly to generate project ideas, identify community interests, and, with support of university leaders, find appropriate university partners. Advisory board representatives and university college deans met monthly to continuously discover and explore new community and university stakeholders. As partners developed small grants, they

used the double rainbow model to define stakeholders, who then became real units of solution for their projects. County boards helped identify community resources, advised university faculty in project development, approved prospective projects, and evaluated outcomes.

Findings

One example of the double rainbow model's value was the partnership between a newly emerging regional Hispanic community and two ETSU departments: the Department of Literature and Language (offering foreign languages) and the Department of Media and Communication (offering journalism). This partnership was committed to publishing *El Nuevo Tennessean*, an annual two-language supplement, with three small-town newspapers. The resulting project was possible only through the combined interests and the skills of all partners. The Hispanic community was interested in university cooperation to help promote a regional recognition of its presence and its positive contributions to the economy and culture. Leaders wanted to prevent anti-immigrant sentiment seen rising in other areas of the country. The small but growing Hispanic community identified development of newspaper stories as a practical strategy to reach this goal. Examples included the stories about a popular restaurant established by one new immigrant family and the cultural importance of soccer within community members' various countries of origin. The university departments wanted student teams to get hands-on cross-cultural learning experiences by collecting, writing, and translating stories and producing the bilingual newspaper supplement.

The tale of the double rainbow model evolved as follows:

Individuals/Groups/Organizations (Community). County advisory boards identified regional Hispanic community leaders. These community members, some of whom were employees in helping professions like health, education, and human services, further identified Hispanic social club members, civic group leaders, and members from multiple churches across a multicounty region who could support this effort. These persons engaged with faculty members and students to identify potential individual and community stories. Faculty–community interaction informally used the model to discover how the regional Hispanic community, with its diversity and richness, could act as an educational partner and resource. Simultaneously, faculty became aware of how broader university connections and resources might help support multiple Hispanic community development interests such as housing, legal, health, and education issues.

Groups and Institutional (University). Faculty members formed an interdisciplinary team. Their departments committed to adopt learning objectives for several courses built on a new experiential community-based pedagogy, which later became a new applied Spanish/community studies minor.

Individuals (University). Faculty recruited students into cross-listed courses in the two departments. Students who sought real-world experience readily enrolled. Students' energy and appreciation for learning in and with the Hispanic community proved their importance as a unit of solution.

Institutional/Wider Environment (University). University leaders recognized the attractiveness of experiential learning among students and the value the partnership brought. The university Language and Cultural Resources Center was established to cement active engagement with the regional Hispanic community as evidence of its mission of being a regionally accountable university.

This analysis was used to construct a visual version of the double rainbow model. It is shown in Figure 3.

Anticipated and Unexpected Outcomes

The success of the bilingual newspaper project became an organizing impetus for Hispanic community leaders to form a new regional group, Puertas Abiertas (Opening the Door). This group sought and received a slot on the regional Community Partnerships Program Governing Board. From there, a multitude of new partnership projects were spawned. The university worked with Hispanic families to encourage further education, then designed recruitment efforts through community colleges and University Admissions. Leaders from the Tri-Cities communities credited the newspaper supplements and Puertas Abiertas with introducing the growing Hispanic community in a positive and nonthreatening way throughout the region. The Puertas Abiertas group cosponsored a

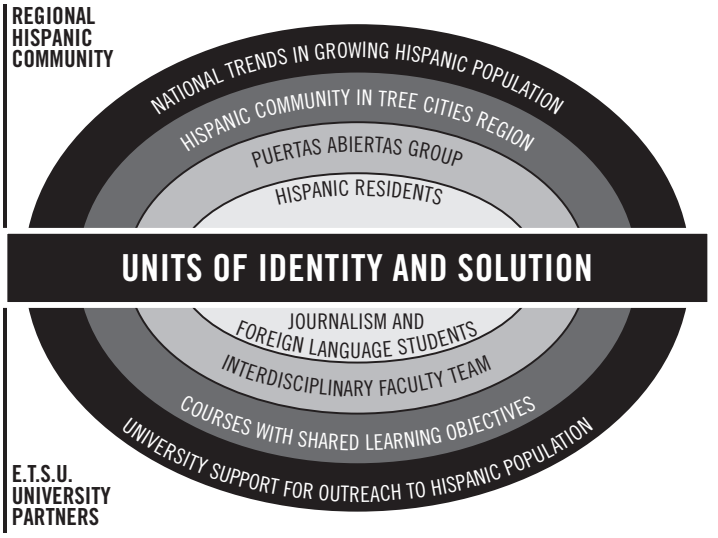

Figure 3. Double Rainbow Model for Hispanic Community and University Partnership

welcome dinner with university leaders for regional business, government, school, and legal representatives (including many university alumni) at which they introduced the Hispanic community's rich diversity, culture, and aspirations to the broader Tri-Cities leadership (King et al., 2004). This approach led to a series of topic-specific community meetings conducted by Puertas Abiertas and supported by university leaders to address Hispanic community concerns (e.g., housing) with regional officials (housing authorities, real estate agents, bankers, and educators).

Case Study 3: Expanding Use of Technology in Schools

Finding ways to adapt to ever-changing new technologies is difficult for more isolated and underresourced areas. Most of those communities are not unaware of the technology gap. Indeed, they are faced with a dilemma: While acknowledging this internal awareness of the gap, they searched for a bridge to external partners with resources to test and adopt new ways. School representatives from one county advisory board identified the need to upgrade their school's assistive technology services for special education students. The Expanding Community Partnership created the bridge through a partnership opportunity with College of Education faculty (Marks et al., 2004). The faculty member who taught teacher preparation courses for special education became interested in testing a new community school-based, experiential teaching approach for the assistive technology course. Previous student placement relationships with the county school system facilitated discussions about stakeholders at planning meetings. An Expanding Community Partnership application was prepared by school personnel and Education faculty. The proposal included purchasing new assistive technology for ETSU students to demonstrate with special education students and teachers at the county school location. Upon completion of the course, the equipment was donated to the school system.

Findings

The small grant conversations employed the double rainbow model to exponentially expand the units of solution well beyond the initial plans.

Individuals (Community). Pleased with the attention and possibility of improving instruction for its special education students, the school system expanded the demonstration project by fully engaging both students and their parents. All recognized an added value of inviting parents to learn about the new technologies and to support student learning. Since little of the new expensive technology was available in the schools, parent excitement was recognized as an important unit of solution.

Individuals (University). University students were critical stakeholders for this

partnership. The assistive technology course was a required course for both undergraduate and graduate students majoring in special education. Students were prepared for the traditional on-campus, 3-hour weekly course. However, changes in course requirements based on this partnership required ETSU students to agree to drive 18 miles to a rural school. That difficulty was weighed against the value of unique hands-on learning and practice with new technologies directly with special education students and their parents. To accommodate the challenge that on-location work presented for university students, the project provided a mileage reimbursement stipend. Graduate/undergraduate student teams visited the school system, where they evaluated and addressed the needs of special education students. Doing so included the identification and application of technologies to assist these students in maintaining their places in regular classrooms. University students were recognized for contributing their time and new expertise while benefiting from greater proficiency with these technologies than even current special education teachers.

Groups and Organizations (Community and University). This case exemplifies parallels between the community schools and university College of Education as units of solution. The school system gave permission for the project and provided space and supervision for students enrolled in the course. In return the schools received additional support for their special education population. Both regular and special education teachers in the school system received instruction in the latest technological advances for serving their students, as well as receiving supplies and equipment the school system would not have been able to afford. Similarly, faculty creativity was reinforced by the College of Education's approval to demonstrate an effective teaching/learning environment for assistive technologies in a rural school. This curricular change enabled the university to graduate far more proficient special education teachers. For both partners, this project became a mark of pride in promoting instructional improvement. The partnership became recognized as a bridge that resulted in reciprocal gains.

Institutional (University). What was learned by the university and schools became input and an impetus for a federal grant to improve technology in the regional schools (McLean, 2001). The partnership was described as a pilot project, and its strategies became major components of a larger grant proposal developed by ETSU faculty and educators for an eight-county area of Northeast Tennessee (McLean, 2001). The grant, titled *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology in Appalachia,* addressed not only preservice teachers, but current in-service teachers in the eight-county region. This grant included assistive technology and instructional technology in the schools, technology leadership for principals, and placement sites for ETSU education students in most of the schools. The focus was preparing preservice and in-service teachers to embed technology into the curriculum to enhance the education process and assist the local schools in achieving that goal.

Wider Environment (Community and University). The Appalachian region of Northeast Tennessee lagged in implementing the use of technology. Based on the school demonstration, the ETSU proposal found an external, federal grant program as a unit of solution to assist with the region's technology needs. Other school systems learned from the experience of the community partnership to collaboratively set a regional goal of gaining more technology savvy by helping to prepare teachers to provide students with those skills. The new knowledge derived from the project ultimately led to reducing the digital divide between Appalachian Northeast Tennessee and the rest of the country, as well as supporting economic development of the region in the future. Using the information about the stakeholders, a double rainbow model graphic was developed for this effort (Figure 4).

Anticipated and Unexpected Outcomes

Several ETSU faculty championed community partnerships that led to, among other things, their coauthoring an explanatory chapter in *Pursuing Opportunities Through Partnerships* (Marks et al., 2004). Through the original Kellogg grant and the subsequent Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology grant, technology was integrated into the teaching of students in the College of Education using hands-on teaching pedagogy and assistive technology, as well as many general instructional technology methods. Further, 11 local school systems benefited from additional technology and support from ETSU faculty and stu-

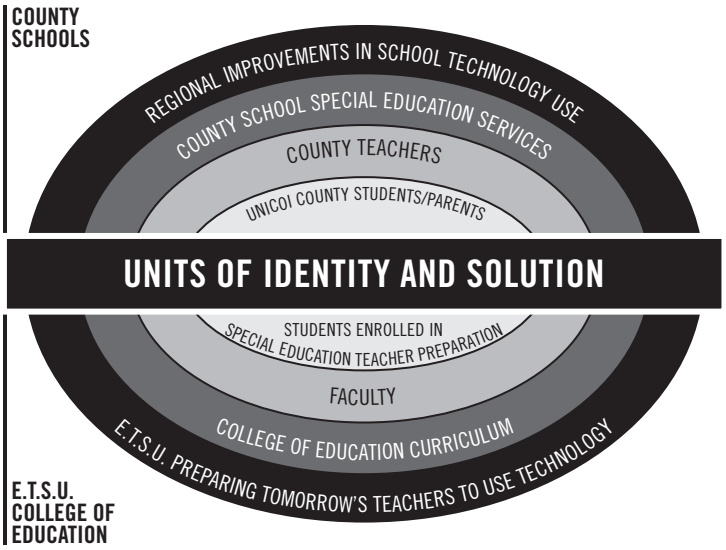

Figure 4. Double Rainbow Model for School System and University Partnership

dents on how to best integrate it into their curriculum.

Another unexpected outcome from this project occurred when the principal investigator of the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology project prepared and taught the first fully online course in the college, which quickly became a model for many other online courses. In a mountainous region such as Northeast Tennessee, remote learning was particularly helpful for currently employed teachers who found travel to a college campus difficult. Since over 80% of the teachers in this region received a degree from ETSU (McLean, 2001), availability of online courses ensured that future teachers in the region would have been taught these skills.

Discussion

The identification of key constituents and stakeholders is crucial for the success of any partnership intended to promote community-engaged scholarship. Without a specific approach, important stakeholders who could potentially contribute to and be impacted by the program are often overlooked. The double rainbow model provides a systematic way to address that problem using a practice-tested model that was developed based on sound theoretical concepts—units of identity and solution and social-ecological theory. Use of the model takes the process one step further toward ensuring reciprocity of any partnership. The model has been successfully used many times and has been enhanced since its inception in 1992. The three varied case studies demonstrate its usefulness in ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were included in the programs.

Multiple unintended outcomes emerged from using the double rainbow model. It helped partners clarify intended target audiences of the programs. Engagement was expanded beyond the obvious stakeholders to more units of solution within community social networks and university structures. For some projects, consideration of units of solution beyond the immediate community and university proved important to promote and sustain the local partnerships. The model reinforced consideration of the contributions and benefits of interdisciplinary interaction within the university and, similarly, multisector involvement within rural Appalachian underserved communities. Perhaps the most important aspect of using the double rainbow model is that it ensured inclusion of key stakeholders from each partner in the decision-making processes.

Use of the model does have limitations. In several instances, partners tried too hard to identify potential stakeholders defined within the generic groups in the model. Planning bogged down over differences in interpretation of the model indicating

whether those stakeholders would add value to the proposed program. Also, as with many group-process tools, a facilitator is often required to initially explain the intent of the model and guide partners through the discussion. Use of the model was seen by some as an extra structured requirement atypical for small grant proposals. Because the model was deployed most frequently at the beginning of partnership development, it relied on input from the original community and university leaders. More diverse input emerged organically through partnering discussions over time and frequently led to clarification or correction of the importance of other stakeholders to the relationships.

The model is easily adapted to different types of engagement and partnerships and applicable to a diversity of community issues and academic interests. It intentionally leads partners to consider many types of contributions from and benefits to stakeholders. It ensures consideration of partners' interests and leads to a shared sense of reciprocity. Another model, the Give-Get Grid, has been extensively used to complement the double rainbow model to further formalize recognition of partners' contributions and benefits (Behringer et al., 2018; King et al., 2004; McLean & Behringer, 2008; Southerland et al., 2013).

The very heart of the model becomes its potential in focusing partner attention on the range and depth of stakeholder engagement that promote longitudinal relationship building. This is the sort of engagement that encourages thinking and actions that extend beyond singular time-limited projects. This approach conforms with the precepts articulated in community-based participatory research (Israel et al., 2013) and contemporary community engagement literature (Hutt, 2010).

Conclusions

Identifying stakeholders in a community-engaged program is difficult. Important stakeholders are often overlooked. The double rainbow model provides a systematic method that enables partners to consider all key stakeholders and engage them as units of solution to address identified issues. The model has been used successfully for almost 30 years in a variety of situations and with a broad diversity of partners. The graphical depiction of the model is a group process tool deployed to facilitate communication, making it more honest, open, complete, and trusting among stakeholders from each partner.

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