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From the Editor…

Shannon O. Brooks

As we publish the first journal issue of 2025, it is interesting to note the heavy focus on Projects with Promise, showcasing early-stage programs and studies that have potential for influencing practice and future research questions. In many ways, this section is a snapshot of the collective imagination of scholars in the community engagement field—what they are pondering and imagining—and how they are taking steps to put these imaginings into action. As such, the articles in this section highlight varied approaches for collaborations between campuses and communities, disparate scholarly approaches for understanding the impact and value of this work, and diverse examples of imaginative practices that can be replicated and built upon by scholars, practitioners, and community partners working collaboratively to address complex issues.

But first, the **Research Articles** section leads off this issue with a study that builds on Sandmann et al.'s (2016) theoretical integrated model. Venter and Holtzhausen propose a practical framework for advancing the praxis of engaged scholarship in higher education through an integrated service-learning praxis (ISLP). This qualitative action research study employs appreciative inquiry methodology with six internationally recognized community-engaged service-learning champions as research participants, all selected for their level of experience, knowledge, and expertise in institutionalizing engaged scholarship at universities. This study is useful in building action steps for two axes of the theoretical model (Sandmann et al., 2016), developing programs for socialization of engaged scholars, and presenting practical steps universities can take to advance support for engaged scholarship.

Next, Matthews et al.'s qualitative research study on the perceived impact of service-learning on student resilience from the perspective of faculty and students is a timely topic receiving renewed attention in the wake of the global pandemic and concerns for university student mental health. For this study, the authors held a series of focus groups with faculty and students better to understand which features of service-learning may explain positive influences on student resilience. Five key themes emerged from this study that can enhance instructor practice in employing elements of high-quality service-learning to support student resilience.

In another contribution to understanding the student dimension of service-learning, Guerrieri and Zambrano examine student motivations for engagement in an international medical service program. This mixed-methods pilot study of the Global Brigades program at the University of San Diego explores the development of a critical reflection tool, the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM). The authors expand upon the multilayered and complex dynamics of international service-learning, voluntourism, and faith-based medical mission trips, and the need for understanding student motivations to foster ethical international engagement. The PEMM is a promising and versatile tool for institutions and organizations looking to understand student motivations for participating in a range of community engagement activities.

The Research Articles section concludes with a study of how service-learning practice can impact student learning in the context of an electronic service-learning (e-SL) course and from the perspective of community partners. Abenir et al. explore how communities perceive students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-SL courses at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, offering more community partner insights on the efficacy of these programs and approaches.

As mentioned, **Projects with Promise** are early-stage descriptions of projects and partnerships that describe preliminary research and evaluation, plans for sustainability, and lessons learned for others to emulate. In this issue, a range of projects are featured that explore professional de-

velopment for community-engaged writing, critical reflection, the potential of an experiential doctoral internship program, the impact of a community mapping program, and outreach and engagement programs focused on critical community issues.

Leading off this section, Doberneck et al. discuss a partnership between the university writing center and the outreach and engagement office at Michigan State University (MSU) that has created a continuum of professional development for community-engaged writing and publishing. The authors delve into literature related to publishing challenges and successful professional development strategies, provide examples of the varied support programs offered at MSU (from online resources to writing retreats), and present lessons learned based on a multiyear evaluation of a variety of professional development offerings. This article offers evidence-based practical strategies for campuses seeking to create professional development support for faculty across a variety of career tracks, and for academic staff interested in bolstering their skills and expertise in writing and publishing community-engaged scholarship.

Nelms et al.'s study of students enrolled in education courses examines how critical reflection related to critical service-learning experiences can transform beliefs around social justice equity work with communities as well as provide preparation for the workforce. This study offers examples of the impact of critical reflection related to student mindsets and whole person development and demonstrates the importance of faculty reflexivity in the process of designing and teaching critical service-learning courses.

Cialdella et al.'s article explores an internship program sponsored by the University of Michigan's Graduate School focused on doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences. The study explores the impact of experiential learning, an underdeveloped aspect of graduate student career and scholarly development. Through a 4-year qualitative analysis of journals written by students involved in a summer internship program, the authors explore the impact of these experiences on professional skill development, transferable skills, identity as researchers, and next steps for career development for doctoral students. The next article by Young et al. is unique in that it is written collaboratively by a student, com-munity members, and faculty to describe an immersive learning experience at Ball State University that engaged in a community mapping project with the Whitely neighborhood in Muncie, Indiana, a predominantly African American community. This community had limited cartographic material available that focused on its history and culture, making it a perfect opportunity to capture information on the past and future of this neighborhood. This project represents an initial foray into a longer-term collaboration to map important aspects of Whitely's history and culture and can be instructive for other communities and campuses seeking examples of successful immersive learning, mapping, and community engagement projects.

This section wraps up with two community-based projects and partnerships focused on suicide and substance misuse prevention and community resiliency. Antunez et al.'s early-stage evaluation of a suicide and substance misuse prevention program was part of a university-school partnership involving college students and students in both traditional and alternative high schools and offers practical lessons for structuring and conducting effective university-school partnerships. Likewise, McConnell and Garrison present phases one and two of a four-phase project, a case study about developing and implementing the Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Project, a community-based participatory research project employing photovoice methodology to capture underrepresented voices and their viewpoints and experiences with community challenges.

Reflective Essays are thought-provoking examinations of emerging questions, trends, and issues in community engagement. In this issue's featured essay, Lewis et al. explore a 7-year collaborative, Indigenous-led community-based participatory research project (ILCBPR). The authors weave their stories and experiences together in the narrative, illuminating the Indigenous practice and concept of "drinking tea" as a metaphor for listening to the priorities of partners and a method for reframing and guiding the CBPR process. This essay is intended as a guide to other Indigenous-led partnerships and projects that engage Indigenous peoples and communities; however, lessons learned from "drinking tea" can also be applied by community-engaged scholars in many other research settings.

Finally, JHEOE's **Book Reviews** section ex-

amines recent volumes that may inform community-engaged research and practice. Leroux reviews D'Ignazio and Klein's (2020) *Data Feminism*, highlighting the alignment between data feminism's principles and principles of community engagement. Simpson reviews Kisker's (2021) *Creating Entrepreneurial Community Colleges: A Design Thinking Approach*, exploring the benefits of design thinking for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset to assist community colleges as they navigate financial and external pressures. In their review, Simpson suggests that entrepreneurship should be viewed not only as a tool or mindset, but also should be considered a crucial component of the community college mission in order to weather the future.

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A Practical Framework for a Flourishing Praxis of Engaged Scholarship in Higher Education Institutions

Karen E. Venter and Somarie M. Holtzhausen

Abstract

This empirical article offers a practical framework to complement Sandmann's integrated theoretical model for advancing the praxis of engaged scholarship in higher education institutions. The article introduces a newly developed integrated service-learning praxis (ISLP) approach, which served as a research context for constructing the practical framework. The ISLP approach combines community-engaged service-learning as pedagogy, appreciative inquiry as a research-and-change model, and the strategies of appreciative leadership to deliver praxis. Through a qualitative action research design, six international community-engaged service-learning champions participated in an appreciative inquiry to coconstruct the practical framework. They drew on their reflective practice and expertise within a study grounded in generative and social constructionist theories. The resulting practical framework includes actions to advance the careers of future engaged scholars and to guide the institutionalization of engaged scholarship.

Keywords: appreciative inquiry, engaged scholarship, community–higher education partnerships, integrated service-learning praxis, community-based participatory research

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Across the globe, higher education institutions (HEIs) have institutionalized community engagement and, by implication, community-engaged service-learning (CESL; Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023; Shumer et al., 2017; Stanton et al., 1999). The practice of CESL can promote professional learning and development and, consequently, the praxis of engaged scholarship (Boyer, 1996/2016; Erasmus, 2014; Ma & Tandon, 2014; Sandmann et al., 2016; Shumer, 2017; Wood, 2020; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

Using CESL is embedded as a transforming pedagogy to develop engaged scholarship in community–higher education partnerships (CHEPs)(Duley, 2017). The pedagogy of CESL integrates meaningful service with instruction or teaching and reflection for learning. This type of integration enables whole-person (holistic) learning and teaches active citizenship to achieve social justice and community development for a more humane world (Duley, 2017; Stanton et al., 1999).

However, continuous change in society and higher education poses challenges for the sustainability of CESL practice, such as a lack of structural and institutional support that could inhibit engaged scholarship's praxis (Sandman et al., 2016). Sandmann et al. developed a theoretical integrated model (hereafter called the *theoretical model*), which proposes two axes to advance engaged scholarship as the socialization of engaged scholars/faculty and the institutionalization of engaged scholarship. The theoretical model also has four significant integrative elements, comprising (1) academic homes and development areas of graduate education for preparing future engaged scholars around the scholarship of engagement; (2) academic departments as the locus for engaged scholarly practice and understanding of institutional change toward sustainable support of engaged scholarship; (3) institutions, the intersection of scholarly practice

of engagement and institutional structures; and (4) disciplinary associations to shape both promising practices of institutional engagement for engaged scholars and institutional structures and administration for defining the role and practice of engaged scholars. However, this model lacks a practical framework of actionable steps to deliver praxis.

Intending to address this gap, the article introduces a newly developed integrated service-learning praxis (ISLP) approach (Venter, 2022). Promising the flourishment of engaged scholarship in CHEPs, the ISLP approach served as a research context for constructing the practical framework to complement the theoretical model. The newly developed ISLP approach combines the pedagogy of CESL, the strengths-based action research genre of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Stavros & Torres, 2018), and appreciative leadership strategies for delivery of praxis (Whitney et al., 2010). "Praxis" in this context refers to the "interdependence and integration—not separation—of theory and practice, research and development, thought and action" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2009, p. 113). Additionally, praxis within the appreciative inquiry unlocks the thoughts and actions of the oppressed so that they can liberate themselves with a pedagogy of hope to create a common good for all in greater society (Freire, 1970/1993, 1994; Wood, 2020).

We used appreciative conversations driven by a 5D process protocol—define, discover, dream, design, destiny/delivery—to engage with six international CESL champions for data generation. The practical framework drew on their shared best practices for advancing engaged scholarship, after exploring the main research question: How can the ISLP approach enable the flourishment of engaged scholarship in CHEPs?

The following sections share the literature review, action research methodology, and findings that offer the practical framework and discussion. The article concludes with a reflection on learning from the findings, namely the practical framework, as well as the research's significance, limitations, challenges, and contradictions.

Literature Review

The literature review clarifies relevant concepts and the context underpinning the research: community engagement, community, engagement and community-engaged scholarship, ISLP approach, CHEPs, CESL, appreciative inquiry, and appreciative leadership.

This article follows the definition of the Carnegie Foundation, which describes "community engagement" as "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023). Community engagement aims at enriching teaching–learning and research, and fosters education about citizenship, democracy, and social responsibility to address societal issues for the public good.

The literature explains that "community" refers to a group of people united by at least one common characteristic, such as geography, shared interests, values, experiences, or traditions (Tandon & Hall, 2015). Being part of a community provides a "sense of belonging" (Tandon & Hall, 2015, p. 1) in relationships and can also refer to a place or an institution, such as a university.

Engagement involves academics who build relationships, for example, in a CHEP with a community to accomplish shared goals. This engagement can include learning, researching, knowledge sharing, or creating new courses with the community. Engagement can include educational interaction with community practitioners and social innovation with students to address societal challenges.

When community–university engagement is research-driven, the engagement leads to community-engaged scholarship. Many definitions have evolved from the original model of community-engaged scholarship (Boyer, 1996/2016). Tandon and Hall (2015) provided a clear and concise definition: "Community engaged scholarship is the teaching, discovery, integration, application, and engagement that involves faculty members in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community" (p. 13). Tandon and Hall added to this definition that "community engaged scholarship" should be characterized by "clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, reflective critique, rigor and peer-review" (p. 13). Therefore, community-engaged

scholarship embraces an integrated, reciprocal, and mutual two-way exchange of resources (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

Serving as the research context, while focusing on CESL as an enabler of an integrated engaged scholarship, the newly developed ISLP approach (Venter, 2022) draws from the first author's self-reflection on best CESL practices, working as a doctorate engaged scholar and head of a CESL division at a South African HEI. Some HEIs still tend to practice teaching–learning, research, and community engagement in silos (Wood, 2020). In contrast, the newly developed ISLP approach offers to integrate these functions by combining CESL (Duley, 2017; Stanton et al., 1999), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Stavros & Torres, 2018), and appreciative leadership (Whitney et al., 2010)—for flourishment of engaged scholarship in CHEPs (Venter, 2022).

Like CESL, the newly developed ISLP approach requires a CHEP for implementation. In South Africa, CHEPs involve a triad partnership model representing three sectors: communities, HEIs, and service (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013). Within this triad partnership, engaged scholars share mutual learning with others from diverse cultures and disciplines (Shumer et al., 2017; Stanton et al., 1999). Long-term partnerships are underpinned by four practices: having guiding principles (shared accountability, equality, equity, responsibility, reciprocity, and respect); quality processes (communication, evaluation, and feedback); accomplishment of meaningful outcomes (flourishment for the common good and well-being of society, the economy, and the environment); and transformative experiences (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). Before starting the collaboration in a CHEP, engaged scholars should agree on logistics, such as drafting an agreement, clarifying a shared set of values (e.g., appreciation, integrity, honesty, openness, and mutual trust) and philosophy, vision, mission, goals, roles, and responsibilities, to ensure the sound implementation of the ISLP approach.

The practice of CESL has made significant contributions to the implementation of engaged scholarship (Furco & Root, 2010; Shumer, 2017; Stanton et al., 1999), as described in the following definition by Bringle and Clayton (2012; adapted from Bringle & Hatcher, 1996):

A course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility. (pp. 114–115)

The practice of CESL involves a bidirectional integration of "thinking and acting, linking service to the community while reflecting on experiences in a conscious and disciplined way . . . as a pattern for lifelong learning" (Ramsay, 2017, p. 46). Thus, the ISLP approach finds structure in the pedagogy of CESL, through which it aligns with learning theories that emphasize reflective learning, such as constructivism, experiential learning, progressive education, self-efficacy, social justice, and action research. These pedagogies advance the development of the praxis of engaged scholarship (Stanton et al., 1999). Additionally, principles for good practice guide engaged scholars to respect CESL activities that allow those in the community with learning needs to define their needs; engage people in responsible and challenging actions to promote the common good; and articulate service and learning goals for all stakeholders involved in CESL partnerships (Sigmon, 2017).

As with CESL, the ISLP approach is rooted in three foundational pillars: service or action to achieve the common good; engagement in civil society; and moral, value-driven experiential learning. Therefore, the ISLP approach demands infinite reflection on service or action, to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and community dynamics and achieve personal growth and a sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, the ISLP approach shares three common strands with action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Both designs involve reflection on service or action to enable learning from experience; have the practical aim to cocreate positive change in society; and support collaborative learning and inquiry to develop praxis. As mentioned previously, the newly developed ISLP approach combines CESL as pedagogy with the appreciative inquiry methodology in pursuit of praxis.

Appreciative inquiry is a contemporary, strengths-based genre of action research that is primarily applied in business environments. As it is embedded in positive psychology (Fredrickson, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011), appreciative inquiry encourages strengths-based organizational research, development, and change management (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Appreciative inquiry identifies best practices and enables designing and implementing development plans. For example, research participants who engaged in an appreciative inquiry on the topic of global sustainable development generated solutions for related challenges in the so-called triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015; Whitney et al., 2010). The most practical definition of appreciative inquiry involves

> cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organisations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives life to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 3)

Also forming part of the ISLP approach, the continuous practice of appreciative inquiry can encourage engaged scholars to develop the five appreciative leadership strategies: inquiry, illumination, inclusion, inspiration, and integrity (Whitney et al., 2010). When applied in CHEPs, these appreciative leadership strategies can guide the creative potential of engaged scholars to cocreate knowledge that can effect change. These strategies help to develop character strengths, such as confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and performance, to "make a positive difference in the world" (Whitney et al., 2010, p. 3). The strategies of appreciative leadership are described by creative phrases, indicated in italics. First, to develop the *wisdom of inquiry*, engaged scholars should ask positive and powerful questions; using the *art of illumination* requires an engaged scholar to focus on the best practices that other engaged scholars deliver in CHEPs. By applying the *genius of inclusion*, engaged scholars can collaborate to cocreate actions that improve future practice. To demonstrate the *courage of inspiration*, engaged scholars can awaken a creative and positive spirit of scholarship in CHEPs. To follow the *path of integrity*, engaged scholars

can make wise choices about their practice that contribute to the common good of all. The excellent practice of CESL scholars who have championed an engaged scholarship can portray "practical wisdom" (Duley, 2017, p. 33). In turn, mentorship by CESL champions can spawn new champions in triad CHEPs (Venter et al., 2015).

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative action research design by performing an appreciative inquiry, following a transformative paradigm that argues for democratic, socially just, action-oriented knowledge cocreation in partnership (Mertens, 2015; Wood, 2020).

When using appreciative inquiry, the action research is rooted in the learning theories of social constructionism and generativity (Bushe, 2007; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Gergen, 2015; Gergen & Gergen, 2008; Grieten et al., 2017; Ludema & Fry, 2008; Stavros & Torres, 2018; Zandee & Cooperrider, 2008). *Social constructionism* involves the idea that a social system, such as a group of engaged scholars, collectively creates its reality. In turn, *generativity* involves the collective discovery and cocreation of new things, thereby positively altering a collective future. These two learning theories provide a significant theoretical grounding for understanding the coconstruction of knowledge and the importance of social context in shaping best practices and practical implications for engaged scholarship.

The appreciative inquiry not only allowed for the integration of theory (i.e., the knowledge shared by the participants) and practice (research into practice; Reed, 2007), but also broadened the scope of research, enabling the convergence of "theory, measurement, design and practice" (Bringle et al., 2013, p. 342).

The authors purposively selected six internationally recognized CESL champions as participants. This study's inclusion selection criteria of the international CESL champions comprised expertise in theory, practice, and research in the CESL field and involvement in institutionalizing engaged scholarship at HEIs. Four of the CESL champions (males; Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5) are recognized as renowned senior CESL pioneers who started the CESL movement in the United States of America (Stanton et al., 1999). To contribute to the rigor and relevance of the study, the profiles of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Research Participants

Participant	Gender, ethnicity	Age group	PhD—discipline	Geographic
1	Male, White	70–80	Education	USA
2	Male, White	70–80	Human and organization systems	USA
3	Male, White	60–70	Educational administration and policy	USA
4	Male, White	70–80	Social psychology	USA
5	Male, White	70–80	Community development	USA
6	Female, Asian	50–60	PhD in social sciences	Asia– Pacific

Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5 have retired but still work as senior engaged scholars to date, conducting research and guiding scholars and institutions to advance the CESL field. Participant 3 is a higher education professor, a global CESL network director, and former associate vice president for public engagement at a HEI. His work focuses on advancing the institutional engagement of stakeholders in community–based research, teaching, and learning to advance the public good through mutually beneficial university–community partnerships. In addition, he conducts research on the impacts of engaged scholarship on students, faculty, the institution, and communities. Participant 6 established a CESL center at a HEI based in the Asia–Pacific region and currently works as an associate professor and heads a program at another HEI. She is also a Senior Fellow for CESL at the Centre for Experiential Learning. True to the CESL field, all the participants' cultural foundation is rooted in commitment to social justice, diversity, and inclusivity while focusing on fostering reciprocal university–community partnerships and adapting engaged scholarship to address global challenges toward positive societal impact. Despite the involvement of their diverse disciplines, the participants had a common denominator: a commitment to advancing the praxis of engaged scholarship, and this element contributed to the study's validity (Mertens, 2015).

The ethical committee of the university's Faculty of Education Board granted ethical clearance to conduct the research. The participants were individually invited via email to engage in the appreciative inquiry. We applied ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and fairness/justice by ob-taining their voluntary informed consent (Mertens, 2015, p. 61). Before the onset of the appreciative inquiry conversation, the idea of the newly developed ISLP approach serving as research context was explained to each of the participants.

Ideally, due to its collaborative action research design, an appreciative inquiry requires a process of collective data generation by a group of participants in one setting and employing one–to–one paired conversations among the group members (Cooperrider et al., 2008). However, the entire partnership logistics proved to be a challenge for full participatory engagement due to the demographic distance, differing time zones, and high–profile work schedules of the participants, who were situated across the globe.

As a result, the first author facilitated appreciative inquiry conversations with each of the six participants to obtain their career–life stories for data generation. A 5D appreciative inquiry process–driven protocol—define, discover, dream, design, destiny/delivery—guided the data generation to ensure the validity of the findings.

In Phase 1, the inquiry was defined by the main research question: How can the ISLP approach enable the flourishment of engaged scholarship in CHEPs?

Phase 2, the discovery, explored the participants' positive core: their best practices, values, and strengths, in answer to three prompting subquestions: (1) Share a story about your best practices regarding CESL partnerships; (2) Describe your top two strengths and share an example in your present role as CESL champion, when you have successfully used one of these strengths

in CESL partnerships; and (3) Share the things you value deeply about yourself and successful practice in CESL partnerships.

Phase 3 required the participants to dream by reflecting on the positive core (as identified in Phase 2). The prompting subquestions asked in Phase 3 involved the following: Imagine that we are meeting on this day next year and reviewing the progress made through the practice of the ISLP approach to strengthen professional learning and development in CHEPs. Could you list these envisioned successes?

In Phase 4, the design, the participants had to build on the positive core (as identified in Phase 2) and the collective dream (cocreated in Phase 3), driven by this subquestion: Please share three actions that partners could use for the ISLP approach to flourish professional learning and development in CHEPs.

Phase 5, the destiny of an appreciative inquiry, is an ongoing phase that aims at continuing and sustaining "the dynamic learning cycle into the future" (Grieten et al., 2017, p. 102). Phase 5 identifies how the designed actions can reach the desired destiny of the appreciative inquiry. Hence, Phase 5 can alternatively be referred to as the delivery phase. The subquestion that guided Phase 5 was "Given no constraints, how will you advise current and future CESL champions to implement the ISLP approach to flourish their professional learning and development in CHEPs?"

Regarding data analysis, the appreciative inquiry methodology ideally also requires a collaborative analysis process by all the participants in one setting (Grieten et al., 2017). However, as already mentioned, this aspect of the methodology could not be realized due to partnership logistics. Alternatively, a qualitative thematic data analysis was followed (Mertens, 2015). The first author transcribed and analyzed data under the supervision of two experienced researchers (doctoral study supervisors) and member-checked with each participant via email (Mertens, 2015).

For triangulation of the findings, we integrated the six expert voices of the participants to form a "prism" of collective perspectives (Mertens, 2015, p. 518) and drafted an article. Finally, as Mertens suggested, each participant conducted a peer review of the drafted article for member checking. All the participants agreed on the data analysis and findings while providing collective, constructive feedback (as an appreciated benefit), which we applied toward completing the article.

Findings

We only report on the appreciative inquiry's findings of Phase 4 (Design). As explained, the 5D phases of the appreciative inquiry are built on each other. However, the other phases' findings are reported on elsewhere due to limited space and relevance to the article's title.

The Practical Framework

The findings offer a practical framework to advance the praxis of engaged scholarship (see Figure 1).

As depicted in Figure 1, the theoretical model (Sandman et al., 2016) has two axes (socialization and institutionalization) that form four quadrants which offer aligned academic homes and four integrated overlapping circles of development areas: (1) graduate education for preparing future engaged scholars around the scholarship of engagement; (2) academic departments as the locus for engaged scholarly practice and understanding of institutional change toward sustainable support of engaged scholarship; (3) institutions, the intersection of scholarly practice of engagement and institutional structures; and (4) disciplinary associations to shape both promising practices of institutional engagement for engaged scholars and institutional structures and administration for defining the role and practice of engaged scholars.

The research context of the ISLP approach is beneficial to both axes, for the approach combines a pedagogy (CESL) for scholarly socialization and to practice engaged scholarship; appreciative inquiry as an institutional change model; and the strategies of appreciative leadership to advance both the socialization of engaged scholars and the institutionalization of engaged scholarship.

The findings revealed a practical framework that includes two sets of actions: actions for the socialization of engaged scholars and actions to flourish the institutionalization of engaged scholarship at HEIs.

The actions are set in italics and supported by verbatim quotes from the CESL champions, referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so forth. These actions, the authors' discussion, and confirming literature are presented in an integrated manner.

Figure 1. Practical Framework to Advance Engaged Scholarship in Higher Education Institutions, Complementing the Theoretical Model of Sandmann et al. (2016)
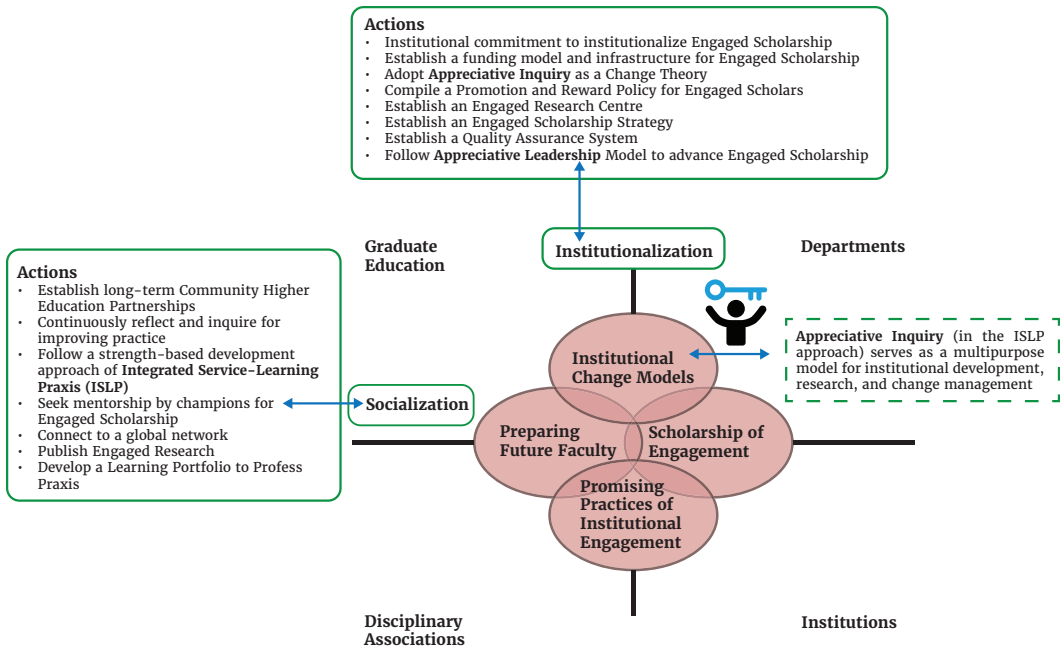
Note. Adapted from "An Integrated Model for Advancing the Scholarship of Engagement: Creating Academic Homes for the Engaged Scholar," by L. Sandmann, J. Saltmarsh, and K. O'Meara, 2016, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 20*(1), 157–174. https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/1264

Set 1: Actions for Socialization of Engaged Scholars

As the first action, Participant 2 suggested that *establishing long-term CHEPs* is necessary to advance the praxis of engaged scholarship. Keeping the intent and environment for engaged scholarship in mind, Participant 2 recommended that "if we are serious about service and development, we must invest in this work with our partners for the long term."

Our engaged scholarly practice tends to become too much of a quick, one-sided student, educational, and personal development offering. Therefore, Participant 2 expressed the following:

> I am concerned that our [CESL] field may be losing its community development focus in the mad rush to institutionalise it in the academy. In this social innovation/entrepreneurship time, there seems to have developed a lack of interest in and focus on the importance of long-term relationships in development and change. Quick in-and-out projects benefit our students and campuses more than communities and skim the surface of what students need to know and understand about community change and development.

In contrast to quick engagement, a long-term commitment requires that HEIs allow for broader CESL practice underpinned by collaboration and partnership values. For this reason, Participant 2 advised that "engaged scholars should return to the roots of CESL to allow for engagement in their surrounding communities." To enable active learning, "engaged scholars should plan how to negotiate with different communities with different ways of thinking and knowing" (Participant 3). A CHEP provides a collaborative learning platform where engaged scholars can learn and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in action to profess praxis.

Suggesting that we move away from once-off projects, Participant 3 specified: "We need to move to the establishment of partnerships, for it serves as an anchor to think about big issues, a broader agenda, goals and objectives to work on together over

an extended period for many years maybe, even decades." In the same vein, Participant 1 voiced: "In a partnership, engaged scholars can learn with and from each other how to address global societal challenges." Participant 4 highlighted the importance of future research on partnerships in CESL, proposing that "scholars should identify cognate theories that can contribute to research on partnerships and demonstrate how these theories can contribute to advance practice." He concluded that "future champions would need to continue stressing theory in research and practice to advance the CESL field." Participant 6 underlined the value of trust development in partnerships, expressing that "trust and understanding form the partnership's foundation."

Societal challenges are currently addressed by the proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More specifically, Goal 17 speaks to partnerships for addressing the goals (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Engagement can become the means to and goal of engaged scholarly learning (Shulman, 2002). Engaged scholars should also develop the courage to enter a "constructive enlarging engagement" (Daloz et al., 1996, p. 63) with the community—across the margin of their tribe of comfortable isolation within HEIs or the community. Such engaged practice allows scholars to continuously reflect on and inquire about their service experiences.

As the second action, to *critically reflect and inquire continuously*, both Participants 1 and 2 indicated that "engaged scholars could find an opportunity to learn how to develop" (Participant 2). Participant 1 specified that "research projects should require scholars to reflect critically and ask them to think about how they gain wisdom." For learning to be transformative, critical self-reflection (habits of the mind) is needed for the specific attitudes and assumptions engaged scholars may hold. Such reflective practice is needed to enable higher order thinking, which, in turn, is required for making wise decisions that facilitate the delivery of praxis (Shulman, 2002; Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

Regarding the third action, Participant 3 proposed to *follow a step-by-step asset-based development approach* to flourish the praxis of engaged scholarship. Participant 3 further advised that "active, engaged scholars should know that true reciprocity is the core principle of engaged scholarship and that we should value it." In this sense, "all engaged scholars in CHEPs have something they can contribute to guide engaged scholarship" (Participant 3).

In line with reciprocity, appreciative inquiry (within the ISLP approach) can motivate engaged scholars to cocreate knowledge that can address societal challenges and bring positive change. When scholars in CHEPs use appreciative inquiry, they do so on the assumption that the topic they study can grow in the direction of the change they desire (called the heliotropic principle; Cooperrider et al., 2008). Therefore, Participant 3's vision for developing dynamic scholarly praxis confirms the appreciative intent embedded in the ISLP approach: "To be successful, everyone must contribute. We need to tap into all the partners' talents, experience, knowledge, and expertise."

However, Participant 3 warned engaged scholars to avoid establishing the approach from an advanced state. They should be aware that "a developmental learning process might take many years to cultivate because high-quality practice requires adequate skills development" (Participant 3). Participant 3 recommended "that engaged scholars develop the ability to balance the complex convergence of diverse skills, attitudes, and perspectives shared by various stakeholders in CHEP, and that, in practice, that is part of the learning." Participant 3 further advised: "It would just need time, and they must navigate and swim in that sea of uncertainty for a while before knowing how to swim well and navigate the ocean because it could feel like drowning." Participant 2 confirmed the importance of development, asserting that "unless our institutions are truly committed to community development, we cannot hope to teach our students how this works." This participant added that "engaged scholarship should return to its roots, which came from a commitment to engaging the resources of HEIs (students, faculty, other) to assist with community change and development."

As the fourth action, Participant 6 pointed to the importance of *seeking mentorship* from CESL champions, stating: "I hope that in the future, CESL champions can work together to promote the values we embrace." Additionally, mentorship by champions for engaged scholarship is required during the implementation of the ISLP approach.

Knowledge-sharing in CHEPs can provide a platform for engaged scholars to learn in action. Participant 5 advised: "The learning content could include elements of the history, heritage, practices, principles, and future of the approach." Participant 6, furthermore, suggested, "Champions of engaged scholarship should connect globally to promote ethical values for training the next generation."

The fifth action guides engaged scholars to focus on challenges and *connect within a glocal network* from local to global contexts, sharing best practices. Both Participant 5 and Participant 1 suggested that a network can support engaged scholarly learning and development, with Participant 5 stating: "There is a global world now for CESL, so present your work at conferences and network in global community engagement networks." Participant 1 voiced the "need for a communication network for sharing information and best practices on engaged scholarship."

These networks include the Campus Compact Network, the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement, the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities, Global Service Learning (globalsl.org), the Higher Education Service Learning Listserv, and the Global University Network for Innovation. In addition, by using global networks and conferences to share best practices, the union of strengths can do more than merely help engaged scholars to perform in practice; it can transform their practice and help them to move into large-scale applications of engaged scholarship. By applying the strengths-based ISLP approach, engaged scholars can move away from a problem-based approach and address trauma, anger, and fear (Grieten et al., 2017). They can then apply the strength of mindfulness to develop resilience (Fredrickson, 2003). Such networking can elevate, magnify, and refract strengths (Cooperrider, 2012; Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011; Grieten et al., 2017) and flourish engaged scholarship.

The sixth action, namely, to *publish engaged research*, was confirmed by Participant 4, who suggested that "more work on best practices of engaged scholarship should be published in journals and books and presented at conferences." Participant 5 confirmed the importance of publication, expressing that "it was important to share projects and principles of what worked and what didn't work."

In addition, there is a need for students and community partners to coauthor publications on engaged scholarship. Participant 4 recommended that "existing publications become information resources that generate improved, good-quality research and promote the generation of better quantitative research on CESL." Therefore, the literature advises that quality research should reflect a convergence of theory, measurement, design, and practice (Bringle et al., 2013). Moreover, conducting research and evaluation studies on the impact and development of CESL should advance its evolution to keep up with the rapid and dynamic global change that characterizes the 21st century (Permaul, 2017). The ISLP approach has appreciative inquiry as a methodology, allowing for reframing evaluation studies (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006). Drawing from its integrative and praxis nature, it seems that the ISLP approach may enable the convergence of all the above recommendations to deliver quality research.

As the seventh action, *developing a portfolio that guides reward and promotion* is essential to capture the hard work involved in learning and the development of engaged scholarship. Participants 5 and 6 indicated that a reformed reward and promotion structure and system is needed to flourish the praxis of engaged scholarship. Participant 6 referred to this need as follows: "We are still not on the main track for ranking because, most of the time, management ignores the practice of service-learning and, by implication, engaged scholarship." Engaged scholars should, therefore, develop a portfolio of work. This approach even makes it possible to "acknowledge the often-hidden positive core of engaged scholars, who specifically engage in the complex and dynamic process of walking the village" (Participant 5).

The literature has long debated the quest to reform promotion, the reward of engaged scholarship, and how to promote and reward engaged scholarship (Giles, 2016; O'Meara et al., 2015; Sandmann et al., 2016). Moreover, many discipline-specific professional organizations have started to include the attribute of public service in their graduate requirements (Sandmann et al., 2016). This requirement provides an opportunity to advance the scholarship of engagement as a required graduate attribute and a criterion for reward and promotion.

In addition to the first set of actions for the socialization of engaged scholars, the practi-

cal framework proposes a second set of actions to institutionalize engaged scholarship.

Set 2: Actions for the Institutionalization of Engaged Scholarship

The participants suggested that the following actions should be taken to enable the institutionalization of engaged scholarship.

As the first action, *genuine institutional commitment to engaged scholarship* was pointed out by Participant 2, who additionally stressed the underpinning intent of community well-being, development, and social justice. Participant 2 stated: "Unless our institutions and programmes are genuinely committed to and engaged with communities to help ensure their long-term health and development, we cannot hope to teach our students how this works." In the same vein, Participant 6 alluded that it is essential "to have the whole university buy-in, for you need to ensure that everyone understands why we need to do an engaged scholarship."

University leadership is crucial in shaping and molding the engaged scholarship agenda. Leadership should inspire, guide, mentor, and support the engagement process by providing the proper orientation for all efforts and activities related to engaged scholarship (Tandon & Hall, 2015). Conversely, if the commitment to engaged scholarship relies solely on the support of leadership, what could happen when leadership changes or leaves? If the commitment to engagement is internalized into the identity and culture as the core of HEI and ingrained into the epistemology of HEI (Schön, 1995), then engaged scholarship can withstand the test of time and change and even lead to an infinite process of new engagements (Shulman, 2002). Nevertheless, institutional change is complex because HEIs encompass a confluence of functions, systems, processes, and structures (Sandmann et al., 2016).

The second action involves *the adoption of a change theory*. Participant 6 advised that "establishing the notion of engaged scholarship should ideally have the buy-in from the whole university for institutionalisation." Participant 5 bravely stated that he "had a mission to change higher education."

The reason for this second action is that engaged scholarship requires whole-system change. Examples of where change is needed are curricula, pedagogies, research epistemologies, ontologies, designs, methodologies, and methods of data collection and dissemination, as well as a change in infrastructure and funding models (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Sandmann et al., 2016; Wood, 2020).

The ISLP approach offers the influential positive change theory of appreciative inquiry to enable such change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Appreciative inquiry promises to deliver changes to institutional culture through a whole-system approach. Moreover, as a genre of action research, it fits the new epistemology required for the praxis of engaged scholarship (Schön, 1995).

The third action requires the *development of an engaged scholarship policy*. Participant 6 suggested:

> The university should align an engaged scholarship policy with development policies on international, national, provincial, and local levels and with the institutional vision, mission, and strategy for practice, as well as related teaching-learning, research, and governance policies. The policy should address adequate resources, infrastructure, and funding allocation.

According to Participant 5, this policy should be "supported by clear promotion and reward indicators, which should provide criteria for guiding the praxis of engaged scholarship." Such action can support engaged scholarship across the institution and disciplines and revise institutional culture and structures (Sandmann et al., 2016). By placing engaged scholarship at the core that complements research and teaching functions, HEIs worldwide can become "dynamic forces" for transformation in their societies (Talloires Network of Engaged Universities, 2018).

As a fourth action, Participant 6 suggested *setting up an engaged research center* "for enabling learning and developing engaged scholarship." Coordination and teamwork are essential for collaborative learning and inquiry. Participant 5 proposed that HEIs "establish and fund such a training and research center in the community, driven by the community." In these centers, engaged scholars can "share information, write about it, and learn from one another" (Participant 6). Such shared resources can provide a "new architecture of knowledge that allows co-construction of knowledge

between intellectuals in academia and intellectuals located in community settings" (Hall & Tandon, 2017, p. 17).

Regarding the fifth action, Participant 6 emphasized the importance of *establishing an engaged scholarship strategy*. By emphasizing the undertaking of strategic planning, Participant 6 advised that "we need to have a detailed action plan of what you want to achieve." Because the ISLP approach includes the appreciative inquiry model, it provides an alternative approach to strategic planning. By using the ISLP approach, engaged scholars can make use of the SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and resources or results; Stavros et al., 2003) instead of the usual SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). To ensure effective planning, ample time should be set aside for purposeful and productive meetings. Participant 6 mentioned: "Actions should be well planned, practical, and measurable; therefore, a sound quality assurance system is required."

As the sixth action, Participant 6 recommended *establishing a quality assurance system*, advising "the need to ensure quality in the whole process." Participant 6 underlined three elements needed for adequate quality assurance: "Delivering a high standard for programmes; continuous communication and feedback between faculties and departments and internal and external stakeholders; and acknowledging and supporting the hard work of engaged scholars." Participant 5 further suggested that "leadership can coordinate such praxis at the research centres proposed for the ISLP approach."

For the seventh action, Participant 5 indicated the importance of *following an inclusive leadership model*, "valuing the notion of inclusion and integrity." Participant 1 confirmed the need for this action, "highlighting the values of inclusion and collaboration to make a difference." Since engaged scholars from different sectors and disciplines deliver the praxis of engaged scholarship, an inclusive leadership model, such as appreciative leadership, is required. Literature advises that engaged scholars should broaden their perspectives and think from outside "simply a service-learning orientation" (Permaul, 2017, p. 99)—this is what the ISLP approach aims to achieve when the appreciative leadership strategies of inquiry, illumination, inclusion, inspiration, and integrity are followed (Whitney et al., 2010, pp. 1–2). Appreciative leadership enables interconnection, interdependence, and positive relationship-building, even globally. Combined with the core CESL values of reciprocity, social responsibility, and citizenship, appreciative leadership can contribute to action that achieves social change and creates a balance between the so-called triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit (Whitney et al., 2010).

Discussion

The practical framework complements the theoretical model by providing actionable steps to implement and operationalize the concepts outlined in the theoretical model.

With regard to socialization of engaged scholars, the theoretical model emphasizes the development areas necessary for engaged scholars and institutions, such as graduate education and institutional structures. The practical framework takes these concepts further by outlining specific actions for socializing engaged scholars. Such actions include establishing long-term CHEPs, promoting reciprocity and collaboration, and emphasizing continuous reflection and learning.

The theoretical model highlights the need for institutional commitment and change theory for the institutionalization of engaged scholarship. Complementing the latter, the practical framework offers actionable steps to institutionalize engaged scholarship in HEIs. The actionable steps include developing engaged scholarship policies aligned with institutional vision and strategy, establishing engaged research centers, and implementing quality assurance systems.

The actions for socializing engaged scholars correspond to the quadrant focusing on preparing future engaged scholars, whereas actions for institutionalization align with the quadrant focusing on promising practices of institutional engagement. This alignment ensures a comprehensive approach to advancing engaged scholarship within HEIs.

The practical framework integrates relevant theories, such as appreciative inquiry, to facilitate institutional change and support the practice of engaged scholarship. By incorporating established change theories and leadership models, the framework enhances the effectiveness of the proposed actions

and ensures alignment with the theoretical underpinnings of engaged scholarship.

The theoretical model provides a conceptual understanding of engaged scholarship, and the practical framework translates these concepts into tangible actions. This emphasis on practical implementation enables HEIs to move beyond theoretical discussions and actively promote engaged scholarship through concrete strategies and initiatives.

In summary, the practical framework expands upon the theoretical model by providing actionable steps for socializing engaged scholars and institutionalizing engaged scholarship within HEIs. By aligning with the theoretical axes, integrating appropriate theories, and focusing on actions for implementation, the practical framework aims to flourish the praxis of engaged scholarship within HEIs.

Conclusion

Continuous change in society and higher education may challenge the future sustainability of CESL and its contribution to developing engaged scholarship praxis. Literature recently shared a theoretically integrated model to advance engaged scholarship, offering to prepare engaged scholars for professional development and socialization while fostering the institutionalization of engaged scholarship (Sandmann et al., 2016). However, the theoretical model of Sandman et al. does not include a practical framework for the delivery of praxis. To address this challenge, the article reported on a qualitative action research study—more specifically, an appreciative inquiry—that explored how an ISLP approach in CHEPs can enable the flourishment of engaged scholarship. The significance of the ISLP approach is rooted in integrating CESL, appreciative inquiry, and appreciative leadership strategies.

Drawing from data generated through appreciative inquiry conversations with six pioneering international CESL champions, guided by a semistructured 5D process-driven protocol, a practical framework was coconstructed. The framework complemented the theoretically integrated model (Sandman et al., 2016), providing two sets of actions for a promise to flourishment: the socialization of an engaged scholar, and the institutionalization of engaged scholarship.

The first set of actions offering to guide the socialization of engaged scholars comprises the establishment of long-term CHEPs for reciprocal engagement in high-quality collaborative learning; continuous reflection and inquiry for improving practice; following the ISLP strengths-based development approach to achieving holistic development; seeking mentorship by champions for engaged scholarship to guide and support the implementation of the ISLP approach; connecting to a glocal network for sharing best practices to strengthen and scale up practice; publishing engaged research to legitimize the field; and developing a learning portfolio to portray praxis and achieve reward and promotion.

Concerning the second set of actions for the flourishment of institutionalization of engaged scholarship in HEIs, appreciative inquiry is a multipurpose model for bringing about institutional development, research, and change management. The following set of actions emerged from the findings: Genuine institutional commitment to the institutionalization of engaged scholarship; adopting a change theory (such as appreciative inquiry) to address curricula, pedagogies, research, as well as infrastructure and funding models; development of an engaged scholarship policy; setting up an engaged research center; compiling an engaged scholarship strategy; establishing a quality assurance system; and following an inclusive leadership model (such as appreciative leadership) to advance engaged scholarship.

By employing a qualitative action research design, the study not only explored the experiences and perspectives of participants, but also involved them actively in the coconstruction of the practical framework. This participatory approach to research is valuable in addressing the gap between theory and practice, by incorporating the insights and expertise of CESL champions directly into the research process.

In final reflection, it seems that practical wisdom can come to life only at the nexus where positive habits of the mind (reflective practice) and heart (values of social justice) meet, primarily when it is aimed at a lifelong commitment to the development of the identity of both engaged scholars and HEIs that profess the praxis of engaged scholarship.

However, moving through "the open door" for engaged scholarship (Sandmann et al., 2016) calls for interdependent and integrated thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Therefore, HEIs must rethink and reframe their house structures to provide academic homes that include a heart for engagement, with open doors for engaged scholars to enter (Butin, 2010). Then, engaged scholars can inhabit multiple academic homes and profess the praxis of engaged scholarship, which is the *raison d'être* (reason for the existence) of higher education learning and development. Participant 2 framed this action in a significant way by sharing the following proposal:

> Perhaps a reframing of higher education is needed—from a commodity one needs for financial and other personal achievements—to training and development for socially responsible citizenship in a just and democratic society.

Significances, Limitations, Challenges, and Contradictions

The research offered a valuable knowledge contribution, enabling the newly developed ISLP approach to come to life through a practical framework for the flourishment of engaged scholarship. As South African authors, we inquired into six international champions' diverse expertise, resources, and networks. The research can address local challenges in South Africa and contribute to global knowledge on how scholarship can effectively engage with societal issues. This inquiry also fosters cross-cultural exchange, promotes capacity building, and ensures that the research has long-term relevance and influence across multiple contexts. The research benefit was mutual because the participants achieved their goal of stewardship for advancing the field while their practical wisdom informed the research purpose. From a broader perspective, engaged scholarship benefits humanity by addressing social challenges for the public good (Boyer, 1996/2016), whereas the ISLP approach offers to advance both the development of engaged scholars and the institutionalization of engaged scholarship in an institutional context.

The inquiry was restricted to the voices of pioneering international CESL champions, which could be considered a limitation of the study. However, the approach taken here was to benchmark praxis with these individuals successfully. In this way, engaging with those who were the first to experience and know the complex and dynamic process of walking the village (Participant 5) regarding the practice of CESL for engaged scholarship was possible.

During the development of the ISLP approach, some internal contradictions arose through the awareness of current challenges concerning the ideal destiny that champions strive to achieve. These contradictions are manifestations of external ideological limitations placed on what could be deemed utopian ideals in all sectors of society. The concept of praxis infers that unequal societies will require a political struggle against power and privilege to achieve social justice. However, through the positive, appreciative ISLP approach, it becomes possible to turn contradictions into creative tensions by reimagining society and the role of higher education. Doing so requires ideologically coordinating with the utopian ideals through constantly invoking a positive vision of the future, where actual actions become drivers of change through mechanisms created by collaborative engaged scholarship (Erasmus, 2014).

The ISLP approach is complex and requires much time and transformation to implement. Therefore, a step-by-step development process is required to scale up best practices, guided by mentors and shared in a global network. However, flourishment for the praxis of engaged scholarship could be enacted by complementing the theoretical model (Sandmann et al., 2016) with the practical framework presented in this article.

By using this practical framework, engaged scholars can "legitimize not only the use of knowledge produced in the academy, but the practitioner's generation of actionable knowledge" (Schön, 1995. p. 34). By keeping in mind that the practical framework can contribute to the eventual coconstruction of societal wellness (Whitney et al., 2010), it can inform policies needed for flourishing the praxis of engaged scholarship.

What next? . . . Dreaming into the Future

When asked to envision future successes after applying the approach for one year, Participant 5 said: "Well, clearly the global spread of the ISLP approach." We share this dream to achieve further development and glocal implementation. Therefore, the future action research cycle aspires to include voices from South African community-engaged CESL scholars to benchmark the ISLP approach at higher education institutions.

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Faculty and Student Perceptions of Service-Learning's Influence on University Student Resilience

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Abstract

Resilience—the ability to persist, bounce back, and achieve, despite setbacks or challenges—is an important predictive and protective factor for university students' personal and academic success. Qualitative research at one large U.S. land-grant university investigated faculty and student perceptions of how and why academic service-learning courses impact student resilience. We used thematic coding and analysis for responses from focus groups of faculty and students with recent service-learning experience. We found five key themes illustrating participants' perceptions of how service-learning enhances student resilience, including (a) opportunities for community members, peers, and instructors to serve as models of resilience; (b) more authentic and less hierarchical relationships among students and instructors; (c) natural opportunities for overcoming challenges inherent in community-based activities; (d) real-world consequences that increased student motivation to persevere; and (e) reflection activities that further helped students perceive and develop mastery and resilience. Suggestions for practice and future research are offered.

Keywords: resilience, service-learning, student outcomes, focus groups, faculty perceptions

Even before the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, "concern over the resilience and mental health of university students [was] a global issue" (Brewer et al., 2019, p. 1113), and during the pandemic large percentages of young adults reported experiencing mental health issues (Adams et al., 2022; Ang et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020; Son et al., 2020). Indeed, students continue to experience challenges completing their coursework and balancing school and other obligations (Ezarek, 2022), and college campuses report a growing number of students seeking mental health services (Abelson et al., 2022). Consequently, universities in the United States and worldwide are interested in activities and interventions that can support student well-being and resilience (Brewer et al., 2019).

Resilience, the "capacity to rise above difficult circumstances" (Ginsburg, n.d.), is an "essential component in managing stress" (Ang et al., 2021) and has demonstrated benefits for students both within courses and beyond. As Brewer et al. (2019) noted, "Reviews of the higher education literature have highlighted the key role resilience plays in assisting students to overcome challenges, manage their well-being and complete their studies" (p. 1106), with multiple research studies supporting "the association between resilience and academic success" (p. 1108). The American Academy of Pediatrics (Ginsburg & Jablow, 2020) and American Psychological Association (2012) have contended that educators should provide opportunities and an appropriate contextual framework that can facilitate the development of resilience in children and youth. However, how universities can best support students in developing this sort of protective resilience is not yet fully understood.

As a pedagogical practice, academic service-learning has a demonstrated track record of benefit to university students, including but not limited to improved content mastery, self-efficacy, civic competencies, retention

and graduation, and employment outcomes (e.g., Celio et al., 2011; Conway et al., 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kuh, 2008; Matthews et al., 2015; Song et al., 2018; Yorio & Ye, 2012). This high-impact (Kuh, 2008) practice engages students in applying their academic learning to real-world issues and challenges, utilizing critical reflection to help them connect their campus and community experiences. In the context of one large, public research university in the southeastern United States, this article investigates potential components of service-learning courses and activities that faculty and student experiences suggest may lead to positive impacts on university student resilience.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Resilience and Service-Learning

In their scoping review, Brewer et al. (2019) noted the lack of consistent definitions of "resilience" across relevant research literature. They proposed conceptualizing resilience as "a dynamic process of positive adaptation in the face of adversity or challenge . . . [which] involves the capacity to negotiate for, and draw upon, psychological, social, cultural and environmental resources" (p. 1114). Resilience is further characterized by students regaining or sustaining levels of healthy functioning following exposure to adversity (Duckworth et al., 2007; Ginsburg & Jablow, 2020; Gucciardi et al., 2015; Henderson, 2007; Masten, 2011). For this study, we operationalize resilience as students' ability to persist, bounce back, and achieve, despite setbacks or course-related challenges. Resilience includes tenacity, being able to cope with adversity, being able to solve problems, and using resources and supports (individual, community, or societal) to be successful in their academic endeavors.

Service-learning is a high-impact pedagogy (Kuh, 2008)—a

> course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112)

Little research has directly investigated how service-learning might support college student resilience, despite some conceptual arguments for such benefits. For instance, in considering a range of engaged pedagogies, Swaner (2007) posited that these sorts of "active engagement" activities could "moderate stress levels and potentially reduce mental health problems" among college students (p. 22). In Ginsburg's (n.d.) 7 Cs model of "essential building blocks of resilience" for youth, several of the guiding questions for programs map onto components likely to be found in service-learning, such as creating "opportunities for each youth to contribute to the community" (Contribution), "demonstrat[ing] the importance of community" (Character), and "helping to build the authentic skills that make them competent in the real world" (Competence).

Goertzen and Whitaker (2015) investigated the impact of a multicourse sequence in a leadership education program on students' "psychological capital," operationalized as "self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency" (p. 775). Although their study primarily focused on how leadership education programs (rather than service-learning) might impact these characteristics, the program they described included one course with service-learning, and they conducted three surveys of over 200 students in online, international, and on-campus leadership courses across a 3-year period. They found that student resilience ratings peaked at the end of the second course, which alone included a service-learning element, showing significant increases from the start of the program. Goertzen and Whitaker described the service-learning experience, including reflection and instructor and peer feedback, as enhancing student resilience:

> These powerful reflection experiences provide students with the confidence (e.g. self-efficacy) to avoid obstacles and adversity (e.g. resiliency) in their own projects as they continue through the semester. Students responded to the survey at Time 2 at the conclusion of the service-learning project. Students may experience a euphoric high from successful completion of a major community-based, service-learning project and as a result report a high level of confidence in their own abilities to set challenging goals, identify relevant

pathways and navigate adverse situations, thus accounting for the significant increase. . . . (p. 781)

However, these gains were not permanent; upon testing after the third (non-service-learning) course in the sequence, student resilience scores declined again. The authors were not able to fully explain this difference but suggested that students "perhaps are not provided with the sufficient and necessary pathways to reinforce their self-efficacy and resiliency in identifying alternative courses of action when challenging leadership situations arise" as in the third, academic-only course (Goertzen & Whitaker, 2015, p. 782).

In her 2010 dissertation, based on her review of student development theory, Mercer argued that service-learning and reflection should enhance "resilience protective factors" among college students (p. 23). Her study used a pretest/posttest design with students in eight undergraduate courses in counseling, social work, and kinesiology in either a service-learning or non-service-learning version. Slightly over half the students in service-learning courses demonstrated increases in their resilience scores, but no significant changes pre- to posttest were apparent between the service-learning and non-service-learning students overall. In comparing the three service-learning classes, she found that the kinesiology students' resilience scores declined from pre- to posttest, while scores increased moderately in the other two disciplines; Mercer suggested this difference may have been due to different structural features, including increased opportunities for student choice in the counseling and social work service-learning experiences. Existing differences between the two groups at pretest, as well as some gender and age differences and differences in test administration timing, may have also contributed to the overall lack of significant findings.

Daniels et al. (2015) described a "critical service-learning research" training program for African American students at an HBCU intended to enhance participants' research interest and persistence. Their 13 participants all agreed that the program increased their resiliency, and the authors suggested that the service-learning experience "strategically connect[ed] them to learning in a more authentic way than traditional classroom experiences" (p. 186). Although this small-scale study was not designed to investigate resilience directly, student comments indicated that activities like presenting at conferences, mentoring from faculty, and group discussions about overcoming challenges were helpful in enhancing student resilience.

Although not directly exploring resilience, in her dissertation study, Brewer (2023) interviewed seven undergraduates with service-learning experience to inquire into how service-learning impacted their mental health and well-being. She posited (p. 121) that reflection and knowledge development helped students develop their identities. Further, developing a sense of belonging, having opportunities to practice empathy and caring, developing agency through making decisions, and expressing gratitude for their experiences all helped participant wellness and mental health.

On our campus (described further below), end-of-semester survey data has consistently indicated that students who participate in service-learning courses do perceive that this experience benefits their resilience. A Likert-scale question in this IRB-approved institutional survey assessed student perceptions of the service-learning activity's impact on their resilience. The majority (82.7%) of student respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "the service-learning component of this course helped me develop resilience," with the most frequent response overall being "strongly agree." From fall 2021 to spring 2024, 676 students across 115 different course sections responded to this item. Survey respondents were primarily, but not exclusively, White, female, non-first-generation students, and the largest class standing represented undergraduate seniors. Although not a representative sample, they represented 115 different course sections at both undergraduate and graduate levels. All respondents provided informed consent for their responses to be used for research purposes.

Consistent with the literature reviewed, students believed that the service-learning elements in their courses enhanced their resilience (e.g., Daniels et al., 2015; Mercer, 2010); however, this end-of-semester survey was not designed to explore reasons for this response. Thus, our primary research question for the current study addressed investigating further the ways in which service-learning faculty and students felt such courses impacted resilience—that is, the "why" and "how." We posed this research

question: What features of service-learning do university faculty and students suggest might explain possible positive influences on student resilience?

Methodology

Institutional Context

The study site was a large public research university in the southeastern United States. This land-grant university, holding the Carnegie Foundation's 2010 and 2020 community engagement classification, annually enrolls over 40,000 students in undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees across multiple schools and colleges. During the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 academic years, the institution's service-learning office reported over 9,000 enrollments in about 500 course sections per year that incorporated service-learning. About 175 of the 250 unique courses had received the university's formal curricular designation for academic service-learning through its curriculum committee.

To address the research question, a basic qualitative study was designed using semi-structured faculty and student focus groups to explore and triangulate perceptions of how and why service-learning might impact student resilience. This study, also approved through the university's human subjects/IRB office, was designed and led by an interdisciplinary group of participants (this study's authors) in a university-sponsored faculty learning community on service-learning scholarship. As described in further detail below, an initial set of faculty focus groups was conducted in 2022. The research team collaboratively conducted emergent coding with the content from these first three focus groups, then additional faculty and student focus groups were conducted to gather additional data, followed by "second cycle coding" (Saldaña, 2021) of themes.

Faculty Focus Groups

The university's service-learning office provided a listing of all faculty who had taught a designated-service-learning course between fall 2019 and fall 2021; these 140 faculty members were emailed with an invitation to participate in the study's focus groups. Seventeen responded with interest, provided informed consent, and (based on their availability) were scheduled for one of a series of focus groups held through Zoom, first in early spring 2022 (Focus Groups 1, 2 and 3),

then in fall 2022 (Focus Groups 4 and 5). The 17 faculty participants were all full-time faculty in both tenure- and non-tenure-track roles, representing 16 disciplines (see Table 1 for details on participants). Participants were offered their choice of a water bottle or coffee mug from the university's service-learning office as a thank-you/incentive.

Each focus group was led by two of the faculty learning community members (also experienced service-learning instructors), and with the participants' permission all but one discussion was recorded via Zoom. A consistent set of open-ended discussion prompts and questions was used to guide each session, although other topics were also brought up by participants and moderators. Generally, in each focus group, participants self-introduced, then described the service-learning courses they had recently taught. Facilitators provided the study's working definition of resilience and asked participants for perceived examples of student resilience from their courses. Additional questions explored the nature of student/instructor relationships in service-learning courses from the faculty perspective, service-learning and non-service-learning course organization and characteristics, potential explanations for participants' observations, and recommendations from participants for other faculty interested in developing student resilience. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour.

For the four faculty focus groups with Zoom recordings, the Zoom-generated transcriptions were reviewed and corrected as needed by one or more of the research team members; participant names were removed and identifiers added. The facilitators' field notes for the one session that was not recorded were also reviewed and used as a data source.

Student Focus Groups

In fall 2022, a new set of focus groups was undertaken with student participants to triangulate, test, and confirm the findings that had emerged from the faculty focus groups. (Additional IRB approval and informed consent was also obtained for the student group, and participants were also offered a water bottle or coffee mug as a participation incentive.) Emails were sent via Qualtrics to all students who had taken part in a designated-service-learning course during the prior year. Eleven students responded with interest. After scheduling focus groups during the semester break in December,

Table 1. Faculty Focus Group Participant Demographics

Focus group	Discipline	Faculty role	Gender	Assigned ID
1	English	Lecturer (non-tenure-track)	Female	J5.1
1	Kinesiology	Professor (tenure-track)	Male	J5.2
1	Parks, recreation & tourism	Professor (tenure-track)	Male	J5.3
1	Environment & design	Senior lecturer (non-tenure-track)	Male	J5.4
2	Law	Associate professor (tenure-track)	Male	J6.1
2	Crop and soil sciences	Research scientist (non-tenure-track)	Female	J6.2
2	Music	Associate professor (tenure-track)	Female	J6.3
2	Horticulture	Associate professor (tenure-track)	Female	J6.4
2	Academic enhancement	Lecturer (non-tenure-track)	Female	J6.5
3	Forestry and natural resources	Lecturer (non-tenure-track)	Male	J11.1
3	Geography	Associate professor (tenure-track)	Male	J11.2
3	English	Senior academic professional (non-tenure-track)	Female	J11.3
4	Public administration	Associate professor (tenure-track)	Male	J66.1
4	Romance languages	Lecturer (non-tenure-track)	Female	J66.2
4	Marine science	Academic professional (non-tenure-track)	Female	J66.3
5	Entomology	Assistant professor (tenure-track)	Female	J77.1
5	Biological sciences	Professor (tenure-track)	Female	J77.2

Note. Although discipline, role, and gender are presented for faculty participants, no differential analysis was conducted based on these demographic categories.

eight total students (undergraduate and graduate students) took part in three Zoom focus groups in spring 2023 (see Table 2 for student demographics).

As with the faculty focus groups, each student focus group was led by two members of the research team over Zoom. After self-introductions, the facilitators asked a series of semistructured questions to understand student participants' experiences in service-learning courses, how they perceived resilience, whom they considered to be resilient, examples of challenges and resilience, recommendations, and perceptions of how their service-learning and non-service-learning courses differed. The Zoom-generated transcriptions were reviewed and corrected by one or more of the research team members, and names were replaced with participant identifiers.

Code Development and Analysis

Thematic analysis was undertaken in three primary steps. First, the final transcriptions and field notes for the first three (spring 2022) faculty focus groups were imported into the qualitative software analysis program Dedoose. Each member of the faculty learning community individually read through each set of transcriptions and notes, identifying prospective and emergent themes in an "open" or "initial coding" process (Saldaña, 2021). These themes were then discussed extensively by the team in a series of group meetings to clarify and ensure consistency and shared understanding (exploratory coding). All areas of inconsistency and questions about coding were resolved through extensive discussion by the entire research team, resulting in an agreed-upon set of initial themes.

Table 2. Student Focus Group Participant Demographics

Focus group	Student major	Degree pursued	Gender	Assigned ID
1	Kinesiology	Undergraduate	Female	S12.1
1	Agriculture leadership	Undergraduate	Female	S12.2
2	Education	Graduate	Female	S13.1
2	Elementary education	Undergraduate	Female	S13.2
2	Social work	Undergraduate	Nonbinary	S13.3
3	Business	Undergraduate	Male	S14.1
3	Landscape architecture	Graduate	Female	S14.2
3	Landscape architecture	Graduate	Female	S14.3

Note. Although student level, major, and gender are presented for student participants, no differential analysis was conducted based on these demographic categories.

Next, the additional two faculty focus groups were conducted in fall 2022 to determine whether thematic saturation had been reached. Transcripts from these two focus groups were reviewed and coded to determine if the initial codes sufficiently captured participant perspectives. No new themes were found from this second set of confirmatory focus groups. Finally, three student focus groups were carried out in spring 2023 to ensure that at least some student perspectives on resilience in service-learning courses were also incorporated in the data set.

Then, using the entire set of faculty and student focus group data, the researchers met iteratively during summer 2023 for "second cycle coding" (Saldaña, 2021): "constructing concepts from categories; outlining based on code frequencies; . . . and reorganizing and reassembling the transformed data to better focus the direction of [the] study" (p. 280). This step included reviewing, finalizing, categorizing, and organizing the codes into a set of clustered (i.e., "parent" and "child") themes. Frequencies of the emergent themes were compiled and reviewed with the intent to identify all salient themes while also being attentive to developing a manageable number of overall codes and themes (Friese, 2014) and avoiding code proliferation (Saldaña, 2021). About 35 discrete thematic topics were identified and coded (e.g., "community as a model of resilience"; "awareness of benefit to community"; "explicitly discussing resilience in class") through this focused and axial coding process (e.g., Charmaz, 2014); the transcriptions were then revisited and collaboratively coded in Dedoose, resulting in over 400 non–mutually exclusive instances across the student and faculty focus groups, though not all subthemes were ultimately deemed by the research team to be relevant to this study's research question. This collaborative process resulted in the identification of five overarching themes representing both student and faculty responses related to resilience and service-learning, as presented in the following section.

Findings

Faculty and Student Focus Group Thematic Findings

Our research into features of service-learning courses that were perceived to influence student resilience resulted in five key themes supported by both faculty and student focus groups. These themes illustrate separate but interrelated ways in which participants suggested that service-learning experiences may support the development of resilience in university students. Table 3 presents these overarching themes as well as sample "child" codes and the frequency of their occurrence in the data set; the Appendix illustrates each of these findings with sample quotes from faculty and student focus group participants, with additional description provided in the thematic narrative overviews below.

The first theme from faculty and student focus group participants indicated that service-learning supported student resil-

Table 3. Themes and Representative Codes From Focus Groups

Key themes	Representative codes (frequency of occurrence)
Models of resilience: Service-learning provided exposure to peer, instructor, or community models of resilience	• Community as model of resilience (13) • Self as model of resilience (10) • Peer as model of resilience (7) • Instructor as model of resilience (3)
Authentic relationships: Service-learning helped foster more authentic classroom relationships between participants	• Student-to-student relationships (28) • Decreased classroom hierarchy (26) • Personal sharing between student and instructor (15) • Student–instructor relationships (11) • Professor vulnerability (7)
Opportunities for challenge: Service-learning provided opportunities for overcoming challenges inherent in community-based activities	• Course structure creates challenge (32) • Rebounding/overcoming challenges (28) • Instructor does not explicitly provide answers (21) • Community partner–based challenges (14) • Initial fears of community-based work (13) • Small failures built into course (7)
Real-world consequences: Service-learning enhanced student motivation to persevere to meet the community's needs	• Motivation due to real-world consequences (27) • Awareness of benefit to community (19) • Positive feedback from community partner (12) • Motivation due to service-learning structure (8)
Reflection: Service-learning incorporated reflection to further help students perceive mastery and resilience	• Reflection activities and examples (20) • Explicitly discussing resilience in class (9)

ience through providing students access to models of resilience. These models could be found in community members from their service–learning experience, their peers, or even their instructor. For instance, one faculty participant (J6.1) commented:

> To some extent exposure to resilience is part of the design of law school clinics. We are putting students in touch with clients who are in need: veterans who are disabled and facing financial pressure, veterans who are facing end-of-life issues [. . . and] we're bringing students in contact with and asking them to help people who, themselves, are having to demonstrate resilience and figure out how to deal with challenges.

Second, participants felt that, compared to traditional lecture courses, service–learning's structure and experiences often led to less hierarchical student–faculty relationships and provided opportunities for participants to get to know each other in more authentic ways. These deeper relationships were particularly apparent in situations where the instructor was on site with students during service experiences, leading to greater trust and sharing. As one instructor (J6.5) stated,

> It's really the trust-building that comes along with that vulnerability that both instructor and student is having in that relationship . . . and I think that is the place where students then feel safe to reach out for support in the context of these kinds of courses.

The third theme related to the substantive, authentic opportunities for overcoming challenge through service–learning. Participants noted that the complexities and difficulties inherent in community-based activities and projects, a hallmark of service–learning, naturally created challenges and setbacks (or even "failures") that students were faced with overcoming, allowing for the development of resilience. These experiences were

directly related to the fourth theme, the way that service-learning activities' "real-world" impacts and implications created accountability to external stakeholders, which further motivated students to persevere. This enhanced accountability provided a natural reason for students to show resilience in the face of challenges. For example, the following student (S12.1) comment highlights both these themes:

> There were problems with me for my [community] participant, where she wouldn't come in. . . . So just being able to get through all of that, and still just like push through . . . still trying to be motivated to come in and [run] the workouts.

The final theme suggested that participants felt that engagement in reflection activities helped students understand that they were developing resilience. In particular, when reflection prompts explicitly focused on overcoming obstacles and demonstrating mastery, participants felt that it helped students recognize and identify their progress and growing resilience. One instructor (J6.5) characterized reflection's benefits as follows:

> Having a chance for students to come together and talk about their experience early on and do it kind of throughout . . . talk about their struggle, how they overcome the challenges that they have . . . this way they can build on that experience and learn about how other people are doing it.

Discussion

Some prior research (e.g., Daniels et al., 2015; Mercer, 2010) had hypothesized that service-learning might support student development of resilience, and our campus surveys of students in such courses found that they overwhelmingly identified this outcome as present from their own experiences. The current study used in-depth focus groups to begin to investigate the perspectives and opinions of university students and faculty with service-learning experience in order to help explain this outcome. The key findings from this study suggested five interrelated features of effective service-learning courses that may support student resilience.

Theme Summaries

Models of Resilience

Students seem to benefit and learn from others who demonstrate resilience in their course-based experiences. In Ang et al.'s (2021) study of resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, students described drawing resilience from learning about and interacting with resilient community members as well as their instructors. Ginsburg (n.d.) described one of the "essential building blocks of resilience" in youth as "contribution," which includes not only "opportunity to contribute to the community" but also looking at role modeling and how "recovery serves as a model." Courses with service-learning can be especially effective at providing students with clear models of resilience—from their peers, instructors, and the community. Instructors described ways in which students learned from community members who had experienced and overcome challenges, helping students place their own course-based struggles in perspective. They also shared their own vulnerabilities and challenges (including those inside and outside the service-learning context), and when on site with community projects, helped demonstrate and reflect on how they responded to difficult situations. Service-learning instructors also designed reflections, student work groups, and in- and out-of-class experiences in ways that allowed students to share challenges and accomplishments and learn from each other.

Authentic Relationships

Similarly, service-learning is positioned to foster more authentic relationships among participants, with benefits to student resilience. Participants in the current study clearly identified ways in which the service-learning course features changed the nature of the student–faculty relationship away from the more traditional, expert/novice dynamic, to a less hierarchical partnership approach as they worked together to address community needs. At its core, demonstrating resilience includes using resources to adapt and respond effectively to adversity and challenge (Brewer et al., 2019). Student relationships with their instructors, and with their peers, functioned as key resources that could be drawn upon; as Felten and Lambert (2020) noted, "a web of student–student, student–faculty, and student–staff relationships creates a more resilient resource for a student to draw upon

when the going gets tough" (p. 15). The current study's participants pointed out ways in which these more personal relationships then allowed students to approach these instructors even for non-course-related concerns and problems, using them as a relational resource and enhancing Ginsburg's (n.d.) notion of "connection." Past research has likewise shown the benefits of student–faculty relationships in enhancing student outcomes (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), and students have reported that supportive interactions with faculty enhanced their resilience (Ang et al., 2021). In their study of first-generation students in service-learning, McKay and Estrella (2008) found that the relationships between students and faculty were often developed through communication outside the classroom, and that these relationships with faculty and with peers motivated and supported student perseverance. Such relationships allow "establishing a caring, supportive environment that enables students to learn, make mistakes, and pick themselves back up to try again" (Felten & Lambert, 2020, p. 84). Another study of academic resilience, although not focused on service-learning, found that "peer connectedness was significantly and positively associated with academic resilience and student hope when faced with an academic challenge" (Frisby et al., 2020, p. 289).

Opportunities for Challenge

Demonstrating resilience happens in the context of responding to a setback, challenge, or failure. Because of the uncertainties and challenges inherent in community-based activities, service-learning courses often provide nonmanufactured (i.e., real), externally generated opportunities for students to hone and practice resilient behaviors, further developing more of Ginsburg's (n.d.) 7 Cs such as competence (i.e., building skills, making and correcting their own mistakes), coping, and confidence. Although this perspective was sometimes frustrating to students who may feel they are not receiving sufficient faculty support, instructors in the current study specifically identified their belief in the importance of allowing students to struggle, and even to fail in low-stakes ways, as they responded to the vagaries, misunderstandings, or divergent priorities of their partners and organizations. Faculty participants also noted the advantages of having these challenges arise from the community, rather than being imposed by the instructor.

Real-World Consequences: Motivation to Persevere

Relatedly, because the service-learning activities and the students' assignments had clear, real-world consequences and benefits to the community, students demonstrated enhanced motivation to persevere in the face of these obstacles. Both student and faculty participants in the current study indicated that this community-facing feature of service-learning led students to demonstrate motivation and grit in completing assignments beyond what they might demonstrate in a traditional academic course, similar to what other service-learning research has noted (e.g., Darby et al., 2013; Yorio & Ye, 2012). In persevering, students make contributions to the community, develop character, and build confidence (three of Ginsburg's, n.d., key competencies for resilience). When students take ownership and see themselves as capable of effecting change and helping their community, these greater feelings of autonomy and agency can also help boost resilience (e.g., Reeve et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Reflection

Finally, service-learning regularly incorporates reflection activities, which can further help students recognize that they are developing mastery and resilience. Reflection, a sine qua non of academic service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Eyler, 2002; Hatcher et al., 2004), has likewise been identified by other researchers as important in helping students develop resilience in service-learning and non-service-learning experiences (e.g., Brewer, 2023; Daniels et al., 2015; Ginsburg & Jablow, 2020; Goertzen & Whitaker, 2015; Mercer, 2010). Participants described ways in which reflection activities (including in-class guided discussions as well as written assignments) helped students contextualize the challenges and progress in their community-based work, reducing their overall stress as they realized they were not the only ones in that situation. Additionally, when instructors explicitly point out student progress and resilient behaviors, including naming them as resilience, they help students recognize that these same skills can be applied in future courses.

Limitations

Several limitations to the present study are salient. As participants all came from the same U.S. university, their perspectives may not represent the breadth of experience for

service-learning programs in different institutional settings, geographic areas, or university types. Student and faculty participants were not randomly chosen, and they represented a small proportion of overall eligible participants and disciplines. Although thematic saturation was present in the faculty group responses, it is possible that additional focus groups—especially among students—could reveal other perspectives on the research questions. Additionally, data collection began relatively soon after resumption of regular academic activities following the global pandemic, so student and faculty experiences and perspectives may not be fully applicable to future cohorts.

Although data were reported on some participant demographic categories, this information was not exhaustive in terms of potential demographic differences, nor was it used to investigate any potential differences among experiences based on identity categories. Similarly, although past research on resilience in university students has frequently considered the experiences of those from underrepresented or historically marginalized backgrounds, this study's focus group questions and discussions did not provide intentional opportunities to explore issues of student demographics or identity.

Directions for Future Research

Directions for future research include extending and testing this study's findings. For instance, in our campus's end-of-semester surveys that provided the initial impetus for our investigation, some students did not agree that their service-learning experiences enhanced their resilience; thus, a deeper look into student survey responses at this and other universities could help investigate potential differences in why some students did not perceive a benefit, based perhaps on features of interest such as student demographics, types of service-learning activity, or course characteristics. Additionally, future studies could more fully apply or test the findings from this study on a broader sample of students and faculty and could look at explanatory factors for supporting resilience from a more theoretical lens, such as self-determination theory (e.g., Reeve et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Finally, this exploratory study resulted in themes based on student and faculty perceptions but did not investigate causality, so designing and testing the overall and relative influences of the features identified in this study's thematic outcomes would

provide stronger evidence for these elements' actual impacts on student resilience.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study's findings suggest several implications for practice for instructors or campuses interested in enhancing service-learning courses to more intentionally facilitate student resilience. Although service-learning courses likely already incorporate student reflection activities, instructors might consider explicitly including resilience-oriented topics in class discussions or written reflection. For instance, because students appear to benefit from seeing models of resilience, reflection activities might ask directly about evidence of resilience they see in the community; class discussions in which common challenges and solutions are shared among peers also appear likely to support student resilience. Similarly, reflection prompts can explicitly encourage students to reflect on how they have addressed challenges (especially looking at the overall arc of their experience at the end of the course) and demonstrated resilience, and to identify effective strategies and behaviors that they can apply in future coursework.

To maximize student engagement, motivation, and perseverance, instructors should ensure that their course service-learning experience clearly does provide community benefit, and they should help students recognize the importance and value of the service assignments, perhaps through direct feedback from partners. Additionally, faculty should communicate to students that although community-based work can be (and often is) challenging, growth and learning are inherent in facing and overcoming these challenges. Intentionally designing courses to foster student autonomy and leadership, such as by allowing some student choice in roles and service activities, may also enhance students' motivation and perseverance.

Instructors should also continue to prioritize authentic relationship-building with their students. Possible methods include sharing their own vulnerabilities and challenges, as well as modeling strategies to productively address issues with areas such as community partner communications. Participants in the current study noted that when faculty are on site or actively taking part in the service experience with their students, the relationship is perceived as more collaborative and less hierarchical; if the course structure does not allow for being on site

with students, faculty might consider creating other in-class activities with direct collaboration with students. Additionally, instructors can consider how to structure in-class and service activities for effective peer-to-peer relationship building.

Finally, because resilience entails effective use of resources to overcome challenges, instructors should ensure that students are aware of both institutional supports (mental health services, tutoring, disability resource centers, etc.) and course-specific resources (e.g., peers, community experts, office hours). Direct discussion and reflection on resource use may be more helpful than pro forma inclusion of syllabus statements in terms of encouraging students to feel comfortable seeking this assistance.

In conclusion, the structure and features of high-quality service-learning courses seem likely to provide an effective stepping stone for supporting university student resilience. Through additional consideration of key elements, service-learning instructors and students can further design and leverage activities to help students develop, access, recognize, and apply resources and strategies that allow students to surmount challenges, persevere, and thrive in their current courses and beyond.

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Appendix. Participant Quotes From Focus Groups
Illustrating Key Themes

Theme	Participant	Quote
Models of resilience	Faculty (J5.2)	"The group that we've chosen [for service-learning] is . . . people with disabilities with spectacular resilience themselves. . . . Our students see people who are working or doing their lives with a significant disability and they're not complaining and they're just plugging away and having a good time in life, and I think, again, that helps our students see a different world. . . . They're seeing people who are demonstrating resilience."
	Faculty (J5.3)	"When we do these discussions where all the groups talk about their problems, suddenly they realize . . . they're not as bad as they think. They're like, 'everyone's going through the same thing' . . . and all of a sudden, the problem becomes smaller. Because it isn't just them, and then they will talk about it and typically in a session, they will kind of work out an answer. . . ."
	Student (S14.3)	"We were working with the . . . coalition of farm workers in Florida, and I guess the way that it was described is they were ordinary people and doing extraordinary things. Some of them didn't have a lot of high-status titles like when you think of changemakers. Some people might think of politicians and lawyers, but they were literally farm workers who were organizing on the community level, spreading the word and advocating for change. And so they took things in their own hands going up against corporations and legislation that were against them . . . they've been successful at it."
Authentic relationships	Faculty (J6.5)	"It gives me the opportunity to get to know them as a student and they get to know me as a person . . . we shared that experience together, and you get to talk about other things, and I think that getting to know that personal level, they will tell me things that they would not normally share in the classroom."
	Faculty (J6.1)	"My relationship with students is a lot more of a partnership approach. I'm sort of the more-experienced partner in a law practice, where the students are the less experienced partners."
	Student (S13.2)	"I think my relationships with [service-learning faculty] were also a lot deeper. They saw me as more than just a student, but they saw me as like a human in their classes with dreams and ambitions, and also needs. And so we would meet up for coffee or for lunch or whatever and talk outside of class."
Opportunities for challenge	Faculty (J11.3)	"Students have to problem-solve on the spot and deal with difficulties, changes in plans, changes in what the community partner needs or can do, or being lower down on the community partner's priority list, and this builds capacity and resilience."
	Faculty (J6.3)	"The other part of it was just the [students'] absolute fear of three- and four-year-olds [in the service placement], when they think they're going to be a high school band director or choir teacher, so . . . they don't know what to expect."
	Student (S13.3)	"My professor was definitely a little like, 'Do it on your own' once we finished the first two weeks. We had like two intros, basically, and she explained a lot of the objectives of the course and what the point of doing this work was, kind of along those lines, and then afterwards we were free to work in our experiences, and then we had guided activities along the way. But she wasn't really like strictly over our shoulder, or anything like that which I really genuinely appreciated, because it was more of like a learning curve on my own to really experience what [the service activity] was like."

Theme	Participant	Quote
Real-world consequences	Faculty (J5.3)	"Students will come in sometimes, and say like 'We've got this problem, I don't know how to fix it' and I'm like, 'Well, do some research.' And, once they figure it out, and then they have a final product, and they go back to the client [who] says, 'we can use this.'"
	Faculty (J6.1)	"[With] a successful outcome for a client . . . you can see the student swell up and get bigger, grow a little bit, right? It affects their motivation to work as a lawyer and affects their motivation to engage with the world and solve someone else's problem. . . . The students can see that their work actually had a huge impact on that person's life."
	Student (S14.2)	"In service-learning classes . . . you're working with real people who really do need something from you, and really do expect something from you. So, for example, in my construction class, where I was just turning an assignment in, it was a lot easier for me to just be like, 'Hey, I'm going to be late on this assignment,' or 'I can't complete it' and not worry about it because it's just a grade I'm sacrificing. But for a service-learning class, there are people relying on you, and you're doing something real which is really unique for us . . . this is our first semester working on really real sites, that had the potential of actually being implemented. And so, it's not something you want to let people down, or it's not something you necessarily, you can feel you can just give up."
Reflection	Faculty (J6.5)	"We actually talked about resilience in the class I teach, too, so we talk about like how to deal with setback[s] and stuff like that, so it's very—we are very explicit about . . . you know, telling them that, 'If you can make it through this you can get through the hopefully the next semester too, because this is really intense.'"
	Faculty (J5.3)	"The students will often say at the end, they go back and look at those reflections, and it's very meaningful to them to realize, you know, 'this was a concern for me, now at the end of the semester it's no longer a concern.'"
	Student (S14.1)	"[We] discussed in class the problem I faced . . . how to handle a conflict within teams. [Through that discussion], I'm seeing the source of conflict."

(Re)framing International Medical Service Trips: Motivations, Paradigms of Engagement, and Global Health Equity

Kevin G. Guerrieri and P. Víctor Zambrano

Abstract

The article analyzes two fundamental questions that emerge as institutions of higher education seek to advance global health equity: What are the motivations driving these initiatives, and within which paradigms of engagement do they enter into collaboration with communities? An examination of the tensions and paradoxes of geopolitical paradigms such as humanitarianism, development, human rights, and voluntourism underscores the need for critical reflection as colleges and universities look across international borders to implement initiatives. The article explains the development of an adaptable tool designed to foment critical reflection, the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), and a pilot study focused on students' motivations for participating in international medical service trips. A mixed-methods approach was used, and the results reflected the complex movement among motivational categories and paradigms, as well as key implications for campuswide efforts to develop ethical solidarity for long-term collective action aimed at global health equity.

Keywords: international medical service trips, global health equity, critical reflection, motivations, paradigms of engagement

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The COVID-19 pandemic created new inequalities and exacerbated existing ones at all levels, from global contexts to local settings. The pandemic made further evident the inextricable links among health disparities and economic, political, and historical factors, as well as the persistence of colonial health structures and the weakening of public-sector health systems, due in part to the implementation of neoliberal policies over the last half century. As Greene et al. (2013) suggested, "Historical consciousness of the colonial roots of global health challenges us to question the knowledge frameworks that constitute the emerging field of global health today" (p. 71). The work for global health equity requires a multidisciplinary and multisector approach, within and across national borders. Equally important, global health initiatives must recognize the inherent interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman, especially considering historical and continuing environmental destruction produced by globalized capitalism and Western processes of industrialization, modernization, and development.

Institutions of higher education can play a fundamental part in the ongoing development of the multifaceted field of global health equity to face these complex problems, working in and with communities. Possibilities exist across practically all academic units and areas on campus, given the multidisciplinary nature of this field and its biosocial approach to global health challenges, spanning from the molecular to the social (Farmer, 2013). However, colleges and universities should not seek to implement programs, projects, and initiatives that simply reflect a return to prepandemic normalcy. As Labonté (2022) stated in a reflection on global health equity and environmental sustainability in a postpandemic economy: "Should we be eager to return to

the 'normal' we left behind in early 2020? If the health of people and planet are of any concern, the answer is a resounding no" (p. 1246). Similarly, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for global learning that values the exchange of health equity interventions among countries in ways that are reciprocal and mutually beneficial (Parke et al., 2024).

As institutions look across international borders for research, experiential learning, and community engagement opportunities in the intersecting fields of medicine, public health, development, and other areas, two fundamental questions emerge: What are the motivations driving these initiatives, and within which paradigms of engagement do they enter into collaboration with different communities? Institutions can make positive contributions to global health equity, but they can also do harm and exacerbate existing structural violence. Accordingly, these questions require critical reflection at all levels of the institution, from the creation of university-wide international initiatives, for example, to individual students or faculty members deciding to create or participate in a program. The present article introduces an instrument that emerged out of the research team's praxis of action and reflection, the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), a conceptual framework designed for use across campus in deepening critical reflection from motives driving individual decisions to a broad geopolitical context at the macro level comprised of the hegemonic discourses and practices of humanitarianism, development, human rights, and voluntourism.

The article then shifts to the implementation of the PEMM in a pilot study at the micro level focused on short-term international medical service trips carried out in Ghana and Panama by an undergraduate student group affiliated with a university in the United States and in collaboration with an international nonprofit organization. For this study, a mixed-methods approach was used in which students from three different international trips, in 2019 and 2020, completed pretrip and posttrip surveys. The results reflected the complex and fluid movement among multiple self-oriented and other-oriented motivations—spanning different paradigms of engagement—and the need to involve all participants and decision makers in exploring this interface in a nuanced manner. Most importantly, the article provides an adaptable tool at the institutional level to help colleges and universities critically reflect on international outreach and engagement initiatives and develop guiding concepts and practices of ethical solidarity for long-term collective action aimed at global health equity.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

We use "paradigms of engagement" here as a broad, flexible notion applied to approaches to entering into collaboration with communities at multiple levels and scales. A paradigm can be understood as "a worldview or framework through which knowledge is filtered," and the set of assumptions, based on ontological and epistemological belief systems, that compose a given paradigm and guide our thoughts and actions are typically taken for granted, thus making the paradigm invisible (Leavy, 2017, p. 11). Accordingly, critical reflection on international engagement initiatives must examine not only the local settings but also broader hegemonic paradigms and historical legacies.

Paradigms of Engagement

Scholars trace the roots of contemporary humanitarianism to the late 18th century and identify its purposes, in general, as providing relief to persons in exceptional distress and alleviating the suffering of others (Wilson & Brown, 2009). Barnett and Weiss (2008) indicated that "specifically, many within the humanitarian sector tend to conceive the ideal humanitarian act as motivated by an altruistic desire to provide life-saving relief; to honor the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; and to do more good than harm" (p. 11). These authors underscored that "the meaning and practices of humanitarianism have been historically fluid as the world in which it operates" (p. 10). As Wilson and Brown (2009) indicated, "the link[s] between humanism, humanitarianism and empire-building has a long pedigree" (p. 17). As one example, King Leopold II "justified his genocidal exploitation of the Congo as advancing civilization and as a humanitarian project" (Barnett & Weiss, 2008, p. 22). Presumptions of a universal human subject and predetermined grammars of human dignity that transcends imperial or national borders have long been used as a pretext for (neo)colonialism,

military intervention, and the imposition of Western worldviews. Humanitarianism is often framed as apolitical, but Fassin (2012) underscored the key role that moral sentiments have come to play in the political life of contemporary societies in general, a phenomenon the author terms "humanitarian government," which is constituted precisely within the "tension between inequality and solidarity, between a relation of domination and a relation of assistance" (p. 3).

Whereas humanitarianism began to arise in the 18th century, development is a more recent phenomenon that emerged in the mid–20th century, specifically in the context of post–World War II reconstruction in Europe, decolonization in Asia and Africa, growing nationalism in Latin America, and the geopolitical polarization of the Cold War. Escobar (1995) examined how the discourse of development came into existence during the period from 1945 to 1955 as a response to the "discovery" and problematization of mass poverty in the so-called Third World and became, over the course of four decades, a hegemonic form of representation based on "the construction of the poor and underdeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects, based on the privilege of the representers; the exercise of power over the Third World made possible by this discursive homogenization . . .; and the colonization and domination of the natural and human ecologies and economies of the Third World" (p. 53). More recently, shifting to Lacanian psychoanalysis, Kapoor (2020) sought to uncover the unconscious of development discourse and reveal its internal traumas and contradictions manifested in blind spots and disavowals, such as adhering to a false history of poverty in the Global South that fails to acknowledge the slavery, genocide, and plunder of Asia, Africa, and Latin America linked to Western colonialism and wealth accumulation in the Global North and privileging free market economics while concealing the realities of rapacious capitalism, growing global inequalities, and the extraction of Third World resources, among others.

Human rights often intersect with humanitarianism and development, both discursively and in practice. However, Moyn (2020) argued that the convergence of humanitarianism and human rights occurred as recently as the late 20th century, and in this recent intersection, human rights have frequently been "humanitarian-ized," retreating from any pretensions to expand egalitarian citizenship rights and the achievement of deep structural change, and focusing instead on providing minimal provisions, often not beyond the protection of biological life itself. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) affirmed, human rights have become the hegemonic language of human dignity at an international level (p. 23), but since the 1970s, this discourse has become tightly interwoven with neoliberalism and the triumph of market fundamentalism, to the detriment of international struggles for structural change such as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), more profound decolonization efforts, and calls for the redistribution of global wealth (Getachew, 2019; Slaughter, 2018). As Whyte (2019) argued, as midcentury neoliberal thinkers viewed the rise of human rights, they "mobilised and developed the language associated with them for their own ends" (p. 5), and they "saw human rights and competitive markets as mutually constitutive" (p. 19). Whyte asserted that "the neoliberals sought to inculcate the morals of the market and pathologise those political struggles which threatened the assigned places of postcolonial societies in the international division of labour" (p. 32).

Voluntourism began to emerge in its current configuration in the late 1980s with the convergence of development volunteering and tourism. However, Sobocinska (2021) traced voluntourism to an earlier phenomenon that they denominated the "humanitarian-development complex," which arose from the 1950s to the 1970s, exemplified by the creation of three Western volunteering programs during that period: Australia's Volunteer Graduate Scheme, Britain's VSO (Volunteer Service Overseas), and the United States Peace Corps. Voluntourism quickly developed into a fast-growing segment of the tourism industry. Poverty and development are reframed within this paradigm as sites of tourist consumption, commodified for the neoliberal market, simultaneously providing income for NGOs and opportunities for individuals from the North to exercise their global citizenship, display their cosmopolitan empathy (often through social media), and acquire social capital and entrepreneurial skills to be utilized upon return home. A number of studies have examined these and other problematic issues related to this paradigm (Abreu & Ferreira, 2021; Biddle, 2021; Guttentag, 2009, 2011; Melles, 2018;

Mostafanezhad, 2014a, 2014b; Occhipinti, 2016; Vrasti, 2013; among others).

It must be emphasized here that this brief panorama is not proposed as a teleological evolution among these phenomena, nor does it negate the fact that humanitarianism can provide life-saving relief for populations in distress, self-determined development can produce vital services and positive social change in communities, mobilization around human rights can lead to more just societies, and voluntourism does not inevitably cause harmful outcomes. Rather, this overview reveals some of the problems, paradoxes, and tensions within and among these complex phenomena. In addition, it reflects the need to examine the different paradigms through the intersections of (inter)actions of nation-states within geopolitical contexts, the roles of organizations and institutions across the sectors, and how and why individuals participate in them.

Shifting to a study specifically on service-learning in higher education, Morton (1995) proposed that students tend to gravitate toward one of three different paradigms of service: charity, project development, and social change (or transformation). Morton argued that, rather than progressing from one paradigm to the next in a continuum from charity toward transformation, students typically remain in the same paradigm. However, there are both thick and thin versions of each paradigm, the former being those that are performed with integrity, "with consistency between its ideals and its practice" (Morton, 1995, p. 28). Upon analyzing this typology, Bringle et al. (2006), in turn, indicated that their findings do not "offer any convincing evidence for Morton's (1995) contention that students have a preference for only one paradigm," and they subsequently argued "that educators should design experiences that deepen the integrity of all three types of service" (p. 12). Critical reflection that leads participants to interrogate their own motivations for engagement within different paradigms and spanning multiple levels—from the micro to the macro—can strengthen the integrity of a given program and potentially contribute to what Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor (2024) described as "transformative solidarity."

Critical Reflection

The literature on community engagement, service-learning, community-based global learning, and other related areas underscores the importance of critical reflection (Hartman et al., 2018; Kiely, 2015; Mitchell, 2008; Norris et al., 2017). Following Kiely (2015), critical reflection is understood here within a critical theory tradition and involves "engaging in a learning process that examines relations of power, hegemony, ideology, trenchant historical structures, and existing institutional arrangements that marginalize and oppress" (para. 19). In this approach, Brookfield (2009) proposed that, by externalizing and investigating power dynamics and uncovering hegemonic assumptions, critical reflection analyzes "commonly held ideas and practices for the extent to which they perpetuate economic inequity, deny compassion, foster a culture of silence and prevent people from realising a sense of common connectedness" (p. 298). Understood as ideology critique, critical reflection "focuses on helping people come to an awareness of how capitalism, White Supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, heterosexism and other ideologies shape beliefs and practices that justify and maintain economic and political inequity" (p. 299). Given the difficulty of seeing naturalized paradigms constructed of unquestioned assumptions, critical reflection can play a key role for all members of the institution.

Critical reflection can lead to perspective transformation,

> the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14)

In a study of an immersion program in Nicaragua, Kiely (2004) indicated that students who participate in international service-learning "that maintains an explicit social justice orientation and is intentionally designed to disrupt students' notion of reality" (p. 8) do indeed experience perspective transformation. However, as suggested in Kiely's longitudinal study, conceptual models tracing students' transformation along a developmental continuum from

charity to social change are problematic (p. 16). Multiple forms of dissonance can play a key role in perspective transformation. Hartman et al. (2018) classified the dissonance experienced by students into two categories: Whereas low-density dissonance "can be addressed through instrumental learning," such as strengthening one's language skills to improve communication, high-density dissonance involves exposure to complex situations and structural issues that "cannot be solved through individual forms of instrumental learning such as skill and knowledge development alone" (p. 102). This distinction speaks to the importance that Morton (1995) placed on both entering more deeply into the paradigm in which one works and exposure to creative dissonance among different paradigms (p. 21).

Freire's (1968/2014) notion of praxis involves both reflection and action directed at the structures of oppression to be transformed (p. 126). It is through this union of reflection and action that one acts to transform the world. Individuals' motivations for acting can reflect the paradigms in which they conceptualize the work as well as how they view their own positionality within systems of power, privilege, and oppression. The first purpose of critical reflection, according to Brookfield (2009), is to externalize and investigate power relationships, and the second purpose is to uncover hegemonic assumptions informed by dominant ideologies (p. 301). Understood as "sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations and justifications that appear self-evidently true and morally desirable," ideologies "legitimise certain political structures and educational practices so that these come to be accepted as representing the normal order of things" (p. 299). The role that emotions and motivations play in ideologies and, subsequently, in critical reflection, should not be overlooked. Ideologies hold an appeal for people, "an appeal that is as much affective as cognitive" (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 60).

The present article emphasizes the development of critical reflection focused on the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of individuals' participation in relation to the dominant ideologies of different paradigms of engagement. Such critical reflection includes examining different scales and parallels of any given paradigm: for example, students who understand their international service trips in terms analogous with a charity, project,

or social change paradigm need to examine humanitarianism, development, and human rights discourses and practices respectively, investigating their power relations and hegemonic assumptions. As apparent self-evident truths are uncovered, so too the problems and paradoxes within and among these complex phenomena can be examined through a critical lens. International service trips and other global health initiatives invariably reveal the incongruities between the particularities of colonization and oppression in different geographies and the pretensions of forging global solidarities that often motivate participants and decision makers. Although potential areas of overlap and convergence among paradigms of engagement can be discerned, some initiatives and projects cannot be aligned or allied. Tuck and Yang (2012) called for "an ethic of incommensurability, which recognizes what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects" (p. 28). It follows that long-term collective action for global health equity must be carried out in ethical solidarity and through strategic collaborations that recognize such incommensurability. It is within this space of tension that critical reflection will ideally become, as Hartman et al. (2018) suggested, "a lifelong commitment to continuously considering the legitimacy of habits and social structures and being willing to make ongoing adjustments and realignments to create a better, more just world" (p. 80).

(Student) Motivations

The pilot study at the micro level described in this article, which was focused on international trips lasting 7–10 days, can be seen as part of a broader series of related activities within the general area of global health, often described with a wide range of terms, including global health experiential education, short-term experiences in global health, international medical electives (Arya & Evert, 2018), short-term medical missions (Roche et al., 2017; Rozier et al., 2017), medical service trips (Sykes, 2014), and medical volunteerism (McLennan, 2014), among others. In addition, it must be emphasized that these short-term health- and medical-related activities can be seen as part of a range of other overlapping phenomena, including international voluntary service (Sherraden et al., 2006), international development work (Heron, 2007), interna-

tional development volunteering (Tiessen, 2012), volunteer humanitarianism (Sandri, 2018), international service-learning (Green & Johnson, 2014; Larsen, 2017), global service-learning (Morrison, 2015), alternative breaks (Piacitelli et al., 2013; Sumka et al., 2015), international experiential learning (Tiessen & Huish, 2014), and volunteer tourism or voluntourism (Mostafanezhad, 2014a, 2014b; Sheyvens, 2011; Vrasti, 2013). These phenomena have some fundamental differences, and each one must be examined individually. However, they also share some key similarities, and the role of student motivations is central to them all.

Students participate in international service trips for a plethora of reasons, driven by both voiced and unvoiced motivations. White and Anderson (2018) observed that "our motives are often buried in our unconscious such that most of the time we only express those that are rational and socially acceptable" (p. 141). What is certain is that the "why" matters. In a study on Canadian youth participants in short-term (3–6 months) international development volunteering, Tiessen (2012) found their motivations to be "largely extrinsic in nature, reflecting the ways in which Canadians are rewarded for their participation in [these programs] in the form of academic credits, improved job opportunities or skills development" (p. 16). Tiessen identified some "key ethical issues" in the interviewees' responses, including the "self-oriented motivations, the absence of concern for structural change, the superficial emphasis on luck rather than explorations of global inequality stemming from our day-to-day actions, and a lack of motivation based on solidarity and improving the lives of others" (p. 16). Moreover, the participants for the study "did not reflect on their own positionality and privilege in relation to race, class and gendered relations of power" (p. 2).

In their study of faith-based missionary service trips to the Dominican Republic, Occhipinti (2016) found that building genuine relationships is a primary objective expressed by participants (p. 265). The missionaries distinguish themselves from tourists by conceptualizing their own short-term trips within "a narrative of giving, of service, and of spiritual growth," which is a "way of validating the mission trip as a religious experience," Occhipinti suggested, "underlining that it is not about the self but about the other" (p. 263). The volunteering experience is "woven into a narrative

of personal morality" that aligns with a neoliberal "vision of social responsibility to the poor that replaces public investment with private, individual action" (p. 266). This construction of a sense of moral self through the performance of good echoes the "helping imperative," as described by Heron (2007) in their study of White Canadian women carrying out development work in Africa. Similarly, these notions reflect the new moral economy, centered on humanitarian reason, as indicated by Fassin (2012).

University students often participate in international volunteering because they perceive such experience as a basic requirement for entry to the job market or admission to professional schools. Using concepts from Freire's liberation pedagogy, Qaiser et al. (2016) described these student volunteers as the "voluntariat"—providing their unskilled labor and paying for the experience—the counterpart of the proletariat, which forms a class of workers who do not own capital and must sell their labor: "The voluntariat not only contributes to the oppression of the community in which they operate, but is simultaneously the object of oppression by liberal institutions, in this case the employment market and graduate schools" (p. e35). Students who wish to enter a health profession may view international volunteering as an opportunity to obtain evidence of "key competencies" that are required in the profession, without which they are at a disadvantage in the admissions process. This approach is evident, for example, in an online guide published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (2017), *Anatomy of an Applicant: Competency Resources and Self-Assessment Guide for Medical School Applicants*, in which "service orientation," the first of nine preprofessional competencies listed, is summarized as follows: "Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society—locally, nationally, and globally" (p. 7).

Similarly, once students are admitted to medical school, experiential learning in other countries continues to be highly valued. Biddle (2021) indicated that "as many as a quarter of all medical students in the United States participate in health-related programs internationally, including voluntourism" and suggested that "universities have learned that offering global

health-themed voluntourism programs is a way of boosting their profile, attracting students and faculty, and making money from organizing and brokering trips" (pp. 113–114). Similarly, "by 2009 nearly half of all dental schools were marketing volunteering abroad to their students" (p. 114). Such practices underscore some of the structural conditions that influence student motivations and the role of institutions in contributing to students' participation in voluntourism and international service.

Much of the research on motivations in volunteerism refers or alludes to the altruism-egoism debate (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Francis & Yasué, 2019; Haslebacher et al., 2019), in which selfless concern for others is opposed to the selfish concern for one's own interests and benefits. In light of a prevalence of such positive/negative binaries in the literature on voluntourism, McLennan (2014) reminded us that "there is a long history of research in the non-profit sector which highlights the nuances of complexities of volunteering" (p. 165). Indeed, there are a myriad of aspects to take into consideration in the exploration of volunteer motivations. Drawing from functionalist theory, Clary et al. (1998) proposed the Volunteer Functions Inventory, an instrument designed to measure six primary functions that are served through volunteering: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective (Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 157). Finkelstien's (2009) study linked aspects of functional analysis to dispositional variables, informed by role identity theory and the notion of a prosocial personality. These variables are examined in relation to intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations, the former in reference to "actions undertaken because they are inherently interesting or in some way satisfying" and the latter understood as behaviors that "are performed in order to obtain some separable outcome" (Finkelstien, 2009, p. 654).

Motivations for participating in volunteerism are diverse, complex, and multifaceted, and they are not necessarily static over time. Similarly, motivational drives involve an interaction of person-based dynamics and situational opportunities (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Furthermore, organizational variables can play a role just as significant as that of dispositional variables and personality traits (Finkelstien, 2009). Avoiding a Manichean approach, Scheyvens (2011) proposed a continuum of six different perspectives on voluntourism—harmful, egocentric, harmless, helpful, education, and social action—in which "social action" is reflected in "greater involvement of volunteers in social movements in the long term" (pp. 98–99). Scheyvens underscored the key role of organizations that "attempt, sometimes idealistically and other times based on a sound platform of knowledge about the political, cultural and economic context, to make the volunteers part of the solution to global problems" (p. 104).

Study Design, Organizational Setting, and Methodology

As Morrison (2015) suggested in relation to global service-learning, it is crucial for researchers to examine their own reflexivity in the process of knowledge creation. This study emerged out of the research team's direct collaboration with the University of San Diego Medical Brigades (USDMB), an official undergraduate student organization at USD. We have worked as the group's advisors on campus since the chapter was founded in 2010, but we have also accompanied them on their international medical service trips, overseeing and working as volunteers, side-by-side with the students. Guerrieri was recruited by the first cohort of students to be their advisor and later traveled with them four times: Honduras and Nicaragua in 2014, and Panama in 2015 and 2024. Zambrano has accompanied the group on six trips: Nicaragua in 2016, Panama in 2016 and 2019, Honduras in 2017 and 2023, and Ghana in 2020. USD is an institution with a strong stated commitment to both social change and internationalization, with a number of programs in areas related to global health. In addition, the university is located in an international border city, such that the local *is* international in a very immediate sense, which makes decisions to allocate resources toward developing outreach and engagement initiatives thousands of miles away even more significant.

The coauthors share a critical stance toward international service trips and related activities precisely due to their echoes of (neo)colonialism, the neoliberal commodification of service, the ethical concerns that can arise, and the potential to produce harm in local communities and the environment, among other problems. However, this stance is coupled with our understanding of the positive collective impact that can be achieved through community engagement based on democratic,

equitable, and mutually beneficial partnerships in local communities—near home or far away—as well as the potential for deep learning experiences in international contexts to lead students toward transformative solidarity.

Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM) and Research Questions

Within our intersecting roles as professors, researchers, and practitioners of community engagement, and through our praxis of action and reflection, we identified the need to develop an instrument that would serve to examine the motivations that drive international initiatives aimed at global health in relation to different paradigms of engagement, including broad geopolitical questions, and, ultimately, to guide critical reflection. This led to the creation of the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), which is designed for use across campus. The research team then implemented a pilot study at the micro level focused specifically on the USDMB. For this study, we determined four categories of self-oriented motivations specifically for students participating in volunteer-based international service trips, as reflected in Figure 1.

The matrix includes two broad categories, "self-oriented motivations" and "other-oriented motivations," each of which contains four additional subcategories. In order to problematize the reductionist altruism–egoism debate, the matrix includes vertical bidirectional arrows in that column to reflect the dynamic and changing interface among the different motivations and paradigms. Similarly, as indicated in the right-hand column, critical reflection takes place across all categories in the matrix, disrupting the self–other binary and interrogating the areas of convergence and potential tensions among the paradigms.

The matrix reflects the three paradigms studied by Morton (1995) but also divides the project paradigm into two categories to encourage the exploration of potential discrepancies between organizational objectives and community-identified outcomes. Moreover, the framework aligns those paradigms to humanitarianism, development, and human rights, explicitly bridging the reflection to the macro level. Most importantly, the categories in the PEMM should not be considered prescriptive but rather adaptable to different initiatives and groups of participants and decision makers on campus.

A central premise here is that in order to make positive contributions to global health equity, institutions of higher education must investigate the paradigms of engagement in which they seek to make those contributions to reveal their paradoxes, underlying colonial structures, and systems of oppression that have been institutionalized. As Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor (2024) indicated, even "philanthropy can become a form of domination" or a "tool for transformation" (p. 174). Through a process of continual critical reflection and the production of creative dissonance that heightens awareness and exposes incongruities, institutions can choose to abandon or change harmful initiatives and work for transformative solidarity. These actions can occur at the individual, programmatic, and institutional levels. For colleges and universities this requires examination of a wide range of initiatives at multiple levels: study-abroad programs, pro bono clinics, overseas centers and institutes, and international research projects, among many others.

For the purpose of our pilot study on international medical service trips, we posed the following three questions:

Figure 1. Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM)

Personal enjoyment and adventure		Self-oriented motivations	Critical reflection
Personal growth and reflection			
Learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented)			
Professional development and career preparation			
Direct service and charity	Humanitarianism	Other-oriented motivations	
Project-based – Addressing community needs	Development		
Project-based – Collaboration with organization			
Social change, transformation, & social justice	Human rights		

1. What are the most significant motivations for students to participate in international medical service trips? As secondary questions, are the motivations more self-oriented or other-oriented, and for each of these general orientations, which of the four motivational categories in the PEMM is the most significant?

2. Do the students' motivations for participating in the international service change significantly upon completing the service? As secondary questions, is there any movement between self-oriented and other-oriented categories and, specifically within other-oriented categories, is there any movement among paradigms of engagement?

3. How effective is the PEMM as a tool for helping individuals to critically reflect on their international service trips?

University of San Diego Medical Brigades and Global Brigades

The University of San Diego is a private, faith-based, medium-sized university located in the western United States. USDMB is a chapter of Global Brigades (GB) and an official student organization at the university, with approximately 25–30 members each year. The group participates in one or two "brigades" (short-term medical trips), in January or in the summer, to Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, or Ghana each year. The executive board recruits and selects the members of the general body of the organization at the beginning of each semester, and there is consistently a portion of students who participate in two or more brigades and eventually become members of the e-board. During the semester, the group meets biweekly to carry out preparations for the upcoming brigade. The travel arrangements and logistics in the destination country are managed entirely by Global Brigades.

Founded in 2003 by students and promoted as a student movement, Global Brigades is an international nonprofit organization that works in seven countries: Belize, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. According to its mission statement, GB seeks to "inspire, mobilize, and collaborate with communities to achieve their own health and economic goals" (Global Brigades, n.d., Our Mission). With more than 500 chapters worldwide, GB is funded primarily by its student volunteers' fund raising in addition to other donations and grants received. Partnering with local governments and other NGOs, the organization promotes a holistic model based on three interlocking areas in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: sustainable health systems, economic development, and water and sanitation infrastructure. GB's approach, as described on their website, is based on building local capacity in order to empower communities to lead their own development and reduce inequalities. As a community reaches a determined level of development, GB stops sending material assistance and shifts their priority to deepening long-term relationships by supporting local leadership, monitoring impact, and consulting on different initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization initiated Global TeleBrigades, a program in which volunteers collaborate with local in-country teams via a virtual platform without traveling internationally. They now offer both in-person and virtual volunteering opportunities.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study in which students from three different brigades, two in 2019—Ghana in January and Panama in June—and another to Ghana in January 2020, were invited to participate by completing pretrip and posttrip surveys. Human subjects approval was obtained from the university's IRB in advance (IRB-2018-553), and students who agreed to participate in the study gave their consent electronically. An email invitation to take the online survey was sent to all the students enrolled for the trip approximately 10 days prior to departure, and a reminder was sent a week later. The messages included a link to a Qualtrics survey, and all responses were recorded anonymously. The posttrip survey was administered upon completion of the brigade, and two reminders were sent inviting participation.

Each survey gathered information on the respondent's age, gender, major, minor, class rank, career plans, international experience, and community engagement experience. The data gathered also included a multipoint question (Q22) in which students were asked to indicate the degree of importance, using a five-point Likert scale, for each of 20 different potential reasons or motives underlying their desire to participate in the brigade (Table 1). This list was

compiled based on previous studies, mentioned in the theoretical framework and literature review, and the research team's experience working with the students.

In the posttrip survey, the prompt was aimed at future participation: "Please rate how important is each motive for you for participating in a future brigade." In addition, participants were also asked in the pretrip survey to identify their most important motive with an open-ended question (Q23): "What is the main reason that you want to participate in this brigade? Please explain in detail." However, in the posttrip survey, this question was retrospective: "What was the main reason . . . ?"

The research team used the PEMM as a tool to analyze both the quantitative data (closed multipoint question Q22) and the qualitative data (open question Q23), following two distinct paths. For the quantitative data, the 20 motives were first ranked by mean independently of their placement in the matrix (see Table 2 below). Then the motives in Q22 were sorted into the eight categories of the matrix. Each motivational category included two or three motives from which a composite mean was derived using the five-point scale (see Table 3). The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28). For the qualitative data, the responses to Q23 were coded using the eight categories from the PEMM, and frequency counts served to determine the distribution of motives by percentage in the matrix. Each member of the research team scored the responses, and together we discussed our scoring to ensure agreement (see Table 4).

Results

Description of the Research Population

The two survey instruments created for this study were sent to a total of 88 USDMB participants. Sixty-eight volunteers (77.3%) responded to the prebrigade survey and provided demographic information about themselves; 27 (30.7%) responded to the postbrigade survey and completed the demographic items. Sixty-six (97%) of the 68 prebrigade respondents completed the survey questions about previous volunteer experience, and all 27 (100%) postbrigade survey respondents completed these items. With regard to the remaining items on the surveys, including Q22 and Q23, 61 (89.7%) prebrigade respondents completed them (internal reliability Cronbach's alpha = .89), and 25 (92.6%) respondents completed them on the postbrigade survey (internal reliability Cronbach's alpha = .90).

Prebrigade Demographic Results

Regarding personal demographics, of the 68 prebrigade respondents, 75% ($n = 51$) identified as female and 25% ($n = 17$) identified as male. Respondents' ages ranged between 18 and 22 years old, and 19.1% ($n = 13$) were first-year students, 42.6% ($n = 29$) were second-year students (sophomore), 30.9% ($n = 21$) were third-year students (junior), and 7.4% ($n = 5$) were fourth-year students (senior).

Table 1. List of 20 Potential Reasons or Motives for Participating in the Brigade (Q22)

1. Fulfill the purpose and objectives of Global Brigades	11. Help others who may be less fortunate than myself
2. Develop skills for my chosen career field	12. Strengthen my résumé for future job opportunities
3. Accompany my friend(s) on this trip abroad	13. Embody my religious or faith-based beliefs
4. Apply academic knowledge to a real-life situation	14. Get away from everything for a while
5. Help to address specific community needs	15. Support an international service organization
6. Learn about another country and culture	16. Reflect on my own life, identity, and future
7. Fulfill the objectives of the specific brigade	17. Give back to the community
8. Go on an adventure traveling abroad	18. Meet new people and network within the profession
9. Help change society for the better	19. Work towards greater equality in society
10. Improve my language skills (Spanish or other language)	20. Travel to a new or unknown destination

Of the 66 respondents who completed the survey items regarding community engagement (CE) experience, 89.4% (*n* = 59) indicated they had previously participated in some kind of CE activity (at USD or elsewhere), 68.2% (*n* = 45) said that they had participated in a USD-related CE activity, and 28.8% (*n* = 19) said they had previously participated in a USDMB brigade.

Asked about previous travel outside the country, 56.1% (*n* = 37) of the 66 respondents indicated that they had made five or more trips outside the United States, 12.1% (*n* = 8) reported four trips, 10.6% (*n* = 7) reported three trips, 1.5% (*n* = 1) reported two trips, 15.2% (*n* = 10) reported one trip, and 4.5% (*n* = 3) indicated they had never been outside the United States. Twelve respondents (18.2%) indicated they had lived outside the United States for a period of several months or more.

The survey provided a list of academic areas of study from which respondents were asked to select their major(s). Behavioral neuroscience was selected 32 times, biology 14 times, biochemistry seven times. The "other" option was selected 10 times: four respondents wrote in psychology, two respondents added sociology, and each of the following majors was written in by one respondent: marine ecology, political science, sociology/concentration in social justice, and sociology-psychology. Several respondents, some 10% (*n* = 7), had not yet selected their major and selected "undeclared."

The survey also included an open question (Q7) regarding the students' future, long-term career plans. Of the 66 respondents, 83.3% (*n* = 55) indicated that they intend to seek a career in health professions: 27.3% (*n* = 15) of these did not specify a field, but 72.7% (*n* = 40) listed a specialization, and 21 different fields or areas were mentioned, including anesthesiology, dentistry, dermatology, neurology, nursing, orthopedics, pediatrics, perinatology, podiatry, and radiology, among others. One respondent wrote law, and two indicated a career in biotechnology. Four students listed multiple possible professions in different sectors, and four were undecided.

Postbrigade Demographic Results

Of the 27 volunteers who responded to the postbrigade survey, 81.5% (*n* = 22) identified as female and 18.5% (*n* = 5) identified as male. Their ages ranged between 18 and 22 years, and 29.6% (*n* = 8) were first-year students, 33.3% (*n* = 9) were second-year students (sophomore), 25.9% (*n* = 7) were third-year students (junior), and 11.1% (*n* = 3) were fourth-year students (senior).

Asked about their experience with community engagement (CE) prior to the brigade they had just completed, 92.6% (*n* = 25) indicated they had participated in some kind of CE activity, and 74.1% (*n* = 20) said they had participated in a USD-related CE activity, whereas 7.4% (*n* = 2) said they had no prior CE experience. With regard to previous brigade experiences, including the trip recently completed, 22 (81.5%) had participated in one USDMB brigade, and 18.5% (*n* = 5) indicated they had participated in two. Twenty-four (88.9%) indicated they would like to participate in another brigade in the future.

The 27 postbrigade surveys showed that, before participating in the trip, 44.4% (*n* = 12) of respondents had made five or more trips outside the United States, 7.4% (*n* = 2) had made four trips; 18.5% (*n* = 5) had made three trips; 25.9% (*n* = 7) had made one trip; and 3.7% (*n* = 1) had never been outside the United States. In addition, 25.9% (*n* = 7) of the respondents said they had lived outside the United States for a period of several months or more.

As on the prebrigade survey, postbrigade survey respondents were asked to indicate their academic major(s). Biochemistry was selected eight times, behavioral neuroscience seven times, biology three times. Six respondents selected the "other" option, with psychology added on three surveys, sociology on two, and marine ecology was added to one. Three respondents said they were undeclared. Regarding the students' future, long-term career plans (Q7), 92.6% (*n* = 25) indicated the health professions, and two were undecided.

Quantitative Data Results

As reflected in Table 2, the top eight motives in the pretrip survey, scoring 4.5–4.3 on the five-point scale (between *extremely important* and *very important*), were all other-oriented except for one, "Learn about another country and culture." The next five in the ranking, scoring 3.7–3.4 (between *very important* and *moderately important*), included three self-oriented and two other-oriented motives. Finally, the seven motives that ranked the lowest, scoring 2.9–1.9 (between *moderately important* and *not at all important*), were all self-oriented. The rankings did not change

significantly in the posttrip survey: The same top eight motives scored 4.5–4.0; of the next five, only one dropped a degree of importance, "Meet new people and network within the profession"; and the final seven scored 2.8–2.0 (between *moderately important* and *slightly important*).

Table 3 illustrates that, when the 20 motives from Q22 were sorted into the eight categories of the PEMM and composite means were calculated, the other-oriented categories collectively scored higher than the self-oriented categories on both pre- and posttrip surveys: 4.5–4.0 (pre) and 4.3–3.8 (post) for other-oriented, and 3.5–2.6 (pre) and 3.7–2.5 (post) for self-oriented.

Qualitative Data Results

In response to the open question (Q23) requesting the main reason that the student "wants" (pretrip) or "wanted" (posttrip) to participate in the brigade, most of the respondents included more than a single motive: The researchers identified a total of 141 motives in the 61 responses from the pretrip survey, an average of 2.31 motives per respondent, and 66 motives among the 25 responses in the posttrip survey, an average of 2.64 motives per respondent. The distribution of motives in the PEMM is reflected in Table 4 as well as two additional categories, created by the researchers, for motives that did not fit clearly into any of the eight categories in the matrix: "Experience—in general" and "Connections and relationships with others."

Table 2. Ranking of Twenty Motives by Mean (Q22)

# in survey	Motive	S[a] or O	Pre-trip mean	SD	Post-trip mean	SD
11	Help others who may be less fortunate than myself	O	4.5	0.7	4.0	1.5
6	Learn about another country and culture	S	4.5	0.7	4.5	0.6
17	Give back to the community	O	4.5	0.7	4.4	1.0
19	Work toward greater equality in society	O	4.5	0.8	4.2	1.2
7	Fulfill the objectives of the specific brigade	O	4.4	0.8	4.2	1.1
5	Help to address specific community needs	O	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.8
9	Help to change society for the better	O	4.4	0.7	4.3	1.1
1	Fulfill the purpose and objectives of Global Brigades	O	4.3	0.7	4.2	1.1
16	Reflect on my own life, identity, and future	S	3.7	1.2	3.7	1.1
2	Develop skills for my chosen career field	S	3.7	0.9	3.4	1.3
15	Support an international service organization	O	3.7	1.1	3.5	1.4
4	Apply academic knowledge to a real-life situation	O	3.5	1.1	3.8	1.0
18	Meet new people and network within the profession	S	3.4	1.3	2.9	1.2
20	Travel to a new or unknown destination	S	2.9	1.3	2.8	1.2
12	Strengthen my résumé for future job opportunities	S	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.3
8	Go on an adventure traveling abroad	S	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.5
10	Improve my language skills (Spanish or other language)	S	2.6	1.2	2.8	1.2
13	Embody my religious or faith-based beliefs	S	2.4	1.5	2.0	1.0
3	Accompany my friend(s) on this trip abroad	S	2.2	1.2	2.2	1.2
14	Get away from everything for a while	S	2.0	1.2	2.2	1.3

Note. The following five-point scale was used: 1 = *Not at all important*, 2 = *Slightly important*, 3 = *Moderately important*, 4 = *Very important*, 5 = *Extremely important*.
[a]S = Self-oriented and O = Other-oriented

Table 3. Degree of Importance Composite Means (Q22) by Motivational Category in the PEMM

Motivational categories from the PEMM	Pre-trip mean (*N* = 61)	SD	Post-trip mean (*N* = 25)	SD
Self-oriented				
Personal enjoyment and adventure (3,8,20)[a]	2.6	1.23	2.5	1.3
Personal growth and reflection (13,14,16)	2.7	1.43	2.6	1.17
Learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented) (4,6,10)	3.5	1.00	3.7	.93
Professional development and career preparation (2,12,18)	3.3	1.13	2.9	1.27
Other-oriented				
Direct service and charity (11,17)	4.5	.7	4.2	1.25
Project-based — Addressing community needs (5,7)	4.4	.8	4.3	.95
Project-based — Collaboration with organization (1,15)	4.0	.9	3.8	1.25
Social change, transformation, & social justice (9,19)	4.4	.75	4.3	1.15

[a]The 20 motives from Q22 (listed in Table 1) are organized into the eight categories of the PEMM and appear in parentheses for each category description.

Table 4. Frequency of Main Motives in Responses to Open Question (Q23)

Motivational categories from the PEMM	Pre-trip motives (*N* = 61)	%	Post-trip motives (*N* = 25)	%
Self-oriented				
Personal enjoyment and adventure	12	8.5%	9	13.6%
Personal growth and reflection	11	7.8%	10	15.2%
Learning and skill development (non-career)	34	24.1%	14	21.2%
Professional development and career preparation	10	7.1%	6	9.1%
Other-oriented				
Direct service and charity	35	24.8%	12	18.2%
Project-based — Addressing community needs	4	2.8%	1	1.5%
Project-based — Collaboration with organization	9	6.4%	3	4.5%
Social change, transformation, & social justice	8	5.7%	4	6.1%
Additional categories				
Experience — in general	6	4.3%	1	1.5%
Connections and relationships with others	12	8.5%	6	9.1%
Total number of motives in responses	141	100%	66	100%

Discussion

With regard to our first research question, unlike the respondents in Tiessen's (2012) study, students' responses to multipoint Q22 (Table 2) indicated that they were driven significantly by other-oriented motivations to participate in the international service trip. Similarly, Table 3 reflects that all four categories of other-oriented motivations in the PEMM ranked higher than all four categories of self-oriented motivations on both surveys. However, in response to the open question (Q23), the overall frequency of self-oriented motives was greater than that of other-oriented motives: On the pre-trip survey 47.5% (*n* = 67) of the motives listed were self-oriented, and 39.7% (*n* = 56) were other-oriented. In other words, in their responses to the list of specific questions, students considered other-oriented motivations more important, but when asked to provide their main reason for participating, they gravitated overall toward the self-oriented reasons.

Another important difference emerged in Q23 among the four other-oriented categories. There were references aligned with the "social change, transformation, and social justice" paradigm. For example, students referred to the need to "reach towards a greater equality within our society" and "to make a positive impact in the world," as well as a "sense of obligation to work towards a greater equitable society." However, motives related to "direct service and charity" were listed much more frequently than those in the other three categories, which comprise the "project-based" and "social change" paradigms, all together: 24.8% (*n* = 35) compared to 14.9% (*n* = 21). Some examples of this helping imperative, coded here within the "direct service and charity" paradigm, include the need "to enrich the lives of others," "to provide any help I can," "to aid others in another country," and "helping to empower them," among others.

Despite being students at a faith-based institution, the respondents considered the motivation to "embody my religious or faith-based beliefs" only slightly important in Q22, and they did not use these specific terms at all in their responses to Q23. Nonetheless, 12 (19.7%) respondents mentioned a desire to form relationships and connections with other people or to immerse themselves in a different culture. This result is similar to Occhipinti's (2016) findings, in their study of faith-based missionary service trips to the Dominican Republic, that building genuine relationships was a primary objective expressed by participants (p. 265). Likewise, some students in the present study expressed their "passion" for serving others; a desire "to serve the people in the most dignified way"; the purpose of spreading "love to the people within the communities"; and feeling "blessed and happy to be able to have this experience." These sentiments could be interpreted through multiples lenses, including both secular and religious or faith-based.

Students' sense of their own privilege appeared in some responses, usually in relation to the imperative to help others. Echoing Tiessen's (2012) critique of their respondents' "superficial emphasis on luck rather than explorations of global inequality" (p. 16), the notion of privilege was typically expressed in Q23 within a framework of good fortune and bad fortune, including hints of saviorism and paternalism in a couple of responses. In addition, one student expressed a sense of guilt or regret—"I feel like I do not give back enough to my community even though I have countless opportunities"—which corresponds with the protective function ("to reduce negative feelings") that can be served through volunteering, as proposed in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998). Another student emphasized the need to avoid "lip service" and take action: "I think it's important to get out there and help others when possible because actions speak louder than words." Such responses point to the need to guide students in developing a praxis of collaboration, uniting action with critical reflection, such that their work can contribute to counter-hegemonic practices.

Among the four categories of self-oriented motivations, "learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented)" was considered more important than the other three categories in the quantitative data (Table 3) and appeared more frequently in the qualitative data (Table 4). In addition, "learn about another country and culture" was ranked among the highest of all 20 motives (Table 2). These tendencies were consistent in both the pretrip and posttrip surveys.

With regard to our second research question, Tables 2 and 3 suggest that students' motivations for participating in the international service did not change significantly upon completing the service, and it is worth reiterating that motives within the "social change, transformation, and social justice" paradigm

were considered among the most important. However, as mentioned previously, Table 4 illustrates that the overall frequency of self-oriented motives was greater than that of other-oriented motives, a tendency that intensified in the posttrip survey; almost twice as many self-oriented motives were listed: 59.1% (n = 39) compared to 30.3% (n = 20). The frequency of motives listed in Q23 increased in the posttrip survey for three self-oriented categories in the PEMM: "personal enjoyment and adventure" (from 8.5% to 13.6%), "personal growth and reflection" (from 7.8% to 15.2%), and "professional development and career preparation" (from 7.1% to 9.1%). On the other hand, other-oriented project-based motives decreased overall (9.2% to 6%).

With regard to our third research question on the effectiveness of the PEMM for helping participants to critically reflect on their international service trips, our study design and mixed-methods approach played a key role. The first method served to expose students to a wide range of predetermined motives and collect quantitative data on their responses, but the second (qualitative) method prompted them to identify the main reason and thus initiated the reflective process. As noted, students responded by providing an average of two to three different motives. The study results reflected the complex and fluid movement among multiple self-oriented and other-oriented motivations, spanning different paradigms of engagement. As Allen et al. (2016) indicated, the purposes of mixed methods include both "complementarity," in which different methods serve to enhance and elaborate on each other, and "initiation," which involves "a search for contradiction or contrast between methods" (p. 336). These contradictions and contrasts can produce dissonance that in turn may open a space for deeper critical reflection.

Although an international service trip experience can produce perspective transformation and consciousness-raising (Kiely, 2004; McGehee, 2012; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Portman & Martin, 2015), we argue that guiding participants in the development of critical reflection, using tools like the PEMM and others, is a fundamental imperative for all stages of a program. This need is underscored by the fact that the pilot study's results did not reflect a significant shift, overall, toward motivations aligned with the social change, transformation,

and social justice paradigm following the international experience. It follows that integration in the research methodology constitutes a key factor for the reflective process. As Guetterman and Manojlovich (2024) stated, "Integration is the most important characteristic of mixed methods research and refers to the intentional combining of qualitative and quantitative data, methods, results and interpretation such that the two forms of research become interdependent to address research questions" (p. 470). When participants are exposed to the PEMM after completing the survey, they join the researchers in interpreting the results, and more opportunities for critical reflection emerge when different, sometimes diametrically opposed, interpretations are offered.

The notion of "empowerment," for example, appeared among many responses in Q23, reflecting students' desire to help empower the communities with whom they work. This desire can be understood in ways that align with any of the three paradigms (charity, project-based, and social change), but it can also be interpreted as indicative of a paternalistic attitude that infantilizes the recipients of the volunteers' efforts and resources, thus reifying—instead of disrupting—power differentials. On the other hand, it should be noted that the idea of empowering communities to lead their own development and reduce inequalities is a central part of Global Brigades' organizational mission and discourse, which also explains in part students' use of this language. Using the PEMM, students reflect on the dynamics of their own role as volunteers with the NGO but also on historical and current conditions of international development work and the tensions that can exist among international aid, state responsibilities, and citizen rights. This example speaks to the need to continually examine all the relationships involved in any given partnership and setting to ensure that it is truly community-driven through a self-determined model of change. Accordingly, the will to empower is replaced by a will to learn to listen to community residents and collaborate collectively.

Students' future career plans constitute a key area of critical reflection for bridging self-oriented and other-oriented motivations, again using this binary here as a basic heuristic to initiate a deeper investigation of the relations between the individual and the

profession and between the profession and the broader society. As indicated, a large majority of the participants in the present pilot study intend to seek careers in the health professions, which the students consider to be inherently other-centered. Nonetheless, the PEMM leads participants in the USDMB to examine multiple paradigms of engagement in which a given profession can operate, in local and international settings, and key themes within the global health field: health care as humanitarianism (e.g., Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders), the politicization of health care access, and health care as a basic human right, among many others. All professions have epistemologies, power dynamics, and ideologies that directly or indirectly can contribute to inequities and oppression. Accordingly, the imperative here is for students to reflect on their career plans with the purpose of uncovering the hegemonic values of the given profession—in whatever field or sector—deconstructing professional practices and exploring how these might be transformed to make the profession more socially just (Baillie et al., 2012; Brookfield, 2009).

Implications and Conclusions

A key implication of the pilot study at the micro level involves the program's degree of autonomy or curricular integration. Although the PEMM proved to be an effective tool when used with the student group, ideally, these international service programs would not be extracurricular and autonomous, but rather integrated into an academic program with structures to help ensure consistency, continuity, and depth in the ethical approach, contextualization, and critical reflection. In this sense, there are many resources from which to draw in order to examine ethical, philosophical, and ideological considerations; approaches to community partnerships; program structure and logistics; student leadership; and other areas (Green & Johnson, 2014; Hartman et al., 2018; Sumka et al., 2015; Tiessen & Huish, 2014; among others). Additionally, there are many studies focused on ethical considerations in international (medical) service trips, humanitarian volunteerism, community-based global learning, and related areas, as well as calls for clear guidelines to help orient groups involved (Arya & Evert, 2018; Asgary & Junck, 2013; DeCamp, 2011; Gendle & Tapler, 2021; Hartman, 2017; Hartman et al., 2018; Kittle & McCarthy,

2015; Langowski & Iltis, 2011; McCall & Iltis, 2014; Roche et al., 2017). From these and other sources, program leaders and participants can develop an ethical approach, establishing standards and benchmark practices, that complements the critical reflection produced through implementing the PEMM.

The pilot study provided a nuanced examination of the wide range of motives that drive students to participate in international medical service trips and how they interface with different paradigms of engagement. As a theoretical framework that bridges the micro and the macro—from individual cognitive, conative, and affective dimensions to broad geopolitical paradigms such as humanitarianism, development, and human rights—the PEMM supports a "self-to-system" approach. Such an approach encourages participants "to discern both personal aspects related to social justice such as the ways their socialization shapes their thinking, as well as the structural elements of oppression, where power dynamics operate in broader systemic ways" (Boyd et al., 2016, p. 173). As this pilot study is expanded and further developed at the institutional level, examining programs, projects, and initiatives in different disciplines, schools, and areas across campus, the PEMM can be a useful tool for critically reflecting on professional and disciplinary blind spots (Mitchell, 2002), avoiding historically problematic practices in global social justice initiatives (Machado de Oliveira, 2021), and probing the particularities of colonization in specific regions in lieu of employing abstract categories of the oppressed and oppressor (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Study Limitations and Future Research

This pilot study has some inherent limitations. Although the PEMM was designed to be applied in initiatives across the institution, the pilot study focused on a small sample size comprised of members of a single student group. Further data could have been gathered by including subsequent methods following the surveys, such as interviews and focus groups. In addition, the results from this pilot study are not generalizable due to several characteristics of the university and the student group. USD has received the community engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation and is designated an Ashoka U Changemaker

campus, both of which speak to aspects of the overall institutional culture and commitment to the public good. Furthermore, when the USDMB leadership team selects new members for the upcoming term, they tend to favor applicants whose responses reflect more other-oriented motivations for joining. All these factors speak to the importance of examining the complexity of individual motivations within their broader context, given that they do not function independently of external, situational, and organizational variables, for example, as reflected in studies by Clary and Snyder (1999) and Finkelstien (2009), among others.

Planned future research consists of expanding the pilot study into a multilevel, multisetting inquiry—drawing from aspects of the mixed methodology described by Allen et al. (2016)—in order to implement the PEMM at the institutional level through four interrelated steps. The first involves widening the scope of inquiry by identifying and mapping across campus the international projects, programs, and initiatives—each conceptualized as a unique setting with one or more international sites—related to the global health equity field. The second consists of adapting the previous survey questions to reflect the motivational categories appropriate for each group of participants (students, staff, faculty, administrators) and the nature of their proposed or ongoing activity on the institutional map. The third involves incorporating a sequential design as we build upon the initial survey structure, which allows data gathered with one method to inform further methodological decisions: The active incorporation of findings into subsequent data collection efforts becomes a reflexive process that involves research team members and participants. In the fourth step, the results from different settings are brought together for strategic interplay and interpretation to produce a richer understanding of the complexity of the network of global health work across campus, without sacrificing specificity at any level of analysis. As Allen et al. (2016) emphasized, "multisite work invites both zooming in and zooming out," which enables researchers to search for "both the nomothetic (generalizations across sites) and the idiographic (site-specific findings)" (p. 342). Ultimately, this future research aims at deepening critical reflection on paradigms of international engagement and outreach at the institutional level, counteracting colonial structures and neoliberal tendencies, and developing a network of collaboration for transformative solidarity.

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Elevating Community Voices to Reexamine Student Cultural Sensitivity and Adaptability in Electronic Service-Learning (e-SL)

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Abstract

This study investigates how communities perceive students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in electronic service-learning (e-SL) programs, focusing on Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. Employing qualitative methodology that incorporates online in-depth interviews and surveys, the research fills a gap by concentrating on community perspectives and not solely on student experiences. Although communities regard Ateneo students as culturally sensitive, the study uncovers complex factors shaping these perceptions. These factors include the dual role of Ateneo's institutional reputation, the effectiveness of digital platforms balanced against the irreplaceable value of face-to-face interactions, and the importance of nuanced communication skills. These findings offer actionable insights for educators, administrators, and community coordinators, urging them to consider cultural and technological factors deeply when implementing e-SL programs. The study is timely due to the increasing digital transformation in educational settings and holds implications for refining and enhancing e-SL practices.

Keywords: e-service-learning (e-SL), community perceptions, cultural sensitivity, cultural adaptability, Philippines

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Cultural sensitivity and adaptability are valuable and essential skills in an interconnected world across geographical boundaries. This imperative has gained added complexity with the COVID-19 pandemic, which spurred a sudden and significant shift from traditional service-learning (SL) modes to the extensive application of electronic service-learning (e-SL). The ubiquity of e-SL raises new questions about managing cross-cultural interaction effectively and sensitively in a virtual environment. Although ample research has examined the cultural sensitivity and adaptability of students in traditional SL programs (Amerson, 2010; Chen et al., 2012; Short et al., 2020), there is a dearth of studies that explore how these attributes are perceived by partner communities, particularly in an e-SL context. This study aims to fill this signifi-cant gap by examining the central research question: How do partner communities perceive students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-SL settings? Furthermore, what is the specific manifestation of cultural sensitivity and adaptability of students at Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines?

The uniqueness of the e-SL context in this study deserves special attention. Unlike traditional SL, which involves face-to-face (f2f) interactions, e-SL occurs virtually (Faulconer, 2021; Waldner et al., 2012). This change in the medium could influence how cultural sensitivity and adaptability are demonstrated and perceived. Although e-SL offers the advantage of bypassing geographical borders, it also introduces challenges in building trust and rapport among the SL stakeholders, who play crucial roles in cultural sensitivity and

adaptability. Thus, we conduct the study in this specific and nuanced setting.

For this study, taking inspiration from the cultural intelligence framework of Earley & Ang (2003), "cultural sensitivity" is defined as the awareness, understanding, and respect students display toward their partner communities' cultural norms, values, and expectations. Similarly, "cultural adaptability" is the students' flexibility and willingness to adjust their behavior, timing, and methods to align with these communities' cultural expectations and practical needs. We investigate both of these operational definitions as we pose three subquestions. First, do partner communities believe that students involved in e-SL programs exhibit understanding and respect for their local culture and norms? Understanding and respecting local culture and norms are foundational in ensuring that any initiative is effective and sensitive to the community's inherent values and practices, fostering a more collaborative and harmonious engagement (De Weger et al., 2018). Second, do these communities find the scope and timing of the students' implementation of e-SL projects to be culturally sensitive and adaptable? Here, it is pertinent to note that notions of time and the acceptable scope of project activities are deeply ingrained in many cultures and can influence perceptions of respect and adaptability (Deal et al., 2003; Suda, 2007). Lastly, how does the level of trust and communication between students and partner communities influence perceptions of students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability? Effective trust and communication are cornerstones for mutual understanding, influencing how cultural efforts are perceived and adapted to by both parties (Taras et al., 2021). Thus, these subquestions illuminate the core research question and help operationalize the concepts of cultural sensitivity and adaptability within the study's framework.

The implications of this research extend beyond academia to the real-world design, ethical considerations, and effectiveness of e-SL programs. By incorporating the perspectives of partner communities, this study aspires to bring about more equitable dynamics in e-SL, which could lead to more effective engagements. This article commences with a literature review, elaborates on the conceptual framework and methodologies, discusses the findings, and concludes with actionable recommendations.

The study offers theoretical and practical insights and aims toward a broad audience—ranging from academic researchers and educators to community leaders and policymakers. Ultimately, it seeks to deepen our understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in enhancing cultural sensitivity and adaptability within the unique context of e-SL.

Literature Review

SL has evolved as an essential pedagogical tool that fuses academic learning objectives with community engagement, aiming to enrich the learning experience while fostering civic responsibility and strengthening communities (Block & Bartkus, 2019). With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, this paradigm has rapidly shifted to adapt to the necessities of remote engagement, giving rise to the ubiquity of e-SL (Dapena et al., 2022; Schmidt, 2021). The evolution of SL into e-SL presents a new set of complexities and opportunities, warranting holistic scrutiny of existing academic discourse to identify gaps that this current study aims to fill.

One core focus threaded through the fabric of SL literature is the essential collaboration of stakeholders, particularly between academic institutions and community partner organizations (CPOs). Suckale et al. (2018) suggested that extended course sequences, rather than one-off classes, lead to more meaningful service, highlighting the need for long-term engagement. Building on this premise, George-Paschal et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of institutional support and alignment between stakeholders in fostering reciprocity in SL, a principle underscoring mutual benefits for community partners and academic institutions (Darby et al., 2023; Karasik, 2020). However, although the literature emphasizes the benefits of collaboration, it often overlooks the potential power dynamics and conflicts that can arise between academic institutions and community partners. For instance, d'Arlach et al. (2009) highlighted that unequal power relations can hinder genuine reciprocity, suggesting the need for more balanced partnership models. Thus, research consistently affirms the need for a mutual exchange of resources, knowledge, and advantages, with many studies highlighting that ensuring equitable and reciprocal interactions for all parties involved constitutes the essence of effective SL collaborations (Willingham & Darby, 2023).

Furthermore, Geller et al. (2016) contended that community organizations are not just service recipients but entities with organizational capacities and visions that can actively optimize the benefits gained from SL.

Building on collaboration between stakeholders, the role of faculty members stands out as pivotal. Their involvement bridges the gap between academic and community objectives, fosters SL partnerships, and profoundly impacts the outcomes of SL projects (Compare et al., 2022; Karasik, 2020; Karasik & Hafner, 2021). Faculty members play a crucial role, and the literature often assumes they possess the necessary skills and commitment to manage these partnerships effectively. However, Karasik (2020) and Abenir et al. (2020) argued that faculty may struggle to balance academic responsibilities with community engagement without proper training and institutional support, potentially leading to suboptimal SL outcomes. Thus, researchers argue for more communication and proper engagement training between faculty and community partners to avert partnership failures (Abenir et al., 2021; Darby et al., 2023; Karasik, 2020). This observation connects to another prevalent theme in SL literature, which delves into the motivations and benefits propelling community partners to join these initiatives. Darby and Willingham (2022) noted that positive interactions with students often translate into memorable experiences that effectively sustain community engagement. Similarly, Cronley et al. (2015) found that motivations such as organizational capacity and the joy of mentoring can drive community partners to engage further in SL initiatives.

Although there is abundant research on SL's benefits and operational aspects, there is an equally compelling body of work on the ethical considerations involved. Matthews (2019) foregrounded the critical concern of power imbalances, contending that community partners frequently experience marginalization or disempowerment during initial project phases. In response, Mtawa and Fongwa (2022) advocated prioritizing "the four Rs"—respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection—to cultivate more equitable and sustainable partnerships. The practical implementation of these four Rs can be seen in the studies of Doran et al. (2021), which demonstrated how respecting community sensibilities and ensuring reciprocal benefits can lead to more effective and lasting

SL partnerships. For instance, Doran et al. suggested adopting a relational approach to ethics in SL through structured reflections that accentuate social justice and community partners' ownership of decision-making processes. Implementing such an approach allows students and community partners to continuously assess and align their goals, fostering mutual understanding and sustained engagement.

Integral to all these facets of SL is the undercurrent of effective communication. Scholars like McCrickard (2011) have emphasized that listening to and acknowledging community perspectives deepens the quality of engagements and fosters trust and mutual respect. Despite its recognized importance, cultural and linguistic barriers often challenge effective communication, especially in diverse global SL or other international electronic educational settings. Studies by Hawes et al. (2021) and Toprak and Genc-Kumtepe (2014) illustrate how miscommunication can lead to misunderstandings and reduced project efficacy, highlighting the need for tailored communication strategies. Thus, Kindred (2020) suggests that projects built on practical communication foundations tend to have longer lasting impacts, solidifying the partnership over time.

The scholarly discourse pivots toward digital adaptability and resilience in transitioning from traditional SL to e-SL, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Barker et al. (2021) underscored the necessity of adaptability for fostering resilience, especially in crisis scenarios such as a pandemic. They argued that resilience is instrumental in sustaining partnerships and crucial for ensuring ongoing value to community partners amid challenges. To this end, Barker et al. advocated for SL initiatives to prioritize resilience-building through specialized training or other preparatory steps. Expanding on this theme, Pellerano et al. (2023) and Walker et al. (2021) explored the changing roles and capacities of community partners in an SL environment, whether virtual or f2f. These studies emphasized the significance of recognizing community partners as coeducators and incorporating them into planning and assessment processes. We should view community partners not as passive recipients but as active contributors to student learning outcomes, warranting their integration into the pedagogical

process for mutual benefit (Goldberg & Atkins, 2020; Vizenor et al., 2017). Couillou et al. (2023) provided a relevant examination of how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted community-based learning, suggesting that flexibility, technological agility, and robust communication systems are crucial for navigating such challenges.

Furthermore, comparative studies from Asia, such as those by Xiao et al. (2022) in Hong Kong, Shek et al. (2022) in mainland China, Choi et al. (2023) in South Korea, Abenir et al. (2023) in the Philippines, and Bardus et al. (2022) in Lebanon, highlight unique cultural dynamics and challenges in implementing SL programs. These studies reveal that cultural norms and technological infrastructure significantly influence the effectiveness of e-SL initiatives, offering a more global perspective that complements the predominantly American- and European-focused literature.

The transition to e-SL opens new avenues for inquiry, particularly concerning cultural sensitivity and adaptability. Although previous studies have shown a positive correlation between student engagement in f2f SL and heightened cultural awareness (Amerson, 2010; Chen et al., 2012; Short et al., 2020), the shift to e-SL, accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, tests this correlation. There is a notable gap in the literature concerning community partners' perceptions of students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-SL settings. As the emphasis on using e-SL programs extends globally, transcending geographical barriers, this gap becomes increasingly significant. Additionally, incorporating perspectives from non-Western contexts can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural sensitivity and adaptability are perceived across different cultural landscapes, thereby enhancing the universality of SL practices. Addressing this research gap is thus vital for ensuring that e-SL initiatives are operationally effective and culturally resonant with the values and expectations of the communities they try to assist in the current times.

Conceptual Framework

The present study anchors its theoretical foundation in two crucial frameworks: "Cultural Intelligence" by Earley & Ang (2003) and Paulo Freire's (1968/2018) seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. These frameworks are instrumental in guiding our exploration of the central research question: "How do partner communities perceive the cultural sensitivity and adaptability of students in e-SL settings?"

Earley & Ang (2003) posited their concept of cultural intelligence by understanding effectiveness in cross-cultural settings through three dimensions: cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. The cognitive aspect covers understanding different cultures' norms, values, and beliefs. The motivational aspect is the drive and confidence to engage with diverse cultural contexts. The behavioral aspect involves adapting actions and communication methods in culturally appropriate ways. In the context of this study, cultural intelligence offers an analytical lens for dissecting the different facets of cultural sensitivity and adaptability exhibited by students. It provides a theoretical foundation for evaluating not just what students know about a culture (cognitive) but also their interest and confidence in engaging with it (motivational) and their ability to adapt their behaviors accordingly (behavioral). Within this framework, cultural sensitivity aligns with the cognitive and motivational elements of cultural intelligence, whereas cultural adaptability aligns with the behavioral facet. By employing the lens of cultural intelligence, we can dissect the varying respects in which students are culturally sensitive and adaptable and how the community stakeholders perceive these qualities in e-SL contexts.

Paulo Freire's (1968/2018) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* offers a transformative approach to education and community engagement founded on dialogue, critical thinking, and the cocreation of knowledge. Freire argued that for any form of education to be liberating, it must be a mutual process involving both the "teacher" and the "learner" rather than a top-down dissemination of knowledge. Informed by Freire's pedagogy for this study, the approach to e-SL recognizes that partner communities are not merely recipients of services. Instead, they act as coeducators and vital stakeholders. Drawing inspiration from Freire, this study suggests including these communities' perspectives to better evaluate an e-SL program's effectiveness. Thus, the central research question reflects an intrinsic Freirean ethos by seeking to understand the communities' perceptions, thereby democratizing the evaluation process.

The interlacing of these theories allows us to confront the research question from both an operational and a moral standpoint, exploring not only the "how" but also the "why" and "wherefore" of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-SL programs. This study assumes that cultural sensitivity and adaptability are integral for successful and meaningful e-SL engagements. Our hypothesis therefore posits that the communities' perception of students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability will significantly shape the efficacy and overall impact of e-SL projects.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative research to investigate the complexities surrounding students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-SL engagements, particularly as perceived by CPOs. The qualitative approach enables us to dig deeper into these community partners' nuanced experiences and perceptions, thus enriching our understanding of the dynamics at play.

Recognizing the pivotal role educational institutions hold in sculpting such programs, we selected Ateneo de Manila University (Ateneo) as our case study due to the robustness of its SL initiatives. Ateneo's Office for Social Concern and Involvement (OSCI), established in 1975, actively fosters positive change in marginalized communities across various academic disciplines (Nebres, 1981). Notably, Ateneo pioneered the Philippines' first SL course, Theory and Practice of Social Development, also in 1975 (Sescon & Tuaño, 2012). Prodded by developments in national policies for a K-12 curriculum compatible with a tertiary or university curriculum, and partly as a response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ateneo adapted its college curriculum—particularly for the third year of study—to offer integrated e-SL experience. This new curriculum combined two core courses: the National Service Training Program 12 (NSTP 12), also known as Bigkis, and Social Science 13 (SocSc 13), a course titled The Economy, Society, and Sustainable Development. Ateneo formators oversee NSTP 12, which focuses on the hands-on facets of community engagement. In contrast, faculty members from the School of Social Sciences primarily teach SocSc 13, which lays the academic foundation for concepts of economics and sustainable develop-ment (Loyola Schools, Ateneo de Manila University, 2020). The intentional pairing of NSTP 12 and SocSc 13 aims to fuse theoretical rigor with real-world community involvement, epitomizing Ateneo's ethos of shaping students into "persons for and with others" (Loyola Schools, Ateneo de Manila University, 2020).

The study targeted key contact persons from a diverse array of CPOs as participants, including government agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs; e.g., civil society groups, faith-based organizations, cooperatives, and people's organizations). The research team chose these individuals for their capacity to provide nuanced insights into the University's SL programs, especially within the intertwined NSTP 12 and SocSc 13 framework. Since these respondents directly engaged with Ateneo from January to December 2022, they added a rich and multifaceted depth to the qualitative data.

In-depth online interviews formed the core of data collection, using a specially designed research instrument: the Community Organization Interview Questions (COIQ), adapted from Barrientos (2010). The COIQ aligns with specific subinquiries: first, it assesses the partner communities' perception of Ateneo students' respect for their culture both before and after e-SL activities; second, it evaluates the timing and scope of e-SL project implementation concerning cultural expectations; and third, it seeks to understand the community's trust level and communication dynamics with Ateneo students, delving into their influence on perceived student cultural sensitivity and adaptability. Each subquestion within the COIQ aims to draw out detailed insights from community perspectives. Qualitative feedback from the Community Impact Feedback Questionnaire (CIFQ) supplements the primary research for a more comprehensive data analysis.

The CIFQ, a tool validated by Lau and Snell (2021), quantitatively assesses the perceived outcomes of SL projects shortly after they conclude. For this study, only the qualitative responses underwent examination. Respondents provided these responses when prompted to give additional comments and suggestions for enhancing Ateneo's SL program. To cater to those who prefer communicating in Filipino, the COIQ and CIFQ underwent professional translation and validation.

The University Research Ethics Office granted ethical clearance. Before participation, all participants received a comprehensive briefing about the study, their rights, and procedures to ensure they gave informed consent. Interviewers recorded the interviews with the respondents' prior permission and later transcribed them. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999/2017), thematic analysis processed the qualitative data from the COIQ and CIFQ. The thematic analysis involved several steps, including familiarization with the data through repeated readings of transcripts, initial coding to identify significant segments related to cultural sensitivity and adaptability, and the development of themes through the constant comparison of codes across different interviews. Taguette, an open-source qualitative data analysis tool, was utilized to systematically organize and manage the coding process. To enhance the reliability of the analysis, two of the researchers independently conducted initial coding, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus. This analysis method facilitated the continuous comparison of emerging themes, adding depth to the study's findings. To further validate and provide nuance to the findings, forums with Ateneo's partner communities and other stakeholders took place. These forums served as a form of member checking, allowing community partners to review and provide feedback on the preliminary themes identified during the analysis. The primary objective of these sessions was to refine and validate the interpretation of qualitative data, ensuring it genuinely reflects the experiences and perspectives of community partners. This process ensured that the interpretations accurately reflected the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Results

Demographic Profile of Research Participants

The COIQ featured interviews with 22 participants, 15 females and seven males, representing a mix of governmental and nongovernmental organizational affiliations. The timing of these interviews ranged from 2 to 3 months after two distinct durations: January–May 2022 and August–December 2022. Each interview lasted a minimum of one hour to a maximum of 1.5 hours.

From the CIFQ's more extensive data set, 101 out of the targeted 129 key contacts responded, representing 46 of Ateneo's 51 CPOs. Most respondents hailed from NGOs, making up 74% of the sample. In contrast, the remaining 26% came from local and national government organizations. A notable 61% of these CPOs had already established SL and community engagement collaborations with Ateneo before the School Year (SY) 2021–2022.

A variety of e-SL projects emerged from the data. Direct services such as online training and tutorials ($n = 63$) were predominant, trailed by research activities ($n = 47$) and other indirect services like content creation ($n = 42$). Respondents say these projects catered to a spectrum of community requirements, from ICT development and educational assistance initiatives to health and wellness drives.

Insights from the COIQ interviews illuminated the manifold advantages of e-SL projects. Benefits ranged from educational milestones like computer literacy and academic aid to health-centric results, encompassing COVID-19 awareness and mental health interventions. The data also revealed contributions to business expansion and artistic endeavors. The results demonstrate a broad spectrum of advantages derived from e-SL projects, highlighting their versatility and relevance in meeting diverse community needs.

Furthermore, the researchers conducted a comparative thematic analysis to explore potential differences in perceptions between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. However, no significant differences were identified, indicating that the perceptions of cultural sensitivity and adaptability were consistent across both types of organizations.

Community Views on Ateneo Students' Observance of Local Norms and Values

Ateneo's reputation as an elite institution presents advantages and challenges when its students collaborate with community partners. How do the communities perceive the degree to which students involved in Ateneo's e-SL programs exhibit understanding and respect for local culture and norms, particularly in virtual settings? Our research delves into the complexities and contradictions that arise during these interactions.

The Double-Edged Sword of Prestige

The reputation of Ateneo as an elite university that primarily caters to the privileged in Philippine society often precedes its students when they engage with community partners. Although the institution's prestige can create a positive initial impression, it also raises questions about the students' ability to genuinely comprehend these communities' lived experiences. One community partner described their initial awe: "When they are from Ateneo, I am like, 'Wow!'. . . and my students were like, 'Oh my gosh ma'am, really? We are engaging with students from Ateneo?'" (COIQ Transcript 01, translated from Tagalog).

However, this sense of prestige—which often implies excellence in capabilities— also fosters skepticism about whether Ateneo students can genuinely empathize with the challenges the partner communities face. One such community member summed up this concern:

> Our perception is that if you are an Ateneo student, you are rich and influential. Unlike in an urban poor community, we do not have influence. So, aside from them being wealthy, they might not understand our situation because they have never experienced poverty. (COIQ Transcript 09, translated from Tagalog)

Ateneo prestige is then a double-edged sword. Although it may open doors and create initial enthusiasm, it can also be a barrier that spawns skepticism, which students must actively overcome.

Virtual Sincerity—More Than Just a Screen

Despite the virtual interactions in the SL program, community partners have reported a noticeable change in their initial perceptions of Ateneo students. One interviewee shared an insightful perspective:

> Despite the challenges brought about by the virtual setup, the Ateneo students sincerely try to understand our community. They are not just asking questions; they are genuinely trying to put themselves in the shoes of our community leaders to understand our challenges. (COIQ Transcript 19)

This change is not an isolated observation but has confirmation from other community members. Another participant shared:

> At first, I had reservations. I wondered how much could be accomplished through a screen with Ateneo students, but after our online interactions, I see that it is feasible. Limitations are there, but the sincerity [of the Ateneo students] comes across. (COIQ Transcript 20)

However, it is crucial to note that most survey respondents, according to the qualitative responses from the CIFQ, expressed a preference for in-person interactions with Ateneo students once it is safe to do so, as one noted: "Actually, it would be more effective if service-learning engagements are face-to-face" (CIFQ Respondent 24). Another respondent further explained:

> There should be actual on-the-ground participation by the students after COVID-19. Face-to-face training would help the community more because sometimes the internet connection is unstable, hindering learning. (CIFQ Respondent 3)

These observations indicate that the physical presence of students is perceived to have a more significant impact on the effectiveness of the SL program than remote or virtual engagements.

Language as a Bridge—Breaking Stereotypes

When one considers the overarching sincerity of Ateneo students, it is worth noting that they also make concerted efforts to be culturally sensitive, particularly in using the vernacular to show respect for the lingua franca of communication in their assigned areas. One community partner expressed this shift in perception eloquently:

> We initially thought they would primarily speak English and maybe even look down on us, but they really tried their best to speak Tagalog. It was endearing. They showed respect rather than flaunting their English proficiency. (COIQ Transcript 13, translated from Tagalog)

This dedication to linguistic use of the vernacular, demonstrating cultural sensitivity, is further emphasized by another statement: "They do not speak in English even if they sometimes find it hard to speak in Tagalog, but they still make an effort to

converse in Tagalog" (COIQ Transcript 17, translated from Tagalog). Such efforts have served to break existing stereotypes about higher class university students refusing to speak in the daily conversational Tagalog, thus rendering Ateneo students more relatable and approachable.

In summary, communities increasingly view Ateneo students as courteous and respectful, demonstrating a profound grasp of the cultural norms and values of the communities with which they collaborate. A statement from a community member encapsulates this sentiment: "Most of your students are profoundly respectful" (COIQ Transcript 01, translated from Tagalog). This sentiment gains further weight from observations highlighting the genuine attempts by several students to bridge cultural differences through the use of local language.

Inconsistent Engagement and Missed Opportunities

However, there are moments of disconnect in cultural understanding that become apparent. For instance, one community key contact person mentioned an episode that caused discomfort among her public school learners:

> One Ateneo student was caught on camera with her feet raised during the engagement. This incident alarmed some of my students who told me, "Ma'am, it seems like she is too comfortable, as if she is just at home." (COIQ Transcript 01, translated from Tagalog)

Furthermore, although students often start the SL program with elevated enthusiasm, engagement wanes as the program progresses. A community member highlighted this concern: "Halfway through, some students become less engaged, perhaps due to academic pressures. While understandable, this does impact the quality of their involvement" (COIQ Transcript 03, translated from Tagalog).

The communities also expressed concerns about the students' pacing and presentation styles. As one interview respondent pointed out: "There was one session where I was expecting a somewhat longer presentation, but theirs was too direct to the point and very short" (COIQ Transcript 10).

Although these incidents are not directly related to cultural understanding, communities might interpret them as examples of mutual communication breakdowns between students and community partners due to differences in communication styles and unspoken expectations. Furthermore, communities anticipate engaging storytelling, but students primarily direct their efforts toward posing questions to community members. One interview respondent echoes this sentiment:

> We want stories. In our organization, we value storytelling. If even one student wrote [or talked] about their experience with us, that would be the story we are looking for. We want to hear [from them] why these engagements matter to us [in the community] and why it matters to them and Ateneo. (COIQ Transcript 18, translated from Tagalog)

Furthermore, a thematic analysis of survey qualitative responses from the CIFQ indicates a strong inclination among community partners toward extending the duration of SL engagements. The underlying reason is that a more extended period would facilitate a more in-depth examination of pertinent issues, leading to richer and more impactful experiences. One survey respondent succinctly stated, "Provide a somewhat longer time for engagement to maximize collaboration" (CIFQ Respondent 89). Another respondent mentioned, "Longer time for the students and our organization for the service-learning activity allows us to cover more topics and gather more information" (CIFQ Respondent 22).

In summary, the partner communities generally perceive Ateneo students as respectful and understanding of their cultural norms and values. There is, however, room for improvement in maintaining consistent engagement levels and meeting the communities' desires for deeper, more narrative-based interaction. Overall, although virtual interactions have proven effective to a certain extent, communities look forward to more meaningful, in-person engagements in future collaborations.

Cultural Fit: Scope and Timing in Ateneo Students' Implementation of e-SL Projects

When CPOs collaborate with student groups for e-SL projects, they seek volunteer complements and quality engagement, considering

their unique needs and cultural background. This part of the study aims to bring forth the community's voice in assessing how well Ateneo students have performed regarding cultural sensitivity and adaptability, specifically in the scope and timing of the implementation of their e-SL projects. Through firsthand accounts from community members, we investigate whether the e-SL projects meet the community's expectations and align with their cultural norms and needs.

Navigating Community Needs Through Sensitivity and Flexibility

A recurring theme from the community partners' feedback emphasizes the importance of a consultative approach in planning. The partners laud the students for not merely imposing a one-size-fits-all project but actively engaging with the community to understand their specific needs and cultural nuances. For example, one community member shared, "The students consulted with our community partners regarding the schedule of activities, so it is not just done whenever they feel like it" (COIQ Transcript 02, translated from Tagalog). Another participant echoed the sentiment by highlighting how the projects were not generic in design but customized based on community needs:

> As for the scope [of the e-SL project], I think it was based on what we said we needed. They [students] met those needs. It was not like a generic project applied by the students to every community. (COIQ Transcript 05, translated from Tagalog)

The Value of Being Adaptable

In addition to cultural sensitivity, the study also examines how adaptability is crucial in successfully executing e-SL projects. "Adaptability" refers to accommodating the ever-changing and often complex circumstances the community partners may be experiencing. One respondent specifically appreciated this aspect, stating:

> Yes, our online engagements with students are scheduled on Saturdays. Sometimes it is pleasing because we, as a Cooperative, also have responsibilities that we need to address . . . the students are very accommodating of our real-world commitments. (COIQ Transcript 05, translated from Tagalog)

Another participant noted the timely nature of the students' involvement, explaining:

> We were already working on our own, but having the perspective of the students when we needed to review [our work systems] was good. It was really timely and provided fresh perspectives that we had not previously considered [in our organization]. (COIQ Transcript 03, translated from Tagalog)

Collaboration Through Mutual Negotiation

The quality of the interaction hinges not just on what students offer but also on their flexibility in adapting to the community's needs and circumstances. Negotiating the scope and duration of the projects grants a level of customization that community partners highly appreciate, suggesting improved planning in future collaborations. One partner illuminated this sentiment, stating:

> Everything can be negotiated with the students if all the parties agree. So, whether the students can only commit for a short term, we will adjust our programs accordingly. Likewise, if they can stay longer, we create longer-term projects they can immerse themselves in. (COIQ Transcript 12)

Room for Refinement: Timing, Preplanning, and Skill Matching in Student Engagements

Although much of the feedback praises the efforts and qualities of Ateneo students, some areas could use refinement, such as the spacing of the engagement protocols. One community partner suggested that there should be more time allocated for preplanning and logistics to ensure that the projects genuinely meet the community's expectations:

> Planning could be earlier, maybe while Ateneo is on break or at least before the new semester starts, so we can already begin planning [for the coming term]. These are the things that should have been discussed more. (COIQ Transcript 03, translated from Tagalog)

Moreover, a thematic analysis of qualitative survey responses from the CIFQ underscores the community partners' strong preference

for enhanced alignment between student skills and organizational needs. This sentiment is captured succinctly by a survey respondent:

> There should be more careful matching of the needs of the organization and the courses offered by the University through having a clear orientation or leveling-off, especially in terms of the course scope and the potential contributions of the class for a semester. (CIFQ Respondent 50)

In summary, partner communities generally perceive Ateneo students' e-SL projects as culturally sensitive and adaptable. However, enhancing engagement timing protocols and skill-matching can ensure closer alignment with community needs and cultural norms. Addressing these aspects allows students to fine-tune their approaches, leading to e-SL projects that resonate profoundly and exhibit genuine cultural sensitivity.

Unveiling the Dynamics of Trust and Communication

Our research aims to unravel the complex dynamics of trust and communication between Ateneo students and their community partners in e-SL programs. We seek to address the research objective: How do these crucial elements influence the communities' perceptions of students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability? Our exploration uncovers a range of strengths and areas for enhancement. The subsequent discussion delineates these thematic findings comprehensively.

Effective Communication: The Bedrock of Trust

A significant factor contributing to successful e-SL engagements is effective communication. Ateneo students demonstrate an outstanding ability to prepare and communicate in ways that ease project implementation and foster trust. One community partner noted:

> Communications are generally smooth. Whenever we have questions or need clarifications, they are quick to respond. Furthermore, they are prepared and impressively adaptable, as if they are always ready. They have all the documents, PowerPoint presentations, everything. Moreover, even if there are last-minute changes or unexpected

issues, they adjust without causing problems. (COIQ Transcript 01, translated from Tagalog)

These observations indicate that the students' adeptness in agile communication positively impacts the trust they cultivate with their community partners.

Technological Limitations: A Barrier to Smooth Partnership

Although the students are effective communicators, technological hurdles present considerable barriers. The need for more reliable internet access and crucial digital equipment is an impediment to seamless engagement. A community partner remarked:

> The internet connection is a challenge for us. Some of us do not have laptops or smartphones. Even those who often do not have their own devices struggle to connect during meetings, so sometimes our communication with them is delayed, affecting the flow of our projects and discussions. (COIQ Transcript 04, translated from Tagalog)

Such observations highlight how technological limitations can interrupt what might otherwise be a smooth collaboration.

Building Trust: It Is a Long Game

Sustained engagement and time are pivotal in fostering profound trust between Ateneo students and the community partners. One CPO, reflecting upon over 3 years of collaboration with Ateneo students, shared:

> We really trust the Ateneo students; there are no issues, and this is mutual. We have built this trust over the years through various activities and meetings, so the level of trust is high. We share updates transparently and make decisions together, no problem. (COIQ Transcript 12, translated from Tagalog)

In essence, prolonged interactions have solidified this mutual trust, positioning it as a foundational aspect of their partnership.

Beyond Lip Service: Cultural Sensitivity and Adaptability in Action

Ateneo students exhibit a profound grasp of the cultural intricacies of their community partners, which is crucial in nurturing trust.

A representative from the Aeta community conveyed:

> They have our trust because they truly engage with the Aeta community. This is not just a superficial engagement. They understand Aeta culture and are sensitive to our issues. The way they interact is very respectful and understanding, which makes us trust them even more. (COIQ Transcript 15, translated from Tagalog)

The dedication to genuinely engage with communities, recognizing distinct aspects of their context, like the Aetas' Indigenous background, lays a robust groundwork of trust for sustained partnerships.

Apart from cultural sensitivity, adaptability stands out as a defining attribute. Students display an exceptional capacity to tailor their approach in alignment with the specific requirements of community partners, bolstering mutual trust. One community collaborator commented:

> What is pleasing is their confidence to handle situations without being disrespectful. They are not stubborn. They listen and adjust according to what the community needs. They are not a "one size fits all" type of group. (COIQ Transcript 20, translated from Tagalog)

The Irreplaceable Value of Physical Interaction

Despite intense levels of trust and effective communication, the irreplaceable value of physical interactions remains notable. A community partner shared:

> We do not have any trust issues, but we wish there could have been at least one in-person meeting. It is not that we do not trust [the students], but a different connection is formed when you see someone face-to-face. (COIQ Transcript 16, translated from Tagalog)

In summary, the study affirms that effective communication, long-term engagement, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability are integral in shaping an elevated level of trust between Ateneo students and community partners. While ever-present, challenges like technological barriers and the lack of physical interaction reveal areas for poten-tial refinement. These findings validate the effectiveness of existing e-SL engagement practices and confirm avenues for continued development and enrichment.

Discussion

In addressing the central research question, our study offers a multifaceted perspective. One of the most intriguing elements is the dual nature of institutional prestige, serving as both an asset and a barrier in e-SL engagement. Our results show that the reputation of Ateneo offers students a degree of cultural capital, facilitating more straightforward access to community initiatives (Aizik et al., 2017; Coelho & Menezes, 2021). However, this prestige also poses challenges, necessitating careful navigation by the students to ensure meaningful engagement. The implication is that although an institution's reputation can act as an initial driver for engagement, it is not a self-sustaining force. This finding ties back to existing literature emphasizing the importance of institutional alignment with community goals and stakeholders for the ultimate success of SL endeavors (d'Arlach et al., 2009; George-Paschal et al., 2019).

Our research also delves into the effectiveness of online platforms for SL. The results confirm that e-SL can be a viable alternative to f2f community engagement (Dapena et al., 2022; Waldner et al., 2012). This observation is particularly critical given the limitations imposed by global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where physical engagement was not an option (Barker et al., 2021). However, our study also finds that online interactions should only partially replace f2f community interactions. Both have their merits, and the ideal approach is a hybrid one that combines the benefits of both modalities (Brooks, 2020; Lee et al., 2011).

Effective communication, especially linguistic fluency in the use of the local language by Ateneo students, is instrumental in altering community perceptions and fostering a more inclusive and relatable form of engagement. Using the vernacular is a matter of linguistic proficiency and cultural diplomacy. Communicating effectively in the community's native tongue is an essential bridge, often dissolving initial misgivings or discomfort and facilitating deeper engagement. The findings contribute significantly to our understanding of effective communication in e-SL, particularly

its role in trust-building. Ateneo students' adeptness in clear, prompt communication proves crucial for streamlining project implementation and fostering trust. Such a perspective resonates with scholarly work emphasizing the role of effective communication as a cornerstone for successful SL projects (Kindred, 2020; McCrickard, 2011).

The observed inconsistency in student engagement levels over time also echoes concerns in the existing literature about the necessity for long-term, sustainable relationships in SL (Mitchell, 2008; Suckale et al., 2018). Moreover, it is not merely the duration but the engagement quality that matters. Our data reveals a community inclination for a more engaging narrative. Researchers can situate this preference within the expansive academic discourse on motivations that lead community partners to participate in SL initiatives. Research suggests that positive interactions and memorable experiences often underpin sustained community engagement (Cronley et al., 2015; Darby & Willingham, 2022). Such a perspective aligns with findings where communities articulate a need for narratives that encapsulate the heart of the engagement, making the collaboration both memorable and potentially enduring. This perspective also brings us to the broader conversation of sustained relationships and reciprocity, emphasizing that both parties should benefit from the engagement (Darby et al., 2023; Jacoby, 2014).

Our findings also underscore the importance of respecting community sensibilities. Cultural missteps, such as a student's casual posture during an e-SL session, serve as cautionary tales. Such instances draw attention to the broader, critical issue of respecting community perspectives and power dynamics in SL contexts (Doran et al., 2021; Matthews, 2019; Mtawa & Fongwa, 2022). Such moments are educational opportunities to revisit and reinforce the importance of cultural awareness in e-SL programs.

We also must recognize the technical barriers that emerged during our study. Although Ateneo students showed strong communication skills, technological limitations hindered the fluidity and trust integral to these e-SL engagements. This finding resonates with Couillou et al. (2023), who stressed the importance of technological agility in community-based learning initiatives. The study adds nuance by highlighting the tension between solid communicative abilities and the technological barriers that may obstruct such interactions. This finding suggests that even the most promising e-SL initiatives may falter without the necessary digital infrastructure; thus, technological agility becomes increasingly relevant as educational initiatives transition into digital realms (Couillou et al., 2023).

Finally, given the focus of the study on e-SL, a form of SL accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to digital adaptability and resilience becomes critical (Barker et al., 2021; Pellerano et al., 2023). In our findings, communities expressed concerns about pacing and presentation styles, signaling a need for resilience and adaptability in e-SL settings. However, despite the strengths in communication, trust-building, cultural sensitivity, and cultural adaptability of students, the study consistently emphasizes the irreplaceable value of physical interactions in e-SL engagements. The literature needs to adequately delve into this aspect within the e-SL context, and we believe that the insights provided here may serve as a basis for future research and program development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study's central research question is how partner communities perceive students' cultural sensitivity and adaptability in e-service-learning (e-SL) programs at Ateneo. Although evidence broadly suggests that community partners perceive Ateneo students as attuned to local customs, values, and power dynamics—factors that foster more meaningful and enduring partnerships—findings unveil multiple critical dimensions that shape these community perceptions.

First, we observed that Ateneo's institutional prestige, although generally considered advantageous, carries a complex duality. Even as it catalyzes initial community engagement due to its inherent cultural capital, it can also hinder establishing genuine, sustained relationships. Such insights indicate a necessity for educational institutions like Ateneo to adapt their community engagement strategies, potentially integrating sensitivity training that educates students about the implications of their institution's reputation within the community.

Concerning the technological aspects, our study affirms the effectiveness of online platforms in fostering community engage-

ment. Nonetheless, the research also highlights the irreplaceable value of f2f interactions. This juxtaposition makes the case for a hybrid approach that affords the benefits of both digital and physical spaces, maximizing the advantages of both modalities. For administrators and policymakers, these insights offer a strong case for revisiting and potentially overhauling the design and execution of e-SL programs.

Effective communication emerges as a cornerstone of successful engagement. The students' use of the community's local language deepens engagement and acts as a form of cultural diplomacy. To further this advantage, educational planners might consider implementing local language and cultural studies within e-SL curricula.

However, our study also reveals that technological limitations, such as poor internet connectivity and inadequate digital capacities of partner communities (e.g., lack of devices), pose significant challenges. These technological barriers underline the importance of bolstering digital infrastructure that can support the needs of both students and partner communities. Educational institutions can seek partnerships with tech companies to provide necessary IT resources so that technology is an enabler rather than an obstacle.

Additionally, both the level and type of student engagement have notable effects. Differences in commitment and the community's preference for engaging narratives play a significant role in the long-term sustainability of partnerships. These insights emphasize the importance of equipping students with an understanding of the value of service and skills in storytelling and maintaining engagement, among other competencies.

Despite its contributions, this study has its limitations. The research focuses solely on Ateneo and its partner communities, potentially limiting the broader applicability of the findings. Additionally, although the study examined the impact of several factors such as (1) the dual role of institutional prestige, (2) the effectiveness of e-SL platforms, (3) the importance of effective communication, (4) consistency in the quality of student engagement, (5) respecting community sensibilities, (6) technical barriers in e-SL, and (7) digital adaptability and resilience, it did not investigate the long-term outcomes of community perceptions nor deeply explore the other technological aspects that impede e-SL experiences.

However, the study's strengths lie in its unique focus on community viewpoints in e-SL, an area often overshadowed by predominantly focusing on the perspective of students. Moreover, given the increasing digital transformation trend in educational settings, the study is timely. The results offer pivotal insights for administrators, educators, and community coordinators striving to optimize e-SL practices, especially within the Philippine milieu and countries with comparable contexts. These findings stress the importance for stakeholders to deeply understand community expectations, cultural norms, and technological preparedness during the planning and execution of e-SL projects.

Researchers should extend the findings from this research study to other educational institutions and community structures. By doing this, they can test the insights' applicability and scalability. Further studies should also explore the impact of technological factors from the community's perspective, an area yet to be thoroughly examined. Conducting longitudinal research will give a deeper understanding of how community perceptions change over time and highlight factors that either support or undermine long-term e-SL initiatives.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests, financial or otherwise, related to the current work.

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Community-Engaged Write-Ins, Workshops, and Retreats: Supporting Scholarly Writing Success Through a Continuum of Professional Development

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Abstract

Despite pressures and incentives, faculty, academic staff, and graduate students struggle to turn outreach and engagement activities into scholarly publications. Publishing challenges include competing professional responsibilities, limited collegial support, difficulty in prioritizing time to write, professional isolation, and lack of confidence in writing skills. Community-engaged scholars and practitioners face additional challenges: publishing about the partnership process, incorporating community partner voices, lack of mentorship, and difficulty identifying appropriate journals for their work. Research shows these barriers are especially challenging for junior faculty, female faculty, and faculty of color. In response, an outreach and engagement office and campus writing center partnered to offer a continuum of professional development for community-engaged writing and publishing. The authors overview the conceptual framework to support scholarly publishing, detail the professional development continuum (online materials, consultations, write-ins, workshops, retreats), and provide evaluation data on participant impact. Authors conclude with reflections on their intrainstitutional partnership and lessons learned.

Keywords: academic writing, community-engaged scholarship, publishing, scholarly productivity, writing communities

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Institutional support for community engagement has been a growing priority, especially for colleges and universities that seek the elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as an affirmation of their institutional responsiveness to community issues and their relevance as institutions. Along with revisions to reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies, professional development is a common form of institutional support. In their 2017 national study of community engagement professional development offered by successfully accredited Carnegie Community Engaged Institutions, Welch and Plaxton-Moore (2017) found that more than half of the articles in their systematic literature review "lacked any inclusion or description of a theoretical framework to guide the adult learning process" (p. 142). They also noted that professional development for publishing and dissemination were offered by 39.76% of the institutions in the study (p. 149). With almost 40% of the institutions offering professional development for publishing and dissemination, it is important to share conceptually grounded, evidence-based practices that strengthen writing success of community-engaged scholars and practitioners.

As a response to Welch and Plaxton-Moore's critique, this article describes one institution's approach to professional development for community-engaged scholarship writing and publishing guided by Baldi et al.'s (2013) continuum of scholarly writing and Kornhaber et al.'s (2016) integrative review of writing retreats. The author team begins

with the history of the partnership between an outreach and engagement office and the campus writing center. We then detail how we adapted the Baldi et al. continuum of scholarly writing to the professional development needs at our institution. Following the explanation of the continuum of professional development as a guiding framework, we describe the activities along that continuum: online materials, consultations, write-ins, publishing workshops, and writing retreats. For each professional development activity, we provide a definition and practical notes on implementation. Following the activity description section, we detail participant demographics and share evaluation data for the write-ins, writing workshops, and retreats. We conclude this article with reflections on our institutional partnership and offer lessons learned for other institutional leaders who may be considering the implementation of a continuum of community-engaged scholarship (CES) professional development for writing and publishing on their own campuses. Our hope is that readers will come away with new ideas for (a) intrainstitutional partnerships to support community engagement, (b) the idea of continuum of professional development, and (c) evidence-based practices to support the writing and publishing success of their community-engaged scholars and publishers.

Institutional Context

Michigan State University (MSU) is a land-grant and sea-grant institution, designated as "research: very high" by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, with membership in the distinguished Association of American Universities. MSU's commitment to service-learning and community engagement is reflected in its mission statement and institutional memberships in Campus Compact, The Research University Civic Engagement Network, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, and Imagining America. In 2014, MSU earned the U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (with distinction), Michigan Campus Compact "Engaged Campus of the Year," and a renewed Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification. The institution has a long-standing and contemporary commitment of its faculty, Extension professionals, academic staff, and students to serving the public good through scholarship and practice.

In 1991, the Office of University Outreach and Engagement (UOE) was established to help create and sustain engagement by supporting the engaged activities of faculty, staff, and students; fostering public access to university expertise and resources; and advocating for exemplary CES, statewide, nationally, and internationally. UOE emphasizes university–community partnerships that are collaborative, reciprocal, participatory, empowering, systemic, transformative, and anchored in scholarship.

Established in 1971, the Writing Center @ MSU (WC) operates with a broad vision of collaboration in the MSU community, with peer-to-peer consultations with students, academic staff, faculty, and the community that expand the ideas of literacy and composing beyond traditional models and geographic boundaries. The WC encourages and facilitates collaboration; supports interdisciplinary methods of thinking, writing, and researching; promotes diverse understandings of writing and the disciplines in which they are situated; and utilizes new technologies in pedagogically responsible ways. Such an expanded view of writing, literacy, and pedagogy enables the WC to meet the ever-changing needs of a diverse constituency and the challenges that inspire growth and innovation in the Writing Center (MSU, n.d.).

Partnership Between UOE and the WC

In summer 2016, the UOE director for faculty and professional development asked for a meeting with the director of the WC to discuss potential collaborations. The UOE faculty and professional development director had just returned from attending the annual meeting of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, where she learned about approaches for supporting writers in general and wondered if there were potential ways to adapt those general practices to support community-engaged scholars and practitioners specifically. From that initial exploratory meeting, a multiyear intrainstitutional collaboration started that continues to this day. The author team, which represents partners from both UOE and WC, hopes to highlight the value and importance of this uncommon intrainstitutional partnership as an example to others. We will also detail some of the outcomes and lessons learned from this successful institutional partnership.

Definition of Community-Engaged Scholarship

To frame our CES professional development, we have intentionally selected a broad definition to speak to disciplinary variations of outreach and engagement. Under the umbrella term "community-engaged scholarship," we include participatory research, collaborative inquiry, service-learning, civic engagement, informal science education, outreach teaching, community-university partnerships, Extension, public humanities, broader impacts, and Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies, to name a few (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). For us, CES requires that both partners use foundational scholarship to inform and guide the engagement experiences; identify, listen to, and collaborate with one another and honor one another's knowledge; and generate new scholarship and practice for both academic and public audiences (Doberneck, McNall, et al., 2017, p. 122). Our definition centers community partner knowledge (e.g., local, Indigenous, practitioner) in the scholarly process and requires that their knowledge shape the community-engaged activities, inclusive of research, creative activities, teaching and learning, and service and practice (Bryant et al., 2020; Doberneck, Glass, & Schweitzer, 2010).

The Imperative and Challenges of Writing and Publishing

Despite pressures and incentives, faculty, academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students often struggle to turn their outreach and engagement activities into scholarly publications. Mastering academic publishing skills and developing one's own writing practice are essential for a successful career in the academy. An individual's publishing record is a core criterion for decisions in academic advancement, including prestigious fellowships, promotion and tenure, annual reviews, merit raises, extramural funding, and awards and recognitions (Swaggerty et al., 2011). In addition to these individual factors, colleges and universities value academic publishing for institutional reasons related to ranking systems in higher education. The pressure to maintain, or even rise in, these competitive rankings drives institutions to value publishing rates in order to maintain reputation and standing, which, in turn, can influence student enrollment, extramural funding, fund raising, and industry partnerships (Balogun et al., 2006; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). As a result, "publishing has become increasingly central in the evaluation systems of even the most student-centered colleges, and faculty and administrators hunt for ways to encourage scholarly production without being punitive" (Farr et al., 2009, p. 15).

Even with these individual and institutional imperatives, many scholars and practitioners struggle with publishing for a wide variety of reasons. McGrail et al. (2006) noted that "many [articles] published by the few" continues to be the case in the academy. For some, writing challenges started when they were in graduate school, where they received little mentoring on writing practices and academic publishing and had fewer opportunities to develop their identities as writers compared to opportunities for developing researcher and teacher identities (Aronson & Swanson, 1991; Cameron et al., 2009; Cuthbert et al., 2009; Garcia et al., 2013; A. Lee & Boud, 2003). When academic writing skills are developed by happenstance, a lack of mentoring for academic writing and underdeveloped writing identities can follow graduate students into their faculty and academic staff roles (Hedengren & Harrison, 2018; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2020). Other graduate students, particularly those with marginalized identities or marginalized subject matters, find it challenging to claim their space and find their voice in the academy as scholars and writers (Aronson & Swanson, 1991; Bojovic et al., 2024; Cameron et al., 2009). Aronson and Swanson noted, "Central to the process of changing relationships to academic authority is changing our writing strategies, our attitudes towards writing, our identities as writers, and the ways in which we read the writing of our colleagues" (p. 157). Murray and Cunningham (2011) further noted that the transition from graduate student to "independent scholar—after years of study or work in other roles—is a major shift in identity and practice. If not well managed, it can be painful and aversive" (p. 832). When graduate students struggle to claim their voices and identities as writers, their success as published authors is diminished, sometimes over the course of their careers.

Research on academic publishing shows that even seasoned faculty members encounter barriers to their writing success. Those

barriers may be characterized as intrap-ersonal factors, difficulty protecting time and space, underdevelopment of academic writing competence, and lack of a community of practice. Each barrier is composed of more subelements, preventing a single type of professional development from addressing all the barriers. Instead, providing a continuum of professional development is a better strategy for enhancing writing and publishing success. See Table 1 for a more detailed summary of the literature.

Additional Challenges

Early-Career Faculty and Academic Staff

Junior faculty members, transitioning from graduate school or postdoctoral positions to tenure-track positions, may feel the pressures to publish most keenly and may benefit from writing support for a number of reasons. Often, their newcomer status creates a diminished sense of community that may make the early years of their careers isolating and lonely. Although many

Table 1. Literature Summary of Barriers to Academic Writing and Publishing

Factors	Subelements and authors
Intrapersonal factors	• Lack of confidence (Baldwin & Chandler, 2002; Berger, 1990; Kempenaar & Murray, 2018; Moore, 2003; Pololi et al., 2004; Quynn & Stewart, 2021) • Lack of motivation (Moore, 2003) • Fear of rejection (Grant & Knowles, 2000; Hale & Pruitt, 1989) • Writing-related anxiety (Pololi et al., 2004)
Difficulty protecting time and space	• Difficulty in protecting time and space (Kwan et al., 2021; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2020) • Juggling increasing and competing professional responsibilities (A. Lee & Boud, 2003; MacLeod et al., 2012) • Increasing workloads and longer work hours (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009) • Negotiating and balancing different demands (Clegg, 2008; Jemielniak et al., 2023; MacLeod et al., 2012; Purcell et al., 2022) • Necessity of scheduling specific times to write (Pololi et al., 2004) • Challenges to viewing writing as a legitimate activity (Girardeau et al., 2014; Grant, 2006; Moore, 2003; Murray & Newton, 2009)
Underdeveloped academic writing competence	• Developing discipline-specific writing competence (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Moore, 2003) • Lack of experience and expertise in academic writing (Kempenaar & Murray, 2018; Kwan et al., 2021; Murray & Cunningham, 2011; Quynn & Stewart, 2021) • Understanding how to write an article (Pololi et al., 2004) • Importance of specific writing goals (Kornhaber et al., 2016) • The need for self-imposed deadlines (Pololi et al., 2004)
Lack of a community of practice	• Creates a "shared vision, collegial support, mentorship, and social interaction" (Kornhaber et al., 2016, p. 1217; also, Bojovic et al., 2024; Kwan et al., 2021; T. G. Smith, 2019) • Instills the "local habit" of writing excellence (A. Lee & Boud, 2003) • Counteract professional isolation (Bojovic et al., 2024; Hedengren & Harrison, 2018; Moore, 2003; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2020) • Provides peer support and collaboration (Kempenaar & Murray, 2018; Pololi et al., 2004) • Involves proximity to mentors and feedback (Cable et al., 2013; Hedengren & Harrison, 2018)

have written dissertations, their graduate experiences may not have provided opportunities to write grants or publish peer-reviewed journal articles—both necessities for achieving tenure (Bojovic et al., 2024; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2020; Hedengren & Harrison, 2018; Quynn & Stewart, 2021; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2020). Early-career faculty are often vulnerable to writer's block, caused by tenure pressures, imposter syndrome, or overactive "internal editors" (Girardeau et al., 2014, p. 34). Early-career academic staff may also feel pressure to publish from their research or education practice despite having little preparation for academic publishing and fewer professional development opportunities to develop their own writing practices and identities (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Kempenaar & Murray, 2018). "Low publication rates can be detrimental to the career prospects of early career academics and those from professional backgrounds. They may find themselves marginalized, outside, or at the periphery of, research communities" (Petrova & Coughlin, 2012, p. 80). Kim (2018) added that those on the alternative-academic (alt-ac) career path (non-tenure-track higher education careers) benefit from writing support, especially campus-based retreats, because, like tenure-track faculty, they also need to develop career networks and pathways to advancement, protect time and space for writing, and write "in community" to dispel isolation. Writing in community, Kim noted, helps alt-acs to "help each other balance the imperative to think and write critically with the reality of the place in the higher education hierarchy" they occupy (pp. 1–2). Furthermore, Kempenaar and Murray (2018) noted that academic staff increase perceptions of their own writing skills and processes through institutionally organized writing support.

Female Writers

Although writing challenges can affect anyone, research shows that female faculty encounter significant challenges, because they frequently juggle responsibilities for teaching, service, and life demands—within and outside the academy. Kolondy (1998) pointed out that women often carry "hidden workloads," including greater contributions to service, course assignments not aligned with their research interests, heavier advising loads, and more time investment in mentoring. Additionally, female faculty experience more work demands from academically entitled students (El-Alayli et al., 2018), have difficulty finding supportive female mentors (Overstreet et al., 2021; Swaggerty et al., 2011), and may encounter unsupportive women colleagues (Chesler, 2001). In addition to "hidden workloads" in the workplace (Babcock et al., 2022), women are also more likely to be responsible for complex domestic responsibilities and emotional labor within their households, including child care, elder care, and other social and family obligations (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Grant, 2006). During the COVID-19 pandemic, these extra responsibilities for maintaining household health (caregiving responsibilities for children or aging parents) prevented many female scholars from making progress in their writing and publishing (Flaherty, 2020; Jemielniak et al., 2023; O'Reilly, 2020; Purcell et al., 2022; Squazzoni et al., 2021).

Community-Engaged Scholars and Practitioners

Due to their commitment to authentic partnerships, community-engaged scholars and practitioners are grounded in epistemological values that require them to respect local, Indigenous, and practitioner knowledge and amplify those contributions in their writing for both academic and public/practitioner audiences. Writing in ways that honor community partner contributions may present a challenge to authors who are unaccustomed to embodying epistemic justice in their publishing (Buchanan et al., 2021). This commitment is concomitant with shifting academic norms that emphasize democratizing knowledge in ways that move away from the ivory tower as a guarded fortress of knowledge and toward higher education practices that make multiple knowledges more visible and promote the accessibility of archived knowledge through emerging media and digital platforms. These emerging communicative norms shape the experiences of community-engaged writers, dividing their attention between public-facing pieces and those required for advancement in the academy and between traditionally framed scholarship and that which amplifies community partners' knowledge(s) throughout the process.

In addition to these shifting societal norms and expectations, the literature about publishing community-engaged scholarship points to other challenges, including learning to publish about the collaboration or partnering process (Ahmed & Palmero,

2010; Bordeaux et al., 2007; L. Smith et al., 2010), incorporating student or community partner voices into their writing (Forchuk & Meier, 2014; L. Smith et al., 2010), lack of mentors for publishing about engaged scholarship (Franz, 2011), and difficulty in identifying appropriate journals for publishing their work. In addition, sometimes strong disciplinary academic writers find the norms and review criteria for CES publishing unfamiliar (Ahmed & Palmero, 2010; Whitesell & Salvador, 2016). Finally, for some community-engaged practitioners especially, the investment of time and commitment into the community partnership and the results of shared activities are the reward. Writing up the experience seems like a distraction from addressing pressing community concerns. Additionally, because community-engaged practitioners are often responding to pressing community concerns that require immediate action, they may not always consult theories, conceptual frameworks, or best practices to guide their work. This lack of scholarly grounding makes the peer review process challenging and can even make academic publishing impossible. For practitioner-led, community-engaged projects not viewed initially as having research or publishing potential, authors may find it challenging to receive institutional review board approval after the fact.

Professional Development for Community-Engaged Scholarship Publishing

To support scholars as they confront these challenges and learn academic writing practices, academic leaders have developed a wide range of institutional supports and interventions (Baldi et al., 2013; McGrail et al., 2006; Murray & Moore, 2006; Rocco & Hatcher, 2011; Sword, 2017). These supports include (a) consultations and collaborative mentoring, (b) writing groups, (c) writing rooms or spaces, (d) writing retreats, and (e) writing workshops. Because much of the relevant literature exists in the higher education and writing practice scholarship, community engagement leaders seldom see these evidence-based practices in the more familiar community-engagement literature. Table 2 lists scholarship associated with the various types of writing and publishing support.

Table 2. Scholarship Associated With Various Types of Writing and Publishing Support

Writing and publishing support	Key authors (full citation in References)
Consultations and collaborative mentoring	Pololi et al., 2004
Writing groups	Aronson & Swanson, 1991; Cuthbert et al., 2009; Hedengren & Harrison, 2018; A. Lee & Boud, 2003; Page-Adams et al., 1995; Rikard et al., 2009; T. G. Smith et al., 2013
Writing rooms or spaces	Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006; Kwan et al., 2021
Writing retreats	Bojovic et al., 2024; Cable et al., 2013; Farr et al., 2009; Girardeau et al., 2014; Herman et al., 2013; Jackson, 2009; Kempenaar & Murray, 2018; Kornhaber et al., 2016; Moore, 2003; Moore et al., 2010; Murray & Newton, 2009; Overstreet et al., 2021; Petrova & Coughlin, 2012; Quynn & Stewart, 2021; Rosser et al., 2001; Singh, 2012; Stevens & Voegele, 2019; Swaggerty et al., 2011; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2020; Wittman et al., 2008
Writing workshops	Kramer & Libhaber, 2016; MacLeod et al., 2012

For those providing writing support specifically for community-engaged scholars and practitioners, writing retreats have been the most frequently implemented writing intervention, with notable examples from Campus Compact's Pen to Paper Academic Writing Retreat (University of Indianapolis, 2024), and East Carolina University's Writers Retreat (Wittman et al., 2008). With few national examples of CES professional development for writing and publishing, institutional leaders have ample opportunities to support the flourishing of community-engaged scholars and practitioners as writers. Interventions that strengthen writers' intrapersonal efficacy, provide protected time and space, develop writing competence, and create communities of writers are known to be valuable and impactful. Institutional investments in a broad range of activities to address the aforementioned challenges serve to support the success of individuals and, as a consequence, the success of the institution.

Continuum of Professional Development: Guiding Conceptual Framework

In their book chapter "The Scholarly Writing Continuum" published in Geller and Eodice's (2013) *Working With Faculty Writers*, Baldi et al. (2013) advocated for a continuum of activities to guide professional development for academic writing and publishing. (We are intentionally using both terms—"writing" and "publishing"—in this article to acknowledge and signal our valuing of non-peer-reviewed writing. Community partner reports, white papers, curricula, grants, and more are essential to successful community-engaged academic careers.) Framing support as a continuum acknowledges that writers have different preferences for professional development, including choices for (a) contact (e.g., individual or asynchronous, one-on-one, small groups, large groups); (b) commitment (e.g., one-time, retreat or intensive, ongoing community); and (c) structure (e.g., unstructured writing spaces, highly structured, self-accountability, group accountability; p. 43). Baldi et al. recommended that those who organize professional development provide a range of support, so that the multiplicity of writers' preferences can be accommodated.

With this in mind, UOE and the WC collaborated over a number of years to develop and provide a continuum of CES professional development for writing and publishing. Our continuum, a modification of Baldi et al.'s (2013) work, includes online materials, consultations, write-ins, publishing workshops, and writing retreats. Figure 1 depicts this adapted continuum.

Figure 1. Adapted MSU Continuum of CES Professional Development for Writing and Publishing

Online materials | Consultations | Write-ins | Publishing workshops | Writing retreats
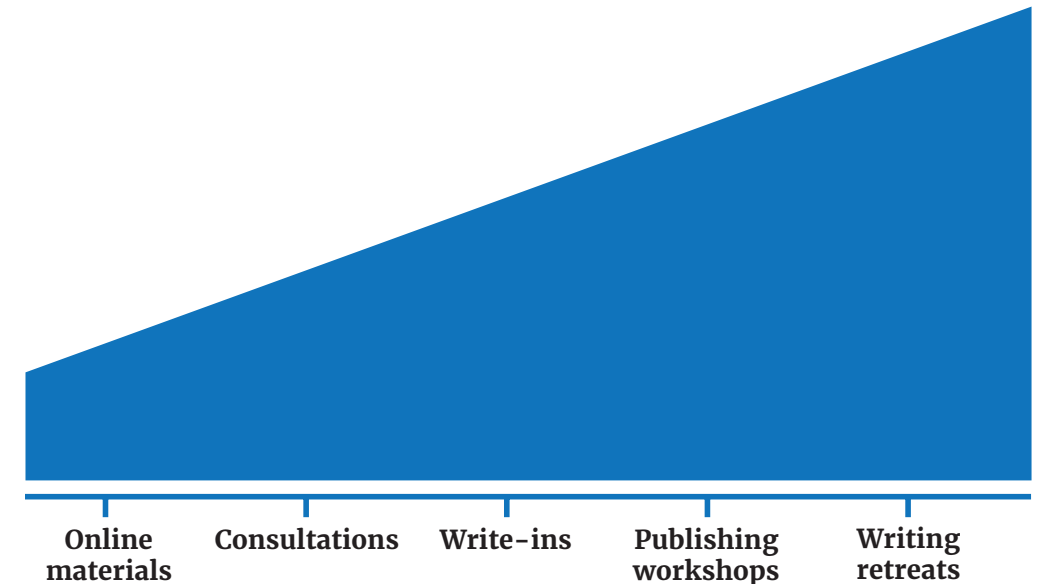
Note. Movement from left to right in the continuum indicates increasing degrees of contact, commitment, and structure and does not indicate increasing value hierarchically.

Although each of these activities occupies a different position on the professional development continuum, we have intentionally taken steps to achieve synergy among the separate activities where it is feasible and appropriate. For example, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) writing goal worksheets are used at both the write-ins and writing retreats. Additional examples of synergy across the continuum activities will be highlighted in the sections that follow. The UOE and WC author team has benefited greatly from having both of our perspectives frame our professional development offerings and coimplement events.

Online Materials

On the continuum of professional development, online materials (e.g., websites, toolkits, videos, blogs, email lists) provide writers with options for accessing resources individually and asynchronously, accommodating the varying schedules of faculty, Extension professionals, academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students. Writers may choose to access resources once or return to favorite resources over and over again. Online materials involve no shared time commitments nor accountability to others. Gravett and Broscheid (2018) pointed out that despite the strengths of online resources, they are low-impact and impersonal, often have ill-defined audiences and learning objectives (pp. 89–91), and lack evaluation data. However, online resources fill a niche on the continuum of support by "providing foundational knowledge that can later be built on . . . and serve an important function as a gateway to other programming" (p. 98).

Because some community-engaged scholars and practitioners prefer to access writing support materials on their own time and in their own way, UOE curated a set of online resources as the Publishing Engaged Scholarship Hub, which is part of Campus Compact's Knowledge Hub Initiative (Doberneck, 2017/2021). This knowledge hub includes originally generated materials such as *The Annotated List of Interdisciplinary Community Engagement Journals* and the *Journal Section Comparison Table*. Together, these two resources assist writers in identifying which interdisciplinary community engagement journals are likely to publish which kinds of journal articles (research, curriculum, practice notes from the field, student-authored pieces, etc.).

The knowledge hub also includes key journal articles providing advice about publishing community-engaged scholarship and lists organizations that provide exemplary opportunities to support publishing success.

In addition to the Campus Compact knowledge hub, a UOE author has developed additional online resources that answer questions CES writers and publishers commonly ask. Each topic is addressed through a bundled set of resources that include journal articles, worksheets, and short videos on the topic, including the following: (1) defining your type of community-engaged scholarship, (2) articulating and linking foundational scholarship to your community-engaged scholarship, (3) identifying your community and honoring community partners' knowledge, (4) what makes publishing community-engaged scholarship special (Doberneck and Dann, 2019), (5) writing with your community partners, (6) unfurling your community-engaged scholarship into multiple scholarly products (Doberneck & Carmichael, 2020; Franz, 2011), and (7) strategizing where to publish your community-engaged scholarship. These curated online resources are often referred to during consultations and used as part of the curriculum for publishing workshops and writing retreats. These online resources are low-cost to develop, but do require access to a dedicated URL and a hosting service as well as continued attention to keeping the resources updated.

Consultations

On our continuum of professional development, consultations offer writers an opportunity to have an individual (or group) conversation with a writing or outreach and engagement coach or mentor. Consultations can be one-time commitments or, at the writer's request, become a series of conversations. Unlike workshops or retreats that have predefined learning agendas and schedules, the focus of consultations is more flexible, with the emphasis changing in response to each writer's needs each time a consultation takes place. Consultants typically avoid taking an expert stance; instead, they interact with the writers as "an empathic listener, mentor, and possibly coach" (Gravett & Broscheid, 2018, p. 98). Consultants ask questions to elicit ideas from writers, make suggestions, and reflect back ideas to the writer. Often, through the process of the conversations, writers discover their own

answers to writing challenges. The biggest advantage of consultations is the ability to tailor the interaction specifically and privately to each writer's needs (Gravett & Broscheid, 2018, p. 98). One downside of consultations is that demand for them often outpaces available consultants or appointment times. Once consultants are recruited and oriented, however, consultations do not require expenses such as room rentals or refreshments. "Consultation is a powerful strategy that can lead to important changes in the practice of faculty members who take advantage of them" (V. Lee, 2010, p. 26).

At MSU, consultations to support CES are predominantly offered by the WC members. Through the campus writing center, undergraduate and graduate students are recruited, oriented, and paid to be available as consultants to the campus community. WC directors hold required beginning-of-the-semester orientations. Undergraduate writing consultants complete a for-credit course on writing center practices, shadow established consultants, and receive mentoring on an ongoing basis. Graduate student writing consultants complete readings, shadow established consultants, and complete supervised consultations with feedback before becoming consultants on their own. All WC consultants participate in biweekly professional development meetings to stay up-to-date on practices throughout the year. The WC dedicates two consultants to write-ins each year and brings others to the writing retreats. Outside these specific events, writers may also contact the writing center directly to schedule consultations. Common consultation topics include developing outlines for journal articles, thinking through flow and organization of writing segments, balancing too many details with too few details, and ensuring clarity in the abstract, among others. At times, UOE staff are also asked for writing consultations on topics such as describing the partnership process, identifying potential journals for specific articles, clarifying the connection between foundational scholarship and the engagement project, and brainstorming ways community partner voices can be elevated in the writing.

CES Write-Ins

On our continuum of professional development, write-ins offer participants protected time and space to write as part of a community. Writers may attend once, come occasionally, or make it a regular, monthly habit to attend the write-ins, which are unstructured but include accountability to the group. Write-ins are scheduled half-day writing times and places that provide dedicated time away from the office or home and everyday responsibilities to focus on writing. Participants typically share their individual writing goals at the beginning and provide updates on their progress at the end. The remainder of the write-in is open, unstructured time for individual writers to pursue their writing goals on their own or in small, self-organized groups. In their *Change* article "The Writing Room," Elbow and Sorcinelli (2006) described the importance of the "simultaneously social and private" write-in space as a "common space, predicated on the notion that faculty will be more apt to do the solitary work of writing if they surround themselves with other writers pursuing the same goal" (p. 18). Writing spaces enhance the group's sense of community and accountability, which often leads to gains in productivity (Kwan et al., 2021).

Timing write-ins during regular working hours is important. Women, in particular, "frequently juggle complex domestic responsibilities that make attendance at residential retreats impossible" (Grant, 2006, p. 485). Nonresidential writing spaces, such as the write-in, where "intensive, exclusive focus on writing occurs during 'normal' working hours on a 9 am to 5 pm" basis are a "more viable alternative" to support these writers (Murray & Moore, 2006, p. 86; see also Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Hedengren & Harrison, 2018).

At MSU, the write-ins are scheduled as 3-hour writing blocks on the first Friday of each month. Unlike Elbow and Sorcinelli's (2006) recommendation for a "pleasant, off-campus room" (p. 17), our write-ins take place on campus, either inside a spacious residence hall dining area that has floor-to-ceiling windows or in the campus hotel's conference rooms. The advantage of these locations is that they are away from the writers' offices but relatively close to home and work. For the write-ins, UOE and the WC arrange for three types of spaces: quiet, chatty/collaborative, and consultation spaces. Coughlin recommended a "mixture of communal and individual spaces for writing" so that participants

may work individually or in the company of others (Petrova & Coughlin, 2012, p. 80). When held in-person, UOE and the WC make sure there are copious extension cords and power strips for each writing table in the room. Prior to the write-in, a worksheet on setting SMART writing goals is emailed to participants so they may set writing goals before they arrive at the write-in. We begin each write-in with a quick check-in about writing goals for the day and close with a check-out to celebrate progress and identify next steps. The WC provides trained consultants to discuss participants' writing process and provide feedback on drafts. This option allows for consultations to occur within the write-in, an example of synergy across the professional development continuum activities. The write-ins are free to attend, with low costs to organize and host (e.g., room rental; refreshments or lunch tickets to the residence hall dining cafeteria). During the COVID-19 pandemic, when on-campus, in-person activities were severely restricted, the write-ins were offered virtually, thereby incurring no costs (other than staff time). Although different from in-person write-ins, the virtual ones continued to create a "writing in community" feel (especially important during a time of increased social isolation) and shared accountability among the participants.

CES Publishing Workshops

On the modified continuum of scholarly writing support, publishing workshops are a professional development choice for writers seeking a high level of contact and a one-time commitment in a structured and organized space. Publishing workshops often seek to "1) identify and minimize barriers to academic writing; 2) increase academic writing knowledge and skills; 3) formulate individualized writing strategies; 4) foster positive attitudes about writing; and 5) facilitate the writing process through peer collaboration and feedback" (Pololi et al., 2004, p. 64). Unlike write-ins, where the emphasis is on uninterrupted writing time, a publishing workshop focuses on building practical academic writing skills and practices and on identifying publishing opportunities for writers' specific ideas. Learning to write in scholarly ways consists of appreciating the importance of scholarly writing and publishing, learning how to get organized to get started, building relationships to support writing, and

developing writing skills (Nackoney et al., 2011, pp. 27–34). In addition to these general scholarly writing and publishing skills, community-engaged scholars and practitioners need to develop ways to connect to foundational scholarship, clearly describe their community partners' role in the project, represent community partner voices or coauthor writing with their partners, and document impact on both partnership processes and outcomes (Ahmed & Palmero, 2010; Bordeaux et al., 2007; Doberneck & Carmichael, 2020; L. Smith et al., 2010).

The MSU publishing workshop is designed to help writers (a) strategize how to link their community engagement activities to scholarly foundations (e.g., theories, conceptual frameworks, best practices); (b) unfurl a single community-engaged project or service-learning course into multiple public and academic products; (c) represent community partner voices in writing and coauthoring articles with community partners; (d) identify appropriate disciplinary and interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journals for each article; (e) understand the peer review process for community-engaged scholarship; and (f) improve writing habits, practices, and confidence. A UOE staff member presents the interactive workshop, which includes individual reflection worksheets and small group activities throughout the 3-hour workshop. The publishing workshop is free for participants to attend, with low costs to organize and host (e.g., room rental, refreshments, workshop materials). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop incurred no costs since it was held virtually with materials made available in a shared electronic folder. An example of the Publishing Your CES Workshop schedule is located in Table 3.

CES Writing Retreat

On our continuum of professional development, the CES writing retreat is characterized by high levels of contact with a community of writers, a high level of commitment, and both structured and unstructured spaces with a high accountability group. "Retreats are designed to create an atmosphere of trust, safety, and empowerment" (Grant & Knowles, 2000, p. 13; Overstreet et al., 2021), increased motivation (Moore, 2003) and confidence (Kempenaar & Murray, 2018), and have potential for transformational learning (Bojovic et al., 2024; Wittman et al., 2008).

Table 3. Publishing Your CES Workshop Schedule

Times	Schedule and Topics
9:00–9:05	Welcome, Introduction, Materials overview, Ground rules, Evaluations
9:05–9:30	Getting Organized to Write Protecting Your Writing Time • Writing habits and practices
9:30–10:00	Situating Yourself in Broader Scholarly Discourse • Multiple terms for community engagement • Identifying your specific type of engagement • Identifying your foundational scholarship
10:00–10:30	Identifying Least Publishable Units • Why unpack your community engagement project • Article: In defense of least publishable unit (Owen)[a] • Unfurling a community project into multiple scholarly products (Doberneck and Dann; Franz)[a] • Scholarly products for public audiences
Break	
10:45–11:05	Finding Your Journal Fit • Disciplinary vs. Interdisciplinary Journal Choices • Prioritizing your writing ideas • Examining your why/motivation, foundational scholarship, type of work, and leading scholars in your field to find your journal fit
11:05–11:30	What's Unique About Publishing CES • Connecting to foundational scholarship • Elaborating on the collaboration process and impact • Collecting data to document the partnership • Including community partner voices
11:30–11:35	Writing with Community Partners • Common journal sections for partners to write • Different ways to represent or write partner voices
11:35–11:45	Managing the Writing, Submission, and Revision Process • Review process basic steps • Examples of responses to peer review comments • Handouts: review criteria for select journals
11:45–11:50	Finding Support & Resources to Publish Your CES
11:50–12:00	Questions and Answers, Evaluation

[a] Sources are included in the CES Writers and Publishers Resource List handout (see Table 5).

MacLeod et al. (2012) noted that writing retreat benefits include containing writing–related anxiety, helping writers to negotiate multiple tasks, positioning writing as the main task, and preventing antitask behavior (e.g., distractions, procrastination; p. 653). To a much greater extent than write–ins,

> retreats have been designed to operate as temporary writing "sanctuaries" away from the normal rhythms of professional life that can allow an exclusive focus on writing, an immersion in the writing process, and the creation of a nurturing environment to share challenges with the writing process (Murray & Moore, 2006). (Dickson–Swift et al., 2009, p. 233).

Writing retreats also create "imaginative spaces" for writing, especially important for those who enjoy writing with others (Grant, 2006; Overstreet et al., 2021). The intentional development of forming, even temporarily, a community of writers is an essential feature of a writing retreat (Stevens & Voegele, 2019). Petrova and Coughlin (2012) recommended that writing retreat conveners "allow time for participants to get to know each other, share motivations for coming to the retreat, and their general academic experiences and aspirations" (p. 84). These opening retreat activities are necessary for the "retreat atmosphere to build a sense of trust" (p. 84). "Since many faculty members have little time for academic writing in their daily lives, the bulk of the retreat should consist of focused blocks of time (two to three hours) for individual writing, interspersed with group discussion and activities" (Girardeau et al., 2014, p. 39). At the closing of a writing retreat, conveners should give "participants an opportunity to reflect on the emotional and developmental journey they have taken part in; how (and if) their emotions related to writing, their writing processes, and their identities as academics and writers have evolved" (Petrova & Coughlin, 2012, p. 85). These more deeply personal, reflective openings and closings are another way writing retreats differ from write–ins, where goal setting and updates are of a more transactional nature (Bojovic et al., 2024; Tremblay–Wragg et al., 2020).

At MSU, the CES Writing Retreat is a 2–day,

off–campus retreat located about an hour's drive from campus. The CES Writing Retreat goals are to (a) provide a dedicated time and space away from campus and home responsibilities to focus on CES writing and publishing; (b) encourage strong writing habits; (c) strengthen academic publishing skills; (d) increase scholarly output and productivity; and (e) write as part of a community, thereby providing support and care during the writing endeavor. Held at a picturesque nature center, lakeside resort hotel, or urban center, the retreat intentionally includes a blend of unstructured, free writing time; optional workshops; opportunities for feedback from peers; and individual or group consultations from the WC and UOE staff. The CES Writing Retreat charges participants a fee, ranging from $260 (MSU participants) to $360 (non-MSU participants), which is used to offset the cost of the venue rental, one night's lodging, refreshments, and five meals at the retreat site. Often, a writer's dean or department chair will pay for the fee as support for professional development.

Organizing and hosting the retreat requires a medium amount of effort, particularly for recruitment, solicitation of administrators for participant scholarships, registration, processing payments, and contracting with the venue. Because some participants from diverse backgrounds may not be comfortable traveling to more rural areas, we coordinate carpools and caravans to ease those concerns and rotate retreat locations to include urban settings. UOE and the WC provide access to writing materials and offer optional mini workshops during the retreat, another example of building synergy across activities on the professional development continuum. Workshop topics are identified through a participant pretreat survey and vary according to each year's participants. UOE and the WC also provide individual feedback and mentoring as needed throughout the retreat. See Table 4 for a sample CES Writing Retreat Schedule and Table 5 for a CES Writers and Publishers Resource List handout.

Having detailed the continuum of professional development and its implementation at MSU, we now present evidence of effectiveness for the write–ins, publishing workshop, and writing retreat.

Table 4. Community–Engaged Scholarship Writing Retreat Schedule

Day 1

Times	Retreat activities
8:00–9:00	Registration, Check-In, Light Breakfast
9:00–10:00	Welcome, Introductions, Setting SMART goals, Sharing them
10:00–12:00	Writing Block 1
11:00–12:00	Optional Workshop 1: Fundamentals of Publishing CES
12:00–1:00	Lunch
1:00–5:00	Writing Block 2
1:00–2:30	Optional Workshop 2: Writing Process and Practices
4:00–5:00	Optional Works-in-Progress Peer Feedback Session
5:00–6:00	Dinner
6:30	Optional, but recommended: Happy Hour at local pub or bonfire on site

Day 2

Times	Retreat activities
8:00–9:00	Breakfast Optional: Whole Draft Optional Reading Feedback Session
9:00–12:00	Writing Block 3
10:00–11:00	Optional Workshop 3: Grant Writing to Support Your Community-Engaged Scholarship
12:00–1:00	Lunch
1:00–3:00	Writing Block 4
1:00–2:00	Optional Workshop 4: Turning Educational Innovations into Scholarship
3:00–4:00	Wrap-Up: Celebrate Progress, Next Steps, Evaluation

Table 5. CES Writers and Publishers Resource List Handout

Topic	Resource
CES Writing and Publishing	Ahmed, S., & Palmero, A. (2010). Community engagement in research: Frameworks for education and peer review. *American Journal of Public Health 100*, 1390-1387. Bordeaux, B. C., Wiley, C., Tandon, S. D., & Horowitz, C. R. (2007). Guidelines for writing manuscripts about community-based participatory research for peer-reviewed journals. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships 1*(3), 281-288. Doberneck, D. M. (2017, revised 2021). *Publishing Engaged Scholarship*. Campus Compact. https://compact.org/resource-posts/publishing-engaged-scholarship/ Smith, L., Rosenzweig, L., & Schmidt, M. (2010). Best practices in the reporting of participatory action research: Embracing both the forest and the trees. *The Counseling Psychologist, 38*(8): 1115-38.

Table 5. Continued

Topic	Resource
Writing with Community Partners, Including Partner Voices	Doberneck, D. M., & Dann, S. L. (2019). The degree of collaboration abacus tool. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement 23*(2), 93-107. Forchuk, C., & Meier, A. (2014). The article idea chart: A participatory action research tool to aid involvement in dissemination. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement 7*(1), 157-163.
CES Publishing & Successful CES Career Strategies	Doberneck, D. M., & Carmichael, C. E. (2020). The unfurling tool: Unpacking your community-engaged work into multiple scholarly products. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education 12*(3):5-19. Forester, J., & Bartel, A. S. (2022). Writing and publishing community-engaged scholarship: Advice for junior faculty on promotion, publishing, and craft. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education 14*(2), 34-50. Franz, N. K. (2011). Tips for constructing a promotion and tenure dossier that documents engaged scholarship endeavors. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement 15*(3): 15-29. Jacquez, F. (2014). Demonstrating impact as a community-engaged scholar within a research university. *Metropolitan Universities 25*(2), 14-26.
Writing Processes and Productivity	Anfara, V. A., Brown, K. M., & Mangione, T. L. (2002). Qualitative analysis on stage: Making the research process more public. *Educational Research 31*(7), 28-38. Belcher, W. L. (2009). *Writing your journal article in 12 weeks*. Sage Publications. Boice, R. (2000). *Advice for new faculty members*. Pearson. Boice, R. (1990). *Professors as writers: A self-help guide to productive writing*. New Forums Press. Febos, M. (2017, March 23). Do you want to be known for your writing or your swift email responses? *Catapult*. https://catapult.co/stories/do-you-want-to-be-known-for-your-writing-or-for-your-swift-email-responses/ Gastel, B., & Day, R. A., (2016). *How to write and publish a scientific paper*, 8th edition. Greenwood. Germano, W. (2013). *From dissertation to book*, 2nd edition. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, University of Chicago Press. Glatthorn, A. A. (2002). *Publish or perish an educator's imperative: Strategies for writing effectively for your profession and school*. Corwin Publishing. Goodson, P. (2012). *Becoming an academic writer: 50 exercises for paced, productive, and powerful writing*. Sage Publishers. LaMott, A. (1995). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. Anchor. Johnson, W. B., & Mullen, C. A. (2007). *Write to the top!: How to become a prolific academic*. Palgrave Macmillan. Owen, W. J. (2006, February 6). In defense of the least publishable unit. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/in-defense-of-the-least-publishable-unit/ Schimel, J. (2011). *Writing Science: How to Write Papers that Get Cited and Proposals that Get Funded*. Oxford University Press. Stevens, D. D. (2018). *Write More, Publish More, Stress Less: Five Keys Principles for a Creative and Sustainable Scholarly Practice*. Routledge. Sword, H. (2017). *Air and light and time and space: How successful academics write*. Harvard University Press. Thomson, P., & Kamler, B. (2012). *Writing for peer reviewed journals: Strategies for getting published*. Routledge. Whitesell, N., & Salvador, M. (2016, April). *Demystifying Peer Review: A Tribal Evaluation Institute Brief*. https://engagementscholarship.org/upload/announcements/TEI%20Brief%20-%20Peer%20Review.pdf

Evaluation of Professional Development for CES Publishing

In addition to the Baldi et al. (2013) conceptual framework, the Kornhaber et al. (2006) Evaluation Framework for Increased Scholarly Output guided our implementation of the continuum of professional development activities. Through a literature review on writing retreat research, Kornhaber et al. identified five domains that lead to increased scholarly output: (a) intrapersonal benefits; (b) protected time and space; (c) development of academic writing competencies; (d) community of practice; and (e) organizational investment (p. 1221). "Intrapersonal benefits" refers to a writer's self-awareness of barriers and enablers to their own writing, confidence and motivation, and reduced anxiety (p. 1222). "Protected time and space" refers to legitimizing writing time, uninterrupted writing time, and a sense of writing sanctuary (p. 1220). "Development of academic writing competence" refers to understanding practices for successful, sustained writing, including goal setting, solicitation of peer review, and writing style and practice (p. 1222). "Community of practice" includes developing a shared group vision, collegial support, mentorship, and social interaction (p. 1217). Finally, "organizational investment" refers to the availability and willingness of experienced mentors, allocation of resources, and follow-up support (p. 1223). As we have developed the continuum of professional development, we have intentionally developed activities to meet some of these needs, with other activities addressing other needs. In other words, not every professional development activity addresses all of the needs outlined above, but, taken as a whole, the continuum of professional development does meet a wide range of CES writers' needs.

MSU's institutional review board (IRB) assessed program evaluation efforts related to this continuum of professional development and determined that these data collection efforts did not meet the IRB definition of research and therefore did not require IRB approval. All evaluation data were collected anonymously by paper surveys for in-person events and online surveys for virtual events.

CES Write-Ins

CES write-ins represent the first collaboration between UOE and the WC and have been offered since 2016. They are held 9:00–12:00 on the first Friday of each month and are followed by an informal lunch in a residence hall dining room. Over the past 7 years, they have been offered in-person, virtually, or in some combination of in-person and virtually. Data summarized below are from the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic years and cover 19 write-ins. During this time frame, the majority of the write-ins were offered virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in fall 2021, we offered both in-person and virtual options but then reverted to virtual-only during spring 2022. In-person and virtual data are combined in Table 6.

Because most data were collected virtually, the questions we asked were limited in number and scope. We asked participants to report on what types of writing they worked on and their progress toward their goals through online surveys and polls. Paper surveys were collected for in-person write-ins. Participants could, and often did, report working on more than one type of writing project during the 3-hour write-in. Poll data were shared with the participants at the conclusion of the virtual write-ins as a way of celebrating collective accomplishments. N/A indicates that question was "not asked" that year. No demographic data were collected.

As the data show, in both academic years, the majority of the participants worked on journal articles, dissertations, and books. In the 2021–2022 academic year, there was a marked increase in pieces for the public, community partner, and practitioner audiences. As for progress toward goals, in both years, most of the participants achieved or made good progress toward their goals.

Publishing Workshops

The Publishing Your CES Workshop was offered four times between 2017 and 2020 as an in-person, half-day workshop. Sixty-three people attended and completed 54 paper evaluations for an 87% response rate. In 2021, the workshop was offered online in two shorter, separate sessions. During the second online session, the workshop content was augmented by a panel of CES journal editors who spoke about the focus of their journals and offered advice to prospective writers. Fifty-nine people attended the two virtual workshops and completed 22 online evaluations for a 37% response rate. Demographic data for both in-person and online workshops are combined in the following paragraphs. Not all participants completed all demographic questions.

Table 6. CES Write-In Participants' Evaluations of Outcomes

Write-in survey or poll question	2020–2021 Participant *n* = 100 Response rate 68%	2021–2022 Participant *n* = 116 Response rate 73%
What did you work on today? (Check all that apply.)		
Journal article	27	36
Conference paper, poster, proposal	4	6
Thesis	1	4
Dissertation	13	23
Grant proposal	8	12
CES job search materials	0	1
Book proposals, chapters	12	11
Teaching and learning, curriculum	N/A	3
Pieces for public, practitioner, community partners	7	22
Did you achieve the goals you set for today?		
Yes	24	46
No, not completely but I made good progress	37	55
No, but I made progress towards other goals	3	10
No	0	0

Of the 53 participants who completed the fill-in-the-blank question about their gender, 25% self-identified as male, 75% self-identified as female, and none self-identified as nonbinary or transgender. Of the 64 participants who self-reported their ages, 19% were in their 20s, 30% were in their 30s, 20% were in their 40s, 22% were in their 50s, and 9% were in their 60s or older. Of the 59 participants who self-reported their race, 7% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 5% were Asian or Asian American, 14% were Black, African American, or African, and 74% were White or European-American. None reported being Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Of the 56 participants who self-reported their ethnicity, 21% were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish descent. Six participants indicated they were international, including from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, and Korea.

Of the 66 participants who reported their colleges, 29% were from Agriculture and Natural Resources; 18% from Social Science; 15% from Human Medicine; 14% from Education; 3% each from Arts and Letters, Natural Science, and Nursing; 2% from Business; 1% each from Engineering and Residential College for Arts and Humanities; and 11% from other, including Extension. Of the 40 reporting their rank or role at the university, 5% were professors, 8% were associate professors, 15% were assistant professors, 35% were academic staff, 37% were postdoctoral students and graduate students. Of the 76 reporting their level of experience with writing about community-engaged scholarship, 34% indicated no experience at all, 54% indicated a little bit of experience, 12% indicated being moderately experienced, and none reported they were very experienced.

In summary, the publishing workshop participants were predominantly female self-identifying, White, of non-Hispanic descent, in their 30s and 40s, with academic staff or postdoctoral/graduate student status. Participants were more likely to be from colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Social Science, and Education, which is in keeping with research on disciplinary differences in community-engaged scholarship (Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017). In addition, 88% of the workshop participants reported having little to no experience publishing community-engaged scholarship.

At the workshop's end, participants completed paper evaluations for the in-person workshops in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 and online surveys for the virtual workshops in 2021. Between 2016 and 2018, the evaluation surveys used a 4-point scale (1 being lowest, 4 being highest). Starting in 2019, evaluation surveys used a 5-point scale (1 being lowest, 5 being highest). Although specific wording of evaluation questions varied by year, all evaluations focused on six areas: (1) understanding special elements of community-engaged publishing, (2) writing/publishing with community partners, (3) unpacking community engagement projects into multiple pieces, (4) identifying a broad array of publishing options, (5) understanding journal focus and editorial review criteria, and (6) knowing where to turn for additional resources and support. Because data using 4-point and 5-point scales could not be combined for analysis, Table 7 summarizes only the data for 2019–2021, when 5-point scales were used.

In light of 88% of the writing workshop participants describing themselves as having little to no experience with CES writing and publishing, the evaluation data reveal important results about their learning. Workshop participants reported gains in all six writing workshop focus areas, the three areas with the largest gains being (1) understand more about what journal editors are looking for, (2) become familiar with journals I did not know about before, and (3) incorporate community partner voice and experience into my writing. These findings parallel the publishing workshop's goals, namely, to develop practical writing skills and practices essential for the academic success of emerging CES writers. As the authors reviewed the two lowest ratings for the workshops, we redeveloped writing with community partners as coauthors by adding more examples. We are in the process of working with some community-engagement journal editors on improving the materials for understanding journal review criteria.

Table 7. Publishing Workshop Participants' Evaluations of Outcomes

Publishing Your CES Workshop	Number participant responses	Mean
Understand special elements of CE publishing		
Connect my CE scholarship to theories, conceptual frameworks, etc.	33	3.64
Recognize how peer reviewed publishing of CE scholarship differs from traditional scholarship	33	3.90
Plan to collect the necessary data about my community engagement project, so that I can publish about it later	12[a]	4.33
Write/publish with community partners		
Know strategies for writing with community partners as coauthors	33	3.48
Incorporate community partner voice and experience into my writing	12[a]	4.75
Unpack community projects into multiple pieces		
Understand how to unfurl a CE project into more than one peer reviewed publication	33	3.86
Identify broader array of publishing options		
Identify potential academic publishing outlets for your CE scholarship	34	4.10
Identify potential outlets for publishing my CE work for public audiences	12[a]	3.90
Become familiar with journals I did not know about before	13	4.75
Understand journal focus and editorial review criteria		
Consider review criteria for CE scholarship when writing my manuscript	34	3.62
Understand more about what journal editors are looking for	12[a]	4.82
Select journals to publish in more purposefully	33	4.00
Know where to turn for additional resources, advice, feedback and support for publishing CE scholarship	32	4.40

[a] These questions were added in 2021, which explains the lower number of responses.

Writing Retreats

The CES Writing Retreat has been held for 5 years, starting in 2016, with a pause in 2020 due to state restrictions on in-person events during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the 5 years, we have hosted 96 writers and have received 85 written evaluations, for a response rate of 88%. Of the 73 participants who completed a fill-in-the-blank about their gender, 5% specified male, 94% specified female, and 1% specified nonbinary or transgender. Of the 76 participants who self-reported their age ranges, 3% were in their 20s, 30% were in their 30s, 37% were in their 40s, 25% were in their 50s, and 5% were 60 or older.

Of the 71 participants who self-reported their race, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 3% Asian or Asian American, 30% Black, African American, or African, and 68% were White or European American. None reported being Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than race. Of the 67 participants who self-reported their ethnicity, 10% were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish descent. Seventeen percent of the participants indicated they were international, from Greece, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Peru, Taiwan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Of the 80 participants who reported their colleges, participants were 28% from Education, 23% from Arts and Letters, 21% from Social Science, 11% from Human and Osteopathic Medicine, 3% each from Engineering, Natural Science, Extension, and Residential College for Arts and Humanities, 1% each from James Madison (an undergraduate residential college focused on public policy), Law, Veterinary Medicine, Nursing, and Communication Arts and Sciences. In addition to MSU participants, the writing retreats have attracted writers from Wayne State University, Iowa State University, and Helen DeVoss Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Of the 63 reporting their rank or role at the university, 3% were professors, 21% were associate professors, 38% were assistant professors, 13% were academic staff, and 25% were postdocs or graduate students. Of the 62 reporting their level of experience with writing about community-engaged scholarship, 1% indicated no experience at all, 60% indicated a little bit of experience, 26% indicated being moderately experienced, and 13% reported they were very experienced.

In summary, the writing retreat participants have predominantly been female self-identifying, in their 30s and 40s, of White or European-American and non-Hispanic descent, and from the Colleges of Arts and Letters, Education, and Social Science. They were predominantly assistant or associate professors and rated themselves as having a little bit of experience writing about community-engaged scholarship.

Table 8 summarizes quantitative evaluation data collected during 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021. At the retreat's end, participants completed paper evaluations, with 4-point Likert-type scaled questions (with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest) about their retreat experiences. Questions were organized around Kornhaber et al.'s (2016) four domains—interpersonal benefit, protected time and space, development of academic writing competence, and community of practice. Starting in 2019, new questions were added to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. N/A in Table 8 indicates that a question was "not asked" that particular year.

With the majority of the writing retreat participants in early career stages or nontenured positions and self-reporting a little bit of experience, the writing retreat provided valuable protected time and space away from the office and home responsibilities for them to concentrate on writing and publishing. Across all evaluation years, data revealed the highest ranking benefits of the retreat to have been the following: (1) uninterrupted time and space for writing, (2) having time away from campus in a retreat-like setting, (3) the respectful and inclusive environment, and (4) defining my writing goal at the beginning. The findings are aligned with the purpose of the writing retreat.

Reflections on the Value of Our Institutional Partnership

In addition to the jointly offered professional development activities, the partnership between UOE and the WC has had other benefits as well. Together, we have given conference presentations at our respective professional conferences. In 2017, the WC director and associate director copresented at both the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (Doberneck, Smith, et al., 2017) and the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement conferences (T. G. Smith, Doberneck, et al., 2017).

Table 8. Writing Retreat Participants' Evaluation of Outcomes

Writing support domain	Year and evaluation response number				
	2016 (*n* = 9)	2017 (*n* = 16)	2018 (*n* = 21)	2019 (*n* = 20)	2021 (*n* = 19)
Intrapersonal benefit					
This writing retreat increased my motivation to publish my community-engaged scholarship.	N/A	3.88	3.55	3.37	3.47
This writing retreat increased my confidence in my ability to publish my community-engaged scholarship.	N/A	3.63	3.40	3.16	3.32
This writing retreat helped decrease my anxiety about writing up community-engaged scholarship.	N/A	3.59	3.38	3.28	3.22
Protected time and space					
I valued having uninterrupted time and space for writing about my community-engaged scholarship.	4.00	3.88	4.00	3.75	3.89
I valued having time away from campus, in a natural, retreat-like setting for my writing.	N/A	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.79
The blend of open writing time, optional workshops, and peer feedback sessions worked for me.	3.78	3.81	3.57	3.68	3.37
Development of academic writing competence					
Defining my writing goal at the beginning helped me to focus my efforts during the retreat.	3.78	3.75	3.33	3.50	3.61
Check-ins, works-in-progress, and question/answer times helped me to stay focused throughout the retreat.	N/A	3.25	3.32	3.33	2.94
I left the writing retreat with clear next steps for my writing project.	3.89	3.63	3.81	3.65	3.53
Community of practice					
Access to writing and community-engagement mentors was valuable.	3.75	3.69	3.57	3.35	3.33
Writing in the company of peers helped me to feel supported.	N/A	3.63	3.86	3.70	3.37
Presenters came from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.44	3.50
This writing retreat created a respectful and inclusive environment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.75	3.74

Conversely, a UOE director copresented at the International Writing Centers Association annual conference later that same year (T. G. Smith, Baldwin, & Doberneck, 2017). This cross-fertilization of ideas has led to other collaborations, including two campus workshops on a participatory methodology called photovoice. UOE and the WC also regularly cross-promote one another's events through our respective campus networks. New partnerships and projects, including disciplinary writing retreats led by our retreat participants for their own departments, emerged as well.

Lessons Learned

As we reflect on multiple years of experience, some lessons learned emerge from our shared experience as intrainstitutional partners supporting CES writing and publishing and from the participants' evaluation and feedback. These lessons may be helpful to leaders at other higher education institutions as they consider offering their own professional development for writing about community-engaged scholarship.

- *Consult the literature on successful academic writing.* Although not commonly known in the community engagement field, there is a rich, varied literature on writing practice in general and on scholarly or academic publishing more specifically. Tap into best practices, conceptual frameworks, and strategies that are proven successes to guide your professional development activities. Continue to revisit the literature for new approaches developed to address the changing needs of academic writers and publishers.

- *Build out your continuum of professional development gradually.* With 5 years of experience, we can talk about a full continuum of professional development; however, we did not start that way. We focused on one offering at a time and built out the continuum gradually. We also intentionally strategized on ways in which different professional development activities could create synergy with one another (e.g., online materials referred to during a workshop, consultations occurring within a write-in, mini workshops within the retreat, the Table 5 handout at write-ins and retreats).

- *Develop partners on and off campus.* Offices of outreach and engagement typically do not have academic writing professionals as part of their staff. Establishing an internal partnership with our writing center was essential to our success. Other campus units, such as the graduate school, the faculty development office, the university library, the diversity office, or your university press, can make contributions to activities along your professional development continuum. As for off-campus partners, we have partnered with our state Campus Compact chapter occasionally and community-engagement journal editors. All partners, on and off campus, were vital in advertising events and recruiting participants through their email lists, events calendars, and webpages.

- *Use "talent, perspectives, and expertise of your own" scholars* (Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006, p. 22). Your campus has faculty, academic staff, and graduate students whose expertise is in writing and publishing; they are in academic departments such as English and Writing and Rhetoric, as well as units such as University Communications or University Libraries. You may also have faculty who serve as editors or section editors for journals that frequently publish community-engaged scholarship. These members of campus can be invited to serve as retreat cohosts, workshop guests, or journal editor panel members within workshops or retreats. In this way, your professional development offerings can amplify successful scholars and campus leaders through peer-to-peer learning and promote an "it can be done at this institution" ethos.

- *Tend to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issues.* Sharing one's writing with others is an especially vulnerable and risky act. Organizers of professional development for writing need to ensure the atmosphere is respectful and inclusive through community ground rules and clear expectations about feedback (e.g., critique the writing, not the writer; Elbow & Belanoff, 1999). Having diverse speakers, facilitators, and hosts for events reflects the DEI commitment necessary for supporting *all* faculty, academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students, especially those who feel their voices, methods, or subject matter have been marginalized in the academy (Overstreet et al., 2021). Consider DEI issues in the logistical planning and venue selection to ensure gender-neutral bathrooms and spaces for nursing parents. As our evaluation data showed, traveling to and from more rural, scenic retreat locations needs to be made comfortable for those who feel uncomfortable in rural settings. Strategies such as carpooling, caravanning, evening group walks, and alternating between rural and urban sites are responsive to such concerns.

- *Set clear expectations for dedicated time for writing.* For write-ins and writing retreats especially, set expectations early about the importance of prioritizing writing over the everyday distractions of emails, meetings, and other deadlines. Communicate prior to events, during events, and afterward that these special writing times and places are to be preserved as much as possible for writing. Our evaluations showed that prompting participants to enable out-of-office automatic responses, write with their email programs closed, and check emails only once or twice during the writing time were effective strategies for protecting their writing time.

- *Remain flexible and writer-focused.* Different writers need different things at different times. For example, we use participant preretreat surveys to identify workshop topics and support needs each year. During the retreat, we remain flexible by emphasizing the optional nature of the workshops and encouraging people to stay in the flow of their own writing even if that means they miss a workshop within the retreat.

- *Be intentional about creating a sense of community among writers.* To counteract a sense of isolation that many writers experience, it is important to intentionally build a sense of community among writers. Take time to have everyone introduce themselves and their community-engaged scholarship focus. Share participant contact information (with permission). Make sure name tags for in-person events are descriptive of people's scholarly areas of interest. Build in socializing and networking time at meals or in evenings. Encourage connections and invite participants to be encouraging of one another's writing.

- *Evaluate your offerings and make improvements over time.* Build in both formative and summative evaluations to gauge what is working and not working from your participants' point of view. We use evaluation data from the write-ins, publishing workshops, and writing retreats, to improve our programming and resources every year. When improvements suggested in evaluations from one kind of event can be applied across all of the events, we make those improvements broadly. These data allow us to improve current activities, identify opportunities for new resources or activities, and document the impact of the professional development offerings, which is especially important for institutional reporting. As we move forward, improvements in what data we collect and how we collect it will allow the author team to analyze data by demographic group and potentially to link impacts from these programs to overall institutional publishing metrics.

- *Celebrate writing and publishing successes.* As Duhigg (2014) noted, one of the key parts of habit formation is the celebration of success. This continuum of professional development is geared toward developing skills, practices, community, and ultimately a habit of scholarly publication about community engagement. Celebrating steps along the way, progress made, as well as final accomplishments, is essential in this habit formation.

Conclusions

After the COVID-19 pandemic, we have entered different patterns of living and working, faculty, Extension professionals, academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students, especially those who have had increased and complicated caregiving responsibilities for children and elders or new chronic diseases themselves, may need additional support to find their way back to successful writing habits or to develop new writing practices, given changes in their personal and professional lives (Lang, 2021). Community-engaged scholars and practitioners encountered more interruptions to their scholarship than traditional scholars because they had to contend with disruptions with their community partner organizations and with individual partners themselves. Without increased institutional support, these disruptions have the potential to undermine the academic success of community-engaged scholars and practitioners. Research about supporting

successful academic writing in general shows that a continuum of support reaches more participants more successfully than a singular approach (Baldi et al., 2013). As MacLeod et al. (2012) noted, it takes more than protected writing time; supporting successful writers takes coordinated and strategic approaches so that participants begin to feel the writing becoming less daunting, the mystery surrounding writing for publication diminishing, the feelings of being capable of writing growing, and identities as writers strengthening. They point out the importance of "confidence tied to a sense of achievement related to their writing, conveying the psychological satisfaction they took from task completion" (p. 648). Evidence from our institution shows that using a modified continuum of professional development is effective in reducing barriers to writing, increasing self-efficacy and identity formation as a writer, and supporting the success of community-engaged scholars and practitioners. As the writing and publishing needs of our community-engaged scholars and practitioners continue to change, this author team looks forward to continuing our intrainstitutional partnerships to develop innovative and responsive professional development programming with and for our colleagues.

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Declaration of Interest

We have no known conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Using Reflexive Agency to Develop Career Readiness and Address Social Inequities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to engage students in critical reflection pertaining to critical service-learning as a vehicle to transform beliefs and perspectives regarding equity and social justice in a community. The authors engaged in personal self-formation with an emphasis on reflexive agency to unpack course requirements, critical service-learning requirements, and connection to career readiness. Student responses while engaging in critical service-learning grounded the process of critical reflection. This study can be replicated across universities and has many implications for course development and university-wide implementation of critical service-learning.

Keywords: critical reflection, experiential learning, critical service-learning, reflexive agency

A s educators, we are responsible for preparing our students for college. Although many would agree that a key benefit of attending an institution of higher education (IHE) is the education itself, some have argued for a shift from a singular focus on intellectual growth to a more comprehensive focus that involves student whole-person self-formation (Marginson, 2023). In addition to disciplinary knowledge that is gained in the classroom, "inquiry and experience in natural and social relational settings" with "collective reflectivity" have been noted as important elements in supporting personal change (Marginson, 2023, p. 9). Although transformation and personal development are not guaranteed in higher education (Marginson, 2023), in order to prepare students to engage in the lifelong process of whole-person formation, faculty have the opportunity to engage students in reflection that requires students to reorganize experiences through problem-solving application of course content (Dewey, 1938), which leads to converting difficult experiences into knowledge (Kolb, 1984).

In the field of teacher preparation, faculty have embraced and grappled with the vehicle responsibility of transformation in order to prepare future teachers and professionals who champion educational equity and opportunity for all students (Baily et al., 2014). Many teacher candidates (as well as the current teaching force) do not share the demographics and backgrounds of their students. Correspondingly, our future teachers bring limited understanding of, or even resistance to recognizing, the realities of educational inequities (Lee, 2011), such as continued achievement gaps between White students and students from other races, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from low-income families (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Teacher educators have focused on the need to "engage our students . . . in more meaningful dialogue and action on issues related to social injustice in schools" (Baily et al., 2014, p. 249). High quality service-learning with ongoing reflection has been considered a high-impact practice and transformative in providing authentic experiences that support deeper learning about social justice and equity (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2023; Baily et al., 2014). We aimed to utilize service-learning with ongoing reflection with the goal of facilitating whole-person self-formation.

The purpose of this study was to engage students in critical reflection pertaining to critical service-learning as a vehicle to transform

beliefs and perspectives regarding equity and social justice in a community. This ambitious goal required a cyclical process of reflexivity grounded in research. To unpack this multilayered work, this article will present an overview of terms specific to effective critical service-learning, followed by a description of this relevant project that aimed to utilize critical reflection and reflexivity to address issues of equity and social justice.

Defining Critical Service-Learning

Service-learning is an essential dimension of the college experience. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2023) identified service-learning and community-based learning as high-impact practices. AAC&U has also stated that a requisite element of successful service-learning is to ensure that students apply concepts learned in the classroom to a real-world field experience and provide in-class time for reflection. Each of these steps is critical in utilizing service-learning to its full capacity to serve both the community partner and the students participating in the practice.

Service-learning is also a way for students to gain hands-on experience working in their fields before entering the workforce (Mitchell & Rost-Banik, 2019). Smith et al. (2022) recognized that many students enter the work field with the technical and content knowledge to perform a job but are missing the soft skills that employers are seeking. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2022), such soft skills include communication, decision making, problem solving, emotional empathy, and flexibility/adaptability. A reflection process was an opportunity for students to identify the connection between the soft skills that are NACE career readiness competencies and their experiences in the field (Smith et al., 2022). This opportunity to refine alignment between experience, NACE competencies, and course content required intentional field experience, and the authors believed that service-learning has the potential to be a powerful opportunity to support this alignment.

The term "service-learning" varies in implementation across universities (Butin, 2006; Kendall, 1990); however, most instructors would agree that service-learning includes a community-based experience tied to learning outcomes (Jacoby & Associates, 1996). Even when entered with noble intentions, service-learning has the potential to promote a sense of charity instead of an opportunity for critical thinking and problem solving (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Intentional field experience, however, has the potential to shift student experiences from "doing something for someone else with some feeling of pity" (Wade, 1997, p. 64) into an opportunity to engage in critical thinking and problem solving that are aligned to course student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Critical service-learning is the term used as a bridge between the advantages of service-learning and the opportunity for authentic relationships with universities. Rhoads's (1997) foundational work explored students' sense of self during service-learning and argued the pedagogical shift that IHEs engage in may guide students to develop a more caring self. His work around "critical community service" began the discussion about the purpose of service-learning and the opportunity for students to explore an identity of caring individuals as the world around us becomes more fragmented. Rice and Pollack (2000) further defined the term "critical service-learning" to describe service-learning experiences with a focus on social justice.

Although service-learning is widely regarded as an important practice by IHEs, it is important to note that there is not a consensus on the meaning of the term "service-learning" across universities. Further, most experiences labeled "service-learning" lack discussions about social injustices (Mitchell, 2008). Kincey et al. (2022) noted that in IHEs each instructor brings their own perceptions of the terms "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion" to classrooms. Although their application is always well intentioned, these differing perceptions and levels of expertise can sometimes lead to subgroups of students feeling isolated or targeted, instead of the original goal of fostering a sense of belonging. Multiple studies have been conducted pertaining to service-learning, and their mixed results related to student impact (Alt & Medrich, 1994; Billig, 2000) may be due to the differing definitions of what constitutes "service-learning" (Eyler & Giles, 1999). These mixed results reflect the need for instructors to consider their personal perceptions when creating opportunities for authentic experiences in communities to ensure their perceptions do not impact the experiences of the students. Regardless, these experiences should be coupled with reflection that pushes students to think critically about their assumptions and how they interact with the world (Baily et al., 2014).

Critical Reflection, Self-Formation, and Reflexivity

Creating impactful, transformative experiences for students is essential to students' experience in higher education, and an important pathway for that experience is critical reflection. Berger (2004) identified transformational reflection as a vehicle to "move outside the form of current understanding and into a new place" (p. 338). These experiences must be intentional and coupled with a model for reflection.

Kolb's (1984) foundational work pertaining to experiential learning set the stage for the progression of experiences leading to the formation of knowledge. The experiential learning cycle included the four stages of (a) concrete experience, or the experience, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualization, or learning from the experience, and (d) active experimentation, or trying out what you have learned. Kolb proposed that effective learning takes place as an individual progresses through the stages, which can lead to complex "mental models" of the content the learner is learning about. This cycle also suggests that a participant can begin the cycle at any stage but must complete all four stages in order to gain an abstract understanding of the content.

Throughout the decades, the reflective observation stage in Kolb's model has expanded to allow educators to engage in rich conversations to lead toward critical reflection. Eyler and Giles (1999) proposed not only that service-learning allows students to gain a deeper understanding of social inequities present in our communities, but that reflection is key to this deeper cognitive development within service-learning. Eyler (2002) reminded us that this opportunity for cognitive development must be paired with authentic, intentional placements, where students are asked to contribute to engaged and thoughtful citizenship as well as having an opportunity to engage in planned, structured reflection. Eyler stated that "reflection is the key to strengthening the power of service-learning" (p. 519).

Eyler (2002) highlighted that the simple placement of students in service-learning experiences with some reflection prompts does not require students to make connections to the academic content taught in the course or to move toward the mindset of engaged citizens. She cautioned that reflection, even when course time is allowed for it, can sometimes be superficial and lack the connection to community partners. Eyler (2001) suggested a progression including reflecting alone, then with classmates, and finally with community partners to truly shift thinking about how service-learning impacts the student.

Critical Service-Learning, Social Justice, and Career Readiness

Shiller (2022) observed that students who are engaged in service-learning are often White and are serving historically marginalized individuals, leading to a scenario where students perceive communities as not having the power to bring about change for themselves. Likewise, conversations and reflections about systemic racism often live in isolation in courses designed for service-learning. Conversations related to systemic racism are not only relevant for service-learning courses, but provide skills that are integral to career readiness.

NACE (2024) career readiness competencies are those abilities that prepare students to enter the workforce as lifelong learners who are active community members striving to be engaged citizens. Researchers have suggested that service-learning can help students gain the soft skills needed to enter the workforce (Smith et al., 2022). Contextualizing efforts of service-learning with explicit conversations about social justice and equity is a necessary precursor to maximizing the self-formative impact of service-learning for university students. Additional research pertaining to the impact of critical service-learning on the student experience will help instructors build authentic experiential learning opportunities.

Methodology

Designing the Project

The purpose of this study was to engage students in critical reflection pertaining to critical service-learning as a vehicle to transform beliefs and perspectives regarding equity and social justice in our community. The term "our community" can hold many meanings. For this study, the term "our community" included "an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location" (Merriam-Webster, 2024, "Community"). The community in this study included the county where the university resides.

The research team included three faculty who shared a common interest in designing course content and experiential learning experiences to transform our students and the community. We also shared a common interest in student whole-person formation. Prior to beginning this study, the authors gained approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). After IRB approval and to prepare for this research, we explored the process of our own self-formation, with an emphasis on reflexive agency (Marginson, 2023), to unpack our current beliefs and understanding of critical reflection and service-learning. Each member of the research team brought current course practices pertaining to critical reflection as well as course expectations during service-learning along with the goal of improving their students' critical reflections and growth. The researchers discussed common practices and opportunities for shifts in curriculum pertaining to critical service-learning.

The projects' authors were faculty members in the College of Education that focused on teacher preparation in a midsized private Christian liberal arts college. The primary partner for this work was an area nonprofit that provided a food pantry and English language classes to the area, which included a very diverse immigrant population. An additional partner was a neighboring elementary school that also served a diverse immigrant population. The university's student population was predominantly female (66%), predominantly White (78%), and mostly affluent, so the potential growth for these students in interacting and working with a diverse immigrant population was very promising.

Because the authors were in the College of Education and taught courses in their teacher preparation program, the student participants in each of the authors' courses were primarily preservice teachers. Service-learning has been found particularly effective in helping preservice teachers see themselves as agents of change and in helping improve their attitudes toward diversity (Root et al., 2002). Because of this close alignment between our goals as teacher educators and the potential impact of service-learning activities and critical reflection, the authors worked very closely with the director of career and professional development at their university. The director of career and professional development helped the authors navigate an in-depth study of the university-defined career readiness competencies and provided guidance about course implementation. These conversations guided the researchers' process of reflexivity to align course learning outcomes, career readiness competencies (NACE, 2024), and the importance of critical reflection.

The positive impact of the collaboration with the director of career readiness allowed the project to expand beyond the role of preservice teachers and explore the impact of these practices on young professionals and on individual self-formation as a whole. Under the guidance of the Office of Career Readiness, the authors were able to approach their SLOs and reflective activities in a more global manner. Doing so was particularly relevant because the university has identified whole-person formation as a key priority and central to its mission and vision.

The process of reflexivity and career readiness skill alignment were coupled with a narrative literature review. A narrative review was utilized with the purpose of "combining quite different kinds of evidence to formulate a broad theoretical formulation" (Baumeister, 2013, p. 120). A critical literature review was not used for this study as the authors were focused on examining key findings from multiple types of studies to gain a more in-depth understanding of the impact of critical reflection on critical service-learning. The review included a search of the following areas: (a) service-learning, experiential learning, critical engagement; (b) critical reflection to transform mindsets; (c) service-learning course development; and (d) Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle.

Participants

All student participants in this study were enrolled in an undergraduate program at a private liberal arts university in the southern United States mentioned earlier. The participants of this study included two groups of undergraduate students with various experiences. The first group included students enrolled in the Education courses Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners (n = 25), Human Development (n = 22), or Introduction to English Learners (n = 11). Each course has distinct critical service-learning outcomes, and these courses are taken throughout students' program of study within either a teaching licensure program or education minor (see Table 1). For example, two of the courses are foundational courses within the Education program

Table 1. Education Courses Learning Outcomes

Course	Program of study	Field experience learning outcomes
Diverse Learners	Sophomore year	Exposure to working with students with disabilities • Building relationships • Overcoming fears • Recognizing bias and misperceptions
English Learners	Any time throughout program	Exposure to working with multilingual students • Understand MLs academic and personal characteristics • Identify and describe personal biases aligned with interpretation of MLs academic performance
Human Development	Freshman year	Exposure to classroom experiences, both in person and virtual • Examine the learning processes that take place in classroom environments. • Analyze key developmental factors at play for students as they engage in learning activities

of study, meaning a student takes these courses early in their program of study, whereas one course can be taken at any time. The program of studies encompasses courses required to be taken in a specific order to meet graduation and teacher licensure requirements. Participants within the Education pathway have a prescribed program of study that does not allow for many alternatives to the progression of courses or additional electives due to teacher licensure requirements.

The second group of participants included undergraduate students from across disciplines who volunteered through a university-wide service-learning volunteer platform (*n* = 7). Students signed up to work with an adult English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program at a community nonprofit. Demographic data related to major and classification were not collected to maintain students' anonymity.

Critical Service-Learning Placements

Participants enrolled in Education courses were partnered with multiple public schools and community placements. The local school district where the authors' university resides is located in a large urban area. University students were assigned to (a) Education field experience or (b) a community-based nonprofit. The field placements included a pre-K through 12th grade public school or a community partner. Education students with a field experience were assigned to a school where they were partnered with one teacher and worked with a group of students who were either (a) students with disabilities (i.e., learning disabilities and emotional disturbance), (b) active English learners, or (c) at risk for school failure. Within the Diverse Learners course, students had field experiences with children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities outside the traditional school day. The placement included a course requirement of 20 hours of field experience.

In addition to the Education field experience, an opportunity to work with a nonprofit in the community was utilized. The nonprofit agency provides many services, such as food assistance, but the student volunteers for this study served as English conversation partners within the adult ESOL classes. As conversation partners, university students performed such activities as asking adult ESOL students about their backgrounds, engaging in mock interviews, and engaging in healthcare simulations, such as expectations in a doctor's office.

Faculty Reflexivity and Course Amendments

This study began with the aim of examining how critical reflection can transform mindsets of students. The cyclical process of faculty agency of reflexivity and the literature review informed the researchers to examine their own assumptions and beliefs about the term "transformation." Originally, we had used the terms "transformation" and "whole-person formation" interchangeably;

yet, as we explored these terms, we realized that our original self-study was missing the complexity to move our mindsets from transformation to self-formation (Marginson, 2023). As true self-formation is an ongoing process, the authors decided that as faculty we should engage in the process of our own reflexivity as a model for our students. The process of this reflexivity was critical to the early-stage assessment of the project and the course amendments during the project.

Throughout these experiences, the student participants took part in conversations related to critical service-learning. As the faculty engaged in reflexivity, they amended in-class discussion prompts, reflection prompts, and course materials to address program practices that prepare teachers to engage in reflection pertaining to structures in society that perpetuate social injustice (Table 2). Findings related to faculty reflexivity are presented later.

Although student volunteers were not engaged in a course that intentionally implemented discussing practices that can perpetuate social injustice, the students did engage in a 30-minute training before working with families. This training included information about perceiving service-learning less as "helping" neighbors and more as serving as a mutual neighbor (Remen, 1999). The student volunteers were encouraged to always engage in conversations with the mindset of working with our neighbors, and not to focus on "fixing" the person.

Design and Implementation of Critical Reflection Process

Student reflections were collected as part of the critical reflection process through a common survey. The students who were engaged in Education courses completed the consent form and reflection prompts in class at the end of the semester. The consent form was read aloud in class. The student volunteers, who were not engaged in an Education course, were provided a link to the survey the day they volunteered. The survey link included the consent form and reflection questions. Volunteers were asked to complete the survey while at the nonprofit.

Due to the nature of this study, a case study method (Pan, 2003) was adopted to capture critical reflection in the moment. To standardize the questions that led students to critical reflection, students were provided Eyler's (2002) reflection prompts. The authors coupled this protocol with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle to gain a deeper understanding of the progression of student thinking. Eyler's reflection protocol was selected due to its rich history of being adopted by many IHEs' teaching centers (SOURCE, n.d.) and identified as a "well-used and successful model" in connection between experiential learning and critical reflection (Jacoby, 2019, para. 1). Kolb's experiential learning cycle was utilized as a progression of critical thinking within the experience. For example, students engaged in Eyler's reflection protocol after engaging in critical service-learning. When analyzing the results of the student responses, the authors consulted Kolb's experiential learning cycle to gain a deeper understanding of students' progression of thinking compared to the experience and, eventually, the students' program of study.

Participants engaged in questions that fell into the categories of "What?", "So what?", and "Now what?" The category of "What?" includes questions related to the student's experience in the field, "So what?" includes

Table 2. Course Topics: Social Injustice

Topics	Education course discussion
Asset vs. deficit mindset	• Identify asset vs. deficit mindset • Use of asset vs. deficit language
Data	• Data that represents opportunity gaps • Differences and outcomes of different demographics of pre-K–12th grade students
Systemic structures	• Opportunity gaps • Policies and practices that impact differences
Case study analysis	• Bridge research theory to practice gap • Connections to field experience

questions related to why the student thinks these experiences have been important, and "Now what?" includes questions about how the student will use and apply new learning.

The subcategory of questions under each category slightly differed based on the learning outcomes and student engagement in the field. For example, students enrolled in Education courses were asked additional subcategory questions, such as "How will this field experience contribute to your effectiveness as a future teacher?" whereas volunteer students were not asked questions related to teacher preparation.

Data Analysis

This study began with the philosophical approach of epistemology, or how do we know what we know (Woleński, 2004)? For this study, qualitative data were intentionally collected to capture the voices of the participants in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of how knowledge was formed during critical service–learning. The authors recognized that their own experiences impact their interpretation of student responses and did not attempt to make judgment through analysis. Qualitative analysis, including epistemology, can sometimes seem generic and linear, leaving terms, such as coding, unexplained (Lichtman, 2013). Lichtman suggested a detailed approach to "sift and sort" qualitative data to allow the researchers more time to dig into the data to explore the complex nature of explaining the human condition (Bernauer et al., 2013). Lichtman's (2023) three Cs of data analysis (codes, categories, concept) were utilized to analyze student reflections by first sifting through responses to identify common codes, negotiating if these codes truly represented the participants' responses, then spending time in these codes to sort responses into common categories, which led to a common concept. The common concept was analyzed with the original responses to ensure that participant voices were present in the common concept.

Each researcher independently read student reflections from the course they taught. Next, they identified common responses from taught courses, including direct quotes, and analyzed the common responses to create common codes throughout all service–learning opportunities. The researchers reviewed the common codes to identify the two common categories. These categories were shared with the research team to identify a common concept.

The researchers completed the analysis multiple times to triangulate methods throughout the study. The researchers first met to establish interrater reliability of the critical reflection prompts. They discussed the essential questions and expectations of student results within the reflection prompts. Next, researchers read the student reflections independently and met as a group to discuss codes. When common categories for all participants were present in the categories of "What?", "So what?", and "Now what?", the researchers reread the responses and annotated responses independently. The researchers met again to discuss the annotation to reinforce the categories identified in the first analysis.

Project Impact

The purpose of this study was to engage students in critical reflection pertaining to critical service–learning as a vehicle to transform beliefs and perspectives regarding equity and social justice in our community. In this section, we discuss the results of the student surveys and outline steps in the development of this project.

Faculty Reflexivity and Course Amendments

The first finding from this study related to the whole–person formation of the authors themselves. While this study began with students as the main participants, we, as faculty engaging in our reflexivity, realized a need for our own shift in mindset from transformation to self–formation (Marginson, 2023). This ongoing process was essential for the authors but also served as a model for students.

The second finding of this study included the need for our students to not only begin to engage in the ongoing process of agency of reflexivity, but also to be able to see the connection between this process and skills that can be used postgraduation. The authors' discussion with the director of career readiness helped us to begin to implement specific career readiness competencies within our courses: career and self–development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology (NACE, 2024). As faculty, we assumed that students would see the clear connection between the critical experience and future career goals, but we learned quickly that students require an explicit connection. The authors asked the director of career readiness to visit classrooms and hold events for our students. Through

the reflexivity process, the authors realized that the responsibility of this work should gradually migrate from being held solely in the Office of Career Readiness and begin to be implemented across courses. As a result, the authors have begun to highlight the NACE key competencies in syllabi and coursework.

The third common finding through the authors' process of reflexivity was the need for a common definition of critical service-learning. This finding was aligned with previous research that suggested faculty often bring their experience and understanding of service-learning into a course, but these experiences may be different between faculty (Jacoby, 2014). As each faculty member engaged in separate literature reviews and shared findings from their studies, a common definition and expectation of critical service-learning, as opposed to traditional service-learning, emerged. These findings aided the faculty in creating course amendments.

The fourth key finding that led to course amendments was the need for a common instrument, common expectations pertaining to critical reflection, and common expectations about critical engagement opportunities. To address the need for a common instrument, the researchers engaged in a literature review to identify current instruments and the benefits of each instrument. This review led the researchers to utilize a common critical reflection tool: Eyler's (2002) "What?", "So what?", "Now what?" protocol.

In addition to the need for a key instrument, the authors noticed a need for common expectations pertaining to the implementation of the reflection questions. The research team discussed current practices pertaining to reflection and discovered a need for the same protocol. For example, one researcher was assigning a written reflection at the end of the course, whereas another researcher was engaging the students in class discussion at the middle and end of the course. Previous research (Wang et al., 2019) guided the researchers to engage students in conversations throughout the course. Due to the timing of this reflection, the common protocol was conducted in all three courses only at the end of the semester, but the researchers see this as an opportunity for the future of this study.

The fifth finding that emerged from the faculty discussion about course requirements was the need for common topics discussed in class. Table 2 includes topics that were discussed in all three Education courses, yet the way the content was introduced and the depth of content covered differed in each course. The researchers decided to ensure that each Education course included the topics and classroom discussion, but each faculty member would align the time and readings to the learning outcomes of the course. This discussion was also aligned to the need to embed these topics in all courses. Previous research suggested that a standalone service-learning course helped students discuss barriers to service-learning, such as the historical context that can lead to service-learning being perceived as "fixing" individuals who are historically marginalized (Schiller, 2022). The researchers discussed the concern that students may perceive conversations intended to address the intricate issue of social injustices as silos limited to community engagement. These conversations could perpetuate many of the biases associated with community engagement.

A separate standalone course also silos the conversation about career readiness competencies and how the reflection process is essential postgraduation. Our sixth finding, from both the discussions with the director of career readiness and student responses, was that students benefit from the explicit connection between career readiness competencies, critical reflection, critical service-learning, and the workforce.

These course amendments were embedded in each of the three Education courses. The students who volunteered at the nonprofit were not able to engage in these course-embedded experiences. Findings related to the analysis of students who engaged in Education courses and students who did not engage in Education courses are discussed later.

Reflexivity and Student Responses

Students engaged in critical service-learning were asked to reflect upon their experiences as critical service-learning experiences. The authors utilized Eyler's (2002) "What?", "So what?", "Now what?" protocol as a common instrument to collect student responses. For the purposes of this article, student responses were condensed to eliminate identifying information and avoid repetition (Table 3). The authors utilized Lichtman's (2023) three Cs of data analysis with raw student responses to identify common codes, categories, and a common concept.

Table 3. Common Student Responses by Categories

	What?	So what?	Now what?
Diverse Learners	Change to experiences Connected to key course content: • Universal Design for Learning • High leverage practices • Social emotional learning • Individualized education programs • Inclusion • Collaboration • Scaffolding • Accommodations & modifications	• Confirmed & questioned career choice (teaching) • Connected relationships with asset-based perspective & learning • Reinforced concept of neurodiversity (path to the end goal may look different) • Understood teacher Impact with use of effective practices • Focused on appropriate accommodations • Concluded that disabilities don't define • Identified challenges with pull-out services & importance of gen-ed classroom	• "Opened my eyes" • Increased knowledge, confidence, effectiveness, patience • Advocate for students & families (can't advocate for themselves) • Collaborate with families
English Language Learner	• Field placement–majority active English learners • Differentiating a lesson for students with different L1s (not just Spanish) • Theory to practice moving lang. progressions • Implemented strategies for classroom management with multiple L1s	• Asset mindset • English language teachers are essential to student success • Multilingualism is part of the culture (the norm) instead of the exception	• Advocacy through parent–teacher conferences and throughout school (working with other teachers, school events, etc.). • School board member (future plans) • Strengthen relationship with parents • Advocate in jobs because see individuals as people

Table 3. Continued

	What?	So what?	Now what?
Human Development	• Sunshine High School • Conversation partners with nonprofit	• Confirmed commitment to teaching; provided new perspective for many; discussed dev. perspective of teachers as well as students • Different perspectives; importance of moderator/teacher's role • Discussed development across lifespan more	• Confirmed career choice • Helped understand others in the world better • Shifted perspective of teaching as a field Challenges and rewards of teaching • Decision not to teach; want to help students, not as a teacher
Nonprofit	• Interview help • Conversation partners	• Majority of clients lived in community for a long time • Clients were professionals in home country • Different perspectives • Impact of barriers; blessing to work with clients • Barriers due to food insecurities and finances but at nonprofit everyone treated equally • Attending a predominantly White institution, have witnessed biases	• Longevity of program and additional programs to support jobs • Being voice for the voiceless (due to language barriers) • Awareness to community about struggles and barriers • Better understanding of what families are going through • Continue work of advocacy • Consider nonprofit work in future • Future profession (cultural awareness)

Note. Categories are based on "Reflection: Linking service and learning—Linking students and communities," by J. Eyler, 2002, *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(3).
L1 = first language.

When analyzing student responses, we noticed inconsistent student understanding and application of certain terms. For example, the majority of students utilized terms such as "equity and inclusion" and "asset and deficit mindset" in their responses, yet the application in the reflection was not at the level of critical thinking the authors were hoping. In contrast, a second, smaller group of student responses suggested that students were implementing the topics in the course, and their reflections indicated a deep level of reflection. The finding is aligned with previous research recognizing that many individuals have different definitions of these terms, even though the terms are widely used (Kincey et al., 2022). This finding was essential for the authors and will inform future steps with course amendments.

Common Codes

Throughout the analysis, the researchers began with the common code of the categories utilized to collect data. The researchers coded the responses based on the headings "What?", "So what?", and "Now what?" The headings helped the researchers see a progression of learning based on the type of question asked. The researchers found overlapping codes among the headings and noted that the lower level thinking responses mostly appeared in the "What?" and "So what?" categories. The codes reinforced Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, which suggested that individuals engage in a progression of thinking to eventually make connections between new learning and an experience. The findings related to the "What?" questions also aligned to the concept of ladder of inference (Argyris, 1982), which suggests that individuals go through a process, often without realizing it, to get from fact to decision or action. For example, participants first interacted with the "What?" questions that led to answers grounded in observable data. With these answers, students could discuss their experiences and invite listeners to ask questions without judgment about their experience. Setting this foundation in the conversation enabled the groups to reflect upon the "So what?" and "Now what?" questions that are designed for critical thinking, as well as moving up the rungs of the ladder of inference to engage with action or shift in beliefs. Although there was a progression of answers across headings, the authors identified the common codes of deeper understanding of course content, collaboration, career choice, and societal structures that lead to disparities.

The first common code we identified was deeper understanding of course content. Student responses that were related to the code of deeper understanding of the content varied from specifically stating the connection between theorists discussed in class, such as Bronfenbrenner (1979), Piaget (1971), and Vygotsky (1978), to application of content discussed in class, such as classroom application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL; CAST, 2018), high leverage practices (McLeskey et al., 2017), and classroom management (e.g., Evertson & Emmer, 2017). Deeper understanding of course content is an important code, as experiential learning could stop at this level of reflection and remain at the lowest level of the ladder of inference (Argyris, 1982) and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. While recognizing it as a lower level response related to self-formation, we still acknowledged this response as an important aspect of refining one's practice. The authors brought these responses back to the research team to further grapple with ways to encourage our students to engage in reflection that leads to a connection between actions and beliefs (Senge, 2006).

The authors identified the next code as collaboration, with various stakeholders being considered. The most common response among students included collaboration with parents, such as one student's response: "Advocacy through parent teacher conferences and throughout school (working with other teachers, school events, etc.)." Another form of collaboration presented by students pertained to opportunities to collaborate in a societal setting, such as "future plans to become a member of the school board" or "consider non-profit work in the future." These responses indicated that the students came to consider their impact on society in light of their experiences; however, the authors noticed the response had varying levels of "saving" versus working alongside community members. For example, one student saw collaborating with families as a path to better instruction; another student saw in it an opportunity to become a voice for the voiceless. Although both responses are essential to the process of self-formation, the authors noticed this finding is important for future course amendments.

The reaffirmation of career choice or connection between the critical service-learning experience and career choice are

aligned with the findings of Mitchell and Rost-Banik (2019), who suggested that an alum who engaged in service-learning during their time at a university connected to exploring career choices and more opportunities within community service.

The final code, societal structures that lead to disparities, was a code the authors felt had the greatest impact on the process of self-formation and changing mindsets from "helping" to engaging in an experience where both parties benefit from the experience. For example, one student wrote, "One thing I found surprising while volunteering at non-profit was how many of the ESOL students were high-level professionals in their home countries." Other students wrote about the instructional services that students with disabilities were receiving in school, identifying challenges with pull-out services for these students and recognizing the importance of general education classrooms. These statements document the students' progression of self-formation and creating new categories of learning based on their experience (Dewey, 1938). Recognizing these societal structures also presents an opportunity for the faculty to consider course amendments, such as offering an opportunity for in-class conversations about how societal structures can lead to disparities.

Within the reflections pertaining to career readiness responses, participants affirmed their career choice or made confident decisions to change career paths. For example, one student reported, "This has taught me that there is nothing else I would rather do than teach," whereas another student responded, "I've learned that I do want to stay in the Education field and help students one day, but that teaching in a high school or school in general is not my path." Our findings were aligned with the findings that service-learning can affirm students' career paths (Mitchell & Rost-Banik, 2019). Enabling students to affirm their career paths is essential within the field of education, which often faces teacher shortages and barriers to teacher retention. Affirming their career choices early in their program of study will prevent students from entering a career path they are unprepared for.

Common Categories

Throughout the discussion about individual coding of responses, two categories emerged: career readiness and experience progression. Although it received fewer responses, the authors identified career readiness as an essential category to capture student progression in programs, connections to the future, and gaining a deeper understanding of student application connected to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. This finding suggested that students who were further along in their program of study (or near graduation) were more likely to identify career readiness as an important aspect of the experience. The category experience progression combines Argyris's (1982) ladder of inference with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. The category experience progression addressed participants' ability to advance through the rungs of the inference ladder as students "touched the bases" or engaged in each of the four stages of Kolb's learning cycle. For example, participants who made quick conclusions often lacked the opportunity to engage in active experimentation. The authors noted the importance of each student response and recognized how the responses are aligned with the progression of learning. No responses were considered "wrong" or not appropriate; rather, each was treated as an opportunity to engage in making new categories of learning through experiences.

Common Concept

This analysis led the authors to derive self-formation as the common concept that all responses were related to. At the time of the analysis, the authors were using our own reflexivity to grapple with understanding whole-person formation or self-formation. We came to realize that student responses from which we analyzed the common codes and common categories were aligned with the complexities, and lifelong process, of self-formation. From this we came to appreciate the necessity of expanding the common concept of self-formation across programs, disciplines, and universities.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the impact of critical reflection as a vehicle to transform mindsets and prepare students for the workforce postgraduation. The authors present general learning from this study as well as future steps to sustain this project.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

The authors' first lesson learned from this study was the need to engage in the reflexivity process before engaging our students. Practicing reflexivity was complex work that

required us to be vulnerable. This experience helped us refine our personal attitudes and beliefs and make amendments to our courses. It was important that the authors engaged in this process before leading students through critical service–learning and critical reflection.

The authors engaged in a literature review coupled with their personal reflexivity. During this process, the authors noticed that many of the previous studies addressing critical reflection as transformational mindset neglected the connection to career readiness. Through engaging in reflexivity with the director of career readiness, the authors' mindsets shifted away from the director of career readiness as holding all the responsibility of career readiness. One lesson learned throughout this study is that career readiness needs to be embedded in each of our courses. By expecting the director of career readiness to facilitate all conversations, students perceived the competencies as an isolated topic that lacked connection to the workforce. The authors plan to align the career readiness competencies to course learning outcomes, state the connection in syllabi, and include the connection through course descriptions.

Likewise, a lesson learned was the concern that students would isolate conversations about systemic oppression to a standalone course about service–learning. Previous studies often highlighted the transformation of student mindset in a standalone course, such as a service–learning course (Shiller, 2022). Although this approach is intentional and meaningful, the authors found that many of the participants represented in the study have prescribed programs of studies, meaning courses must be taken in a specific order with limited options to choose electives. This led the authors to examine current structures within the university to engage students in critical reflection.

Although this foundational work was informative for both students and faculty, the authors learned that performing such work is necessary across the entire program of study (Marginson, 2023). Each course required 20 hours of field experience, which was enough time for students to observe and begin to work with community members, but it was limited time to use their reflections to refine practices. This lesson was reaffirmed based on participants' progression within their program. Two of the three Education courses were introductory courses. Students in these courses are learning theory and the "basics" of the education system while also being asked to reflect on mindset. One of the three Education courses is available to students at any point in their program of study. The authors found that students further along in their programs, or nearing graduation, were more likely to appreciate the connection to future goals, the necessity of understanding content for the "real world," and the importance of their own readiness for and compatibility with the workplace. This lesson learned includes an explicit connection across an entire program of study to build two specific career competencies: career and self–development and critical thinking (NACE, 2024).

In addition to the need for critical reflection to transform mindsets across Education courses, the authors noticed a need to expand this work across the entire university. Foundational examination of reflections led to the authors' understanding that embedding conversations about systemic oppression into courses will help all students gain a deeper understanding of equity and inclusion (NACE, 2024). The authors learned that the need to find an opportunity for buy–in across campus is essential to the success of this project as well as any future projects.

Future of the Project and Future Research

The authors of this study learned many lessons about the implementation of critical reflection as a vehicle to engage in critical service–learning. Future studies will aid the authors in a deeper understanding of this process and help students leave the university career ready.

We ascertained that our first step to reach this goal was to move our students to transformation that includes self–regulation skills that enable them to apply concepts learned in the moment, which is one important component of self–regulation. For us as faculty, this was a shift in thinking. We had significant experiences in self–study and reflection, but we needed to expand our concept of curriculum to include strategies that support learning self–regulation; that is, strategies that require students to eventually take ownership of concepts they gain in class or experience and apply these same structures postgraduation.

The authors are also interested in exploring the connection between students' program of study and Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

We noticed a disconnect between the sense of urgency of incoming students (mostly sophomores) and students about to engage in their culminating clinical experience of student teaching. This connection could also be aligned with developmentally appropriate practices based on student age. The authors would like to explore this area more in future studies, as in the future it may aid universities in a framework for implementation of general education requirements.

An additional area we would like to include in the future of this study is to collect reflections from the mentors or directors of the nonprofit. Our current study collected only the student perspective. We believe that adding the mentor perspective will provide us with a better understanding of the student implementation and reflection. We are also interested in engaging mentors in the reflexivity process.

Implementation

This study presented many important findings to help support IHEs around the world. Lessons learned will help the authors and other faculty implement critical reflection through the complex journey of self-formation. One lesson learned from this phase of implementation is to be more intentional in learning outcomes and the "why" for the field experience. The authors noticed mixed reflection results related to students' response to asset and deficit mindset. After discussion as a research team, we realized that some courses spent more time defining mindset, and this was evident in the reflections. One quick strategy to implement in the classroom is to explicitly state the purpose of the field experience and give students an opportunity to respond. Students could participate through class discussion or a quick online resource, such as Mentimeter or Google JamBoard.

The authors have also learned to be more explicit about their expectations for experiential learning. For example, the authors noticed mixed results related to students drawing conclusions based on their own experiences leading to a deficit mindset about the experience. This finding connects with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle and Marginson's (2023) reflexivity. For example, students engaged in their first experiences tend to include responses aligned with the notion of a volunteer "saving" the individual they are working with. When beginning this study, the authors thought that a shift from deficit to asset mindset would be part of the transformation of utilizing critical reflection, but after the authors' critical reflection, they realized this connection must be explicitly stated to students. If a course allows enough time, students could explore this topic through structured discussion, such as the class reflecting on their experiences with service-learning. The instructor would then make clear connections to how this experience will push their thinking in a different direction.

An additional lesson learned is to meet the students where they are in their program of study and urgency to enter the workforce. In hindsight, this seems obvious. The authors noticed that certain students seemed to engage in higher levels of critical thinking; however, when analyzing the reflections, we realized that these students may be manifesting compliance rather than active participation. Students could benefit from embedding career readiness competencies in courses from Day 1. Even in introductory courses, an awareness of career readiness competencies prepares students to see the connection between experiential learning and their future plans.

This study sets the foundation for work pertaining to critical reflection and self-formation utilizing critical service-learning as an opportunity for students to apply new learning, engage in critical thinking, and recognize the potential of members of the community. These career readiness competencies are essential for students to acquire during the college experience.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors have no known conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Doctoral Internships as Pathways for Professional Growth and Publicly Engaged Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences

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Abstract

This article examines a longstanding university-sponsored summer internship program for doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences at the University of Michigan's Rackham Graduate School. Four years of student reflection data suggest that an internship is an enriching experiential learning opportunity that contributes to both students' career development and their trajectories as publicly engaged scholars. Specifically, students shared that summer doctoral internships helped them hone their career interests, make connections between their scholarship and the public good, and expand their professional networks. Internships have potential as a promising practice for a more student-centered doctoral education that prepares students for a range of career paths. Graduate schools and universities can inspire students to impact the greater public good over the course of their careers, both within and outside academe. Rather than being a distraction from doctoral training and research, internships may further hone doctoral students' scholarly and career development.

Keywords: graduate education, internships, public scholarship, experiential learning, partnerships

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Since 2010, the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan (Rackham) has coordinated a summer intern fellowship program for doctoral students at the intersection of students' professional development and publicly engaged scholarship. The program started as one of several public scholarship training opportunities offered by Rackham to provide graduate students learning and experiences in the principles and practices of publicly engaged scholarship—scholarship put into practice through collaboration with communities and publics outside the university. As Imagining America, a national professional organization supporting public scholarship, defines it, public scholarship includes

scholarly and creative activity that aims to produce new knowledge and elevate a diversity of voices and wisdom with and for diverse publics and communities beyond higher education. Through purposeful and often collaborative research and artmaking, public scholarship produces concrete artifacts of intellectual, creative, social, and political value to diverse constituents and communities beyond the boundaries of specific scholarly and artistic disciplines. (Kohl-Arenas et al., 2022, p. 1)

When the summer internship fellowship program began, it was intended to be one type of learning experience in public scholarship, where students would work with organizations beyond higher education in order to learn how to bring their scholarly expertise and skills to bear on challenges and projects identified by communities.

In its first summer, the program supported one student completing an internship at a local museum. It has since evolved into a program that supports approximately 35 doctoral students annually who participate in internships at 10–15 partner organizations. As a part of the summer intern fellowship, students participate in learning communities with their peers during their fellowship and complete prompts to reflect on their experiences and growth at the beginning, middle, and end of their internships. Today, there is continued interest among faculty and administrators in expanding career options for doctoral students through professional development opportunities, as well as interest on the part of students to grow as publicly engaged scholars who can contribute their expertise to community needs and the greater public good. With this in mind, this summer intern fellowship program can serve as a promising practice for other institutions as they seek ways to reimagine graduate education while also remaining committed to serving the public good through outreach and engagement in higher education.

Literature Review and Context

Traditionally, graduate education in the humanities and social sciences has been located at the department level, with students learning under the supervision of their primary advisor, and aimed at training students for a faculty career that values disciplinary scholarship over applied work with impact outside the university. In recent years, this model has been critiqued both because it limits publicly engaged work and because fewer graduates are pursuing tenure-track roles (Cassuto & Weisbuch, 2021; Rogers, 2020). For more than two decades, the rate of academic employment commitments in the humanities and social sciences has declined for many reasons, including fewer tenure-track positions (Day et al., 2012; National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2021). Alongside this trend, students and leaders in U.S. higher education have come to understand the long-established fields and practices of public scholarship and community engagement as one of many ways to diversify graduate student career development (Day et al., 2012). Leaders in U.S. higher education are also interrogating the purpose of the PhD and examining which learning experiences help faculty, staff, and students to achieve a reimagined doctoral degree with expanded career horizons and public engagement in mind (Cassuto & Weisbuch, 2021; Rogers, 2020; Smith, 2015). Many faculty, students, and administrators have partnered to offer a vision for the future of humanities doctoral education through national projects. Examples of such initiatives, many funded by the Mellon Foundation, include the American Historical Association's Career Diversity initiative launched in 2011, the Modern Language Association's Connected Academics program that began in 2015 with funding from the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities Next Generation Humanities PhD project created in 2016 (McCarthy, 2017), and the Council of Graduate Schools Humanities Coalition that was formed in 2021.

As part of this shift, many scholars have argued for increased opportunities for both public and community engagement as forms of experiential learning that can better prepare humanities PhDs for careers within and beyond the professoriate, while also demonstrating the relevance and value of the PhD to the public (Balleisen & Chin, 2022; Carlin, 2002; Cassuto & Weisbuch, 2021; Rogers, 2020). Specifically, in addition to more traditional forms of experiential learning through research and teaching assistantships, some have proposed that internships may provide an opportunity for experiential learning that is particularly valuable in preparing students to apply their scholarly skills in a range of settings (Balleisen & Chin, 2022; Faber et al., 2020). Indeed, internships are considered a high-impact career practice for undergraduates (Career Leadership Collective, 2022), and research is needed to explore whether internships have similar effects on doctoral students' career development. Furthermore, research on undergraduate internships suggests that internships are more than a high-impact practice for students' career development. For example, many community-engaged internships connect undergraduate students to the civic mission of public universities and benefit community partners as a part of the community-engaged and service-learning ecosystem on university campuses (Kuh, 2008; Sweitzer & King, 2013; Trager, 2020). Internships and career diversity are not synonymous with the field of publicly engaged scholarship. Yet researchers have found that internships and experiential learning may contribute to doctoral student career and skill development for diverse careers, as well as their scholarly expertise and advanced research

skills as publicly engaged scholars (Bartha & Burgett, 2015; Day et al., 2012; Eatman, 2012; Ellison, 2005, 2013; Woodson, 2013).

As part of efforts aimed at reimagining doctoral education in the humanities, doctoral internships have been touted as a potential opportunity for students to engage in experiential learning outside their departments in the wider humanities ecosystem and to learn about the possible broader impacts of their scholarly work and expertise (Brown, 2019; Cassuto, 2020; Hartman & Strakovsky, 2023). Although there is research and evaluation on the impact of internships on undergraduate students, there is scant program evaluation or scholarly research on doctoral students' experiences with internship programs, despite their growing participation in such initiatives. The most rigorous studies to date focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) internships (Chatterjee et al., 2019; Schnoes et al., 2018), and data from this research suggests that internships have a significant impact on students' career confidence, decision making, skill development, and overall preparation for diverse careers. Chatterjee et al. reported that more than 80% of students in their sample indicated that they transferred learning from their academic context to an industry context for their internship, and the vast majority of internship participants indicated they were able to transfer their industry learning back to their academic lab context upon completing their internship experiences. Schnoes et al. found that internships did not increase the time it took STEM students at their institutions to complete their degrees. We are lacking comparable studies on the impact of internships on the scholarly development of humanities and humanistic social science doctoral students. Moreover, these studies on STEM doctoral internships did not explore internship programs in the context of university–community partnerships. In sum, there is significant interest in internships as a potentially promising practice for the future of graduate education in the humanities and humanistic social sciences, but little qualitative or quantitative research on this experiential learning practice.

Our analysis of data from Rackham's summer intern fellowship program explores how internships contributed to humanities and social science students' career development and scholarly development as publicly engaged graduate students. We use an expansive definition of public scholarship developed by Eatman (2012) to refer to scholarly or creative activity that "encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, it contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value" (p. 29). The data for this study is derived from qualitative program evaluations investigating the impact of summer internships on doctoral student development in the humanities and social sciences. A case study of the program can offer graduate programs, graduate colleges, and professional organizations a deeper understanding of internships' value in doctoral training. As internships become more widespread in doctoral education, learning how these experiences contribute to students' development and their efficacy as a means of university–community partnership will be important for developing mutually beneficial internship programs guided by best principles and practices for outreach and engagement.

Background: Summer Doctoral Intern Fellowship Program Description

In 2010, the founding faculty director of Rackham's summer intern fellowship program learned through conversations with community partners that practitioners working for community organizations, nonprofits, museums, and local governments had a need for the research skills and expertise of doctoral students. Likewise, doctoral students were also eager to shape their graduate education and professional growth in ways that were publicly oriented with community needs in mind. To meet these two distinct needs necessitated moving beyond the traditional apprenticeship model of doctoral training in which students primarily seek mentorship and navigate their professional development with one faculty mentor. Therefore, the summer fellowship program was created to enable students to engage with community-based organizations outside the university while simultaneously learning from a diverse set of professional mentors outside the classroom. Scholars focused on reenvisioning graduate education to be more publicly oriented have since argued for the importance of imagining and creating a more student-centered model of graduate studies through public scholarship by creating "integrative professional experiences of collaboration, teamwork, and mentoring" (Bartha & Burgett, 2015, p. 39) in the humanities and social sciences (Bartha & Burgett, 2015; Cassuto & Weisbuch, 2021; Rogers, 2020).

The summer intern fellowship program's structure initially involved the Rackham Graduate School providing a summer stipend of $5,000–$10,000 to students selected to complete an internship at a partner organization. During the time period under study, most doctoral students at the University of Michigan received some form of summer funding support, though it was not guaranteed. The fellowship stipends for internships mirrored typical summer support that doctoral students would receive from their departments or the graduate school for research projects or other summer research activities. The program started small, offering support for two to five internships during the summer term annually. In 2015, Rackham leadership applied for and received a grant from Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to significantly grow the program's capacity to offer 10 to 20 summer intern fellowships annually. Following the Mellon Foundation grant, the graduate school raised and allocated funds to continue the program, which now has 15–18 students completing summer intern fellowships with partner organizations annually each summer (May–August). In the landscape of U.S. graduate education, this is one of the most mature doctoral internship programs for humanities and humanistic social scientists, as it has existed for over a decade and grown annually.

In imagining a new model for doctoral professional development, the initial structure of Rackham's summer intern fellowship program grew from the overarching value of mutual benefit as a guiding principle for publicly engaged scholarship. To create internship projects that are mutually beneficial, educators at the university worked with staff at the internship host organizations to connect the expertise of communities with doctoral students, collaboratively identifying projects that meet community needs. Projects required a range of skill sets and experiences, such as curating exhibits; developing, writing, and editing communications materials and strategies; conducting program evaluation; and designing and facilitating public programs.

After internship projects are identified, university staff educators recruit students through a competitive application process. Following an initial screening for eligibility by university staff, the hiring manager at the internship host organization decides which students to interview and select for the internship. The student then works alongside a supervisor at the internship organization to contribute to the project, often in a deeply collaborative way where the student and partner cocreate or redesign a program, product, or service, yielding a result that the organization would not have had the immediate capacity to achieve without the partnership. This model aims to foster longer term, mutually beneficial relationships between host organizations and students while alleviating the burden on students of designing, searching for, and securing an internship. Most internship partner sites that have participated in the program return annually, demonstrating how the program is a model for sustained community–university partnerships.

This centralized internship program situated within the University of Michigan's graduate school has proven to be a sustainable structure within the institution. Rather than individual faculty members or graduate programs attempting to start their own internship support for students, the graduate school serves as a centralized place for outreach, application process, and point of contact for students and site partners, while allowing students from multiple graduate programs across the university to apply. The disciplinary diversity among student applicants further expands the kinds of expertise, skill sets, and problem-solving perspectives brought to bear on the projects identified by host organizations. An additional objective of the internship program is to align with Rackham's efforts to better prepare students for the diverse career options available to them while serving the graduate school's public-facing mission to impact the public good through the scholarship of its students.

In 2015, staff educators at the graduate school implemented a robust program evaluation in which they assessed students at the beginning, middle, and end of their internships. In addition to providing valuable insight on program effectiveness, the evaluation became part of an educational and reflective scaffolding for students, which scholars have identified as important to experiential and service-learning opportunities like internships (Hatcher et al., 2004). Two additional elements of the program contribute to such scaffolding: (1) an internship planning process in which students use a project planning template to set expectations and deadlines with their

internship supervisor and (2) monthly learning community meetings led by graduate school staff educators over the course of students' internships that provide a space for regular group reflection on learning throughout the internship experience.

Research Questions, Purpose, and Impact Measures

The purpose of this study is to better understand how summer doctoral interns' fellowship experiences shape the professional and scholarly development of graduate students in the humanities and social sciences. This study seeks to answer two overarching research questions:

1. What impact, if any, does participation in the internship program/experience have on students' career development (i.e., career interests, career self-efficacy/confidence, career outcomes)?

2. What impact, if any, does an internship experience have on students' scholarly development, particularly as publicly engaged scholars (research trajectory/interests, scholarly products, scholarly identity development, mentor network, skill acquisition, skill development, etc.)?

Data

The data in our study is derived from two sources. First, we have 4 years of qualitative data (2016–2019) from the journal entries of 67 graduate students in the summer internship program (see the Appendix for the journal entry reflection prompts). The graduate students self-reported graduate programs include American Culture (*n* = 11), Anthropology (*n* = 1), a joint program in Anthropology and History (*n* = 2), Architecture (*n* = 1), Architecture and Urban Planning (*n* = 2), Classical Art and Archaeology (*n* = 2), Creative Writing (*n* = 1), Educational Studies (*n* = 4), a joint program in English and Women's Studies (*n* = 3), English Language and Literature (*n* = 17), Environment and Sustainability (*n* = 2), Epidemiology (*n* = 1), Greek and Roman History (*n* = 1), Higher Education (*n* = 1), History (*n* = 9), a joint program in History and Women's Studies (*n* = 3), Near Eastern Studies (*n* = 1), Romance Languages and Literature (*n* = 1), Screen Arts and Cultures (*n* = 1), Slavic Languages and Literature (*n* = 1), Social Work (*n* = 1), and Urban and Regional Planning (*n* = 1). Because it was gathered for program evaluation purposes, the data was determined to be exempt by the campus Institutional Review Board in spring 2015 when the program was significantly expanded with the support of a grant from the Mellon Foundation. Journal entries were completed by students at the beginning (after 2 weeks), middle (after 5 weeks), and end of graduate students' internship experiences. In our journal entry prompts at the midpoint of participants' internships, we also included a closed-ended question that asked students to identify from a list of 47 transferable skills what skills they had developed through their internships. Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, internships in summer 2020 shifted to fully remote opportunities. Beginning in 2022, internships again shifted to a mix of remote, hybrid, and in-person. Given this qualitatively different learning modality, we limit our analysis to the first 4 years of data collection, when internships were all in-person. We discuss possibilities for analyzing the postpandemic student reflection data in the Next Steps section.

To analyze the qualitative data, the research team developed a codebook based on the research questions under examination and the literature and theory that informed our study. The sensitizing concepts that guided the development of the codebook and the inherent definitions for the preliminary codes were public scholarship (Eatman, 2012) and social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994; Schnoes et al., 2018). We define "public scholarship" as scholarly or creative activity that "encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, it contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value" (Eatman, 2012, p. 29). SCCT describes the process through which people develop and achieve professional goals. Derived from general social cognitive theory, SCCT incorporates individual and environmental variables involved in the process of career development, including career interests, self-efficacy, career outcome expectations, career goals, and contextual supports or barriers (Lent at al., 1994; Schnoes et al., 2018). SCCT framed and contextualized the career-related concepts represented in the codebook reflecting students' participation in the internship program: career interests and goals, self-efficacy, career outcome expectations, and contextual supports and barriers.

Our second data source is time-to-degree data made available through the Rackham Graduate School. This data represents the experiences of 36 students who completed the internship program and finished their degree requirements between 2010 and 2020. Since 2010, we have time-to-degree data on 36 interns who participated in the Doctoral Intern Fellowship Program. Of those, we were able to match 33 students that completed their PhD by September 2020 (15 of whom also completed the journal entries discussed in our qualitative data analysis). Some participant records could not be matched with time-to-degree data because of an incorrect email identifier, participation by a non–Rackham graduate student (graduate students in non–Rackham professional degree programs are eligible to participate in the program), or a student not meeting the rule of the data set being matched. To provide context, nearly 800 PhDs are awarded each year by the Rackham Graduate School. Median time to degree varies by discipline at our institution. For example, students in the engineering and physical sciences are likely to finish faster than students in the arts and humanities. Given these differences and because we know that intern fellows in our sample are situated in the humanistic social sciences and humanities, we excluded engineering and the health and biological sciences from the overall comparison groups. Further, we know a handful of programs have no interns across the time period in this analysis, and thus for a more accurate comparison we exclude students from these programs. With these exclusions, we compared the 33 students in the internship program to 838 students that graduated between these same years across the social sciences and humanities.

Qualitative Methodology for Journal Entry Analysis

The research team consisted of two staff educators at the graduate school (one with a PhD in a humanities field, the other with a PhD in the social sciences) and a graduate student research assistant (GSRA) in the higher education doctoral program. Given the staff educators' positionality as designers and leaders of the internship program, the GSRA was hired to enhance the trustworthiness of our program evaluation. The GSRA used the literature guiding our work to develop the initial codebook, with the following Level 1 codes: (1) "Skill develop-ment for career exploration"; (2) "Sources of career exploration skill development"; (3) "Skill development for professional practice"; (4) "Cultivation of career-related values," "Interests, outcome expectations, goals"; (5) "Values"; and (6) "Career path." The first-level codes consisted of multiple subcodes, which were also informed by the SCCT literature.

The GSRA then tested the initial codebook on three journal entries, which resulted in the identification of emergent and redundant codes and subsequent revisions to the codebook. The two additional members of the research team then reviewed the codebook for minimally used and redundant codes, which were removed or collapsed, respectively. This iterative process continued until each of the journal entries was fully coded, at which time the GSRA drafted high-level summaries of the preliminary findings for each journal entry. The research team together reviewed and refined these preliminary findings and selected illustrative quotes for each emergent theme. Throughout this process, the research team also engaged in intentional and reflexive conversations about our coding decisions. We then implemented the same process when coding each journal entry. Once this process was completed, each member of the research team reviewed each journal entry to ensure coding was consistent across all the data and with the final codebook.

The final codebook consisted of the following four Level 1 codes: (1) "Skill and knowledge development for career exploration"; (2) "Skill development for professional practice"; (3) "Scholarly identity conceptualization"; and (4) "Next steps." These final codes also consisted of Level 2 codes (themes within the Level 1 codes), which were informed by the literature and ongoing data analysis. Level 2 themes for each of the Level 1 codes are summarized in Table 1.

Journal Entry and Data Analysis Findings

Student Career and Scholarly Development at Beginning of Internships

Because participants completed journal entries about their career and scholarly development at the beginning, middle, and end of their internships, we were able to analyze this data at multiple points in time. In this section, we share themes that were most prominent at the start of the internships. A substantial number of participants noted

Table 1. Codes and Definitions

Level 1 code	Definition	Level 2 themes
Skill and knowledge development for career exploration	The cultivation of skills that assist in exploring and pursuing professional options and paths.	Self-awareness, Professional field, Work environment, Career path, Professional network
Skill development for professional practice	The cultivation of skills that participants currently or may use in their professional work.	Interpersonal skills, Communication skills, Creative skills, Project management skills, Technical skills
Scholarly identity conceptualization	The cultivation of one's skills, values, interests, and identity as a researcher/scholar.	Research interests and trajectory, Pedagogy skills, Research skill development, Grants, Interviewing and focus groups, Survey skills, Resources, Synergies, Translating scholarship, Scholarly products, Public scholar identity development
Next steps	Next steps for career path.	

that they were in the process of clarifying their understanding of and interest in career fields more broadly as they considered their potential career paths (*n* = 15). Representative quotes related to this theme of defining career interests at the start of the internships are below (please note that where necessary, quotes were redacted to anonymize names of individuals, their workplaces, and the university):

> "I was surprised to learn about how many different positions there are in publishing, especially around electronic publishing. I had previously thought of publishing work as being primarily editing-based, so it was surprising to learn that there are many other opportunities around development, design, and accessibility. I was also surprised to learn that there were teams, centers, and organizations focusing specifically on digital accessibility (consulting, conducting accessibility and usability evaluations, developing resources and standards, etc.). It's been helpful to see the wide variety of careers that might be available in this area."

> "I will develop an in-depth understanding of what it means to work in the humanities from the schema of national funding. As a scholar in training already invested in the notion of an accessible humanities,

the challenges, biases, and issues of such a shared vision at this level are coming into view."

> "I have a much better idea of the huge scale of collections assessment; the different roles people have within the department ([Supervisor name] and I have sat down to talk individually with nearly everyone); the unique and mundane challenges of working in a library/archives. Before starting, I only had a hunch that this would be good work for me—now I know that it is, and I am starting to think about how I can tailor my job search, cultivate my experience, and pursue similar opportunities."

As these reflections suggest, from the beginning of their internships, participants perceived that they were gaining an increased understanding of new career fields.

Another theme that emerged at the beginning of the internships was that participants aspired to develop a more thorough understanding of work environments and organizational structures in career fields of interest to them (*n* = 14). Participants also noted the differences between organizational norms at the sites of their internships and the norms they were accustomed to in academia. Following are several representative quotes on participants' new insights about work environments:

"I think what was most surprising to me about the settling in process was how intent my supervisors were on making me familiar with the publishing process. It would have been entirely possible for them to only allow me to attend one or two meetings, but instead they gave me a window onto the operations of the organizations for two whole weeks."

"Going behind the scenes of an organization is always refreshing. I was mostly surprised at the relatively flat structure and cohesiveness of [the museum]—I thought it would be a lot more hierarchical. I did not expect to see so many different departments working together on the museum's programming. The cross communication that goes on a daily basis is really great to see."

"Already I feel like I have gained a lot of experience on how museums operate and what is involved behind the scenes. Before, I really thought of museums more in terms of exhibits and events, but now I see how museums also function as archival repositories and provide a way to connect the public with information."

Participants linked their internship experiences to new revelations about how different organizations function, often in surprising ways.

Finally, at the start of their internships, participants also reported their eagerness to develop specific skill sets (*n* = 45), with many participants speaking about communication skills (*n* = 19) and project management capacities (*n* = 17) that they wanted to expand further. Several representative quotes reflect doctoral interns' desires to hone such skills through internship experiences:

"I have really had the opportunity to see how the analytical skills developed in PhD programs can be incredibly important in the work world."

"Seeing 'transferable skills' from PhD training being used. Mostly research and project management related. I'm not especially knowledgeable when it comes to art history, but I'm pretty confident in

my research skills when it comes to creating teaching resources for [the museum]."

"I believe I will get a lot better at juggling multiple projects and advising on them. I have four projects running simultaneously with youth and they will not all be on the same projects. This will definitely build my leadership skills and advising skills."

From the beginning of their participation in the intern fellowship, participants saw how they could apply existing skills from their doctoral training to these new settings, as well as how they may develop new competencies through these professional experiences.

Student Career and Scholarly Development at Midpoint of Internships

Addressing their career development at the midpoint of their internship experiences, a number of participants stated that they had a more thorough understanding of the professional fields and environments in which they were working (*n* = 9), as well as related career paths that might be of interest to them (*n* = 6). For example, students said the following about their deepening knowledge of professional career paths:

"I've developed the ability to better understand the nonprofit world, understanding the machinations of larger foundations. Other than that I've been able to strengthen my interpersonal and organizational skills."

"In general, my fellowship has provided an opportunity to learn about an array of careers that I am qualified for after graduation, including being a librarian, curator, archivist, or library specialist."

"The fellowship is also providing me with a window into a possible career path that is connected to my field of study."

In other words, these students were gaining greater clarity in terms of their career interests and potential career paths. At this time, several participants (*n* = 11) indicated that they had networked or developed interpersonal and collaboration skills as a result of their work. As one student put it:

"The most critical skill I've developed thus far is networking. Part of my job is reaching out to potential collaboration partners in the community and in other academic units and other universities. This is a difficult thing for me to do and is significantly outside of my comfort zone. However, with support from my supervisors, I have felt empowered to reach out and take ownership of the work we're doing."

Appreciation of the importance of the skill of networking emerged as especially important to students' career development midway through their internships. By the middle of their internship experiences, many (*n* = 23) of the participants shared that they were developing as public scholars in some way, such as by fostering a deeper commitment to focusing on the public good in their research or cultivating their knowledge about and skills in conducting public scholarship. In our analysis, we define public scholars as "individuals who conduct research and involve themselves in engaged community work both in the academy and in the larger society" (Eatman, 2012, p. 27). This finding speaks directly to our research question regarding the ways that the internship experiences might impact students' scholarly development. Students said the following about how they perceived their internship work to make a public impact:

"My scholarship has always been driven by an interest in how people develop creative ways to challenge the status quo and the power structures in which they are entangled. Much of the work that [the organization] supports is about using creative outlets developed through the humanities, to educate people about histories that have shaped our current social reality, with the objective of bringing about a more just and equitable society."

"My fellowship experience has allowed me to situate my scholarly focus on spatial politics, urban life, and engaged pedagogy in the context of [city]. Specifically, by planning a socio–political exhibit and symposium on engaged pedagogy in the city, I have been able to seek new connections between my academic work and public scholarship training around questions of race, power,

and privilege between and among the [university] and [city] communities."

"I see a lot of connections. My scholarship is focused on Black youth activism and community engagement. My fellowship site is with a community-based organization that advocates for educational justice and has a lot of Black membership. I am learning so much more about [city], the community, and the ways in which they advocate for educational equity."

Through their internship projects, several students perceived that they were able to apply their scholarly expertise to make an impact in communities where they were working.

Participants also identified a number of connections between their internship experiences and their scholarly endeavors halfway through their internships. Such connections included opportunities to apply their research skills or identify synergies between their professional practice and research areas (*n* = 34). Students said the following about how they applied and connected their scholarly skills in new contexts:

"At my Fellowship, I am part of a team that has designed and is executing a research study. I see this as connected to my scholarship because that is essentially what I have done with my dissertation (design a study). I find that my scholarship has helped me be effective with qualitative research (the portion of the [organization's] study that I work on) as well as have a good grasp of the 'big picture' of the study."

"My fellowship work is directly related to my scholarship, as I work in the field of environmental humanities. The fellowship is helping me to explore the field from a much broader perspective than my own research would normally let me. I've also started to have the chance to network with faculty and staff who engage with my field from different disciplines, which will prove useful for long-term contacts."

"Like my scholarship, my Fellowship involves extensive archival research.

I also hope to make my scholarship more accessible to the public, through a variety of venues, and the Fellowship will be useful experience in preparing materials for museum and online exhibits."

Notably, over half of the participants (*n* = 42) shared that by the midpoint of their intern fellowships they were developing stronger research skills and honing specific research-related skills, including both qualitative (e.g., interviewing) and quantitative (e.g., survey methodology) research skills. When prompted to contemplate any associations between their internships and insights about the research process, participants noted that they were developing their abilities to translate the importance of their research to others or the general public (*n* = 13). For example, students said:

"Completing the Public Humanities [intern] Fellowship while writing my prospectus has helped me to make my dissertation accessible to communities and conversations outside of the academy."

"In recent weeks, I've noticed several direct parallels between the synthesizing work that I need to do as a graduate student/researcher and the work required for writing webpages for the [organization's] project. I need to pull together multiple sources and foreground the most relevant ideas, while also making the material accessible to a public audience."

Participants perceived that they were learning how their research skills and scholarly knowledge can contribute to meeting the needs of diverse organizations.

Transferable Skill Development at Midpoint of Internships

In addition to open-ended questions about skill development, we also asked our 67 student interns at the midpoint of their internships to respond to a closed-ended question in which they were asked to identify skills they perceived they had developed thus far from a list of transferable skills. Guided by SCCT, the transferable skills list was developed by staff educators leading the program. Students could select as many skills as they wished from the list of 47 skills. Table 2 details the responses to this question in order of frequency of skills students reported that they had developed by the midpoint of their internships. The two top transferable skills that students perceived they developed through their internships were the ability to comprehend large amounts of information quickly and the ability to work effectively with limited supervision. Students reported developing their skill of working in a self-directed way to synthesize large amounts of data in their internships.

Table 2. Student Self-Reports of Transferable Skills Developed Through Internships

Transferable skills sets	Number of responses (Total *N* = 67)
Comprehend large amounts of information quickly	87% (*n* = 58)
Work effectively with limited supervision, self-directed	79% (*n* = 53)
Cooperate and collaborate on team projects	73% (*n* = 49)
Maintain flexibility in the face of changing circumstances	73% (*n* = 49)
Prioritize tasks while anticipating potential problems	67% (*n* = 45)
Network and form new collaborative relationships in or outside org	67% (*n* = 45)
Comprehend new material and subject matter quickly	66% (*n* = 44)
Prepare concise and logically-written materials	66% (*n* = 44)
Exercise discipline to complete tasks, meet deadlines	64% (*n* = 43)
"Manage up"; forge effective relationships through proactive communication	60% (*n* = 40)

Table continued on next page

Table 2. Continued

Transferable skills sets	Number of responses (Total *N* = 67)
Identify sources of information applicable to a given problem	57% (*n* = 38)
Manage projects from beginning to end	57% (*n* = 38)
Effectively convey complex information to non-expert audiences	57% (*n* = 38)
Link ideas; connect seemingly unrelated phenomena	55% (*n* = 37)
Respond appropriately to positive or negative feedback	54% (*n* = 36)
Understand and synthesize large quantities of data	52% (*n* = 35)
Advocate for something or someone you believe in	48% (*n* = 32)
Edit and proofread effectively	48% (*n* = 32)
Form and defend independent conclusions	48% (*n* = 32)
Define a problem and identify possible causes	48% (*n* = 32)
Keen ability to observe and remember	46% (*n* = 31)
Organize and present ideas effectively to small or large groups	46% (*n* = 31)
Design an experiment, plan, or model	43% (*n* = 29)
Think on feet; react quickly and effectively to problems	43% (*n* = 29)
Develop organizing principles to effectively sort and evaluate data	40% (*n* = 27)
Tell stories that convey themes and messages	39% (*n* = 26)
Provide critical or constructive feedback	36% (*n* = 24)
Write at all levels—brief abstract to book-length manuscript	36% (*n* = 24)
Maintain hope and open mindset when facing difficult challenges	34% (*n* = 23)
Navigate complex bureaucratic environments	31% (*n* = 21)
See the world from another's perspective and show empathy	31% (*n* = 21)
Participate in group discussions, debate issues in a collegial manner	30% (*n* = 20)
Facilitate group discussions or conduct meetings	28% (*n* = 19)
Implement plans or solutions	28% (*n* = 19)
Use emotional intelligence to persuade others	25% (*n* = 17)
Test potential resolutions to a problem	25% (*n* = 17)
Identify and delegate tasks to others, establish timelines, and follow up	19% (*n* = 13)
Use logical argument to persuade others	18% (*n* = 12)
Work effectively under pressure or in competitive environment	16% (*n* = 11)
Cope with or manage complicated/difficult personalities	13% (*n* = 9)
Teach skills or concepts to others	13% (*n* = 9)
Design and analyze surveys	12% (*n* = 8)
"Close the deal," finish large endeavors	12% (*n* = 8)
Effectively advise or mentor subordinates and/or peers	7% (*n* = 5)
Interview individuals or groups	6% (*n* = 4)
Supervise the work of others or motivate others to complete projects	4% (*n* = 3)

Similar to several themes that emerged in students' open-ended responses, a vast majority of students perceived that they developed the skills to cooperate and collaborate on team projects and to network and form new collaborative relationships within or outside their organization. In addition to networking, another interpersonal skill that the majority of the students reported developing was the ability to "manage up" through proactive communication to work with supervisors. Although project management did not emerge as a top theme in response to our open-ended question about skill development, a majority of the students reported the development of a range of project management skills in response to our closed-ended question about skills. For example, over half of the students indicated that they were learning to maintain flexibility in the face of changing circumstances, prioritize tasks while anticipating potential problems, and manage projects from beginning to end.

Only a small number reported that they had the opportunity to develop skills related to leadership and management of others. For example, some of the least reported skills included supervising the work of others, advising or mentoring others, teaching skills or concepts to others, persuading others (through the use of logical argumentation or emotional intelligence), and identifying and delegating tasks to others.

Student Career and Scholarly Development at the Conclusion of Internships

Internships concluded after 8 to 12 weeks, depending on the organization and internship project needs. At the end of their internships, we found that students perceived several benefits to their scholarly development as a result of their internship experiences, and these themes echoed those related to their scholarly development at the midpoint of the internship. For example, students noted that they cultivated and honed their scholarly research skills (*n* = 10):

> "This fellowship gave me experience with conducting archival research and helped me to improve my interviewing skills. I also gained more practice with producing polished written content under tight deadlines."

> "I gained skills like doing background and historical research, developing interview guides and conducting oral history interviews. I don't think the content or network of what I did applies specifically to anything I will do later, but the skills I picked up hopefully will."

> "I feel that this fellowship has taken me outside of my disciplinary 'wheelhouse' in the best possible way. From a research perspective, I've gained new insights about historical and archival methods. It's been exciting for me to trace links and find unexpected connections among a variety of sources, whether these have been from the [library]'s files, the [organization]'s papers, or the number of interviews I've conducted. It's given me a new appreciation for the work historians do, as well as taught me how to incorporate archival methods into my own work and teaching."

Participants perceived that they gained new skills, and that they applied their existing scholarly skills in new professional settings.

Similar to their reflections at the midpoint of their internships, students once again perceived that they developed a clearer understanding of the synergies between their scholarship and the work being done beyond academe (*n* = 23). Many students (*n* = 16) noted a stronger identity as a public scholar and a desire to take on more opportunities related to publicly engaged scholarship both within and beyond academe.

> "I think I want to talk with trusted professors about my goals and what that might mean about maybe doing a portfolio dissertation with some public humanities aspects incorporated. Luckily I have a third term review coming up that will be a good place to start."

> "Because the nature of my fellowship entailed detailed communications and work with professors and community partners from across the university and beyond, I was exposed to a broad swath of career trajectories, willing mentors, and big ideas about the possibilities for life and work as a public scholar."

"I'm really grateful I chose to do this project at the mid-point of my program, because I think this gives me an opportunity to think more carefully about how to incorporate public engagement into my research and teaching. I do think I want to pursue academia for now, but I am eager to build on my partnerships with the [organization] as I plan my Winter 2020 course and begin my dissertation research. My next steps are to find as many opportunities for public engagement in my work as I can."

As these participants' comments suggest, the internship experiences shaped students' sense of what was possible in terms of their future scholarly work.

With respect to students' career development—and consistent with students' comments in earlier journal entries—many participants (*n* = 32) expressed that their internships were particularly helpful for developing a clearer understanding of a career field or work environment, as well as their desire to pursue future work in these spaces. In addition to affirming desired career paths, students perceived their internship experiences as equipping them to obtain a sense of clarity regarding their career interests that they would not have gained through academic studies alone. Several quotes speak to this finding:

"My internship was extremely beneficial for exploring new career trajectories. I feel like I got excellent exposure to how a digital humanities center works and what is entailed."

"After completing the fellowship I feel that I have a much better sense of the kinds of careers I might be interested in. This experience has helped me realize that I work best in an office setting and when I can collaborate with other people, and that I enjoy working in academic settings but in a role that focuses on technical support, design, and development rather than on producing my own research."

"This fellowship was an incredibly clarifying experience, which helped me gain a better sense of the field of public humanities (via the fact I was at a national grant giving organization). This helped me understand how to better position my work and my potential career trajectory within the field, helping me to rethink things like how I want to structure my dissertation, what other sorts of experiences I should try to have at [the university], and what sort of place I might end up."

As in the midpoint journal entries, students at the end of their internship experiences (*n* = 16) reported that they formed a professional network as a result of their work, including relationships that they would not have forged through their academic studies alone. Illustrating these sentiments, participants said:

"I have always been convinced that I'm TERRIBLE at networking. Any kind of professional, social setting (such as staff meetings, conference calls, district assemblies, etc.) has always felt extremely awkward and forced to me. Through this fellowship, though, I've found ways to navigate those settings more smoothly and more confidently."

"One aspect of my Fellowship experience that surprised me was realizing the strong network of individuals and organizations that are committed to dealing with environmental challenges in [urban region]."

"This fellowship was an amazing experience for me. It allowed me to directly do the type of work I hope to do after graduation. I learned so much about the field of community engagement and was able to meet so many new folks who do similar types of work."

Internships provided participants with valuable networking opportunities in organizations and communities outside the university.

Finally, students were asked to describe what they anticipated as their next steps related to their career and professional development. Two themes emerged in their responses. First, students intended to continue their career exploration to discern what fields were a best fit for them (*n* = 35), particularly by continuing to build their professional networks (*n* = 14). For example, two students commented:

"Finishing my dissertation and continuing to look for opportunities to work in public history (attend conferences, talks, volunteer at museums etc.). I am still interested in academic paths but I am also very open to alternative paths that would allow me to continue doing public history work in some capacity."

"While this fellowship gave me insights into the museum world, it also showed me some of the areas that do not fit my career interests (e.g. the departments that design visitor experience are sometimes the farthest removed from engaging with the public). My next step is to research job/opportunities similar to this fellowship that would expose me to more areas where the arts and public engagement intersect."

As these comments suggest, participants noted their intention to gain additional professional experience in fields of interest through future experiential learning opportunities.

Second, students noted their intention to further cultivate their professional skills (*n* = 20), especially technical skills (*n* = 5) that they believed they often did not have exposure to through their home department's curriculum. Illustrating this point, two participants said:

"I'm looking into the Masters program at the School of Information to gain more skills and knowledge around digital accessibility and development. I will also be working with professor [name redacted] this fall on digital design and communications for the [university] Initiative on Disability Studies and have talked with the library accessibility specialist [name redacted] about potentially continuing with accessibility testing work for the library in the winter."

"One of the things I've been considering is taking finance/accounting classes online to round out my skill set."

Participants felt that it would be valuable to continue developing skill sets that would position them for careers that aligned with their interests, and were seeking courses or experiential learning opportunities to fill those gaps.

Limitations of Journal Entry Data Set

One drawback of the journal entry data set is that it only captured students' self-reflections and self-perceptions during and immediately upon concluding their internship experiences. How these self-perceptions translate into actual skill acquisition remains unclear. In addition, the program is voluntary, and students who apply to participate in the program may assume that internships would be helpful to them, so they may be predisposed to find them helpful. Finally, students may reflect differently on the impact of the experience on their long-term career interests, values, and scholarly identities as they gain new knowledge and skills later in their doctoral studies and beyond.

In addition, participants had internships in a wide variety of settings and contributed to a range of projects. Accordingly, it was challenging to assess the potential influence of exposure to distinct professional fields (museums, nonprofit organizations, foundations, etc.) or project types (such as communications, public and community programs, research, grant writing, program evaluation, and translation) on students' reflections about their internship experiences.

The effect of fellowship funding on students' decisions to pursue these internships is another limitation of this initial study. At the time under examination, most doctoral students at the university received some amount of summer funding support from their departments or the graduate school. Completing an internship was thus one among many options available to students for summer funding support; however, the survey did not include questions about the impact of funding on students' decisions to pursue an internship. Fellowship funding is likely one factor among many that influenced students' decisions to complete an internship during their doctoral studies.

Finally, another limitation is that our available data set does not reflect the perspectives of students' supervisors and colleagues at their internship sites. Consequently, this article cannot thoroughly address the influence of community partners and their perceptions about what contributes to positive internship experiences. Given the long-term partner-

ships between universities and many internship host organizations, further research is needed to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of internships on communities in addition to students.

Time-to-Degree Data Analysis

Internships appear to have value for students' career and scholarly development. However, it is important to consider the potential impact that internships may have on lengthening students' time-to-degree. As noted earlier, Schnoes et al. (2018) found internships did not increase the time it took STEM students to complete their degrees. However, similar research has not been conducted in the humanities and social sciences. Therefore, in addition to our journal entry analysis, we examined the milestone metrics (time-to-degree and time-to-candidacy) for those who participated in the internship program. As noted earlier, we compared 33 students who participated in the doctoral internship program to 838 students who graduated between these same years across the social sciences and humanities.

In general, comparing students across the years, students that participated in the summer internship program tended to take slightly longer to graduate, 6.4 versus 6.8 years. This is a difference of 4.8 months, or roughly one semester. Overall, the time-to-candidacy is identical (2.7 years). Because of differences across disciplines, we performed the same analysis at the division level. Here we find that intern fellowship participants in the social sciences have slightly higher median time-to-degree (6.9 versus 6.2 years) than other PhD students. They also have a slightly higher median time-to-candidacy (2.8 versus 3.0 years). This trend is reversed in the humanities, where students participating in the intern fellowship have a slightly lower median time-to-degree and equivalent time-to-candidacy (6.2 years versus 6.6 years and 2.3 years to candidacy).

Limitations of Time-to-Degree

The standard caveats to the analyses of milestone times apply to this analysis. Time-to-degree and time-to-candidacy are complex and dynamic metrics affected by a multitude of variables. Highlighted disciplinary differences are one of many levels at which times differ. Program-by-program variability is an inherent reality of these data, and a program-by-program analysis is impractical given the small size of the intern fellowship

cohorts and the small sizes of several PhD programs. Further, any analyses where the sizes of comparative groups are disproportionate are susceptible to misinterpretation. With only 33 students to pool together, an analysis of difference can be disproportionately affected by outliers in either group and by the complexities of the time calculations, which account for time spent on leaves of absence and do not consider time spent on a master's program as part of the time calculations. In sum, for these students, time-to-degree is extended slightly. That said, we cannot conclude that this difference in time-to-degree is due solely to internships. Therefore, caution is urged in interpreting these differences as more than mere descriptions of the given populations.

Discussion and Implications of the Early-Stage Assessment

The findings from this evaluation of the summer doctoral intern fellowship program have both local institutional implications for creating programmatic improvements and broader implications for practitioners and leaders in graduate education at U.S. colleges and universities committed to supporting public scholarship, experiential learning, and resources for students to explore the wide range of careers available to them.

For doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences, this study finds that internships are a valuable form of experiential learning in terms of supporting both career and scholarly development. Internships have not traditionally been integrated into doctoral training, particularly in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. However, many of our study participants reported that internship experiences honed their scholarly skills and broader professional development. Specifically, students reported that these learning experiences helped them apply research skills in new settings, find new connections between their scholarly research and community needs, and develop their ability to translate their work to new audiences. They perceived that such learning experiences and expanded professional relationships would not have been possible through research or teaching assistantships within the university context. In addition to shaping students' research interests and methodologies, our preliminary analysis suggests that doctoral internships have the potential to cultivate students' commitments to public scholarship.

Students reported that inspiration from work in the public sphere and communities outside academia deepened their understanding of their research field and enabled them to apply their scholarly expertise and research skills in collaboration with organizations and communities with impacts beyond academia. Individuals, institutions, and publics all might gain from this model, which cultivates partnerships and connections between humanities students and communities outside the university (Rogers, 2020).

In addition to their scholarly development, students indicated that they gained greater career clarity and access to professional networks unavailable through traditional modes of doctoral learning (i.e., teaching assistantships, academic research assistantships). In particular, they learned about new career fields and work settings while building professional networks and connections that they could not have accessed through their department's intellectual communities alone. Students also grew in their career development, particularly in the area of transferable skills applicable to a range of engaged work. By participating in an internship, they perceived that they were learning how their research skills and scholarly knowledge can contribute to meeting the needs of diverse organizations, and they reported developing stronger research skills and honing specific research-related skills, including both qualitative (e.g., interviewing) and quantitative (e.g., survey methodology) research skills. Participants also noted that they were developing their abilities to translate the importance of scholarly research to communities and the general public.

Although we cannot generalize our findings about the impact of doctoral internships on time-to-degree, we found in our population as a whole that time-to-degree was slightly longer for students who completed the summer internship program (by approximately one semester). New models for doctoral internships, such as fellowships that allow students to engage in this experiential learning during the academic year rather than only in summer, might mitigate the potential for lengthening time-to-degree for doctoral students who wish to engage in this type of experiential learning. At Rackham, we began to offer such opportunities beginning in 2020 to enable students to pursue internships as a replacement for a semester when they might normally have been teaching.

In terms of local implications for our early-stage program evaluation, at our institution, these program evaluation findings have helped to shape the topics in the Rackham-facilitated learning community meetings. Specifically, Rackham staff educators lead sessions for students on topics such as project management, informational interviewing, and transferable skills. Staff educators ensure that the learning community provides a space to discuss themes that emerged as most important to students' development, including the importance of cultivating a professional network, applications of the internship experiences to their interests as public scholars, and experiential learning opportunities that are available beyond the intern fellowship.

Next Steps

We plan to sustain our current program evaluation efforts, and we see value in expanding them further. First, we would like to develop a more rigorous mechanism to periodically assess program impact from the vantage point of our community partners. This might include a brief, annual survey coupled with several closed-ended and open-ended questions. For sites who have partnered with the university for several years, we could invite reflections on the long-term impact of the program on their organizations as a way to understand the benefits to community partners of further engagement in partnerships with higher education, which could in turn help leaders in graduate education advocate for new partnerships to be formed on the basis of similar results and potential.

Second, we have yet to conduct a large-scale assessment of the entire pool of alumni. However, we did conduct interviews with 10 program alumni in 2021. This preliminary research revealed that alumni of the program emphasized the longer term importance of mentors from their internship organizations in providing guidance on possible career paths. Alums also discussed how exposure to new fields and types of careers provided through their internships was critical to their professional development in several ways. In particular, alumni felt that internships introduced them to a range of career possibilities which, in turn, instilled a greater sense of confidence as they navigated their professional development. In fact, several alumni shared a moment during their internship when they "realized" they could be successful in a range

of professional settings. Such intellectual self-confidence might also contribute to participants' scholarly development. Given that many of our past intern fellows are now in their early careers (both as faculty and in diverse career contexts), we would like to conduct a more rigorous and extensive alumni survey to assess their perceptions of the impact of these experiences on their longer term scholarly and career development, as well as how their internships may have shaped their commitment to public and community engagement as a part of their careers, whether in academia or beyond. Anecdotally, we have heard from alumni that not only do internships and other "nontraditional" experiences make students better candidates for faculty positions, but the career pathways of doctoral students participating in experiential learning like internships may not be preordained or linear (i.e., internships can prepare students for both faculty positions and diverse careers outside the professoriate). Additionally, future longitudinal research could explore the impact of internships by following doctoral students not just during their internship experiences, but from the beginning of their doctoral studies into their early careers. Scholars could document all students' varying experiences during doctoral education—internships, research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and so on—and explore whether some combination of these experiences presents different patterns in terms of scholarly and career development. This type of study could also include questions to address how fellowship funding for internships relative to other funding opportunities factored into students' decisions to pursue an internship.

Given students noted the importance of networking as part of their experiences, staff educators also intend to invite more community partners to learning community sessions to create space for more intentional conversations about building relationships with partners working in diverse career fields. Finally, in both open-ended and closed-ended responses, few students reported perceiving that they developed their skills as leaders. Staff educators will develop a session that creates space for students to reflect on leveraging these experiences to augment their leadership skills. Although interns do not have opportunities to supervise the work of others or formally delegate tasks, they often do have opportunities to "manage up," persuade and motivate others, and teach skills or concepts to others. Given that students may not have perceived their internships as opportunities for leadership development, more guided instruction by staff experts on leadership skills may help students to better leverage internships as opportunities for leadership development.

Finally, data collection continued in 2020 and beyond. In this period internships shifted first to a fully remote format due to the global COVID-19 pandemic for 2 years, followed by a mix of remote, hybrid, and in-person internships in 2022. One next step would be to analyze these more recent data to assess differences in the impacts of remote and hybrid work, versus in-person experiences, on students' career and scholarly development. Given changes in the broader workforce postpandemic, this future exploration may be useful in understanding how community partners and the university can partner to ensure mutually beneficial experiences that may include a range of modalities of working together, both virtual and in-person.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Best Practices

We contend that one best practice of the program has been to compensate students through fellowship stipends for these publicly engaged internships, much as students are compensated for other forms of professional learning like teaching and research assistantships. This practice reflects a shift in how doctoral students are funded that some scholars in the field of public and community engagement have called for in order to advance a new vision for graduate education that trains students for diverse career outcomes. Nationally, in the last decade, several universities have offered fellowships and funding for doctoral students completing internships (Balleisen & Chin, 2022; Day et al., 2012; Lafond, 2023). This funding model allows doctoral students to choose to participate in internships in the same way they would a teaching assistant position, gaining professional experience and mentorship outside the academy while also being fully supported to make progress toward their degree.

We have also found that the program's location within a graduate school, and not in a single department, has been important to success. Building and sustaining partnerships to "match-make" between students' skills and organizations' needs has been

central to the program's success. By serving as the connector and sustainer of community partnerships between the university and organizations like local museums and nonprofits, the program serves student and partner needs by making it easier for partner organizations and students to find opportunities. Graduate students bring valuable skill sets to community partner organizations, but because they often relocate geographically for graduate school, they typically do not have established deep local community connections. If outreach and engagement are central to reimagined graduate education in the humanities and social sciences, then one lesson we have learned is that the graduate college can play a role in facilitating these connections and opportunities for students. The graduate school serving as a central hub for the program also means that the learning communities that students participate in as a part of the program are interdisciplinary, drawing students from across programs to connect and learn with one another.

Integrating experiential learning and publicly engaged research into doctoral education is also connected to broader disciplinary examinations of what counts as research inside the academy, as well as the relationship between the academy and the rest of society (see, for example: https://www.historians.org/resource/guidelines-for-broadening-the-definition-of-historical-scholarship/). Academic departments at some higher education institutions have implemented curricular changes and alterations to the dissertation format requirements, making room for scholarship informed by increasingly diversified experiential learning with the public, communities, and workplaces outside academia (Balleisen & Chin, 2022; Rogers, 2020; Smith, 2015). Rogers has argued that the cyclical relationship between the internship and scholarship goes beyond the student or department themselves, promoting a public reinvestment in the humanities in higher education.

The success of the summer intern fellowship program led to significant growth at our institution. Since analyzing and collecting the data used in this study, Rackham built on the program's success. Beginning in 2020, the graduate school launched a pilot program to expand the intern fellowship program into the fall and winter terms, in addition to summer. This transformation of the summer program into the Rackham Doctoral Intern Fellowship Program means that the program now offers a robust fellowship package to students, including a stipend, tuition, and health insurance at the same levels as doctoral students receive for teaching or research assistant positions on campus. Academic year internships have the potential to align better with graduate program curricula when students are often engaged in teaching or research assistantships, rather than being additive during a summer period, when many students in the humanities and social sciences focus on their fieldwork. In 2023, Rackham and University of Michigan also began offering guaranteed summer funding to doctoral students. This form of support further solidified internship fellowships as one option among many that doctoral students can choose to pursue at multiple times of year (summer, academic terms) as part of their funding package and professional development. In 2024, 101 students across all fields at the university and 67 in the humanities and social sciences received a Rackham Doctoral Intern Fellowship. Future work will explore the impact of this expanded internship program on students' career and scholarly development.

We hope this model can be replicated and adapted to impact graduate education broadly. At the same time, we recognize that institutional contexts can vary greatly. For example, smaller institutions need not replicate a program at the scale discussed in this article in order to have an impact on students' professional development and community partner organizations. Another lesson we learned from our program's growth was to start small. With only one intern in summer 2010, program staff and faculty leadership were able to advocate for the importance of the program over time and thoughtfully build relationships with community partners who were interested in working with the program.

As a part of a reimagined version of doctoral education, internships are a promising practice that demonstrates one way graduate schools and universities can train students to impact the greater public good over the course of their careers, whether they pursue careers inside or outside the academy (Eatman, 2012). Rather than a distraction from doctoral training and research, as a traditional view of doctoral education in the humanities and social sci-

ences might view them, internships appear to be a promising avenue to further hone doctoral students' scholarly development. Leaders in higher education thus might consider these internships a tool to better prepare students for the current reality of diverse career options.

One purpose of graduate education, particularly at public institutions like the University of Michigan's Rackham Graduate School, has been to advance excellence in graduate education while serving the greater public good through research and scholarship. To enact this commitment, doctoral internships can be an additional way for students and graduate schools to advance their commitment to serving society. In the 21st century, internships can provide powerful experiential learning opportunities for doctoral students and position them to apply their disciplinary expertise and skills in service to society.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix. Journal Entry Questions

Journal Entry 1 (Completed at Week 2 of the experience)

Q1. Settling in to your Fellowship, comment on things that were unexpected or surprising.

Q2. Which capacities do you see yourself developing now or a bit down the road in your fellowship experience?

Q3. Are there challenges, everything from interpersonal issues to the content of your work, for which you'd appreciate help from the graduate school?

Journal Entry 2 (Completed at Week 5 of the experience)

Q1. What connections do you see between your Fellowship experience and your scholarship?

Q2. What challenges (if any) have you encountered? How did you handle those challenges?

Q3. In your own words, what skills have you developed through your Fellowship thus far?

Q4. From the list below, what skills would you say you have developed thus far in the experience (check all that apply)? [List of skills appears in Table 2.]

Journal Entry 3 (Completed at end of the experience)

Q1. Did you learn anything that surprised you from your Fellowship experience?

Q2. What challenges did you encounter, if any?

Q3. What could you have done differently to get the most out of the experience?

Q4. What did your site supervisor do that was most helpful? And what could they have done to better support you, if anything?

Q5. Are there aspects of your work at your site for which you feel your academic training at U–M prepared you? What aspects of your work did your academic training not prepare you?

Q6. What do you see as your next steps in terms of achieving your career goals?

Q7. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Immersive Learning and Community Mapping: The Case of the Whitely Neighborhood in Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract

This article discusses the preliminary results of a semester-long partnership between an undergraduate course and a local Black community to map culture and history of the neighborhood. Students of Ball State University and residents of the Whitely community in Muncie, Indiana, worked together in spring 2022 to collect data and produce maps that the community could use for its activities. Within a framework of immersive learning and high-impact practices, this article points out challenges and achievements of this collaboration, based on the observations of the students and community members, who are also coauthors of this publication. Strengths and weaknesses in the mapping process are identified and suggestions are made to improve the project and guarantee its continuity.

Keywords: community mapping, immersive learning, student–community relations, geography education, Muncie (Indiana)

In recent decades, cartographers, geographers, and GIS specialists have paid more attention to how maps and mapmaking could contribute to supporting and empowering communities. Making maps for and with communities is a democratized form of mapping that can give voice to marginalized groups and enable them to make their own maps, especially in the digital age and in the light of information flows on the worldwide web (Perkins, 2007, p. 127). Projects and approaches range from database solutions provided for neighborhoods or specific social groups to community-driven participatory mapping. A critical issue is the degree of participation of the population, which should go beyond a mere transfer of technologies or the delivery of ready-to-go maps and requires a deeper involvement and engagement of all social actors who participate in the project.

In this context, this article looks deeper into the challenges and problems of the practices of mapping collaboration involving undergraduate students and residents of a neighborhood. How can they partner to produce cartographic material that can both contribute to the students' personal, professional, and intellectual growth and support the needs of the community?

In the spring semester of 2022, 14 Ball State University undergraduate students, their professor, and approximately 10 residents of the Whitely community, a historically Black neighborhood in Muncie, Indiana, worked together to produce maps on paper and in a digital format. The Whitely neighborhood wanted to document its rich history and tell stories about the past and culture of its place and people, for example, the history of churches, local businesses, street names, and segregation

spaces in the past, with the potential of using the maps as educational tools. The students aimed to gain hands-on experience with real-world partners to train and to improve their professional knowledge in mapmaking. The professor's role was to organize the activities of the weekly sessions of the class held in the community, facilitate the communication between students and residents, and evaluate the students' overall performance, based on the two student learning goals defined by Ball State's high-impact practices assessment guide: (1) create a constructive, collaborative climate (i.e., the creation of a good work atmosphere, especially teamwork) and (2) apply the students' field-specific knowledge—in the case of this class, geography, cartography, and mapping technologies—to "demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations" (S. Plesha, personal communication, April 7, 2022).

In the light of higher education outreach, this student- and community-centered course combined service, teaching, and research. Maps were made *with* and *for* the community—the students, the community members, and the professor of the course were active participants and coauthors in a continuous multivocal dialogue and mutual reflection (Wells et al., 2021). This article is an account of the personal experiences of the project written by multiple hands. It addresses the achievements accomplished and challenges faced by the participants during the 15 weeks of the course. Four students and eight community members agreed on voluntarily taking part in the writing-up of the project and are equitable coauthors of this article (see Miles et al., 2022), rather than sources of information, subject(s), or mere "object(s)" of study, as is common practice in academic writing. The study uses a humanistic approach that focuses on "multidimensional understandings; open, empathetic methods; firsthand experience; and explication and interpretation" (Seamon & Larsen, 2020, p. 1) and does not require IRB approval. This article is unconventional or unusual in the sense that it includes subjective observations and elements of storytelling by the coauthors, who are identified by name in attribution of their direct quotes.

Educational Framework: Immersive Learning and Community Outreach

Since 2000 Ball State University, a public university in East Central Indiana with an enrollment of approximately 20,000 students, has been investing in an educational experience labeled as immersive learning (David, 2016, p. 1), combining experiential learning and service-learning to provide the students with a unique format and theme for classes related to the solution of real-world problems in partnership with communities. The theoretical and methodological framework of this learning experience is based on and inspired by Dewey's (1938) and Kolb's (1984) writings on experiential learning and principles of meaningful service-learning that stress a strong connection between the curriculum and service activities, student leadership, community involvement, diversity, and critical reflection with sufficient duration and intensity (David, 2016, pp. 14–27).

Ball State University provides clear guidelines concerning the main characteristics and desired learning outcomes for immersive learning classes. These courses should be student-driven and faculty mentor-guided interdisciplinary teamwork with community partners, resulting in a tangible outcome or product with an impact on the larger community and the student participants (David, 2016). Student learning outcomes cover a wide range of specific qualities, including the demonstration of professionalism, the understanding of the needs of the community partners (cultural competency) and their ideas and expectations of collaboration that may diverge from the students' own vision, and a commitment to the project. In addition, students should focus on the identification of problems and the reflection on their solution, teamwork, and a high-quality contribution that exceeds the expectation of the community partner and can be transferred to other contexts and spark other competencies (Table 1).

In recent years, Ball State University has been approaching immersive learning projects in a systematic fashion by labeling these classes with a specific code in the university course catalogue that allows easy identification and advertises these projects campuswide. Service-learning and community-based learning classes are conceived as high-impact practices in education that

Table 1. Characteristics and Learning Outcomes of Immersive Learning Projects

Characteristics	Learning outcomes
• Engagement in active learning	• Professionalism, integrity, and ethics
• Student-driven	• Cultural competency
• Guided by faculty mentor	• Interaction with persons with varying points of view
• Tangible outcome or product	• Respect for diverse ideas
• Interdisciplinary teamwork	• Commitment to project
• Work with community partners	• Problem and solution identification
• Impact on larger community	• Integration of disciplinary knowledge
• Impact on student participants	• Teamwork, leadership and conflict resolution
	• Successful implementation of the mission
	• Project will exceed the expectation of the community
	• Acquisition of extended knowledge
	• Articulation of transferable skills

Note. Based on *An Evaluation of Immersive Learning at Ball State University: Relations Between Immersive Learning and Self-Determination Factors* by K. A. David, 2016 [Doctoral dissertation, Ball State University], pp. 2–4.

give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students gain to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life (Kuh, 2008, p. 11, emphasis in original).

Literature Review

A literature review on community mapping as educational outreach and engagement requires a brief definition of the key terms. Maps can be conceived as "graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world" (Harley & Woodward, 1987, p. xvi). Moving away from the traditional conception of maps, these representations can be in printed form or interactive, zoomable online maps such as story maps or ArcGIS applications, with the potential of telling stories. Different from mapmaking (the production of maps), mapping entails any kind of cognitive engagement with information on space and place that could be used (or not) to create a map. A useful definition of community mapping is "local mapping, produced collaboratively, by local people and often incorporating alternative local knowledge" (Perkins, 2007, p. 127). More specifically, community mapping can be conceived as participatory cultural mapping, which "is rooted in practices of community engagement and collaboration, working to make visible and co-produce knowledge that is of value for community identity formation, reflection, decision-making, advocacy and development" (Duxbury & Garrett-Petts, 2024, p. 329).

An early example of community mapping with the participation of residents is from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Geographer William Bunge worked together with teenagers of the African American neighborhood of Fitzgerald in Detroit to map social injustice and document the precarious living conditions of the local population (Bunge, 1971). For what they called the Detroit Geographical Expedition, the participants, mostly young Black people who lived in the location, explored their own neighborhood

and gathered data in the aftermath of the 1967 Detroit Riots. They produced thought-provoking maps on themes such as places where babies were bitten by rats, the limited leisure options for youths, or where children were run over by cars traveling from the more affluent White suburbs and passing through the Black neighborhood on their way to downtown Detroit (Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute, 1971). Though Bunge's project is a good example of community participation that sparked follow-up projects (e.g., Campbell et al., 2020), the educational dimension did not involve university students, but endeavored to give the youths from the neighborhood potential access to higher education through taking courses at Wayne State University.

A more recent example of a partnership with a community is The Ward: Race and Class in Du Bois' Seventh Ward, a collaboration between professors and students at Penn State University and the residents of the traditionally Black Seventh Ward in Philadelphia, initiated in 2006. The project aimed to provide an online and open-access historical GIS for "a web-based interactive experience for high school students and others who might otherwise never approach it" (Hillier, 2011, p. 285), based on the maps, stories, census data, and statistics published in the book *The Philadelphia Negro* by writer, sociologist, and Black civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois (1899). Besides the online map, the website for the project (no longer accessible as of July 2024) included additional features such as lesson plans for teaching, oral histories by residents, suggestions for walking tours, a board game, and the proposal for a neighborhood mural. Community members were invited to tell their own stories and get involved in the activities to "help teach lessons about racial discrimination by introducing students to real African Americans who struggled to make ends meet at the turn of the nineteenth century" (Hillier, 2011, p. 281).

Community mapping could be a powerful proposal for educational outreach (Parker, 2006), though in U. S. higher education, cartography and GIScience classes are still predominantly content- and data-driven rather than focused on pedagogy and people (Barcus & Muehlenhaus, 2010; Elwood & Wilson, 2017; Gilbert & Krygier, 2007). For students, a community-centered course offers the opportunity to apply their cartographic knowledge to a real-world situation and directly interact with their "clients" since the students will have to make maps that the community considers important and useful, stimulating interdisciplinary collaboration and civic engagement (Jung, 2018). However, though the goals are straightforward on paper, the outcomes of the class may raise more questions than answers, and the benefits may differ considerably from those "that were anticipated at the outset" (Elwood, 2009, p. 62).

The literature on community-based learning in geography in higher education has grown considerably in recent years (e.g., Jackson & Bryson, 2018; Robinson et al., 2017; Sinha et al., 2017), which is a sign of recognition of the benefits of these projects for students, communities, and educators since "these connections deepen the educational experience and improve student success and retention, and build civic engagement skills that benefit the university community and the student's home community" (Rock, 2021, p. S235). In addition, universities are starting to pay more attention to community-focused projects, encouraging faculty to redesign their classes for a practical, hands-on experience (Robinson & Hawthorne, 2018; Shannon et al., 2021).

Putting the Whitely Community on the Map

For the project with promise discussed in this article, the professor of the class established contact with the Whitely community in Muncie, Indiana, in fall 2021, based on the indispensable rule that a community must be interested in the partnership and approve the project. The outline for the spring 2022 project was presented at a Zoom meeting on October 26, 2021, during which the professor explained to a group of residents the purpose of the project and how it could be beneficial for the community. The participating community members embraced the idea and assured their support.

One of the main reasons for selecting Whitely was the lack of cartographic material on the community that could narrate its history and culture, in addition to the correction of the stereotypical, almost stigmatic image of the neighborhood as a poor Black community with low education levels, high crime rates, and low economic power.

Whitely's population is about 2,300, with more than 50% self-identifying as Black or African American, a median household income of $22,411 (the county's average is $54,087), and a poverty rate of 44.2% (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). The neighborhood is situated on the Eastside of Muncie, Indiana, a typical rustbelt town that today is struggling with limited economic growth, a declining population, and social issues such as drug use, violence, and even homelessness. Muncie gained national prominence in the 1920s under the pseudonym Middletown, when the anthropologists Robert and Helen Lynd conducted extensive fieldwork for a case study on sociology and social change in an "average" American town (Lynd & Lynd, 1929, 1937). Follow-up studies were carried out (Caccamo, 2002; Caplow et al., 1982, 1983), and voices about the shortcomings and selectivity emerged, resulting in publications that focused on the "other side" of Middletown, namely the African American community unmentioned in and omitted from the Lynd studies (Dennis, 2012; Lassiter et al., 2004), though a significant migration flow of Black people to Muncie had initiated in the early 20th century (Goodall & Mitchell, 1976, p. 9).

An important initiative to include the African American population of the town on the "map" was a collaborative ethnographic study titled The Other Side of Middletown (Lassiter et al., 2004), which gathered university students and community consultants to explore Muncie's Black community and its history. The project resulted in a book that documented and storified the daily life of people in the Whitely neighborhood, addressing themes such as civil rights, segregation, work, living, young people, leisure, and religious practices (for an assessment of the project see Campbell & Lassiter, 2010; Lassiter, 2012).
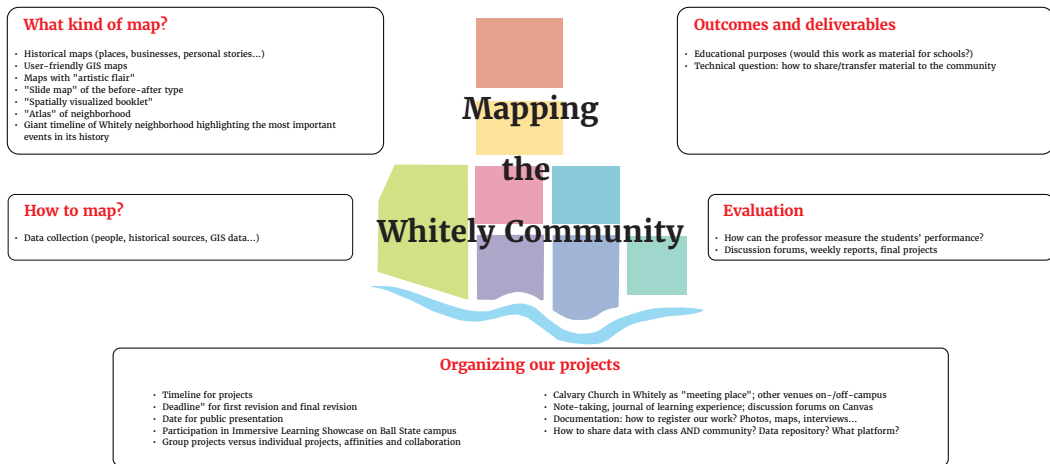
Ball State University has created a tradition of working together with the Whitely community. Among the recent projects are community-engaged and -based teacher preparation (Zygmunt & Cipollone, 2018) and the safety of the neighborhood in the context of criminal justice (Warren-Gordon et al., 2020).

Getting Started

One of the most challenging characteristics of community mapping projects is their uncertainty. Even with clear predefined guidelines and ideas, collaboration with community partners must follow an ever-changing pace and script. Participants must be prepared for surprise moments and changes of direction. The first group meeting of the semester took place on the Ball State University campus on January 11, 2022. The syllabus was introduced as a basic two-page outline of general information and activities to be constructed collaboratively during the semester. In a section called "What Is the Course About," the professor explained the nature of the class (student-, project-, and community-driven, immersive and active learning). The group was expected to meet in off-campus locations with schedules that required flexibility in accordance with the needs and demands of the participants. Four learning outcomes were defined for the course: Students will (1) improve their mapping skills (especially software and online tools) and how to apply these to specific places in need of organization and maps, (2) learn how to collect data and transform them into maps, (3) collaborate and dialogue with different community actors and partners, and (4) plan and execute applied cartography projects. In addition, the professor shared his expectations for the class: Students were required to actively engage in the activities, whereas the professor's role was to facilitate learning, stimulate participation, encourage the students to think outside the box, and even dare to get out of their academic comfort zone to achieve the project's aims. In the first meeting of the group, he jokingly boiled down the aim of the class to the following catchphrase: community needs maps—students make them. However, the semester project was far more complex and challenging since the activities went beyond mapmaking and required social interaction.

A group of five Whitely residents attended the first meeting on campus in January 2022 to brainstorm together with the students about what maps the community would like to see. Based on these initial conversations, the professor summarized the main points of the discussion in a list: What kind of maps? How to map? How to organize the students' projects? Forms of evaluation? Outcomes and deliverables of project? (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Brainstorming the Whitely Mapping Project

What kind of map?
- Historical maps (places, businesses, personal stories…)
- User-friendly GIS maps
- Maps with "artistic flair"
- "Slide map" of the before–after type
- "Spatially visualized booklet"
- "Atlas" of neighborhood
- Giant timeline of Whitely neighborhood highlighting the most important events in its history

Outcomes and deliverables
- Educational purposes (would this work as material for schools?)
- Technical question: how to share/transfer material to the community

How to map?
- Data collection (people, historical sources, GIS data…)

Evaluation
- How can the professor measure the students' performance?
- Discussion forums, weekly reports, final projects

Mapping the Whitely Community

Organizing our projects
- Timeline for projects
- Deadline" for first revision and final revision
- Date for public presentation
- Participation in Immersive Learning Showcase on Ball State campus
- Group projects versus individual projects, affinities and collaboration
- Calvary Church in Whitely as "meeting place"; other venues on-/off-campus
- Note–taking, journal of learning experience; discussion forums on Canvas
- Documentation: how to register our work? Photos, maps, interviews…
- How to share data with class AND community? Data repository? What platform?

Note. Drawing by Jörn Seemann.

Though these first ideas remained slightly vague, the initial conversation was a starting point for further reflection. The professor decided not to provide an outline of the semester activities since his aim was to make students and community members step up and discuss details of their collaboration. In an online discussion forum (January 12, 2022) and a retrospective in the form of a final evaluation at the end of the semester, the student coauthors shared their impressions of the class. Their comments show their awareness of the challenges of community mapping, especially with regard to how they could convert personal stories into maps and how they could contribute to place-building in a community.

One critical point was the importance of gathering information about the community that could provide a better understanding of how Whitely was in the past and became what it is now:

> When we were introduced to this class in the first few weeks, I had quite a few expectations. First, I was expecting to make an impact on the Whitely community in some way. Although I had no idea what type of project I would create, I was expecting myself to make an impact with whatever I accomplished. Second, I was expecting to create relationships with Whitely residents and other people of the community. Heading into the neighborhood, I was assuming that there would be community involvement to help

us students navigate our projects. Finally, I had the expectation of the class being a learning experience for all involved. Heading into this project, I knew that it was uncharted territory and had never been done before. This expectation was positive though. I was expecting the experience to be a challenging and eye-opening time in a professional environment. (Jackson Longenbaugh, Geography senior)

Besides collecting data, there was also a human dimension. How to get personally attached to the project to overcome lack of experience with this kind of work?

> I know our class will be able to make any kind of map that the community wants, but I can definitely see us making historical maps, more artistic maps that include personal stories from community members, and scientific-based maps that can help educate the neighborhood on the geographical characteristics that surround them so they can protect what is theirs. To be able to make these maps come to life we will need to submerge ourselves in the neighborhood and collect any useful data that can showcase the culture of Whitely. Personal stories will be crucial to creating a great final product because we are focusing on people and their livelihoods. Getting the opportunity to tour the

neighborhood and speak directly to those who know the history will boost our cartographic confidence and put a more caring perspective on what we want this semester-long project to look like. Collecting the data will most likely be from word of mouth, or in the collected records/history of Whitely. The only challenges I expect to face are a lack of information for certain topics or too much information for certain topics to the point we have to cut back on some of the information to be able to create a clean map product. (Morgan Toschlog, Geography senior)

Students were aware that working with an African American community also required sensitivity and understanding of the people and their neighborhood, which are essential to help the community relive and remember the past and create a sense of belonging that could also be passed to younger generations:

> I did not necessarily have a set of expectations for this project, more so hopes and goals. The reason being is I did not want to stick way too heavy on a strict set plan because oftentimes things do not work according to plan in life, and you have to maneuver yourself around what life throws at you. I will say that before we started this project, once we learned what we would be doing I did hope to receive a close bond with the community, which we did. If I had to choose an expectation to have with this project, it would be to convey the message that the community wanted and to get closer to them on more than just a class assignment level. I wanted to develop my own connections with the community because I felt that was important not only just for networking purposes, but you never know how people who were once strangers can impact your life. Our mission is to let the Whitely community live on and educate others about Whitely's great community through maps. I believe including testimonials from the people of the community would be a great idea as well because it's one thing seeing it but it's a different story when you can actually hear it from a person. I believe in the end

we can achieve the goal that they want, the only problem is the lack of information that might be difficult to obtain. I am excited to see where this goes! (Ky'Lie Garland-Yates, Geography junior and only African American student in the group)

Some students initially had a rather technological vision of the project, focusing on data collection and GIS maps to tell the story of the community, but then realized that the crucial point was not the data, but how to obtain it from the community:

> Going into the project I knew that Muncie had an extensive and rich history, so I was expecting to do historical mapping of some kind. I was excited to learn more about Whitely's history as I hadn't heard much about it before. After meeting the community members and representatives I understood that we would be conducting much of our research through interviews. This was a new and exciting way of collecting data for maps which I had not previously considered. (Robert Dorbritz III, Geography junior)

The expectations of the participating community members were a mix of curiosity about mapmaking, the hope to make Whitely a "better livable place" (Khamari Murphy, resident), and to mobilize and engage more residents in these activities. Frank Scott Sr., the president of the Whitely Community Council and coauthor of this article, stressed the importance of highlighting the history of the neighborhood, especially its businesses and places of reference, to keep the memory alive and teach future generations:

> I wanted to discover and uncover many of the Whitely businesses and landmarks that have faded away over the years. I also wanted to highlight many of our residents who were successful in various areas and at many levels of business and government. I wanted to see this information made available to this next generation and generations to come. (Frank Scott Sr.)

In the second week of the semester, the group scheduled a field trip with community members to get known to the neighborhood by walking through its streets (Figure 2).

However, the low temperatures in mid-January, accompanied by a brisk wind, reduced the field experience considerably. Despite this challenge, students were able to gain an idea about Whitely:

> The field trip to Whitely furthered my suspicion that there is a lot of work to be done in a small amount of time. I believe there are still countless themes of maps that can be made, however. I am most excited to hear personal stories from some of the elders and get the chance to bring that point in time back in the form of a map. (Morgan Toschlog)

The field trip provided the students with insights into local community life, an experience that is not taken for granted since the student population at Ball State generally do not explore Muncie beyond campus and do not know much about the neighborhoods. By walking through the streets of Whitely, students had the opportunity to engage with "real people" and gain an idea of what community spirit is:

I enjoyed myself more than I thought I would. I was surprised about how much we covered in one day far as walking around the community and gaining knowledge. Being able to experience the community firsthand was amazing. It opened my eyes to see what was lost, changed, etc. My first impression was that there is a lot to be done in the maps. Due to hearing what the people of the community were saying and seeing in person, you can tell a lot of historical aspects are gone and/or forgotten about. To hear personal accounts such as interviews (audio/visual) would paint a clear image for outside viewers and viewers within the community. I am excited to see where this all goes. I believe this is a solid team and we are going to create something magical. I cannot wait until we get moving further along in the process, anticipation is killing me. (Ky'Lie Garland-Yates)

Figure 2. Participants on Field Trip Through Whitely, January 2022

*Note.* Photo by Robbie Mehling. Used with permission.

Mapping It Out: Activities and Deliverables

The design of the course consisted in weekly meetings at the Greater Mount Calvary Church in the Whitely neighborhood, whose community room was graciously offered by the church's reverend. The room served as a meeting place to discuss projects, chat with residents about Whitely's history, and define the semester projects for each student. For each session, community members prepared hot food to be shared with the students. Guest speakers and spontaneous walk-ins engaged with the students and replied to their questions about the neighborhood. For example, in a panel with local business owners, the participants initiated a discussion on the economic history of Whitely (e.g., shops and stores that existed in the past). The direct contact with people from the community aimed to "break the ice" and make students feel more comfortable about their projects, though there was a constant struggle about how to retrieve data and how to insert them in a map, or, in more extreme cases, what should be the theme of the project.

In addition to the weekly meetings, students had to submit ideas and updates on their project to an online discussion forum. Since the regular schedule did not allow lecture-style classes or a deeper engagement with literature on community mapping, students had to read additional texts on cartography, methodologies, and race and submit short reflection essays on the contents and how these texts can help with their projects.

The students selected a wide variety of themes, from the history of businesses, "invisible" (racial) borders, street names, and local church history to a local census atlas of the neighborhood, and "Whitely-Opoly," a Monopoly-style board game (Figure 3). The preliminary projects were presented publicly in mid-April in a session with community members who also provided feedback. The final products were shared at the Immersive Learning Showcase on campus (Seemann et al., 2022). A link to the maps ("additional Whitely neighborhood history") was also included on the website of the Whitely Community Council.

Figure 3. "Whitely-Opoly" Game Board
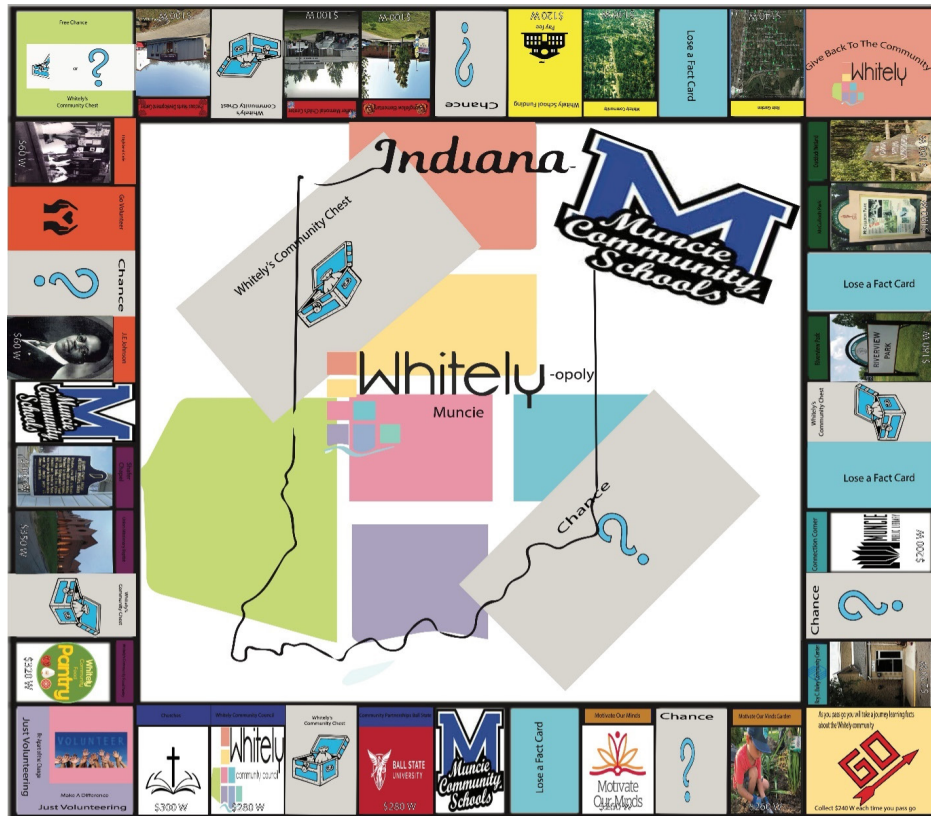
Note. Source: Personal collection, Ky'Lie Garland-Yates.

Mapping Multiple Perspectives

As a paper written by multiple hands, this article about a project with promise seeks to present the views from different participant groups—the students, the community, and, as facilitator and listener in the background, the professor—who all had distinct or even diverging ideas about the class and its outcomes, especially since many students found themselves in an unfamiliar learning situation (student- and community-driven class) and setting (off-campus location in the Whitely neighborhood). Community members had the desire to receive maps but were not acquainted with the full potential of mapping, whereas the professor hoped that having students and residents in the same space would facilitate data collection and communication among the participants. In retrospect, despite the direct contact with the community members, students found access to information a major challenge:

> During my time in this class, I feel like I accomplished what I was aiming to do. I wanted to research and investigate the local impact of churches in the neighborhood. Initially though, there were challenges that I faced for a few weeks. When the class began, I struggled to find legitimate information, church histories, or speak with knowledgeable residents. It took me quite a while to find the right people to talk to or find any information online. Looking back on this experience, I wish I would have been more proactive in looking for residents to speak to and visiting these churches in person. Many of these things were hard to do because of time constraints and, naturally, navigating this brand-new experience made these tasks even more difficult. (Jackson Longenbaugh)

In general, the community members were less map-minded than the students; that is, they had an idea about what information they wanted to have mapped, but did not know much about the mapping process, from data collection to map production. For them, it was already an achievement to be remembered by the university and to be contemplated for the immersive learning project, as observed in the following comment:

> For me, the achievement is that we were able to UNIFY with great understanding for one another, both students and community (respecting backgrounds, culture and the unfamiliar due to exposure). In the beginning, the territory was unfamiliar and so were the people, on both sides, which posed a challenge until everyone warmed up to another. I've done all that I could to engage with great results and wouldn't change a thing. (Evette L. Young, resident and one of the leading contacts)

A key issue was the collaboration between students and community members. Students did not receive specific training for community projects, and some of them, due to their personalities (e.g., shy, introverted, not a public speaker, not used to a think-outside-the-box class) struggled to connect with the Whitely residents, even when sitting next to them, giving the impression that "we got the cold shoulder in the beginning" (Mary Dollison, resident and one of the leading contacts). Establishing relationships between the students and residents was time-consuming, and only a small group of the neighborhood actively participated in the project:

> One thing I think was a notable achievement was the interaction we saw between the students and the residents. Apprehension soon turned to anticipation and apathy to interest. The discoveries brought a new level of appreciation and respect on both fronts. One of the challenges was getting residents and students together. Correlating schedules and developing a strategy to move forward took a lot of time and left little time for actually completing the project. One of the things we could have done better was secure more residential involvement earlier in the process. (Bessie Jordan, resident and retired social worker)

Often collaborations terminate when the semester comes to an end, so many projects must start from scratch for a new edition without building on what has already been produced. Frank Scott Sr., the president of the Whitely Community Council, considered the project "a success that exceeded my ex-

pectations in several areas (Whitely board game, interactive searches for businesses, etc.)." However, at the same time, he also showed his concern with the continuation of the partnership:

> Since this was only the beginning of what we envisioned, the next steps might be to see how we can build and continue the process. Researching photos of business owners and businesses. Bios of residents and possibly something that will capsulize the project and give an overview of what has been developed.

Frank concluded that "we don't want to lose access to all the work that has been done. I know the student[s] left links [to their online maps] but we want to make sure that we have the ability to continue to add to and make any corrections that may be needed." Though the outcome was considered "outstanding . . . and a win-win for both the students and the community" (Cornelius Dollison, resident and one of the leading contacts), participants longed for "additional tangible products to engage the community on behalf of our history" (Evette L. Young).

As for the students, the immersive learning experience, though challenging, was a valid form of education, though the project appeared as a permanent work in progress that would require a narrower focus due to the abundance of possible studies:

> I think the results we collected at the end of our class were very useful for both students and community members, but we only scratched the surface of Whitely's history and future. The next steps would be to solely focus on certain years/ periods in the Whitely community. While I think it is useful to see different projects over different topics from different times, to serve the community better, I believe taking this community project step by step will give the students a better foundation to build their projects. This approach would also give the community a limit on what situations and topics they can talk about, giving more details about one topic compared to many details about many topics. (Morgan Toschlog)

Communication between students, the professor, and the community and among students was a key issue for a successful project. Appreciating the limits and skills of each participant was also a factor:

> The most common issue that we faced during this project was communicating our limitations to the Whitely representatives. Had we figured this out as a group beforehand, we may have been able to complete the project sooner and deliver a better product. This also would have helped the community representatives decide better what the product should be. Going forward I think it would be wise to assess the capabilities of team members before meeting with community members. Additionally, I think a reliable and accessible form of communication should be set from the beginning. This would help to keep everyone on the same page and avoid confusion. (Robert Dorbritz III)

The first edition of this community mapping project taught many lessons to the participants and will allow them to adjust strategies, contents, and activities for the next "round." The following issues were identified and were considered for the next editions of the class in fall 2023 and in spring 2025.

Physical proximity to the community is a crucial aspect in this work. For this reason, the classes took place in a location inside the community and were used as meeting time with the community. Some residents attended almost all sessions; others were invited guests or just stopped by. However, being in a community does not automatically create understanding and collaboration between community members and the students. Not all students felt comfortable talking with residents face-to-face. Some students were not aware of cultural diplomacy and unpacked the afternoon lunch they brought to class, even knowing that the community adamantly insisted on providing food for them, since they considered sharing food as an important social function. Good social skills were essential, and some students showed frustration since the data was not simply out there. Community members liked talking, but not always about what students wanted to hear. For future editions, it will be necessary to prepare students

better to interact and communicate with community partners.

Working with a community means knowing its space. Extensive fieldwork (i.e., guided and unguided walking tours through the neighborhood) is an essential part of community mapping. Being in a space in person is a completely different experience from seeing images of the neighborhood on Google Maps.

Immersive learning classes are not lecture-style courses, though students needed further input and context to understand theory and practice of community mapping. In the class, there were uncertainties about forms of evaluation, and some students felt overwhelmed with the coursework since they had to submit shorter assignments every week, raising the question of how to bridge the gap between empirical work (talking to people), technological training (e.g., making story maps), and the reading of additional texts on theory, methodology, and practices.

Student-centered classes require a stronger hand from the professor. For GEOG434, the idea was to put the students into the driver's seat and let them decide about their projects. However, some students felt insecure because nobody was telling them what to do. They became frustrated but did not ask the professor for help.

Several participants mentioned activities to "break the ice" and make both students and community members feel comfortable in each other's presence. In this case, a simple mental map exercise to draw each participant's idea of the neighborhood could have been a starting point (see Zardiny & Hakimpour, 2021).

Data storage and continuity of activities remain pressing issues. Though there was no lack of data, there was no central repository to gather all information:

> We delivered an abundance of information, research, and visual aid to the community. However, it could have been more cohesive and usable across the board. I think that the biggest step we could take to better our results and further the project would be to develop a more permanent website including the research of all group members. Not only would this be a much more usable product for Whitely, but it would also represent the project in a more cohesive manner. (Robert Dorbritz III)

The main challenges and difficulties of the project perceived by the professor, the students, and the community members, discussed above, are summarized below (Table 2) and will provide food for thought for the next edition of the class.

Table 2. Challenges and Difficulties of the Project

Students	Community members	Professor
• Unfamiliar learning situation	• Desire for maps, but not many ideas about their potential use in the community	• Uncertainty of planning the classes since the directions of the project changed frequently
• No specific training for community mapping and student-driven projects	• Lack of familiarity with mapping processes	• Time-consuming preparation
• Access to information (data collection)	• Doubts about how the project could continue	• Shortcomings of student evaluation strategies
• Conversion of qualitative information into maps	• Direct communication with students required time	• Precarious communication with students who did not always ask questions or share their difficulties
• Diverging ideas about class and project outcomes	• Low involvement of community members	
• Communication skills varied (e.g., shy or uninterested students)		
• Slow warm-up to interact with community		

What to Map Next?

Since summer 2023, the professor and the Whitely Community Council have been working on a website that will serve as a repository for maps, memories, and histories, using the acronym MASTS (MApping and STory-telling System). Launched in late fall 2024, MASTS of Whitely aims to create a community-centered, open-ended, interactive online platform that allows Whitely community members to gather and share place-based histories of the neighborhood, historical sources, and personal spatial biographies. This platform will be driven primarily by community input but will also draw on the materials produced in immersive learning classes at Ball State and archival documents available in the university library. As a unique placemaking tool, MASTS will help consolidate the cultural identity of the neighborhood and provide reference material and educational resources to learn about Whitely. The pilot project and experiences in Whitely also aim to serve as a model for other neighborhoods in Muncie and other places to help them retrieve their stories.

As a project with promise, the mapping experience in Whitely is only an initial step in the partnership between university and community and aims to make a plea for more student- and community-centered immersive learning classes in higher education. Despite the difficulties and challenges, the project gives hope for new, improved editions. Coping with technological problems and frustration with data collection, many students learned something that conventional professional or service training does not provide: the human and humanistic aspects of community mapping, as testified by two of the student coauthors:

> When thinking back to this experience in Whitely, I'm blown away by the dedication and passion the Whitely residents showed us students every week. I truly appreciated every relationship that was formed and valued the time the residents spent helping form our projects. Seeing the passion the residents had for their community and neighborhood inspired us students to create impactful projects. (Jackson Longenbaugh)

> I had a great time with this project overall. I learned a lot about a great community and its people. This was a great learning experience and I gained so much out of it. The people of the community were so welcoming, and they represented the true definition of knowing your roots and never forgetting where you came from. I hope that I made half of the impact on their lives as they did on mine. It was truly a great time and I hope this isn't the end of me working and communicating with the Whitely community. (Ky'Lie Garland-Yates)

These last two observations are the most rewarding statements at the end of the course and, ultimately, confirm that projects of this kind do enrich educational experiences by immersing students in their local reality.

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Author Note

None of the authors have a conflict of interest. The project did not require approval from the Institutional Review Board of Ball State University since all the individuals involved in this project—professor, students, and community members—were not subjects of study, but coauthors who shared their materials and reflections. Correspondence concerning this article should be directed to Jörn Seemann, Department of Geography & Meteorology, Ball State University. Email: jseemann@bsu.edu

About the Authors

Evette L. Young is a proud native of Muncie, Indiana, community activist, entrepreneur, transformative life coach, educator, and creative artist in the Whitely neighborhood. She attended Muncie Central High School and studied health and human services at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana. Evette's commitment is further underscored by numerous certifications, awards, and recognitions for her exceptional civic leadership, a legacy passed down from her grandmother, Alice McIntosh-Kelly, a "change-maker" of Muncie in her own right.

Julius Anderson is a community activist, a former president of the Whitely Neighborhood Association, a former Muncie School Board member, a three-time city councilman for Muncie, and a retired residence life manager at Ball State University.

Cornelius Dollison is a past president of the Whitely Community Council and the Kiwanis Club of Muncie. He graduated from Muncie Central High School, attended Ball State University for vocational training in electrics and electronics, and worked as process engineer for General Motors. He served as a board member of the Black YMCA, Muncie Habitat for Humanity, and Black Expo of Indiana. Cornelius is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and recently received the Leadership in Civic Education and Public Service Award (together with his wife Mary) for his service to the Muncie community.

Mary Dollison graduated with a bachelor's and master's degree in education from Ball State University and started teaching at Longfellow School in the Whitely neighborhood in 1964. In 1987, she cofounded Motivate Our Minds (MOMs), a nonprofit community-based organization to educate and empower young children. As a lifetime community activist, she has worked with organizations such as the Whitely Neighborhood Association, the NAACP, the Martin Luther King Dream Team, and the Kiwanis Club. She has received many awards for her service, including the Delaware County Personal Integrity Award presented by the Committee for Integrity Enhancement.

Robert Dorbritz III obtained his BS in geography at Ball State University in 2024, with a concentration in GIScience.

Ky'Lie Garland-Yates obtained her BA in geography at Ball State University in 2023, with a concentration in meteorology and GIScience and a minor in Spanish.

Judith Hill is a lifelong resident in the Whitely neighborhood, where, in her early life, she went to Longfellow School and through segregation. Before her retirement, she had worked as a staff technologist at Ball State Memorial Hospital for 37 years.

Bessie Jordan is a retired welfare care worker and longtime resident of Whitely, where she attended Longfellow School. She received a BA in social work from Ball State University in 1981.

Jackson Longenbaugh is currently the assistant city planner for the City of Warsaw, Indiana. For the community project, his research focused on the history and impact of churches located in the Whitely neighborhood. He received his bachelor's degree in geography with a concentration in GIScience and a minor in urban planning from Ball State University in 2022.

Khamari Murphy is a Whitely resident and currently a junior at Delta High School, Muncie, Indiana. He is deeply committed to his community, which is evident through his active involvement in diverse organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), and 4-H. He has received the Devin Carter Jr. Award for youth innovation and the 2024 Forward Visions Music Scholarship.

Frank Scott Sr. is the president of the Whitely Community Council not-for-profit organization. He also serves as president of the Whitely Neighborhood Association, on the Greater Muncie Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Delaware County NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Board, and the Muncie Cradle to Career Leadership Team. He received his associate of science degree in human services from Ivy Tech Community College and received the Ivy Tech Distinguished Alumni Award in 2018.

Morgan C. Toschlog is a GIS analyst at Tallgrass Energy in Lakewood, Colorado. Her research interests focus on mapping qualitative data, specifically how to code interview-based data and

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Evolution of a University–School Partnership: Suicide and Substance Misuse Prevention

Madison E. Antunez, Monica Nandan, and Stephen Z. Emmons

Abstract

This article follows the early-stage planning, implementation, and evaluation of a university-school-based partnership (USBP) between a large Carnegie-designated doctoral research institution (R2) and local high schools in Georgia. The purpose of the partnership was to implement suicide and substance use prevention efforts over 3 years. USBPs are mutually beneficial to partners and provide opportunities for positive change within the larger community. Two evidence-based prevention programs were implemented: Sources of Strength (SOS) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The authors describe the development and evolution of the partnership as well as the prevention programs with underserved student populations, lessons learned over the 3 years, and early-stage positive implications for sustaining the project.

Keywords: university-school partnerships, prevention, youth, sources of strength, mindfulness

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The establishment of university–school partnerships yields significant mutual benefits, enhancing both educational practices within schools and pedagogical approaches at universities. Such collaborations not only enrich the academic and social environments for school students by incorporating evidence-based interventions and innovative teaching methods, but also provide university faculty and students with valuable, real-world learning opportunities that inform research and teaching (Dani et al., 2020; Farah, 2019; Myende, 2019). For these partnerships to be beneficial, all parties need to have shared goals, mutual trust, good communication, and frequent evaluations to assess partnership effectiveness. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in establishing partnerships between educational institutions, driven by the recognition of mutually beneficial outcomes. These collaborations often enhance resource sharing, foster innovation, and improve educational offerings, ultimately benefiting both types of institutions involved (Bosma et al., 2010; Perkins, 2015; Record, 2012; Swick et al., 2021). This type of university–school-based partnership (USBP) enables the introduction of new opportunities in schools and universities that would otherwise not be possible, and they can create positive change within the larger community.

Specifically, in the field of substance misuse and suicide prevention, such partnerships could bring prevention programs to schools, funded and operated by the university and community members. Prevention programs are popular for preventing suicide, as well as illicit substance use and unprescribed medication use (ISUUMU) for school-aged students. Although there is limited research on the effectiveness of prevention programs among school-aged students, health and physical education curricula incorporate such content (Duncan et al., 2019; Wong, 2016). Establishing prevention programs using USBP allows each entity to plan, implement, and evaluate such programs.

Evidence-based prevention programs are designed to increase school students' knowledge about the adverse effects of ISUUMU and to build alternative recreational practices and stress reduction skills (Duncan et al., 2019; Lee & Henry, 2022). Additionally, these programs provide a safe

space for students to express themselves while learning about the norms of substance use. For instance, The Life Skills Training Program is a 3-year prevention program based on the social influence model utilizing normative education, resistance skills, peer leaders, advertising, and a public commitment to not engage in ISUUMU (Hart & Ksir, 2018). This evidence-based program demonstrates long-term positive results for preventing ISUUMU among students.

USBP exists for various purposes but often provides specific curricula and skills development among school-aged students. This project describes a partnership between a large Carnegie-designated doctoral research institution (R2) and local high schools focused on ISUUMU prevention efforts over 3 years. Some existing prevention strategies teach students how to resist consuming illicit substances and make healthy decisions, especially when experiencing life stressors (Feinberg et al., 2022). Peer-led prevention strategies have changed adolescents' behaviors toward ISUUMU and reduced the incidence of substance use among students (Akkuş et al., 2016; Demirezen et al., 2019; Trucco, 2020).

Context

In the past 20 years in the United States, illicit substance use and suicide rates have steadily increased. In 2020, 1.2 million people attempted suicide and 45,979 people died by suicide (Stone et al., 2023). In young adults aged 10–24 years, suicide is the third leading cause of death (CDC, 2022). Similarly, youth have experienced an increase in substance use and overdose deaths. Overdose rates in 2020 increased by 49% among people aged 15–24, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 14.3% of high school students had misused prescription drugs (Jones et al., 2020).

At the county level (in a Southeastern state in the U.S.), a recent community health assessment report gathered data between 2016 and 2020 and found that suicide was the leading cause of death for young adults aged 15–19 in Cobb County (Cobb & Douglas Public Health, 2022). Additionally, in this same county, the emergency room visit rate for young adults ages 15–17 was 325 per 100,000 people, with a suicide death rate of 12 per 100,000 for this age group. Addressing substance and drug overdose rates for young adults ages 15–17, 475 per 100,000 were hospitalized for drug over-

doses in one county. In the same county, 7% of middle and high school students reported having at least one drink of alcohol and 13.4% reported using any tobacco product within the last 30 days. In the same population, 3.5% of students reported misusing prescription drugs (e.g., painkillers, sedatives, stimulants) within the last 30 days.

Particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, a national effort to support youth mental health has increased. Although research on the effectiveness of primary prevention programs remains limited, existing studies indicate encouraging outcomes among children and adolescents. These findings suggest that early intervention can mitigate risk factors and foster resilience in young populations (Compton et al., 2019; Milroy et al., 2015). Research also supports the the efficacy of university-school-based partnerships (Cress et al., 2020; Farah, 2019; Griffiths et al., 2022; Kang & Mayor, 2021; Myende, 2019; Provinzano et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2021). Several prevention programs have been implemented by university partners in schools across the country to aid in substance misuse prevention, and common themes seen across successful partnerships include frequent communication and trust among members, collaborative goal setting, and evaluation of the partnership.

Case Study

The College of Health and Human Services, part of a Carnegie-classified research institution, secured funding from a state agency to collaborate with one local high school and an alternative high/middle school to implement prevention programs. The College-Adopt-A-School Program (CASP)—funded by the State Opioid Response initiative—is a partnership between this university and local high schools to implement prevention programs focused on ISUUMU. The partnership was built on trust among the principal investigators (PIs), two community-based consultants working closely with the schools even before the receipt of the grant, and the school administrators. The schools identified had a higher rate of students experiencing mental health challenges, vis-à-vis other schools in the county, and the administrators were receptive to USBP.

Evolution of Implementing CASP Over Three Years

The CASP is in its 3rd year of implementation, and the model is as follows: University

faculty serves as the PI and project manager; a total of 27 college students from different majors during the first 2 years, and later only from one graduate program (social work), were recruited and trained in prevention models; and two consultants, professionals adept in working with young people, were recruited to train college students in the prevention models and supervise their implementation concurrently in the two schools. Most college students in the program were female (20), and 12 were from African American or Latinx backgrounds. These demographics matched the demographics of the school students. During the summer, college students applied for the position, completed an interview with one of the PIs, and subsequently were trained in the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), Mindfulness–Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and Sources of Strength (SOS) programs. They also completed the mandatory reporter training and were equally divided between the two schools (one regular high school and one alternative high school), under the supervision of the consultants (one consultant for each program), where they met on alternate weeks with school students to implement SPF.

During the first year, only SPF was implemented in the two schools. The main components of the SPF model included assessment, capacity, planning, implementation, and evaluation, with the two overarching principles of sustainability and cultural competence (SAMHSA, 2019). During the assessment stage of the SPF model, students described their challenges and coping strategies. Based on the yearlong planning stage of the SPF (2019–2020), school students, collaboratively with the consultants and the college students, identified two additional evidence–based prevention strategies for implementation in the following academic year. The evidence–based prevention strategy (SAMHSA) chosen at one school was Sources of Strength (SOS); Mindfulness–Based Stress Reduction (MBSR, designed at Johns Hopkins University) was chosen at the second school. The two consultants were trained in these models at the end of the first academic year.

In the second academic year, new college students were recruited, and all were trained in SPF; half were trained in SOS and placed in one high school; the other half were trained in MBSR and placed in the second school—an alternative high school.

Due to the COVID–19 pandemic, halfway through the academic year all meetings with school students were switched to Zoom, where participation by these students suffered due to various reasons. During the 2nd year, one of the partnerships with the high school abruptly ended, and another school had to be immediately identified. Based on the relationship between one of the PIs and another high school, a partnership was developed during the summer after several meetings with the key administrators, and SOS was approved for implementation with a student population that was vulnerable to academic and emotional distress. During the 3rd year, both programs were implemented in an alternative school with new school and college students.

One of the main goals of the partnership and the prevention programs was for school-aged students to handle their stressors more constructively instead of turning to ISUUMU or having "run-ins with the law." The goal for the university students was to implement the prevention programs in the schools after building rapport and trusting relations with the school students, model positive coping behaviors, and mentor school students to use constructive stress management tools.

High School 1: Traditional High School

At this school, the SOS prevention program was introduced during the 2nd year of implementation, led by college students who played a key role in its execution. Built on the peer–leader model, Sources of Strength (SOS) is an evidence–based program for preventing suicides and ISUUMU among young people. Peer leaders among school students, more than adults, are effective in delivering content to youth, and under their leadership school students are more likely to apply and practice the principles of SOS (Akkuş et al., 2016). SOS uses a color wheel to assist students in identifying over eight different types of protective factors in their lives so that when they encounter challenges and stress, they can mobilize and invoke the appropriate protective factors (e.g., close friend, faith and prayers) to assist them in navigating the difficult situation.

Sources of Strength trainers first trained a small group of school students as peer leaders in the SOS model. These students were self–selected (87% female, 96% Black and African American, and 4% Latinx) since they were already engaged in planning

prevention strategies for another project. Subsequently, every other week college students met with a consultant to plan the meeting with peer leaders, and on alternate weeks they met with peer leaders to plan activities to implement SOS across the school. At the planning meetings, roles, goals for the session content, and details of the session were discussed. The biweekly meetings with peer leaders included check-ins and icebreaker activities, discussion on mental health, ISUUMU discussions led by the consultant, and, to conclude the meeting, planning outreach to engage other students in the school with the SOS strategies. During this check-in time, peer leaders offered to support those students who self-disclosed their challenges. After completing the check-in, peer leaders would break out into groups to work on outreach activities to spread the word about SOS to the rest of the student body. During this time, a consultant and college students assisted peer leaders with their outreach projects. These meetings normally lasted 1–1.5 hours. After the biweekly sessions concluded with the peer leaders, a consultant and the college students would debrief about the session and discuss what needed to be completed with the outreach projects by the next session.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, recruiting additional peer leaders and implementing impactful SOS strategies across the school became a major challenge. Additionally, by midyear, the school experienced administration changes that led to the loss of trusting relationships that had been established between a consultant and the leaders. Notwithstanding several meetings between a consultant, one PI, and the school administration to work through the SOS program requirements and maintenance of the partnership, the partnership could not be continued. Fortunately, the peer leaders who had been trained in SOS decided to continue implementing elements of the program, even though they were unable to get support from the college students and the consultants.

High School 2: Traditional High School

With the loss of partnership with the first school, a consultant and the PI had to identify other potential partners in their ecosystem. Since this PI had a strong relationship with another school system, they were invited to work with a select group of ninth graders (30% female, 75% Black or African American, 10% Latinx, 15% White),

with a large segment that had English as second language (ESL). The school administrator leading the student success center was very receptive to implementing SOS with this group. These students received a short training on the SPF process and were explained the rationale for selecting the SOS program. The SOS program maintained the same format as in the first school—biweekly planning meetings with a consultant and the college students, and biweekly meetings with school students/peer leaders.

High School 3: Alternative School

At this school, the MBSR program was implemented in Year 2 of the grant. This program aims to improve students' mental, physical, and spiritual health by keeping them grounded in the present moment. This model was specifically chosen by the school students, college students, and the consultant because mindfulness meditation offers students who often have very high stress levels (all had parole officers; 20% female; 85% Black or African American; 15% Latinx) another option besides fight or flight during difficult situations. Mindfulness meditation helps calm the brain to allow for clearer thinking and more positive behavioral responses. Anecdotal evidence from adolescents suggests positive outcomes when implementing mindfulness practices (Eppler-Wolff et al., 2019). To effectively implement this evidence-based intervention, a consultant and college students met biweekly with the alternative school students, with meetings usually lasting 1–1.5 hours. After the meetings with school students, a consultant and the college students debriefed on what went well and what could be improved, as well as planned the next meeting with school students. These meetings normally lasted from 30 min to 1 hour.

The MBSR is a 15-week curriculum where students build mindfulness skills each week. Some mindfulness techniques taught across these 15 weeks include body-scan meditations, focusing on the breath, meditation with difficult emotions, building equanimity, mindful listening, and journaling. Each biweekly session began with a check-in to ask students about their current stress levels and if they have been practicing meditation or practicing journaling. Sometimes these activities occur at the beginning of the session to help students get centered before they enter a mindfulness session.

Data Collection

The state department that funded the project informed the university that no Institutional Review Board approval was required because the evaluation data collected was for state use only. The state department recruited an external evaluator to design the data collection tools that were administered in the schools as pre- and posttests for SPF, SOS, and MBSR, as well as questions for interviewing college students. The external evaluator reported all the findings to the grantor only. The evaluator also conducted focus groups with the school and college students to capture their experiences during the academic year.

Both college and school students trained in SPF received pre- and posttest assessment tools to measure their understanding of the SPF process. After completing this assessment following the first year, the project moved into implementing the two mentioned evidence-based prevention programs. At the beginning of each academic year, school students were administered a pretest for either the SOS or the MBSR program, depending on the school. At the end of the academic year, they completed a posttest on these interventions. Due to COVID-19 and implementation challenges (administration changes, school population turnover, etc.), some data collection was hampered. However, sufficient data were collected throughout the implementation of both evidence-based prevention programs.

Sources of Strength (SOS)

School students completed a peer leader pretest before being trained in the model. The peer leader pretest–posttest measures students' opinions about trusted adults in school, their access to mental health resources, and their knowledge of ISUUMU. It also inquires about the resources known to them, particularly related to suicide prevention, reporting suicidal ideation, and resources to prevent illicit substance use.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

At the beginning of the semester, each student completed a mindfulness pretest, and at the end of the calendar or academic year, they completed the posttest. Students were also invited to participate in an online focus group with the evaluator, to share their experiences in their program, as well

as describe its impact in their lives. These results were shared with the grantor.

During the biweekly meetings with students involving the implementation of MBSR strategies, school students completed a regular check-in exercise, followed by a pretest for gauging their stress levels before completing the meditation curriculum and practice for the day. The stress test consisted of a 1–10 Likert scale, with 1 denoting little or no stress and 10 denoting extreme stress. The stress test was collected with pencil and paper and later entered into an Excel spreadsheet for evaluation. In the 3rd year of implementation, the stress test was collected online through a Google form that was exported into an Excel spreadsheet. Two or more college students cofacilitated each session with the school students by implementing the curriculum they had learned from a consultant.

After completing the meditation, students completed a posttest to gauge stress levels after engaging in mindfulness; on some occasions, based on the curriculum for the day, students would also have a journal prompt. Subsequently, college students would lead the school students in a focusing activity. These activities consisted of yoga, origami, painting, coloring, or having open discussions about what the students needed to talk about. Sometimes these activities occurred at the beginning of the session to help students to get centered before they entered the mindfulness session.

Student turnover was high at the alternative school due to students either returning to the main campus, relocating, graduating, or (rarely) getting into trouble with the law. Consequently, all students in the program completed the pretest, but only a handful completed the posttest.

Findings and Discussion

An external evaluator analyzed the data that was collected in all three schools before and after the training and interventions and reported the findings to the grantor. The evaluator also interviewed the college students to learn about their experiences and the impact the program had on them as adult mentors; these findings likewise were reported to the grantor. The primary data collected from school students for this study came from pretest–posttest results addressing semester or yearlong SOS and MBSR programs and couldn't be reported

in this article; therefore, this section summarizes some of the key elements noted in the biweekly meeting notes from each of the meetings over 3 years. One coauthor who read all the meeting notes identified two major themes: experiences of school students and lessons learned about the evolutionary nature of USBP.

School Students' Experiences

In the alternative school where MBSR was implemented, results from pre-post stress tests that were administered before and after each session demonstrated a reduction in student stress levels following each of the mindfulness activities. Furthermore, most students in the program continued to stay in school and didn't get into trouble with the law or their parole officer. If a student did get into trouble with the law, the juvenile justice judge released the student if they would continue attending the biweekly MBSR program. Additionally, during regular check-ins with the students, several shared how they used mindfulness strategies and journaling after school to handle stress in healthier ways and not turn to substances or violence. Consistency in the attendance and mentorship provided by college students was very impactful for several school students.

One major limitation in the data collection in this school was that a certain percentage of students were not consistent in their attendance due to the reasons mentioned earlier. The biweekly program often had some new students throughout the school year, but the results remained the same regardless of how long the school student had been attending the MBSR program—an overall trend of decreased stress levels after students received the mindfulness meditation session.

Many studies have similarly reported on the effectiveness of MBSR programming: It reduces depressive symptom levels (Zhang et al., 2019); helps with the treatment of anxiety symptoms in young people to promote emotional health (Zhou et al., 2020); and it can also improve physical health, mental health, and quality of life of adolescents (Lin et al., 2019). MBSR programs also encourage nonjudgmental awareness, improve cognitive performance, increase self-efficacy and individuation, and help individuals choose a healthy life, ultimately resulting in improved mental health outcomes (Sarvandani et al., 2021).

In the two high schools where the SOS program was implemented, school students regularly shared what resources they had individually used during stressful situations and challenges, and whom they felt comfortable talking to within their ecosystems. Student peer leaders developed strong leadership skills over the year, gaining confidence in recognizing when their peers were struggling, and sharing SOS resources to help them through the challenges. They gained skills to develop and design prevention strategies that were implemented throughout the school with the help of college students and consultants. Based on notes taken at each meeting, it was evident that college students were taking turns cofacilitating MBSR and SOS, as well as activities with school students surrounding these two programs. These notes also indicated that college students successfully built rapport with new students who joined the program in the academic year. The external evaluator continues to collect quantitative and qualitative data from school and college students for reporting to the grantor.

College Students' Experiences

College students significantly enhanced their ability to interact with school-aged populations, particularly regarding sensitive topics such as substance misuse and suicide prevention. Similar to Griffiths et al. (2022) research, many of these college students had prior experience working with youth, and this partnership allowed them to refine their communication and intervention strategies. Discussions were specifically tailored to address the needs of school students within the context of prevention, expanding the college students' understanding of engaging in meaningful, impactful dialogue.

Biweekly preparatory meetings were critical in building the students' confidence. These meetings focused on evidence-based models and techniques, providing a structured environment where the college students could practice group skills, team building, and trust-building exercises with their peers. Practicing in a controlled and supportive setting gave them the confidence to deliver these interventions effectively in schools. College students developed their ability to facilitate group activities by participating in these biweekly preparatory meetings. These sessions not only helped them plan for school interventions but also allowed them to pivot effectively based on the dynamic

needs or the "temperature" of the room. Through active participation, they learned to adjust their facilitation styles in real time to better meet the needs of the school students, enhancing their adaptability.

Social work students, in particular, noted that they had minimal exposure to prevention techniques during their formal coursework. However, by practicing these interventions over the course of a year, they felt increasingly confident in applying these strategies during their internships and anticipate incorporating them into their future work settings. Furthermore, using the SOS and MBSR curricula had a broader influence on the students. Several college students reported incorporating mindfulness into their daily routines and felt more equipped to handle stressful situations. This result highlights the value of experiential learning in helping students apply prevention techniques not only in professional settings but also in their personal lives, mirroring the findings of the research by Groulx et al. (2021).

For the college students involved, the partnership with school staff not only enhanced their practical skills but also deepened their understanding of the complex factors influencing youth behavior. Through their interactions, they recognized how school policies, family dynamics, peer relationships, and access to community resources significantly impact the success of prevention programs. This nuanced understanding helped foster greater empathy for the students they were working with, making their interventions more responsive to the actual needs of the youth.

Lastly, these experiences instilled a heightened sense of responsibility in college students. As they navigated these multifaceted challenges, they were better prepared to assume leadership and advocacy roles in their future careers. By developing a more holistic perspective on behavioral health prevention, the college students gained valuable insights that extended beyond the immediate context of their work, equipping them with more effective and community-oriented skills.

Evolutionary Nature of USBP

At the beginning of the partnership, several steps were taken to conduct an early-stage assessment of the school students' current coping strategies for stressful events. Based on this assessment, consultants, college students, and high school students identified potential evidence-based programs to implement in the schools. Involving school students in the selection and implementation process was important to ensure that they would engage with the program in the future. MBSR and SOS were finally selected for implementation in the schools. Literature also supports the inclusion of school students in the implementation of prevention programs (Akkuş et al., 2016). At the end of the first year's implementation of the two programs, evaluation was completed in one school but could not be completed in the second school due to changing administration. Notwithstanding a close relationship with the school, the program could not be continued. The new administration wanted to implement SOS as a top-down model instead of the "student-led" initiative that it was. In an effort to preserve the fidelity of SOS, the PI and a consultant decided to move the program to another high-need school. Other school–university partnerships have had to pivot to accommodate changes in administration (Eppler-Wolff et al., 2019; Swick et al., 2021) as well as modify the relationship due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Peña et al., 2022).

In the 2nd year of the partnership, assessments of students' coping strategies indicated that these programs needed to be modified to fit appropriately within the school's context, student culture and need, the COVID-19 pandemic, and to also support the transient nature of some of the program participants. Similar program modifications have been made in other school–university partnerships (Eppler-Wolff et al., 2019). Certain methods of implementation (e.g., providing printed copies of mindfulness curriculum; using paper/pencil to collect daily stress data) had to be discontinued due to students' cultural needs specifically with the alternative school population. By increasing the cultural responsiveness of implementers of the program, prevention programs can better meet the needs of, and increase support for, a diverse body of students (Adams, 2021; Groulx et al., 2021; Kang & Mayor, 2021). Findings from the project and literature support the inclusion of school students in the planning and implementation of prevention programs (Akkuş et al., 2016). School students in fact were included in implementing SOS, but not MBSR.

Recently, with the implementation of some state policies, prevention programs have

become more integral to the school curriculum. Consequently, SOS and MBSR programs are receiving greater administrative support, contributing to the sustainability of the project. The long-term impact of this project could be assessed with the State's Student Health Survey data that is collected yearly within all middle and high schools. The survey is anonymous and includes topics such as school climate and safety, peer and adult social support, mental health, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation. Finally, this project continues to provide college students with opportunities to work with school students and build their own interpersonal and group facilitation skills while creating a meaningful impact in the community.

Conclusion

Implementing a USBP does not follow a linear or predictable path, even when partners maintain strong working relationships. Consistent communication between college students, consultants, and school partners was critical for success. Regular engagement enabled sustained momentum and reinforced the partnerships, despite the unpredictable nature of school environments and student attendance. This variability necessitated that program facilitators stay flexible and adaptable in their approach to delivering prevention programs. Given the unique challenges faced by students in alternative schools, it is essential to intensify efforts in delivering prevention programs specifically tailored to their needs. A focused approach ensured that these students received the necessary support and interventions for their well-being. College students involved in the program enhanced their ability to address sensitive topics like substance misuse and suicide prevention, adapting to varying conditions in school environments. Additionally, they strengthened their group facilitation and leadership skills, as well as their capacity to collaborate effectively with diverse school staff, further deepening their empathy and understanding of youth.

In conclusion, the unpredictable nature of school environments suggests that a modular design for curriculum delivery—utilizing various time frames and formats, such as hybrid or online learning—could enhance reach and impact. To ensure the sustainability of prevention programs and support their expansion, a structured approach to data collection and impact assessment can be helpful. This approach should include both qualitative and quantitative data from school students and college facilitators to effectively monitor progress, identify challenges, and evaluate outcomes. Sharing feedback with key school administrators is important to demonstrate the impact as well as share implementation challenges, if any. In each subsequent year, designing strategies to address implementation problems will allow for real-time refinement of program elements. By prioritizing these strategies, partnerships can evolve to address emerging hurdles and foster lasting improvements in the well-being of students, particularly in underserved or high-need contexts. The authors would like to express their gratitude to the state organization for its continued funding of this project, despite challenges related to USBP and efforts to prevent ISUUMU.

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Community–Academic Partnerships Through Photovoice: The Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project

Jason B. McConnell and Jean A. Garrison

Abstract

This article speaks to the challenge of public land-grant universities addressing public need through community–academic partnerships and presents a case study to explain and illustrate these challenges. Included in this approach is the acknowledgment that as universities strive to bring the community perspective to their knowledge production, strong barriers remain. To address these challenges, we discuss our Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project, a research study that employs photovoice, a methodology well suited to inclusive participatory research, to amplify the voice of community members on matters of local concern. We offer insights gained through this work-in-progress, addressing opportunities and barriers to education, employment, and community resilience in Wyoming, as we reflect on early-stage assessments and pivot to the project's next steps. This article offers insight into the steps needed to develop more accessible methods for collaboration with the goal to build knowledge coproduction capacity through community–academic partnerships.

Keywords: photovoice, community-academic partnership, participatory action research, community resilience, community engagement

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Twenty-five years ago, community-engaged scholarship advocates such as Boyer (1990) and Gelmon et al. (1998), among others, argued that public universities should be engaged in work that addresses the public need. This community engagement approach informs the work of several prominent academic organizations, including the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities' (APLU) Commission on Economic and Community Engagement, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and its elective classification for community engagement (2020), and Campus Compact's Civic Action Plans (Torres, 2000); furthermore, it figures increasingly in federal grant opportunities emphasizing broader impacts. This widespread interest in community engagement reflects the conviction that the work of public institutions should develop through partnerships with communities to put their knowledge and skills to work to address today's most critical problems (APLU, n.d.; E Boyer, 1996; Campus Compact, n.d.; Carnegie Foundation, n.d., 2020; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Saltmarsh et al., 2009; Torres, 2000). Included in this approach is the acknowledgment that as universities strive to bring the community perspective to their knowledge production, strong barriers remain to including the community voice (see, for example, Janke et al., 2022; Strier & Schechter, 2016).

These circumstances lead us to ask two important questions. First, why does community engagement, and thus community-based partnerships, still seem to be an afterthought and on the fringe of mainstream academic activity? Also, how can researchers incorporate the community voice in their community-engaged partnership work?

Our research acknowledges that much progress has been made in community partnership work, but that institutional as well as

practical challenges remain for those who pursue this kind of community work and scholarship. From an institutional perspective, universities often categorize community engagement and partnership work as service, while dismissing related research as "unserious." Boyer (1990) recognized the problematic nature of this juxtaposition when he noted that this perspective emphasizes that service means "doing good" rather than doing serious scholarship. Community-engaged work is time consuming and based on labor-intensive relationship building. It must be perceived as relevant by the identified community and can be more challenging to assess and evaluate, all while also appealing to traditional academic audiences with expectations for rigorous and impactful research outcomes (Glassick et al., 1997; Simpson, 2000).

In this article, we present a case study of the development and implementation of the first two phases of our Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project (the Profiles Project), a photovoice project whose focus on community-based participatory research provides a unique mechanism to amplify underrepresented voices. The Wallop Civic Engagement Program, the project's primary sponsor, has developed reciprocal partnerships with stakeholders in government, civil society, education, and more. Thus, the project commenced with the intention of cultivating reciprocal partnerships among the communities we serve (with mixed results across different phases of the project, as described below). This project represents a commitment to the generation, exchange, and application of mutually beneficial and socially useful knowledge and practices developed through active partnerships between the academy and the community. Thus, by design, this project is a commitment to programs rooted in scholarship and evidence-based practices, addressing larger societal issues (as identified by the communities we serve) as well as projects that link campus teaching, learning, and research to community needs (Dunifon et al., 2004; Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Torres, 2000).

The Profiles Project adopted this lens by focusing on public challenges identified by state government, namely barriers and opportunities to success in education, employment, and community resilience in comparison to our neighboring states. The project employs photovoice—a qualitative research methodology designed to capture people's perspectives of their lives through photography and narrative to gather underrepresented community voices through pictures and narratives they provide. This article seeks to reflect the evolving roadmap of the process for completion of the first four phases of this photovoice project, including its twists and turns, responses to challenges and opportunities and impacts, which should contribute to the dialogue on qualitative community–academic partnership work (Bloomgarden, 2017).

The article begins by defining the role of partnership research in the context of the University's land-grant mission. This is followed by a discussion of the community–academic partnership research approach and best practices in community engagement, which we see as largely compatible with our institution's land-grant roots. Following that, we present the photovoice case study reflecting the four phases of the project, noting the successes and challenges of case design, development and redevelopment, and findings and lessons learned as we attempt to bridge the gap between the needs of academic research, practitioners, and the public, which are often highly differentiated.

Defining the Role of the Wyoming Land–Grant University in Partnership Research

Wyoming is the least populated of the 50 states, at 581,381 people as of July 2022 (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Wyoming is thus one of only two remaining "Frontier" states—those with a population density of fewer than six people per square mile (University of Wyoming, 2023a, p. 4). The rurality of the state, combined with the northern latitude mountainous climate with vast open spaces between communities, contributes to a culture of self-reliance that manifests itself in many areas of life. The state's boom and bust cycles, tied to extractive industries such as mining and oil and gas production, create a volatile economic pattern, but one that has also contributed to the perception that advanced educational achievement is simply not necessary to secure a high-paying career. This dynamic is reflected in the fact that Wyoming boasts the second highest high school graduation rate in the nation (94%) yet is 43rd among the states for bachelor's degree attainment (27% of people over the age of 25; University of Wyoming, 2023a, p. 4).

As Wyoming's only four-year public university and a land-grant institution, the University of Wyoming (UW) is uniquely positioned to serve the state. Building from previous strategic plans, one of the central objectives in UW's *Strategic Plan 2023+* includes "to engage with and serve the state of Wyoming" (University of Wyoming, 2023b). In April 2023, UW completed its application to the Carnegie Foundation to be designated as a Carnegie community-engaged campus with the goal to evaluate its work and to address questions on best practices, as well as when, how, and why to foster community-engaged work across the institution (University of Wyoming, 2023b). In January 2024, the University received recognition as one of the country's 368 institutions designated with the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.

Specifically, the Carnegie Foundation (2020) definition for community engagement emphasizes "collaboration" between higher education institutions and their larger communities in a context of partnership and reciprocity valuing the mutual exchange of knowledge and resources. For its part, the APLU (n.d.) defines the economic development and community engagement missions similarly, emphasizing that public research universities are engaged in their communities, tackling societal challenges, to develop collaborative efforts focusing on imagining and then realizing a shared vision for healthier and more engaged citizens, thriving economies, and other outcomes that lead to a better tomorrow. The engaged campus recognizes that its knowledge creation cannot be separated from the public purpose and aspirations of the community itself.

Building from UW's land-grant mission, the Wallop Civic Engagement Program evolved in the context of this institutional prioritization on community engagement and from the start adopted the Carnegie definition of "community engagement" for our outreach, engagement, and research projects. It also has evolved in the context of the growing tradition of community partner research.

Community Partner Research and Work of the Community-Engaged Campus

Situating the Community Partner Research

In this journal in 2022, Janke et al. completed a comprehensive scoping review of community–academic partnerships to define the criteria for community engagement grounded in the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement. Their review provides a data set that maps the partnership literature that helps to situate this study and others of its kind. They conclude that scholarship on community partner research reinforces the importance of including the community voice, but also that more work needs to be done on various aspects of these partnerships. Janke et al. (2022) differentiated between community engagement partnerships and community-placed or community-focused organizations to demonstrate the broad scope of community-based research that has been done. From this review, we can see that those who engage in community-based research projects build their work from reciprocal partnerships. For example, work by Davis et al. (2006) and Howard et al. (2010) discussed how partnerships facilitate direct interaction with targeted audiences and thus access to the field. Dentato et al. (2010) and Lo and Bayer (2003), among others, discussed how community partners from a wide variety of fields help with important research goals such as data collection, hypothesis testing, and theory development. Janke et al. recommended using a single term for this work, "community–academic partnership" (CAP), to unite multiple research disciplines and to provide an agreed-upon conceptual definition of this collaborative process (pp. 5–6).

Even as institutions of higher education show an ongoing interest in building long-lasting partnerships with the communities they serve, scholars continue to identify persistent challenges to this type of work. Building on Gelmon et al.'s (1998) call for more robust research on community engagement partnerships, two decades later Bloomgarden (2017) still described the partnership literature as "woefully thin" (p. 21) and focused on the context of partnerships as they relate to student learning and other academic priorities. He called for the "development of robust scholarship focused on the where, how, when, and why that community engagement partnerships contribute to or detract from community priorities" (cited in Janke et al., 2022, p. 6). Until the partnership itself, and specifically the community voice, receives the attention it deserves as the context within which this vein of work is possible, we will get only a peek at partnerships rather than having a robust description or discussion of their structure as well as how they serve community-identified needs.

By integrating the best practices of community engagement and practical steps of the partnership work, we can begin to address the challenges that Janke et al. (2022), among others, discussed, which include the growing commitment to include community stakeholders as partners in research (to provide firsthand knowledge and insight to develop these collaborative processes), facilitate interpersonal factors (e.g., building trust and respect among partners), and address hindering operational factors such as the significant time commitment such partnerships require. Pellecchia et al. (2018) noted these community–academic partnerships are critical for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices in community settings as well as providing guidance about how to develop, support, and nurture community partnerships (see also Strier & Schechter, 2016). These dynamics are important to the evaluation of the effectiveness of collaborative partner involvement.

Our case study attempts a modest response to Bloomgarden's (2017) call, by unabashedly self-assessing our attempts at community engagement and community participatory research. The first step in this effort is to explain how community engagement practice serves as an integral step to partnership research.

Integrating Community Engagement Practices Into Partnership Research

On the community engagement side of the coin, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2; n.d.) Spectrum of Public Participation provides "best practice" guidance for its practitioners that also provides a roadmap for the scholarship on partnerships as well. The five-point spectrum describes general modes of public participation in democratic decision making on a continuum of increasing community influence. The public's role in public participation processes ranges from (1) informing on one side of the spectrum, followed by (2) consulting and (3) involving, to (4) collaborating with and (5) empowering community partners as more intensive modes of public participation. This five-point spectrum can be adapted to assist with determining the level of influence of community partners in campus work, including research, teaching, and service missions, depending on the community or stakeholder's role in the engagement. Ultimately, the goal is to have community partners as codevelopers of projects.

The lesson to draw from the IAP2 best practices for engagement is that engagement professionals

> require professional agility and intellectual flexibility to adapt to the specific (and often specialist) nature of varying projects and recognize that community and stakeholder roles will also alter depending on the required level of engagement. (International Association for Public Participation Australasia, 2016, as cited in International Association for Public Participation, n.d.)

A fundamental underpinning of the IAP2 spectrum is to define what scholars mean by "community voice" as an aspect of practice and scholarship.

The IAP2 spectrum seeks to ensure genuine community partner participation by adding a "promise to the public" for each type of participation. There is a normative quality to this work for scholars such as Beaulieu et al. (2018), who defined engaged scholarship as working in "ways that will build mutually beneficial and reciprocal bridges between university activity and civil society" ("Engaged Scholarship Schema," para. 1). For Judith Ramaley (2019), and this article, it is a call to address more specifically what we mean by the plethora of ways we can bring forth "community voice" and specifically how we can bring forth underrepresented, marginalized, and disenfranchised voices through our scholarship (see Strier & Schechter, 2016).

Therefore, we used an a priori protocol, informed by key concepts in community engagement and CAP work, which was updated iteratively as the project progressed. By returning to the IAP2 five-point spectrum, discussed above, we recognize that scholars can orient their projects through basic questions about their program and research goals, objectives, and outcomes that are relevant for all types of participatory research. This approach helps to define "the community" as well as best practices in program and participatory research. At the University of Wyoming, one contributor to this project authored a toolkit for community-engaged work for the UW Office of Engagement and Outreach with the IAP2 steps in mind. Toolkit steps included clarifying research objectives, linking these objectives to purpose of the audience to be served,

involving community partners in all stages of the planning process, and building an evaluation and assessment plan from the start. The case study on the Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project outlined in the next section is motivated by democratic deliberation often lacking marginalized voices. Photovoice offers an opportunity to address that shortcoming by amplifying those voices through partnerships between researchers and the community. Yet, as Pellecchia et al. (2018) and Strier and Schechter (2016) have observed, the complexity of coproduced academic research, which includes identifying, implementing, and sustaining evidence–based practices in community–academic partnerships, makes this practice difficult. Advancing the science of CAP calls for learning from others how to develop, support, nurture, and maintain community partnerships—a challenge keenly felt by our project, as described in detail below. The implementation strategies referenced above identified as most relevant to CAP's focus are identifying barriers and facilitators to implementation, as well as providing mechanisms for feedback and auditing the process.

Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project

Project Overview

In keeping with a community–academic partnership approach, the Profiles in Wyoming Resilience Research Project attempted to gather underrepresented community perspectives from a broad range of citizen and stakeholder voices through pictures and narratives they provide, which can be used to develop profiles of our communities, share their stories, and better inform state and local programming (Strier & Schechter, 2016). We have sought to understand better how Wyomingites perceive barriers and opportunities (Wang & Burris, 1997) to success in academic achievement (Means et al., 2019), employment (Power et al., 2014), and community resilience (Ozanne et al., 2013). Yet, as described below, the best laid plans do succumb to practicalities, from time to time. We found the IAP2 lesson to be true—we needed professional agility and flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances as the project evolved.

By capturing Wyomingites' experiences, in their own voices, we hoped to add rich context to macrolevel and microlevel economic and behavioral data (Downey & Anyaegbunam, 2010) that inform Wyoming state and local government policy, support Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP) goals and the Wyoming Strategy to Survive, Drive, and Thrive (Office of Governor Mark Gordon, n.d.). Specifically, our project speaks to the WIP objectives of developing a "resilient workforce and economy" through "increasing collaborations between state entities and ultimately local partners" (Wyoming Innovation Partnership, n.d.). Pursuant to the "Drive" phase of the governor's initiative, we examine three "problem areas impacting Wyoming's resilience and vitality and impeding Wyoming's growth in the future" (Office of Governor Mark Gordon, n.d., para. 3): education, employment, and community resilience. By "education," we mean a person's journey as a student that begins prekindergarten but stretches on through high school and perhaps beyond. By "employment," we mean those opportunities people have to gain paid work. By "community resilience," we mean that quality that allows our communities to not only survive hard times but also to drive forward and thrive in good times.

Thus, a key objective of the project is to encourage community dialogue. By focusing on subject matter areas already identified by Governor Mark Gordon and other state policymakers as critical to the future vitality of Wyoming, with this project we seek to bring in the community voice to this research and thus aim to contribute to efforts to identify solutions to the state's pressing problems—"big ideas with long–term impacts" (Office of Governor Mark Gordon, n.d., para. 4). Recognizing that many residents feel disconnected from the policy process, we employ photovoice as a means of amplifying marginalized voices, who seek to be heard.

Photovoice is a participatory research methodology that empowers participants to engage in meaningful dialogue about their community through photography and rich description (Kramer et al., 2013). Since its development in the 1990s by Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice has been successfully utilized to explore an array of issues, including those surrounding life in rural communities (Downey & Anyaegbunam, 2010), homelessness (Peterson et al., 2012), access to health care (Catalani et al., 2012), access to education (Means et al., 2019), and

the travails of life in a "boom-and-bust" economy (Mayan et al., 2011). With this rich research record in mind, the methodology is uniquely well suited to investigate life in the nation's least populated state, which faces those very challenges, among others.

Project aims were twofold: (1) traditional research aimed at addressing key research questions and (2) gathering and sharing data to empower Wyoming communities to help each other, using geographic information systems (GIS) technology to provide dynamic access to qualitative data, on a persistent platform, in a format useful to constituents, statewide policymakers, Wyoming communities, businesses, and researchers, while identifying ways to work collaboratively to overcome adversity. Pursuant to those goals, the authors partnered with the Wyoming Geographic Information Science Center (WyGISC) to develop an integrated cyberinfrastructure to facilitate data capture, storage, sharing, and visualization. WyGISC developed an ASP.NET C# web API, which provides an interface to the backend SQL server relational database using the Umbraco content management system. The API endpoints support reading, writing, and validating user-uploaded information from multiple user interfaces. An interactive, web-based map application was built using ESRI Experience Builder (EEB) platform in which we have embedded the customized map into our Umbraco website (https://surveys.wygisc.org/profiles-in-wyoming-resilience). At first blush, this element might seem an extraneous addition to an admittedly complex project. However, expanding community participatory research beyond the typical small-*n* confines of qualitative research requires leveraging both available technologies and GIS technology that is pervasive in contemporary society. This element also made our initial results readily available to our partners, participants, and the public.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured, pursuant to institutional expectations, to assure safe and ethical interactions between the research team and community partners. IRB approved a protocol whereby participants would submit electronic image files with descriptions of the same, pursuant to prompts related to our projects' three related topics: education, employment, and community resilience. The protocol also described the use of community forums to gather feedback on emergent themes, consistent with best practices in the photovoice method and pursuant to the community engagement research goal of including the "community voice."

Evolution of the Profiles Project: Design, Implementation, and Initial Findings

The project developed in four stages, as the research plan evolved in light of unexpected challenges: (1) October–December 2021: developed objectives, identified partners for communicating the project, and identified participant solicitation strategy; (2) January–March 15, 2022: strategic communication of project and solicitation of participants utilizing partner organizations contacts, including biweekly webinars; (3) March 15–June 15, 2022: revised solicitation strategy with direct presentations utilizing partners, classes, and Qualtrics contract; and (4) July 2022–February 2023: identified key themes and conducted community forums. Across these stages, we utilized an evaluation protocol, which allowed the project to adjust to challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to bring community voices more centrally to the project.

Phase 1—Developing the Participant Solicitation Strategy

In conceptualizing natural partners for this type of work, some organizations were more obvious than others. Statewide goals identified by both the governor and legislature were natural starting points, as we identified subjects of inquiry. Although some urgent needs were readily apparent during the pandemic, other long-term needs presented persistent challenges to the state (Office of Governor Mark Gordon, n.d.). Similar insight was derived from the Wyoming Business Council (2021), specifically in the context of the state's business environment and the potential economic diversification from extractive industries, which have constituted much of Wyoming's economic activity historically, to other opportunities such as tourism. Based on these works, and consistent with the governor's priorities, our team settled on three foci for the Profiles Project: education, employment, and community resilience. Within these contexts, we would explore perceptions of both opportunities for success and barriers preventing it.

With our three topics in mind, the research team set about identifying and reaching out

to potential participants through more than four dozen stakeholder organizations across the state. For example, contact was made with groups such as the Wyoming Business Council (WBC) and Wyoming Economic Development Association (WEDA), local governmental entities, civil society, and civic organizations such as Wyoming Community Foundation and Rotary International, among others, that each serve established constituencies whose interests aligned with one or more of our topics. UW offices in the Wyoming Business Network and UW Extension, which has offices in every Wyoming county and the Wind River Indian Reservation, played an integral role in identifying potential participants. Our research team also identified other stakeholder organizations active in the state, whose endeavors intersected with at least one of our research topics, and yet were not already identified by any of the lists above. Examples here included local economic development organizations and state-level arts and humanities councils.

Outreach to these organizations progressed through preexisting relationships between the organizations and codirectors of the project. This outreach was aimed at taking advantage of preexisting relationships and developing the new partnerships needed to identify both community need, within the scope of our project, and likely participants who would be willing to share their insight into community issues surrounding education, employment, and community resilience. As described below, some partnerships revealed themselves to be more fruitful than others, precipitating the evolution of the project.

Phase 2—Soliciting Participants Through Partnerships and Direct Webinars

Our initial approach to recruit project participants across the state was a two-pronged strategy. First, marketing that invited direct participation was distributed through government, civil society, and civic organization partners throughout Wyoming, who agreed to distribute fliers and similar materials to their membership via their normal communication channels (social media posts, email, face-to-face meeting announcement, etc.). We took these actions on a weekly and then biweekly basis (across the first 10-week solicitation phase). In addition, the project directors held webinar-style recruitment meetings via Zoom. Webinars were designed to introduce the

project, its objectives, the photovoice methodology, basic photography, and ethical standards as well as instructions on how to share images with the research team. Over the first 3 months of 2022, 16 webinars were conducted with 11 total participants. In that time frame, nine pictures with descriptions were submitted to the project. Considering disappointing participation rates, the research team determined a change of recruitment strategy was needed.

Phase 3—Implementing Improved Solicitation Methods to Overcome Early Barriers

Later in spring 2022, our research team scheduled, through partner organizations, face-to-face recruitment presentations across the state. Presentations were scheduled during those organizations' regular meetings to capitalize on the existing cultural norms of the groups. These presentations (both in-person and via Zoom) were more successful in recruiting participants than the Zoom-based webinars of Phase 2. Presentations were widely distributed across the state geographically and in terms of audience, including local government meetings, university/community college classes, student organizations, and offices (American Heritage Center, Staff Senate, etc.), as well as state-level entities such as Workforce Services, the small business development organizations, and the Wyoming Business Alliance. Altogether, the research team conducted roughly 30 recruitment presentations.

Means of participation was another factor in Phase 2's low participation rates, however. Feedback from prospective participants in Phase 2 who ultimately declined to participate after interactions with the research team revealed that many found the subject matter compelling and were inclined to participate but were dissuaded by the method of participation the research team requested (photos and descriptions shared via the photography social media platform Flickr). To overcome this problem, a survey instrument was created via the Qualtrics survey engine, although this choice was not without its own shortcomings. Although a powerful tool to distribute and collect both quantitative and qualitative surveys, Qualtrics has limited functionality for the submission and evaluation of data files—including images. Nevertheless, the use of Qualtrics over Flickr, and more than two dozen invited presentations via Zoom and in person across April–June 2023 and an added research incentive,

did result in an increased participation rate, with 159 total submissions collected across Wyoming by June 2022.

Still disappointed with the participation rate to date, the research team contacted Qualtrics Research Services (QRS) to ascertain the cost of paying the service to recruit participants for the project. Their response noted that Wyoming's population was so small that it would be impossible to empanel the desired number of participants, if the sampling frame was restricted to the state's population. Our team was not dissuaded by this reply, as the quote-per-participant was within the project's budget. At this point the project grew much larger than originally anticipated. QRS could not acquire the target number of participants from Wyoming alone; however, expanding the selection criteria to Wyoming—and its surrounding states (Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska)—was financially feasible, as it provided a new opportunity to compare results in Wyoming across neighboring states. QRS took 3 months to collect the targeted 645 participants (69 from Wyoming), who shared 1,157 total images relevant to the project. Although beyond the original scope of the project, the inclusion of the multistate data afforded the opportunity to gather more Wyoming responses and to tease out response trends unique to Wyoming from those that were common in surrounding states.

Phase 4—Identifying Key Themes and Conducting Community Forums

As the research team analyzed results, it identified several emerging themes in the submissions. At the most macro level, submissions reflected the perception that opportunities were far more common than barriers across all three topics of the study. In the context of education, access to online education was commonly identified as an educational opportunity. Figure A1 (see Appendix for all figures) is indicative of this theme, with the submitted image depicting a laptop computer being utilized to access the videoconferencing platform Zoom from the comfort of a sofa. The contributor offered this description to accompany the image:

> My home, showing my computer and access to Zoom classes that helped me earn my Master's in Social Work from the University of Wyoming while continuing to work and participate in my community while achieving my academic goal and a better job in my community. It was an incredible opportunity!

Inclement weather was a commonly cited barrier to education, as many submissions reflected the negative impact of Wyoming's wintry weather on school-related activities. Figure A2 offers a typical instance; its image depicts children standing next to parked vehicles as snow falls, with a school facility barely visible in the background, through the falling snow. The caption reads:

> Picture of the student drop-off lane at Anderson Elementary school in Cheyenne, WY. Shows barriers to participation, either by finding ways to school during weather events, along with available transportation.

A hopeful note was struck by many contributors, as they noted educational opportunities in skills-based education—specifically in fields such as robotics and other applied technology fields. Figure A3, depicting a group of students working collaboratively on a robotics project, epitomizes this theme among submissions. This was the description offered with the image:

> This is a picture of Powell High School's first all-girls robotic team. It depicts both opportunity since robotics is a huge/growing area for 21st century students and barrier as the program is not funded the way sports programs are. Students have to raise/pay money for the team to travel and compete. That means low-income students are essentially barred.

The remaining theme identified among education-related submissions dealt with infrastructure. Many participants noted that quality facilities and physical infrastructure investment created opportunities for student success. Here, Figure A4 captures the sentiment as it shows college students participating in a class-related activity outside a building on campus. Its description reads:

> Laramie WY. Student assistance in directing technical lab. Opportunity - personal and professional growth

Participants who chose to share images and descriptions on the topic of employment frequently discussed the job market and

the necessity of multiple jobs per employee to make ends meet. Figure A5 focuses on the storefront of a pizza restaurant, whose window has been repurposed as an advertisement—for employment. The participant offered this description, along with the image:

> This picture was taken in Torrington. Dominos just like lots of other businesses are looking for help. This is both good and bad I think. There is a chance for a job for someone who needs one, but also this can be a struggle because we are low on help in a lot of places. A lot of businesses struggle with not having enough help and that sometimes leads to being shut down, which is definitely a barrier for our community.

Figure A6 strikes a similar tone. Its image of two uniform hats from two food service jobs, with accompanying description of pandemic-related barriers to employment, was indicative of the sentiment expressed by many participants. Its caption reads:

> This picture is of two employee hats from two different jobs I have had in the past couple years. It depicts barriers as I was forced to quit due to Covid but ironically due to the same restrictions I was never able to return the uniforms.

Another theme among submissions reflected the common refrain that opportunities for employment frequently described the downtown area of their community as the locus for economic activity. The image of a small rural community's downtown area captured in Figure A7 is reflective of this broader theme. The image was captioned thus:

> This is downtown Dubois, WY. These little stores are the backbone of the community and that is really all there is. It's a huge barrier but it's a way of life for this community.

The strong job demand in the skilled trades, as reflected in Figure A8, was another common theme among employment-related submissions. The image depicts the (blurred) faces of two house painters, and was accompanied by this description:

This picture was taken in Cheyenne Wyoming. In this picture I had surprised a co-worker of mine while painting houses in the summertime. This picture highlights the opportunity of labor jobs in communities. Not a lot of people realize there are good paying and sustainable jobs in the construction field. When I talk to people my age who are looking for work they often search in food or retail areas but seldom in trade work. Not only does trade work provide good pay, but it also teaches skills and techniques that can be applied elsewhere and taught to others.

In the context of community resilience, participants commonly referenced hardships imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic (barriers to resilience), such as the difficulty many businesses experienced in maintaining a customer base through the public health crisis. Figure A9 is indicative of these submissions, revealing a storefront in a downtown setting, which the participant captioned:

> This picture is of Sweet Melissa's in downtown Laramie. This displays opportunities offered in the downtown area for small businesses to thrive. After the pandemic, it was difficult to maintain a strong customer following so small businesses like this display the resilience of Laramie.

Whether referring to summertime activities such as enjoying time at the lake or describing winter activities such as skiing or snowshoeing, many described how their time in nature was an opportunity for community resilience, demonstrating the importance of intangibles in perceptions of resilience. See Figure A10 depicting a vibrant sunset above an open road that stretches between fields and houses to the horizon, with its accompanying description:

> This was taken in a community on the outskirts of Laramie where my girlfriend's family lives. It was taken during the trip we went to go see them for the first time in 3 years due to the pandemic. I think it shows that we can see the beauty in the world even when we are facing the hardships of potentially

not being able to see our families, or any other hardships we might be facing on any given day.

The repurposing of existing community infrastructure to meet contemporary needs (opportunity for resilience) was another frequent theme among community resilience submissions. Participants repeatedly offered images and descriptions such as Figure A11, which shows a former railroad facility that has been repurposed as a meeting facility for the community. The participant described the image like this:

> This picture was taken at the railroad complex in Evanston. This picture displays rusted wheels from trains and in the back you can see part of the former Union Pacific roundhouse. This image depicts opportunity to community resilience. Evanston has been through many different booms and busts including a railroad boom and bust.

The final theme among community resilience submissions spoke to the diversification of the economy as a driver of community resilience. Figure A12 captures a pair of wind turbines backlit by the setting sun and is captioned:

> Wind energy is an opportunity for community resilience by making jobs and diversifying our economy.

As themes were identified, plans were implemented to share information with the public and to seek additional community involvement. A Wyoming DataHub grant funded by the Wyoming Innovation Partnership (n.d.) allowed the codirectors to contract with the WyGISC, previously described, to map results to an interactive map application so that all results would be publicly available (https://surveys.wygisc. org/profiles-in-wyoming-resilience).

In keeping with the photovoice method, community forums were subsequently held in nine Wyoming cities, in addition to a forum conducted at the annual meeting of WEDA. Forum locales were chosen with the objective of achieving diverse contributions in the context of geography, economics, rurality, and population. In fall 2022, forums were held in Riverton, Cody, Sheridan, and Torrington, with additional forums conducted in spring 2023 in Evanston, Lyman, Rock Springs, Rawlins, and Saratoga. Some forums were well attended, and others were simply not. Maximum attendance was nearly 20 (Sheridan), yet two had zero attendees (Lyman and Rawlins).

In these forums, attendees were presented with information about the Profiles Project and were asked to reflect on and respond to themes and examples of pictures and associated narratives from the previous round of submissions. Participants were offered two related questions: Do you see these dynamics in your community? If so or if not, what do you see here? Many forum participants agreed that infrastructure investment provides greater opportunities for education in the state, but a notable number discounted the notion that winter weather presented a barrier, observing that winter is part of life here. Forum participants also digressed from themes identified by the research team, in the context of community resilience, especially participants in Cody and Torrington. There, forum participants observed that local economies (predominantly tourism and agriculture, respectively) were largely insulated from the economic impact of the pandemic.

Implications of the Early-Stage Assessment

Considering both the themes identified among the initial round of image/description submissions and the commentary offered by community forum participants across the state, a few notable early-stage implications are worthy of discussion. This project proceeded in conjunction with other statewide stakeholder efforts to address similar questions of education, employment, and community resilience. Project leaders have shared preliminary results with Wyoming economic development authorities, and these discussions have been intermittent but remain ongoing; however, the major result has been the recognition that this project served as the necessary pilot to make the next steps of a truly coproduced research project feasible. Through this process, we learned that barriers to participation were significantly reduced when participants could "see" what photovoice is and can do. The creation of the publicly available interactive map has been integral to show potential stakeholders both what photovoice can do and how the results may be used.

Our project was originally conceptual-

ized as focusing on adults' perceptions of opportunities and barriers to education, employment, and community resilience. Consequently, all planning focused on recruiting adult participants. Despite our multifaceted efforts, participation in the project remained a significant challenge throughout its implementation. In these results, however, we see a huge new opportunity to more tightly focus the next phase of the project on youth perspectives. In our submissions, a significant number of image/description contributions and a noticeable amount of community forum commentary centered on youth dynamics. From discussions of educational opportunities, such as skills-based training, to submissions describing the need for diversification of the economy, an unexpectedly high number of contributions were focused on youth. These were generally hopeful in nature but were nevertheless more youth-centric than the research team anticipated. However, in accord with the parameters of the project's IRB-approved protocol, youth voices were systematically excluded from this participatory research.

The evolution of our participant-recruitment strategy confirms the value of partnerships with key stakeholders for obtaining participant responses. Although recruitment is possible via webinars, in-person appeals, and even third-party recruitment, the contribution quality was notably better from those participants recruited in collaboration with partnering organizations. This dynamic held true through the community forum phase of the project as well, with partnering organizations working to recruit more of their members to participate in forums, to share their feedback and contribute to the overall dialogue of the project, which has the benefit of increasing the input of the community voice into the project.

Next Steps

Building upon the project's early-stage assessments, for the project's next phase, we intend to build upon our preexisting partnership with secondary education classroom teachers in the Wallop Program, as a means of amplifying youth voices. Although this focus would require significantly more safeguards than working with adult populations, our initial assessment of image/description submissions and community forum commentary reveals that pivoting to include youth participants would best meet the project's overarching objective of amplifying marginalized voices. Further, this focus allows us to seek participation from an underrepresented population that is seldom surveyed. To those ends, our next steps now include securing partnerships with K–12 classroom teachers, gaining their administrators' approval of the partnership, then seeking IRB approval of the protocol. Given the work of the Wallop Civic Engagement Program with K–12 teachers, partnerships are in now place to make this phase of the project possible.

Although the Qualtrics survey engine proved adaptable enough to solicit image file uploads and accompanying text-based descriptions, the platform was an inelegant solution, adopted when participants balked at the unfamiliarity of a dedicated photo-sharing application (Flickr). To address these myriad shortcomings, a grant from the College of Arts and Sciences allowed us to commission the development of a smartphone application, functional on both iOS and Android operating systems, that will allow app users to capture images, describe them, and send their submissions directly to the project's database used to populate the interactive web-based map application. This technological innovation will allow faster processing of participant submissions, which will in turn further develop the collaborative nature of the project. We see the integration of the smartphone app as being especially timely, given the project's pivot to a youth-focused phase.

Lessons Learned: A Photovoice Approach to Amplifying the Community Voices in Community–Academic Partner Research

One key takeaway from the project must focus on the changing nature of what we mean by partners and the partnerships in this project. Building on preexisting relationships with stakeholders and partner organizations to solicit participation was an important first step but proved inadequate. The revisions discussed across Phases 2–4 demonstrate the essential nature of such partnerships to implement the scope of this project, but particularly the need for flexibility in strategy and sensitivity to the difficulty in implementing such qualitative community engagement projects. Community–academic partnership models and evidence-based approaches, consistent with the land-grant model, mean the com-

mitment to transparency of project design as well as recognition of the need to adjust strategies. Although we describe four phases here, this article discusses only the steps that made the true codeveloped project possible. Our procedure is in alignment with the community–academic partnership approach and IAP2 best practices to make sure the research has the involvement of community stakeholders from design, through implementation, to evaluation. UW's commitment to the land-grant mission, when viewed through the lens of reciprocal community–academic partnerships, as described in the Carnegie (2020) model and Kellogg Commission (1999) report, reflects its commitment to such an iterative project as central to addressing community needs.

This study essentially served as a 2-year pilot to now set up the next phase of the project. Without the steps above, we would not have developed the technical and re-lational expertise to make the next phase possible: partnering with K–12 education to access underrepresented youth voices.

Reflecting on this project, we must return to our starting point—how to bridge the gap between traditional scholarly expectations and the call for universities to be responsive to the public need. The answer is in the careful design of projects that allow for traditional academic output (e.g., research following the IRB process with articles in mind) and fulfilling the commitment to perform and share research addressing community needs (e.g., community forums and making the data available to the public and stakeholders).

About the Authors

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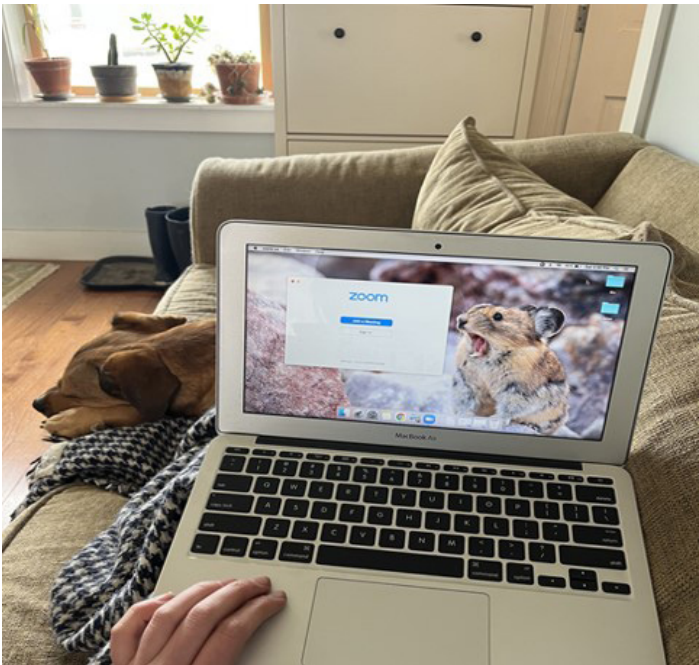## Appendix. Sample Photos

Figure A1

Figure A2

Figure A3

Figure A4

Figure A5

Figure A6

Figure A7

Figure A8
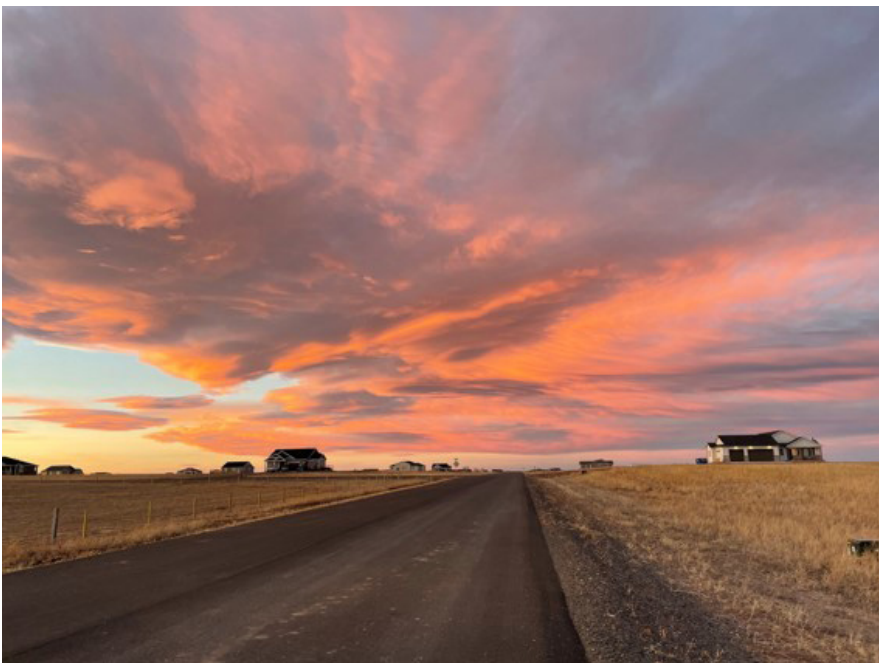
Figure A9

Figure A10

Figure A11

Figure A12

From Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Involving Indigenous Peoples to Indigenous-Led CBPR: It Is More Than Just Drinking Tea

Diana Lewis, Heather Castleden, Ronald David Glass, and Nicole Bates-Eamer

Abstract

Recent research and social movements (e.g., #IdleNoMore, #NotYourMascots, #EveryChildMatters, #LandBack, #Pretendians) have advanced Indigenous resurgence and self-determination. In this essay we explore the evolution of community-based participatory research (CBPR) involving Indigenous Peoples. Much has changed since Castleden et al. (2012) used "drinking tea" to reveal the material realities of CBPR with Indigenous communities; then and now, it is more than simply a cup of tea. Here, we further scholarly understandings of "drinking tea" through Indigenous and decolonial lenses, as we see rapid shifts toward Indigenous-*led* CBPR (ILCBPR). Through our own ILCBPR experiences, we share insights into the intersections of relational accountability, data sovereignty and autonomy, cultural relevance in gender-based analysis, the power of ceremony in governance, and for decolonizing time, place, and all our relations in engaged scholarship. We contextualize our essay with examples from our work and offer guiding questions for those—particularly non-Indigenous people—considering CBPR.

Keywords: community-based participatory research (CBPR), Indigenous Peoples, relational accountability, decolonizing research, Indigenous-led research

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Introductions: Setting the Table for Tea

Picture this: a group of four people, sitting together, spanning four decades in age, drinking coffee (not tea), and reflecting on a 7+ year, $2 million countrywide program of collaborative, Indigenous-led community-based participatory research (ILCBPR). This program examined the reach and limits of reconciliation between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems within Indigenous-settler partnerships implementing renewable energy projects and policies. They wonder, "What does our program of research have to offer others, and how do we go about writing about those experiences?" As is the protocol in many Indigenous contexts, and since one person is new to the group, they begin with introductions, their genealogies, and ancestral lands.

Diana (aka Dee): Kwe', ni'n na teluisi Dee. Wetapeksi Sipekne'katik, etek Mi'kma'ki. (Translation: Hi, my name is Dee. I am from Sipekne'katik, found in [the unceded territory of] Mi'kma'ki.) My journey into CBPR was at a time in my life when I was not even aware that it was an emerging methodology or approach for doing research with Indigenous communities "in a good way." I was not an academic. I was a community member working closely with my own Mi'kmaw communities on matters of importance to us. Intuitively I just knew, however, that for research to work, non-Indigenous academics must let Indigenous communities lead the way. The academy was

just catching up with this notion.

I had been approached in 2010 by a group of Mi'kmaw women from Pictou Landing First Nation (PLFN) in Nova Scotia, Canada, who were concerned about how a nearby pulp mill was impacting the health of their community, and despite voicing those concerns, they were never heard. They asked for my help, as a Mi'kmaw woman, with a recently completed master of resource and environmental management degree. Knowing I did not have the academic standing yet to achieve what the women needed, I had to approach experts who were far more trained than I was at that point in addressing environmental impacts. But the bottom line that we agreed to was this: Those experts would have to take the women's lead (see London et al., 2022).

As Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holder Catherine Martin has explained to me, the ancestors were guiding us, putting us all on the same path—that Creator was aligning our universe. A few months earlier, one of the leading early career experts at the time in CBPR with Indigenous communities in Canada, and the soon-to-be author of "I Spent the First Year Drinking Tea" (Castleden et al., 2012), had arrived at Dalhousie University. We talked. We connected. I invited Heather to meet with the women. The women said, "Finally someone is listening to us." And the rest is history (see Castleden, Bennett, et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2016, 2020; Lewis, Castleden, et al., 2021; Lewis, Francis, et al., 2021; Pictou Landing Native Women's Group et al., 2016).

The Pictou Landing Native Women's Group (PLNWG), led by a remarkable Mi'kmaw woman, Sheila Francis, had this to say in our final report after concluding our multiyear ILCBPR project:

> This has been a long and emotional journey, not just for me but especially for the women of the community. At the same time, it has been one of empowerment and voice. Many women in our community have shown themselves to be leaders through this project. . . . Right from the start, you were our partner. You did not come in and assert your credentials or your experience. You did not minimize our lack of expertise as scientists. What [Heather] brought was what we had never received before—compassion,

safety, someone who listened to our concerns and who really cared. I think that was the most important thing we needed to move this project forward so successfully. To the ladies who played a role in this project: Whatever conclusions you have taken from this research study, I hope one of them is the fact that you were a part of this study. You led this study. You controlled this study. You are the authors of this study. I hope you will continue to demand and express your concern for your and your family's health, and the health of our community. I hope you will continue to use your voice. I want to thank you for allowing me to represent you. I had to step out of my own comfort zone many times to tell your story, our story, but I would do it again for you. (Pictou Landing Native Women's Group et al., 2016, p. xiv)

This refrain about listening (also known as "drinking tea"), emphasized above, is a common refrain in the research projects I have since formed with Indigenous communities who are experiencing egregious environmental and health injustices.

From 2010 onward, Heather and I have established a trusting research relationship and friendship, in that I know she works "with a good heart and mind," by which I mean that she respects Indigenous communities' right of refusal (see Tuck & Yang, 2014) and puts the needs of the community before the needs of herself or the academy. In fact, in 2015, she coauthored another manuscript whose title captures how she had to invent a new way of working for herself within Indigenous-led projects: "'I Don't Think That Any Peer Review Committee . . . Would Ever Get What I Currently Do': How Institutional Metrics for Success and Merit Risk Perpetuating the (Re)production of Colonial Relationships in Community-Based Participatory Research Involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada" (Castleden et al., 2015). The respect that I have for Heather led me to agree to become the codirector of the research program at the center of our analysis, and within the program, to become the Indigenous colead of a specific research project with an Indigenous community on their renewable energy partnerships. We are now at the stage where we want to share how far we have come (and how far we

still must go) since the days of spending "the first year drinking tea," when studies of CBPR involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada were still mainly initiated and led by non-Indigenous people, and Indigenous Peoples were mainly hired to collect data or offer translation skills. For the most part then (and even now), data was still removed from the people and places that generated it for analysis and ownership; for their contributions, those Indigenous contributors were typically just "acknowledged" rather than being recognized as cocreators and coauthors of new knowledge. Indeed, how far we have come.

Heather: I am a White settler with ancestral roots in the United Kingdom. Like all early European settlers to what is now known as Canada, my ancestors stole Indigenous lands when they arrived (Lowman & Barker, 2015). I was born in the territory of the Yellowknives Dene. I switched from doing investigator-driven research involving Indigenous Peoples to ILCBPR in the early 2000s after I learned the importance of drinking tea and listening, especially considering my Whiteness and settler positionality. I arrived in a northern community for my graduate research with "book-knowledge" about northern Indigenous health, professional knowledge as an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, and personal (albeit limited) knowledge of the North, having been born there. What was a thesis on an Indigenous family's experience of raising a deaf child in an off-grid, fly-in Indigenous community (because of my own interests and experiences) should have been, from the perspective I now have, a thesis on the impacts of diamond mining on caribou–Dene–land relations. Let me explain: The family I wanted to connect with—who had tried to raise their deaf child in the community—no longer lived there, and I had not thought to confirm this before university approvals to conduct the study or even before arriving in the community; my timing was off by a decade. Had I spent time drinking tea, *listening* to the community's current priorities, my project could have become an ILCBPR project on the ways in which a new diamond mine was impacting caribou migration patterns as well as hunter safety while on climate-induced changing ice conditions in winters and community reliance on caribou for food security and sovereignty. Such a project could have been immediately useful to them in their legal cases, their impact benefit agreement ne-

gotiations, and their self-determining priorities. In short, I should have spent time drinking tea together before any research. Since then, I've tried to drink plenty of tea with those who choose to engage with me in research relationships (confessional moment: I'm more of a coffee-drinker, but I'll drink tea if it is offered).

To write together with Dee, Ron, and Nicole as part of Dee's and my process of critical reflection on our work is truly special. Dee and I have collaborated through CBPR projects for 13 years, and she has become one of my most trusted, valued, and closest friends. As our work with the women from Pictou Landing was wrapping up, we became the codirectors of a 5-year (now 7 years thanks to COVID-19) program of research called "A SHARED Future" (Achieving Strength, Health, and Autonomy through Renewable Energy Development for the Future; see https://asharedfuture.ca/), wherein eight thematically linked ILCBPR projects were carried out. Through this (see Rotz et al., 2022; Sanchez-Pimienta et al., 2021; Stefanelli et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2019, 2021) and previous work, we "drank a lot of tea" together as well as with the (very large) A SHARED Future team. By drinking tea, I mean we spent a lot of time focused on getting to know each other, building trust and respect for each other, developing a transparent and horizontal governance structure, and sharing stories with each other to establish the basis for the sometimes uncomfortable but necessary and honest conversations with each other and our team about our diverse teachings, approaches, and ways of researching. It is not easy, this tea drinking stuff—it still is not even after all these years. Our A SHARED Future team had to deal with all kinds of relational, ethical, political, practical, and other tensions. Some we have been able to resolve, others are not the sort of tensions one resolves, but rather are the sort that one learns to dwell with, to endure, in doing this work "in a good way." More on that later.

Just around the time that Dee, I, and others conceptualized A SHARED Future, Ron and I crossed virtual paths when he organized an invitational gathering around unsettling research ethics (see Baloy et al., 2016). Although I missed the gathering, as I was busy exploring the formation of A SHARED Future, I was impressed with his praxis to unsettle colonial institutional contexts like ethics in research, and I invited Ron to join

our International Advisory Committee (IAC) for his insights and wisdom in this area. He supported our team's focus and deep engagement with the ethics of research as defined within the domains of place and time, relationality, and knowledge.

As we write this, 7 years since the formation of A SHARED Future, the energy on our team is waning thanks to multiple factors: COVID, the life-threatening climate crisis that continues to take its toll, identity politics that have entered lives and created divides, research and community priorities that have shifted for some projects, and capacity to "do more" remains limited. A SHARED Future is sunsetting in unexpected ways even as parts of it morph into new forms. Ron, Dee, and I decided a reflection and writing retreat was needed to work through some of this angst. At this important knowledge mobilization phase of our work, a new postdoctoral researcher joined us: Enter Nicole, who joined us on our retreat and who has brought fresh enthusiasm and focus through her own experience working at the intersections of Indigenous and Western knowledges around climate justice, clean energy, governance, public policy, and data synthesis. She has been an amazing boost of energy, a breath of fresh air, with a great sense of gumption to get us going again! And now, here we are, walking, talking, reflecting, and writing together in the beautiful Comox Valley—the unceded territory of K'ómoks First Nation.

Ron: I grew up a settler in the southern reaches of the Algonquian-speaking peoples, in the land of the Shaawanwaki, in what became known as Ohio; my ancestors arrived there in desperation and hope as they fled European pogroms, imprisonment, and orphanhood. I was raised up from that slate clay left behind on the etched glacial scrape that holds the Great Lakes, and I live now on the unceded lands of the Lisjan Ohlone people, who continue to fight to preserve their local sacred spaces. Over the years, I have been invited to work in many places, each with its own histories outside the narrative confines of coloniality, each with its own histories of dispossession, oppression, and resurgence. It is always an honor and responsibility to listen with intention to hear beyond the words and to respond fully to the stories of those places and people, to the heartbreaks along with the freedom dreams that animate the hopes that shape change.

In the 1970s I began experiments in liberatory education, and in 1983–1984 I was mentored in that work by the renowned democratic educators Myles Horton and Paulo Freire (Glass, 2010; see also Horton & Freire, 1990). My life path has connected me with a wide diversity of communities in my work as a "historico-cultural-political psychoanalyst" and Freirean philosopher of education (Freire, 1994, p. 55). I came into the circle of A SHARED Future as a guest, invited to listen and share my learning from decades of experiences crafting critical educational projects with communities and organizations seeking to strengthen and mobilize their knowledge in struggles for justice.

When Heather asked me to serve on the International Advisory Committee (IAC), I was the director of a systemwide research program initiative of the University of California Office of the President, the Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California (2009–2015; https://ccrec.ucsc.edu/), and in addition, I led its Spencer Foundation–funded project on the ethics of collaborative research for justice (see Foster & Glass, 2017; Glass & Stoudt, 2019; Newman & Glass, 2014). Over the 7 years of Dee's, Heather's, and my collaboration, we not only spent substantial time in Zoom rooms together exploring the complexities of Indigenous–Western reconciliation in the context of facing planetary existential crises, we also codesigned learning spaces and met for an intensive research institute in 2018 hosted by Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation), a Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) community on the east coast of Canada. The institute allowed participants the possibility of in-person ceremony, of eating together along with sharing our study and reflections, and it allowed ample time for working as whole persons, as persons in relation to other communities, and to other places.

When I arrived for our retreat in the traditional territories of the ləkʷəŋən-speaking peoples (Victoria, on the west coast of Canada), I looked forward to the opportunity to write with Dee and Heather using A SHARED Future as a reflective starting point and using each of our histories as vantage points to discern lessons learned along the way. I especially looked forward to the IAC and A SHARED Future practice of always beginning meetings with extended check-ins that included the more-than-human, such that our entire discussion might be

driven by the IAC Elders' teachings from the Mayfly, or the Reindeer, or Canada Geese. This assured me that the roots of our work were deep enough to keep us balanced as we moved through examining the complex relations and topics of ILCBPR, an examination that surely would challenge the ethical and political foundations of the growing fields of engaged scholarship and CBPR (Glass et al., 2018). I had been happy to learn that Nicole, a new person in this SHARED Future work, had roots interwoven with one of my ethics project collaborators and coauthors, and I looked forward to her joining the circle.

Nicole: I am a White-settler with English, Irish, Scottish, Norwegian, and German heritage, born and raised in Nanaimo, BC on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples. I am new to ILCBPR in Canada and just started this postdoc with Heather and Dee. I recently finished a PhD in political science focused on the discourses that construct understandings of how climate change and human mobility intersect, and the profound questions of (in)justice and (in)equity in those intersections as well as the policy responses to them. Since graduating, I had been doing some work across Indigenous and Western knowledge systems related to renewable energy projects and Indigenous-led sustainability assessment systems. I had earlier studied international development in my master's degree (some time ago) and then worked on community development projects around the world before returning home to Vancouver Island 15 years ago.

On the first day of our writing retreat, I am only in the second month of my postdoc, and as is so often the case in academia, I have a serious case of imposter syndrome. While I am biking downtown on a cold winter morning to meet with my two supervisors, Heather and Dee (Dee who I had only met in person the day before), and their colleague, Ron, for the retreat, I am questioning if my lived experiences and studies have prepared me for this intellectual work. I have been voraciously reading anything and everything that they published or that I can find on the research program, so that I might have something to write about at this retreat. We meet in a hotel lobby, chat easily until everyone arrives, and then grab coffees (not tea). The day is not what I think it will be; there seems to be a lot more chatting, laughing, walking, and eating involved than I had anticipated.

On the second day of our retreat, we recon-

vene over dinner in a smaller town several hours by car up-island, after Heather, Dee, and Ron have visited some ancient Douglas Fir trees in an old growth forest not far from where we meet. Heather's family members join us, and there is little chat about the program or the research. In fact, we talk about our mothers (Heather's mum had died just five months ago and Day 2 happened to fall on her mum's birthday, so it created space, time, and relationality for celebration and reflection, blending "professional work" with "the personal").

By Day 3, I imagine a day hammering out some text; "words on paper!" was my partner's daily and encouraging refrain while I finished my dissertation. We meet in the hotel lobby and set out on a walk along the river estuary. We debate what shade of a gray sky can be called "blue" in February on Vancouver Island; we talk some more about our families, our past experiences, and a bit about the research; and then we discuss how hungry we are before stopping into one place for coffee and then another for breakfast. Back at the hotel, I pull out my computer, ready to write. We talk through key decision points in the different research projects and how we could write about them, and then share a lunch over a meandering conversation. We do a little silent writing after lunch, starting to focus on themes across the project key decision points; we read it aloud to each other at the end of the time.

Day 4 is much like Day 3, but (finally) with more words on paper and a plan for more to follow from each of us, along with a planned series of meetings every two weeks until the paper could be completed.

On Day 5, I return home reflecting on what just happened in this writing retreat attuned to decolonized practices. It did not seem to be as much about getting words on paper as I had thought. Instead, I leave with relatively few words on paper, but a much better understanding of who Dee, Heather, and Ron are, as people, as scholars, and as they have lived out many other roles and relationships in projects and in their lives. I have a better understanding of what ILCBPR means, how to create space for all team members to feel welcome and valued, and how to work together across generations and scholarly disciplines with respect, and with a good heart and in a good way. I feel deeply committed to this team, and I have a whole new appreciation for "drinking tea"

and the importance of the relational, not just the intellectual, in cocreating knowledge for justice.

Introductions: A Summary

There are two reasons for writing such a lengthy set of author introductions. First, we are mindful and respectful of Indigenous protocols for introducing ourselves, our people, and our places; we would be falling into the colonial trap of removing ourselves from our work if we did not take the time and space to do so. Second, by inviting you to drink tea with us, we are embarking on a journey of relational accountability with you, the reader, to walk our talk in decolonizing, disrupting, and unsettling academic processes of scholarly engagement and writing. Now that we have introduced ourselves, we are ready to share our experiences engaging in CBPR involving Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR with a decolonial lens. For ease of exposition, in the remainder of the essay, we, the four authors, will use the term "we" to refer to ourselves collectively as well as at times to also refer to the teams with which we have worked; the composition of "we" varies across examples, instances, or projects, but we use it throughout to be consistent and inclusive, and we intend the context to make clear the scope of the reference.

From CBPR Involving Indigenous Peoples to ILCBPR

We are a group of interdisciplinary scholars who have worked closely with Indigenous communities in a variety of CBPR; cumulatively, we have about three quarters of a century of experience in CBPR projects aimed at transforming inequitable structures across Canada and the United States. In this essay we share some of the key lessons we have learned, which we hope can contribute toward ongoing efforts to decolonize all aspects of CBPR and the academy writ large. Our intended audience is primarily people who identify as non-Indigenous researchers. We humbly offer our reflections in the hopes that they may inspire, instigate debate, and/or invigorate newcomers as well as long-time actors in this arena. Our offerings may be useful not only for those partnerships and projects that are led by or directly involve Indigenous Peoples and communities, but for any community-engaged scholars in academia or other settings who seek to transform the deep structures of coloniality, racism, sexism, patriarchy, and economic exploitation that threaten the literal survival of the planet.

We revisit the responsibilities entailed in moving to ILCBPR and reflect on how these responsibilities have manifested in a variety of settings. Grounded in respect for ontological, ethical, and epistemological pluralism, ILCBPR provides a philosophy and methodology thoroughly interwoven with relational ethics and accountability (see Coombes et al., 2014). Although we hope that our reflections on ILCBPR may offer useful guidance for other non-Indigenous-led forms of research and knowledge creation, we also want to caution readers: When you seek to integrate these approaches, you need to ensure that they are always connected to local Indigenous epistemologies/ontologies and their praxis of place (see de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018, p. 9).

ILCBPR: Not Pan-Indigenous, Not Linear, Not Formulaic

We begin with a shared understanding that tying any research, including CBPR, to notions of identity with terms like "Indigenous" (Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) binds us against our will to conceptions of personhood and community that are dictated by treaties and constitutional law under the authority of the Canadian and the United States' governments. Indigenous identities continue to be defined by these state structures, rather than by conceptions of autonomy, personhood, and sovereignty derived from Indigenous legal traditions (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018, p. 7). This structural dilemma leads us to use terms like "Indigenous" with caution, and without meaning to imply a generalized pan-Indigenous perspective.

We also know that those places that the Canadian and the United States' governments designated to divide, conquer, and contain (reserves, treaty settlement lands, reservations, etc.) become spaces where Indigenous self-determination and autonomy can exist in particular forms despite colonial efforts to limit the exercise of Indigenous sovereignty, but these are not the only places that Indigenous communities know as their traditional lands. We recall, for example, some Omushkegowuk Cree teachings that remind us through their conception of and responsibilities to *awawa-nenitakik*, that the place of their Muskeg

lands is not just something underfoot throughout a community's territory, but rather, land is an animate being, a relative, a food provider, and a teacher of law and governance to whom people are accountable (Daigle, 2016; for other examples, see Awâsis, 2020; Bawaka Country et al., 2016; Parsons et al., 2021). According to Daigle (2016), this is how Omushkegowuk Cree self-determination is lived, how it is understood and mobilized from their Muskeg lands and not the mapped reserves and the treaty territories meant to contain their way of life. Similar understandings can be said for other Indigenous Nations.

We have learned that to begin ethical collaborations, special attention is necessary not only to the place but also to the time (Baloy et al., 2016; see also Awâsis, 2020) and timing of the research (Stiegman & Castleden, 2015). By this we mean to point beyond notions of the duration of a particular research project, to focus attention on longer histories and wider possibilities for alternative futures that can address the many forms of slow violence that—like environmental destruction—move at paces and scales that can escape notice, unlike spectacular forms of violence that cannot be missed (Nixon, 2013; Sylvestre, 2021). Non-Indigenous CBPR researchers should be in the habit of asking, "Who are the original inhabitants in this place? What are their relationships and responsibilities to the land? What were and are their ways of life? Where are they now? How are they now? What were the processes by which they came to be dispossessed of their land? What are the ongoing consequences of those processes?" These are questions that reveal the colonial history of violence, dispossession, displacement, and cultural erasure that endures into the present and shapes the landscape of the work. These and similar questions also enable researchers to identify the generative cultural resources that have sustained these communities despite attempts at genocide, and that can serve as the basis for the realization of alternative visions.

This shift toward a more expansive future reflects our determination to resist the timelines and frames of reference insisted on by funders, who delineate grant award end-dates, determine uses of grant funds, evaluate eligibility to hold grant funds, and decide metrics for success, all which limit community-led strategies for change (see Sylvestre et al., 2018). For those work-ing in solidarity in ILCBPR, this shift can contribute to transforming structures that reproduce injustice (see, for example, Sprague Martinez et al., 2023) and to defending cultural formations that have been built over thousands of years. At the same time, ILCBPR researchers and their coconspirators are also taking the approach that when resurgence is the focus, decolonizing is not the priority, but it can be a co-benefit (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019). Intergenerational insights and experience are also needed to shape such work and succeed by Indigenous measures, and so we strive to have Indigenous youth and Elders present and engaged in and guiding our projects as much as is possible, from initial stages of partnerships through governance to knowledge production, dissemination, and mobilization.

ILCBPR Is Ceremony

Over the years, we have learned that to enable relations of genuine respect and mutuality to emerge, new ways of understanding sovereignty, autonomy, personhood, history, and future possibilities needed to first be acknowledged and appreciated; yet even this initial period of bearing witness and seeking mutuality did not end the need to attend to the issues raised in the ongoing work of research partnerships and collaborations (i.e., drinking tea—like decolonizing—is not a one-off event; it is an ongoing process; see Wolfe, 2006). We learned that ceremony provides a way to facilitate difficult tasks, both "external" in relation to one another and "internal" in relation to our self-understanding (see also Hughes et al., 2023; Wilson, 2008). To help readers who are new to this concept, we turn to Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), who writes that

> for Indigenous people, research is a ceremony. In our cultures an integral part of any ceremony is setting the stage properly. When ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday and to accept a raised state of consciousness. You could say that the specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to get the participants into a state of consciousness that will allow for the extraordinary to take place. . . . It is fitting that we view research in the same way—as

a means of raising our conscious-
ness. (p. 69)

The kind of ceremony we reference provides a way of grappling with the complexities and contradictions in the work that does not focus on allocating blame, but rather calls people into responsibility for the mutuality and interdependence of their lives with other people and with all the nonhuman beings that share their time/place, including the water, air, and earth themselves on which all life depends. We understand ceremony as a key to expanding our horizons to futures previously unimagined but that are nonetheless possible, a key to sensing the precarity of the present society, and a key to grasping the power each person has, to make a more just future the reality. We learned that ceremony could provide the breaks in the everyday that enable groups to ground themselves in the fraught but fertile realms of transformation and achieve a perspective that provides the kind of critical hope on which actual world-historical movements are built (Bozalek et al., 2014).

We know that ceremony, making time and space for time and place, for establishing relations, has a double effect of making people both more secure and more vulnerable at the same time. People become more secure in the respect and mutuality made possible, which at the same time enables a deeper vulnerability to emerge. This vulnerability reflects the precarity of even the deepest structures of injustice and the limiting conditions of everyday life, which, having been produced in history by human beings, can thus be undone in history by human beings when responsibility is taken for what gets carried forward. The vulnerability also reflects the precarity of even the most enduring depths of self-understanding and of the distortions of the dominant ideologies that inhabit language and practices; we discover that always at the same time and place that oppressive practices reign, resistant and transformative languages and practices persist and are being (re)created. We learned that when we connect deeply with others (including other-than-human others) in these vulnerabilities, in respect and mutuality, we cannot help but be changed; and we learned that ceremony opens this kind of transformative knowing to help shape our work. Indeed, we began our reflective essay with ceremony by making space and taking time to emplace our introductions as a way of establishing a relationship with readers.

We hope this overview of our years of learning about and doing/supporting ILCBPR makes more evident why the transactional ethics of institutionalized research ethics review cannot be the basis for fully ethical collaborative CBPR involving any oppressed community, and itself needs to be decolonized (Baloy et al., 2016; Bull & Hudson, 2019; Sabati, 2019; Stiegman & Castleden, 2015; Woodward & McTaggart, 2016), and we hope it also makes more evident what ILCBPR has to offer the wider fields of community-engaged research and university-community research partnerships. In the following sections, we situate these general learnings in more specific accounts, and we hope in this way to also make clear that when we invoke the notion of ILCBPR, we do not intend a general or universal account of Indigeneity. Building on our earlier caveats, we do not mean to ignore the significant debates and conflicts about who counts as Indigenous or who is authorized to "speak for" a particular Indigenous community, and in what contexts. We also do not want to flatten or erase the multiple significant differences within/among/across Indigenous communities, nor to obscure the ways that the traditional ceremonies, value frameworks, and relations with the more-than-human are always particular and located. Nonetheless, to respect our community collaborators, we will preserve as needed the anonymity of those who are in the stories we share.

Relationality and Commitments in ILCBPR

When we (i.e., any of the research teams we have been a part of) come together to engage in relationship exploration and research design, we are making a commitment to do more than work together; we are committing to be in relation with each other (Wilson, 2008). These relationships can be compared in some regards to romantic connections between people, as partnerships go through the early "spark" of immediate energy and excitement that is created. It is full of anticipation and optimism. As the relationship deepens, commitments are made, perhaps vows expressed and inscribed in some official way in the community. Partnerships have a honeymoon phase, where everything is "sunshine and roses," though they mature through working at the things that do not go so incredibly well, and unexpected challenges and broken commitments need to be discussed and resolved. But when more and more breaches occur, and perhaps less

transparency in communication and even distancing, such relationships are at risk of "death by a thousand cuts." We have asked ourselves, and perhaps you have too: What happened to those relational commitments?

In 2012, Crooks and Castleden wrote about "managing research partnerships" as early career researchers. They illustrated some of the issues that can arise with the time invested in research relationships as well as the ethical and practical challenges that occur when things go sideways. They wrote,

> Like the song says, breaking–up is hard to do. This is very true in [some of] the research partnerships we have had. We have had to de–velop tactful exit strategies to get ourselves out of research partner–ships that were toxic in one way or another. How do I know when the time is right? What are the long–term implications of a break–up? (p. 396)

Our reflections on ILCBPR grapple with these complex, fraught, and at times pain–ful dynamics, and we share some of our ex–periences of what relational commitments mean to us and offer suggestions for guid–ing research processes to reduce/eliminate potential toxicities.

In one project, we formed a team of prin–cipal investigators based on existing friendships and networks, shared desires for strength–based ILCBPR processes, and support for Indigenous futurities over and above any specific content expertise each team member held. Indigenous and set–tler academics and Indigenous community members cocreated a research proposal that established roles and responsibilities, per the funding agency's requirements. We en–gaged in a commitment ceremony of doing the work together over the next 5 years. No one could have anticipated that three of the 10 principal investigators would be gone within a year due to employment changes and needing to respond to their own com–munity's priorities. But in one case, a prin–cipal investigator left the team because of incompatibility. Perhaps not surprisingly, this individual was not part of our existing friendship–based network, and we did not perform enough ceremony to ensure they shared our values and relational commit–ments. Community and organizational part–ners also experienced employee turnover

and priority shifts. As a result, we invited new principal investigators and new com–munity and organizational partners to our team. They came with new ideas, new disci–plinary training, new lived experience, new personalities, and new politics. Ceremony was needed during the onboarding and ori–entation process, yet we did not always have the foresight to do it well. But ceremony was also needed for all of us on an ongoing basis, and although efforts were made, we could have done better. It is critical for those in leadership roles to recognize this necessity and to act upon it. It is also important for leaders to create ethical space (for more on "ethical space," see Ermine, 2007) for those who are not in leadership roles to feel safe to express such needs when they arise.

You can and should anticipate that such unexpected turns of events, pitfalls, and tensions might happen in your own CBPR/ILCBPR projects, especially those with large teams and long–term grants. Ask yourselves and develop protocols for this question: "How do your orientation and onboarding processes (ceremonies) roll out to ensure the same degree of relational commitment to each other among new team members as those who were part of the team's origins?" Looking back on that project, we know we could have done better and allocated more time, space, and budget to these processes.

None of us could have possibly anticipated that a global pandemic would halt our CBPR activity for nearly three years. But what could we have anticipated? We could antici–pate that careers would progress, relation–ships would evolve, interests would wane, new priorities would emerge, deaths could occur, and, as a result, relational commit–ments might change. We attempted to miti–gate these anticipated challenges by having a valued Elder on our team to help with the hard stuff, and then the Elder themselves fell ill and had to reduce their commit–ments to focus on healing and health. We kept evolving our team's Terms of Reference to cover unexpected learnings year by year as our commitments to each other and community partners and organizations necessarily changed over time. But it was/is the quiet quitting that seems to be the most emotionally and operationally chal–lenging. Here we remind ourselves that we could have anticipated that the early broken commitments and ongoing small breaches left unattended would need us to press pause and reconvene to reexamine the state of our

relationships and commitments.

Over the multiyear program, we did organize annual retreats and hold virtual team meetings as we thought they were needed. We engaged in ceremony (e.g., smudging, along with opening and closing prayers to bring people's hearts and minds together, Indigenous teachings from other-than-humans, sharing circles) to seek a raised state of shared consciousness, but we also had individual everyday demands to contend with. So, when is the right time to press pause, or to recognize that the ceremonial circle is broken beyond repair? And what kind of ceremony is needed at that point? Are attempts to maintain ongoing relations ethically required at that point? In ILCBPR, people are not simply defined by their professional identities; unlike in projects that can recruit another epidemiologist, another economist, or another engineer for the research to proceed, in ILCBPR people and relationships matter more than project outcomes. In our case, tremendous efforts were made to mend relations, and when they failed, hearts hurt, and the work and group suffered. You can and should anticipate that this might happen in your own teams and long-term projects and relationships. Ask yourselves and develop protocols for this question: "How do your closure and farewell processes (ceremonies) roll out to ensure the same degree of relational commitment to each other in the ending as you had in the beginning?"

Revisiting Refusal: Community Autonomy in "Scaled-Up" Programs

Historically, CBPR (and now also ILCBPR) projects have typically been carried out in discrete "case study" form within one community context, often with some form of social, political, geographical, and temporal boundaries. But when a project involves multiple communities—some of which are geographically bound and perhaps distant from each other, others of which are socially bound, and thus involve multiple culturally and politically distinct traditions, laws, and protocols—then attending to these differences in respectful ways can be quite the art of negotiation and diplomacy . . . with heartfelt apologies *and* ceremony when things inevitably go awry.

We created a programmatic Terms of Reference to help carry out this complex work, to guide our roles, responsibilities, financial decision-making, data governance protocols, and authorship. After multiple rounds of revision, the principal investigators came to an agreement about these key decision-making areas. A year later, one of the team members left the annual retreat in tears because of a particular tension the Terms of Reference created for them and their relationship to their own community. The issues arising at that meeting were around data sovereignty and who had access to data collected in the community and who would be included in the authorship of outputs from the community. Initially, many of the team held fast to the academic (i.e., colonial) ways of doing work together; that is, all principal investigators would have access to all community data and/or could opt into authorship of all publications, regardless of whether they were colead on that specific project. But then we realized that we did not have to do things the way they had typically been done in academia. Wanting to make amends and knowing we had the power and autonomy to change the status quo, we did! Ownership of community data stayed with the community, thereby respecting Indigenous data sovereignty; project coleads would now have the discretion to decide whether they would invite the codirectors to participate in authorship in recognition of their leadership of the program. Although we found the experience unsettling at the time, rather than rejecting an Indigenous team member and their community's act of refusal, we grappled with and eventually embraced it so that we could continue to move forward in a good way.

Another example of an ILCBPR project involving Indigenous Peoples from many nations across Canada encountering an unanticipated challenge occurred when we had gathered in one location to share stories about the gendered experiences of working in the renewable energy sector. After our circle of introductions, we were to share a meal together, but we had not done the work of understanding each other's ceremonial protocols before the meal commenced; a period of tension ensued. From one participant: I will prepare a spirit plate. Then from another: We need a fire for the spirit plate. From still another: What is a spirit plate? And from still another: We do not burn our spirit plates; we leave them on the land, to return to it. Finally, from the person whose land we were on and who held specific responsibilities to it: We do not do spirit plates. After some hesitation about how to

work through the tension (i.e., "refusal"; see Tuck & Yang, 2014), the Indigenous individuals that had come together to learn from each other realized they were learning from each other, and the tension dissipated when a creative solution was agreed upon. In sharing this story, we want to emphasize that when tensions arise, there are many ways that "refusal" can emerge in any CBPR project, let alone in ILCBPR with multiple Indigenous Peoples from different, distinct nations and particular projects all under one thematic umbrella of a funded program, as was the case with the project here. The key message we want to convey is that respect and humility are critical for relational accountability, ethical space, and for ceremony to navigate tensions as they arise.

Questions to ask in your projects involving multiple community partners and academic coleads might be "How does refusal show up here? How do we deal with Indigenous data sovereignty?" (We deal with that next.) "Do we see refusal as a problem with those who are refusing or as an opportunity for those who want access in unlearning the taken-for-granted processes that have been designed in colonial systems? Is scaling up ILCBPR into thematic programs a wise practice or is such an approach better left to Western systems of research? How big a scale can/should we move to, and might we risk losing the place-based nature of the work?"

The Importance of Indigenous Data Governance and Sovereignty in ILCBPR

Indigenous data sovereignty is defined as "the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine the means of collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of data pertaining to the Indigenous peoples from whom it has been derived, or to whom it relates" (Walter & Suina, 2019, p. 237). Since "I Spent the First Year Drinking Tea" (Castleden et al., 2012), the Indigenous data governance and sovereignty movement has emerged on the global scene. It is led by strong Indigenous data advocates in response to the harms that Indigenous Peoples have experienced from the narratives and tropes generated by a colonial state that seeks to keep Indigenous Peoples marginalized. In fact, the first major publication on the topic of Indigenous data sovereignty was released in 2016 (Taylor & Kukutai, 2016). Since then, CBPR with Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR has progressed, seeking to ensure that re-

search is culturally meaningful and meets community needs and that Indigenous Peoples are equal partners in the research process, jointly deciding what data is collected and analyzed, how data is interpreted, and how data is managed and stored. More importantly, Indigenous Peoples are asserting their right to ensure that the narrative about them is strengths-based, meaningful, and reflective of their worldviews. In short, CBPR principles continue to evolve to reflect the importance for Indigenous communities to have reliable data of their own, control over it, and authority over who has access to it: This is a critical aspect of ILCBPR.

Several recent developments reflect this urgency. In 2021, Canada passed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act and has committed to implementing the Declaration based on lasting reconciliation, healing, and cooperative relations (Government of Canada, 2023). Article 19 of UNDRIP affirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples to give free, prior, and informed consent about measures that may impact them. Target 21 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022) states that decision-makers must have access to the best available data, including Indigenous data, to make informed decisions to protect biological diversity. At face value, that could be a welcome message, given the history of Western science's neglect and/or dismissal of Indigenous Knowledge systems. But there remain threats of misuse, misinterpretation, and misappropriation of such data. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly more urgent to safeguard the rights of Indigenous Peoples to control how their data are used, controlled, and accessed.

The work that we have performed, individually and collectively, with Indigenous communities across Canada and the United States reflects our commitment to respect their right to assert autonomy over data governance, including how data is disseminated (see example above on the right of refusal). In Canada, we have adopted several Indigenous-created data governance protocols in line with community requirements. For example, principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession or "OCAP" (which is a registered trademark of the First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC]) are employed in projects involving First Nations. These principles

seek to protect First Nations' rights to own, control, access, and possess data, as well as determine the data collection processes and how the data is used (FNIGC, 2020). To fully understand the definition of OCAP, FNIGC requires that any author who is referring to these principles direct readers to their website (*https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/*). The Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) has adopted the CARE Principles (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics) for Indigenous Data Governance (GIDA, n.d.), and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), which was established to support "community" for Indigenous Peoples in urban centers, developed the USAI Framework (Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Interrelationality; OFIFC, 2016). While we write this essay, new Indigenous-led data governance models are emerging across Canada and beyond.

Moreover, we are cognizant of how data is interpreted, that often, colonial concepts and measures may not be compatible with Indigenous concepts or values. Wilkes (2015) noted how the measure of educational attainment, for example, may distort Indigenous realities. She pointed out how survey data typically reveals lower educational attainment among Indigenous populations compared to non-Indigenous populations. On the surface, what is conveyed from a deficit perspective is that Indigenous Peoples are less educated. In fact, as Wilkes argued, lower educational achievement might more appropriately reflect an intergenerational resistance to Western education because of the harms imposed on Indigenous communities by the colonial Indian Residential School System. The right to assert what Morphy (2016) refers to as "the adequacy of categorization" is, in itself, data sovereignty.

In the research that Dee and Heather (Lewis, Castleden, et al., 2021) conducted with the Pictou Landing women, only the Mi'kmaw language could adequately convey the land displacement and environmental dispossession that the community members had experienced when the effluent from the pulp mill started to disconnect the community from their traditional lands and impact the health of community members. The English language has no words to convey the Mi'kmaw relational worldview like the Mi'kmaw language. For example, *Kisu'lt melkiko'tin* means "the place of creation—nature"; *weji-sqalia'timk* means "where we sprouted from—the landscape." Using Indigenous languages to convey Indigenous experiences is truly data governance and data sovereignty.

Therefore, non-Indigenous researchers might ask themselves questions like these about Indigenous data governance and sovereignty: "Do you know what Indigenous sovereignty is and what it means in the context where you are working? Are you aware of best practices (for example: the First Nations Data Governance Strategy [FNIGC, 2020], the British Columbia First Nations Data Governance Initiative [BCFNDGI, n.d.], or the United States Data Sovereignty Network [Native Nations Institute, n.d.])? Are you aware of the guidance provided in Canada's Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans—TCPS 2 (2018) for the application of OCAP or similar principles for other Indigenous groups (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018) when conducting research with Indigenous partners? Or have you read *Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology* (Walter & Andersen, 2016), which speaks to how dominant settler-societies impose their methodologies to create, translate, and deploy data, often from a deficit-based approach? Do you know what it means to take a strengths-based approach in ILCBPR? Are you prepared to use Indigenous languages, measures, and concepts to convey what the English language is unable to?"

Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis in ILCBPR

Research funding agencies and the research community in Canada and the United States have only recently begun to recognize the importance of considering sex and gender in research teams and the data they collect and analyze, particularly in health research. That recognition, although important, has been imposed through a Western (i.e., White supremacist, settler-colonial, hetero-patriarchal) framework, and this practice is largely maintained through funding opportunities, including specific objectives, institutional structures, and systems, as well as privileged methods, approaches, and awardees (see Rose & Castleden, 2022).

Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis (SGBA) includes the consideration of sex-based (biological) and gender-based (sociocultural) differences between men, women,

boys, girls, and gender-diverse people in the design and practice of analysis (Masuda et al., 2018). The Government of Canada now employs Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) as an analytical tool to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs, and initiatives (Government of Canada, 2021). The "plus" in GBA+ goes beyond biological (sex) and sociocultural (gender) differences; it stresses the interaction and intersectionality of multiple identity factors (such as race, religion, age, and ability).

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has developed a culturally relevant gender-based analysis (CR-GBA) approach that goes beyond non-Indigenous understandings of GBA+ to recognize that sex and gender intersect, not just with other identity factors, but with historical, cultural, racialized, and political factors that shape experiences (NWAC, 2020, 2023). NWAC advances CR-GBA frameworks that situate genders within different contexts and across broad systems and structures. Further, CR-GBA reveals how the health of the air, land, and water interconnects with the health of Indigenous women's and other gender-diverse people's bodies (NWAC, 2023). The tenets of CBPR and ILCBPR align with the tenets of CR-GBA; that is, CR-GBA is a process that is collaborative, reciprocal, distinctions based, trauma informed, and culturally grounded (NWAC, 2023). In CBPR involving Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR, we have learned from those like Arvin et al. (2013) and Simpson (2017) about the need to recognize how Indigenous women and gender-diverse people are simultaneously affected by colonialism and heteropatriarchy, how oppression under colonialism is gendered, and how we must challenge dominant cultural narratives about gender and sex.

In the development of a research program, for which we were seeking funding from a federal health research agency, one of the application requirements was the identification of a "sex and gender champion." The champion needed to be a researcher who had expertise in the study of sex as a biological variable and/or gender as a determinant of health. Their role was to ensure that sex and/or gender considerations were integrated throughout the research. We had no difficulty in identifying such a champion for our team; however, they were non-Indigenous. But we took the Indigenous-led approach seriously, and so we approached the NWAC to partner with us in our work. We recognized that our request would involve a commitment of time and energy from NWAC, and we made clear that our request for their championing efforts was to be reciprocal in nature by asking how we could support their work and offering compensation for their time.

In one of our projects, gender considerations were very much at the forefront of the research, with the first research question asking, "What does a healthy future look like for the members of the community, across the gender spectrum, when our community gets back to living off the local environment using water (hydro), air (wind), earth (wood), and fire (solar)?" In the research objectives, we further articulated the gendered implications of exploring potential gender-based inequities in leadership, participation, benefits, and strategies being used to implement renewable energy projects in the community, including paying particular attention to potential gender-specific health inequities across the lifespan. In this community in particular, women have a central role in the well-being of the entire community and are the teachers who maintain the connection to the ancestors, to the earth, and to the land (Hanharan, 2008). The culture of this community was not based on a matriarchal or patriarchal system but was bilateral with a strong tendency to matrilocality (Bear Nicholas, 1994). In fact, the language of this nation does not differentiate gender (Bear Nicholas, 1994; Sherwood, 1983).

Questions to ask yourselves and develop protocols for: "How well-versed in CR-GBA is your team? What are your own assumptions about gender, and how did you develop them? What makes you 'well-versed' or not? What is your commitment to lifelong learning along this trajectory? Can you move beyond CR-GBA to make similar considerations for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) more broadly? For those who have not begun the journey, will they be required to participate in any training such as gender-based violence, trauma-informed approaches, human rights, power, privilege, antioppression practices, social justice, and other workshops offered by your university and/or communities and organizations during the first year of their involvement with your research program? If there is turnover of team members, will you preferentially recruit

with a CR-GBA lens? How will you know how you are doing with respect to CR-GBA?" You might consider annual anonymized surveys to assess the impact CR-GBA is having in terms of accelerating leadership opportunities for women and gender-diverse team members; this could be evidenced by new research grants, new research appointments, and publications led by diverse team members. Tokenism is a serious obstacle in Western research; how will you measure the impact of your CR-GBA approach that centers and celebrates it? An excellent resource for the application of CR-GBA can be found in NWAC's recent publication, *Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis: A Roadmap for Policy Development* (NWAC, 2023).

Finishing Up This Cup of Tea . . .

Diana: As an Indigenous researcher, there are two important points I must stress as we finish up our cup of tea. First, non-Indigenous researchers must equitably engage with Indigenous researchers in a research program, not just so they are able to check a box for the research application, but in true partnership. Second, research partners must recognize that Indigenous people come to research from a place of responsibility—responsibility to our ancestors who came before us, and to the generations yet to come. We come with a responsibility to all of Creation—*msit no'kmaq* (to all my relations). Our ethics are interwoven throughout the research relationship and are guiding us as we are doing the research for our community and for those who cannot or are no longer able to do so.

Heather: All researchers who are doing work "in a good way" (Ball & Janyst, 2008), by drinking tea in ILCBPR, are not just fake-listening to Indigenous community leaders or community members. They are not just stepping out of the office to have a one-off meeting with Indigenous Peoples to secure the letters of partnership required to prove they have relationships with them for their funding agencies. Those who are drinking tea are actively working to take the backseat in research (see Castleden, Martin, et al., 2017), to disrupt systemic, structural, and interpersonal acts of anti-Indigenous racism, to call out White supremacy in the academy—from policies and procedures to peer review and publishing—and to unlearn their ways of being in a lifelong journey of decolonizing themselves. As tea-drinkers, we can, we should, we must continually do better in the spirit of healing, truth, reconciliation, justice, and support for Indigenous rights and responsibilities in research.

Ron: As we finish our tea, with so much more to hear and say with one another, with so much left unsaid and only partially heard already, I am reminded that we are always in the middle, that all our words and listening are in the midst of making sense, of transforming the world. I am reminded as well to continue to search, and search again, and again, to re-search, so as to learn with others to know better what we already know, to know critically the truths that shape our everyday lives so that we can transform and overcome the damaged and limiting conditions of our situation, and so that we can renew and strengthen the life-sustaining relations that enable our creative response and realization of our freedom dreams. Indeed, I am reminded that this is why research, the disciplined investigation of our world and ourselves to seek the most rigorous understanding, is a kind of sacred way of life, one that requires great humility in light of the determined efforts of the generations who have come before us also searching, and re-searching; each generation must search for those truths that will shape the changes needed to end injustice, to awaken each of us to our responsibilities to one another and to the earth that is the very possibility of life. From this in-between place of becoming otherwise, I am grateful beyond words for the wisdom shared and earned in the struggles to embody ILCBPR of which I have been a part; I hope that our days together in dialogue, in tears and laughter, in visits to Elder trees and walks along river banks, in silent engagement with our keyboards and one another's thoughts, bear fruit for all who read these words. I hope the questions we have posed help others find their own pathways ahead, pathways that can only be forged in the walking, in the movement of these words and this work into other times and places through the words and work of each succeeding generation.

Nicole: As someone relatively new to CBPR with Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR, I have been reflecting on what I have learned in the months of meeting with this team to draft this essay. As our process on this specific task comes to a close, I find myself more focused on my unlearning than the learning. Dee, Heather, and Ron have graciously shared with me their insights and their wisdoms from their decades-long dedication to

CBPR with Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR. But what is most apparent to me is how they approach their research, the importance of relationality, and the ethic that grounds their work: with me, with each other, with the communities where/with whom they work. It is the time for personal chats at the beginning of meetings, the space they create for me to contribute my ideas or challenge theirs, and the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which they disrupt and decolonize the academy—and the responsibility I now feel to do the same.

Dee's Final Word: As we pass on our shared experiences, we also have much to learn from Nicole, as we witness her immersion into CBPR with Indigenous Peoples and ILCBPR. We hope that, like Nicole, you will have come to realize that "drinking tea" does not always take you on the path you expect. Rather, being open to and embracing the relationality required of ILCBPR work can generate the most transformative opportunities to do research with a "good heart and mind." As you too may be embarking on your own CBPR project, be it Indigenous-led or not, we hope that the key lessons we have learned on our collective journey, that we now share with you by inviting you to drink tea with us, can contribute toward ongoing efforts to decolonize all aspects of CBPR and the academy at large.

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Declaration of Interest

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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D'Ignazio, C., & Klein, L. F. (2020). *Data feminism*. MIT Press. 328 pp.

Review by Janette Leroux

Data and feminism are two words not often combined, leaving their intersections understudied and underpoliticized. However, authors Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein challenge their readers to explore the interconnections and antagonisms among these two important concepts. In their book *Data Feminism*, D'Ignazio and Klein (2020) define data feminism as a way of thinking about data, both its uses and limits, that is informed by direct experience, a commitment to action, and intersectional feminist principles. They demonstrate how data is power, but also the ways in which data can be used to challenge oppressive power structures and move our world closer to justice. This move toward justice begins with the acknowledgment that power is unequally distributed in the world, and the work of data feminism is to problematize how "standard practices in data science serve to reinforce these existing inequalities" (p. 8) while using data science to challenge and change the uneven distribution of power. Although *Data Feminism* is not explicitly stated to be engagement scholarship, I review it here as a timely and relevant contribution to collective ways of thinking about and working with data and communities toward goals of social justice.

D'Ignazio and Klein offer a novel conceptual contribution to the literature by outlining seven principles of data feminism around which they structure the book: examine power, challenge power, elevate emotion and embodiment, rethink binaries and hierarchies, embrace pluralism, consider context, and make labor visible. The authors lay out an argument for each principle, discuss how to put it into action, and then complicate it. Importantly, the authors enact the principles of data feminism through the expression of their commitments to reflexivity, transparency, deliberate citation practices, and open editing to draft the book. Core to the principles of *Data Feminism*, the authors argue, is an authentic commitment to coliberation. D'Ignazio and Klein are critical of data projects that "do good work, but . . . keep the roots of the problem in place" (p. 61). Throughout the book, the authors ground and reground their coliberation with their relational approach to working within the community, the valuation of different expertise(s), and the exemplar projects that they feature to help illustrate these principles. This same ethic of working with the community, elevating the voices and expertise of the community, and committing to transformative versus technical change aligns with critical community engagement scholarship (Mitchell, 2008; Shah, 2021; Stoecker, 2016). In this review, I highlight D'Ignazio and Klein's most compelling insights to demonstrate the relevance of *Data Feminism* to a wider audience of engagement scholars.

Data cannot be assumed to be an unmitigated good. For example, D'Ignazio and Klein describe the paradox of exposure where to not be counted is to be rendered invisible. However, for some people, there are times when it is more helpful to remain obscured, hidden, and invisible in data. The authors warn that data can unwittingly amplify deficit narratives, and they advocate that the harms and benefits of data should be balanced. They present a well-crafted argument for working *with* community as the way to dismantle the system of structural power in data. They challenge the narrative of individual technical genius, the fetishization of data and inflated sense of technical importance of having more data (they call this "Big Dick Data," p. 151), rather suggesting that there are no technophoric solutions. The authors suggest we question findings from data scientists who are "strangers in the dataset" (pp. 130–136) and fail to locate themselves within the project as if they are oblique. For D'Ignazio and Klein, "transparency is the new objectivity" (pp. 136–137), so they purport seeing themselves as a data sidekick rather than a superhero, and advocate for an approach that is careful, community-based,

and complex. This relational approach is a slow and careful process, where time and space need to be made for many to contribute and at all stages of the project.

For one, in order to do data on a local scale, one must engage and build trust with community groups, and work with nonexperts. This practice means valuing different forms of expertise alongside technical expertise, including lived, domain, organizing, and community history expertise. Moreover, as data researchers we must embrace the value of multiple perspectives while actively attending to and amplifying a multiplicity of voices. The authors provide several examples of new knowledge and new designs emerging from the margins, without eschewing complexity. But to dismantle the center/margins is to recognize subjugated knowledge and epistemic violence, which at the same time is to recognize epistemic advantage. Data is expensive, resource intensive, and is undertaken by powerful institutions. People in power accept evidence from those like themselves. It is here that D'Ignazio and Klein so deftly do their calling in, reminding readers of the other forms of power that exist alongside oppressive power—including bargaining and messaging power, as well as the power of interruption and subversion—all of which can be leveraged with data projects that challenge the status quo.

By carefully considering the politics of knowledge production, D'Ignazio and Klein teach us that counting can be healing when the community does it. Throughout their book, the authors continuously emphasize the importance of education and opportunities for technical learning and knowledge transfer within and across communities. Part of the work of building solidarity and collectivity is building technical capacity and social infrastructure within communities, and *Data Feminism* helps its readers to better understand how this work can be accomplished. The authors demonstrate how community engagement is a *process* as opposed to a *product*, and that doing data feminism is a commitment to centering, revising, learning, and "staying with the trouble" (p. 72).

I recognized several of the exemplar projects the authors cover but had never before thought to relate them. Reading the book was an exercise in considering and applying the principles they explore, and sharpening my thinking around the use of data in community-engaged learning and research. The authors demonstrate a humility that has inspired my own humility and reflexivity. As I read about these projects and the pitfalls of data through the lens of the principles of data feminism, I found myself considering projects in which I have participated that have been too removed, too technical, too data-focused, and have not gone "far enough" (p. 61) to challenge the current order.

A great strength of this book is how it is so grounded in practical examples and insights without simplifying the role of intersectional theory for understanding the problem of data and the solutions proposed. Doing data feminism is not straightforward. There are perpetual tensions in doing this work. It's not formulaic or prescriptive, but it holds real potential for making social change. D'Ignazio and Klein somehow balance the messy and humbling experience of data feminism while simultaneously calling in a wide audience of researchers and scholars. Therein also lies the gap that this book leaves. As with any trailblazing contribution, *Data Feminism* is just a beginning synthesis, and to do this good work as outlined we need more examples, more critical analysis, more reflection, more community. In fact, reviewing *Data Feminism* here and relating it to engagement scholarship is my own tangible action in response to their concluding chapter, "Now Let's Multiply." *Data Feminism* has a home with other contributions to the literature about community-engaged scholarship. It is boundary spanning and captures the imagination on what is possible when working with communities in principled ways.

In our increasingly data-driven world, data is no longer reserved for traditionally data-centric disciplines. *Data Feminism* is both a call to action and a roadmap for scholars of various disciplinary backgrounds. The book is vindicating for quantitative researchers and offers a place for data scientists in any project that is "a well-designed, data-driven, participatory process . . . that centers the standpoints of those most marginalized, empowers project participants, and builds new relationships across lines of social difference" (p. 148). For engagement scholars, *Data Feminism* offers an accessible introduction to the state and perils of status quo data science. For everyone, *Data Feminism* is affirming in the discerning of "good" from "justice" and the critical importance of the relational approach to working within the community and the valuing of different expertise(s).

About the Reviewer

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Kisker, C. B. (2021). *Creating Entrepreneurial Community Colleges: A Design Thinking Approach*. **Harvard University Press. 280 pp.**

Review by Peter M. Simpson

The field of higher education continues to grapple with the challenge of identifying interventions adequate to address today's myriad challenges. Climate change, pandemics and other global health threats, and increasingly stratified societies are prompting the field to both acknowledge and respond to rapidly changing conditions. Historically and contemporarily, community colleges have been central to granting enrollment to those who otherwise would not have access to a postsecondary education and its benefits. Despite efforts to improve access to higher education for historically disadvantaged students, inadequate public education funding, coupled with dwindling enrollment rates, has severely limited the long-term sustainability and viability of community colleges.

Community colleges face several expectations, including preparing students for the 21st century workforce, contributing meaningfully to the surrounding community, and hosting lifelong education programs. Such local and regional capacity-building expectations are a hallmark of the two-year sector. Thus, mentions of entrepreneurship, innovation, and revenue generation are often viewed as in conflict with community colleges' central mission and values.

However, education practitioner, research consultant, and policy specialist Carrie Kisker's (2021) *Creating Entrepreneurial Community Colleges: A Design Thinking Approach* utilizes design thinking as "a framework for exploring entrepreneurship in an empathetic manner, one that ensures new ventures amplify—rather than sacrifice—the institution's mission" (p. 3). Kisker argues that positioning a college's entrepreneurial actions as market-oriented creates the false dichotomy that a college serves either students or the market.

Her significant contribution to the field of higher education and innovative education lies in the basic premise of design thinking as a process that begins with "empathizing with stakeholder needs and iteratively prototyp[ing] and test[ing] new programs or ideas with those same stakeholders" (p. 4). In doing so, she underscores the importance of colleges pursuing mission-oriented approaches to fiscal sustainability, which enables them to best serve the unique needs of their students, and plan for their long-term future.

Creating Entrepreneurial Community Colleges expands dialogue between community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses, providing a renewed glance at the changing role of community colleges in the 21st century. Kisker advances discussions about design thinking practices and outcomes through four community colleges case studies focused on Maricopa Community Colleges, North Iowa Area Community College, Tarrant County College, and Valencia College. For a field in which research on four-year universities predominates, Kisker's text is a welcome addition.

Taking a Closer Look: Design Thinking in Depth

Community colleges lie at many intersections, serving as a site for vocational training, postsecondary credential attainment, and lifelong learning. Thus, the two-year sector serves both economic development and higher education attainment efforts. Given these important missions, as well as the pivotal role of community colleges for students and community members alike, leaders of two-year institutions need to find ways to mitigate fiscal uncertainty and ensure their institution's ability to carry out its educational and training purposes.

According to Kisker, this argument stands in contrast to the typical, albeit unsustainable, financial model of community colleges to educate students with the greatest needs, using the least funds, all amid an increasingly unequal higher education landscape (p. 20). Thus, she proposes using the tenets

of entrepreneurship, embracing failure, and rewarding risk-taking in the two-year sector as a method of creating transformative change and simultaneously meeting the needs of community members.

Lake et al. (2021) defined design thinking as a process of working in teams to recognize diverse contributions and engaging in active listening to find shared meaning. Their particular focus on teamwork, active listening, and shared meaning underscores the versatility of design thinking as both a starting point and process. Examples of entrepreneurship in the two-year sector include engaging in strategic alliances with businesses and community groups, providing training for local companies or industries, and creating a shared culture of supporting and rewarding innovative thinking.

These approaches ensure that collegiate leaders rethink what their stakeholders, students, and community members need. Challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic similarly prompted many institutions to consider alternative models of learning and development in an effort to plan for a sustainable future. Going forward, design thinking can play a critical role in helping students, researchers, and practitioners envision a more long-term, mission-driven, and community-centered approach to higher education. Its iterative, relational, and context-responsive process promises to enable community colleges to develop valued and viable responses to challenges through capacity building, which will deepen collaboration within educational institutions.

Design Thinking in the Field

Kisker's text utilizes case studies from a variety of metropolitan and rural community colleges. Despite their differences, her emphasis on stakeholder inclusivity, a gradual shift toward third-wave entrepreneurship, and the importance of community colleges in solving community problems unite these institutions. In doing so, all four case studies demonstrate the ability of colleges to remain mission-oriented in pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunity.

One example that Kisker offers is accelerated training programs, which lead to industry-recognized certifications, provide individuals with sustainable wages, and prepare graduates to enter the workforce in under 6 months (p. 88). Kisker's example of such programs illustrates a balance between individuals' goals, earning a livable wage, and contributing meaningfully to surrounding communities. Thus, community impact is both financially viable and sustainable in the short and long term, allowing community engagement to exist alongside more long-standing missions in the two-year sector, such as workforce development and teaching and learning.

Kisker argues that design thinking can foster greater alignment between student and market needs. Purposes such as increasing access to postsecondary education and providing opportunities for social mobility ensure that students and communities are kept at the center of all institutional decision-making processes. Approaches to student and community success mirror entrepreneurial thinking, which provides students with the skills and capabilities to succeed despite an uncertain future.

Thus, a design thinking framework allows students to align their learning with workforce and industry needs, prepare for long-term endeavors, and safeguard institutional mission priorities. Kisker also argues that design thinking requires an ability to prioritize thinking differently, which allows collegiate leaders to think otherwise about challenges facing the two-year sector.

Open-minded thinking is critical for addressing contemporary challenges through an approach in which collegiate leaders share their ideas, support them with data, and creatively plan for ways to improve the lives of students and community members. Given the lingering impacts of COVID-19, and an increase in community needs, community colleges will be well served to prioritize creative problem solving and design thinking as multifaceted approaches to solving chronic dilemmas.

Despite the increasing demands on community colleges, Kisker reminds readers that historically, the two-year sector served as an alternative to more traditional four-year programs because of its alignment with workforce and industry needs. Thus, a culture of agility and change is common among these institutions as they have endeavored to serve the myriad pathways of their students. This flexibility will serve community colleges well going forward as they adapt their modes of instruction and community engagement to optimize benefits for students and communities.

Engaging faculty and staff in conversations early, sharing decision-making collaboratively, and providing multiple opportunities to solicit feedback are three prominent examples of design thinking in action. In the two-year sector, nonacademic stakeholders play a significant part, including parents, community members, and local business owners. Lastly, Kisker recommends speaking about the need to be entrepreneurial and innovative in a way that is congruent with traditional higher education values, including collaboration, creativity, and service. Making this connection may help further communicate the importance of this mindset to long-standing faculty and staff members who may fear that their institutions will prioritize business needs over those of students.

Although Kisker provides readers with several insights as an applied researcher, this approach partially limits her text's usefulness for current community college leaders. The tension between historical and contemporary purposes and missions of the two-year landscape and increasing calls for entrepreneurial ideas grounded in local contexts underscore the unique position within which community colleges currently find themselves. Aligning existing programs and services with community needs and increasing the importance of community engagement in faculty tenure and advancement processes are two pertinent examples Kisker provides (p. 195).

However, her use of a case study research design limits the utility and applicability by community college leaders. Although all four case studies are well-developed, readers may benefit from findings and practices drawn from a larger sample of community colleges. Despite the limitations of Kisker's text, it succeeds in pointing to the promise of design thinking as a framework for mission-driven innovation, people-centered entrepreneurship, and community colleges' success.

Concluding Thoughts

Carrie Kisker's *Creating Entrepreneurial Community Colleges: A Design Thinking Approach* is timely and situated at the intersection of multiple critical concerns facing colleges: Public disinvestment in higher education and increased pressure for education and workforce alignment. She makes a compelling case for salient interventions meant to ensure that education and training remain at the forefront of the two-year sector, and that students and communities continue to be served in fiscally sustainable ways.

Kisker also offers design thinking as one approach to reducing the reliance of community colleges on dwindling governmental funding allocations in favor of a flexible approach that ties internal allocations to outcomes, costs, and strategic objectives. This renewed mission reorients the two-year sector toward serving students and playing a pivotal role in the economic sustainability of their communities.

Despite Kisker's contributions, it is unclear to what extent her recommendations will be feasible in the two-year sector given institutional challenges, financial constraints, and limited human resources. It is also unclear how well design thinking maps onto more centralized collegiate systems, such as the City University of New York or State University of New York systems.

Her text is best utilized by those who have an in-depth knowledge of the day-to-day workings of two-year colleges and may best facilitate interdisciplinary partnerships to address community and student priorities. Going forward, community college leaders will need to become more adept at illustrating their institution's value to policymakers, governmental leaders, and industry partners.

Without an entrepreneurial mindset coupled with an ability to implement financially sustainable ways of meeting student and community needs, one of our nation's mechanisms for social mobility and regional development may be in jeopardy. However, with renewed interest in the two-year sector, community colleges are well positioned to think proactively about meeting future needs and contributing meaningfully to regional economic development. Design thinking is a powerful approach to mission-oriented change when coupled with a willingness from faculty and staff members, as well as engagement with governmental and industry stakeholders.

I posit entrepreneurship as the "new mission" of community colleges, and endeavor to situate it as the undergirding mission challenging students and college leaders to think critically about solving problems for an increasingly unpredictable future. In the two-year sector, the core business choices of a college are those that make it profitable and sustainable. Thus, our understanding of public institutions in service of the public good must now incorporate an understanding of their role in business as well.

About the Reviewer

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