

JOURNAL of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SCHOLARSHIP

Volume 7, Number 1, Spring 2014

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The 15th Annual
Engagement Scholarship Consortium
Conference

Engaging for Change: Changing for Engagement

hosted by the

University of Alberta
in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

October 5 - 8, 2014

The University of Alberta invites engaged scholars throughout the world to the 15th annual Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference, to be held in Edmonton, Canada with pre-conference days on October 5 & 6 and full conference on October 7 & 8.

Our conference theme is Engaging for Change: Changing for Engagement and will challenge scholars, students, and community partners to discuss international advances in the scholarship of engagement.



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**JOURNAL of
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
and SCHOLARSHIP**

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ISSN 1944-1207. Printed by University Printing at The University of Alabama.

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The cover for this issue was designed by
Antwon Key, a senior advertising major at
the University of Alabama. Photos were
supplied by Cabrini College.

Connecting with Community Partners and Student Scholars

As a board member and reviewer I had read many compelling manuscripts each with the potential to make significant contributions to the practice and scholarship of engagement. This has encouraged me, as associate editor, to see more first-time authors, particularly students and community partners, published in *JCES*. While *JCES* has always been responsive to the needs of communities, community partners, and students, issue 7.1 is a significant new step toward enhancing the connections between our professional knowledge and practice and our community partners and student scholars.

Our Community Voices essay is unique because it's a community piece written by a student, Jason Merrick. Jason, a third year social work major at Northern Kentucky University, is the voluntary chairman for the Northern Kentucky chapter of a grassroots community organization known as People Advocating Recovery (PAR). PAR's mission is to remove the barriers to long-term recovery from the disease of drug addiction, and to address the stigma and discrimination associated with addiction. He also works part time at Transition's Grateful Life Center, a 100-bed inpatient long-term men's recovery center. He's a very impressive young man who has already accomplished a lot. His essay is written from his perspective as a community activist.

Service-learning is all about becoming better citizens. By engaging ourselves with a community through service-learning, we develop first-hand knowledge, an understanding of the intricacies of real world, small-town social and power systems, and we are enriched with a fuller appreciation of the relationships between community and academy. Our Student Voices paper is a collaboration between four undergraduate students and their faculty advisor from the University of Virginia. While the paper itself is a compelling account of how their work in South Africa helped improve a community and expand their own intellectual and practical horizons, it is their transference of that knowledge that will help us create a more inclusive platform for the larger community of scholars. This paper is significant too; it is the first article reviewed by members of our student editorial board-SCOPE (Scholars for Community Outreach, Partnership and Engagement).

SCOPE membership is currently limited to University of Alabama undergraduate and graduate students from all disciplines. Graduate students who are members of SCOPE are recognized as SCOPE Fellows and are offered the opportunity to serve on the *JCES* Editorial Review Board as reviewers of manuscripts for the Student Voices section of *JCES*, under the guidance of Editorial Liaison Dr. Melanie Miller and Editorial Assistant Vicky Carter. The use of SCOPE Fellows as Student Voices reviewers is the brainchild of *JCES* Editor Dr. Cassie Simon. It is her vision to expand this board to include student reviewers at other universities in the near future. Our thanks to our first three reviewers; their comments made this a far better and more useful paper.

The remainder of this issue is an alluring blend of cutting-edge engagement research, collaborations, and innovative pedagogies. Paige Bray and her associates share a deliberation guide to successful collaborative partnerships between parents and families and schools. Chaebong Nam discusses a youth asset mapping project conducted by a group of African American youth, who investigated local assets available for teens to create a map using digital media tools in order to develop and share information. David Dunbar and his team present their analysis of a model for designing and conducting an interdisciplinary team-taught community-based research course employing instructors with different disciplinary backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Sarah Banks and her co-authors introduce us to the advantages of using co-inquiry to design and manage projects and in the process they provide critical new insights into the process of collaboration. Sharon Paynter shares a provocative discussion on how engaged scholarship and applied research intersect and forces us to reconsider many strongly held beliefs about the work we do. Melissa Simon and her team describe what we believe is the first community-based participatory research study to elicit perceptions of research within an underserved suburban community. They examined community members' knowledge and attitudes about research as a way to improve our understanding of and participation in research within rapidly growing, underserved suburban populations. Finally, Demetria Rougeaux Shabazz and Leda Cooks demonstrate how increased cultural competencies could be learned as a result of improved intergroup understanding, interaction, and dialogue in their adaptation of asset mapping.

Collaborative Action Inquiry: A Tool for, and Result of, Parent Learning and Leadership

Paige M. Bray, Joan Pedro, Eric M. Kenney, and Mary Gannotti

Abstract

This parent information project is grounded in the notion of parental involvement as advocacy that benefits children in the community. Supported by a state-level early childhood foundation in a learning partnership with a national, non-partisan research foundation, this project engaged parent leaders from five communities as co-researchers in identifying assets, listening to citizens, capacity building, and knowledge development. University researchers engaged with co-researchers as essential collaborators enacting this participatory action-oriented project in order to gain insights on family involvement and community action contributing to thriving children, birth to age 8. Creation of a deliberation guide was a tangible product of an iterative cycle of inquiry and grassroots, collaborative process to promote change and empowerment. Co-researcher insights and observations, formally captured in an intentional focus group, are presented with equal importance as author voices. The use of face-to-face time and virtual space is addressed. Implications for parent leadership, transformative knowledge production, and educational change are explored.

Introduction

There is overwhelming support for engaging parents and families in the education of their children as parent involvement is linked to positive learning outcomes. When families are engaged in the educational decisions for their children, the research shows better student achievement and retention in school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005). Parents and professionals working together on a consistent basis provide an opportunity for each group to gain a better understanding of the other. This information underscores an urgent need to engage in reflective dialogue (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). The Parent Information Action Research (PIAR), funded by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, was grounded in the theoretical foundations of parental involvement as advocacy that benefits children in the community. The work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) undergirds the work that took place in this partnership with the parent leaders, who contributed as co-researchers. Additionally, the concepts of family systems, self-efficacy, and agency were also underlying assumptions that were explored as the PIAR team undertook and completed the project.

The project was supported by a state-level early childhood foundation in a learning partnership with a national, non-partisan research foundation devoted to finding ways to increase citizen participation in American society. University researchers enacted this project, collaborating with parent co-researchers to create an Issue Guide. This

participatory action-oriented project methodology uniquely engaged parent co-researchers in a leadership capacity in order to document insights on family involvement contributing to thriving children, birth to 8. The outcome of this research in an accessible Issue Guide is gained insights into key issues in family involvement and community collaboration all presented in a format that fosters seeking strategies to ensure early childhood success. The goals of this research were to: a) engage parents as co-researchers in a participatory action-oriented research process for their own knowledge development, b) create an Issue Guide grounded in actual parent and citizen concerns, and, c) capture the specific vantage point of the parents via focus groups.

The PIAR project emphasis was intentionally on children birth to age 8 and their communities. While not a prescribed relationship between children or parents and schools, the early care and education of children across the early childhood span meant attending to the roles of family as well as informal and formal institutional education in the young child's life. When talking about children or student "education" we are inclusive of early care and education addressing birth through grade 3. The educational aspects of child, parent, and community are layered throughout the PIAR project.

For the purpose of this research parent education is defined as the tools and resources that parents need to pursue new knowledge (Frusciante, 2010). In addition, parent engagement through

parent education is understood to be the incredible power the early care and early childhood education needs to harness. Through directly attending to the child in the context of the family, as well as by supporting comprehensive community resources and systemic support for parenting, we can realize national goals for more children in more families in more neighborhoods in America.

Our participatory PIAR team consisted of 10 parent co-researcher leaders from five communities engaging with the university lead researcher and research assistant in action research to identify issues in community-oriented parent leadership. Not new to parenting, the co-researchers were used to being active members in their community and had either formalized leadership training or community-based leadership experience previously. During this project, the parent co-researchers, drawing from what they heard parents and citizens in their home communities articulate, identified their own questions and practical outcomes, which are expressed in our Issue Guide. The Kettering Foundation Issue Guide, or Issue Book as they are also called, is “for forums that encourage serious deliberation on hard policy choices facing the public” (<http://www.cpn.org/partners/Kettering.html>). The National Issues Forum (Muse, 2009) typically produces and disseminates three such documents each year. The creation of the PIAR Issue Guide is a tangible product of grassroots community work in collaboration with university, state, and national agencies to promote change and empowerment.

The process of developing our particular Issue Guide was intentionally structured to parallel the iterative action research inquiry cycles. Our Issue Guide has been disseminated both regionally and nationally. Drawing from selected literature, we now examine theories explaining the value of community context, what significance there is to the concept of capacity building, and lessons learned from partnerships involving parents and families.

Individuals Drawing on Community Context

The relational understanding of family and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) paired with self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) sets the overarching theoretical orientation for this project. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 2005) ecological perspective highlights that families are the most influential factor in child development, centering the socialization of the child within the nested contexts of family and community. Work with

parents can be grounded in the Bronfenbrenner ecological model, which acknowledges that the most important setting for a young child is the family unit because it has the most emotional influence on the child. Bronfenbrenner further contends that all of these contexts can be thought of as environments or settings that hold people, which influence each other and are influenced by culture. Understanding that a child affects as well as is affected by the settings in which that child spends time, the child is at the center. The number and quality of the connections between the settings in which a young child spends time also have important implications for his/her development.

An innovation from the current literature that is deemed to be successful in the United States is the Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) initiative launched by the Kellogg Foundation. This project was developed to promote permanent improvement in the systems that affect early learning, particularly for children ages 3 to 8. This initiative invited parent engagement, public will, culture, and a coordinated service delivery and has partnerships as an important component (Berkley, 2010).

In another of his works, “Rebuilding The Nest,” Bronfenbrenner (1990) lays out five propositions that describe the processes that foster the development of human competence and character. At the core of these principles is a child’s emotional, physical, intellectual, and social need for ongoing, mutual interaction with a caring adult, and preferably with many adults. The effective functioning of child-rearing processes in the family and other child settings requires public policies and practices that provide place, time, stability, status, recognition, belief systems, customs, and actions in support of child-rearing activities not only on the part of parents, caregivers, teachers, and other professional personnel, but also relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, communities, and the major economic, social, and political institutions of the entire society (Bronfenbrenner, 1990). Bronfenbrenner (1979) states, “Whether parents can perform effectively in their child-rearing roles within the family depends on the role demands, stresses, and supports emanating from other settings...”(p. 7).

This social ecological model is most broadly understood to be the study of the influence of people on one another in a particular environment (Hawley, 1950). When looking at adults, the individual’s roles and the interpersonal features

of a group have been explored further (Gregson, 2001). In contemporary use of this model, Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, & Rinderle (2006) inquire about the role of technology as one of many layers of interactions integrated into our lives.

Capacity Building: To What End?

The family systems theory offers an additional lens on parental involvement and information. It emphasizes the inter-relationships between family members and how a family's psychological and physical health affects the care they give their children with special needs (Odom, Yoder, & Hill, 1988). The family systems (Olson, Sprengle, & Russell, 1979), family stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983), and family life-cycle theory (Turnbull, Summers, & Bortherson, 1986) have all contributed greatly to our understanding of family function. Family stress model (Conger, Rueter & Conger, 2000) demonstrates how stressors the parents experience can cause conflict and disrupt parenting and interactions between the parent and the child, leading to poor outcomes.

There is a great deal of diversity among and within families in how people cope with and deal with different life circumstances. However, there is a body of literature to support specific child and family characteristics as being associated with greater stress. For example, families of children with special health care needs, in general, experience more stress than families of typically developing children (Barlow, Cullen-Powell, & Chesire, 2006). English as a second language, poverty, and level of education are related to increased parental stress and depression, and are associated with child behavior problems (Patcher, Auinger, Palmer, & Weitzman, 2006). PIAR by design kept the complexities of families' lives at the forefront of the work in order to have applied outcomes.

Most of the work on self-efficacy has been conducted by Bandura, who defined self-efficacy relatively broadly as "people's judgments of their capacities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). He argues that efficacy is a "generative capacity in which cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral sub-skills must be organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes" (Bandura, 1997, p. 36). He defined perceived self-efficacy as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate

themselves, and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1994). Thus what matters to perceived self-efficacy is not the number of skills people have, but rather what people believe they can do with those skills under certain circumstances. This concept is most central to people's everyday lives (Bandura, 1989).

Self-efficacy is understood to operate throughout a family system, in both the parents and the children. Bandura (1986) states that children make choices based on the influence of self-efficacy. Persistence, such as how long children persist when they confront obstacles or failures, is also related to self-efficacy in the ability to define a goal, persevere, and see oneself as capable. Parents and other adults can help children develop self-efficacy by reinforcing their strengths and helping them identify steps or paths to achieve their goals. Witte (2000) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs about one's ability to perform the recommended response to avert the threat" (p. 20). A lack of skills, self-confidence, knowledge, and access are common barriers to performance. Social cognitive theory has outlined two major components of self-efficacy: establishment of goals and the ability to organize necessary skills to achieve the goals. The goals, whether explicitly stated or implicitly harbored, provide major motivations for people to execute their skills. While taking on impossible tasks can dampen self-efficacy, goals too easy to accomplish do not benefit self-efficacy either. Thus helping people to establish appropriate goals or appropriate perception of goals is a good starting point. Bandura (1986) also emphasizes that self-efficacy is behavior and context specific. Therefore the skills recommended should be related to specific target behaviors in the target context. Designed as both modeling and experiential learning through action research, PIAR drew on and built upon the adult parent co-researchers' individual and collective skills and capacities. Community development and knowledge creation, specifically through the development of the skills and capacities of parents, are powerful tools that community organizations, institutions of higher education, and philanthropic institutions can invest in.

Knopf and Swick (2007) share that involving families capitalizes on family strengths to develop an empowering relationship with the families. Empowerment can be defined as a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives (Page & Czuba, 1999).

When empowered, people see their skills and capacities and in turn see themselves as knowledge creators as well as critical consumers with the ability to change or grow. A dynamic agency (Bray, 2008) is the development of self-identified capacities that are created in the actions of using talents in multiple contexts. When educational institutions learn about families and develop programs that would encourage parent and family involvement, there are successful efforts to engage public will, culture, and coordinated service delivery (Berkley, 2010).

Methodology: Parent Co-Researchers as Essential Collaborators By Design

What we call community-based action research is methodology that incorporates commitments and practices that put parent co-researchers at the center of PIAR as engaged knowledge-makers instead of as more traditional, passive research participants. Rather than seek answers for more traditional, pre-determined research questions, this research project captures the lived co-constructed experiences of the parent co-researchers (Collins, 2000) and their reflections on this experience, in their own words (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Seidman, 2006).

As articulated in the PIAR Issue Guide, the focus statement is: Connecting parents, who are those with primary responsibility for a young child, and others in the community to information about early childhood is key to the success of young children. Parents who have access to quality information and the supports to use that information can make better decisions regarding children. The Issue Guide is a tangible outcome of this research using a community-based (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Horton, 1998; Stringer, 1999, 2008), participatory action research model (Freire, 1970; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Maguire, 1987). The model, our methodology, and the Issues Guide are located in an explicit set of social values and assumptions including: a) engaging “with” people in a process, not “for” or “on” research subjects; b) a democratic, inclusive process that enables participation of all parent co-researchers while developing critical consciousness; c) an equitable process recognizing human capacity and an individual’s ability to contribute; and, d) a liberating and life enhancing activity with the express commitment to practical outcomes that transform structures and relationships.

Process of Community Partners Selection

The PIAR project was funded through parent co-researcher stipends, researcher time, and community honoraria in five Discovery Network communities (<http://discovery.wcgmf.org>), a decade long initiative of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. The community selection process was designed to encourage Discovery communities to propose and support parent co-researchers in their communities and to provide a grounded leadership development experience so that those parent teams could help in both understanding and addressing parent information needs in communities. Eligible communities were those designated as having a completed community plan for early care and education. In the application process, communities needed to demonstrate that they had at least two parents interested in working on the project and willing to make a multi-year commitment. The communities also were asked to describe how the notion of parent information fit within their community blueprint plan and what their interest was in working on action research with university support.

The parent co-researcher team consisted of nine women and one man from five distinct communities. Of the co-researchers nine were parents and one a grandparent in the role of primary care providers of a child or children. The co-researchers’ children ranged in age from early childhood to adulthood. The parent co-researchers self-identified as African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and multiracial. All co-researchers reside in urban areas, be that a large urban center or more isolated city with rural surrounding, and suburban communities in Connecticut.

Process of Parent Co-researcher Selection and Training

The knowledge development and capacity building opportunities for parents have driven the design of this project. True to the legacy of the methodology, this project was designed to inform and provide multiple opportunities to act on and internalize new information with the support of the project team. The PIAR Issue Guide is the first concrete product resulting from the parent co-researchers being in the role of knowledge producers.

The 10 parent co-researchers represented five communities located across Connecticut. Team interactions were designed to a) transmit key training information and knowledge-building experiences, b) foster collaborative exchange

among and between team members, and c) provide supported practice for new skills with a problem solving lens. Distance and time concerns made frequent PIAR team meetings of the parent co-researchers, the primary university researcher, and research assistant impractical. A virtual space was created to augment the monthly PIAR team meetings. This web space included basic project information, contact information, and a discussion board with technical assistance and monitoring by the research assistant. The specific discussion board feature allowed for the constant contact of parent co-researchers with one another as well as priority access to the lead researcher and research assistant. In addition, the primary researcher, often with the research assistant, would travel to each community specifically to meet with each community team in between the larger group meetings. Given the generative nature of the project, the consistent face-to-face contact, the coming to know each other through collaboration, and the virtual space discussion board, there was a relatively uninterrupted stream of communication for parent co-researchers to discuss process and grapple with producing tangible outcomes.

In addition, the discussion board was used as a capacity building forum for co-researchers. Weekly discussion board assignments included introduction to action research models, reflections on various stages of the project, and other related topics. The discussion board quickly became a sounding board for all co-researchers, allowing them to support one another in various stages of the project and continually reflect on the action research process. Additional particulars about parent co-researcher training are explicated in the data collection and documentation section that follows.

The lead university researcher/primary facilitator had credibility with the parent co-researchers as a parent, as an early childhood educator, and as a linked community member. While a central and visible presence in the work, by design the facilitator role evolved from central to marginal as part of parent capacity building in ways that are sustaining and sustainable. As a team we found that the greatest challenge of this participatory, collaborative approach was the tyranny of time.

Data Collection and Documentation—Iterative Cycles of Inquiry

The pages that follow capture the chronological sequence of the first year of the PIAR project:

a) learning the landscape: listening to parents and community members, b) moving from process to product, and c) reflection on process and the Issue Guide production. In the next section, the results, including themes and parent co-researcher insights, are explored.

Learning the Landscape: Listening to Parents and Community Members

The first task before embarking on creating the Issue Guide was to listen to parents and citizens in each of the five communities about their concerns. Before one-on-one conversations and small group discussions, each parent co-researcher was trained in community interaction and individual approach. Community interaction training consisted of naming, locating, and engaging with key individuals and entities in one-on-one meetings or in a group setting. Co-researchers were then given the opportunity to role-play concern gathering interactions (Kelley, 2008). In addition, the group brainstormed various venues where the concern gathering might happen: Where would such a discussion be fruitful? Where would time and context allow for forthright answers? What locations would provide a cross section of the community or how many specific locations would be needed to capture a cross-section of the community? After cross-examination of locations, the consideration of which stakeholders, and sub-groups, would be approached was fully vetted by the PIAR team.

Each pair of parent co-researchers went back to their communities to listen and gather information, perspective and options from various individuals, some already established community committees or collaborative-related groups, and a cross-section of stakeholders. The question presented to each interviewee was: What concerns you about nurturing young children (birth to age 8)? Parent co-researchers documented the responses, which in turn informed the content of the Issue Guide.

Through our virtual space discussion board format co-researchers were able to discuss the process, post successes, and offer support to each other around challenges related to concern gathering. The concern gathering was a two-fold capacity-building opportunity. First, the co-researchers gained communication experience by listening to others—not just talking to others—around the issues for young children. Second, the co-researchers learned to collaborate with each other. Both of these capacities were overtly introduced and then consistently modeled by the primary researcher/facilitator in the face-to-face

meetings complementing the agreed upon group norms and anticipating transfer to the virtual space.

The first capacity building experience in communication not only expanded and affirmed the co-researchers' understanding of the issues around young children but also formalized the act of listening and talking with community members. The validation of listening to everyday citizens as a form of contextualizing inquiry and valuable data gathering was critical at this initial stage. This validation then integrated into the co-researchers' understanding of their own knowledge, possessed and newly acquired, as valuable. The second capacity, collaboration with each other, could be understood as key contributions from each individual and to the success of the team of co-researchers as well as to the shape of the project with the subsequent completion of the Issue Guide work. The power of collaboration was further underscored by grounding of the community-based nature of the concern gathering and linkage to strategic community work. These understandings would not have been possible without the virtual space discussion board complementing the face-to-face team meetings.

Process to Product

After one month of intensive listening to over 100 citizens' concerns, the co-researchers came back together to report what they heard. Each co-researcher shared the concerns expressed in their community. Then, as a full PIAR team, including the parent co-researchers, the University of Hartford lead researcher and research assistant, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund Knowledge Development officer, and the Kettering Foundation facilitators' coach in the Issue Guide production, reviewed the concerns and grouped them based on relative themes. This naming and framing process (Kelley, 2008) looked for common patterns and themes among the concerns and across communities. By the end of the session three distinct components for the Issue Guide were identified: parental responsibility, systemic problems, and societal value of parenting.

These three distinct components were utilized to develop the Issue Guide grid, a visual summary of the identified components with three action options. Each action option considers the stakeholders and possible action locations along with the inevitable drawbacks that come with any possible action or solution (<http://discovery.wcgmf.org/lookingforanswerstogether>).

The grid development enabled citizen member checking of the ideas and iterations of the concepts without becoming bogged down in lengthy text. In most cases the draft grid was presented to the same individuals who expressed the concerns during the concern gathering. Once again, forums were typically semi-structured response group opportunities created by existing committees, organizations, or ad-hoc community events. Each semi-structured response group was designed to gather feedback on the grid including word choice, questions regarding the action options or stakeholders, and any concerns not heard or represented by the grid. The information gathered was used to reshape the grid, clarifying statements and reworking concerns.

The culmination of this multi-month iterative process was a restructured, well-vetted Issue Guide grid used in a statewide structured focus group forum. This three-hour statewide event drawing 28 people from 8 communities and inclusive of parents, concerned citizens, early care educators, community service providers, and activists engaged people with the grid. This forum was facilitated by the project's lead researcher and was audio recorded with participant permission via an IRB-approved informed consent. The initial portion offered a sample forum for how the grid might be used in a community to promote discussion and link people to information. The rest of the forum was used to respond directly to the grid word choice, clarification of options and drawbacks, and any concerns that arose. Thus this forum utilized the grid in the intended capacity, to foster discussion related to concerns of nurturing young children.

Ultimately the lead university researcher, consulting with a journalist experienced in the Issue Guide format, wrote the Issue Guide text that was brought back to the parent co-researchers and funders for multiple rounds of vetting. The foundation-to-foundation learning agreement enabled this multi-layered collaboration.

Reflection on Process and Issue Guide Production

Intentionally and by design, this first year was modeling the iterative process of action research and engaging the parent co-researchers in the experience of data collection and documentation for the Issue Guide in preparation for their own future community-specific work. This initial "performing" has led to a negotiated experience, or what Daiute (2004) calls "contesting" of the norms and moving toward a process-end "centering", which

is at least the integration of the new knowledge if not a completely transformative event resulting from engagement.

A parent co-researcher specific focus group was conducted in December 2011 as an opportunity to reflect on the first year of the project. Parent co-researchers were presented with specific questions and offered the opportunity to reflect and chart responses for the group. The initial questions presented by the primary researcher for this focus group were: Reflecting on the last months, what have you learned? What skills, capacity, knowledge, confidence have you gained? What continues to be a challenge? Some overview is provided here and fuller capturing of parent co-researcher themes are found in the results section that follows.

After eight months of engaging in this new work, parent co-researchers relayed a newly found appreciation for working in the action inquiry process and how the process demands slowing down to reflect throughout the action research cycles. "Taking time doesn't mean you're behind," stated Carmen. Another parent co-researcher, Rubis, reflected that she had learned to push herself, to go out and get connected with the community, and make things change. William stated what he gained most from the first year was the coaching, the direct training, and time to practice what he learned. Collectively, the PIAR team was experiencing the acquisition of information as power gained. This developing understanding informed a deepening meaning of the parent information project itself. In addition, co-researchers commented that they appreciated the opportunity to work with other communities throughout the state. The specific community resources and project support structures served as models for each co-researcher and across the five communities. Discussion and collaboration provided insight and input on the various methods and sources. Finally, the valuing of collaboration and the strong relationships built among team members was overwhelmingly identified when responding to "what have you gained?"

Challenges of the project reflected frustration by some with the ambiguity of time and lack of formula or prescription for the action research process. The act of learning the action research process while engaging in the research was irritating to some co-researchers, especially those who favor looking ahead and knowing the final outcome at the beginning or what we came to name as degrees of tolerance for the "process-product tension."

A related but distinctive challenge was co-

researchers managing their time. For the co-researchers having boundaries about the amount of time given to the project, precisely because the work was compelling, became an on-going how-do-we-manage-this conversation. Precisely because the project activities related to real concerns and linked directly to known community faces and articulated community struggles, the co-researchers engaged in an ongoing struggle to balance responsiveness and self-care. From the beginning of PIAR, the expectations of 12 hours per month over the course of 18 months for the co-researcher were clear and documented. The desire for bounded work in the complex lives of the parent co-researchers was often in direct competition with doing-what-it-takes to address community and project needs. From the outset it was clear the co-researchers would be fundamental to the creation of the Issue Guide.

While it was anticipated the co-researchers would find common ground and rallying points in their communities, the full understanding of how individuals impacted the work was intensely experienced. What we came to call "pivot people" or key stakeholders, were those who could change the course of events by either being "blockers," "facilitators," or both. The extent that some projects threatened certain stakeholders in a community and their attempts to "shut-up" or shut-down co-researchers was not fully expected. Since not an issue of paramount danger, it was unforeseen affirmation of the co-researchers getting to the weighty issues. And as a co-researcher articulated, "...that just makes me keep moving forward and keep going."

While community involvement and interaction is ideal, it is not always easy with busy schedules for parents and children. In particular, Carmen spoke of the challenge of realizing there were at least four distinct sub-sections of her city all struggling in different ways and needing different responses. The challenge of balancing home, work, family, and the project made realities of the depth and scope of the work overwhelming at times. This challenge was echoed by many of the parents, often noted to include the intensity of the listening and responding required by the work. These demands were empathized with and understood by the university researchers.

In combating the intense depth and scope of need, the project design supported both physical meetings and trainings as well as the virtual space interactions, including the project discussion board. Responding to all participatory attempts

by using physical and virtual spaces created a different challenge along with the intense 18-month time commitment. Parents at different points contested the need for systematic documentation and data collection throughout the process, stating it was often frustrating and too time consuming. While the discussion board in virtual space clearly enabled communication that strengthened team collaboration, the time to attend to high volume posts on the discussion board could be a burdensome project demand. The essential integration of this virtual layer became a conflict between assisting communication and a burden of time the access created.

As part of the dissemination and roll-out of the Issue Guide, conversations are under way about how to continue the work with parents as lead facilitators and respond to requests from other Connecticut communities wanting to engage in a forum. In keeping with the project's commitment to access, English and Spanish versions of the Issue Guide are accessible online as well as in print form (<http://www.hartford.edu/parentii>). This project's process and the Issue Guide product are compelling for the continued learning about the experience of parents working with other parents in communities in the development of parent leadership and to improve outcomes for all children.

Results and Co-Researcher Reflections

The parent co-researchers are core contributors to the content of this work. This results section addresses themes from the first year of the project illuminating how the process connected individuals to a deeper understanding of the notion of participatory research and prompted the team to continue inquiries of community action. Thus of equal importance as our author voices are the insights and observations of the co-researchers as they reflected on the first year of the project in the December 2011 formal focus group. This focus group was audio recorded with the informed consent granted by each co-researcher. The themes around the collaborative inquiry experience illuminated by the parent co-researchers are presented in Table 1.

At the end of the first year, the co-researchers accomplished a tangible outcome of their collaborative participatory action.

Discussion of Implications

This project is unique for the grassroots grounding fostered and funded by a state-based foundation committed to early childhood im-

provement. The state-based foundation partnering with a national foundation championing democratic deliberation and a university for research methodologies and rigor make the project not only unique, but a compelling project for replication. The layers of engagement, the iterative cycles of action, and the parent co-researcher contributions while building capacity make this project translatable to endless contexts and topics. Due to the process-to-product progression, there is a perpetuating momentum that builds during the life of the project, a desirable energy in any community change action project. Finally, the sustainability of investment is quite high as the knowledge acquired and capacity built are located within the individual co-researchers and carried forward with them into the work. Possessing the tools of inquiry, the discipline of documentation, and the capacity to articulate the knowledge produced, the co-researchers turned to application through action projects in their specific communities.

PIAR underscores the importance of participatory work occurring over time in locations at least familiar to if not "owned" by the parent leaders such as the 10 co-researchers on this project. For the parent co-researchers to draw upon their possessed leadership skills and community connections, the work needed to be located in physical places that honored their efforts and contexts that made visible their existing knowledge. The project design deliberately balanced the validating of the parent co-researcher expertise in their community, building their self-efficacy, with the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. The project facilitator consistently modeled skills as well as made visible individuals' talents to the team. The responsive pacing of capacity-building exercises and scaffolding product requirements were intended to optimize internalization.

Implications for methodological choices and community change

PIAR makes visible the repercussions of research design and methodological choices enacted. The transformational nature of this work occurs when efforts go beyond transactional researcher engagement with a community. The commitment to cycles of engagement that authentically build levels of individual parent leadership capacity is paramount. The subsequent fostering of a dynamic agency (the active interplay among and between entities) was not only through interaction with the methodology but also the capturing of the individual's power to transform

Table 1. Co-Researcher Inquiry Perspective—Shared and Particular

Theme from Collaborative Inquiry Experience	Sub-Theme from Co-Researcher Team: Shared Perspective	Parent Co-Researcher Perspective: Particular Voices
How can the co-researchers voice what they learned, including navigating what action and non-action was required to move the project forward?	More specifically, managing the complexity of the widespread, diverse Issue Guide audience?	Karla named how important earnest, respectful communication is. Rubis spoke to the commitment to marginalized, arguably invisible, parents such as non-documented workers.
Importance of valuing children	Importance of child-to-child interactions, those organic opportunities where children learn from each other, mentor each other and learn to collaborate, communicate and be part of a larger group.	Carmen clarified it is the information a parent needs to nurture their child as well as information citizens at large need to support children and parents in feeling/being valued.
	Importance of childhood and valuing the playful, imaginative, creative energy brought by children through age 8.	Yury emphasized this point by reflecting on how little value school holds for creative, imaginative, inventive, autonomous, problem-solving children. In school such traits or talents are often seen as "off-task" or "distracted."
	An extended notion of parent responsibility. What might be responsible behavior and decisions to one person or in one family might seem incorrect to others.	Timeca spoke of her own pre-school aged daughter being asked to eat her lunch with a timer, because she was "taking too long to eat." How are we valuing each child and supporting their growth toward autonomy when we do not welcome them as people or trust them to pace themselves in even the most basic things?
Pushing ourselves to ask: Whose values are being recognized?	The unspoken alert to the possibility of privileging certain values was in the air throughout our working together and was overtly acknowledged during the formal focus group, which offered the space for reflection.	Doreen asserted what we could agree upon is parents who learn and improve their parenting are acting responsibly and with regard for their children. This recognition of growth and integrity is thus devoid of judgment on particular individual choices while holding the adults in children's lives to a standard. Monica spoke to the importance of honoring different values, naming whose values we are talking about, and are they person, community, or culturally specific.
Pivotal group realization: Values recognized or disregarded were directly linked to whose voice was heard.	Co-researcher consensus that we commit to using text and language in the Issue Guide that went beyond what might be read as generic values by being representative and demonstrating a commitment to multiple, even though at times conflicting, values.	Yury recognized specific values but that given the diversity and reach of the audience beyond our communities and state, it would be impossible to know and include everyone.
For whom is this Issue Guide written?	Is it about children, about parents, or a more elusive citizen?	Cheryl identified that it is the citizen who is a parent caring for a child and that the parent and child cannot be separated as our focus is the well-being and nurturing of young children done primarily by parents who operate in a community and cultural context shaped by all citizens. Crystal included the responsibility of educators and care providers being heightened: "Every adult, every role model, needs to take responsibility...."
Addressing systematic changes made vivid the need for action by the larger citizenry.	Co-researchers were unanimously clear about the need for action by the entire citizenry to stand up, listen actively, and not lay back or become complacent.	As Rubis stated so powerfully, "Civic engagement is the way to change....(C)hildren don't have a voice."

the community institutions, practices and norms.

This project draws on the legacy of community-change work, understanding that sustained change occurs from the individual and his/her interactions with the layers of community and institution (as seen with the individual at the center of the ecological model). The process of engaging parent co-researchers in a participatory, iterative process offers not only experience but also the acquisition

of tools by which one utilizes the capacity built in additional contexts. The conceptualization and two distinctive applications of this methodology engaged parent stakeholders as contributors not observers. Uniquely, each individual saw himself/herself as participating in pivotal, not marginalized, ways as knowledge producers.

Implications for Transformative Knowledge Production

From the beginning when parent co-researchers engaged in performance of tasks, the group norm supported the ubiquitous contesting of assumptions. The nuances in the methodology were then contested as particular context realities demanded questioning and re-examination. The practice-oriented performance tasks and the norm of contesting were pivotal in the knowledge productions being transformative and integrated.

Dissemination has included the parent co-researchers making their first public sharing of their community-specific action projects in March 2012 at a regional early childhood conversation conference drawing parents and providers as well as a subsequent state-wide parent and community network conference in October 2012. The parent co-researchers' learning that has occurred in particular communities will be shared across multiple communities via multiple forums over the remaining time of the project by the co-researchers themselves. The necessity for ownership and a dynamic, responsive process informs the notions of replication of this work.

Implications for Educational Change

This research informs current educators and educational leaders by capturing work with parent co-researchers as community leaders. Of significance is using this research as a means for pre-service teachers and early care educators to see parent capacity in action. This research is informing the preparation of teachers in one university teacher preparation program with a long legacy of early childhood education, a field understood to engage children, their families, and the community. Further dissemination of this research to educational leadership doctoral students as a methodological example contributes to the understanding of application and use. Engaged research with parent co-researchers gives texture to the rhetoric of why educators need parents to engage in the early education process in and out of schools. This research contributes to the literature linking parent involvement to positive child outcomes and the power of a supportive, nurtured, and informed citizenry both shaping and being shaped by our nation's living democracy.

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Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, the Kettering Foundation, and the parent co-researchers of the Parent Inquiry Initiative (<http://www.hartford.edu/parentii>).

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Crossing Through the Invisible Gate, Mapping Our Neighborhood: The Engaging and Empowering Project (E2Y)

Chaebong Nam

Abstract

This paper discusses a youth asset mapping project, the Engaging and Empowering Youth Project (E2Y), conducted by a group of African American youth. The youth mappers investigated local assets available for teens and created a map using digital media tools in order to develop and share information; as part of this project they engaged in a wide variety of activities, including canvassing, interviews, making videos, and public presentations. These activities helped the youth mappers to cultivate positive perceptions of the community, as well as develop social skills and digital literacy skills. The work conducted by the youth mappers also addressed practical community needs and challenged the deficit view of the community. This paper describes how the project took place, what the experience of the youth mappers was like, and the legacy of this project. I use community inquiry as the overarching contextualizing framework to help illuminate the nature and significances of this project.

Community Asset Mapping as Community Inquiry

Community Inquiry

Community inquiry is a social and educational practice that connects learning with lived experiences in various everyday social contexts (Bishop & Bruce, 2008). The term “community inquiry” is not associated exclusively with one particular field but is widely used in many disciplines and with varying traditions of usage. The notion of community inquiry in this paper has its origins in progressive education. Progressivists such as John Dewey and Jane Addams highlighted the connection between learning and lived experience. They maintained that students should be connected with real life situations interwoven with community, work, social norms, culture, and other parts of lived experience. In view of this, it is important that students understand the world as a whole and learn to handle complexities, which can help them grow into engaged and critical citizens who participate in a collective effort to serve a public good (Bishop & Bruce, 2008).

Hull House was a good example of how community inquiry could produce critical and engaged intelligence. The people of Hull House actively participated in collective efforts to address issues of health, education, childcare, labor, and other critical matters in the community (Addams, 1999; Bruce, 2008; Longo, 2007). Their communal/social practice enabled them to acquire local, historical, and political knowledge, governance skills, critical perspectives, and democratic values in a holistic manner. As such, it was as Addams noted “a protest against a restricted view of education” (Addams, 1999, p. 253).

Community inquiry is also reflected in the various of community-based learning that highlight the connection between learning and the ordinary experiences of community life. Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett (2007) underline the importance of partnerships between universities, public schools, and a broad range of community organizations in envisioning community schools. Teachers and students in community schools often 1) use resources, people, and places in their community as the focus of courses, 2) open school programming to all community members, and 3) connect schools closely to the community. These things help realize Dewey’s recommendation that school should be the center of educational life in the community. Ritzo, Nam, and Bruce (2009) shed light on the role of public libraries as another key agency in the creation of meaningful university-community partnerships that allow people to educate and empower one another. Art is another important way community inquiry takes place: In discussing a community-based art project intertwining the history of social movements and art, Kim and Miyamoto (2013) stress the importance of community-based arts for engaged learning that connects arts to the common and ordinary experiences in the community. Using the arts, individuals make sense of their experiences of everyday life, express themselves creatively, produce local knowledge, and empower each other. Technology also has an integral role in shaping the ways people communicate, think, make sense of experience, and act in the world. Bishop and Bruce (2008) examined deep connections among literacy, learning, technology,

and community as fundamental to the idea of community inquiry. They discuss how individuals appropriate tools and technologies into various literate activities arising out of lived experiences in the community, including dimensions of social justice and morality. Similarly, in Bruce and Lin (2009), young immigrant students created audiovisual podcasts that reflected their cultural backgrounds and presented important community issues. This inquiry-based learning using digital technology inspired not only students' personal growth in media skills and inquiry skills, but also demonstrated the potential of community action.

In brief, although there are different approaches (art, technology, community-university partnerships) in exploring community inquiry, the common ground—connection with lived experience, concrete activities for inquiry and action, and respect for the values and perspectives of various groups and people of the community—remains the same across those differences.

The Inquiry Cycle

Dewey (1938) defines inquiry as “the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation” (p. 104). Indeterminate situations are those that expose the gap between current needs and realities, and are characterized as troubled, ambiguous, confused, full of conflicting tendencies and the like. Inquiry begins with a desire to resolve these issues of indeterminate situations, a desire which is a natural feature of human cognition.

Bishop and Bruce (2008) broke down inquiry into the following five steps: Ask, Investigate, Create, Discuss, and Reflect. In the Ask stage, people facing an indeterminate situation raise questions and identify problems. In the Investigate stage the inquirer engages in a variety of activities, searching out new factual conditions. This involves opportunities for people to learn diverse, authentic, and challenging materials and problems. The Investigate stage typically requires people to interact with other people, encounter new social environments, communicate, and negotiate. New factual conditions or ideas obtained from investigation are then represented in concrete ways. In the Create stage, people produce specific observable and unobservable products. The Discuss stage is where participants listen to others' opinions, examine the new ideas, and articulate their understandings. In this way, personal learning experiences become a social enterprise. The Reflect stage involves a meaning-

making process that includes judging whether the original indeterminate situation has really been transformed into a determinate and unified whole. In this stage people look back at the initial question, the investigation path, and the products and conclusions, as a whole. This reflection process may initiate new questions, leading to continuing inquiry.

These steps of inquiry overlap with each other, do not have sharp boundaries, and do not necessarily occur in order. In practice, inquiry entails multiple cycles without definitive end points, and involves embodied action to transform situations beyond merely thinking and intellectual play (Bruce, 2009; Bruce & Bishop, 2002). Finally, it is important to recognize that inquiry-based learning is not a method or an option to consider for teaching and learning; instead, it is what actually happens when people do learn (Bishop & Bruce, 2008).

Community inquiry expands the agency of inquiry from an individual to groups of people, organizations, and the community at large. Everyone who has knowledge of the situation should, ideally, participate in the communal effort to solve the problem. People from diverse backgrounds must be able to express their thoughts and ideas without any fear of judgment or prejudice. Their perspectives should be equally respected, and fair communication and negotiation processes should always be encouraged. This participatory dimension supports a democratic approach to knowledge production in community inquiry (Bruce & Bloch, 2013).

Community Asset Mapping

Community asset mapping exemplifies community inquiry. This activity, which begins with discovering the existing resources and strengths of a community rather than its deficits, is rooted in the asset-based community development model (ABCD) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1996). It aims at achieving sustainable community development from the inside out, and is an effective strategy for the visualization and sharing of information with the members of the community. The map creation process entails active participation of community members in raising questions and collaborative investigation, echoing the participatory knowledge production of community inquiry.

Many disciplines, including community development, public health, youth development, K-12 education, and teacher education, use the

asset-mapping approach for community-driven development. In Aronson, Wallis, O'Camp, and Schafer (2007), the members of the community contributed to a map about a community-based urban infant mortality prevention program, in collaboration with researchers. This work identified neighborhood conditions and resources related to issues of interest to the community residents and encouraged them to seek resources available near to them. This information could be an important tool for program staff and policy makers as they decide where and how to focus and improve resources and effort. In Ordonez-Jasis and Myck-Wayne (2012), teacher candidates uncovered resources and assets for young children and their families, including children with disabilities, and reported that they became more knowledgeable about the rich educational resources of the area. At the same time, they began to look critically at the lack of equal access available to children at risk or with disabilities, which prompted them to broaden their practices beyond the classroom and to consider collaboration with families and other educators.

Youth participation in community-asset mapping is receiving increasing attention. In Santilli, Carroll-Scott, Wong, and Ickovics (2011), urban youth working as community health workers collected geocoding data of access to nutritious foods and green spaces in the neighborhoods, which formed part of a chronic disease prevention initiative. In Handy, Rodgers and Schwieterman (2011), youth were partnered with adults and investigated available resources that promote positive youth development. This research underlined positive adult-youth partnership as a key factor for the youth's successful participation. In K-12 education, community-asset mapping is also being used as a helpful pedagogical tool for engaged and inquiry-based learning. Students and teachers utilized geographic information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS) in order to investigate various topics of the community (Andersen, 2011). Students in social studies class were also encouraged to think critically about the unequal distribution of resources with regards to the historical, cultural, and political aspects of the community (Munoz, 2003). These examples among others reveal that community-asset mapping is gaining ground as a powerful tool for encouraging youth to take part in addressing the real issues in the community and cultivating critical understanding of resource distribution, as well as learning positive facts about the community.

Although the studies discussed above did not use the term "community inquiry," the ways they looked at the community—from a positive rather than a deficit point of view—and the involvement of individuals and community groups working together to address important community issues clearly reflect the key ideas of community inquiry.

Community asset mapping entails many different types of activities, such as walk-through, data collection, interviews, and map creation. Some studies applied traditional methods; others used new methods and tools, such as geospatial technology (GIS and GPS). Youth partnerships varied across situations where the projects were taking place. The youth had different levels of involvement in map-making as well. In some cases, they participated in the data collection stage, but did not participate in the actual map creation; adult researchers and partners used professional software and presented the data in visual form.

These differences in the activities and media practices, youth-adult partnerships, and the social context involved in the project play a key role in constructing youth experience. There is still little research in this area, however, especially concerning the usage of youth-friendly media tools and approaches. In the following sections, I discuss how E2Y youth mappers employed traditional methods and digital media tools, what their participation was like, how it has changed their view of the community and of themselves, and what the implications are for future youth community engagement projects.

The Engaging and Empowering Youth Project

E2Y arose from the desire to challenge the historical town and gown separation in a university town and, in particular, deficit views of the community. This community, northern Champaign, IL, has historically been populated by working-class African Americans, and, despite its proximity to the university, it has remained socially and culturally separated from it. Patricia Avery, who was the director of Champaign-Urbana Area Project (CUAP) and had worked for youth and their families in the community for 40 years, noted African American youth from lower income families in northern Champaign felt the university was "gated" to them and did not dare to cross a certain geographic boundary.

Recognizing this gap in the fall of 2008, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois formed a collaboration with three community

organizations: CUAP, Peer Ambassadors, and Illinois Public Media. The aim of this campus-community partnership was to provide youth who lived in the communities north of the university with an opportunity to cross the imaginary border and investigate resources and assets available for them locally, such as job opportunities for teens, youth programs, recreation centers, and more. It was expected that the new project would encourage youth to actively engage in the community and empower them to see the community from a positive perspective, in the face of any negative views of African American youth and communities. The project title, “Engaging and Empowering Youth (E2Y),” originated from this goal. Most of the youth participants were recruited through the Empowering Black Youth Network established by Illinois Public Media in Northern Champaign.

Methods

This study took a qualitative approach. I played a dual role in this project: one as an adult partner who worked with youth, and one as a participant observer. Data were collected from observations, interviews, informal conversations, and artifacts. From January 2009 through February 2010, I observed youth participating in trainings, interviews, lab sessions, presentations, and other activities. The first youth interviews were video-recorded by Illinois Public Media. Each of these first interviews lasted 10 minutes and covered the youth’s motivation for participation and their purpose in the project. I later conducted two group interviews with the five youth mappers in October 2009 and January 2010 respectively, and one interview with the adult community partners (December 2009). The interviews lasted about 50 minutes each, and the questions concerned the youth mappers’ backgrounds and personal involvement in the mapping project, reflections on the products of the project (such as the E2Y map, data directory entries, interview video clips), challenges, and rewards.

An insufficient number of interviews with youth mappers was one of the major limitations of this study. However, as I worked closely with the youth mappers throughout the project, I was able to obtain many informal opportunities to talk with them about their experience in the project. The important quotations and issues from the conversation were documented in my observation notes. The notes also included information on the youth activities and accomplishment, and

reflection on project activities: preliminary training, canvassing, lab sessions, youth interviews, group discussion sessions, public presentations and talks. Some of the presentations and talks were audio or video recorded.

Artifacts included the E2Y map containing the data directory entries that the youth created; the interview videos; the Youthworks curriculum; a press release; and the project website (<http://illinoisyouthmedia.org/projects/e2y>). For the analysis, the initial focus was on social skills, new media skills, and positive perceptions of the community. As the project progressed, consistent themes emerged from the notes, informal conversations, and formal interviews, for example, varied interests and learning capacities among the youth, passion for interviews, positive perception of the community, self-confidence, collaborative learning, and challenges in learning technical tasks.

Participants

Youth Participants

Five youth mappers—Raisha, Clorisa, Christina, Dave, and Ian, all high school students—completed E2Y, which lasted from the beginning of 2009 to the spring of 2010. Raisha and Christina, both 16, and Clorisa, Raisha’s younger sister, had been close friends for a long time, and had previously conducted a multimedia project with the Youth Community Informatics Project (YCI) of GSLIS. The two boys, Dave and Ian, were 15 and were new to YCI and GSLIS. These youth were recruited through the Empowering Black Youth Network or by personal recommendation.

Adult Partners

Seven to twelve adult partners from community organizations and the university participated in the project. They worked with youth in various stages of the project, and with different levels of involvement. The adult partners included staff members, community members, graduate students, and formal representatives of each institution, including Kimberlie Kranich, Patricia Avery, and Ann Bishop, representing Illinois Public Media, CUAP, and GSLIS, respectively. The primary focus of this section will be on the youth experience with the project, although the adult partners also played an important role.

Youth Activities in Mapping

Below is the description of how E2Y progressed in following the inquiry cycle

introduced above: Ask, Investigate, Create, Discuss, and Reflect. As mentioned earlier, the boundaries between steps in the cycle are fuzzy, and so framing the project with these steps may over-simplify the activities that were in actuality performed in more complicated ways.

Ask

E2Y grew out of a concern about the deficit view of the community and the local youth who lived in northern Champaign. Part of the assumption was that not enough information existed about resources available for youth in the area, including locations, contact information, kinds of services, and more. E2Y intended to counteract the deficit view by creating an asset-map actively addressing this indeterminate situation. Among the main questions were: What resources are available to youth in our community? How do we effectively support youth community engagement and learning? And, more broadly, How can we contribute to a better understanding between African American youth and Champaign-Urbana residents? These questions were initially shaped by adult partners who initiated the campus-community partnership, and they guided the youth mappers to explore the next steps of inquiry.

Investigate

In the next stage, the youth mappers engaged in many different activities in order to discover the local assets. These activities included door-to-door canvassing, interviews, and trainings. These were planned by adult partners, and this stage represented the most intensive fieldwork of the project.

Prior to the fieldwork, the youth mappers underwent training where they acquired the knowledge and skills needed for fieldwork. For the basic learning module of the project, E2Y adapted Youthworks (2007), which was a curriculum about youth mapping previously developed by the university's Illinois Rural Families program. E2Y brought Youthworks into the digital era, as we customized its guidelines to fit our purposes and relied on computers, GPS, digital cameras, and the Internet in designing interviews, creating entry standards for each organization profiled, processing the data gathered, and disseminating what was learned.

Canvassing. During the summer of 2009, the project conducted preliminary canvassing in northern Champaign in order to cast a wide net

for new information about local youth assets. The canvassing consisted of passing out flyers to inform people about E2Y and requests for information on local assets people knew of. In canvassing, the youth mappers and adult partners distributed a thousand flyers informing residents of the purpose of the project in northern Champaign. Incorporating inputs of the members of the neighborhoods, the project team created a new list of youth serving agencies. At this stage, the youth mappers' participation in decision-making was slight, but as the project went on, the youth mappers voiced their thoughts on the project and made good suggestions for improvement.

Interviews. The youth mappers began interviewing the youth-serving agencies listed in the newly created directory at the end of August 2009. This was the part of the project that interested the youth mappers the most. Prior to the actual interviews, the youth mappers conducted mock interviews with adult partners, learning what is expected in a real interview and how they could effectively deliver their messages. They practiced each component of the interview, including greetings and introductions, asking questions, writing down answers, and taking video. A professional staff member of Illinois Public Media (one of the adult partners) helped the youth with operating the cameras and maintaining good camera angles. The adult partners provided constructive feedback on all aspects of the interview process.

For the interviews, the adult partners prepared templates of an organizational profile and an interview questionnaire. Adopted from Youthworks, the templates were customized to E2Y based on feedback from both the adult partners and the youth mappers. The organizational profile was a simple form displaying brief information about the agency, and the interview questionnaires included more in-depth questions. Through the interview, the youth mappers were able to apply in the real world the skills and knowledge they had learned. They visited different places and organizations in the community for the interviews. The youth mappers said the interviews taught them much about their community and community programs they had not known before. The community agencies that the youth mappers interviewed included the Champaign-Urbana Park District, Parkland Community College, Girl Scouts, Housing Authority of Champaign County, National Council of African American Men, Urbana Neighborhood Connection Center,

Freedom School, the Champaign-Urbana Area Project, and more.

Create

The Create stage focused on the questions How do we share new information about local assets with others? and What are the effective ways to do so? Digital technology was integral to the way E2Y gathered and presented the data. The youth's keen interest in digital technology—apparent throughout the project—was the major motivation for their participation in the project, and the effort to support youth motivation naturally led E2Y to utilize youth-friendly media tools that would potentially also be easily available for the general public. For this purpose, Google Maps was chosen.

The youth mappers gathered at the Saturday lab sessions from August through mid-November of 2009. During the lab sessions, chiefly run by me, the youth mappers edited their interview videos, uploaded them to YouTube, and typed their interview answers and organizational profiles in Google Documents. After finishing these preliminary tasks, the youth mappers created the E2Y map via Google Maps, and edited the info windows for the location markers of the youth-serving agencies they had interviewed. These info windows allowed the youth mappers to include hyperlinks to the interview questions and to the agencies' organizational profiles; videos of the interviews; and brief descriptions of the agencies. Although the youth mappers found editing the info windows to be very challenging due to the complicated process involved, they were very proud of their final product. The complete E2Y map displayed metadata of the local assets, as it offered information on multiple aspects of the youth-serving agencies in the community. This map was accessible through both the official E2Y website (<http://illinoisyouthmedia.org/e2y>), hosted by Illinois Public Media, and the YCI website.

Discuss and Reflect

In principle, Discuss and Reflect are separate stages, but in the project, the two seemed inseparable from each other, and, to some extent, inseparable from the other stages as well. As they became engaged in the main part of project, the youth mappers began to more actively express their thoughts about the project and experience. Closely working with the youth mappers, I had many chances to have conversations about the project and tried to turn these conversations into meaningful reflection. The topics covered in these

conversations included what they learned, what challenged or interested them the most, what other effective ways to advertise the map might be, and so on. Moreover, youth mappers became outspoken about certain setbacks in the project (e.g., the delayed schedule) and made suggestions for improvement.

In mid-October, the whole E2Y team, including both the youth mappers and the adult partners, held a group reflection session to listen more carefully to the voices of the youth mappers. Both adult partners and youth mappers reflected on where they were, what the youth mappers had learned so far, and what improvements were needed. The three girls, Christina, Raisha, and Clorisa, made good suggestions for improving the project. These suggestions included having a concrete contract with the youth mappers about hours and responsibilities, additional staff recruitment, effective canvassing, training time reduction, youth-led fundraising, and more. These insightful voices from the youth mappers taught the adult partners important lessons on the project, which they otherwise would have missed.

Among the important reflective activities was a public presentation. Upon completion of the E2Y map, the youth mappers began presenting it. The first presentation took place at the closing ceremony of E2Y held at Illinois Public Media in December 2009. Before their parents and the adult partners, youth mappers presented their favorite "balloons" (the info windows of the community agencies they interviewed) on the E2Y map. They talked about why they liked these specific balloons, what the agency was about, and what they had learned from the project. This presentation experience prepared the youth mappers for the upcoming public presentations.

On February 3, 2010, the youth mappers gave a talk at the YCI workshop sessions of the fifth annual iConference. At this conference, they presented the E2Y map, shared their experiences with the conference participants, and led a small lab session to teach others how to edit Google Maps. Afterwards, some of the youth mappers (Christina, Raisha, and Clorisa) were also invited to graduate courses of GSLIS and to several meetings to talk about their experiences with E2Y. As they gave more talks, the youth mappers became more eloquent and confident in their presentation. It appeared that many questions they were asked helped them reflect on their practice from multiple perspectives.

The reflection stage also prompted the

participants (both youth mappers and adult partners) to think about how E2Y would make a difference in the community. Or, in Dewey's terminology, it raised the issue of how the project would contribute to transformation of the initial "indeterminate situation" (the lack of information on local resources available for teens) into the improved determinate situation. This led to reflections on the project from a broader perspective, not only centering on the final project and its potential impact but also reflections on the nature of the community inquiry practice as a whole. This process brought about new questions and suggestions for future projects, which could initiate a new inquiry in turn. I discuss this issue further after reviewing what youth learned from the project in the next section.

Youth Learning Outcomes

Learning about the Community: "We really didn't know that our community had such resources."

The youth mappers said that E2Y helped them learn much about their community in multiple ways. Despite the physical challenge of canvassing, the youth mappers regarded it as worthwhile in improving their geographical knowledge of their neighborhoods, calling their attention to street names, signs, and the locations of community organizations. It was also through canvassing that they first gained attention from classmates in school. Some classmates of the three girls recognized them on the E2Y flyer, bringing it to school to ask about the project and their roles in it. Clorisa talked about this experience in the second interview:

I learned about the different areas in the neighborhoods, know what streets I am on, pay attention to signs.... I met people who have done good in the community and other youth will be interested in. Some of our friends saw us in the newspaper about E2Y. It was really cool.

Most importantly, the youth mappers were surprised at the rich resources for teens their community offered, which they had not known of before. It is certain that interviews with community agencies provided the youth mappers with a vital community learning experience. For instance, Christina emphasized how much she enjoyed the two-and-a-half-hour interview with Mr. Cordell of the National Council of African American Men. Christina said that the actual interview was done

within a half hour; Mr. Cordell talked about his personal history and the history of African Americans in Champaign for the rest of the time. She reported that his story was not boring at all, but that rather she had learned a lot about the community. An interview with a community organization for kids with Down syndrome was another favorite of hers. She said that the interview had made her aware of Down syndrome and the social prejudices faced by people with the condition.

The interview experiences played a pivotal role in helping the youth get to know the community better and recognize its positive aspects. It is important to note that in addition to the interviews, a wide range of interactions with various groups of people in the local media center, community organizations, and the university contributed to the youth mappers' positive learning experiences about their community as well. For these youth mappers, this project was one of the few opportunities to interact with adults from different backgrounds who cared for the community, respected youth's voice, and appreciated their dedication to this project.

Interviewing and Social Skills

The youth mappers gained interview and communication skills, as well as social confidence. They learned how to interview people, how to avoid being shy, and how to be polite to people even when confronted with rudeness during the canvassing and interviews. The youth mappers said that they were very nervous in their first interviews, but as they conducted more interviews, they became more relaxed and learned to enjoy them. For instance, in Christina's final interview, she made a smooth transition from one question to another (having memorized all the interview questions) and maintained healthy eye contact, as well as creating her own questions to probe further into issues. On the way home from that interview, Christina said, "I just wanted to know more about the program and its services. That was really important to other youth."

Raisha reported learning social skills: "I learned how to interview people, how to talk to people, how not to be scared when I hand out flyers." She added, "I learned how to be more respectful to people and even if they be rude to you, but just be respectful and say, 'Thanks.'"

Ian also testified that he had improved both his ability to interact with others and his ability to explain a project to adults through this mapping

project. Ian was usually quiet and shy during the project, but his presentation at the iConference was full of wit and humor, eliciting laughter. Further, the three girls connected their acquired interview skills to their future job interview preparations. Raisha said,:

I want to be a nurse in the future. When I get an interview, I know what to say, since I used to be an interviewer and I know how to interview. I know how to say something back positive. I know how to, like...[Clorisa turned as if to whisper to Raisha], have a good conversation with a person.

Learning New Media Skills

New technology skills constituted a big chunk of the youth mappers' learning outcome (see Figure 1). Given their own Flip Video cameras, the youth mappers were also passionate about playing with cameras and making videos throughout the whole project. They learned from Illinois Public Media professional staff members important basic film skills such as setting up tripods, getting good camera angles, and avoiding backlight, in addition to video editing skills.

Youth mappers also learned skills using video editing software and various online tools such as Google Maps, YouTube, Google Docs, Flickr, and more. They achieved different levels of mastery and interest in these technological skills according to individual differences in interest in and aptitude for technology. Dave had a particular interest in learning new technology skills, and Ian impressed the team with his consistent passion for learning new skills and sharing his experiences. Christina and Clorisa, who were relatively quick to grasp new skills, took the role of interns among the team and taught their peers to finish their tasks successfully. I respected the youth mappers' own pace for learning, and emphasized collaboration and mutual support during the lab sessions. Ian talked about his achievement at the iConference: "I was too far away from the computer at first...but we actually posted something on the Web. I learned to type better now and find stuff on Google. At first, it was very hard." Ian had a low level of technological skill in the beginning, but he kept pushing himself to learn about the new technology at his own pace.

Taken together, E2Y was not just about mapping, but about holistic community learning and action for change. Their work addressed a practical need of the community: producing informa-

tion about local resources available for teens. The youth mappers crossed the invisible gate and participated in campus-community activities; they learned to work with other adult and youth partners, communicate with members of the community, and inquire into important local issues using various tools and methods. The interviews the youth conducted with youth-serving agencies, as well as their work with adult partners and other support networks for E2Y helped foster in them a positive view of their community (and vice versa) and themselves.



Figure 1. Students Learn Technology Skills As Part of E2Y Experience.

Discussion and Implications

In this section I examine the project from the perspective of the participatory dimension of the community inquiry, and discuss its limitations and implications for future studies. E2Y did not come out of a vacuum, but originated from the participatory culture and long-standing commitment to social justice among the partner organizations of the project. Illinois Public Media has made many efforts to reach out to the community and invited local youth to their youth media workshops. CUAP, as introduced earlier, has strived to improve the welfare of families and youth in need of help and support in the area. Since 1993, GSLIS has worked with the surrounding community through community information network projects to promote equity of access to digital resources and teach the skills necessary to access and use these resources. From this background, the partner organizations brought their own expertise and experience in community engagement into E2Y. Several other community organizations also constituted the collaborative nexus for community inquiry of this project by providing interviews, curriculum resources and guidelines, and personnel and financial support, among other things. This collaborative effort to form a space for community inquiry (Ritzo et al., 2009) became a solid foundation for this project and should not be overlooked.

Toward the end of the project, new questions emerged about the potential impact of the project to the community, in particular regarding accessibility and availability of the map among the community members. These questions included: Can people who live in northern Champaign have access to this information? Where would they be able to get information on things such as homes, libraries, schools, community organizations? What are the other effective ways to increase the availability of the map? What types of maps, other than online-based maps, would be useful to audiences without immediate access to the Internet? Among the most important issues related to these questions is the choice of representation tools for E2Y. In order to use the E2Y map, which is online-based, access to the Internet and adequate digital literacy skills are required. However, the decision in favor of online-based information distribution may have inadvertently prevented youth and their families who did not have the relevant digital resources and skills from using the E2Y map. This may have even exacerbated existing digital divide problems in the community.

This experience helps us to understand how to strengthen the participatory dimension. In knowledge production, it is important that people with different backgrounds bring diverse perspectives and engage in conversation and negotiation in order to develop solutions that are more effective and equitable. Encouraging groups of community members to discuss what type of representation would best work for them is therefore essential, and this discussion will inevitably initiate additional inquiries and encourage concrete action toward that goal in the community.

Lastly, I want to draw attention to the issue of the authenticity of youth engagement. The youth mappers in E2Y were not fully included in the decision-making process; instead, adult partners took the lead. Although this was not intentional, the insufficient inclusion of youth mappers' voices in the project may have kept the project from reaching the goal of authentic youth engagement. Toward the later stages of the project, however, the youth mappers developed a critical understanding, and offered good critiques and suggestions that would improve the project performance and contribute to youth ownership of the project.

The definition and practice of "authenticity" in youth engagement varies according to context. It does not necessarily require the exclusion of adult partner guidance; adult partners can in fact

still play a critical role in helping youth learn to share ownership, and then gradually fade away from the power position. With a focus on youth-adult relationship dynamics, future projects need to pay more attention to developing models to improve youth ownership based on active and interdependent relationships between youth and adults in their own contexts.

These unexplored and newly emerged issues rendered E2Y an open-ended social experiment. People could exercise their own creativity in performing community inquiry according to their own needs and social contexts. There are many other ways of conducting asset mapping projects. In addition to the topics introduced here, there are many others available: cultural-, historical-, political-, public health-, and eco-friendly-assets, and also resources for senior citizens and young children. Identifying effective tools and technologies, particularly including free, open-source maps that suit the needs of the audience, is essential, especially in the face of the digital divide. Based on lessons learned from the challenges and limitations other projects will be able to develop valuable models and practices that would become instrumental in the long-term community development.

Concluding Remarks

Through their participation in this project, the youth mappers were able to cultivate positive perceptions of the community, as well as develop social skills and digital literacy skills. In addition the work addressed practical community needs and challenged the deficit view of the community. E2Y was thus not just about mapping, but also holistic community learning and action, making the community a better place to live, work, and play. Although there were limitations, they provided important lessons and ideas for improving future projects. The concept of community inquiry proved to be a powerful framework for understanding community engagement, and additional exploratory applications of this "lens" could improve the sophistication of the theory as well as its usefulness and range.

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A Cost Benefit Analysis from Instructor, Community Partner, and Student Perspectives: Cabrini College CBR Courses Merge Service, Education, and Research

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Abstract

Two community-based research (CBR) courses—Watershed Citizenship and Watershed Ecology—were piloted at Cabrini College in southeastern Pennsylvania. The courses connected service, education, and research using a local Pennsylvania stream, Crabby Creek, as the focal point, while working with several community partners. Course feedback using a qualitative student focus group regarding attitudes about environmental awareness, interdisciplinary thinking, and community-based, undergraduate research experiences showed that students gained a better understanding of how different disciplines can collaborate to address a problem in an integrative manner. Students also valued the faculty interdisciplinary team-teaching approach of the courses. We offer a model for designing and conducting an interdisciplinary team-taught CBR course employing instructors with different disciplinary backgrounds and areas of expertise. In this paper we present a case study in which we discuss the benefits and costs of these types of courses offered through the eyes of course instructors, community partners, and students and emphasize lessons learned that should prove helpful for others considering developing similar courses.

Literature Review

In order to share our experience and insights with prospective participants in interdisciplinary CBR projects, we present a case study of two interdisciplinary CBR courses. CBR offers a compelling opportunity for faculty to integrate the research, teaching, and service activities both expected and valued in college and university settings. They also offer faculty a chance to use and transmit professional research skills and scholarly knowledge into projects that directly benefit community partners and whose impact is immediate and relevant (Reardon, 1998; Chapdelaine & Chapman, 1999; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003; Council on Undergraduate Research, 2004; Hofman & Rosing, 2007). CBR may help instill an attitude or disposition toward engaged citizenship in the next generation of students. Furthermore, because it emphasizes the elements of rigorous research sometimes missing from the direct service model of traditional service-learning, this practice has a level of credibility important for faculty promotion and tenure in many disciplines (see Faculty for the Engaged Campus at <http://www.ccpf.info/>; Ward, 2002). Finally, CBR, undertaken with care and attention, can complement more traditional research agendas by using a partnership approach of mutuality and reciprocity to foreground social change initiatives addressing community-based problems (Reardon, 1998; Stocking & Cutforth, 2006). It does so, moreover, through the application

of skills and extension of knowledge while helping to build capacity among diverse stakeholders (Chapdelaine & Chapman, 1999; Sunderland, Catalano, Kendall, McAuliffe, & Chenoweth, 2011).

By its very nature, CBR is interdisciplinary, since it can necessitate research methods in several disciplinary fields based on issues raised by community partners (Strand et al., 2003). One of the primary benefits of interdisciplinary, problem-based pedagogy is its ability to help students make profound connections within and across multiple fields and modes of inquiry, while requiring them to develop their knowledge in active, engaged, and contributory ways (Sternberg, 2008; Watterson et al., 2011). Scholars have noted that such approaches accentuate meaningful community-based learning experiences for students (Furco, 2002). Berkes (2004), for example, describes the potential power of interdisciplinary CBR for understanding environmental issues. He highlights the importance of joint undertakings for civic engagement—in this case conjoining natural sciences and social sciences. His findings reveal the interplay of science and local knowledge in enhancing the understanding of multiple parties, offering a particularly useful backdrop for examining students' experiences of integrating research approaches from both the social and natural sciences in addressing environmental problems.

Such benefits notwithstanding, Strand et al. (2003) describe four major pedagogical challenges

inherent in teaching CBR courses. These include finding a disciplinary connection, building CBR into the curriculum, ensuring student readiness for the complex tasks required of CBR, and structuring the experience for students. As indicated by Willis, Peresie, Waldref, & Stockmann (2003), even an enthusiastic student may have difficulty with a CBR project if the student is not skilled in the research method being employed to carry out the project. Stocking and Cutforth (2006) use as a case study two CBR courses to provide a framework for how to overcome some of the pedagogical challenges inherent in teaching these types of courses. They further point out additional factors important for the success of CBR courses. One of these factors includes institutional support, whether in the form of grants and instructor course release and/or a dedicated office of service learning that can ably assist with CBR projects. Another factor for success includes the dissemination of research findings to the community partner and, if acceptable, the broader public. Done well, both the community partners and students benefit in many ways, including students' gaining valuable skills useful not only for future employers but in their role as citizens as well.

Co-teaching interdisciplinary CBR courses has a number of advantages from a faculty perspective. The fact that course instructors co-teach interdisciplinary courses requires constant communication as to course logistics of student work, lesson plans, and research methods. As well, since interdisciplinary teams of faculty must construct course design and craft syllabi together, team-taught courses allow for a more deliberate and robust integration of different disciplines and research methods (Davis, 1995; Wenger & Hornyak, 1999; Sandholtz, 2000). Team teaching interdisciplinary courses can also provide a means of focusing more on the process of learning instead of only on accumulating content knowledge (Shibley, 2006). However, team teaching is resource intensive from an administration level and takes more time and effort than teaching alone (George & Davis, 2000; Sorensen & Wittmer, 1996). On top of this, co-instructors must negotiate with one another which disciplinary-specific research methods should be included and integrated in such ways to make the course truly interdisciplinary (Klein, 2010). Thus, team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses require a high and consistent level of commitment from all those involved in its implementation.

Our current study builds upon this emerging

body of work and sheds light on the rewards and challenges of team-taught intentional interdisciplinary CBR courses from three perspectives: the instructor, community partner, and student. Our case study of two team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses consists of three sections. The first describes the intentional design and implementation of two team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses, Watershed Citizenship and Watershed Ecology. The second section outlines the benefits and costs of these types of courses as viewed through the eyes of faculty, community partners, and students. The third section details lessons learned by team teaching interdisciplinary CBR courses that should provide guidance for others attempting to teach these types of CBR courses.

Background

Designing and Implementation of Interdisciplinary CBR Courses

Six years ago, two faculty at Cabrini College, a biologist and a psychologist, began conducting CBR projects with the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership (VCRP). The VCRP is a coalition of several key stakeholder organizations united around the purpose of protecting and enhancing the Valley Creek watershed located in Southeastern Pennsylvania (Terlecki, Dunbar, Nielsen, Ratmansky, Watterson, McGauley, Hannum, Seidler, Bongiorno, Owens, Goodman, Marshall, Gill, Travers, & Jackson, 2010). The biologist, Dr. David Dunbar, worked with the VCRP and a few dedicated students performing preliminary stream studies on Crabby Creek, an important tributary to Valley Creek. The stream studies were important in establishing baseline stream quality measurements prior to major stream restoration work. Dunbar has formal training as a molecular biologist but has a personal interest in watershed stewardship that evolved from his passion for fly-fishing. Around the same time, the psychologist, Dr. Melissa Terlecki, became involved in developing a community attitude survey in consultation with the VCRP to gauge the community's awareness of the restoration work being done on Crabby Creek. Terlecki and a few of her dedicated students analyzed the survey results and reported them to members of the VCRP. This work quickly developed into an honors course, Environmental Psychology, co-taught by Dunbar and Terlecki. The course engaged students in research methods in both the social and natural sciences and included a large service-learning component that involved assisting the VCRP in

organizing and hosting a Crabby Creek Earth Day event. This event showcased the work of VCRP and served as a vehicle for establishing backyard ecology programs for several area homeowners by presenting best practices in management of storm water runoff. The course offered a minor CBR component by developing storm water management brochures distributed in key locations throughout Crabby Creek Park and students training local residents in water quality testing. Based on student feedback from the initial course, students valued the interdisciplinary nature of the course and stated that they gained value in learning different research methods. However, students also indicated that the course would be even more powerful if they were able to employ research methods learned in the course in more robust CBR projects in conjunction with the community partner.

Because of the success of our initial course offering and its incorporation of some CBR, we desired to offer more robust CBR classroom experiences for our students. This strategy fits well with our current curriculum emphasis at our institution in having more of our service-learning courses with a CBR component. Additionally, CBR has been demonstrated to be an important extension of more traditional service-learning models historically valued at our institution (Watterson et al., 2011; Stoecker, 1997). In addition to students valuing a CBR course taught by two instructors with different areas of expertise, both of the instructors felt that working together in a classroom setting allowed them to align CBR projects more closely with VCRP's desires; after all, the very nature of co-teaching required more dialogue both between instructors and with members of VCRP. Since both faculty felt somewhat out of their element conducting classroom-based CBR, especially since both were recent practitioners in the field of CBR, we began a dialogue with educators at Stroud Water Research Center (SWRC) about how best to develop interdisciplinary CBR courses incorporating watershed issues with VCRP. The staff at SWRC work in interdisciplinary research teams, blending their individual talents in watershed ecology and ecosystem modeling to study the physical, chemical, and biological processes of streams and rivers, the life histories of individual organisms, and the ecology of watersheds. Their expertise and input into this dialogue quickly led to the development of a NSF-funded grant to implement two related, interdisciplinary CBR courses. The two CBR courses that emerged, Watershed Citizenship

and Watershed Ecology, were designed to bring both social and natural science perspectives to environmental issues. Moreover, both courses were intentionally designed to employ a team-taught interdisciplinary approach using instructors with different disciplinary foci. For instance, the Watershed Citizenship course was co-taught with Dunbar, a molecular biologist by training, and Terlecki, a cognitive psychologist by training, and Dr. Susan Gill, director of education at the SWRC with expertise in environmental planning. The Watershed Ecology course was co-taught by Dunbar, who had previously mastered basic stream study methods, Dr. Caroline Nielsen, whose training primarily lies in terrestrial ecosystems, and Christina Medved, education programs manager at SWRC with expertise in aquatic biology, watershed education, and experience in working with citizen volunteers in stream monitoring groups.

The Watershed Citizenship course emphasizes community-based research as approached from a social science perspective in order to bring that perspective on specific environmental issues of importance to communities. This course thus provides valuable exposure and experience in undergraduate CBR by linking local water quality to land use, and, just as importantly, to the choices people make about managing their local environment. A major CBR component of this course entailed students constructing a community watershed survey in consultation with VCRP. With its focal point on the Valley Creek watershed, Watershed Citizenship complemented its companion Watershed Ecology course by foregrounding the human component: helping students and our community partner gain an appreciation of residents' perspectives on local watershed issues in order to develop strategic planning for implementation of watershed management practices in the local community.

In the Watershed Ecology course, students not only studied the natural systems that comprise the environment of streams, but also conducted water quality testing and research on Crabby Creek. To assess water quality, students collected water samples, identified the physical and chemical characteristics of the stream, as well as the aquatic macroinvertebrates. Additionally, in conjunction with SWRC, students participated in a larger effort to compile a genetic library of local aquatic fauna by DNA bar-coding. This project provided an exciting opportunity for non-science-major students to participate in groundbreaking national research.

Interdisciplinary both by design and in implementation, the two CBR courses drew on the strengths of the course co-instructors as well as the needs of VCRP. Course planning and implementation involved course instructors, educators from SWRC, and members of VCRP attending joint meetings describing course goals. VCRP members were likewise invited to attend the Cabrini courses throughout the semester, an arrangement that proved valuable in giving course instructors key feedback during the process of conducting the courses. In the Watershed Citizenship course, for example, the chair of VCRP and SWRC partners thought it would be a good idea for us to invite members of other watershed organizations to our class so that students could gain a better appreciation of other dedicated watershed groups and how their members' views might differ from their own. Gill's contacts with many regional watershed professionals allowed us to have a broad range of speakers address the class. This exposure, moreover, provided real-world examples of watershed management that added greatly to the students' understanding of what being a citizen of a watershed entails. Another example occurred during the Watershed Ecology course. Members from VCRP recommended additional stream sampling sites for Crabby Creek as a way to determine the health of the stream in areas outside of the restoration area. Indeed, the recommendation of additional stream sampling sites was later implemented in a future Watershed Ecology course.

Methods

To further probe student course evaluations on administered surveys, we conducted focus group interviews with students co-enrolled in both Watershed Ecology and Watershed Citizenship courses. During the subsequent academic semester, a facilitator from Cabrini College's Center for Teaching & Learning conducted a small student focus group. The focus group lasted approximately one hour. Students' anonymous responses were audio-taped and transcribed by professional transcription services (students were referred to as "student #1", etc. during focus group audio-taping). The student focus group was semi-structured (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) with the facilitator asking questions developed by the course instructors.

To analyze students' focus group responses, we used a directed content analysis of these qualitative data to identify recurring themes

(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Three of the authors coded themes that arose during the focus groups individually after which they compared results and then came to a coding consensus. Thus, we were able to organize focus group results according to specific themes based on the type of questions asked during focus group sessions. Five students participated in one focus group discussion three months after completing both the Watershed Ecology and Watershed Citizenship courses.

Findings

Benefits and Costs of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary CBR Courses: A Course Instructor Perspective

From a course instructor perspective, there are several benefits of team teaching interdisciplinary CBR courses. Course instructors are prompted and encouraged to move into new areas of research that sustain the community partnership by meeting their needs. In many instances, this type of innovation may not readily emerge without the catalyst of team teaching CBR courses. For example, Dunbar felt that the interdisciplinary, community planning perspective that Gill brought to the Watershed Citizenship course broadened his own understanding of the multidimensional aspects of community engagement. Another example of this serendipity emerged in the Watershed Ecology course when the community partners expressed a desire to understand the types of bacteria found in a local stream to see whether there was a sewer line break releasing raw sewage into the stream. Developing the Watershed Ecology course, we used one instructor's ecology expertise (Nielsen) and another's genetics expertise (Dunbar) to DNA barcode selected bacterial strains that students isolated in the stream. Another example arose in the Watershed Citizenship course. The first two renditions of Watershed Citizenship were co-taught by Terlecki, Dunbar, and Gill. One key aspect of that class was our desire to model collaborative, interdisciplinary problem solving. For the final exam in that course, Gill developed an individual scenario for each student that required her or him to forge a solution to a complex community issue. Students were given one week to complete their answers and were encouraged to brainstorm with their classmates. For the students, this model proved a new and challenging experience. The exciting result of this examination was that even students who had been passive during the class discussion were able to develop nuanced answers to complex questions. During the latest rendition of Watershed Citizenship, the course was co-

taught by the same biology professor along with a communications professor, Dr. Janice Xu. Having a communications professor co-teaching the course proved advantageous, for at this time VCRP desired to get a weekly pulse on the students' perspective of their involvement with the partnership. Xu decided to integrate weekly open access, online blogs where students commented on their interaction and work with VCRP. Based largely on these blogs, the community partner realized a need for video documentaries showcasing their efforts in the community to address storm water management practices. With the assistance of Xu, members of VCRP skilled in video production and a communications student previously enrolled in the course created video documentaries and are currently in the planning stage for airing on local television broadcasts.

It turned out to be advantageous to have the biology professor co-teach the Watershed Citizenship course since later departmental obligations with the psychology professor no longer allowed her to co-teach the course. The biology professor, from the onset, has served as the point person for the collaboration between Cabrini College and VCRP. Yet a third example of benefits is illustrated when the biology professor learned social science research methods from the psychology professor during the initial implementation of the Watershed Citizenship course. These same research methods were later used by the biology instructor in the Watershed Citizenship course when he co-taught with a communications professor; they collaborated in developing, implementing, and analyzing a community survey, a process that again evolved out of a need defined by VCRP as it had expanded its restoration work in a second nearby community and thus found it beneficial to conduct a similar survey.

From an instructor's viewpoint several powerful outcomes result from co-teaching interdisciplinary CBR courses including that these types of courses attract students from different majors and disciplines. This response was particularly true on our campus since Watershed Ecology satisfied a science requirement for non-science majors and Watershed Citizenship satisfied a core curriculum requirement in the form of a writing intensive course called Engagements in the Common Good (ECG). All students must take ECG courses at Cabrini College, a series of courses that, in the sophomore and junior level, typically embed some service-learning or CBR component. These combined factors made the Watershed Citizenship

course particularly well-suited for a team-taught CBR approach. As noted above, interdisciplinary CBR courses introduce many students, faculty, and community members to research methods outside of their primary discipline. Indeed, through feedback from student focus groups, we found that such exposure allowed students to make connections more easily to the importance of interdisciplinary research. One student, for example, was quoted as stating, "I feel like everyone in the classes, students and the faculty, was getting something out of the courses by each faculty member bringing their own unique perspective to it." Another student co-enrolled in both CBR courses indicated that, "Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the linked courses I learned a lot about CBR, DNA barcoding, macroinvertebrates, water regulations, stream conservation, and surveys, just to name a few of the topics covered in the two courses."

Most faculty come to our institution with little or no experience in CBR, so team teaching interdisciplinary CBR with another more experienced faculty member offers many advantages. For example, junior faculty inexperienced with CBR felt they were less risk averse when team teaching with a senior faculty experienced in CBR courses. Dunbar, as a tenured associate professor, had several years of experience working with VCRP before Nielsen came to Cabrini as an untenured assistant professor. With Dunbar's guidance during her second year as a faculty member in the science department, Nielsen co-taught Watershed Ecology.

Although there are notable benefits of co-teaching an interdisciplinary CBR course, there are costs associated with these types of courses from a faculty perspective. Several course instructors who co-taught the CBR courses share concern that they have not mastered all of the current research methods and techniques currently used in the courses, since many of these procedures are outside their area of immediate expertise. If a situation arises such that one of the courses can no longer be co-taught, it could be difficult for faculty to teach these courses on their own, without additional guidance. For example, in Watershed Ecology, many of the techniques used were developed by SWRC, and the two Cabrini faculty involved in the course still feel that they need some guidance for several of the techniques such as stream macroinvertebrate studies. Another related example comes from the Watershed Citizenship course. Although we successfully constructed and distributed a community attitude survey, we strongly leaned on the assistance of one student, a psychology major

who served as a teaching assistant and was skilled in SPSS software.

Another concern for faculty involves negotiating interpersonal matters. There may be the potential for hard feelings to arise among colleagues not involved in co-teaching CBR courses, a situation that could lead to promotion and tenure challenges, particularly for junior faculty. One large concern for faculty, of course, is how team teaching these types of courses will be weighed in tenure and promotion decisions, especially since interdisciplinary, team-taught courses are novel to our institution. Several faculty who are part of teaching these courses are apprehensive that fellow faculty may perceive them as doing less work or investing less time in team teaching the CBR courses, additional time spent in community-based endeavors notwithstanding. Several colleagues not involved with the CBR courses also expressed concern that it is not fair for faculty co-teaching courses to both receive full course credit in terms of course load. The accepted model for faculty co-teaching courses at our institution is for each instructor to receive $\frac{1}{2}$ course credit. Finally, we found that dissonance takes a great deal of effort to manage, particularly if faculty have different teaching styles and expectations for the types of community-based projects connected to courses. In one of the two courses, two instructors had highly divergent teaching styles; hence, the constant tension between them was palpable to others involved in designing and teaching these collaborative courses.

Benefits and Costs of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary CBR Courses: A Community Partner Perspective—the SWRC

SWRC educators teach over 2,000 students, from grades 4 and up, annually. With a multidisciplinary approach in their watershed education programs, their hope is that participants will be motivated to become responsible stewards of freshwater resources. The inclusion of SWRC into the CBR courses complemented very well the work Cabrini College was trying to do and what SWRC has done for many years. SWRC has known for years that because watersheds have natural boundaries and are universal in nature, they are ideal models or themes around which science, education, conservation, and public policy can be discussed as all of those topics require an interdisciplinary approach. SWRC saw a benefit to working with Cabrini College in that it expanded their typical audience into the collegiate level, for

an entire semester at a time. While engaging the next generation of community members and homeowners, the SWRC educators felt it was important to teach them—as well as the students—about the importance of water bodies in their neighborhoods and how everyday decisions can impact a local stream and why those impacts matter. The partners also recognized that all instructors learned from each other, not only technical information, but also teaching strategies and classroom management techniques. While teaching the courses, instructors were likewise receiving professional development. It was creative and rewarding to utilize instructors' personal as well as professional interests in the development of the final student projects. For example, the SWRC educator co-teaching the Watershed Ecology class has a master's degree in communication and was able to provide feedback to students on their public speaking as well as poster presentation and layout to help the students prepare for their presentations to members of the VCRP partnership.

While working at a non-profit is extremely rewarding on many levels—indeed one of the perks is allowance for working on diverse projects—a challenge to all non-profits is being paid for time spent on projects: whether it is time spent teaching, traveling, or grading papers, and in addition, travel/mileage costs. Packing up gear every week rather than having it at hand in our own laboratory was time consuming, as was the travel to and from Cabrini College, on average a one-hour commute each way. With the type of programming provided at SWRC, the educators are usually not creating or grading homework. This was a great opportunity for them to practice such tasks as well as to receive feedback from co-teachers about rubrics in grading and appropriateness of questions and evaluation given the student audience.

Benefits and Costs of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary CBR Courses: A Community Partner Perspective—the VCRP

From the VCRP perspective, several benefits of team teaching CBR courses stand out. According to the chair of VCRP, Dr. Owen Owens, our interdisciplinary, co-taught CBR courses by definition expanded the intellectual capacity and technical wherewithal of the project. That is, the collaborative composition actually ensured that a range of diverse research methods could more easily be tailored to meet the community partnership's needs. Bear in mind that most community partners, in every community, are volunteers. Owens

indicates that without interdisciplinary teams of course instructors discussing an array of possible watershed projects, it would have been difficult if not impossible for many of their research goals to be carried out. One example Owens pointed out includes the collection and analysis of aquatic macroinvertebrates in a stretch of creek that was stabilized through a grant by VCRP. In his view, VCRP would like to use macroinvertebrate data for long-term assessment on whether the restoration on Crabby Creek contributes to stream health over time. The macroinvertebrate studies carried out with students in the Watershed Ecology course drew upon the knowledge of an educator from the SWRC partnership. Another highlight of such interdisciplinary problem solving includes the environmental and attitudinal surveys that were conducted by residents in the Crabby Creek and Wilson Run watersheds as part of the Watershed Citizenship course. The survey results indicate what level of support VCRP members are likely to have when undertaking a conservation project in the community in which the surveys were conducted. Without the Watershed Citizenship course initially being co-taught by a psychology professor, these surveys would not have been part of the course.

From the VCRP perspective another powerful element of co-teaching CBR courses centers on the constant dialogue between community partners and course instructors. According to one member of VCRP, the dialogue usually sharpens the issue or objectives of the projects undertaken by VCRP. For example, what VCRP learned is that when one instructor (Dunbar) became involved with the partnership, he became a lead or primary partner. VCRP's thought of partnering with Dunbar had initially trended along biological lines and how to address the issues surrounding water quality; this alliance emerged both because of this one faculty member having received a grant to research this topic and because of his academic status, subject knowledge, and experience. When Dunbar then started to involve other junior faculty in CBR, he then became a bridge between the VCRP and Cabrini College, taking the project beyond the preliminary issues of biology and water quality. In other words, Dunbar became both a partner and a facilitator. His work helped generate additional activity and outcomes for both Cabrini and VCRP beyond what he, acting alone, could have accomplished. This type of personnel investment at Cabrini College required a similar response within the partnership. Because the projects that came out of the classes were multi-disciplinary and multi-

faceted, they required experienced individuals (partnership members and course instructors alike) to become more involved in order to handle the volume and the scope of activities.

Such developments have other unintended but advantageous consequences, too. One such attribute is the exposure of students to outside professionals and volunteers from different disciplines who have experience in dealing with various watershed issues. As community members, the VCRP partners believe it important to help develop the knowledge and skills of students in the area of watershed management; even if those students do not take future residence in, or study, the local watershed, they will ultimately end up connected in some way to a watershed. The VCRP likewise gained exposure to a much wider audience for their goals and aspirations; at the most obvious level this exposure included relationships with the students enrolled specifically in the CBR courses; but the VCRP also gained added exposure from being on the campus of an institution of higher education with a voice in shaping engaged pedagogies.

Initially, the VCRP hesitated to describe any downsides or costs associated with our CBR courses, but when pressed, several members indicated that it did take some investment in time to get several of the faculty co-teaching the courses "up to speed" in understanding the VCRP's goals and aspirations. Another cost was the time and transportation required for meetings with Cabrini College faculty. However, VCRP members stressed the advantage of the experiential education format that the course instructors provided in the CBR courses, with the help of SWRC, which went far beyond the type of learning provided in a more standard college classroom. The VCRP also emphasized that student learning may be even more all-encompassing than the course instructors think, involving relationships, real life situations (actions and reactions), as well as the usual basic learning component such as what is a watershed or why macroinvertebrate studies are important in monitoring stream health. One example of a "real life situation" involves a student whose current activity level in social issues revolving around water issues came directly from her passion from working with VCRP in the Watershed Citizenship course. This student is currently an activist against natural gas drilling taking place in Pennsylvania.

Benefits and Costs of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary CBR Courses: A Student Perspective

From a student perspective, several benefits of team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses deserve a closer look. For example, student focus group data indicate that these types of courses offer far more intensive faculty/student interactions than traditional courses offer. Additionally, there are sustained CBR learning opportunities outside the students' major fields, discussed later in this paper. Furthermore, seeing faculty willing to explore outside of their disciplinary comfort zones helped students themselves feel more comfortable engaging in research outside their own major. Although different teaching styles were a significant cost for two faculty who were co-teaching one of the two courses, the students consider this diversity a great benefit of the course. Student focus group work suggested that the course succeeded largely because of the faculty's distinctive styles of teaching. For instance, in the Watershed Citizenship course, one student indicated that "it was a cool concept to have instructors team teaching and then really approaching the same subject from two different standpoints." The same student went on to explain that "there was constant collaboration between the professors throughout the entire semester" and that "looking at topics from different standpoints enriched the class." Another student indicated for the same course that the experiential aspect of the course highlighted a different way of thinking, adding, "We just learned about how we can protect our environment by thinking about it differently." A third student indicated,

When you brought in the psychological aspect, it actually showed the cognitive dissonance you can have yourself. The knowledge and learning experience that I gained from having three different professors, each with their own unique style, really improved my understanding of the material.

Several students articulated the merits of a team-teaching approach in the Watershed Ecology course as well: "I feel like everyone in the class, students and the faculty, was getting something out of the courses, with each faculty member bringing their own unique perspective to it."

Another student stated,

I think it was really beneficial to have faculty together team teaching, especially

when we were doing the DNA bar coding experiments. If we didn't have Dr. Dunbar at that point, we would have actually been lost because even the other biology professor, Dr. Nielsen, had never done the DNA bar coding before, and she was learning with us.

Perhaps the most promising benefit of our CBR courses was that of student-acquired academic skills, particularly in the area of research methods, either within or outside of their major or disciplinary focus of their undergraduate studies. As defined by Lichtenstein, Thorne, Cutforth and Tombari (2011), "academic skills pertain to cognitive skills related to academic learning" (p. 12). In their study, the researchers indicate that many students involved in CBR projects increased their applied research method skills within the student's major area of undergraduate study. Our work using the team-taught CBR courses as a case study shows how several of our students continued their CBR projects working mostly independently and using research methods they had only recently mastered precisely because of their involvement in an interdisciplinary CBR course. For instance, one student, majoring in English, continued to work with Dunbar on DNA barcoding a native crayfish species that was recently discovered in the Valley Creek watershed. The student received science undergraduate research credits for his DNA barcoding project. The student was inspired to take on a crayfish DNA barcoding project as a result of listening to a presentation by the Valley Forge National Historical Park, a partner of VCRP, who discussed the need to acquire as much information on the native crayfish species as possible, for it is an endangered species thought to be important to the Valley Creek watershed ecosystem. This student felt confident he could take on this sophisticated project as an English major, since he had learned and mastered molecular genetics techniques in the Watershed Ecology course. Two additional students, both of whom are business majors, approached the science faculty about conducting additional water chemistry studies on Crabby Creek during a semester in which the Watershed Ecology course was not being taught. They have done so as part of one of their business course community-based service-learning projects with little guidance from science faculty other than lending them necessary equipment and materials they were accustomed to using as part of their CBR project in the Watershed Ecology course. Such yearly stream chemistry

data are critical for VCRP. The VCRP needs to determine the results of the restoration to deal with storm water runoff in a section of the creek. The two business students, on their own initiative, also recruited several other business students to assist Valley Forge National Historical Park to help remove an invasive crayfish population from the Valley Creek watershed one year after they had taken Watershed Ecology. Another student, a psychology major, decided to conduct research with Terlecki, examining in further detail the community attitude surveys that were developed, distributed to community members, and analyzed by the students in the Watershed Citizenship course. This student received research credits for her work in the psychology department and presented her findings not only to the VCRP but also at the Cabrini College annual Undergraduate Arts, Research and Scholarship Symposium. Recently, two students, a psychology/English double major and a business major, worked with each other to further analyze the results of a recent survey of a community in a section of Valley Creek located just outside the border of Valley Forge National Historical Park. The two students presented their work to the VCRP with little guidance from any of the course instructors. These students indicate that their CBR course experience, both learning research methods and interacting with the community partner in the Watershed Citizenship course, gave them the added comfort level to sustain their involvement in CBR with little instructor guidance.

In the three short years we offered these CBR courses, seven students continued CBR projects after their course experience and did their work with little guidance from faculty mentors, a true testament to their enhanced academic skills as a direct result of their interdisciplinary, co-taught CBR experience. This is the first reported example at Cabrini of several students willing to sustain CBR projects with faculty outside their disciplinary major. A recent study by Puma, Bennett, Cutforth, Tombari, and Stein (2009) has shown the same transitioning with graduate student CBR from classroom-based to projects that require a much greater degree of independence. Here we demonstrate a similar transition of undergraduate students from course-based CBR to projects that build upon their research skills to more independent CBR initiatives. We feel that students become more comfortable in conducting CBR outside of the majors by removing the mystique of CBR, in part by observing diverse faculty in the team-taught course challenging each other to work

outside their areas of expertise. As reported by the students and noted above, students thought it is a rewarding experience seeing faculty learn from other faculty in the courses.

After having a candid conversation with the faculty co-teaching the courses, a cost emerged; namely, the perceived inconsistencies in course expectations between the faculty. According to several students, the main inconsistency regarded assignment grades. Students indicated that faculty from different disciplines have different grading criteria that may be a reflection of a faculty's disciplinary training. Although faculty co-teaching the course made earnest attempts to "stay on the same page" by discussing grading criteria and sharing their grades on student assignments, the increased chances for miscommunication appears to be a real issue that can arise around these types of interdisciplinary, team-taught classes. Granted, such misperception could be symptomatic of "too many cooks in the kitchen." Yet, given the inherent uncertainty and surprises that regularly arise in many community-based projects that involve multiple partners, it is little surprise that there is heightened need for explicit and regular communication. One idea suggested by the student author of this paper, Jenna Cardone, is for course instructors to devise common grading rubrics for course assignments to ensure instructors are using the same grading criteria and meet more regularly in discussing rubric scoring differences as a way to alleviate this problem.

Discussion

Lessons Learned of Team-Taught Interdisciplinary CBR Courses

One of the most powerful outcomes of team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses from a student perspective arises from seeing faculty learn research methods both from one another and alongside community members. Students indicate that working alongside faculty, themselves working outside their comfort zone, and learning with them took away much of their uncertainty about doing CBR and ultimately, for several of them, giving them the confidence to conduct research with faculty outside of the students' disciplinary focus. Team-taught interdisciplinary CBR courses are thus enriching to students in allowing them to see how different disciplines can work together, in this case on an environmental issue. Faculty participants found learning research methods and problem-solving epistemologies from colleagues in different disciplines to be enriching and providing insights

they likely would not have acquired without the intense team-teaching approach. Team teaching interdisciplinary CBR courses allows faculty to be creative in co-designing community-based projects in a mutually informative, reciprocal manner, often in conjunction with multiple community partners; such integrative projects may not have emerged in precisely that fashion without the input of so many constituents. Working closely, faculty are encouraged to think of CBR practices and protocols in ways they would not have had the courses not required constant communication about approaches to teaching and research. This powerful experience of interdisciplinary, team-taught, CBR courses demonstrates the potential for other institutions to have a similar impact on faculty and student participants, on the institution itself, and on community partners. This model of teaching replicates for students what happens in the real-world with everyday decisions whether it is at the community, state, or federal level or in a corporate boardroom.

Another powerful outcome is that course instructors are capable of moving into new areas of research that sustain the community partnership by meeting community partner needs. This responsiveness allows for greater flexibility for faculty to conduct research with a community partner based on that partner's wants and needs. All key stakeholders—faculty, students and community partners—were able to draw on each other's strengths and expertise. Such mutually beneficial interactions from collaboration serve as a stellar example of a synergistic effect in which the results are greater than the sum of the parts. Our institution thus saves time engaging with a partnership as an entity, while the partnership reaps the same benefits working with a college.

Ultimately, our work supports the model articulated by both Mulroy (2004) and Rosing and Hofman (2010) on using multiple CBR courses to institutionalize a CBR project. Our interdisciplinary CBR project has taken on a coordinated model, to use the typology articulated and defined by Mulroy (2004), a coordinated model brings together faculty members and students from different disciplines to work together toward serving the research interests of a community partner. The project initially started with two professors, a biology professor and a psychology professor, working with their students on separate CBR projects but with the same community partner. Both professors worked with one another and with key members of SWRC to integrate their CBR with one another

and developed the Watershed Citizenship course. As it evolved, another course emerged, Watershed Ecology, co-developed with the biology professor, a new ecology professor, and with assistance from educators at SWRC.

Interdisciplinary CBR courses such as the ones described here can be viewed instructively as consonant with a wider discussion on interdisciplinarity and integrative learning. In a public report issued by the Integrative Learning Project, a three-year collaboration of the Carnegie Foundation and the American Association of Colleges and Universities, those involved asserted that “fostering students’ abilities to integrate learning—over time, across courses, and between academic, personal, and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education” (<http://www.units.muohio.edu/aisorg/>). Among the pedagogies that engage students more deeply and thus lead to integrative learning, the most prevalent and prominent are service-learning, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and experiential learning such as interdisciplinary service-learning/CBR courses. All of these pedagogies of integration, and many more, share certain qualities and elements regardless of the level at which they are used. The Carnegie Foundation’s findings are particularly pertinent, for they acknowledge the realities of a changing world in which disciplinary and curricular isolation are neither feasible nor desirable. In short, interdisciplinary, team-taught CBR courses help to blur the boundaries between areas of expertise, placing teachers, students, and community partners in new cognitive and affective arenas.

Conclusion

Based on our experience, we have several suggestions addressing the challenges of team teaching CBR courses for those considering this powerful but intensive form of pedagogy at other institutions. We recognize institutional barriers to maintaining this high-intensity collaboration so we recommend a model that builds on the relationships that were previously cultivated with faculty and community partners, even if this involves taking baby steps in the initial process of course planning and implementation. Initially, we had two faculty working independently with a few of their students and the community partner. It took over a year of planning for these two faculty to develop and implement an interdisciplinary CBR course called Environmental Psychology. Additionally, we found that the main institutional barrier for faculty co-teaching CBR

courses is each of them receiving full course credit. Also, some faculty might enjoy co-teaching a CBR course but find it problematic because of time constraints and/or other course commitments.

One strategy that has worked well for us is to have a valued colleague(s) guest lecture or teach a research method to the class. Building a relationship with a valued colleague might lead to a co-teaching CBR course in the future as it has for us in one of our courses. For instance, since we are no longer funded by an NSF grant for our ongoing courses, key members of SWRC can no longer be as involved in our courses as they were during initial course implementation phase. However, SWRC educators are still actively involved in assisting and training faculty teaching the Watershed courses in research methods. SWRC educators also continue to be guest lecturers in our Watershed courses and we find this ongoing collaboration highly valuable to continue to train faculty in research methods outside their areas of expertise. We find it important that at least one faculty team member serve as the primary liaison between the faculty and community partner. This strategy releases some of the burden on additional faculty in attending community partner meetings, setting up meeting times, etc. However, even if one member serves as a primary liaison, we continue to find that it is critically important to maintain collaboration through regular communication among course instructors and the community partner, including occasional face-to-face meetings, even if one member serves as the primary liaison. This not only serves to ensure that all instructor ideas and input are valued but also to ensure that the community partner hears the voices of other instructors.

There were a few instances in which the ideas generated by the community partner and faculty liaison did not reflect the ideas of course co-instructors and created a degree of consternation since the ideas were already being implemented without others having adequate time for valued input.

However, community partner and faculty authors of this paper feel strongly that time invested in interdisciplinary CBR projects is time well spent and that the project took on added meaning with increased investment time with all project stakeholders. We have currently taken what we have learned (both cost and benefits), made adjustment to address the concerns and continue to offer these courses in a way that is sustainable at our campus. Additionally, we are in the process of replicating these courses at other schools of higher education in southeastern Pennsylvania.

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following faculty members of the Cabrini Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, who were helpful in reviewing the manuscript: John Cordes, Communications, Courtney Smith, History; and Raquel Green, Romance Languages. The authors would also like to thank the American Society of Microbiology's Biology Scholars Program (NSF Award # 0715777) for helping to develop research ideas incorporated into this manuscript. The Watershed Citizenship Learning Community was funded by a phase I Course, Curriculum, Laboratory Improvement National Science Foundation collaborative grant proposal NSF Award # 0837511 and # 0837757.

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Using Co-Inquiry to Study Co-Inquiry: Community-University Perspectives on Research

Sarah Banks and Andrea Armstrong, with Mark Booth, Greg Brown, Kathleen Carter, Maurice Clarkson, Lynne Corner, Audley Genus, Rose Gilroy, Tom Henfrey, Kate Hudson, Anna Jenner, Robert Moss, Dermot Roddy, and Andrew Russell

Abstract

In the context of a rapid development of interest in community-university research partnerships, this article argues for a greater focus on collaborative reflexivity to enhance learning from the research process and contribute toward developing sustainable and ethical research collaborations. Incorporating perspectives of community and university participants, the article offers a case study analysis of a UK-based co-inquiry action research group. This group not only studied examples of community-university research collaborations, but also reflected on its own workings as an example of collaborative research in action—scrutinizing relationships of power, responsibility, and boundaries in the group (collaborative reflexivity). This article argues that research projects might be designed with space designated for co-inquiry action research or similar inquiry groups. These co-inquiry groups would serve as replacements or supplements to more traditional steering or advisory groups.

Introduction

There is a burgeoning interest in community-university research collaborations and the mutual benefits these can bring for all participants. Over the last decade there has also been a gradual shift from a focus on participatory research where professional researchers design and manage a project with some participation from the people usually regarded as the objects of research. This shift has focused on an ideal of co-production where professional researchers and community partners have equal power and responsibility (Tinkler, 2012). Despite the value placed on equal research partnerships between universities and non-university participants in research, there are relatively few published accounts that combine the perspectives of both parties in reflecting on their experiences of the process of collaboration (examples include Benoit, Jansson, Millar, & Phillips, 2005; Hart & Aumann, 2013; Majnep & Bulmer, 1977; Sullivan, Kone, Senturia, Chrisman, Ciske, & Krieger, 2001).

This article offers an analysis based on perspectives of community and university partners involved in a research collaboration that took the form of a co-inquiry action research (CAR) group set up to examine the nature, challenges, and opportunities of universities and community-based organizations working together on research. It not only offers a range of perspectives on collaboration, but also a chance to get inside what Dumlaao and Janke (2012, following Thomson & Perry, 2006) refer to as the black box of little understood processes of collaboration.

Background

The CAR group was established under the aegis of Beacon North East in 2010. Beacon North East was one of six beacons for public engagement in the UK and consisted of a four-year (2008–2011) collaboration between Newcastle and Durham Universities and the Centre for Life (a science center) in North East England with a particular brief to promote public engagement with research. When Beacon North East was established, it characterized its approach to engaged research as co-inquiry. This term was used in a generic sense to refer to collaborative research with both an action orientation and some degree of participation by non-university members.

Toward the end of the second year of Beacon North East, Sarah Banks proposed that a group should be set up, comprising academics and some of the community partners from their current research projects. The purpose of this group would be to study co-inquiry research by means of a co-inquiry group. This proposal arose from the desire of key academics to share experiences and a feeling of lack of clarity about the nature of co-inquiry.

With funding from Beacon North East and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, the CAR project started in January 2010. Its purpose was to share learning from Beacon North East partners about co-inquiry as an approach to community-university research and produce materials (co-inquiry literature review, case studies of co-inquiry research projects, a toolkit, and articles) of use to universities and community partners. The process would involve a

series of meetings, a major focus of which would be presentations and discussions of the collaborative research projects with which group members were engaged. This would give everyone a chance to participate in the group and reflect on real life examples from practice.

Co-inquiry Research

Although Beacon North East used the term co-inquiry in a broad sense to refer to collaborative research, the CAR group was modeled on the idea of the co-inquiry group as promoted by Heron and Reason. This approach to research, also called cooperative experiential inquiry, was introduced in the 1970s (Heron, 1971) and developed over the following decades (Heron, 1981, 1996; Heron and Reason, 1997, 2000, 2008; Reason, 1994a). A co-inquiry group involves people coming together to define and explore an issue, problem, or question that is important for them. Co-inquiry groups use and value the knowledge within the group and work in a participatory and egalitarian way. The participants in a co-inquiry group work together as both co-researchers and co-subjects: that is, not only do they all play a role in the planning, process, analysis, and dissemination of the research (co-researchers), they also draw on their own subjective experiences from outside and inside the group as data for discussion and analysis (co-subjects).

Over time Heron and Reason and other colleagues developed a philosophy based on a radical or extended epistemology (particularly valuing knowledge gained through experience), a commitment to principles of equality (valuing and respecting all contributions), participation (active engagement of all members in the group), and a methodology based on cycles of reflection and action. A typical model of working entails a group moving through various phases. A group might start with participants coming together and focusing on purpose. Participants then become co-subjects (recording the processes and outcomes of their own and each other's experiences), before moving on to being fully immersed and engaged with their experience. Finally, the group comes back to reconsider or reframe the original questions/issues and/or formulate new questions and continue through the cycle again (Reason, 1994b).

The Beacon North East CAR Group

The principles, methods, and process of the CAR group drew on the philosophy and models of co-inquiry groups as developed by Heron and

Reason but did not follow their methodology in detail. Since the facilitator had a background in community development, the group also drew on the principles and values of community development work (Community Development Exchange, n.d.; Ledwith, 2011; Ledwith & Springett, 2010), critical community practice (Butcher, Banks, Henderson, & Robertson, 2007), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972, 1993, 2001). These share a participatory worldview and egalitarian philosophy, but also emphasize analysis of power relations, challenging oppression, promoting empowerment of individuals and groups, and an action orientation toward transformational change. The working of the CAR group was also informed by principles and methods of dialogical learning, especially as developed in neo-Socratic dialogue, with an emphasis on listening and developing mutual understanding (Saran & Neisser, 2004). The principles listed below were important in setting up and facilitating the group.

1. Valuing alternative ways of knowing. One of the main aims was to create knowledge through learning from the experiences of participants, all of whose perspectives were regarded as equally valuable. This relates to Heron and Reason's (2008) argument for an extended or radical epistemology (theory of how we come to know the world) as an alternative to the traditional academic privileging of theoretical, abstract, propositional knowledge (intellectual knowing of ideas and theories, knowing about). This extended epistemology identifies three other types of knowledge in addition to the propositional, namely: experiential (gained through direct face-to-face contact with a person, place, or object, based on empathy and resonance); presentational (grows out of experiential knowing, expressing it through story, movement, drawing, etc); and practical (knowing how to do something, a skill or competence; this brings together the other forms of knowing into action in the world). This is also referred to in other literature as an epistemological shift (Welch, 2002) or a new epistemology (Schön, 1995) that focuses on a reflective and applied approach to research.

2. Awareness of differing positionalities and power of group participants. While the group was set up with a commitment to an egalitarian philosophy and participatory approach, members were aware of the potential for academic voices and interpretations to dominate. This issue was kept on the agenda throughout the year and one of

the main ways of distributing power in the group was through using exercises that gave space for all to contribute (such as rounds and pair work), encouraging serious listening and valuing of each contribution.

3. Phases of reflection and action. The group was based on a familiar model of experiential learning, alternating between phases of reflection and action (Kolb, 1984; Freire, 1972; Heron, 1996). Members planned future actions of the group and brought case examples for discussion, which then enabled them to reflect on the processes of community-university collaboration. They also continued working in their research collaborations outside the group and reflected on these processes and on the processes of the CAR group itself. The reflections in the group were often dialogical, with group members sharing their perceptions and views, listening to others, identifying commonalities, and developing shared understandings.

4. Awareness and use of group processes. The group was deliberately set up to mirror the process it was studying—the relationship between community and university participants in collaborative research. This meant that all participants were aware of, and from time to time discussed, the roles people played within and outside the group (especially the distinction between academic and community participants), levels of participation, inclusion and exclusion, and the use of power and language. Reflections on group dynamics provided some of the data for analysis of how community-university research collaborations work, and reflections of members on their own positions and contributions in the group (reflexivity, see Finlay, 2002) were particularly useful in this.

5. Search for transformational as well as informational outcomes. In addition to finding out how the process of community-university collaboration in research worked, including identification of challenges and elements of good practice, the aim was also to enhance the capacity of group members and others in the wider community and universities to undertake this kind of research. In Heron's (1996) terminology, the group was seeking both informational and transformational outcomes. In community development terms, it was aiming for individual and collective empowerment to enable participants to work for progressive social change in their communities (Banks & Vickers, 2006; Community Development Exchange, n.d.).

The Organization of the Group

The project was coordinated and meetings facilitated by Banks, with Andrea Armstrong as researcher (responsible for a literature review, collation of materials for case studies, and recording meetings). The group met on six occasions between April 2010 and April 2011. It initially comprised five members of community groups (one paid worker and four voluntary activists), five academics, an academic as facilitator, a researcher, and one staff member from Beacon North East. Participants were selected and invited by Beacon North East staff, with academic participants comprising the Beacon North East theme leaders and the community partners coming from two projects. After the first meeting, one community partner withdrew (for family reasons), leaving four community partners from the same organization.

The six meetings were each three hours long and provided a space to share and develop ideas, comment on presentations from group members, and materials produced by the researcher. Meetings were structured by the facilitator and generally comprised a round of information sharing, a case study presentation, feedback and discussion, pair and small group work, and deciding next steps. Actions to be taken by group members were identified and the researcher collated more materials for the next meeting.

The meetings were audio-recorded and detailed notes were circulated to members to ensure accuracy of reporting. The notes from meetings and additional interviews with CAR group participants by the researcher and evaluation questionnaires completed at the end of the meetings were used to inform this article. These materials formed the basis of toolkits and case studies (www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/toolkits). The writing process was collaborative, with the researcher and facilitator pulling materials together and circulating to members for editing and comments.

Developing a Way of Working

Presenting a literature review: exposing the group to academic jargon

Since part of the brief of the CAR project was for the researcher to produce an initial literature review on co-inquiry and related approaches, it was decided to present this at the first meeting. This overview of the literature was followed by presentation of a case study of a community-university collaboration by members of a community group. Despite attempts to summarize the findings of the literature review in a way that was comprehensible

and relevant, this clearly failed, as illustrated by the comments of two community participants:

From the outset it was quite daunting.... For me this was new. The academics genuinely wanted to know our opinions. I must admit that at first I thought it was over my head and at the first meeting, me and a colleague were ready to call it a day. We decided to stick it out for a couple more sessions.

Did not have a clue what to expect or what was expected of me. During the meeting I felt out of my depth and that I could not contribute in any way. The jargon used by others put me off straight away. Having a cigarette break during the meeting, my colleague and I just stood laughing at each other, both having the same thought that we were from another planet.

Presenting case studies: grounding the group in practice

Fortunately, these two community participants stayed, and after the break they presented, with others, their case study on the work of their community organization (Thrive) and their research collaboration with Durham University. This provoked intense interest among other participants, as Thrive had been involved in campaigning and community action in relation to high interest loan companies (www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/researchprojects/debt_on_teesside). The community participants showed a video they had made to highlight the unethical practices of doorstep lenders and explained how university staff and students were involved in working with them to collect, analyze, and write up supporting research data.

The following three meetings included presentations on research projects in which group members had been involved, followed by discussion and analysis. These presentations served to ground the group in experiential and presentational knowledge, giving different people a space to contribute and enabling the group to compare and contrast experiences and begin to identify common themes and issues. Although the comments from the community participants quoted earlier suggest that the group had a rocky start, it gradually recovered from this as academic jargon and theorizing were put aside and discussions focused on practical experiences and reflections on experiences in a way that all could contribute.

Listening and asking questions: becoming a group

Interestingly, in the presentation of the research based at the community organization, Thrive, the community participants used some specialist terminology from the field of community organizing (www.gamaliel.org; Alinsky, 1969; Pyles, 2009), which some of the academics did not understand—for example “cutting an issue” (choosing an issue on which to campaign), one-on-ones (face-to-face meetings with key people to engage them) and self-interest (individual interests around which a campaign can be mobilized). This first meeting served an important purpose in alerting participants to the potential for the worlds of academia and community action to seem mutually inscrutable. Indeed, it was not only the community participants who felt unsure or excluded at the start. Some of the academics had not met previously and were also hesitant, as comments from three university participants show:

I did have concerns about what I had to offer to the group: whether my own work was relevant, and my capacity to make a useful contribution.

I think I felt a little bit on the outside to begin with.... I was aware some people had well-established relationships... whereas for me I knew no one at the table.

I felt a bit like a fish out of water. It was clear that several of my colleagues were very familiar with co-inquiry research, an approach which to me was very new.

However, like all groups (Brown, 1994; Doel, 2006), this one went through stages and quickly settled down as participants expressed genuine interest in each other’s perspectives, academics tried to avoid jargon and over-intellectualizing, and community participants felt respected and were prepared to challenge and ask questions. As one community participant remarked:

At one meeting we were discussing the problems of engaging with the university and one point was the language or the amount of academic jargon being used. They listened to me and took on board what I said and it was plain sailing from then on.

Reflecting on the group process, two academics commented: “By the end of the process, it felt like we had become something of a team,” and “We became a group rather than a bringing together of people from different disciplines and stakeholders.”

Exploring Together

Once the group was established, its main focus was on discussing and analyzing four case studies of community-university collaborative research projects. These are summarized in Table 1 and were presented by members of the CAR group and explored in detail (for fuller accounts see www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/toolkits/).

The emphasis in the group’s examination of the case studies was not on research findings, but rather on reflecting on the process of academics and community participants working together within the context of their projects and identifying issues, challenges, what worked well, and lessons learned. This allowed members to reflect on their own roles in their research projects and created a space to analyze each other’s accounts in a critical but supportive environment. The process of exploring together highlighted a number of issues and challenges when working collaboratively in co-inquiry groups and/or partnerships.

Reflecting Together on the Challenges of Collaborative Research

At the fifth meeting, the group took stock of the case studies (written up in draft by the

researcher) and earlier discussions in order to summarize key challenges in community-university collaborative research and identify points of good practice. The discussion drew on the issues raised by the case studies, and also on analyses of how the CAR group itself functioned as a community-university collaboration. Many issues were identified, a number of which formed the basis of the good practice guidance (Beacon North East, 2011a). There were two challenges upon which the group focused much attention—one raised by community partners and the other by academics. These were: community partners’ concerns about academic language and ways of working (based on experiences in early CAR group meetings) and academics’ interest in how they managed multiple roles and identities, including becoming personally involved and “going native” (based on reflections on the case study presentations).

Community partners’ concerns about academic language and ways of working: “different planets”

On a number of occasions, community participants raised the issue of academic language. Although it was clear that this was about more than just language or the use of jargon, this was a useful focus for an issue that was also about differences in class, status, wealth, and power. It was about the power of academics to set and control agendas and to patronize or exploit (whether consciously or unconsciously) community participants. As one community participant said afterwards: “What appeared to me at the first meeting was a group of

Table 1. Case Studies Examined by the CAR Group

Case Study Title	Brief Description
1. Collaborating for social justice: a community-university partnership (Beacon North East, 2011b)	A long-term partnership between Thrive and academics in the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action (Durham University). It started with an approach from Thrive to an academic for help with research on sustainable livelihoods and led to university support for several Thrive-initiated research projects, university staff attending Thrive community organizing training, and a large research grant on household debt managed jointly by Thrive and the University.
2. Digging where we stand: a research collaboration between older people and planning students (Beacon North East, 2011c)	A community-university research partnership in Newcastle involving postgraduate architecture and planning students working according to instructions drawn up by The Elders’ Council and the Quality of Life Partnership. Students worked with older people in two diverse neighborhoods to draw out qualities of those areas that were supportive or detrimental to older residents’ quality of life. The project developed from the Newcastle University staff member’s research interest in aging and her involvement in the Quality of Life Partnership for many years.
3. Developing Durham Local Food Network: the role of a Master’s student (Beacon North East, 2011d)	A one-year project involving a Durham University master’s student undertaking research for her dissertation with a view to promoting the Durham Local Food Network and raising general awareness of organically grown local food among the local community. The project grew out of a relationship between one of the research supervisors and the founder of the food network who knew each other through mutual interests in transition towns and permaculture.
4. Developing low carbon neighbourhoods: a collaborative action research project in Newcastle (Beacon North East, 2011e)	A partnership project between two universities, a city council, two energy charities, a housing co-op, tenants’ associations, a housing association, and others to promote community engagement in relation to energy-demand reduction in fuel poor neighborhoods in Newcastle. Building on previous collaborations between some of the partners, a Newcastle University member of staff gained a Beacon North East fellowship to take the research further.

learned people having to put up with a commoner like me.” This is the same person who laughed with her colleague at the first meeting, thinking they were “from a different planet.”

However, at later meetings the academic language issue was raised again and university participants took it seriously. It was important to tackle this, not just for the purpose of including community participants, but also because the academic participants were from different disciplines. There was a danger the social sciences and social research methodologies would dominate. Yet it was broader than just language, as the group facilitator commented:

It was also about academic culture and ways of working. It’s hard to put your finger on it, especially when you are immersed in it, but we can easily fall into academic seminar mode if we are not careful. We hear a presentation and then ask questions, which may be in the form of a disguised critique. We minutely analyze and interpret what people say, test out an argument, or link it to a theoretical position. In the CAR group we needed to do something very different: We needed to stay with people’s experiences, communicate clearly, listen to each other very carefully, and build mutual understanding. That is, we needed to engage in dialogue rather than debate.

The group seems to have been successful in this respect. As the same community participant who spoke about being from a different planet commented:

Their jargon and way of speaking could have crushed me within seconds. My response to that would have been to leave, shout, or use expletives. But they treated me as they treated themselves: with courtesy, decorum, and respect. They made me feel an equal with something to contribute. They listened, dissected my argument so I could rethink a better way of explanation. They listened to me when I disagreed with them and explained fully things I did not understand. I joined as an outsider but left as a full equal even though I do not have letters after my name.

The CAR group may not have created a “new world,” but it did create a new space—a common ground where a productive community-university dialogue could take place. This space was not just an artificial bubble with no connection to the worlds outside, as the learning enabled participants to go back to their worlds and work in new and relevant ways, as described in the later section on benefits.

Academics’ multiple roles/identities: Becoming personal and “going native”

The issue of academics occupying more than one role/identity in their research projects was raised as a challenge by the university members of the CAR group. The community partners in the CAR group did not express similar concerns (although there are clearly challenges in taking on researcher roles in their communities), and it is worth considering why this is a recurring challenge for academics.

Negotiation of roles/identities that are not always complementary is perhaps more acutely experienced by university partners because it is often academics who become involved in the settings where community partners work or live (Farquhar & Dobson, 2004). This was the case in the four examples studied by the CAR group (although in the case of the CAR group itself the situation was reversed). Furthermore, university partners may feel the responsibility of the researcher role differently than community partners because that is their main working role. Other roles/identities may evolve unexpectedly for university partners and they may feel less experienced in them. For example, the academic researcher in Case Study 4 said he was “conscious that the role was different to [what I] expected” and one of the CAR group members commented that this academic’s role was “like that of a community development worker.”

In Case Study 3, the academic researcher and master’s student both commented on their multiple roles as researcher (with a funded university project to complete), student (taking courses in permaculture design taught by the community partner) and community activist (involved in local food and transition groups). This also happened in Case Study 1, as academics and students enrolled in training for community organizers and engaged in campaigns and public assemblies alongside their community partners from the community organization, Thrive.

In some situations, then, there is added complexity and potential conflict for the academic partners when their roles become

more than researchers and include being advisors or community activists. Being involved in a community project also entails a duty of care and responsibility, and relationships can become personal. CAR group members discussed the issue of conflicting roles, commenting that in Case Study 3, where the community partner was teacher, the academic partner ceded authority to someone else. Comments included: "It [research partnership] can become personal, part of your life and much more than a research interest" and collaborative research can be seen "as (life) long relationships which blur the lines between community/researcher/activist." One academic member commented on the tensions between commitment and dependency:

There has to be commitment from people who have a passion but you have to know when to draw the line, for example: skills to avoid co-dependency; how to manage expectations and hopes; feel that you can say 'no' and have time for yourself and that commitments are defined.

In Case Study 3, the master's student became so immersed in the project that she said in an interview with the researcher that she had "gone native" (see Gold, 1958):

I have "gone native" and almost become one of the subjects of my own inquiry. The fieldwork has not been an abstracted study about "them," but rather it has involved striking up real relationships with the people you are working with.

This comment encapsulates a recognized challenge for social science researchers, especially ethnographers playing a participant-observer role of adopting multiple roles/identities in the field (e.g., as researcher and activist). It also highlights the issues raised by being "inside" and "outside" the group that is the focus of the research (see Bachmann, 2011; Eyles, 1988).

Reflections Afterward on the Benefits of Participating in the CAR Group

In February 2012, 10 months after the last meeting, the researcher sent participants questionnaires to evaluate their learning from the group and any outcomes that could be attributed to it. A number of themes emerged, which are elaborated upon below.

1. Broadening of theoretical knowledge. Several academics reported a greater understanding of the range of approaches to community-based participatory research (CBPR). This was propositional knowledge derived from the academic literature, particularly as presented in the literature review. As two academics commented:

It has broadened my field of vision concerning the wider body of knowledge about action research and public engagement. It has helped me to question how genuinely collaborative—in the co-inquiry sense—my work is or could be.

It opened my mind to a whole range of research topics that I had never thought about before I spend most of my time working with academics, industrialists, and business people whose background is in the hard sciences and engineering. Co-inquiry research is not commonly used in those circles, which is quite unlike the world that my new social science colleagues appear to inhabit. However, it is very clear to me that many of the serious obstacles to deploying the results of work in the hard sciences stem from a lack of engagement with people. We are probably missing a trick!

2. Developing practical knowledge. All participants reported developing practical knowledge and skills in how to conduct community-university collaborative research, particularly co-inquiry. For example, an academic commented that he had learned how to conduct a co-inquiry group and the CAR group had provided a platform (through the toolkit) for further co-inquiry projects. One of the community partners said: "My work is now more structured and researched with the right questions being asked. I have also won two awards for my work." This community partner has taken a lead in developing a toolkit for community partners engaging with universities (Beacon North East, 2012).

3. Deepening sensitivity. Several participants made comments relating to their greater awareness of the nuances of participatory research, and one academic commented that he had gained:

[A]wareness of language and discursive issues and their relation to inclusion,

exclusion, and ethical conduct in research; better appreciation of the nuances and dilemmas implicated in the foregoing.

The same academic also said that participation in the group had “deepened my appreciation of the issues to consider in working with various types of partners.” Another academic commented: “I now appreciate the degrees of community participation and researcher control and have a deeper insight into complexities of relationships.”

4. Stimulating reflexivity. As indicated earlier, several community partners were conscious of their class and educational backgrounds and how this influenced their participation in the group. Several academics reported a greater awareness of their role as university researchers, the potential for abuse of power, and conflicts between responsibilities to different organizations or groups. “Reflexivity” was not a term used in the CAR group (it could be regarded as “academic jargon”). However, in reflections afterward it became clear that the concept was useful—referring to the conscious placing of oneself in the picture and an awareness of one’s own position, values, and influence in a group or project. One of the academics mentioned that an effect of the CAR group for her was: “Perhaps being more conscious of my position and that of others.”

5. Developing self-confidence. Community partners in particular stressed the effect of participation in the group on their self-confidence, as one commented:

It has given me more confidence to express my beliefs and the structure behind them. Also to integrate more in the circles of people who could help my work progress (public speaking engagements, both in university and the community).... This collaboration has given me a self-esteem I have never had. I refused university when I had the chance and always felt in awe of the people who worked and studied there, but I learnt that I can contribute.

Academics also reported developing confidence, particularly in relation to contributing to the CAR group, as two participants commented: “Over time I became more confident about offering opinions and perspectives,” and “A generally supportive atmosphere helped me to develop con-

fidence in my own role, and I think this helped me to contribute more often and substantially.”

6. Leading to further action. When asked how the CAR group had changed what they were doing, several participants commented that they were taking on new projects based on the co-inquiry approach, as well as improving their existing practice. One of the community partners reported that she was:

Taking on bigger projects.... I am working with people to mentor them and become experts in their causes. Because of the CAR group I make things happen, not go with the flow. I am now an educator by experience.

An academic gave an example of how she had developed a new research project around the viability of co-housing for older people to a brief drawn up by an elders’ council:

This piece of work is being managed by a steering group that is mainly elders’ council members. This is a new approach in co-inquiry for me, though I have worked with steering groups before, set up by research funders. This was a conscious attempt to ensure that management of the project was not taken away from older people.

Conclusions: Developing Collaborative Reflexivity

Much community-university collaborative research focuses on the aims, objectives, and tasks of the research itself, rather than the process of the collaboration—the black box mentioned at the start of this article. The four case study research projects that were the focus of the CAR group deliberations were typical in this respect. The participants were aware of some of the challenges of universities and communities working together, but had rarely talked about the process of collaboration in any detail or made the process a study in its own right. The CAR group showed the value of engaging in exploratory dialogue in a group. Participants were surprised at what they learned from each other and about themselves. They reflected not just on the collaborative processes in their own current and recent research projects and evaluated their roles, strengths, and weaknesses, but also studied themselves in the group and analyzed the

workings of the group. This provided a model for how to become more reflective and reflexive in the research process and demonstrated the value of experiential learning.

The process that the group went through could be described as developing a capacity for collaborative reflexivity—enabling individuals not only to reflect critically on themselves and the influence of their own power and positions in their research projects, but also stimulating a collective process. This included subjecting the structure and dynamics of the group itself to scrutiny and considering how these influenced the work it could do in studying co-inquiry.

Reflexivity as mutual collaboration or collaborative reflexivity is one of five types of reflexivity in research identified by Finlay (2002). However, her short sketch of collaborative reflexivity misses some of the dimensions identified in the CAR group. Finlay presents collaborative reflexivity of the type developed in co-inquiry groups as “offering opportunities to hear, and take into account, multiple voices and conflicting positions” (p. 220). However, she remains skeptical of the value of this process, which she suggests may be based on an egalitarian rhetoric disguising essentially unequal relationships. This is a valid point. In the CAR group, with academics in a majority and taking the roles of facilitator and researcher, parity of status was hard to achieve. However, arguably collaborative reflexivity is not just about hearing multiple voices; it is also engaging in critical dialogue so the many voices may position themselves in relation to salient categories such as class, gender, ethnicity, education, and status, consciously reflecting those positions and talking to each other about their positions and reflections. This began to happen in the group and has been taken further in subsequent CAR groups.

The CAR group offered a rare opportunity for reflection and reflexivity in a diverse group on ways of working collaboratively. While a steering group or advisory group is often included within research projects, these are usually task focused and do not allow much time and space for mutual reflection on the research process. There are enormous benefits to integrating a CAR group within a larger research project instead of, or alongside, the more traditional steering/advisory group. A CAR group can not only consider the research findings and how to put them into practice, but also examine the workings of the research project itself and draw out and create learning from the process of collaboration.

This was done on a small scale in a scoping study on ethics in community-based research (funded by a UK research council) that involved some of the same academics and community partners from the CAR group described here undertaking a literature review and participating in a second CAR group (Durham Community Research Team, 2011). This led to the drafting of ethical guidelines for CBPR and ultimately the publication of a guide and case materials as part of a follow-on project (Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University and National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2012).

Building in a CAR group, or some other format for stimulating and developing the capacity for collaborative reflexivity, can take community-university collaborative research to a new level, developing stronger and more sustainable partnerships and promoting genuinely transformative learning for individuals, groups, and communities. In terms of community-university engagement more generally, including university students and staff undertaking community service and community action, the concept of collaborative reflexivity can be a useful focus for stimulating shared learning and improved practice. Building in spaces where different parties can reflect honestly, acknowledging and exploring the impact of differentials in power, status, education, and wealth, can result in stronger partnerships, significant learning for individuals and groups, and stimulation of further collaborations of mutual benefit.

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Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the UK-based National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement and Beacon North East for providing funding for the CAR group and to the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University, UK for facilitating the project.

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Tackling Wicked Problems Through Engaged Scholarship

Sharon Paynter

Abstract

Engaged scholarship combines the work of universities with that of community partners. The results can be powerful examples of the synergy that arises between theory and practice. By examining engaged scholarship and reflecting on the nuances that exist between it and engaged research, this paper follows the ways that research questions can be explored in a practical application versus in a controlled environment. I examine the benefits of community-engaged scholarship relative to service recipients, scholars, organizations, and communities at large. The academic benefits extend far beyond the universities; engaged scholarship allows for university programs to provide realistic training to students as an example of future work-related duties and assignments and to collaborate with community partners in service delivery. Results of collective collaboration and community-engaged scholarship can lead to a strengthened sense of community in lasting partnerships that increase dialogue surrounding challenging issues.

Introduction

The Great Recession of 2008 forced many organizations, both public and private, to begin an era of cutback management that will persist for years (Jimenez, 2012; Levine & Scorsone, 2011). Partnerships between public and private entities, including government, nonprofit, and educational organizations, could offer an avenue for maintaining or even re-envisioning service provision during austere budgetary times. Community-engaged scholarship is one way that collaborative partnerships can be created to benefit all stakeholders involved. University faculty can make important contributions to programs while preserving institutional academic missions through partnerships with government and nonprofit organizations.

My analysis explores how community-engaged scholarship benefits service recipients, scholars, organizations, and communities at large. First, I explain community-engaged scholarship and nuances that set it apart from engaged and applied research. I then use this framework to examine a case study bringing together university, nonprofit, government, and private business resources.

The Engaged Scholarship Model

Engaged scholarship differs from engaged research in an important way. Engaged research activities use protocol and frameworks to guide the collection and analysis of data. It is a framework rather than a methodology unto itself (MacQueen, McLellan, Metzger, Kegeles, Strauss, Scotti, Blanchard, & Trotter, 2001). Engaged research is a part of engaged scholarship, a larger concept where

scholarly work is disseminated through teaching, research, and service (Boyer, 1990). Colleges and universities undertake both, though engaged scholarship is likely to have a greater impact on the stakeholders who collaborate in both academic and community settings.

Boyer (1990) suggested that scholarship is more than the conduct of original research. In his view, scholarship incorporates discovery with problem solving that assists individuals and institutions, and promotes educational progress. In this depiction scholarship is a dynamic process of building bridges between theory and practice that is accomplished through discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

This is in contrast to traditional academic work where knowledge is built for its own sake. There is a belief that traditional scholarship provides the freedom to explore ideas in creative, innovative ways in a university climate that is generally free from the pressures that come from clients seeking validation for decisions that might impact the fiscal health of the organization or project whose problems are being studied. Yet engaged scholarship can allow researchers to contribute to both the “climate of the university” and “stock of human knowledge” (Boyer, 1990, p. 17–23) by exploring research questions wherever they lead, with no prescribed notion of what the outcome might be.

Engaged scholarship frequently involves researchers from different disciplines and communities who need an interdisciplinary perspective in order to solve problems. Discoveries as important as the structure of

life itself came through collaboration between scholars from different fields exploring problems without a preconceived outcome. The value of multidisciplinary research has been evident in the medical field for many years (for example, see Kim, Barnato, Angus, Fleisher, & Kahn, 2010; Rosenfield, 1992). For example, James Watson, an ornithologist, partnered with Francis Crick, a physicist, to uncover the coding pattern of deoxyribonucleic acid, literally discovering the DNA of human beings. In this case, the integration of multidisciplinary collaborations allowed the application of theoretical frameworks from two fields to questions in related fields. Yet some researchers are reluctant to engage in this sort of collaborative, cross disciplinary work because they feel pressure to find publication outlets and establish reputations in their home discipline.

Engaged scholarship allows the application of discovery and integration in community environments. Individuals and institutions benefit from applying the knowledge of research studies in real world environments. Real world dilemmas can even lead academe to broaden research agendas and scholarly investment while contributing to the needs of the larger community surrounding college campuses (Boyer, 1990).

Engaged scholarship is viewed in many ways within academia. For example, it may be considered a type of service, a type that must be distinguished from simply doing good works in a community or serving as committee member, student advisor, work on national boards, editorial boards for peer-reviewed journals, and the like. Many faculty members also work with community groups as advisors, board members, and volunteers. These activities are best described as “citizenship” (Boyer, 1990). When a researcher is able to tie citizenship to his or her area of specialization and professional work through activities that require accountability, rigor, and end with research, this type of service blends scholarship with community work.

The difference in engaged scholarship and research is difficult to pinpoint, though important to note. Many of the activities that make a project engaged research also allow it to be classified as engaged scholarship. Engaged research allows teachers to build bridges and stimulate critical thinking as they involve students in solving community problems if the findings are used in pedagogical settings. The simplest way to understand the distinction, at least in my mind, is to see engaged research as a part of engaged scholarship. That is, one might undertake a

research effort that involves partnership with community members, with the aim of mutual benefit, but the effort stops after data are analyzed and findings reported. The expanded activities related to integration, application, and teaching are less emphasized than the research itself.

Engaged research allows for the transference of knowledge born of deeper understanding of theory that is gained through the integrated application of axioms in real world settings. Engaged research is likely to create opportunities for faculty to become better teachers and students better learners because both are able to translate theory through a more relatable lens. But the research itself falls short of being engaged scholarship, a more active and integrated approach that uses the findings in a deliberate effort to integrate theory and practice. In Boyer’s terms, engaged research projects allow faculty to use knowledge gained through serious study, exploration, and understanding to offer students the best opportunity to develop and apply an understanding of the discovery being examined.

But engaged scholarship and applied research are not necessarily synonymous. The use of applied research to bridge the gap between theory and practice is a widely accepted practice (Koliba, 2007), and most often means that researchers take knowledge gained and apply it to community problems that the researcher defines. Engaged scholarship, in contrast, is “user inspired research” where the community defines the problem and in partnership with the researcher looks for a solution (Gibson, 2006).

Most academic units remain bound by the traditional models of scholarship that rely heavily on empirical tests of theory (including applied research) without rewarding faculty for engaging in work with community partners. With limited time, and the pressures of the tenure and promotion process, many faculty members choose to limit activities to conventional teaching, research, and service activities. In doing so the researchers most well trained to study, evaluate, and theorize on real world problems fail to become involved in working to solve the issues about which they write, and some might argue, are unable to meet the broadly defined public service mission of many colleges and universities. In short, the experts are unable to engage in activities that put theory into practice.

The civic engagement movement has prompted some level of tenure and promotion reform within the university community (Marullo,

1996; Kellogg, 1999; Koliba, 2007; Ostrander, 2004). Despite recognition that applied research has value, there are limited outlets for this brand of research in peer-reviewed journals and a lack of understanding of the time intensity engaged scholarship requires.

Hunger as a Platform for Understanding Engagement

Some topics are perfectly suited to bring together actors from many different perspectives. Hunger is one of those issues. Scholars from fields as varied as medicine (Casey, de Cuba, Cook, & Frank, 2010), nutrition (Weaver & Hadley, 2009), public health (Widome, Neumark-Sztainer, Hannan, Haines, & Story, 2009), anthropology (Cormier, 2006), political science (Collier, 2008), economics (Logan, 2009), public administration and policy (Berner, Paynter, & Anderson, 2009), sociology (Coleman-Jensen, 2010), psychology (May, Berry, & Andrade, 2007), and nonprofits (Bade & Daponte (2006) have undertaken work on the causes and effects of hunger across the United States and in other countries. A common thread among all of these examples is that hunger is an important topic.

Hunger and poverty are tightly linked but not all people who experience hunger are poor, according to the official poverty guidelines. About 15 percent (46.2 million people) of the total population in the United States including 16.1 million children experienced poverty in 2011 (Carmen, Proctor, & Lee, 2011). In the same year, there were 50.1 million Americans who reported living with food insecurity (not knowing where the next meal will come from), among them 16.7 million children and 1 million seniors living alone (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Andrews, 2011).

Public administration and policy is an important lens through which hunger might be studied, and ultimately addressed. Embedded within public administration and policy literature are studies of organizations in the public and governmental sector as well as those that are private, nonprofit agencies. Together agencies providing social programs within these realms make up the social safety net (Grosh, Del, Ninno, Tesliuc, & Ouerghi 2008). As a scholar in a public administration program that is a part of a political science department, I see the interconnectivity between hunger, public policy and management, and other disciplines. As a result, this topic is one way to explore the ideas of engaged scholarship between university and community partners.

Historically, institutions of higher education have been tasked with fostering a learning environment, providing tools that contribute to social mobility and lessen inequality, and to the enculturation of generations that live, learn, and work within a society (Holmwood, 2011). These are the basic tenets of higher education, but since the 1970s universities are taking on a broader mission that includes activities ranging from promoting economic growth to disseminating research across various outlets including, in recent years, through social media (Thrift, 2012). Whether one favors the basics approach or the reinvention strategy, universities are clearly important components of communities. It is equally critical that university campuses engage in collaborations with community partners in active ways, including through scholarship.

Interestingly, though collaboration is an often researched and well reviewed concept in public administration literature (for example see Agranoff, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Clarke & Stewart, 1997; Gazely & Brudney, 2007; Henton, Amsler, & Kopell, 2006; O'Leary, Gerard, & Bingham, 2006), there is little attention given to the nexus between institutions of higher education engaging in work with community partners, especially in the United States. Public administration scholars have written extensively on civic engagement (Ostrander, 2004; Portney, 2005) and participatory governance (Murray & Shaffer, 2004). Two studies issue a call for more research on engagement between public actors and communities with one considering the role of coproduction public services as a way to maximize resources and integrate activities between organizations (Bovaird, 2007) and the other (Boxelaar, Paine, & Beilin, 2006) suggesting that genuine stakeholder participation will be more effective and genuine if a reflexive dialogue between agencies and community members is established.

Certainly there are many instances in the public administration literature where a researcher, or even institution, partnered with governmental agencies or nonprofits in research endeavors, but there is little attention given to how the relationship between partners developed, whether the community had a role in research design, goals, or analysis, or in how results were disseminated for mutual benefit. A notable example of the kind of work that might benefit public administration, engagement, and other social science research is a study of the relationship between the University of Kentucky and community partners who worked

together on alternative food resources to address hunger (Tanaka & Mooney, 2010). The partnership I describe in this article is an attempt to shed light on the types of efforts that public administration scholars may be able to document through the lens of engaged scholarship.

Boyer (1996) expanded the concept of scholarship to include engagement with community partners. In doing so he challenged academics to look for partnerships that would allow the academy to work with practitioners to solve the kinds of wicked problems that plague societies. The result is the scholarship of engagement. There has been some guidance provided for university faculty interested in engagement work (Ward, 2003) and establishing the concept as a set of practices (Barker, 2004). Sandmann (2008) provides a thorough review of the history and evolution of the scholarship of engagement in higher education. Engaged scholars work alongside community participants to address questions relevant to both sets of stakeholders (Barker, 2004). Engaged scholarship can benefit multiple stakeholders as evidenced by the activities and impact of the North Carolina Hunger Project (NCHP).

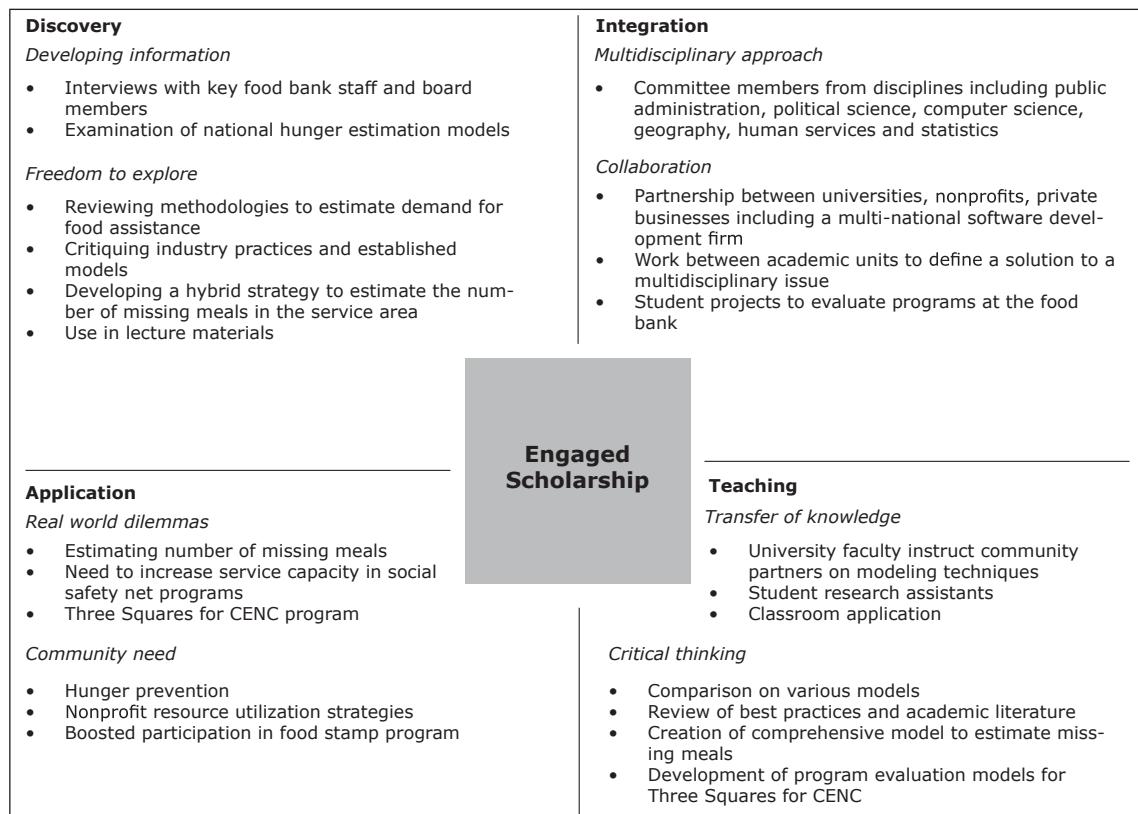
Using Engaged Research to Develop Engaged Scholarship

The NCHP is an example of the four phases of engaged scholarship, as it incorporates expertise and knowledge from practice and theory into a solution that guides both the strategic plan for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina (FBCENC) has resulted in academic publications and has been used in teaching activities at East Carolina University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Together food bank and academic partners put the Boyer Model of Engaged Scholarship (1996) into practice, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

The work relies on a framework that built on strengths from both the academic and food assistance communities. The partnership drew from issue expertise of food bank staff and volunteers who are “hunger experts,” as well as technical research skills from the academic community.

The transition from engaged research to engaged scholarship has been deliberate. Initial research centered on analyzing trends and using quantitative methods to describe or explain phenomena at the food bank. The missing meals model has been used in a number of ways and

Figure 1. Applying the Boyer (1996) Model to the Hunger Project Partnerships



environments. For example, it is used within the food bank for strategic planning purposes, as the subject for peer reviewed academic journal articles, as the starting point for conversations among stakeholders (community presentations, addresses to state and national conferences), and as the foundation for classroom instructional activities at the collegiate level. The activities, data, and findings from the missing meals model have given partners in NCHP a way to inform communities in both the public and private sectors through a single project leveraging resources along the way.

The Missing Meals Model: Applied and Engaged Research

To be effective, non-profit organizations need to understand future demand for services and plan accordingly. Most often, social service oriented non-profits use service usage patterns to project demand. This method has an obvious limitation. If the organization was unable to provide sufficient service because of limited financial, human, or physical resources, past service numbers might be underestimated, and consequently the organization would effectively be planning the past rather than projecting the future. That is, if a food pantry ran out of food before all the hungry people were fed, the number would be artificially reduced because the demand outstripped supply.

There is a new movement in modeling demand for social services. These efforts estimate demand by understanding overall need for a service in a community, and then calculating what is available to meet that need—whether resources are provided by the individuals or other private sector providers, government, or non-profits that pick up where government leaves off. The difference between what is needed overall and what is provided is the service “gap.” In the area of hunger, national and regional non-profits are turning to this method to understand unmet need, called “missing meals.”

FBCENC, located in Raleigh, serves 34 counties and more than a third of the total population of the state. This food bank is the largest of the seven in North Carolina. There are more than 800 partner agencies located throughout the agency footprint, delivering upwards of 41 million pounds of food in fiscal year 2009-2010. While the NCHP has relationships with the other food banks in the state, this paper is focused on an effort to estimate missing meals with the FBCENC.

The FBCENC began a strategic planning process in 2009 that carried into 2010. Discussions about service provision, resource utilization,

staffing, and other components of organizational management were discussed. Given its mission “...to harness and supply resources so that no one goes hungry in Central and Eastern North Carolina,” the fact that its affiliates regularly report running out of food before filling all requests for aid troubled the staff and board. In response the FBCENC determined that it needed a reliable estimate of how many more resources would be needed to meet the demand for hunger assistance across the 34-county service area.

The problem was that a thorough, rigorous analysis of estimation techniques was needed to identify the unmet need. The FBCENC had expertise in food assistance practices, but the staff and board lacked training in statistical modeling. The food bank staff sought a partnership with East Carolina University to develop answers to their questions. University faculty were interested in engaging in this research for its potential to be a useful tool in the fight against hunger as well as the possibilities for using the project for academic publications and teaching resources.

An existing relationship with the NCHP offered an opportunity to collaborate on estimating unmet demand for hunger assistance. The board empowered the staff to reach out to community partners at area universities and local businesses to begin the process. The result was a committee comprised of two university faculty members, one research associate, two graduate research assistants, two members of the food bank executive team (directors of operations and agency services), a retired executive from a major information technology firm, and a board member. Together the Missing Meals Committee crafted a methodology based on the academic and best practices literature, experience of human services professionals, and expertise in the private sector. The FBCENC was interested in creating an accurate measure of the number of meals missing in their service area by asking:

- 1) How did the methodology used by Food FBCENC compare with that of the national hunger relief nonprofit Feeding America?
- 2) Would changes to the methodology improve the accuracy or applicability of the results?
- 3) Could a revised methodology be used to estimate the number of missing meals for the FBCENC service area overall as well as at the county level?

Assume a person eats three meals a day and that the person uses a combination of personal

resources (e.g., salary), government sponsored programs (e.g., food stamps or free or reduced priced school lunches), or nonprofit assistance (e.g., food pantry boxes) to provide those three meals. The combination of resources should allow a person to achieve the three meals per day goal, or will show how many meals that person is missing because of deficient resources. Food banks across the United States use a calculus similar to this to identify resource gaps. But what if this calculation is not accurate? What if a more reliable formula could be created to produce a more accurate missing meals estimate? These are two of the questions the FBCENC pondered as it began a major strategic planning project in 2010.

The missing meals approach is appropriate to estimate future need for food bank services. The methodology is logical and uses reliable data, although there are some methodological differences in the approaches used within foodbanks across the United States. One food bank of comparable size and scope to the FBCENC is Food Lifeline in western Washington State.

Like FBCENC, Food Lifeline is a member of the national Feeding America network. This extensive hunger relief organization served more than 19 million meals in 2009 through its 300 partner agencies. Because demand for food assistance is difficult to quantify, Food Lifeline worked to create a methodology to increase food availability through government and nonprofit programs as well as to incorporate funds individuals contribute to food acquisition. The result is its Missing Meals Model. The methodology, hereafter described as the Missing Meals Model, was initially developed in 2009 by the Food Lifeline food bank and was considered for adoption by FBCENC as a part of the strategic initiatives it began in 2009.

The Missing Meals Model is based on an estimate of the people at risk of food insecurity. The logic behind the approach is refreshing because it is more holistic. It explicitly includes overall need for food and is easy enough to measure because in the abstract food is an inelastic good. That is, regardless of anything else, people generally need three meals a day to function. The methodology uses inputs from an individual's ability to buy food for themselves and their families, as well as the more traditional measures of participation in government programs or pounds of food being distributed via food assistance agencies. The model can be used with easily accessible public data (for example, some data sources are American Community Survey; Census 2000 and 2010;

wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and various reports from state departments of health and human services administering SNAP or other food assistance programs) in a standard spreadsheet format with simple calculations, though the spreadsheets can be rather large.

With the Missing Meals Model, need for services can be identified across jurisdictions in a relative sense (due to lower incomes and therefore lower self-provision, lower federal program take-up rates, or lower food pantry provision) in each county, and therefore, what local policy effort may produce more meals. Targets can be created for each method on a county by county level in those areas (such as if summer feeding program take-up rates are very low in one county), and the FBCENC could work with the pantries in those areas to adopt plans on how to close the gap, such as a campaign to advertise the summer feeding program and developing local government support for more feeding stations. Performance measures can be set for the pantries, counties and the FBCENC overall, and meal provision via these different methods can be tracked. Long-term efforts can target employment to increase the number of meals self-provided, medium term efforts could focus on program take-up rates, and short-terms efforts can focus on increasing provision of food pantry goods. All efforts can be done simultaneously.

An alternative method, currently used by Feeding America, is based on estimates of the people actually experiencing food insecurity. National and large regional food assistance organizations are actively testing the missing meals approach, having seen the limitations of previous efforts to plan for future demand. The Feeding America Model involves the use of mathematical forecasting techniques which, while used in a relatively straightforward manner, is likely to be beyond the analytical training of most food bank staff. The assumptions necessary to collect data for both models are critical. Changing something as simple as how the number of clients is tabulated can drastically impact the result of the model.

For example, when household income was used to estimate the number of clients needing food assistance, a problem arose. Poverty thresholds are determined by age and household size. Average household size in the United States was about 2.6 people in 2011 varying from about 2.15 (District of Columbia) to 3.13 (Utah) (Census, 2011). The number of people is used in combination with age to determine the poverty threshold, a common

measure representing what a family needs to survive. Age data are available so that one might learn how many households had people less than 18 years old, seniors, or other stratifications. The income data are grouped by the U.S. Census Bureau in increments of \$5,000 for households earning less than \$54,999 per year. The problem is that entitlement programs like SNAP use the poverty line to qualify households for services. Households with more than the poverty threshold can qualify, based on a complicated formula. In North Carolina, for example, some households making as much as 200% of the poverty threshold can be eligible for food stamps. As a result, the income level at which a household needs food assistance can vary and often falls in the middle of an income band. Some income groups, especially those in the lower strata (\$25,000 or less) are always food insecure while other households at risk for food insecurity are not actually food insecure (Nord & Brent, 2002). To use the entire population for all income bands that might qualify for public food assistance would lead to an over estimation of need while excluding higher income strata is too conservative. That is, the models are very sensitive to the assumptions, data, and may be biased.

Feeding America uses data from the Economic Research Service Food Security Report conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the monthly population survey. In this survey respondents were asked 18 questions on food security, among them did they report that they worried that food would run out before they got money to buy more and that they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals. These data are reported for adults as well as children in the household. As a result, Feeding America creates a measure that captures the number of households that reported food insecurity.

The Income-Based Missing Meals Method used by Food Lifeline relies on the number of households at risk for food insecurity. This model assumes all households within a single income band would be included in the estimation of the number of missing meals. This approach would yield a biased estimate for two reasons: 1) not all households below 185 percent of the poverty level are actually food insecure; and 2) not all households above 185 percent of the poverty level are actually food secure.

There has been some work around this issue. Nord and Brent (2002) used data from the Current Population Survey (2000) to consider whether respondents both above and below 185

percent of poverty who reported food insecurity were an anomaly. The study concluded that of all households reporting food insecurity 80 percent were below 185 percent of poverty and 20 percent were above this income level. Nord and Brent also report that of the 57 million households between 185 percent of poverty (approximately \$31,000 per year) and \$50,000 (about 300 percent of poverty) annually 3.8 percent are food insecure and 1.2 percent food insecure with hunger. As a result the NCHP research staff recommended using the Nord and Brent estimation to correct for the number of at-risk versus actual missing meals.

Alternatively, assumptions underlying service provision are equally important, and equally difficult to pinpoint. The food bank staff was quick to point out that all meals are not equal. The USDA uses four different models to estimate the cost of food. The four models, ranging from least expensive to most are the Thrifty Food Plan, the Low Cost Food Plan, the Moderate Food Plan, and the Liberal Food Plan.

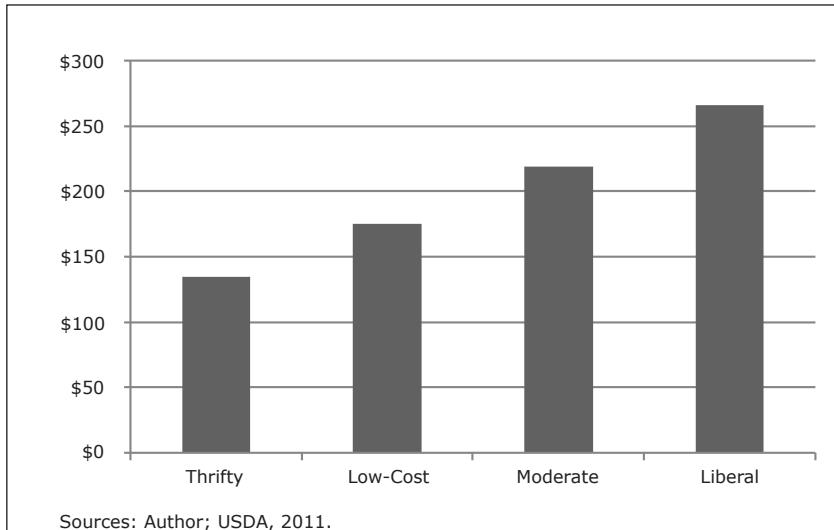
According to the 2010 USDA Thrifty Food Plan, which is the most conservative, three meals cost about \$139 per week for a family of four, including two adults age 19 to 50 and two children between the ages of 6 and 11. Comparatively, following the highest cost Liberal Food Plan, the same number of meals for the same family would cost two times as much (see Figure 2).

The costs also vary based on the number as well as the ages of the people included in the calculations. When attempting to calculate the resources necessary to fill the gap between what a household can provide through its income, social services, and nonprofit resources, assumptions incorporated in the calculation are critical to the validity and reliability of the prediction.

The FBCENC staff educated the research team on what sorts of foods are included in each meal plan, what industry standards would be most reasonable to apply to the service area, and what kinds of inventory exist at the food bank. Using these pieces of information, the team determined that using estimates for the Low Cost Food Plan would make the most sense in FBCENC service area.

In the end, the team determined that more than 1.1 million people in the service area were at risk for food insecurity. Assuming these individuals require three meals a day and subtracting the total number of meals acquired through a combination of self provision (61.8 percent), government programs (27.3 percent), and the food bank (3

Figure 2. Cost of Meals According to 2010 USDA Food Plans



percent) meant that more than 98 million meals were unaccounted for each year. Armed with this information the FBCENC was able to initiate fundraising and programming strategies to narrow the gap.

The process of developing a methodology for estimating hunger is an example of applied research and most certainly meets the basic test for being an illustration of engaged research.

Turning Toward Engaged Scholarship

The board and executive team used information from the Missing Meals Model to develop a strategic plan that has an impact on operations, outreach, and agency service activities. University partners were asked to attend a number of board meetings to discuss the assumptions and findings from the model and ultimately to move into an advisory role for projects relating utilizing information from the Missing Meals Model. What began as applied research turned into engaged research, and ultimately moved into engaged scholarship where faculty learned about the nuances of the food assistance world through interactions with professionals in the field, and those same professionals were informed through patterns uncovered by faculty trained as professional researchers. These partnerships are ongoing and strong.

Student involvement in the project was also a core component of its success. Over the course of three years, 12 different students were involved in the project. Together they logged more than 5,100 hours, collecting, preparing, and analyzing data, conducting 8 focus group interviews, attending 21

meetings with the food bank and research team, co-authoring two white papers and two peer-reviewed journal articles, and assisting in presenting findings for the food bank board and at two statewide public health meetings.

The work has not ended with discovering and exploring hunger. The Missing Meals Model has also been used by FBCENC to justify expanding its programming through an outreach ef-

fort called Three Squares for CENC. Food bank staff partnered with county social service agencies to increase education and awareness of the federal food stamp program known nationally as SNAP, and within North Carolina as the Food and Nutrition Services Program (FNS). Three Squares for CENC is being piloted in six counties where need for food assistance is high as determined in part through the Missing Meals Model.

Since Three Squares is a pilot program, FBCENC wanted to evaluate its success as well as the need for expansion to other counties in the service area. One of East Carolina University faculty members designed a graduate course in program evaluation to give students an opportunity to apply theoretical concepts in a real world setting. The food bank allowed the program manager to work in conjunction with the professor to deliver course content, including meetings with students, lectures, and group sessions. Student teams were required to submit needs assessment and program evaluation protocols to evaluate Three Squares. Each team used public datasets such as the 2010 Census and state food stamp participation reports in conjunction with internal food bank data. Though differently conceived and proposed, each team recommended future evaluations rely on focus groups or interviews with key personnel from the food bank as well as social service agencies to pair qualitative data with quantitative analysis as a way to ensure reliability in the analyses.

The evaluation teams had three general program findings. One is that the problem of hunger is substantial, requiring a tighter connection between community actors collaborating on

solutions. The second finding was that the food bank needed to clearly identify program goals, key staff responsibilities, and develop performance measures to determine program effectiveness. And finally, the teams recommended providing services in areas where households living on the margins of food insecurity, where poverty was not most rampant and where unemployment was lower than surrounding counties. The logic was that more households fall outside the social safety net in these areas and would not be eligible for government assistance, thus relying more on nonprofit food assistance offered through the food bank system.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

The NCHP is the joint venture of public universities, a network of private nonprofit food pantries, and other actors including a few private corporations. The project is a multi-faceted study of hunger with an eye toward developing the most effective food assistance programming possible and provided many opportunities for engaged scholarship. Ultimately, the results of the modeling effort led to expanded programming, student projects, and a graduate course in program evaluation. Together these examples demonstrate the value of applied and engaged research as well as the power of engaged scholarship.

University faculty and community partners can learn two things directly from NCHP. The lessons are: 1) to understand the strengths and limitations both partners bring to a project; and 2) to develop a communication strategy that ensures accountability and adherence to deadlines.

The FBCENC adopted the goal of becoming a “trusted leader” as a deliberate part of its current strategic initiative. To accomplish this goal Food FBCENC dedicated resources including staff and funding to developing a reliable strategy for projecting service demand. When FBCENC could not accomplish the goal because its staff lacked technical research skills it sought help from university faculty in the area. In the initial phases of the project FBCENC was unclear about how its staff, board, and volunteers would contribute to developing a better assessment of service demand. As conversations moved forward both the FBCENC and the university faculty working on the project became more aware of the importance practitioner-based knowledge would bring to the reliability and validity of the work. At that point the project became more engagement than community service. The strengths and limitations

of the partners were readily apparent.

Establishing a mutually beneficial relationship built on good communication, respect, and expertise is critical. Like any other team-based work, engagement projects can get mired down in meetings that become brainstorming sessions that produce few results. One of the keys to success for the NCHP was a summary list of action items that responsible parties generated at each group session. The list was sent to participants no more than two days after the meeting so that deadlines and commitments were clear. The simple process of project management kept the group on track for important deadlines like board meetings, community presentations, research conferences, and journal submissions.

Engaged scholarship falls outside traditional norms in university settings. In addition to the lessons learned relative to engagement with communities, university faculty can use these sorts of projects to boost student interest, understanding, and application of core concepts. Working in a collaborative environment can benefit organizations in all sectors. Engaged scholarship gives community partners contact with research and issue area expertise that might otherwise be unaffordable or difficult to access. In turn, research faculties are able to use examples, and sometimes partnerships, to enhance teaching and research findings in ways that not only increase reliability and validity of the findings, but also increase the likelihood that the work will actually be put to use, rather than withering on bookshelves. Importantly, this work allowed students in both graduate and undergraduate courses to work with data involving a major public policy issue (hunger) and applying techniques such as program evaluation, cost benefit analysis, survey design, and development of written and visual communication tools. Developing a sense of connection to policy problems gave students a way to better connect to theoretical and technical concepts that were otherwise difficult to understand or relate to. Admittedly, involving students is risky, takes more time, and requires vigilance on the part of instructors; but the payoffs are substantial for all stakeholders concerned. Three of the 12 students working on this project now volunteer with hunger relief agencies and one is working in the field post-graduation.

Engaged scholarship can be a carefully positioned win for all stakeholders involved, and is an enterprise that university and community partners can employ to better leverage scarce resources. While faculty are actively working to

discover new ideas and find explanations for phenomena, the work is more difficult to recognize or quantify relative to counting a number of journal articles, books, other publications, or classes taught. Engaged scholarship is not community service alone. It is a more directed effort that blends traditional academic work with practice. As such engaged faculty have a responsibility to educate peers about the value of engaged scholarship as it differs from community service, and as a potential resource for data, teaching examples, and publications. An important part of the process is for university researchers to make clear connections between problems and potential solutions. Engaged scholarship may be a tool used in addressing the problem of hunger. This paper has been an example of how solutions can emerge when community partners work with university faculty, staff, and students. It is a call for linking research, social services, teaching, and learning to develop tools to tackle wicked social policy problems.

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Leveraging a Community-Based Research Approach to Explore Research Perceptions Among Suburban Poor and Underserved Populations

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored perceptions of research among a rapidly growing underserved population within a suburban community, a setting that has yet to be sufficiently explored using a community-based research (CBR) approach. We recruited community members from community health care agencies in DuPage County, Illinois, and 79 participants were enrolled in the study. Community researchers conducted nine focus groups comprised of agency clients and eight stakeholder interviews to collect community perspectives regarding the meaning of research and its community impact, current and desired channels of research information, and research motives, discrimination, and funding. Findings revealed four major themes: community members 1) often associate research with medical research or community engagement; 2) rely most heavily on the internet for research information; 3) perceive financial barriers, rather than racial or ethnic barriers, as a significant obstacle to receiving the benefits of research; and 4) trust research conducted by academic institutions.

Health disparities research among low-income, minority populations has centered on urban and rural communities (Ansell, Grabler, Whitman, Ferrans, Burgess-Bishop, Murray, Rao, & Marcus, 2009; Corbie-Smith, Akers, Blumenthal, Council, Wynn, Muhammad, & Sith, 2010; Meade, Menard, Luque, Martinez-Tyson, & Gwede, 2011; Williams, Mabiso, Todem, Hammad, Hill-Ashford, Hamade, Palamisono, Robinson-Lockett, & Zambrana, 2011). These communities typically provide affordable residential areas for minority groups, making these areas convenient and meaningful locations for CBR. When successful, CBR fosters community-led initiatives intended to create and sustain improved health and well-being (Ramsden, McKay, & Crowe, 2010). Undergirding CBR is a recognition that communities are rich in assets that, when harnessed, result in impactful social change. Communities must therefore have an active and engaged voice alongside their academic colleagues, in both goal setting and interventions. Unlike traditional methodologies, the researchers, specifically in the case of health care providers, are responsible for facilitating community members to examine their local needs in areas such as personal health and community well-being, and to develop potential strategic solutions in the form of interventions (Ramsden, McKay, & Crowe, 2010). The overall goal of this approach is to develop interventions that are appropriate and meaningful for the particular community context. This ideal could not be achieved without the involvement

of community voices and agents in every stage of research.

While previous studies have examined both rural and urban communities within a CBR framework, suburban communities are underrepresented in the literature (Meade, et al., 2011; Rodriguez, Bowie, Frattaroli, & Gielen, 2009; Scarinci, Johnson, Hardy, Marron, & Partridge, 2009). Further, research into the health care challenges and needs of low-income, minority individuals in suburban areas is distinctly lacking, despite evidence of increasing suburbanization of both minority populations and poverty. A dramatic rise in poverty rates in Midwestern and Southern suburban areas, as indicated by the 2006 Brookings Institute Report, has provoked new health care disparities that current research is unequipped to handle (Berube & Kneebone, 2006).

DuPage County is a collar county near Chicago, Illinois in which the population of low-income, ethnic minority residents has risen swiftly and the number of limited English proficient residents has increased dramatically in recent decades (Barbieri & Iverson, 2005). Between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of DuPage County residents living below the federal poverty line rose by 182% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). Furthermore, over the past two decades, Latinos, African Americans, and Asians in DuPage have increased by 253%, 173%, and 134%, respectively, while the percentage of non-Hispanic Caucasians has declined by 9.6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990,

2000, 2010b). Lacking infrastructure to support increased poverty density, suburban low-income, minority populations present novel challenges to health care providers. Many suburbs have limited access to safety net health services like free clinics and federally qualified health centers, with available services exacting higher cost to consumers. Furthermore, suburban facilities are often unequipped to serve non-English speaking and limited English proficient patients. (Marmot, Ryff, Bumpass, Shipley, & Marks, 1997). Together, this environment presents low-income, ethnic minority populations with significant barriers to acquiring adequate health care and culturally appropriate health information.

Derived directly from community-identified needs, this study seeks to bridge a gap in research knowledge, education, and communication by strengthening a budding academic-community partnership between Northwestern University and DuPage Health Coalition, a mature collaboration of 215 health, human service, and governmental partner organizations, coordinating affordable health care for a rapidly growing population of low-income DuPage County residents. Together, the academic and community partner's recent history of collaboration in community-engaged research lays the foundation for this community-based research study. Our academic-community partnership leverages the community partner's local knowledge and engagement with an academic partner's established record of community-engaged research in underserved populations. This relationship aims to reduce health disparities in DuPage County by improving communication between underserved suburban populations and medical research through partnership with community health care agencies and stakeholders.

To our knowledge, this is the first CBR study to elicit perceptions of research within an underserved suburban community. To drive future research and interventions within this community, we qualitatively examined community members' knowledge and attitudes about research using focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Our study seeks to strengthen future CBR research implementation, evaluation, and dissemination focused on improving understanding of and participation in research within a rapidly growing, underserved suburban population.

Methods

CBR Framework. CBR methodology drives researchers to become intimately involved in the

community, which, especially in highly diverse areas, can cause tension (Green, 2004). This quality of CBR, coupled with cultural sensitivity to poor quality or unethical research throughout history, requires a set of principles that provides the tools to navigate potential personal and communal conflicts (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). We developed this study following the principles and recommendations outlined in Israel, Parker, Rowe, Salvatore, Minkler, López, Butz, Mosley, Coates, Lambert, Potito, Brenner, Rivera, Romero, Thompson, Coronado, and Halstead (2005). Three principles in particular guided this study: 1) a focus on the perspective of the community with regard to local health issues; 2) the mutual learning and empowerment of community partners; and 3) the use of community knowledge to develop respective interventions. Together, these principles provided a foundation to explore perceptions of research within the DuPage County community, allowing for future context-specific and culturally appropriate research and interventions.

The study was initiated in close collaboration with DuPage Health Coalition, the community partner. Academic and community partners both identified the low prevalence of basic research knowledge and education among underserved populations within DuPage County. Building on a desire to enhance the research literacy of the community, the research team, comprised of academicians from Northwestern University and community leaders from DuPage Health Coalition, sought input on study design and implementation from a diverse group of community members using a grassroots approach. Through snowball sampling, we reached out to community leaders representing civic and political sectors, faith and religious institutions, health care, and social and non-profit organizations. We conducted meetings to learn more about the needs of DuPage County residents and to seek recommendations on securing community support and engagement. We discussed the goals of the project, study procedures, expectations of residents, as well as risks and benefits at the individual and community levels. To adequately align scientific goals with community concerns, community members further refined common goals and recommended new avenues of academic pursuit.

Sampling and data collection. Once the interview tool was developed, we recruited participants from a convenience sample of local health and human service agencies, seeking recipients of direct services as well as

Table 1. Focus Group Descriptions

Focus Group	Description of Recruiting Activity	Focus Group Demographic
Young Parent Groups	Non-profit agency providing comprehensive services and programs related to young pregnancy and parenting	18-31 years old; male and female; Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Poland, U.S.; majority insured
Care Connection Group	Non-profit organization connecting health care professionals with organizations servicing free clinics, to address health disparities among homeless and low-income minority residents whose primary language is not English	23-33 years old; female; Mexico; uninsured
Child Enrichment Program Group	Federally-funded child development program providing health and educational services, experiences, and counseling for parental involvement to help prepare low-income children and children with disabilities to enter and succeed in school	25-51 years old; female; Honduras, Mexico; uninsured
Community Clinic Group	Free community clinic providing low income, medically uninsured residents with primary medical care, specialty medical care, and/or or mental health services	21-48 years old; female; Philippines, U.S.; majority uninsured
Recovering Substance Abuse Group	Addictions treatment facility providing holistic treatment and services for individuals recovering from chemical dependence and substance abuse	23-52 years old; male and female; U.S.; uninsured
Conflict Safe House Group	Multilingual, multi-cultural social and health service agency serving South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Bosnian Communities; promoting physical and emotional health and psychological well-being of individuals and families	24-80 years old; male and female; Pakistan, U.S.; majority insured
Poverty-Stricken Group	Non-profit agency providing support and services to the homeless, including crisis intervention and support, screening and needs assessment, permanent supportive housing, and life skills coaching	20-61 years old; male and female; Poland, U.S.; majority uninsured
Private Insured Group	Residents with private medical insurance	20-45 years old; female; Syria, U.S.; insured

key community stakeholders (see Table 1). The community partner conducted focus groups and stakeholder interviews on-site at the community agencies from May 2009 to December 2009. To recruit focus group participants, community partners placed flyers in health and social service affiliated local care sites. English or Spanish-speaking DuPage County residents, aged 18 or older, were eligible for focus group participation. Ultimately, nine focus groups formed from eight community agencies represented, with each group consisting of six to eight participants. The Young Parent Group accounted for two of nine focus groups. For the stakeholder interview portion of the study, the community partner personally invited constituents to participate in individual interviews. Invited community leaders were also required to live in the community, and no minors were permitted.

A mixed methods design utilizing a combination of qualitative, semi-structured focus groups and interviews and demographic data collection provided an apt framework to actively engage study participants from the community. The research team developed the interview guide

based on a culturally appropriate, community-focused baseline needs assessment of knowledge and attitudes regarding research in the community. Interview questions prompted participants to discuss community definitions of research, personal topics of interest, areas of interest for future research, the current status and availability of research in the community, and the most trusted sources for research in the community. Additionally, each participant completed a form reporting demographic data.

A bilingual/bicultural, trained community researcher conducted focus groups in English or Spanish on-site at the community agencies, in private spaces sensitive to cultural and social norms congruent with participating groups. A team member accompanied the community researcher to record data and group observations. Stakeholder interviews were recorded in a similar environment; however, a community researcher conducted interviews one-on-one with a particular stakeholder. The academic partner transcribed the audio recordings of each focus group and interview, while the academic partner and community partner collaborated in analyzing the

transcripts. Participants provided written informed consent and were moderately reimbursed for their time. The study was approved by the Northwestern University Institutional Review Board.

Data analysis. Following an inductive approach, the data analysts (Willis, Hajjar, and Ragas) analyzed each focus group and stakeholder interview transcript to synthesize data and identify themes, and subsequently organized and summarized transcripts in a qualitative database. Quotations that directly addressed each question and added to discussion were captured in the database. For each question, the research team identified emerging themes, discussed and integrated the main findings, and identified exemplary quotations for the findings. Analysis continued until no new themes emerged and thematic saturation was reached. Status updates on the study and our findings were presented at regularly-held community advisory board committee meetings, and feedback from these meetings influenced the interpretation of the findings.

Results

Sample characteristics. The study sample included eight community stakeholders and 71 clients from eight community health care agencies. Of the 79 community members enrolled in the study, 70.9% were female. Participants' mean age was 32.9 years ($n = 74$), with a range of 18 to 80 years old. Participants had lived in DuPage County from five to 50 years and originated from the United States (57.0%), Latin America (Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico; 26.6%), Asia (Pakistan, Philippines, Syria; 11.5%), or Europe (Poland; 2.5%). All stakeholders and 33 agency clients were privately insured. Of participants, 55.7% were employed, 29.1% were unemployed, and 15.2% were students (see Table 2).

Qualitative results. We identified theme categories from larger patterns that emerged from focus groups and stakeholder interviews. These categories include: Understanding Research, community members' definition of research and its significance; Community Impact, the relationship between a group's community and its members' positive or negative perception of research; Research Awareness, community members' awareness of current research and potential research topics; and Research Intentions/Prejudice, community members' perception of bias, prejudice, or discrimination in research. These categories provide a consistent, explicative

Table 2. Sample Characteristics ($N=79$)

	Mean Age	32.9 years	n	%
Age				
18-29		35	44.3	
30-39		13	16.5	
40-49		15	19.0	
50-59		7	8.9	
60+		3	3.8	
Unreported		6	7.6	
Gender				
Male		22	27.8	
Female		56	70.9	
Unreported		1	1.3	
Country of Origin				
Guatemala		1	1.3	
Honduras		2	2.5	
Mexico		16	20.3	
Pakistan		4	5.1	
Philippines		1	1.3	
Poland		2	2.5	
Syria		4	5.1	
Colombia		2	2.5	
United States		45	57.0	
Unreported		2	2.5	
Insurance				
Insured		37	46.8	
Uninsured		42	53.2	
Employment Status				
Employed		44	55.7	
Unemployed		23	29.1	
Student		12	15.2	

means to grouping themes that emerged from transcript analysis.

Understanding of research. Participants were asked to define research and specify, if possible, the differences between "medical" and "scientific" research. All focus groups alluded that research is a process of or a set of tools for gathering information, and most stakeholders elaborated on the formal research process:

...finding the symptoms and solutions to an illness, or the answers to many questions. A research is based on finding the truth and finding answers to many questions that perhaps we don't have very clear. (Care Connection Group)

...[T]he formal process of either making observations or taking measurements and collecting and aggregating those for different groups along the lines of a formal research study with independent variables

and dependent variables ... that's just one model, but to determine if there's a relationship between those variables, and if so to try to determine to the extent possible if there is a causal relationship or what is the nature of that relationship. Then in common everyday usage, I think people use the term just to mean finding out more information about something. (Stakeholder)

While many participants defined research in the context of advancing general knowledge, some focus groups and most stakeholders set research into the context of health and medicine. The Young Parent and Care Connection Groups focused on research as finding a cure to a disease or improving a standard of care. Of those focus groups that did not mention medicine specifically, responses tended to include aspects of research design such as experiments, statistics, data, and methodology. The Private Insured Group elaborated on the details of research, using terms like "placebo," "hypothesis," and "data-driven". The Young Parent Group agreed upon the following definition:

...[Y]ou start out with a problem or a question. Research is what you do...when you study using surveys, experiments, questions, discussions. There are probably lots of other tools there in order to study health or your problem in order to find a solution to gather information to look for an answer to your problem. (Young Parent Group)

While the notion of scientific research frequently prompted descriptions of laboratories, sophisticated methodologies, and a specific goal or hypothesis, medical research was defined differently. Participants described their understanding of medical research similarly to community engagement; they reported that medical research functioned by assessing individual and community health, involving the community, or interacting with a health care practitioner on a personal level. Focus groups differentiated the personal nature of medical research from scientific research:

I think the difference is with scientific they're in a lab and they have a set study that they're working on specifically. In a health study it could be like you come

to like a particular group whether it's a doctor's office or a lab or whatever that is specifically focused like on the study of say something within diabetes or the thyroid or cancer and you go through a series of certain number of weeks or months for the research to find out whether sub group A has this finding or sub group B has that particular finding. (Community Clinic Group)

Community impact. Participants were asked to consider whether research helped or harmed themselves or their communities, whether research was appropriate for their communities, and whether community values should be considered during research. Most participants, regardless of background, age, or focus group, identified research as beneficial, and examples were most often related to community health. Instances when a family or community member benefited from medical research were frequently reported; otherwise, many participants hoped that future research would ameliorate systemic public health problems, such as smoking and diabetes.

One of the primary benefits research offered this community was access to care: Individuals who might not otherwise qualify for health insurance expressed gratitude for the services medical research provided to them. The Child Enrichment Program Group articulated this benefit of research:

...[A]s Latinos, there are many people that don't have the means to have medical insurance.....You have a chronic illness and you don't know where to go. So right now what we're seeing is that...people like you, that make a lot of research to see who really needs and who'll get help... Well, it does benefit us.

The Private Insured Group, who recognized the mutually beneficial relationship community engagement creates, extended this notion:

For a long time we thought only certain health research or scientific research are done in this big bubble but now it's extending to everyday life...and we're feeling the benefits and...the research community is feeling the benefits that if you're taking quotes from the people you can get better results...

Furthermore, the group indicated that the community engagement process, actively involving the community in discussion and research, has secondary benefits such as the fortification of personal relationships between the community, health practitioners, and the research team. A participant from the Poverty-Stricken Group reflected:

I think research really helps the community a lot in my opinion because when you really get in there and get enrooted to what the real person, not just something on a piece of paper, is feeling, then you know what you're writing is something that's real.

Some participants, however, raised critical opinions regarding research practices and discussed questionable research motives. Participants who suggested that research could cause harm often raised concerns about the motives of for-profit entities, like pharmaceutical companies:

I think specifically when it comes to pharmaceuticals they tend to have it be faster than what it is. Because for example they say it can cure this symptom but then afterwards you have five different symptoms which had nothing to do with the original illness. (Poverty-Stricken Group)

Further, participants indicated that research could be misleading to uneducated members of the community or that researchers could misinterpret or inflate data, possibly leading to exaggerated results and implications.

When the results of research are taken out of context there is a danger...reporting bias...that studies finding a negative result or an insignificant result are rejected by journal publications or not even submitted. (Stakeholder)

Other participants discussed issues regarding research dissemination, use, and applicability to the community. A common concern was the readiness of research to be released:

I think if information is thrown out there too soon to the public it can cause a panic. You know not enough information

provided when it's first exposed to the general public that it can cause a panic. So it could be harmful if it's not done in the right way. (Community Clinic Group)

Finally, participants discussed whether community values should be considered in research. The Young Parent Group offered an analysis of community values, concluding that targeting at-risk groups will most involve the community in research:

...[I]f they come and ask us about something that's not affecting us, then we're not going to go anywhere. So if the community participates and they say that they're interested in a research about autism or obesity in kids or cholesterol that is affecting kids and adults...well, then the community will be more involved, and it will be better suited for the necessities we have.

The Care Connection Group offered another reason to consider community values, specifying personal motivations and cultural influences:

That us Latinos are sometimes afraid to speak of the problems we have...for example, when they're asking us about a disease we have.... Sometimes we don't say it all, what we feel and what we want to know, for fear, because we don't feel comfortable.... Other cultures don't have this fear.

The Child Enrichment Program Group, one of the strongest supporters of medical research in the community, also discussed a fear salient in the minds of this underserved group:

Is it beneficial? Yes and no at the same time.... One gets intimidated, like her. Right now she doubted because she thinks, what's happening? What am I signing? And we're all like that. And there are times where not all of us speak up for fear that...what if it's for migration? What if they call? What if they knock on my house? And the way the situation is right now, many times you don't answer many things because of the fear of being researched thoroughly.

Research awareness. Participants were prompted to list where they learned about research, how they wanted to learn about research, and which topics they deemed relevant for research. The most commonly reported sources for research information among focus groups were the Internet, particularly Google Search or WebMD sites, the news, and a personal physician. Other participants reported their children's schools, radio, magazines, the library, and word-of-mouth as sources for research. Some stakeholders additionally mentioned the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state health department, community health organizations, professional associations, and academic journals as current sources of research awareness.

Focus groups found that the potential sources to which they could have access for research information outnumbered their current sources. Potential new sources reported by focus groups included the Internet, overt advertisements like billboards, radio ads, advertisements in grocery stores, public flyers, and mailings. Participants were also asked to discuss research topics that were relevant to their lives. Topics of interest among focus groups and stakeholders included mental health, women's and children's health, diabetes, smoking cessation, health disparities, healthy lifestyle promotion, and other issues related to health behaviors. The Young Parent Group captured the sentiments of many participants:

I live in DuPage County now....

[T]here's a gap. There's a big variation in classes and I guess I would overall like to see some type of research and a...change in that gap. So research how to even the playing field.

Research intentions and prejudice. Participants were asked to consider whether health research benefited the poor and uninsured, whether research was affected by prejudice or racism, and whether knowing who funds research was important to the community. Most participants indicated that research intended to help the uninsured, but some participants disagreed:

The research is directed towards the people who can actually go into the doctor's office or find out about medical trials through their doctors and get the information that the sick person who

can't afford to go to the doctor can't.
(Young Parent Group)

I think sometimes yes, it helps everyone across the board and then sometimes I think there are studies or there are findings specifically that are going to pertain to persons who can afford health care that have definite insurance or have the ability to pay. If you've got money, then you're going to get whatever you want. If you don't have money, then you have to wait.
(Community Clinic Group)

Many focus groups and stakeholders perceived that money was the greatest factor in determining the purpose of research and the scope of its benefits. The Recovering Substance Abuse Group, on the other hand, recognized that health research has far-reaching benefits:

It helps all people across the board. You know? Of course, if you're doing research, disease isn't biased. It just affects the rich or the poor or the black or the white or, you know Mexicans. It helps all mankind. It's just that some people are so readily available to receive it. You've got people that live in Third World countries that aren't going to have the same medical options that people do in Western cultures and societies.

Most focus groups and stakeholders acknowledged the presence of racism or prejudice in research, but emphasized an association with financial barriers:

...[W]hen we look at the discrepancies of mortality rates, you look at OK this year so many blacks dying from this disease while you have a much lower number of whites or Hispanics or whatever, well, why does that happen? So I would say that I don't know if it would go back to what I said at the beginning about insurance, are they treating you better because you are white and you have money or you have a good insurance versus you're black and you don't have money, you don't have insurance, you know? So there are so many things that are linked together.
(Stakeholder)

Another stakeholder added that research can be prejudiced when population demographics are not adequately considered:

Indirect in the sense that medical research is biased though. Medical research is biased because most of the times... their research participants are from the mainstream community. They do not take into the consideration, you know, the demographic of DuPage County is not Caucasian.

Participants were somewhat divided on whether knowing who paid for research was important. Some focus groups mentioned apprehension of the government:

...[J]ust because of African Americans' history dealing with the government and the different type of research, I would be more apprehensive. African Americans typically speaking...are more apprehensive when it comes to law enforcement or government officials than maybe say other ethnic groups because of our treatment historically here in America. (Young Parent Group)

Many focus group participants favored research conducted by academic institutions, while stakeholders spoke positively of government-funded and academic research:

I would probably be the most green light with the academic research institution because that is sort of their expertise, and then if I thought that the study sounded sound I would be eager to participate in a government-funded study because I would want them to have more valid data that I can contribute to, and when it's a private corporation running the study I kind of feel like my voice has less of an impact.... I would see a private enterprise as potentially more biased. (Stakeholder)

More commonly, participants were indifferent about who funded research:

I think that it's more about knowing where we are getting the support from. Not so much knowing that they are paying for it. (Care Connection Group)

Discussion

Results revealed that DuPage County community members have many insights from which researchers can learn to improve future interventions. Four major themes arose from the analysis of focus groups and stakeholder interviews: 1) community members' understanding of community engagement in defining research and determining its value; 2) the Internet as a dominant source for research awareness; 3) concerns regarding the effects of privately funded and commercial research on the community; and 4) financial barriers to research and health care.

When asked to discuss the difference between "scientific" and "medical" research, the notion of medical research subsumed scientific research. Furthermore, participants frequently equated medical research to community engagement, likely because the research most familiar to and most easily defined by the community is research which involves the community most. Focus groups often pointed to the personal connections made during community interventions and clinical interactions as the creation and fortification of their positive view of research. It is therefore critical that researchers are genuine and perform community-centric research as such a degree of involvement will leave an impression on the community, affecting future research.

Although participants' access to research was limited, a number of resources were repeated: the Internet, personal physicians, the news, and publications. Nearly all focus groups mentioned the Internet as a resource that they used most and wanted to use more. Participants mentioned physicians as sources for research information as much as the Internet; however, unlike the Internet, physicians were not mentioned as a potential new source for research, suggesting some untapped potential in the Internet as a research dissemination tool. For instance, the Internet could be tailored even more toward delivering useful, personalized information, such as local research. Further, while our findings suggest that current sources of research are meager, as some focus groups did not report any research sources, each group reported numerous possibilities for how they could be informed of research. In this community, an apparent imbalance exists between the potential and current level of research awareness. It is likely and acceptable that this will always be the case; however, the current disparity warrants investigation into how to best disseminate research to this population.

Despite the prevailing positive perception of research throughout focus groups and stakeholder interviews, a number of key concerns regarding the intentions and dissemination of research arose. Participants feared that some researchers may have questionable motives and distrusted for-profit entities. While many participants appeared indifferent to who conducted research, others criticized pharmaceutical companies for engaging in research that primarily served to develop drugs or treatments for profit. Participants both praised and criticized government entities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, minority-centric focus groups expressed unease for government institutions due to immigration issues or past treatment. Other focus groups and stakeholders were less reactive to the government conducting research, as they believed governmental research intended to benefit people. The academic institution emerged as the most trusted research entity, an expected finding due to this community's past involvement with academic research. Participants feared that researchers, or research disseminators like the news, may frame a study in such a way to appear more successful or significant, which can pose major implications in a community. Participants voiced concern that research tends to be released in ways that cause a fad, such as a new diet, or panic, like the vaccination-autism scare. These fears suggest that research dissemination is not ideal; rather, the examples participants provided suggest that the media's spin on research has a significant, at times negative, effect on research perceptions.

Although some focus groups discussed sensitivity to immigration issues, when asked about the relationship between racism or prejudice and research, participants predominantly discussed financial prejudice and identified financial obstacles as the most significant barriers to care. Some participants, however, equated financial barriers to a different form of prejudice, as economic burdens are more commonly born by minority populations. Nonetheless, participants generally felt that financial barriers were unrelated to racism, pointing to otherwise positive interactions with clinicians.

While the design of our study elicited important findings, the results are limited by the sample. Although 79 participants composed the sample, there were typically only 6-8 participants per focus group. Furthermore, all study participants were volunteers, which likely resulted in response bias. These factors combined with a lack of demographic data—namely, lack of ethnicity data,

incomplete demographic data due to self-report, and the inability to individually identify the speaker of a particular focus group quotation— inhibit the generalizability of our results to other populations.

In addressing the need for greater understanding of research perceptions and means for dissemination, our study followed the recommendations outlined by Glasgow, Marcus, Bull, and Wilson (2004), Montoya and Kent (2011), and Wallerstein and Duran (2010). Specifically, a bicultural/bilingual community researcher conducted all interviews in which the research team directly addressed the perceptions of many segments of the community while building upon previous work in developing trust and rapport in the DuPage County community, extending recommendations by Alexander and Richman (2008). While previous research has noted that one individual performing in both a service provider and focus group leader role can cause complications (Smith, 2008), this relationship instead allowed our research methodology access to otherwise guarded thoughts and insights from the community that will help future research initiate community-appropriate interventions. Future studies should consider involving the community more in data collection, as past research has demonstrated that community members are as effective at collecting data as traditional academic data collectors (Brugge, Kapunan, Babcock-Dunning, Matloff, Cagua-Koo, Okoroh, Salas, Bradeen, & Woodin, 2010).

This study sought to expand the literature by adding valuable CBR data on the growing underserved low-income, minority communities in suburban areas. Findings suggest that CBR is well-received and salient in this community and, as a whole, participants reported positive attitudes regarding research. Considering the rapid growth of underserved communities in suburban areas, CBR will become an instrumental tool in navigating the inevitable tensions between a growing community and an area traditionally unfamiliar with these new populations. Likewise, further research into suburban low-income, minority communities is necessary to gain a proper understanding of the needs of both the new and old communities before initiating interventions. Creating and maintaining social services, such as the programs offered by DuPage Health Coalition, will be invaluable to communities and researchers alike in the next decade (Cargo & Mercer, 2008).

Key take-home points. Future research

and interventions resulting from this study should address three things. First, expanding the community's understanding of research should be a goal to prevent community members from avoiding or missing research that may benefit them. Second, exploring the potential of the Internet as a means for research dissemination would be highly valuable following the conclusions of this study. Given the ease of access to the Internet and the ease of developing web pages with today's resources, the ability to generate low cost, local resources for research dissemination is unprecedented. Finally, following the community's focus on financial barriers to research participation or awareness and resulting health care, investigation into the pervasiveness of this barrier and means to deconstruct it are needed. Developing resources to increase research participation and awareness among low-income, minority members of DuPage County would be a major step toward better understanding and preempting health disparities in this rapidly growing, underserved suburban community.

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Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the DuPage Community Clinic, to the community health care agencies who helped recruit participants, and especially to the DuPage County community members who are the voices of this study. We also thank Rosario Bularzik, Carmi Frankovich, Dora Monroe, Narissa Nonzee, Ava Phisuthikul, Belinda Reyes, and Shaneah Taylor for their contributions.

This research is supported by NIH RO3 HD059721-01 (Simon) and NIMHD R24 MD001650 (Simon).

The Pedagogy of Community Service-Learning Discourse: From Deficit to Asset Mapping in the Re-Envisioning Media Project

Demetria Rougeaux Shabazz and Leda M. Cooks

Abstract

An intersection of power, privilege, and injustice in community service-learning (CSL) pedagogy is examined through the language used to describe relationships between college classroom and community site participants. This article extends work on deficit and asset-based discourse to address critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and whiteness in a study of a university CSL partnership with an under-resourced public middle school in Western Massachusetts. Using critical race theory, appreciative inquiry, and situated learning theory, the instructors re-framed talk of education for dominant and non-dominant ethnic group participants as sites of contestation over the meaning of difference. The article demonstrates how increased cultural competencies could be learned as a result of improved intergroup understanding, interaction, and dialogue. It suggests new directions for a CSL pedagogy that moves from deficit- to asset-based discourse and the ways such meanings are formed in relation to and in relationship with others inside and outside our communities.

In the past decade CSL research has brought together theory and methodology that link ideas of democracy and citizenship (most recently on a global level) to the process of education as it connects classrooms and communities. Less attention has been paid, however, to the language used to frame these issues, e.g., Who is already assumed to need social change? Why are these groups the assumed targets of change efforts and what keeps them in these roles? (Yosso, 2002). As more CSL scholars and practitioners work in underserved areas and commit to partnerships for more sustainable programs, critique of systemic injustice and band-aid solutions to social ills sometimes collide with the ideals of service to the community (Robinson, 2000). Likewise, a CSL pedagogy of democracy and citizenship is at times at odds with a critical pedagogy that advocates critique of unreflective patriotism and a self-reflective look at the role of race and privilege in sustaining inequities in education and community (and CSL, see Abowitz, 1999; Jones, Maloy, & Steen, 1996; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006). In agreement with these sentiments, Green (2001) notes that: "It is absolutely imperative to talk about the intersections of race, class, and service in order to prevent service-learning from replicating the power imbalances and economic injustices that create the need for service-learning in the first place" (p. 18).

In this article, we assert that the best way to focus on the intersections of power, privilege, and injustice in CSL pedagogy and practice is through a closer examination of the language we use to

describe our relationships to those we work with in the classroom and community. Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* represents a major effort to both look at the discourse of social problems and offer a practical guide for speaking and acting differently. This article builds on their efforts to develop a program for community action but also extends their (and others) work on deficit and asset-based discourse to address critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and whiteness in the context of an ongoing community service-learning project and long-term partnership. We turn our theoretical and pedagogical lens on our course, our project, ourselves, and the students and community members with whom we work to take a closer look at the movement from asset or needs based talk to action—on individual, social, and cultural levels.

The context of our analysis is a four-year partnership between the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a middle school in Western Massachusetts, an under-resourced, chronically under-performing middle school, and in the larger background of a decade of doing similar community-based learning projects in better resourced (higher income) school districts. The students in this middle school are primarily (more than 75%) Latino/a; the students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst are primarily (82%) white. Our data analysis is based on one year of the program and on the constituencies involved, the language they used to describe

themselves, and their relationships to each other as well as to their school/university, community, and media. Our focus in this article is on the ways a discussion of deficit discourses and an asset-based approach to the project impacted (or did not) the language that we and our students used to describe the project, ourselves, the middle school constituencies (parents, students, teachers, school administrators, department of education), local communities, and our pedagogy in the course of one year of the partnership. In this article we draw from qualitative and nominal quantitative data based on pre and post surveys of both the undergraduate students and the middle school students, journals of undergraduate students, video of middle school program sessions, post-program videotaped interviews with middle school students, videotaped interviews of college students, pre-program focus group sessions with middle school students, videotaped interviews with faculty and administrators at the middle school, and our own self-reflections.

The Re-Envisioning Media Project

Schools are not synonymous with education. They are only part of education. Alongside school operates a parallel educational system, the “societal curriculum.” Within that societal curriculum, the media serve as pervasive, relentless lifelong educators (Cortés, 1992).

The program at the center of our analysis, the Re-Envisioning Media Project, requires undergraduate students enrolled in a Media Literacy and Community Media course from a wide variety of majors to create and implement both an in-school and an after-school media literacy program on the topics of race, ethnicity, and nationality and their representation in a variety of media. The in-school program is geared toward sixth graders and introduces the topic of media literacy and racial stereotyping and representation, while the after-school program (open to all middle schoolers) adds a production component to the aforementioned areas. Both groups produce media dealing with race, ethnicity, and nationality, but in the after-school program the focus is on the process and product of alternative media production, whereas for the in-school program the children produce a short public service announcement discussing media literacy, race, and representation.

In the CSL course, the university students spend the first part of the semester learning about CSL, the concepts central to the program (race, ethnicity, nationality, media literacy), learning how

to teach sixth graders these concepts, and learning basic skills of media production (e.g.,storyboarding and camera operation). Additionally, an important focus of our pedagogy is on the community in which the students will be working and on their own racial, class, gender, standpoints, and privilege in relation to the community. To frame this discussion throughout the semester, we constantly draw attention to the ways we create and perpetuate deficit discourses in our talk about the school, students, and surrounding community and how we might look for resources and assets within these same contexts and our relationships with all involved.

After the first month of classes, students spend their time both in the middle school and the university classroom. At this point in the semester, classroom sessions are used to discuss class readings, the application of theories, and to refine lesson plans. The in-school program runs for eight 45-minute sessions over the course of two months, while the after-school program requires twice a week two-hour sessions throughout and beyond the semester.

At the end of both the in-school and after-school program, the final productions are edited and shown on the local cable access station. The children view their productions in their own classrooms, at a showing for parents, and at a screening at the university the following semester. All children involved in the project attend the screening, along with university students and faculty, and take a tour of the campus afterwards. In this manner, the institutional and the personal, the social and the cultural, interweave with one another—if not reciprocally, then at least at the level of recognition and, we hope, critical thought. Critical thinking is central to the project and the field trip: for the children to think about race as an idea created by people in power, for our own students to learn about social privilege as unearned benefit, rather than as a right and for all to gain the ability to take action as a result of this knowledge.

Thus, it is in the movement back and forth in the language we use to situate the personal and institutional, social, and cultural, that we might dislodge deficit discourses. Here, and without negating the political dimensions of unequal resources and underserved communities, we develop in our relationships with the school the ability to find assets and resources where only need, lack, and despair are expected. To do so, however, we must first examine the theoretical

frameworks that undergird deficit discourses and constructions of assets.

Theoretical Framework

Deficit Discourses

Beyond the cliché that “language creates our reality,” we must look at the ways language creates our relationships to each other and the world. Our words are formed in context—in communication and community with others. Communication theorists often talk about the centrality of communication in learning, in making meaning of everyday life, and thus in constructing an identity for us and others. Cooks and Scharrer (2006) note that, “By situating learning in the relational and contextual processes through which people make meaning, we also are able to situate community service-learning as engaged practice—a practice that offers learning *in situ* through challenges to notions of power, identities, cultures, community and change” (p. 2). CSL scholars, too, have found that relationships often drive the learning and pedagogy of CSL (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006), but these relationships do not exist in vacuum; rather, they are situated as “helping” or “serving” a need—one that often implies a deficiency. Likewise, critical race theorists (CRT) in education (Delgado, 1995; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993) challenge the ways learning and education have been constructed in the interests of the dominant racial group in society. CRT also emphasizes the importance of the experiential knowledge of marginalized groups as sources of support in the classroom, and moreover as foundations for new epistemologies that celebrate, rather than suppress, alternative ways of knowing.

Deficit discourses often frame “problems” based in a hierarchical system of social capital, where some groups have inherently more resources than others. This conception of resources, and their relative lack or fulfillment, drives the model of social programs designed to address the ills of groups on the margins of society. More insidious, however, is the degree to which deficit language becomes the measure upon which marginalized groups are defined against white middle class society in the United States. Critical race theorists in education have posited four general theoretical models that make deficit discourses seem logical and natural and make critique of such ideas difficult: genetic determinist, cultural determinist, school determinist, and societal determinist. These generally accepted theories correlate easily to stereotypes prevalent in the media and society

based on intelligence, physical appearance, and educational ability (genetic), and personality or character (cultural and societal). These stereotypes in turn inform and justify low expectations for educational ability and occupation which result in differential tracking and testing for students of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2002).

Yosso (2002) applies these general theories of deficit to the portrayal of Chicanos in the media, and especially media depicting schooling in the United States. She finds “overwhelming support for cultural deficit explanations of why the social and educational outcomes of Chicano/a students are unequal to those of whites” (p. 53). Notably, and although there are many strong connections between deficit discourses and the impacts on marginalized groups in U.S. society, the literature in this area rarely discusses the ways white students (well-intentioned or not) and CSL in general utilize this discourse in their attempts to remedy social problems, as well as among CSL scholars discussing the pedagogy of community, citizenship, and moral/ethical duty. Green (2001), for instance, observes that “for those of us at predominantly white institutions, service-learning raises particular issues of race that we need to theorize. ... In addition, when we set up service-learning sites, we should consider what those sites represent to our students” (p. 25). For us, Green’s advice translates into the need for CSL pedagogy to situate itself in relation to its own assumptions about people of color, as well as the need to theorize and discuss race in general as a “white” problem. From this perspective, deficit discourses need to be addressed not only or primarily in communities of people of color but among white people who intend to work toward a more just society.

Critical pedagogical scholars, discussing the topic of race/ethnicity and inequality in schools, cite the need for critical inquiry into the role of institutions such as schools, the prison system, media, government, and transnational corporations in preparing and socializing student-citizens. These scholars note that expectations for educational and other kinds of achievement are often based on race, class, gender, and ability, and whether one is schooled accordingly. The pedagogy part of critical pedagogy lies in promoting (1) critical thinking: asking questions about “official knowledge” promoted in texts and in the written and unwritten rules of proper behavior and comportment; (2) critical self-awareness and group awareness and knowledge: understanding one’s location in society and the differing ways groups (one’s own and

others) are named, categorized and represented; (3) student empowerment: taking students' own (especially students from marginalized groups) experiences and questions as a basis for developing course material; and similarly (4) challenging the authority of the teacher as container of knowledge in order to create opportunities for more creative and democratic forms of learning. Certainly CSL and critical pedagogy share some of the same pedagogical goals, and both concern themselves with underserved communities. While critical pedagogy may provide the more radical and structural critique of schooling and social problems, both critical pedagogy and CSL often (unintentionally) frame communities as deficient. Whether discussing the need to liberate or empower students from marginalized communities (critical pedagogy) or working in the communities themselves, rarely does the pedagogy of either approach focus on the discourse of deficiency or lack, and how teachers, students, and community members might develop alternative narratives based on resources and strengths already present in the community and in the relationships among those involved in change.

Any approach to re-framing community deficiencies as assets could easily be critiqued as simply another way of ignoring real social problems and thus perpetuating the oppression of marginalized communities, but, as noted in the organizer's workbook of the Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center, asset-based community development (ABCD) is an entire philosophical approach to community development that requires a shift in the ways one approaches the process and product of this work. However, they also caution that the language of assets can be a code and a cover for the same old deficit frame that ignores the real strengths of the community—strengths not immediately apparent when quick intervention is the operating principle. So, given that CSL is not community development and does not necessarily share the same community-based priorities and goals, can CSL pedagogy and practice move from deficit-based discourses about community needs and service to asset-based approaches? In the following sections we explore this question and its potential application within the context of our own CSL media literacy project.

Asset Building

When surveying the landscape of social scientific thought regarding social problems

and social needs, some scholars are critical of psychological diagnoses of social ills as well as interventions of social work based on neutral and standardized evaluation (Gergen, 1994; Huot, 2004; Robinson, 2000). Ludema (2000) observes that the language of critique (postmodernism), as well as that of problem solving (the tradition of social science) offers few alternative solutions and often leads to conditions of cynicism and hopelessness. Alternatively, Ludema (2000) posits that language can also be used to create vocabularies of hope (or, for our purposes, community assets) when members of organizations and communities are willing and able to work together cooperatively to explore deeply held values with a sense of agency and optimism about the future. They are not merely a code word for resources, Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) concentration on assets, while less focused on language per se, is similar in its emphasis on cooperation and optimism. Assets are the strengths and talents already present in communities that often go unrecognized in a server-client or needs-based framework. Assets are not merely a code word for resources, but are the result of a strategy that requires the identification of deeply held values and defining problems and developing solutions from within the community. This strategy, called asset-mapping by Kretzmann and McKnight, takes place on several levels, from personal relationships to those between and among institutions that impact the community. At each level, Kretzmann and McKnight outline a process for capacity building: (1) locating "primary building blocks" in the form of human and social capital (skills and talents of community members); (2) moving to secondary building blocks currently outside the purview of the community that might be used as resources; and (3) thinking of potential building blocks, such as children, whose strength could help sustain the community into the future.

Discussing asset building, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) observe that "[I]f a community development process is to be asset focused, then it will be in very important ways 'relationship driven,'" and that one of the central challenges for asset-based community developers is to constantly build and rebuild the relationships between community members and others to sustain partnerships and build capacity (p. 6). Indeed, relationships are central to making meaning: subjects create subjectivities—and objectify their others. If we are to move from deficit to asset-based discourse, we must examine our position in our narratives about members of the community,

along with the language of the narrative itself.

Given these concerns, our research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How/did our talk about ourselves (cultural identities as well as our roles as students/educators) in the school and the project change from the first part of the semester to the latter half (as we worked in the school)?

RQ2: Can we make links between classroom and community discussions of deficit and asset discourses and asset mapping and actions taken (i.e. PSAs and other video productions, projects started or underway, etc.)? What language/stories characterized these projects?

RQ3: What are problems and possibilities of using asset mapping in a program that deals specifically with concepts of race, ethnicity, and nationality (specifically as it involves primarily white, middle, and upper middle class students working with a community vastly different from their own)?

RQ4: What theoretical and practical implications might we draw from asset mapping to pedagogy for social justice and social change?

In the subsequent paragraphs we outline our data and methodology and analyze the data in response to the research questions.

Data and Methodology

Discourses jostle up against each other, fight and conspire together, influence and change each other; they make us and we make them—although they have usually started before we got on the scene and continue long after we have left (Gee, 2001).

Using critical race theory's critique of deficit discourses, along with a view of schools and schooling as inherently political and often oppressive, we have a clear basis for a structural critique of teaching and learning as inherently biased. Less clear, however, are the ways we might use CSL as pedagogy for movement from deficit- to asset-based discourse. Kretzmann and McKnight provide (literally and figuratively) a map for community action, and other CSL scholars (Ludema, 2002; Shadduck-Hernández, 2006) have discussed the use of appreciative inquiry and situated learning theory, among other approaches to re-framing talk of communities. These approaches, while useful for our analysis, are limited in their lack of actual application in classroom or community contexts (although the theories are themselves grounded explicitly in discourse analysis). As a result, theorizing about

how we might use pedagogy to move or change our ways of talking, teaching, and thinking about communities has not moved beyond the abstract.

How can we utilize our talk about our work in and out of the community, our relationships to classmates and community members, our course goals and assignments, what it means to do CSL to trace stories of deficit and/or asset, lack or presence of resources? The force of these stories as a theoretical lens still undergirds much of our pedagogy as well as our critique of the general conditions of injustice, and it is these overlaps and blurring of boundaries that become points of confusion and enlightenment. For these reasons, in this paper we examine the stories of our undergraduate students throughout the semester as we introduce the concepts of deficit discourses and asset mapping. We trace these ideas as they appear (or not) in the talk among the sixth graders with whom we worked, their teachers and principal, and in the public service announcements they made at the conclusion of our program.

Our data come from several sources: video of our class at the university, sessions at the middle school, interviews with our students, focus groups of our students, interviews and focus groups with the sixth graders, interviews with the sixth grade teachers, interviews with the first author and with the school principal (separately and together), along with a large compendium of videotaped class sessions, personal narratives, and interviews with the undergraduate, graduate, and middle school students participating in the after-school program. Due to the breadth and quantity of the materials we amassed during the course of the project, we focus in particular on stories about relationships as they emerged in discussions of the project: in our (teacher, students, and student-teacher) discussions about pedagogy, in the content of the program at the middle school, and in the subsequent reflections on the part of those involved. In addition to the video materials, we draw from sixth graders' responses to surveys (pre and post) on the concepts of race, ethnicity, nationality, and media literacy, on undergraduate student journals, and on the class' final projects for the semester.

In all, we logged over 125 hours of video-recorded material, 120 surveys from the in-school program, 15 surveys from the after-school program and 250 pages of written reflective and evaluative material. From this corpus, we center on relational talk in particular in part as a response to Cooks, Scharrer, and Paredes' (2004) discussion of learning as a social and relational process in which selves

and others are co-constructed, and of assessment of CSL (Cooks & Scharrer, 2006) as necessarily emphasizing the connectedness of language, power, identity, and relationship in the context of civic engagement. We use critical pedagogy and critical race theory as a framework for our analysis of deficit discourses and utilize cultural studies analysis and the narrative concept of position to make sense of the relational stories we found in our data.

Cultural studies scholars look at culture as a site of struggle, often using critical theory to problematize areas of popular cultural discourse that are viewed as common sense or as unremarkable by the dominant culture. Within CSL, cultural studies have been employed to critique the enthusiasm with which CSL has approached concepts of democracy, civic education, and community service—often without reflection on the disparate meanings and benefits these concepts have held for those on the margins of society (Abowitz, 1999; Jones, Maloy, & Steen, 1996; Shadduck-Hernández, 2006). While certainly CSL scholars have worked to be inclusive of diverse populations in their work, they have often done so at the exclusion of examining their own position relative to those they study. Research conducted from the perspective of the dominant group, be it with regard to racial, gender, class, or sexual identity, often fails to regard its own biases and exclusions, and more so the epistemological assumptions which frame what counts as teaching and research of and for the community.

While certainly not without its own faults and assumptions, cultural studies analysis offers one corrective through deliberative attention to media and everyday experiences that are mostly taken for granted. Cultural studies analysis builds from the concept of articulation, first elaborated by Hall (1980) and then extended to methodology by Slack (1996) and Halualani, Fassett, Warren, and Dodge (2006). Articulation was first defined by Hall (1980) as a “non-necessary correspondence” of terms that become common sense. For Slack (1996) for instance, articulation results in correlation of technology with modern society, civilization, and development. Closer to the goals of CSL, Halualani et al. (2006) examine the ways terms such as race and diversity are intimately connected in everyday talk, and yet lived as disparate realities. In this analysis, we use the concept of articulation and its deconstruction to analyze the movement or flow of discourses in the articulation of racial and ethnic identity. Terms such as race or ethnicity

often articulate with deficit discourses in the talk of all constituencies involved in the project (including ourselves), and our interest is in the meaning and consequences of these articulations as well as the ways we moved toward or away from them in attempts to construct narratives about the community and its assets.

Our analysis focuses on stories told of relationships, and of the articulation of race or ethnicity within those stories. For instance, our own stories as co-teachers in the classroom often articulated race and ethnicity with whiteness and privilege—assets we wished to problematize for the direct implications that such ideologies and identities might have on our project for their direct implications for our project. Although we share some CSL scholars’ concerns (Jones, Maloy, & Steen, 1996; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006) with sending white middle class students off into the community to work with underserved youth, we also believe that the project allowed those (primarily white) students to break the seemingly “natural” correspondence between race and the body of the nonwhite other. By teaching and talking about race/ethnicity and nationality, the white university students were illustrating race through their own bodies: by pointing back at themselves. The middle school students were then freed to explore race as an idea, which had been created and used as a marker of difference as deficit.

We now turn to our analysis of the data and of the project. We first look at the ways race, ethnicity, and nationality were articulated in our own pedagogy, as goals and as practice reflected in our syllabus and course plan and in the video documentation and students’ surveys and journals. Next, we extend our examination to the articulation of race in-relation-to the various constituencies involved in the project.

Analysis

The Pedagogy of the Media Re-Envisioning Project

Our class, Media Literacy and Community Media Production, enrolled three graduate students and eleven undergraduate seniors and juniors. The course was designed to give students theoretical content via readings and discussion in several areas: community-based learning and social justice, whiteness and privilege, theories of race and racism, ethnicity, and nationality as socially constructed concepts, critical race theory in education (including deficit theory), and media literacy. Readings on standardized testing,

educational policy and “failing schools,” and on Puerto Rican culture and communities were assigned. Lesson plans from previous groups were handed out, along with many samples of potential curricula. We also discussed basic skills in media production. The readings and class discussion centered on how various systems—of knowledge, power, and privilege, media and education—worked to frame the school and the children we were working with as deficient, and we discussed the role of communication in creating, maintaining, and perpetuating that frame. We mentioned the need to reflect on our own language, as well as the talk of those we were working with at the middle school. We asked students to create an initial asset map based on the information they had from readings, Internet research, and interviews with previous university students who participated in this program. Once the sessions began in the school, we reflected on the use of deficit/asset language in the narratives we told about our own experiences in the middle school, as well as those of the school children, teachers, and principal. The video-recorded interviews and focus groups with the in-school and after-school participants assisted us in this process. Recorded interviews with teachers and parents were used as supporting data for the use of deficit discourses.

Beyond our university class, our pedagogical efforts extended into the middle school as a relational teaching/learning process. The in-school program was coordinated with the sixth grade social studies class (five classes with a total of 65 students). The university students were assigned to the various classes (or tracks) of students—each of which represented their academic ability. On the other hand, the after-school program served students on a voluntary basis and was open to all grades in the middle school. The after-school program attracted students interested in media production. For the 15 students enrolled in the program, the focus on race, ethnicity, and nationality allowed them to address their invisibility in mainstream media through writing and producing their own stories and poetry. The after-school program ran for two hours, twice a week for approximately three and a half months. This program required supervision beyond the semester and so one instructor/author and a few dedicated students agreed to continue to meet with the children over the break.

In our work in the middle school we encountered several contradictions between an approach to education in our university courses that emphasized critical thinking and challenged

the institutional power of schools and schooling and that of the middle school teachers who emphasized rules and regulation due to (they said) the chaos of the children’s everyday lives. Although we were careful to present a more complex picture of the relationship between teacher and students, initially the university students found the seemingly unrelenting discipline and emphasis on failure in the schools somewhat depressing. As they spent more time with the teachers and students however, they began to see more complicated relationships between teachers and curriculum, teachers and community (school community, parents, neighborhoods, etc.) and teachers and students. In their interviews with us, the teachers expressed optimism and despair, as well as a sense of genuine affection for the children along with a conflicting and conflicted sense of their potential.

As we assessed our pedagogy and the structuring of the university class, we found places of movement from discussing the school and students as “at-risk” to talking about it and us in more relational terms that connote change. We observed in our (instructor) in-class stories later in the semester more discussion of the sixth graders’ creativity and humor, their pride in their ethnicity and nationality, and their concern and care for their community. Although the underside of these stories always loomed, we found little need to focus on the negative aspects of students’ experiences with school and community beyond their use as a basis for more creative ways of relating.

We also found places where we remained stuck in deficit models and re-positioning ourselves felt impossible. The purpose of the school program (media literacy) located us as critics of mainstream media and our focus on race, ethnicity, and nationality connected to this population placed the emphasis again on race as Other. Although we constantly reframed race in terms of white skin, we did not manage to escape the inevitable deficits that contextualized our work “in the community”. Still, while we discussed the label the state had given the school, “chronically underperforming,” and student scores on their standardized tests, we did so self-consciously. Whenever we used these discourses, we reflected on what they did and did not say. Of course, later in the semester as our time in the school grew, we were able to fill in these blanks and return to them differently. Although we discussed the language of both critique and “client” as framing the community as a problem or as a target for social change, we did not bipolarize either as bad or good. Where Ludema

(2000), among others, would have us do away with negative critique, we believe that such language is necessary for movement toward change. Likewise, where Robinson (2000), Abowitz, (2001), Jones, Maloy and Steen, (1996) and others feel that CSL pushes students away from radical action or advocacy on behalf of social change, we feel that students may or may not choose to use CSL experiences to motivate further action. If some of our students have gone on to advocacy roles in children's non-profits and others have become teachers, should we be critical of the latter? Just as we can question the language of social problems and social change, so too should we reflect on the ways the language of critique often assumes only one form of advocacy toward justice.

Articulating Race through Dialectics of Deficit and Asset: Stories of Teaching and Identity

In the sections that follow we look at the articulation of race in the project and in stories told about the project. We transcribed and analyzed data from focus groups and interviews with university students, sixth graders, the principal of the school, several teachers who worked with the sixth graders, parents who attended the open house for the after-school program, as well as interviews with each other (co-authors/instructors). We also analyzed university student journals, surveys of the sixth graders in the in-school program, surveys from the after-school program, and the various projects of both the in-school and after-school program. Additionally, and after producing and editing footage from both programs, we held a field trip for the students to the university where they viewed their work and then took a tour of the campus. On the bus rides back to the middle school we asked the sixth graders for further feedback some six months after the program had ended.

From this vast array of data, we first highlighted terms based on their repetition within stories told about relationships. We checked our perceptions with each other and with our students and the teachers at the school. Then, within the narratives we looked closely at the ways race and ethnicity were articulated; that is, we paid attention to how these terms were associated with others and looked for any changes in those linkages. Although it is tempting to look solely at the ways deficiencies defined early on in the semester became assets once relationships were established, we found that actual interactions, whether in the classroom, middle school, or during the interviews, were

often much more complex. Asking mostly white students to not only think about, but to talk about to community members in asset terms in a context where the community was/is the target of social change is difficult given the institutional knowledge and liberal politics that support such a structure. We, too, were wary of asset terms becoming an excuse to ignore the very real structural inequities that made the gap between the university and communities to its south seem worlds apart. On the other side, and documented in the research of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), Solórzano and Yosso (2001), and Yosso (2002), community members themselves can and do speak of themselves in deficit terms—sometimes for strategic purposes but generally as a reflection of dominant (i.e. institutional) discourses about them.

Although race was articulated with many important concepts across our corpus of data, due to space limitations we focus here on two of the most common narratives: teaching and identity. The former was discussed more often by the university students and in our own stories; the latter spanned all groups we worked with and demonstrates well the dynamics of race, privilege, and critical community service-learning.

Teaching and Learning. In our analysis of the data, we found that “teaching” was often articulated early on in the semester with “knowledge” about race and racial identities—and “helping”. Several of the university students expressed some hesitancy about entering into a middle school of students who were so different from themselves racially, ethnically, or economically, and being able to teach them, much less talk to them, about race. As one student expressed in her journal, “I have to say that I am nervous about going to the middle school. I don’t feel that I have much to say about race: I’m a white girl; that’s about it.” Responding to these sentiments, a student of color in the class later reflected on her nervousness about teaching earlier in the semester: “If they don’t get it [the links between racial oppression and everyday actions of well-intentioned white people] then I am worried about what happens when they go in to teach the kids.” Teaching about race, for this student, was linked to self-knowledge, a theme that connected the discourse of the three students of color in the class.

From a critical perspective, the articulation of teaching with knowledge indicated an association of teaching with knowledge of race and ethnicity as facts to be obtained and contained. Consistent

with the distancing that whites often experience with the concept of race (i.e., as something possessed by “others”), the white university students felt that to teach the younger students they must first and foremost be able to define race as objectively as possible. While certainly we instructors emphasized preparation in our class sessions, we also were careful to displace race-making the concept personal to white people in general and our class in particular. Data from our own interviews and our emails showed that teaching in our own discourse was often linked to learning in and from the community. Despite our efforts to differentiate between helping the community and working with them, several students continued to mark achievement in terms of changing the sixth graders’ lives. As another student later commented:

I thought it was interesting the last discussion we had in class ... a lot of people [early in the semester] were having expectations that they were to go in and change the school and save the kids. ... I think that the work we are going in to do there with them is planting seeds and really important seeds. You are not going to necessarily walk away like you have saved a child. ... I don’t think that should be an expectation

The discourse of “helping” can be seen as a reflection of race and class privilege, one that makes assumptions about communities of color as deficient and in need of correction. Green (2001) argues that where mainly white students perform service among mostly people of color, they must “unlearn” their “largely white middle class biases” (p. 19). Like many of our students later in the project, the experience of “working with” the younger students allowed the student quoted above to see through the stereotypes and misperceptions that the school is deficient and the students within its corridors are victims or problems.

In later reflections on the programs by the university students, teaching was linked to the experience of learning about race and ethnicity from the sixth graders. As one student commented about the course and project, “everyone was a teacher in that class and everyone was a student.” Another student agreed, noting that it was,

Everyone learning together ... contributed to the atmosphere that this class had.

... [I]t did not feel like anyone had all the answers and that was at first a scary feeling I think.... But ultimately I think that is what made it the most honest and truly beneficial and organic experience.

Although the sixth graders and after school program participants did not reflect on teaching per se in their interviews, our follow up conversations with the students during their field trip sixth months later revealed that they saw themselves as teachers of their peers, their siblings, and parents about stereotyping in the media and about media production. Thus for these students as well, teaching and learning became intertwined and enriched the experience of both. Although the movement of deficit and asset discourses was not always clearly delineated in discourses about race and teaching or teaching about race, the actions taken in the creation and filming of the public service announcements and in the creative projects of the after school program revealed that the creation and production of content dealing with race and identity for a presumably sympathetic audience led to discussions and representations of assets within the community and in the students themselves.

Identity. Given the nature of our CSL course, the program in the middle school, and of the characteristics of deficit and asset-based discourses, identity (and racial identity in particular) was a central theme throughout the data. As the dominant narrative around which the project and the course was situated, it is important to locate racial identity discourses in relation to an asset-based ideal of change from the inside out (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In the student narratives, change from deficit to asset discourses was associated with subject or object position in relation to the narratives about racial identities. Early in the semester, several of the white students related that although they knew they had white skin they did not identify with a white race. When asked to write about and discuss their first encounters with racial identification, they told stories that displaced race from their own bodies and onto the bodies of those who were racially marginalized. Others distanced themselves from race all together and became quite upset at arguments in favor of recognizing racial differences and the histories behind them. A few of the students insisted on the moral and spiritual basis of their advocacy for equality in a colorblind society (to the point of long emails and discussions after class), when

nothing had been said about the particular ethical rightness or wrongness or their point of view. They seemed troubled by their sense that we instructors were not attempting to empower all people on an equal basis. These views also reflected a particular centering and de-centering of themselves as invisible subjects in narratives of racial identity. If centered as the subject (the one who points out) and to race of the narrative of first encounter, then whites can distance themselves from the objects (the one pointed to) in the story. In this manner, they see themselves as neither gaining nor losing in stories about racial identity.

Later in the semester, however, some students told of uncovering their own biases and discovering whiteness as an unearned asset. In his final journal, one student, who had been an outspoken “savior” of the downtrodden youth of Holyoke, reported that:

Though I lack the hatred and malice often associated with this word, I am guilty, at least to some degree, of the ignorance implicit in being a racist. By not understanding; acknowledging, even, my own place in the racial discourse; my own whiteness; by blindly assuming that I was aware of the challenges facing subordinate groups in our society without ever working to truly understand them—in these subtle, seemingly inert ways I came to be as I am. Now that I have seen the whole picture, though, I will never allow myself to ignore it again.

Although it would be easier to look for—and find—language that moved from deficit to asset in all the talk about racial identities as the semester progressed, actual interaction around these topics never moves in such a linear fashion. What we found in the children’s talk, alternatively, was that deficit and assets could be located in the same stories—and in some cases (as in the after-school poetry project and in their public service announcements discussed below) one became the other. The after-school program poetry project resulted in poems about where the middle school students were from. Most of the poems reflected cultural foods, stories from their childhoods in places like Puerto Rico, the Bronx, and the local communities of Springfield and Holyoke. The poems were beautifully articulated expressions of sandy beaches of Puerto Rico, bustling streets of New York, and locating themselves through deep

experiences of joy and pain. One such poem from a young girl spoke of being “from her dead cat Princess” and another from “church music” and “missionary work” of her parents. We then asked the students to read or recite their poems several times on camera during a field trip to some of the sites they had mentioned as important to them with another student usually doing the video work and another working the sound. While the creation of the poems opened up new vocabularies for expressing the assets of their communities, the expression of this poetry to a wider audience (cable access television and a university screening) seemed to heighten the middle school students’ feelings of deficiency. Several of the poems were mumbled, with the students looking down or away from the camera. It was as if the sights and sounds of their community recreated as beautiful or at the least as more complexly significant in their poetry might become lost in translation simply as deficiencies.

Countering the opposition between critical analysis and discourses of hope (Ludema, 2000), the final projects from the sixth graders in the in-school program, demonstrate the need for both. One group of sixth graders rapped about stereotypes, and offered:

People think that if I am Puerto Rican I know how to fix cars. Just because I’m white doesn’t mean I know how to run an industry. I could be a teacher at [our] school teaching history. Just ’cause I’m black doesn’t mean I own a gun. Just ’cause I’m a youth doesn’t mean I’d be shooting up for fun. Just because I am Mexican doesn’t mean I know how to run a bar.

Chorus: White rice, black dice are both nice/Peace and love are both the same and none of us should be ashamed/ Color doesn’t mean/Our personality is an easy thing/Try to talk to one another/ No violence or pain. Leave with a friend come back with a homey/The person is not a phony/So let there be color and everything is rosy dozy.

And a middle school principal said:

I have found critical media literacy and particularly questions on race and ethnicity really valuable because our teachers are differently skilled in

integrating conversations like that, and overall there are limited opportunities because of curriculum to really address both those questions of media and its impact. Being able to read it and secondly, to think about it systematically to think about questions of race and racism, race and ethnicity.

Conclusions

Our study evolved out of the research questions posed earlier based on deficit and asset discourses, the examination of language as it pertains to the classroom and community action work, and our own pedagogy with regard to critical theory, social justice, and community service-learning. Addressing the first research question, we found that (the university students and our own) talk about race and our talk about teaching shifted in the course of the semester. For the white students, it seemed that many became more reflexive about deficits and assets based on privileges and social inequities. Both the in-school and the after-school projects helped to establish relationships among the university and middle school students and with the teachers in the school, and this seemed to promote easier access to assets and to discussion of the same in the middle school and in our own classroom. Telling stories, rather than reciting facts about poverty and school failure, helped bridge the gap between our (and their) bodies and the reality of racial identity. The second and third research questions delved into the links between asset-based language and asset-based action in the community. As mentioned earlier, the opportunity to engage in the creative work of re-presenting stories of identity and community within the contexts of our partnership moved us away from discourses of deficiency and abstractly negative critique and toward restorative critical thinking. That is, we asked questions and had discussions about how we might re-envision race, ethnicity, identity, and community in the contexts of our relationships. The third question asked specifically about the problems and possibilities of using asset mapping in a program that deals with concepts of race, ethnicity, and nationality. We found that teachers and the principal of the middle school emphasized deficit discourses in their stories about the children, their families, neighborhood, and struggles in the school. However, we also discovered openings for resistance to these stories in their interest in and response to the children's creative projects and in our own commitment to

partnering with the school over the years. Where the children could easily recite all the stereotypes of students who went to their middle school (drop outs, poor, deviant, criminals, over sexualized, etc.), they knew also that the combination of their own stories and the platform of community media could educate a wider public.

In response to our fourth research question, regarding directions for CSL pedagogy, we hope that this essay contributes to the growing dialogue on moving from deficit- to asset-based discourse through complicating this shift as neither precisely one or the other, and by looking at the ways such meanings (deficit or asset) as formed in relation to and in relationship with others inside and outside our communities. Although it is perhaps a bit simplistic, we take from this study a pedagogical emphasis on three R's: Relationship, reflexivity, and realism. By relationship, we emphasize centering our teaching on the ways we create meanings for identity (and everything else) in relation to others. Reflexivity means looking at the ways discourses (like those about race) point both toward and away from ourselves as subjects/objects. Focusing on the actual movement of discourse complicates the divisions between deficit and asset, along with the subjects and objects of such discourses. Lastly, and in terms of pedagogy, realism refers to the connections between a critical analysis of material inequities in social life and the hope embedded in everyday and mundane acts of human creativity.

Indeed, it is simply the strength of the relationships built during the projects that adds depth, complexity, and interdependence to our discussions in the classrooms on the college campus and the middle school as well as faith that things will not go careening out of control and everyone will be better off in the end. Calderón (2003) argues "the connections between the classroom and community based learning are all about translation"—about looking for ways to get students to "understand communities outside of themselves and to become engaged interpreters" (p. 22). In this fashion, we find that it is in those moments of self- and other-recognition as well as the realization that deficits do not reside in people or in communities but are mobilized in discourse that are central to the pedagogy of asset building in relationships and in communities.

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BOOK REVIEWS

JCES invites submission of book reviews that speak to a wide range of issues relevant to the scholarship of engagement. Reviews of books within the social sciences, natural sciences and math, medicine and health, the environment, law, business, philosophy, religion, and the arts and humanities are encouraged. Although reviews of individual books are the most common, JCES also invites submission of several reviews that speak to a particular topic area, to be published as a group. All book reviews submitted to JCES should provide readers with a broad overview of the book, but should go beyond this description to discuss central issues raised, strengths and limitations of the text, and current issues of theory and practice raised by the book that are germane to the subject matter and engaged scholarship.

Heather Pleasants, Ph.D.
Book Review Editor

Educator Examines Tools to Engage Communities in Classrooms

Reviewed by Samantha Basile

Inviting Families into the Classroom: Learning from a Life in Teaching. Lynne Yermanock Strieb. Teachers College Press: New York, NY, 2010, 240 pages. ISBN 978-0-8077-5082-7

How can teachers create safe spaces for students to engage in their own education while exploring their individuality, embracing diversity, and celebrating community? What tools can educators, administrators, and policy-makers use to establish trust and encourage continuous improvement in schools? Chronicling over 30 years of one teacher's experience as a parent, activist, and teacher, Strieb adds a new dynamic to existing academic studies of families and communities. A cross between an academic longitudinal study, an insider's view into the classroom, and pragmatic toolkit, *Inviting Families into the Classroom* transparently shows why and how family involvement in schools has enhanced Strieb's experience as a teacher and learner, a point substantiated by decades of research (Epstein & Sanders, 2009; Laureau, 1987; Leichter, 1978). Strieb's work is an essential read for educators, researchers, and policy makers who wish to learn how to bridge classrooms and communities to make teaching and learning more meaningful. Over the course of the book, Strieb shares valuable tools for her reader through meticulously documented case studies and reflective analysis that models successes and challenges to integrating families and communities into her classroom.

Starting with a view into her personal life in Chapter 1, Strieb adds depth by discussing how her childhood experience as the daughter of a working class immigrant family influenced her life as a student, parent, activist, and teacher. Growing up, Strieb experienced a large gap between her family and school lives. With these experiences as a foundation from the beginning of her teaching career, Strieb consistently modeled an unwavering commitment to the education, safety, and well-being of children as she actively worked to find creative ways to make families an integral part of her classroom community.

In Chapter 2, Strieb introduces and explains how she constructs and sends regular newsletters to parents; through this example, she shows how classroom newsletters can move beyond simple

fill-in-the-blank memos to become a powerful platform for communication between teachers and parents. By Strieb's description of the newsletter and her experience with it, the reader learns about its effectiveness in building connections and setting expectations between students, teachers, and parents. Educators, and even administrators, could follow Strieb's example of sending regular, personalized newsletters home to update parents on classroom activities and invite them to join in.

Building upon relationships and communication established with parents through her newsletters, in Chapter 3 Strieb discusses her personally conflicted views on homework and the challenge of aligning this work with parental, school, and district expectations. Citing cases of too much or too little parental involvement, the capacity for homework to exacerbate existing student disadvantages, and the stress it creates for families, her only conclusion is that the teacher is ultimately responsible for a student's learning. Integrating notes from parents and her own journal about the touchy subject of homework, the reader is encouraged to reflect on his or her own ideas or policies on homework and what it means for the child's education.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 Strieb advocates for understanding and managing student behavior through family involvement in the classroom while recognizing challenges that do exist. When a parent's promise of revamping the annual gingerbread house class project by making individual sleighs becomes disastrous, Strieb reflects on how they could have improved communication in order to set realistic expectations in the future. This experience is juxtaposed with the synergy created when Bobbie, a helpful aunt and community member, volunteers to help with organizing classroom materials, cleanup, and hands-on projects; Strieb feels more at ease with classroom management and has more space to focus on content. Acknowledging that family involvement can and must take different forms and address different kinds of issues, when young Jalil returns to the classroom with bruises following

a conversation about his disruptive behavior with his father, Strieb discusses the parameters of parent-teacher communication and shows when it is hurtful instead of helpful. Adding nuance to works like Canter's *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom* (2010), she reasserts her conviction that the teacher is ultimately responsible for establishing a safe space for children and hopes that teachers reflect on the best way for families to engage in classrooms.

Strieb also discusses her experience with Parent Scholars (established through President Johnson's Project Follow Through from 1967 to 1995) by showing how and why teachers can capitalize on parental involvement and incorporate applicable perspectives into her practice. When she invites multi-lingual parents and guardians from varied socio-economic backgrounds into the classroom, Strieb also shows how parental involvement can be a key element to connecting students with the variety of communities of which they are a part. In a most memorable illustration, a parent (truck driver by profession) shares his passion for hair cutting with the class by cutting his own child's hair in front of all the students. Through illustrative case studies *Inviting Families into the Classroom* shows how parental involvement can cut through socio-economic barriers, increase inter-racial understanding, challenge stereotypes, and provide a foundation for communication that adds to each child's learning experience.

Strieb's reflections in Chapter 7 provide the basis for an analysis of her roles as parent activist, teacher, and community member and serve to illustrate the importance of documentation, while showing her dedication to excellence in her responsibilities as a teacher. Her innovative practice of collaborating with parents and teachers to conduct descriptive reviews provides a model to educators and administrators on how to approach student and classroom difficulties. *Inviting Families into the Classroom* suggests ways to approach diversity in a more institutional way and how administrators can make the school environment more warm and welcoming to families. Finally, Strieb's letters to administrators to change discriminatory policies at local schools and analysis of "what she could have done differently" as a new and veteran teacher provide concrete examples of how to approach the effective practice of inviting families into the classroom through taking a stand on social and community issues. Although all of her suggestions, like cooking or bringing living animals into the classroom, may not be relevant in

all environments, her steadfast commitment to all children's learning invites interpretation on how to best execute them.

Providing an inside look into over 30 years of teaching, this book serves as a significant tool that is both pragmatic, innovative, and reflective for the use of new and seasoned educators, administrators, and policy-makers.

Putting the work to use in this era of ever-advancing classroom technology, online learning, and other forms of distance learning is only a small challenge that educators could face. Streib's model can be used as an educational framework, constantly reminding us of the importance of human connection and interaction inside and outside the classroom. Teachers, researchers, university faculty, and education policy-makers can add this tool to their arsenal of teaching resources as a base from which to create innovative platforms that connect families and educators. Additionally, mentors can use Streib's work to show new teachers how to build a positive classroom atmosphere, professionally communicate with parents, and as a launching point for the essential conversation of how to create relationships with new communities.

Throughout the book her educational philosophy is clear and consistent: In order for teachers to fulfill their responsibility to ensure that all students learn, communication with the entire school community is essential. *Inviting Families into the Classroom* models how teachers can capitalize on parent, student, administrator, and community knowledge and skills in a safe, inviting, and supportive environment conducive to improve teaching and learning. As such, this book would be a helpful resource for community-based researchers, educational activists, and policy-makers trying to create bridges between family and school life. It is also extremely appropriate for new, mid-career, and mentor teachers seeking to implement and improve community-based strategies within their own school communities.

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Two-Volume Set Offers Sage Advice for Those Doing Research on Service-Learning

Reviewed by George L. Daniels

Research on Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Assessment: Students and Faculty. (IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research, Volume 2A). Patti H. Clayton, Robert G. Bringle, and Julie A. Hatcher, Editors. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013, 337 pages. ISBN 978-1-57922-341-0

Research on Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Assessments: Communities, Institutions, and Partnerships. (IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research, Volume 2B). Patti H. Clayton, Robert G. Bringle, and Julie A. Hatcher, Editors. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013, 332 pages. ISBN 978-1-57922-884-2.

Is there a right way or a wrong way to do service learning research? What are the necessary ingredients of a good study that adds something meaningful to the body of knowledge on experiential learning? Who should be the real beneficiaries of a solid piece of service learning scholarship? These are questions addressed in the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* since the very first issue (Johnson, Johnson, & Shaney, 2008). Most recently, these are some of the questions the authors of a brand new two-volume set probe in their in-depth treatment and exploration of the field.

Part of the IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research, the two volumes of *Research on Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Assessment* were produced with the intent of improving service learning scholarship through strengthening its theoretical base. The volumes followed an initial book in the series that was dedicated to international service learning and produced by scholars in the Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis Center for Service and Learning. In Volume 2A the authors present eight chapters on service learning research related specifically to students and faculty. In Volume 2B, eight more chapters are devoted to community development and the institutionalization of service learning. The latter volume also devotes three chapters to conceptualizing and measuring the quality of various partnerships. Even though they were produced as a two-volume set, readers could purchase either volume and still get a complete experience, as both volumes open with the same two chapters defining the criteria for quality research.

Many of the authors who contributed chapters to both volumes, like the editors of the set, are a virtual "Who's Who" in the field of service learning

and engagement scholarship. From Andrew Furco and Barbara Holland's chapter on improving research on service learning institutionalization, to KerryAnn O'Meara's treatment of faculty motivations for service learning, to Kevin Kecske's chapter on what an engaged academic unit should look like and Emily Janke's how-to on advancing theory-based research on organizational partnerships, readers can be assured they are hearing from leaders in the field. However, that doesn't mean newer or lesser-known scholars are excluded. Whether a leading scholar in the field or a researcher in the early stage in his/her career, the contributors all came together in 2009 in an IUPUI symposium. The result is an integrated set of chapters that complement one another in a way that is ideal for the service learning novice. In fact, this review is written from the perspective of one who is evolving as a service learning researcher and is seeking guidance on the best way to contribute to the body of knowledge in the interdisciplinary fields of service learning and civic engagement.

One of the biggest strengths of both volumes is that they assume nothing more than the reader's desire to make such a contribution, starting with defining the very terms themselves—"service learning" and "research." For something to be considered research, the authors say, a convergence of theory, measurement, design, and practice is required. Research, then, is not the same as evaluation because the former is conducted to generate or test theory, apply to practice, and contribute to knowledge for the sake of knowledge, whereas the latter is only a component of the process. Service learning research can be mistaken for program evaluation, which generally does not test theory and lacks generalizability because it is primarily concerned with the data and inferences from a single program or effort. How many times

have we seen a “study” on a service learning class that, while useful in the assessment of that course, was not really research, as these volumes make clear?

Another strength of Volume 2 is the depth of treatment on what some of the goals of our service learning research should be: impact on academic learning, influence on students’ civic learning, personal development, and intercultural competence. For example, in Communication and Diversity, a course this reviewer teaches, significant time is spent conceptualizing what it means to live and produce media messages in a diverse society.

Elsewhere, O’Meara (2010) has argued for a “new script” when it comes to reward systems for engaged scholars that are more public and more growth-focused. In a chapter in the first volume of this set, O’Meara reviewed the numerous studies on the motivations for faculty doing research on service learning and community engagement. The synthesis on this scholarship resulted in a conceptual model that includes inputs, processes, and outcomes of such research. Her analysis suggested that three common methods for research in the specific area of faculty reward system were quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and narrative analysis. New scholars in the field can take O’Meara’s analysis and not only situate themselves (and their own motivations for what they do) in the field, but also blaze a new path methodologically and conceptually in developing a research project. This shows how one can really put the chapters in these two volumes to work.

A couple of years ago, Kevin Kecske, based on his decade in the provost’s office at Portland State University, acknowledged that engaged scholars have to wage our own public relations campaign to tell our story to those in our institution that engagement scholarship not only has to meet all the rigors of traditional scholarship, but also has to have applicable value and relevance to community or public issues while advancing disciplinary knowledge and public knowledge (Kecske, 2013). Here in the second volume of *Research on Service Learning*, Kecske outlines one way to start that public relations campaign by researching the academic department as a locus of change in the service learning and community engagement movement in higher education. By utilizing organizational change or institutional theory, one can show the key role of an academic unit in institutionalizing change toward community engagement. He noted that cultural theory can provide researchers with a framework to consider

the diversity of community-campus partnership-building arrangements.

For anyone seeking to conduct research or program evaluation on a service learning course, this *Research on Service Learning* two-volume set is a must-have for starting to conceptualize what the project will be. The completeness and currency of the volumes make either or both of them appropriate as a textbook for an engagement scholarship graduate course or a guide for research on civic engagement. Community partners interested in how academic research is done, especially on community-based research, could also benefit from *Research on Service Learning* as the writing is very accessible to the layperson.

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STUDENT VOICES

Arriving as Strangers, Welcomed as Friends: Student Reflections on Mindsets, Equity, and Partnerships in International Service-Learning

**Nicholas Allen, Rachel Boots, Michael Bugas,
Arianna Parsons and Robert Swap**

We began as a group of students interested in conducting a service-learning project in rural South Africa. As we prepared, we quickly found ourselves exposed to a broad range of literature and personal testimony regarding campus-community engagement that ranged from glowing praise to outright criticism (Butin, 2010; Handler, 2013). While we had been educated about the importance of student mindsets, equity in the engagement, and long-lasting relationships, we still found ourselves faced with the uncertainties of working with people whom we did not know well, in a place we did not know well, with a project where we were not experts. Furthermore, we were deeply concerned with whether we should even attempt to conduct an international service-learning project for fear of potentially causing harm to the community.

In preparation for a service-learning project focused on implementing an improved design for wood-burning cook stoves, known as Rocket Stoves, in the rural Limpopo Province of South Africa, the team became aware of the importance of process in service-learning and community engagement. Team members were taught that underlying all engagements were the fundamental tenets of respect, reciprocity, and relationship. The team members had been exposed to the notion that real world challenges know no disciplinary boundaries and that such challenges required a diverse knowledge base to arrive at appropriate approaches. Coursework had made the team aware of the value of multiple forms of knowledge, existing both inside and outside academic settings. Most formal courses stress that knowledge outside of the academy, while present, was often silent and only exchanged between the community, faculty,

and students after the practice of responsible engagement with the community had been demonstrated (Chambers, 1983). We came to see that the lack of respect for and exchange of knowledge between community and the project team could result in ineffective service-learning and community engagement project outcomes. Near the end of the stateside project preparation, our student team came to comprehend the protocols of service-learning as a type of etiquette around the process of engagement as people first, process second, and product third.

We have seen firsthand that any other focus can lead to highly product-driven, individualistic mindsets. We understand how easy it can be to fall into the trap of seeing one's education as a linear process designed for corporate readiness, an education that places a strong emphasis on results, rather than on the process of learning how to learn and think for oneself. Such observations are consistent with the views of scholars such as Hirschman (1986), who have found that these highly individualistic mindsets reinforce self-centered interest behavior and run counter to collaboration and engagement. With these economicistic, product-first mindsets, it follows that students, more often than not, undertake service-learning projects to produce a tangible product. This "get the job done" mentality tends to focus on project rather than people and process (Brown-Glazner, Gutierrez, & Heil, 2009). Our courses had impressed upon us that such approaches can lead to extractive, asymmetrical, student-community engagements, which over time may make communities less receptive to entertaining outsiders (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Clayton,

Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010; Nelson & Klak, 2013).

During project preparation we were taught that the community voice often goes unheard during project planning and implementation, all while the campus service-learning team works toward its predetermined goals. Little if any thought is given to the principle of equity and engaging all stakeholders from the inception of the proposed activity (Sandy & Holland, 2006). It is as if the community is there to serve the students and their project, in spite of the stated purpose to learn from and serve the community. The principles of respect, reciprocity, and relationship can be overlooked, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in engagement between outsiders (the students and faculty) and insiders (the community). Too often, as noted by Clayton et al. (2010), this can result in extractive relationships that lead to ongoing dependencies within the community long after the service-learning engagements are completed.

As undergraduates from the United States, we were accustomed to pursuing the most efficient and effective approach to group work in order to produce the best product. We entered the planning phase of this project with the intellectual awareness instilled by service-learning and community engagement-focused courses. Even so, we had to fight against the notion of racing through the process of checking off items on a list of pre-departure requirements; we tried not to succumb to “walking fast by walking alone”¹ during the preparation process. While we had heard the proverb that stressed the importance of walking far by walking together, there were many uncertainties as to how this implementation would occur. By adhering to our people-first principle, we relied on this method to ensure we could effectively engage with the rural South African communities.

With this as the backdrop, an interesting thing happened upon the arrival of the student team in the rural setting of the Limpopo Province; the team was greeted by the community not as a group of imposing strangers, as the team had feared, but received warmly, almost as friends. The larger community was there to welcome the team with an opening reception at the local primary school. Furthermore, at the completion of the reception, staff from the primary school invited the student members of the team to their homes and hosted them for the duration of the stay. We, as members of the student team, did not expect to receive the

degree of hospitality from the community that we experienced. Such a warm welcome helped alleviate some of our trepidation. With all that was occurring at that time, the team did not have the opportunity to reflect on much of anything, let alone the welcome, its significance, and what had prompted it.

The time for reflection would present itself after returning home and to campus the following fall. During that first semester back, the student team participated in a group independent study to reflexively process the experience. One of the most challenging aspects of this process was understanding exactly how the team, comprised primarily of relatively young students, could enter a close-knit community as almost complete strangers, and yet be welcomed as friends. This reaction seemed counter to experiences of many student groups involved in international service-learning community engagement that critics have noted, leaving our group to reflect upon why was this our experience. Was this purely cultural or was there something else, something deeper that the team was not aware of? The team’s first inkling that this might have been something deeper came from the realization that the initial spirit of collaboration continued both during and after our time in the region.

As we began the process of post-field reflection, we sought to comprehend our experience and quickly focused on what we found to be three key aspects of service-learning community engagement: the role of our mindsets as students, the role of equity in partner participation in these activities, and the role of facilitative relationships. Throughout formal (in class) and informal (outside of class) educational activities to prepare for this project, the concept of maintaining a “beginner’s mind” was constantly reinforced. While we had heard this concept countless times prior to departure and had understood it in the abstract, it was not until having lived it in the field during the project that this concept actually made sense in practice. A concrete example of this was when one of the local artisan members of our team came up with several solutions to challenges that the team faced. As it turned out, the protective roofing structures that originally covered the first generation of stoves were not as durable as they needed to be. At first we looked to merely replace the roofs with a similar design; however, we listened to a solution that was offered from one of the least likely members of our team, the artisan from another province, who had joined

¹This comes from the African proverb “If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to walk far, walk together.”

us to learn about these stoves. His suggestion was to go with a metal frame that was easily sourced, highly durable, and that could be maintained in a cost-effective fashion by members of the local community. Without his help, we could have easily gone with a solution that would have created further economic and logistical burdens for the community. Upon further reflection back home, we realized that if we had not placed the emphasis on entering into this engagement process with a “beginner’s mind” as learners, there was a very real risk of the student team adopting a product-oriented mindset that might have allowed us to accomplish our goals efficiently, but would have possibly harmed engagement with the community.

The original student effort to design and construct modified wood burning stoves in this area of the Limpopo Province took place over a nearly two-year period (2008-2010) and is detailed elsewhere (de Chastonay, Bugas, Soni, & Swap, 2012). While that original effort was in response to the stated needs of the Mashamba Primary School located within the larger community, a broader community engagement around the stoves emerged through the process of collaboration and knowledge exchange. This engagement was defined as one in which more members of the community were able to have their voices heard, and one in which the undergraduate students were able to step to the side for full community ownership.

As part of the ongoing efforts of an international program involving faculty, practitioners, students, and communities associated with different African and U.S. institutions of higher learning known as the Eastern/Southern African Virginia Networks and Associations² (ESAVANA) study abroad activities, two of our own student team members traveled to Mashamba in 2011, a year after the first stove was constructed. These new students had the opportunity to observe the original stove and learn that two more had been built by the school on their own initiative. These new students were also able to interact with school staff, teachers, and administrators (de Chastonay et al., 2012). More importantly, they were able to see the increased community interest around the original implementation, interest that had spread well beyond the Mashamba community. As learners within the larger context of the ESVANA study

abroad program, the new students were able to interact under the umbrella of the larger relationship without imposing upon school stakeholders and local community members to the degree that a relatively unknown student group outside of the context of these longstanding relationships would. These interactions led to dialogues between the community and the ESVANA study abroad participants, around the emergence of additional student energies to expand the implementation of appropriate wood-stove technology. These conversations led to brainstorming sessions to improve upon the design so as to have the outcomes desired by the community. Upon their return to their home campus, these new students pursued additional coursework and devoted the next year to developing ideas for a project plan. The student team utilized the existing, facilitative relationships between faculty, practitioners, community members, and students from the U.S. and South Africa to collaborate with Mashamba stakeholders and to incorporate their expressed concerns regarding the first generation of the modified wood burning cook stoves. With the voice of the community front and center in the design process, the student team iteratively developed a proposal for implementing additional stoves with the collaboratively improved stove design.

This iterative process of consultation and engagement over a prolonged period, facilitated a community of trust between the team and the community. A pivotal aspect of this project partnership was the utilization of asset-based community development (ABCD) (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). Using this approach that sought to recognize and engage the strengths and expertise inherent in the community, the team created space and opportunities for local community members to enter into the project. Our desire was to create the opportunity for both parties—researchers from the outside and community members from the inside—to capitalize on available resources and leverage off of each other’s strengths to yield a more feasible, resilient, and sustainable outcome. First, knowledge was exchanged regarding the impact of the first generation of modified Rocket Stoves. Knowledge concerning the stoves’ performance and suggestions for improvements were exchanged between the key stakeholders, the cooking staff at the school, and the students seeking to improve upon original implementation. Second, all stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the evolving

²Originally established as the SAVANA Consortium (SWAP et al., 2008), the network expanded in 2010 to include colleagues from Eastern and Central Africa and is now known as ESVANA-Eastern/Southern Africa Virginia Networks and Associations (Intolubbe-Chmil et al., 2012).

design during the project-planning phase. Over the course of six months prior to departure, the student team demonstrated due diligence in following up on these expressed concerns through communications with the other project stakeholders, faculty, community mentors, and local craftsmen. Such communication allowed for the collaborative identification of other individuals with the necessary expertise to complete the team. These included skilled craftsmen, local teachers, community development practitioners, and students from the local university. The project team's intentions were to account for and recognize the assets that both the community (knowledge of how the stoves work in practice and more importantly how they do not work, construction skills, etc.) and the student researchers (energy, passion, openness to learn) brought to bear on this project, so that all parties would have a sense of equity and, therefore, joint ownership in this project.

This trust was further deepened by the actions of the project team that included being part of the community. Team members demonstrated their commitment to being present in and part of the community by living within the community with the school's teachers, holding open meetings to foster discussion, and engaging in transparent dialogue among stakeholders. While participating in these activities, the project team was approached with and responded to additional requests by the community. Sometimes these requests fell outside of the initial project scope, such as the need for cultural exchange events and computer classes for teachers. and the nature of the requests left the team feeling overwhelmed and helpless at times. However, upon further reflection, the student team came to understand this sharing of requests beyond the nature of the project as a demonstration by the community of a certain level of comfort and trust with the project team. More importantly, the way forward for the stove project may not have been possible without that level of trust and comfort between the students and the community, a trust whose solid foundation had already been established by these longer-term relationships. We came to see that the ongoing personal, professional, and institutional relationships, when combined with an open mind when responding to these requests, helped to create a stronger community of trust and more resilient partnership between student and community.

The team also came to realize that the ability to conduct this project emerged from more than just

the initiative of the students and their collaboration with the community; it was also due in part to a combination of personal, professional, and institutional relationships developed over nearly two decades. While intellectually the student team had known the existence and importance of the existing partnerships beyond the original student stove project, it was not until having returned and reflecting upon this further that the team came to appreciate more fully the power of those existing partnerships. As part of the reflection process, we came to understand that the community of trust that we had become a part of had at its roots the shared, lived experiences of at least two large-scale, multi-year research, education, and outreach programs. The first of these programs was the international Southern African Regional Science Initiative (SAFARI 2000) that ran from 1998–2003 (Annegarn, Otter, Swap, & Scholes, 2002). This was the first formal, regional research activity to engage the universities and communities of this part of rural South Africa. The momentum of SAFARI 2000 helped to give rise to what is now known as the ESAVEANA network. As part of a constant process of evolution, the ESAVEANA relationship grew to incorporate additional disciplinary expertise at the University of Virginia (Intolubbe-Chmil, Spreen, & Swap, 2012). With this increase in the disciplinary breadth, students also found increased opportunities for engagement through long-standing personal connections in Limpopo Province, more specifically with the village of Mashamba.

Our team benefited greatly from the exchange of knowledge, experience, and wisdom between faculty, practitioners, community members, and former South African and U.S students. An integral part of this transfer was between our team and a group of local university student members of their campus Global Sustainability Club, who were able to use a similar analytical mindset while providing insights as seen through a South African lens. Looking forward, the South African student was able to understand the project from a sustainability standpoint and how the networks would exist over time. Through this we were able to see how the etiquette that we had come to learn in class was put into practice in the field. As part of the reflexive process, we could now begin to understand how being associated with faculty, staff, and communities from these long-standing, respectful, and reciprocal relationships, might, in the eyes of those people whom we had not yet met, make us not appear as student strangers but

rather as relatives in an ongoing relationship.

As students, we often hear criticisms of international service-learning, criticisms that include projects not being maintained once the outside implementing teams have left the site and that many of these types of encounters are based on extractive engagements where student teams focus on projects almost exclusively (Brown-Glazner et al., 2009) and where the community has little equity (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Nelson & Klak, 2012). Our experience that involved implementing an international service-learning project, however, differs from these widely held criticisms. We found that the implementation of the Rocket Stoves in the Mashamba area has been effective not only in addressing the community's expressed needs, but also in creating an increased interest in this particular approach to energy efficient, wood burning stoves after our engagement. We support this assertion with the following facts: since 2010, 13 stoves have been constructed at 4 different schools; nearly half (6 of the 13) were built solely through the community's own initiative; as of 2013, these stoves are all functioning, and half a dozen more communities in the province of Limpopo have requested the plans for the modified Rocket Stoves. We attribute much of the expansion of this collaboratively developed approach to three main points: our mindsets as students; the community being vested in the process of generating an appropriate and contextually relevant solution; and a longstanding relationship with the local community and our local partnering institution of higher learning, the University of Venda. Project sustainability, the use of ABCD, and the cultural competence exhibited by students and community members were only accomplished through a relationship of respectful, responsible, and reciprocal collaboration and mentoring.

Through reflection, we understand that our respect for the process and adherence to the tacit etiquette around service-learning and community engagement contributed greatly to our arriving as strangers and being welcomed as friends. We aimed to ensure that the opportunity for reciprocity was maintained throughout the process for all stakeholders during the service-learning project. And finally we realized that such respectful behavior most likely contributed to faculty and community acceptance of our group and of our project and to our being entrusted with access to this facilitative partnership; we had demonstrated respect of the process and adherence

to its etiquette. Our efforts benefited greatly from the community of trust created by the rich and complex tapestry of relationships originating from respect and reciprocity. We know that our own time in South Africa is just one thread of a much bigger network, but we, as students, believe that is how service-learning should be—resilient braids of partnerships rather than tenuous strands of individual effort.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge Prof. Carol Anne Spreen for the critical insight that she provided and her decade-long engagement with the teachers and staff of Mashamba Presidential Primary School outside of Elim, Limpopo Province. We also thank those who contributed significantly to the success of the engagement: Ray Dukes Smith, Jr., Gadisi Nthambeleni, and Sox Sihlangu. In addition, we thank Principal Lazarus, Alex Mashamba, Selina Mbedzi, Joel Mushaku, Selinah Letshebane, and Fridah Rambu Konanani from the Mashamba Nelson Mandela Presidential Primary School in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Financial support was provided by the Jefferson Public Citizens and Community Based Undergraduate Research Grants programs of the University of Virginia, and Terence Y. Sieg through his support of the ESAVEANA program. The authors also wish to acknowledge Caroline Berinyuy, Loren Intolubbe-Chmil, Kent Wayland, Joseph Francis, and Augusto Castilho for their thoughtful comments on this manuscript.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Model for Engaged Community Efficacy

Jason Merrick

Through this essay I hope to illuminate the processes implemented by a concerned student activist and his community in a region hit extraordinarily hard by an influx of heroin and opioid (synthetic) pain medication. I have structured it as an equation for community engagement so others may address paramount community issues and concerns with a productive and efficient format.

My intention is to breathe life into this essay so that it may spark affection and interest in its readers. My hope is that readers will choose to advocate for recovery from the disease of addiction by making decisions that reinforce the efforts of those working to stop the unnecessary suffering.

Support from the communities throughout Northern Kentucky has only been paralleled by the encouragement, advisement, and experiences received from the social work faculty at Northern Kentucky University. It is through their guidance that the synchronicity of events explained in the following paragraphs has taken form. My experience as a student and a community activist has been, and continues to be, the most exhilarating and profoundly satisfying accomplishment of my life.

Identifying the Need

Every community in the eight counties of the Northern Kentucky area has been affected by the heroin epidemic on an unprecedented scale. A recent newspaper article identified Northern Kentucky as “heroin ground zero,” describing our region as “...the state’s epicenter for heroin, straining legal and medical systems and bringing deadly consequences that are starting to spill out to the rest of the state” (DeMio, 2013a). Heroin is affecting families in Northern Kentucky without regard to status, income, family composition, race, faith, or location.

The need for action was clear. According to St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, the number of babies treated for drug withdrawal doubled between 2011 and 2012 (St. Elizabeth & Children’s Hospitals, 2013). In addition, the number of overdose cases treated through the St. Elizabeth Healthcare systems increased by 77% in 2012. As of August 2013, the number of heroin overdose cases almost doubled the 2012 rate (St. Elizabeth, 2013). Statewide, the number of heroin overdose deaths has increased by 550% between 2011 and 2012 (ODCP, 2012).

Rallying the Stakeholders

Developing a grassroots community organization was essential in bringing the people most invested in the stabilization of this epidemic together. The data spoke for itself. Community leaders, politicians, doctors, parents, families, and loved ones all have felt the impact of heroin and opioid pain killers on our communities at epidemic proportions. What was missing is a catalyst to action.

People Advocating Recovery (PAR), a statewide organization with over 10,000 members and dedicated to eliminating barriers to recovery, became that catalyst. A Northern Kentucky chapter was established, and in February 2013 I was selected to serve as its chairperson. At our inaugural meeting, 250 citizens attended to express their concerns. Attendees included the mayor of Covington, Ky., St Elizabeth Healthcare professionals, the Northern Kentucky Health Department, concerned parents, loved ones, people from the recovery community, and many privately practicing physicians, therapists, and clinicians. All of these people attended in the interest of stabilizing this crippling epidemic.

An interesting characteristic of my student activist/community organizer journey has been the

uncanny parallels between my studies and real life experiences. In the spring semester of the 2012-13 academic year I was enrolled in my first semester of core classes in the social work program here at NKU. One of these core classes was SWK 405, Community Organizations.

During the first month of class, in an unrelated setting, I was asked to be the chairman of PAR. As the semester progressed I was able to study community organizations while building a real world grassroots community organization. The two experiences paralleled one another seamlessly. I was able to use my experience in the field to fuel my academic requirements and use my academic accomplishments to better understand my fieldwork. A more closely related class to real world experience could not have been choreographed this well.

Developing a Plan of Action

“First things first, stop the dying,” Dr. Jeremy Engel (2013) told me in a personal communication. Through Northern Kentucky PAR, a committee was formed to promote House Bill 366. This bill allowed for public prescription and distribution of a medication called Naloxone. Naloxone, an opioid antagonist, temporarily reverses the effects of a potentially fatal opiate overdose. This life saving medication, also known as Narcan, has been used in emergency rooms to successfully reverse overdose situations since 1971.

A newly developed nasal atomizer delivery system for Naloxone, in the hands of high risk individuals and their loved ones, is just the tool needed to save lives, serve as a gateway into treatment, and work to establish long term recovery from the disease of addiction. An unprecedented campaign of letters, emails, and phone calls was coordinated through our network of PAR members. The campaign was directed at state and local representatives, and sent HB 366 soaring through both the House and the Senate. Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear signed HB 366 into law in July of 2013.

Developing and implementing a vessel designed to distribute Naloxone to our high-risk population came with surprisingly little resistance. (One of many, many signs that we were on the right path.) Through Northern Kentucky PAR, local agencies, and other coalitions, we were able to secure an office space in Falmouth, Ky. in hopes of distributing this medication to our target population. We soon established a team of health care professionals, pharmacists, social workers, and

recovery advocates that collectively covered every needed aspect of the intervention.

Dr. Engel, our champion physician, became the first doctor in the state willing to prescribe and distribute the Naloxone Rescue Kits. A local pharmacist ordered the medication and built the kits. Karen Hargett, assistant executive director of Transitions, Inc., developed and stored the necessary forms and waivers for our client charts and files. Stacie Nance, a registered nurse at St. Elizabeth Hospital, performed on site triage care. Ron Clark, retired U.S. Army staff sergeant, developed and performed training on how to identify an overdose, rescue breathing, and explanations regarding administration of the medication. Also, countless others who donated time, space, furniture, food, energy, and, of course, money, were most essential to the opening of Kentucky’s first Naloxone Harm Reduction Center on October 6, 2013, at 206 Main Street in Falmouth, Ky. (DeMio, 2013b).

Performing the Intervention

Our first day was a very successful dry run. We served six clients with free Naloxone Rescue Kits, and were able to establish the raw mechanics of the process. Our team had just enough time, space, and participants to understand what and where each role fit into the equation.

Each client or group of clients was assigned a personal guide to navigate the process of paperwork, training, examinations, and prescription. As clients entered the offices, they were greeted and introduced to our policy of complete confidentiality. Each client packet included consent to treatment, past medical history, and HIPAA forms. The training process was divided into six sections: calling 911, identifying an overdose, rescue breathing (with a real CPR dummy), hands-on atomizer assembly, medication administration, and a short video reviewing each step. After training was completed, the doctor performed a brief examination and our nurse took and recorded the client’s vitals. Finally, the prescriptions were written and the Kits were distributed. From beginning to end, the process took about 30–40 minutes.

It is very important to note that these Kits are not intended to give a person an excuse to use drugs again. What they give a person suffering from heroin or opioid addiction is a lifeline into treatment and long-term recovery.

The Kits are equipped with several critical components:

- Two doses of Naloxone (2 ml each).

- Step-by-step instructions (instructions include: calling 911, identifying an overdose, an overview of rescue breathing procedures, and explanations of the medication administration process).
- A nasal atomizer delivery device (this turns the liquid Naloxone into a fine mist that is absorbed through the capillaries in the nasal cavity).
- A rescue breathing mask.
- Latex gloves.
- A list of local treatment resource phone numbers.

Our goal to save lives by making Naloxone more available to high risk individuals and their loved ones has evolved far beyond the boundaries of our small grassroots organization. The community has embraced this effort by developing a proposed social welfare policy that encompasses not only harm reduction, but also prevention, treatment, recovery, and advocacy. This is a well-rounded plan that, with proper support, can build a sustainable structure and continuum of care that promotes life-saving and life-restoring strategies addressing heroin and opioid pain medication addiction as well as the impact it has on our communities.

This plan, another academic synchronicity, coincided with SWK 407, Social Welfare Policy, which began in the fall of the 2013–14 school year. Through the first few classes, I found that my greatest challenge was to visualize a complete social welfare policy. Where did it begin? What was its driving force? How did it gain traction? Where does the money come from? How is it implemented, and who oversees the process?

As a community organizer, I was working to develop a social welfare policy without even realizing it. It hit me one day in the second week of class while analyzing the National School Lunch Program that this was it, this is what we are working on, this is policy in the making. Much like the NSLP, our policy was born of tragic necessity. The support came naturally. As any good movement gains momentum, people see and understand something needs to be done. When an option presents itself that people believe is sound and of value they naturally gravitate toward support.

The proposed policy, titled Northern Kentucky's Collective Response to the Heroin Epidemic, was released to the people of Northern Kentucky on November 14, 2013, and can be

found at drugfreenky.org. Since then, we have begun to implement five strategic platforms relating to harm reduction, prevention, treatment, advocacy, and recovery. Our mission: The people of Northern Kentucky have access to life-saving and life-restoring resources for heroin addiction that will reduce its impact in our communities. Our Vision: That Northern Kentuckians thrive healthier and happier.

As a result of the extreme need for awareness, education, and advocacy regarding this cause, teams of social work students and professors have freely dedicated time, energy, and resources to the cause. Drs. Tara McLendon, Jessica Averitt-Taylor, Caroline Macke, Holly Riffe, Prof. Karen Tapp, and many more have all helped me to see and reach my potential. Drs. McLendon, Riffe, and Prof. Tapp have given me time to speak to their BSW & MSW classes. Dr. Macke invited me to speak at the Kentucky Association of Social Work Educators conference, and our events have been posted on the University websites. In fact, the conception of this very article was born in a brainstorming session with Drs. Averitt-Taylor and McLendon. Professors and students alike have participated in, and donated to, our fundraisers, and Dr. Riffe has officially joined the team as an academic liaison. The support and collaborative efforts between student advocacy and university resources have been paramount to the efficacy of our efforts, but not without some challenges.

To continue at a level that both serves the cause and my academic requirements has been a daunting task. In light of this, Dr. Riffe has authorized a team of her MSW Community Organization students to help ensure our successes. They are performing strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis, developing training manuals for a wrap-around service called Starting Point, gathering resources, and volunteering time at the distribution site. Prof. Tapp has arranged for me to fulfill my practicum hours in service within the Heroin Impact Response Team under the supervision of the Northern Kentucky Health Department.

The overall support has been an uplifting inspiration and fueled my understanding of what a college education ought to be. I came to Northern Kentucky University not just for a degree, but for the opportunity to serve my fellow men, women, and children. The value of human life and our accomplishments cannot only be seen within its hallways, classrooms, and communities, but also in the minds and hearts of our students and faculty.

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About the Author

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Published by the Office of Community Affairs at The University of Alabama
Distributed by The University of Alabama Press

ISSN 1944-1207
Published twice a year
Also in e-edition. ISBN: 978-0-8173-8514-9

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