

# JOURNAL of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SCHOLARSHIP

Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 2012

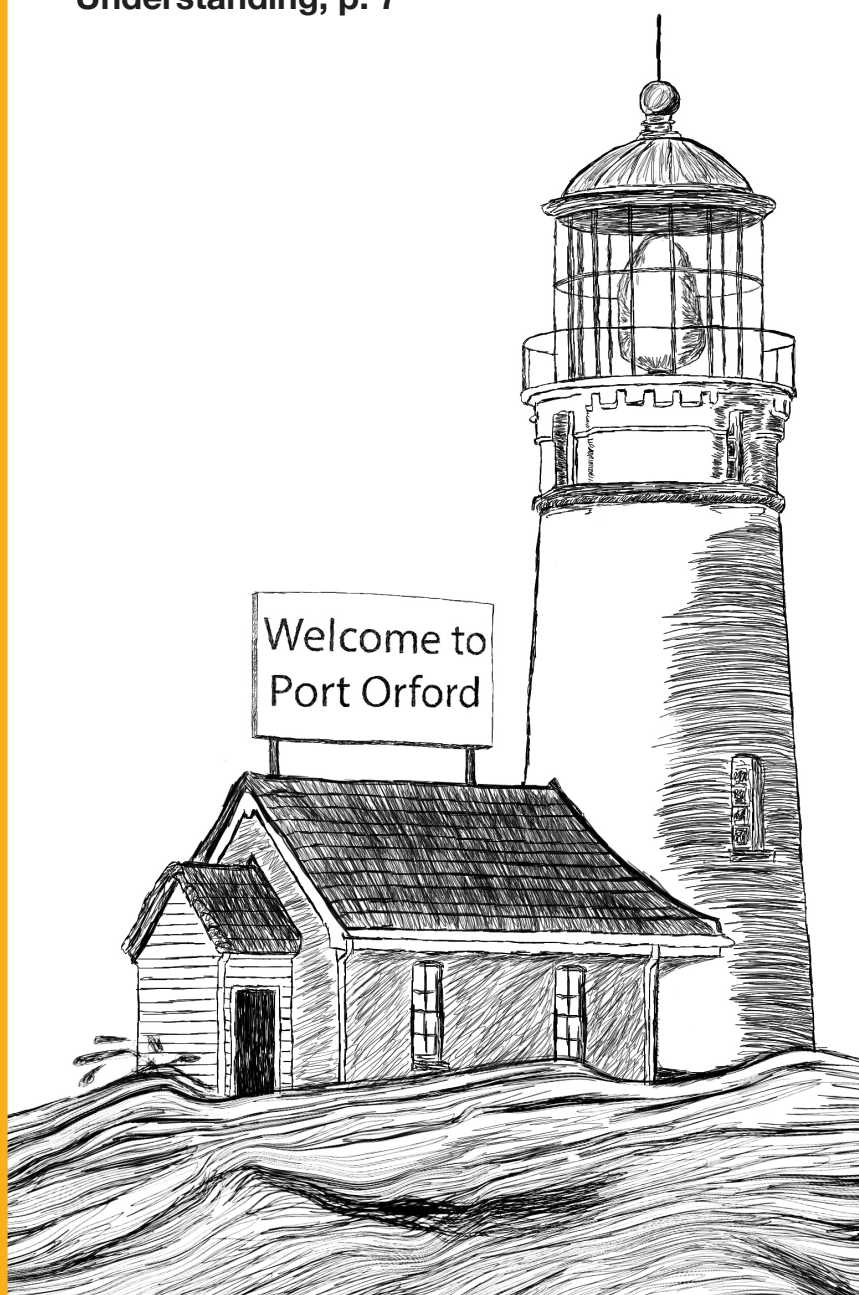
**Community Planning for Climate Change:  
Visible Thinking Tools Facilitate Shared  
Understanding, p. 7**

*Theoretical  
and Applied  
Perspectives on  
Power: Recognizing  
Processes That  
Undermine Effective  
Community-University  
Partnerships, p. 20*

*Assessing  
the Culture of  
Engagement on a  
University Campus,  
p. 29*

*Community  
Engagement  
Grants: Assessing  
the Impact of  
University Funding  
and Engagements,  
p. 41*

*Set Charge about  
Change: The  
Effects of a  
Long-Term Youth  
Civic Engagement  
Program, p. 48*





# ***Welcome to NOSC 2012!***

## ***You Still Have Time to Sign Up for the October 3 Field Trip***

NOSC 2012 offers participants the unique opportunity to explore civil rights history or Alabama's Black Belt, Wednesday, October 3, 1–8 p.m. (\$65).

Field Trip No. 1 — **Civil Rights Icons:** Selma's Brown Chapel AME Church and First Baptist Church, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. inspired crowds. Tour the National Voting Rights Museum in downtown Selma. Walk across Edmund Pettus Bridge, where "Bloody Sunday" took place, an event re-enacted every year on the anniversary of the March 7, 1965 event.

Field Trip No. 2 — **Black Belt Partnerships:** Auburn Rural Studio Tour, Safe House, and Pie Lab. The Rural Studio, in Greensboro, about 40 minutes from the University, is a design-and-build program of the Auburn University School of Architecture that teaches students social responsibility while providing sound business and living structures for poor communities. The Safe House Museum is situated in a small house once used to conceal Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. while he was organizing peaceful protests in west Alabama. The Pie Lab is a restaurant that serves, yes, pies made from fresh ingredients, but is also a complete restaurant. What makes the Pie Lab distinctive is its purpose: a place for people to engage in conversation centering on community engagement and social justice.

**To register for this opportunity send an email or call [stalanis@ccs.ua.edu](mailto:stalanis@ccs.ua.edu), (205) 348-3014.**





# JOURNAL of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SCHOLARSHIP

Copyright © 2012 by The University of Alabama Press. All rights reserved.  
ISSN 1944-1207. Printed by University Printing at The University of Alabama.

# JOURNAL of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SCHOLARSHIP

## STAFF

### Publisher

Dr. Samory T. Pruitt  
Vice President for Community Affairs

### Editor

Dr. Cassandra E. Simon

### Book Review Editor

Dr. Heather Pleasants

### Production Editor

Dr. Edward Mullins

### Assistant to the Editor

Vicky Carter

### Copy Editors, Designers, Web Producers

Christi Cowan and Eric Wang

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Marsha H. Adams  
The University of Alabama  
Andrea Adolph  
Kent State University Stark Campus  
Katrice A. Albert  
Louisiana State University  
Theodore R. Alter  
Pennsylvania State University  
Robert E. Bardon  
North Carolina State University  
Anna Sims Bartel  
Bates College  
Delicia Carey  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Jeremy Cohen  
Pennsylvania State University  
Richard L. Conville  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Susan Curtis  
Purdue University  
Mary Elizabeth Curtner-Smith  
The University of Alabama  
David J. Edelman  
University of Cincinnati  
Barbara Ferman  
Temple University  
Hiram E. Fitzgerald  
Michigan State University  
Philip A. Greasley  
University of Kentucky  
Sulina Green  
University of Stellenbosch (South Africa)  
Susan Scheriffius Jakes  
North Carolina State University  
Phillip W. Johnson  
The University of Alabama  
Mary Jolley  
Community Volunteer, Tuscaloosa, Ala.  
Kimberly L. King-Jupiter  
Albany State University  
William S. Kisaalita  
University of Georgia  
J. Robert Krueger  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
Jay Lamar  
Auburn University  
James Leeper  
The University of Alabama  
Robert C. Liebman  
Portland State University

Marybeth Lima  
Louisiana State University  
Antoinette Lombard  
University of Pretoria (South Africa)  
Robert L. Miller, Jr.  
The University at Albany, State University  
of New York  
Mary Ann Murphy  
Pace University  
dt ogilvie  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Jacob Oludoye Oluwoye  
Alabama A&M University  
Michael E. Orok  
Alabama A&M University  
Ruth Paris  
Boston University  
Clement Alesander Price  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Josephine Pryce  
The University of Alabama  
A. Scott Reed  
Oregon State University  
Michael J. Rich  
Emory University  
Howard B. Rosing  
DePaul University  
Sunil Saigal  
New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Nick Sanyal  
University of Idaho  
Amilcar Shabazz  
University of Massachusetts  
L. Steven Smutko  
North Carolina State University  
Lee H. Staples  
Boston University  
John J. Stretch  
Saint Louis University  
John R. Wheat  
The University of Alabama  
Kim L. Wilson  
Purdue University



# Contents

Editor's Message  
p. 4

**Cassandra E. Simon**

The Formation of a Research  
Collaboration: Same Time, Next Year?:  
An Essay  
p. 5

**Cheryl Keen**

Community Planning for Climate  
Change: Visible Thinking Tools Facilitate  
Shared Understanding  
p. 7

**Joseph Cone, Shawn Rowe,  
Jenna Borberg, and Briana Goodwin**

Theoretical and Applied Perspectives  
on Power: Recognizing Processes That  
Undermine Effective Community-  
University Partnerships  
p. 20

**Lorilee R. Sandmann  
and Brandon W. Kliever**

Assessing the Culture of Engagement  
on a University Campus  
p. 29

**Nancy Franz, Jeri Childers,  
and Nicole Sanderlin**

Community Engagement Grants:  
Assessing the Impact of University  
Funding and Engagements  
p. 41

**Monica Leisey, Valerie Holton,  
and Timothy L. Davey**

Set Charge about Change: The Effects  
of a Long-Term Youth Civic Engagement  
Program  
p. 48

**Robbin Smith**

Fostering a Listening Community  
Through Testimony: Learning with  
Orphans of the Genocide in Rwanda  
p. 61

**Alexandre Dauge-Roth**

Book Reviews  
p. 72

Instructions to Authors  
p. 81

Review Process  
p. 82

The *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* is published at The University of Alabama by the Division of Community Affairs to advance the scholarship of engagement worldwide. To reach the editor, send an email to [jces@ua.edu](mailto:jces@ua.edu) or call 205-348-7392. The cover design is by John Miller. See also [www.jces.ua.edu](http://www.jces.ua.edu).



## Partnering, Inspiring, Changing...and Taking Chances



The release of this issue of *JCES* coincides with the 2012 National Outreach and Scholarship Conference being held at the University of Alabama, October 1-3, 2012. The manuscripts in this issue continue to add to the ongoing and increasingly complex body of engagement scholarship knowledge. The topics presented in this issue are as varied as engagement scholarship itself. This particular selection of manuscripts seeks to contribute to strengthening methodological, theoretical, and practical applications relevant for engagement scholarship and our understanding of it. One manuscript demonstrates the successful application of concept mapping and influence diagramming through a community and university partnership. A community sidebar accompanies this piece and represents *JCES*' first publication

of such a piece. As a scholarly peer-reviewed journal, we recognize and appreciate the role of communities' voices in engagement scholarship and look for different ways to have it acknowledged and included as part of the scholarly process.

Other manuscripts evaluate the effectiveness of a civic youth engagement program and assess the culture of engagement. Whether it is through articulation of how learning *with* as opposed to learning *from* survivors of trauma changes participants, processes, and outcomes or power dynamics and their influence on different constituent groups in engagement projects, this issue is sure to have something of relevance to engagement scholars of all varieties. We hope you will find something interesting and exciting...something that will inspire you to partner with others to effect change.

**Partner! Inspire! Change!** This is the theme of the 2012 NOSC conference and it is in that spirit that we present an essay submitted by Cheryl Keen, Ph.D. The essay is not your typical scholarly piece; nor is it a manuscript that *JCES* would have normally reviewed. We, the local *JCES* production team, did decide, however, that it had a certain kind of scholarly merit, especially with the NOSC conference upcoming and publication of this issue of *JCES* for release at the conference. Our publishing this piece represents our willingness to do what engagement scholarship dares to do, and that is to fulfill our commitment to you to be a high quality peer-reviewed journal, unafraid to try something new, and not restricted to what already is. We hope you enjoy the essay, as well as the rest of this issue.



# The Formation of a Research Collaboration: Same Time, Next Year? An Essay

Cheryl Keen

## Abstract

This essay describes the evolution of two scholars' discussion of common interests in a major national study involving faculty, students, and a community partner. A service-learning project involving analysis of a large service-learning alumni database by a graduate research methods class was central to the project. Compelling findings about the formation of civically minded professionals emerged. This essay focuses on that process, while identifying the major outcomes.

How many times have you attended a conference, met an exciting colleague, felt exhilarated about your shared interests, declared intentions, and then made promises to collaborate on research or write "something" together? And then, how many times have well-intentioned pledges evaporated within a few months?

My experience with a successful research partnership defies this pattern. What made it work this time around? Was it the diversity, dedication, or personality of the partners? Was it the allure of a robust dataset that could shed light on civic patterns of college graduates? Or was it the enthusiasm of a graduate student class using real data and working with real community partners?

My research focused on understanding the inclinations of others to work toward the common good. For years, Julie Hatcher, of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), and I said how wonderful it would be to work together on a project. We attended the same conferences, shared a commitment to the public purposes of higher education, studied the same books on civic engagement, and found each other's work very compelling. And we were only separated by a two-hour drive! What promise!

Yet, years passed.

In 2009, both Julie and I participated in a Symposium on Civic Learning Outcomes, co-hosted by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and IUPUI. A few months after the two-day summit, I was asked to survey the alumni of 25 campuses of the Bonner Foundation's Scholar Program and make a report at their 20th anniversary event. I was sure I could enhance this opportunity to learn about the civic development of 4,000 alumni of the four-year co-curricular service-learning programs if I included Julie's recently developed Civic-Minded Professional (CMP) scale.

Forgoing the two-hour drive, Julie, Bobby Hackett, president of the Bonner Foundation, and I met by phone several times and developed a survey to reach our shared goals. The Bonner Foundation was most interested in program dimensions and current levels of civic engagement of the scholars, while Julie and I were most interested in understanding how dialogue, reflection, and interaction with faculty contribute to civic growth. The Bonner Foundation staff found 3,000 alumni email addresses. We were fortunate to get almost 1,000 responses. We presented descriptive data and preliminary findings at the Bonner alumni event. I remember Doug Bennett, soon-to-retire president of Earlham College, saying that most colleges would drool over a 33% response rate and the high levels of civic engagement reported by the Bonner Scholar alumni.

We swallowed some scholarly pride and shared the preliminary analysis of the data at the International Association of Research on Service Learning and Civic Engagement (IARSLCE) conference in fall 2010. We had wished to be further along by the time of the conference, but as full-fledged members of the sandwich generation, we each had to face and assume new responsibilities to care for aging parents, and this, coupled with our daily work, limited our ability to dive into the rich dataset. Nevertheless, we found the IARSLCE audience enthusiastic about the research, the questions, and the methodology. More importantly, Professor Dan Richard of the University of North Florida (UNF) was so impressed by the dataset, and the important questions represented by the many variables, that he approached us at the end of the session to inquire about our working together. So, promises were made to meet "same time, same place, next year."

What happened in that year astounded all of us.





Dan was curious about service learning, but did not have experience in leading a service-learning class. The opportunity to engage his graduate statistics class in analysis of the alumni data was very enticing. Since I was traveling nearby, he arranged for me to meet his class. For the next 9 months, we communicated on the phone via Skype and through email. We had the Bonner Foundation president and Julie speak to the class via iPhone. At the end of the semester, the class presented their results to us via Skype. And when the semester was over, a core of students kept working with Dan to further analyze the data.

In November, we indeed met at the “same time, same place” and five partners—the evaluator, the researcher, the professor, the student, and the Foundation program officer, Ariane Hoy—presented a finely analyzed dataset with compelling results to attendees of the annual IARSLCE conference. The UNF team developed a great sense of ease with and ownership of the data. All five partners were deeply invested in the findings. We could ask questions of each other like family members concerned about the family farm.

When we presented, we must have modeled collaboration. The audience seemed torn between being impressed by the implications of the results for their own institution and by the partnership they witnessed. Most of all, the professional presentation of student Heather Pease was a manifestation of what we had to share.

So what had happened to make this partnership work? Why did our heartfelt promises at a conference not evaporate?

As a faculty member at an online institution, I lack access to a local research center where I can easily collaborate with colleagues. I trusted my intuition about a new partner willing to work virtually. I long ago shed my proprietary sense about data, having written a book with three co-authors and published most of my articles with others. Julie needed access to a larger dataset to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on her scale. As for Dan, he was first intrinsically interested in the possibilities in the data analysis and then realized that he and his students could be learning while also providing service to a community partner. Heather and her fellow students seemed to be drawn by the opportunity to find their own voice as researchers, to discern researchable questions in a large database to whet their curiosity and growing concern to understand the roots of civic engagement. The Bonner Foundation was patient with the year’s process, one of many collaborations

they were supporting.

And how do we know it worked? Every partner in the collaboration benefited. The faculty types in the group (Dan, Julie, and I) are all quite pleased that a class of graduate students discovered the potential power of quantitative analysis to answer important questions. Heather has found that she “loves data” and is busy applying to a doctoral program to grow her research skills. The Bonner Foundation has found confirmation of their assumption that they should focus on connecting people, and that sharing data, and allowing others to muck with it, benefits everyone. Julie gained access to a diverse group of professionals to help confirm the validity of her CMP scale. Dan gained confirmation that service-learning didn’t just sound like a good idea, but also seemed to propel the kind of learning he was hoping for in his master’s level stats class.

And I? I’m feeling quite generative and satisfied at this culmination of some life work. And now I’m looking for my next partner to meet “same place, same time” next year. Anyone want to help me analyze some new and interesting data? Meet you at a conference soon!

### About the Author

Cheryl Keen is a specialization coordinator of Ph.D. in Education foundation and core courses at Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership at Walden University.



# Community Planning for Climate Change: Visible Thinking Tools Facilitate Shared Understanding

Joseph Cone, Shawn Rowe, Jenna Borberg,  
and Briana Goodwin

## Abstract

An engagement project examined the effectiveness of the visible thinking tools of concept mapping and influence diagramming to facilitate community planning for climate change through a series of workshops. The workshops were developed in coordination with a local nonprofit as part of a strategy of communicating about climate risks. Guided by university engagement faculty, workshop participants thoughtfully identified and mapped how specific risks associated with climate change may affect their rural coastal community, what could be done to address each risk, and who was responsible for taking action. Post-workshop interviews and surveys revealed that participants recognized the civic importance of facilitating dialogue on the contested issue of climate change and that visible thinking tools were beneficial towards developing understanding and consensus. Through the project, the community members and university personnel learned about local climate change concerns and some effective means for future collaboration, and the community set initial action priorities.

## Introduction

Many coastal communities in the United States and, indeed, throughout the world, will need to adapt to the changing climate over the next century (Adger, Agrawala, Mirza, Conde, O'Brien, Pulhin, Pulwarty, Smit, & Takahashi, 2007; Nicholls, Wong, Burkett, Codignotto, Hay, McLean, & Woodroffe, 2007). Coastal communities in the location of this study, the Pacific Northwest, are already affected by major storms, shifts in ocean currents, and tectonic uplift and subduction, among other effects (Burgette, Weldon, & Schmitt, 2009; Huppert, 2009; Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, 2010). Anticipated future effects from changes in Pacific Northwest's climate include increased air and water temperatures, shifts in marine ecosystems and fish species, increased flooding, and coastal erosion worsened by sea-level rise and increasing wave heights (Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, 2010).

Despite these stresses occurring or anticipated in the natural system of which they are part, rural communities that typify the Oregon coast have not been urgently preparing for climate change. While our research shows that lack of information about anticipated local effects of climate change is one impediment to local planners (Borberg, Cone, Jodice, Harte, & Corcoran, 2009), the lack of institutional resources (including expertise and funding) to address the issue is also a concern (Tribbia & Moser, 2008). Knowing where to begin and how to proceed with such a potentially long and complex undertaking presents many additional

hurdles (Snover, Whitely Binder, Lopez, Willmott, Kay, Howell, & Simmonds, 2007). These conditions provide an opportunity for university specialists to assist communities.

Community engagement, in part, involves such specialists interpreting the results of applied and basic research in ways that can be adopted by community members (National Sea Grant, 2000). The principal difference between engagement and the older concept of "outreach," however, is that engagement fundamentally involves a two-way, collaborative mode of interaction between scientists, university personnel, and community members, all of whom are seen to be specialized-information holders. In traditional models of outreach or extension, outreach is seen as transmission or translation of "expert" knowledge from the university specialist out to users who are seen to have little to no important contribution to that knowledge. Such "conduit" models of university communication (Reddy, 1979) have given way in recent years to models of communication that see all participants as possessing expertise. The role of the community members in engagement as co-producers of knowledge rather than passive consumers is thus crucial. Engagement in this sense is only secondarily about interpreting applied research. Priority must first be given to working with communities to understand their needs and interests, their own specialized knowledge, and the constraints on putting into action the resulting co-generated knowledge.

In its first steps, this work of engagement





requires getting to know communities and providing forums for their interaction with university research, researchers, and communicators. Therefore, before engaging a specific coastal community, the project's university team, comprised of Oregon Sea Grant<sup>1</sup> research and engagement faculty and graduate students, had undertaken some preliminary inquiry of the study population. This included a largest-ever coastwide survey of Oregon coast professionals regarding climate change. Needs, interests, and barriers to action were explicitly queried in that 2008 survey. (The findings, the subject of a master's thesis, are published and available at <http://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sgps/onlinepubs/s09001.html>). In addition, the university team conducted a set of in-depth interviews with a small sample of coastal residents (n=14 interviews with 19 total participants) who visited the Visitor Center at the Hatfield Marine Science Center or the Oregon Coast Aquarium, both in Newport, Oregon. While surveys and interviews are traditional methods for carrying out assessments with target audiences (Davidson, 2005; Patton, 2001), these don't provide substantive opportunity for two-way communication among university engagement professionals or researchers and public decision makers. Therefore, in addition, two group discussions with coastal decision makers (n=20) were conducted with that goal in mind.

## Method

**Rationale.** Anticipating that the community engagement project described here would be the first of a number of such climate planning projects in Oregon and potentially in other states involving members of the university team, we conceived the initial community project as a pilot, particularly to examine the usefulness of certain methods while at the same time providing value to the community and direct feedback to participating scientists. Before the community engagement began, the university team had an overarching goal to assist the community in becoming more resilient<sup>2</sup> to climate change. We had multiple potential communities with which we could work. Our selection criteria for this pilot were (1) a community of a manageable size and local issue complexity; with (2) an existing community

organization with a good reputation; which was (3) able to convene community participants; and had (4) constructive working relationships with university and team members, reflecting apparent trust and goodwill between the parties; and (5) an interest in participating in a project aimed at improving the community's resilience to climate change.

The small coastal community of Port Orford, Oregon (population 1,200) met these criteria. The university team approached the leadership of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team (POORT), a local nonprofit organization, to act as community convener of the project and chief collaborator. POORT, directed by local commercial fishermen, dedicated to natural resources, and with a history of success in novel approaches to resource issues, agreed to convene an ad-hoc community group. Community members who participated in the working group included both public officials and interested citizens, but our intention was for the working group to be completely voluntary, without any official capacity. [A sidebar to this article provides a characterization of the organization, community, and project from the perspective of a community participant and staff member of POORT.]

Once the community of Port Orford was identified, this project proceeded with the following components: (1) empirical research to understand climate-related opinions, values, and information interests of the community; (2) engagement workshops to involve community members in identifying climate change risks and possible actions; (3) inter-workshop assessment of potential climate information needs by comparing results of the first workshop with an expert climate-change model; (4) a formative evaluation of the effectiveness of the project through interviews with participants, leading to (5) a determination of additional activities in the project.

**Structured Decision Making.** We recognized that the community would want to know what knowledge and advice climate scientists would have for Port Orford. We did have some insights from the domain scientists, but in order to create conditions for two-way communication and the co-generation of interpretations of those recommendations, the workshop process would not begin with it. Nor would we begin with the "vulnerability assessments" that have become routine in the methodology of climate adaptation as conducted with professional and technical groups (NOAA Coastal Services Center, 2011). Instead, our approach was grounded

<sup>1</sup>Oregon Sea Grant is a marine research and education program based at Oregon State University since 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Resilience has been defined in many ways (Moser, 2008), but here it can be understood as the capacity of a system to experience shocks while retaining essentially the same function, structure, and feedbacks, and therefore identity. A system can be social or ecological or their combination.



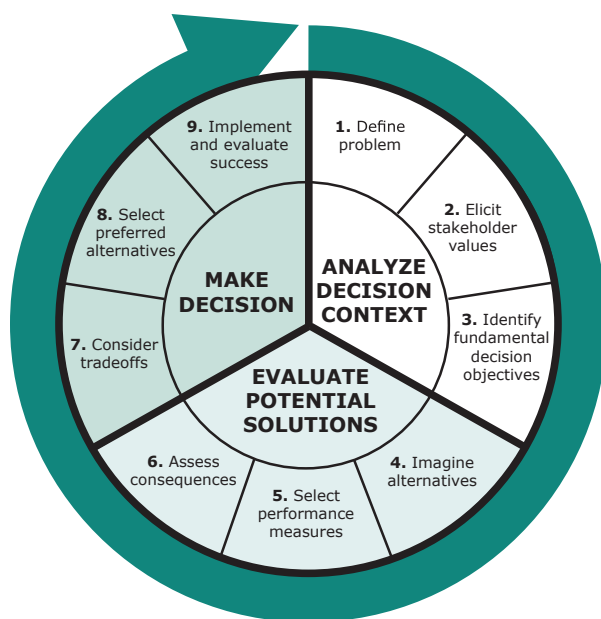


Figure 1. From Wilson & Arvai, 2011

## The Decision Cycle

### *Analyze decision context*

1. Identify group definition of the problem
2. Elicit diverse stakeholder values in the form of problem-relevant objectives.
3. Separate the means from ends (fundamental) objectives.

### *Evaluate potential solutions*

4. Create list of potential alternatives.
5. Select practical performance measures to evaluate the alternatives.
6. Use performance measures to assess the consequences of each alternative for each end objective.

### *Make decision*

7. Identify and conduct tradeoffs to reach best-possible alternative.

in a structured decision-making cycle (figure 1), the first two steps of which are for the decision makers (here, the working group) to define the problem as they see it and clarify objectives that matter to them (Wilson & Arvai, 2011). These steps, we believed, are critical to successful engagement, since without them, target audience voices are not part of the interpretation of research findings. However, simply documenting how participants' defined the focal problems and their objectives is not enough. Underlying both how a person defines a problem and conceives of objectives to address it are that person's values, and identifying and acknowledging these are important aspects of creating forums for two-way communication about decision making.

Substantial research over the past 20 years demonstrates the critical role of values in the decision-making process. Decision processes that focus on discussing personal and social values in addition to arraying technical alternatives have been shown to lead to not only greater participant satisfaction but also better informed processes than those that focus on generating technical alternatives alone (Keeny, 1992; Gregory, McDaniels, & Fields, 2001; Arvai, Gregory, & McDaniels, 2001). "Value-focused thinking" (Keeny, 1992) has become a key feature of varying formulations of behavioral decision-making processes, including the "decision-aiding" model advanced by Gregory and colleagues (2001), the now prevalent notion of "decision support" (Moser, 2009; National Research Council,

2009), and the approach of "deliberation with analysis," regarded as best practice by the NRC panel (2009) that examined Informing Decisions in a Changing Climate.

The planned design of the workshops was derived from a well-established framework developed in the disciplines of behavioral decision-making and risk communication. One synthesis of these two disciplines is a model of multi-party communication known as "nonpersuasive communication" (Fischhoff, 2007). The essence of this model is that successful communication about scientific and technical issues is far more than just presenting the "best available [physical] science" –which is often all that is provided to decision makers (National Research Council, 2005). Instead, communication that is successful, in the sense that it results in well-considered decisions, depends critically upon understanding the scientific issue (here, the effects of climate change) from the perspective of the user, stakeholder, or community (National Research Council, 2005; Cone, 2009).

**Climate Concept Mapping and Influence Diagramming.** The 20 questions of the 2009 survey provided a baseline for understanding participants' perspectives. To start the workshops, we knew we wanted to establish more clearly what the community participants believed about the local effects of climate change and the risks that the community faced from their perspective (the decision problem) as well as something about the values underlying





those beliefs. While interviews and ethnographic work can be used effectively to document these things, we are particularly interested in tools that help target groups articulate to themselves and with researchers their beliefs, knowledge, and values. Our assumption was that unidentified differences in understanding, beliefs and values are often the cause of miscommunication in engagement settings. We were interested particularly in testing tools that make individual and group thinking visible to all participants as a way to identify areas of divergence and convergence in thinking about climate change and climate change decision making. Making thinking visible, we believed, is a primary step in co-generating expert knowledge and putting it to use in decision-making. Based on our team's previous work with visible thinking routines, we chose two tools for use in this context: concept maps and influence diagrams.

Concepts maps are simple, visual diagrams that link concepts (nodes) and propositions about them (connecting lines) from their creators' perspectives (Novak & Gowin, 1984; Howard, 1989); they are used in many formal educational and informal learning settings as visual aides to learning as well as for assessment (Ritchhart, Palmer, Church, & Tishman, 2006; Novak & Cañas, 2006; Cañas, 2005; Stoddert et. al., 2000). Influence diagrams are graphs that show key variables of a system and the direction of influence of those variables. As specialized visualizations for thinking about risk, they have been used traditionally in risk analysis and risk communication processes, especially those involving both risk specialists and non-specialists, such as members of the public (Morgan, Fischhoff, Bostrom, & Atman, 2002).

Review of such visible-thinking with others can be valuable for several reasons: notably, individuals may refine, clarify, and negotiate individual understanding; diverging beliefs and values may be identified and honored without becoming the focus of discussion; unanticipated (from the researchers' perspectives) ideas, beliefs and sources of fear or expertise may emerge (Wood, Bostrom, Bridges, & Linkov, 2012). The result is better communication within the group as well as a visible artifact for reporting back to that group (for member checking) as well as communicating to other groups (in this case university scientists and engagement professionals). Such outcomes have been demonstrated for many learning contexts (Kane, 2007; Markham, Mintzes, & Jones, 1994).

While sophisticated, computer-mediated, concept mapping has shown value in resolving

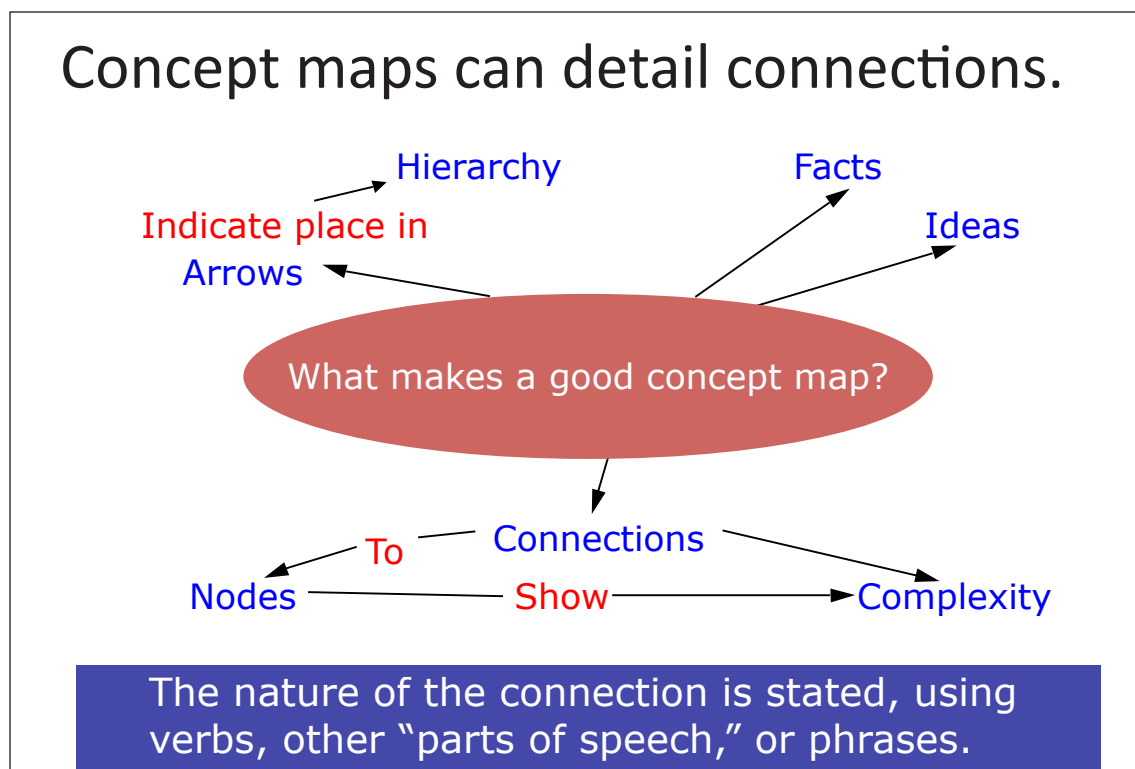
conflict-laden social decisions (Trochim, Milstein, Wood, Jackson, & Pressler, 2004), these tools require familiarity with software, training of participants, and computer access. In engagement contexts, facilitators often do not have access to technology, and time is limited, so training is not feasible unless it is part of long-term efforts. Members of our team had had positive experiences with more "free-hand" paper-and-pen approaches to concept mapping in a variety of teaching, communicating and group-decision making processes, and we wanted to test such low-tech methods here.

## Procedure

**Pre-workshop Surveys.** Two workshops were planned for Port Orford in 2009. In consultation with the POORT conveners, the project team designed the workshops to address shared goals in a sequential way, to be partly planned and partly adaptive to what arose in the workshops. With the results of our previous coastwide survey, interviews, and group discussions as a foundation, the team invited prospective participants from Port Orford to take the same survey prior to the first workshop in 2009. Survey responses showed the working group-respondents strongly agreed that climate change was a concern to which both individuals and government need to respond. These respondents were also particularly agreed about their willingness to "take action in my work if I hear a sense of local urgency to do so." In addition, while the respondents from Port Orford showed general similarity with coastwide respondents from the larger survey with respect to perceptions of climate risks<sup>3</sup> one notable difference was the Port Orford respondents' emphases on livability and safety concerns. Knowing those community-based concerns helped prepare the university team for the workshops.

**Climate Concept Mapping and Influence Diagramming.** The initial workshop was conducted on a January 2009 afternoon and scheduled for five hours, beginning with a hosted lunch and ending by 5 p.m. The first activity began with the university team introducing the notion of "visible thinking routines" (Vygotsky, 1934/1986; Richert & Perkins, 2008) and the research that attests to the value to individuals and groups of making thinking visible. This was followed by a concise training on the rationale for and process of concept mapping.

<sup>3</sup>The question was open ended and provided no cues about answering; its position in the survey was prior to any other in which specific risks were named.



**Figure 2.** Concept mapping

Two points were emphasized. First, by explaining the process through simple diagrams, (e.g., figure 2), we demonstrated that making a concept map is technically easy to do. Second, we underscored that the making of such maps enabled participation by all group members in a process of group understanding and co-generation of knowledge.

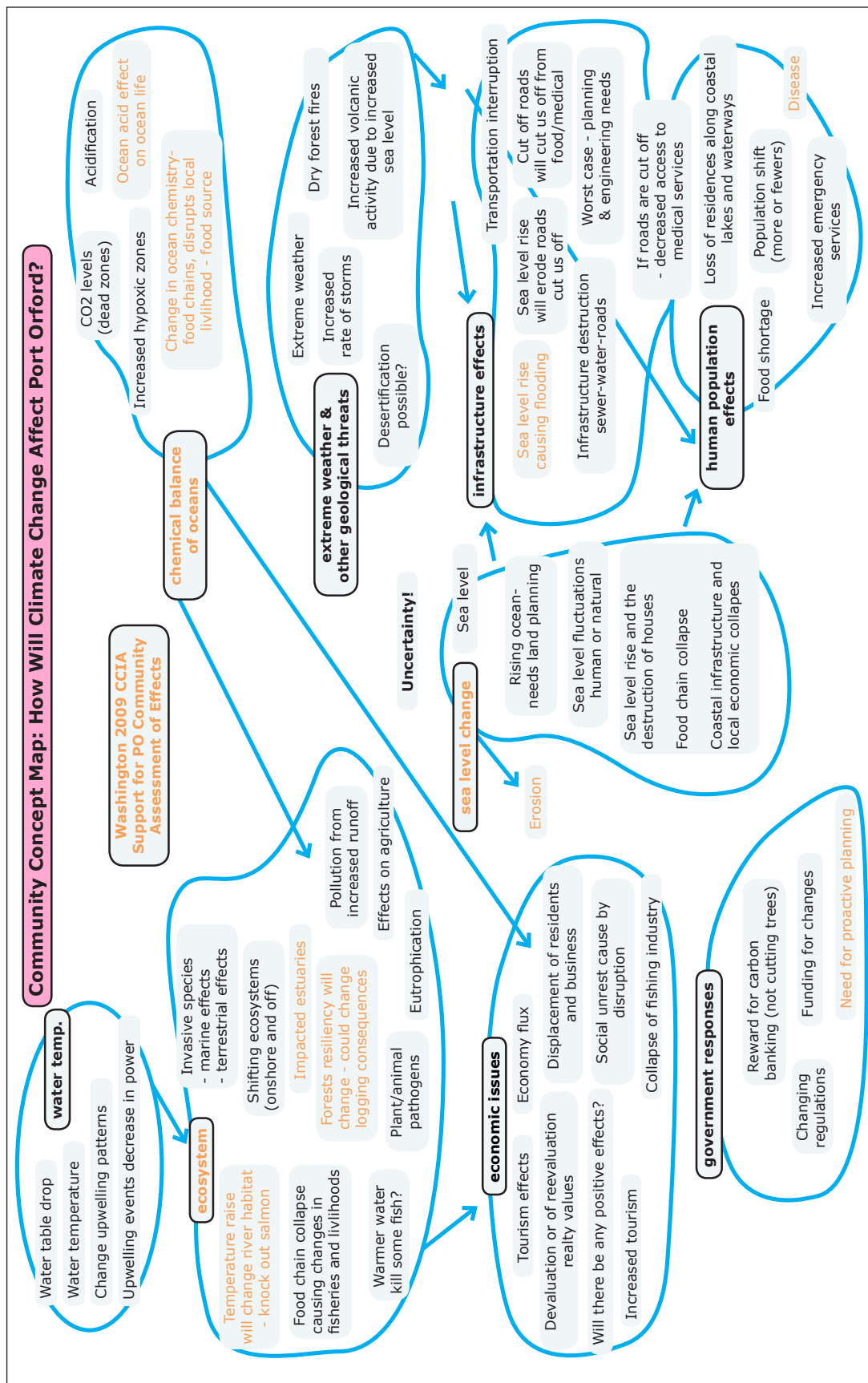
After this ten-minute introduction, the team asked the 10 community participants to write on sticky notes their concepts of how climate change might affect their community. Only one effect was to be written on each note sheet. Following ten minutes of the group working independently and silently, the university facilitators then collected the sticky notes onto big sheets of paper. Asking the group members about the sorting as they proceeded, they organized the notes into a rough concept map that was later converted to digital format (figure 3).

During the sorting and organizing to create the concept map, group members considered how their individual elements were related to each other (such as causes, effects, or categories), and added new concepts (on sticky notes) to make certain relationships more explicit. From this activity, the group identified five broad climate change-effect categories of concern to them: effects associated with infrastructure, marine ecosystems, terrestrial

ecosystems, economic issues, and extreme weather. In addition, the group generated new conceptual relationships from the primary groupings, pointing to second-order effects of a changing climate, such as new invasive species or new government regulations.

In the next step, participants were coached to create influence diagrams on poster paper by using the concepts generated in the previous steps. To begin, the learning researcher on the university team<sup>1</sup> made a brief presentation to the group on influence diagrams, using a simple example of the risk of falling down stairs (Morgan, Fischhoff, Bostrom, & Atman, 2002, p. 37), in which an unseen toy on a staircase can cause a fall unless a decision is made to remove it. Influence diagrams are directed graphs, with arrows, indicating influences, connecting various “nodes” in a system. For our purposes, the nodes were causes, effects, and decisions that could be made to affect them. Then the task was presented to the group: to take one group/category at a time (e.g., Infrastructure effects) and list all of the risks associated with that category; identify what could be done to address each risk; and indicate who was

<sup>4</sup> Shawn Rowe, who specializes in free-choice learning research, that is, how people learn in non-school settings when they perceive they have a choice and control over their learning.



**Figure 3.** A community concept map regarding climate change



or could be responsible for taking action.

To model the task, two members of the university team (an Extension community planning specialist and the learning researcher) demonstrated the diagram-development process to the group with two categories of climate effects. These team members listed risks associated with the given category as community participants called them out, the list being written on poster paper on the wall for all to see. (The team members used the sticky notes generated in the previous step for reference, but did not actually pull them off of the paper, thereby retaining their agreed-upon concept placements.)

After 45 minutes of diagramming the first two effect-categories in plenary session, the group was divided into three sub-groups, each comprised of two or three individuals, to complete the remaining three climate-effect categories. Each group started with a separate category and was directed to refer to the initial concept map as a starting point for their development of a list of risks associated with the effects of climate change. After another 20 minutes, the groups shifted to consider and add ideas to diagrams on which the other groups had been working. Each group had a different color pen, so their contributions would be apparent. After five minutes, the groups shifted to their final diagram.

Following a ten minute break, the university team redirected the groups to consider what decisions could be made to lessen the risks identified previously. The task was posed as starting with your highest priority risk, identify some decision “nodes”—places where a decision needs to be made in order to mitigate or manage that risk.

As before, the learning researcher demonstrated the procedure, referring again to the textbook falling-on-a-staircase example, and then applying it to one of the influence diagrams. The three small subgroups were then directed to resume with the diagrams, using sticky notes for the decision nodes and identifying who is responsible for making that decision. Each group had a different color pad of sticky notes for identifying decision nodes. Each had 15 minutes at the first diagram and then about 5 minutes at the remaining maps to identify anything the prior groups had missed.

Finally, after another very short break, the question was posed to the working group: Who has, or should have, the capacity and resources to act on these decisions that you’ve identified?

Again subgroups went to one of the five influence diagrams to identify the person/organization who needs to make the decision

(based on the decision node). If known, they were asked to make a note if that party has the capacity or resources to address the risk or decision.

Thus, after about three hours of learning from each other and working together, this diverse community working-group had shared and consolidated its views on the effects of a changing climate about which they were concerned. And they described and diagrammed the risks those effects posed, the decisions that could be made about those risks, and by whom, into influence diagrams.<sup>5</sup>

### **Inter-workshop Comparison of Influence Diagrams and the Climate Specialists’ Model.**

Prior to the workshops, as part of the project design the team produced a climate science influence diagram that visualized the major climate change effects for the Oregon coast as predicted by university and agency scientists. This diagram was reviewed by regional climate change experts and changed with their input. Following the first workshop, the university team transferred the hand-written “community” concept map and influence diagrams to digital form (using CMap Tools—available at <http://cmap.ihmc.us/download/>). The intent was to make all elements legible and in a more permanent, sharable form, thereby permitting both ongoing analysis of the maps and the ability to share the maps with participating scientists, other community members, and engagement professionals. The resulting digital maps are artifacts for keeping the conversation going in co-generative ways.

One step in that co-generation was to return to the climate specialist’s concept map described above that had been assembled prior to the workshop. The project team compared the concept maps created in the workshop by the community with this specialists’ map, to better identify where regional climate scientists’ knowledge, beliefs, and values met or diverged from those of the Port Orford community. This assessment would help guide the second workshop, where the similarities and differences between the scientist and community maps would be displayed and discussed in terms of options for how best to proceed with co-generating useful interpretations of available information for future local decision-making.

**Participant Evaluation.** After the second workshop we planned a set of interviews to sample satisfaction and interest in future engagement. The

<sup>5</sup> Specialists familiar with traditional influence diagram notation would note the differences in the graphical approach used during the workshop, which reflects the group’s deliberation sequences and seemed natural and appropriate for the team to support.



plan was for two or three of the university team to interview by phone about half the working group participants with a set of questions.

## Results

**Comparison of Influence Diagrams and the Climate Specialists' Model.** A critical question for a lay community group addressing a specialized topic is, how does our understanding compare to that of specialists in the topic? Comparing the climate science map with the maps produced during the workshop allowed project personnel and (ultimately) community participants to see where community knowledge, beliefs, and values coincided with or diverged from ongoing research and the knowledge, beliefs and values of regional climate scientists. There was actually considerable convergence.

Very little climate-prediction information was available that specifically focused on the Port Orford vicinity, a well-recognized limitation of much climate prediction, namely, that it largely depends on models which have focused historically on regional geographic areas (Sarachik, 2008). In the absence of climate science data specific to the Port Orford area, the team's development of the Climate Specialists' Model for the coastal Pacific Northwest provided a serviceable approximation<sup>6</sup>. The team noted similarities between what scientists and the community participants recognized as significant effects of climate change. To highlight this similarity and display additional information developed by the working group, the team compiled the community influence diagrams into a community model (Figure 4). The team's premise was that organizing and making visible a great deal of disparate information in a diagrammed form might help the community members and climate scientists see connections clearly that might otherwise not be seen (areas of overlap between community members and climate scientists are emphasized in Figure 4 by darker colors).

The community model was structured in columns containing items that linked graphically and conceptually from left to right, from broader climate effects to primary biophysical impacts to biophysical risks to potential social/economic impacts to potential interventions. The final

column considered "who is responsible" for making those interventions. Both the climate scientists' and community models highlighted infrastructure effects, a decrease in drinking water, impacts on fisheries, and increased disease and public health effects. The Port Orford community members' model differed somewhat in focus, with stronger emphasis on social impacts, including displaced population, increased isolation, disruption in local livelihood, and loss of jobs.

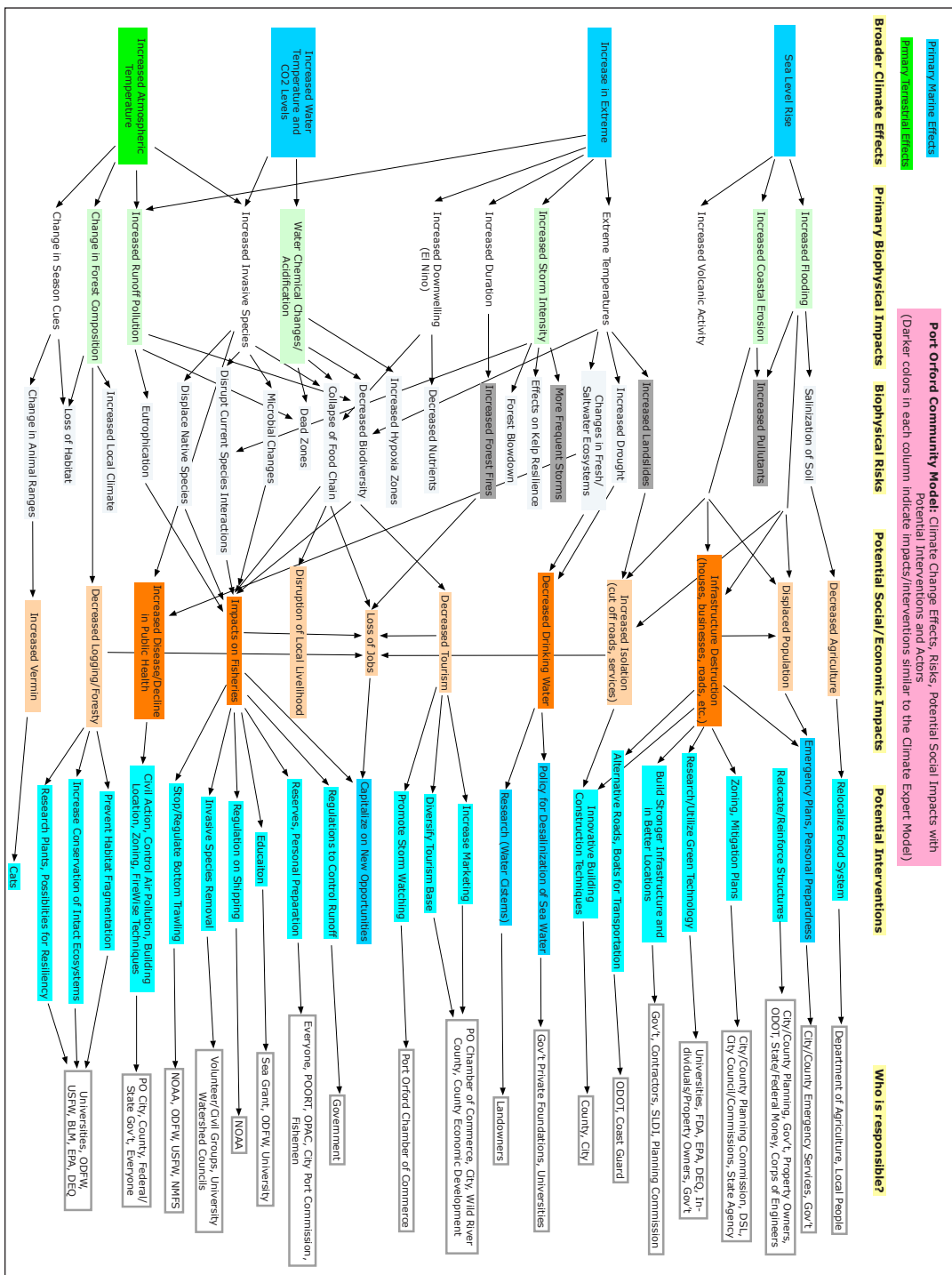
It should be noted that the community model assembled by the university team did not include every detail contained in the influence-diagram sources. Also, the number of arrows shown converging on a particular column-topic is an indication of the factors associated with that topic and the degree of participant attention on them, rather than a strictly quantitative valuation of importance. Indeed, we did not attempt higher-order quantitative analyses that are sometimes developed when both the specialist and lay models are more detailed than existed in our situation (Wood et al., 2012).

**Participant Evaluation.** An evaluation was conducted at the end of the first workshop simply to determine what participants liked or felt needed to be changed (for other workshops). Among other points, participants requested more information on climate change and community effects—indications that the workshop engaged them and prompted further thinking. One unexpected and positive outcome of the workshop training occurred shortly afterwards, as POORT staff put to use their training in developing concept maps in conducting a planning workshop of their own.

Following the second workshop, university team members interviewed by phone four workshop participants. The interviewees were asked the same questions<sup>7</sup> and the interviews recorded and analyzed.

The interviewed participants described satisfaction with the workshops, stating that their participation caused them to consider risks of climate change that they would not have thought about otherwise and as they will affect their community (rather than as a global and distant issue). One participant noted the range of backgrounds of workshop participants and the civic importance of bringing such a range of community members to a shared understanding of the climate issue. Another participant noted that influence diagrams worked well as a workshop tool because it allowed the group to work together, with everyone included, and helped the group come to consensus.

<sup>6</sup>It was assembled from available published sources that had either a regional Pacific Northwest context (Huppert, 2009) or a coastwide Oregon context (Weber, 2009). In addition, qualified members and associates of the university team reviewed the specialists' model for accuracy.



**Figure 4.** A community model of climate change effects, risks, impacts, and interventions

The interviewees suggested how additional workshops and related activities could be of value

<sup>7</sup> How would you say the workshops have gone so far? How would you describe your current thinking about how Port Orford needs to respond to climate change? Have the workshops had any influence on this way of thinking? What is/are the next step/s that you think the community needs to take with respect to preparing for the effects of climate change? How can our project help you take that step? What would cause you to come to a third workshop?

to the community, and the university team began planning to implement these suggestions for the following years.

In addition, the working group appears to consider the visible thinking methods valuable: In a 2011 follow-up survey, seven of eight participants in the first workshop in 2009 (which focused on



the concept mapping) considered “production and publication of concept maps and related diagrams” as of high or medium value. The aggregate score placed these methods near the top of a list of 10 project activities. The 2011 survey also revealed a modest improvement in the amount of information respondents held about how climate change would affect their work, over pre-project survey levels of 2008. And this working group had an undiminished willingness “to take action in my work if I hear a sense of local urgency to do so” (average 4.3 on a 5-point scale<sup>8</sup> in both survey years). Yet the 2011 survey respondents perceived, as they had in 2008, no great sense of urgency about local climate change effects from others in the community.

## Discussion

This community engagement project follows the recommendations of a NRC panel (Dietz & Stern, 2008) in recognizing that public participation in planning can create significant value. It also mirrors the current understanding that public participation in research can have far reaching implications for the valuing and relevance of climate-related science for public audiences (Bonney, Ballard, Jordan, McCallie, Phillips, Shirk, & Wilderman, 2009). Rather than a notion of participation in scientific or technical decision-making in which citizens are viewed as a hindrance and are consulted only via a public “hearing” or some other partial involvement, often late in the decision-making process, the university team held the premise that the community’s knowledge, views, values, and the objectives that derive from them are not only legitimate in their own right but should be heard before the presentation of specialist knowledge and incorporated in the interpretation of that knowledge. In short, the reason to engage the community is a belief that doing so improves both the quality of science long-term (Bonney et al, 2009) and what the NRC termed the “quality” and “legitimacy” of the resulting assessments and decisions.

As crucial as understanding and making decisions based on climate science is to long-term community resilience, these are very unlikely to occur with public participants of widely varying views if the process does not explicitly consider the values of the participants and make them part of the two-way conversation with university and agency scientists. Analytic techniques framed by non-communi-

ty “experts” may reflect value choices that may not be shared by the community (National Research Council, 2005). Indeed, those facilitating climate-change discussions do well to remember that all participants—scientists, engagement practitioners, and other citizens—see the claims of science through the lens of their own values. These may be deeply held and not easily negotiated, as recent “cultural cognition” research illustrates. That framework highlights the role of certain pervasive “cultural” values in the U.S.—labeled dichotomously “individualistic” or “communitarian”, and “hierarchical” or “egalitarian”—in determining individuals’ receptivity to science (Kahan, Jenkins-Smith, & Braman, 2010).

In exploring the creation and use of concept maps and influence diagrams as well as developing other visual thinking routines for co-generative dialogue (Tobin, 2006), this project provides useful experience on the value of these techniques. Learning research has previously identified (Halford, 1993) that the ability to visually represent thinking with concept maps and diagrams illustrates two essential properties of understanding: the representation and the organization of ideas. To understand a concept means having an internal representation or mental model that reflects the structure of that concept; a concept map makes that mental model explicit so that it can be reviewed with others. It furthermore makes the beliefs and values that underlie those mental models explicit for participants as they rationalize or explain their thinking and their maps to themselves and each other.

Using these visible thinking methods, the Port Orford workshop participants produced thoughtful and detailed assessments of climate change risks that their community faces. Further, they identified actions that could be taken to reduce these risks. For example, in the Marine Ecosystem Effects category they recognized that climate change could lead to a loss of biodiversity, which could cause a decrease in tourism, and this could be addressed through diversifying the tourism base, with the local Chamber of Commerce taking the lead.

Given the likely continuing need for attention to a changing climate, developing shared understandings through techniques such as the mental model diagramming used here, and then proceeding as the community has capacity and intent, seems to us very sensible.

## References

- Adger, W.N., Agrawala, S., Mirza, M.M.Q., Conde, C., O’Brien, K., Pulhin, J., Pulwarty, R., Smit, B., & Takahashi, K. (2007). Assessment

<sup>8</sup>Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree. No opinion/doesn’t apply was also available but not scored if selected.



of adaptation practices, options, constraints and capacity. In M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden, and C.E. Hanson (Eds.), *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability* (pp. 717–743). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arvai, J., Gregory, R., & McDaniels, T. (2001). Testing a structured decision approach: value-focused thinking for deliberative risk communication. *Risk Analysis*, 21(6), 1065–1076.

Bonney, R., Ballard, H., Jordan, R., McCallie, E., Phillips, T., Shirk, J., & Wilderman, C.C. (2009). *Public participation in scientific research: Defining the field and assessing its potential for informal science education. A CAISE Inquiry Group Report*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education (CAISE).

Borberg, J., Cone, J., Jodice, L., Harte, M., & Corcoran, P. (2009). *An analysis of a survey of Oregon coast decision makers regarding climate change*. Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon Sea Grant.

Burgette, R.J., Weldon II, R.J., & Schmidt, D.A. (2009). Interseismic uplift rates for western Oregon and along-strike variation in locking on the Cascadia subduction zone. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 114, pp. 2,009.

Cone, J. (2008). *Hold that thought! Questioning five common assumptions about communicating with the public*. Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon Sea Grant.

Davison, E.J. (2005). *Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dietz, T., & Stern, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Public participation in environmental assessment and decision making*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Fischhoff, B. (2007). Nonpersuasive communication about matters of greatest urgency: Climate change. *Environmental Science & Technology A-Page Magazine* 41(21): 7204–7208.

Gregory, R., McDaniels, T.L., & Fields, D. (2001). Decision aiding, not dispute resolution: Creating insights through structured environmental decisions. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20(3), 415–432.

Halford, G.S. (1993). *Children's understanding: The development of mental models*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Howard, R.A. (1989). Knowledge maps. *Management Science*, 35(8), 903–922.

Huppert, D., Moore, A., et al. (2009). Impacts of climate change on the coasts of Washington state. In *Washington Climate Change Impacts Assessment* (pp. 285–309). Seattle, University of Washington.

Kahan, D.M., Jenkins-Smith, H., & Braman, D. (2010). Cultural cognition of scientific consensus. *Journal of Risk Research*. On-line advance publication at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2010.511246>.

Kane, M., Trochim, M., & Trochim, W. (2007). *Concept mapping for planning and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Karl, T.R., Melillo, J.M., & Peterson, T.C. (Eds.). (2009). *Global climate change impacts in the United States*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Keeny, R.L. (1992). *Value focused thinking: A path to creative decision making*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Markham, K., Mintzes, J., & Jones, M. (1994). The concept map as a research and evaluation tool: Further evidence of validity. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 31(1), 91–101

Morgan, M.G., Fischhoff, B., Bostrom, A., & Atman, C.J. (2002). *Risk communication: A mental models approach*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press..

Moser, S.C. (2008). *Resilience in the face of global environmental change. C.A.R.R. Initiative*. Oak Ridge, Tenn.: Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Moser, S.C. (2009). Making a difference on the ground: the challenge of demonstrating the effectiveness of decision support. *Climatic Change*, 95(1–2).

National Research Council, Panel on Social and Behavioral Science Research Priorities for Environmental Decision Making. (2005). *Decision Making for the Environment: Social and Behavioral Science Research Priorities*. G.D. Brewer and P.C. Stern (Eds). Washington, D.C., National Academies Press.

National Research Council, Panel on Strategies and Methods for Climate-Related Decision Support. (2009). *Informing decisions in a changing climate*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

National Sea Grant Extension Review Panel. (2000). *A mandate to engage coastal users*. Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon Sea Grant.

Nicholls, R.J., Wong, P.P., Burkett, V.R., Codignotto, J.O., Hay, J.E., McLean, R.F., & Woodroffe, C.D. (2007). Coastal systems and low-lying areas. In M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden & C.E. Hanson (Eds.), *Climate change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability* (pp. 315–356). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

NOAA Coastal Services Center. (2011). *Vulnerability assessment*. Retrieved 2/10/2011, from <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/products/nchaz/htm/tut>.

htm#two

Novak, J., & Gowin, D. (1984). *Learning how to learn*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Novak, J.D., & Cañas, A.J. (2008). *The theory underlying concept maps and how to construct and use them*. Retrieved 1/27/2011, from <http://cmap.ihmc.us/publications/researchpapers/theorycmaps/theoryunderlyingconceptmaps.htm>

Oregon Climate Change Research Institute. (2010). *Oregon climate assessment report*. K.D. Dello & P.W. Mote (Eds.). Corvallis, Ore.: College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reddy, Michael J. (1979). The conduit metaphor: A case of frame conflict in our language about language. In Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ritchhart, R., Palmer, P., Church, M., & Tishman, S. (2006). *Thinking routines: Establishing patterns of thinking in the classroom*. Paper presented at the AERA Conference, San Francisco.

Sarachik, Edward. (2008). *Improving the capacity of U.S. climate modeling for decision-makers and end-users*. Washington, D.C., Testimony May 8, 2008 to Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Snober, A.K., Whitely Binder, L., Lopez, J., Willmott, E., Kay, J., Howell, D., & Simmonds, J. (2007). *Preparing for climate change: A guidebook for local, regional, and state governments*. Oakland, CA: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

Stoddart, T. Abrams, R., Gasper, E. & Canaday, D. (2000). Concept maps as assessment in science inquiry learning – a report of methodology. *International Journal of Science Education* 22(12), 1221–1246.

Tobin, K. (2006). Learning to teach through coteaching and cogenerative dialogue. *Teaching Education* 17(2), 133–142.

Tribbia, J., & Moser, S.C. (2008). More than information: what coastal managers need to plan for climate change. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 11(4), 315–328.

Trochim, W.M.K., Milstein, B., Wood, B. J., Jackson, S., & Pressler, V. (2004). Setting objectives for community and systems change: An application of concept mapping for planning a statewide health improvement initiative. *Health Promotion Practice*, 5(1), 8–19.

Vygotsky, L. (1934/1986). *Thought and Language*. Trans. A. Kozulin. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Weber, Jeff. (2009). *Climate ready communities: A strategy for adapting to impacts of climate change on the Oregon coast*. O.C.M. Program. Salem, Ore., Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Wilson, R.S., & Arvai, J.L. (2011). *Structured decision making*. Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon Sea Grant.

Wood, M.D., Bostrom, A., Bridges, T., & Linkov, I. (2012). Cognitive mapping tools: Review and risk management needs. *Risk Analysis* 2(8), 1,333–1,348.

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge our other university collaborators in this project: Patrick Corcoran and Michael Harte, Oregon Sea Grant; and Joy Irby and Kirsten Winters, graduate students, Oregon State University. We also acknowledge helpful comments from two anonymous reviewers of this article. This report was prepared by Oregon Sea Grant under awards NA06OAR4170010 (project M/A-21), NA10OAR4170059 (project numbers M/A-21, A/ESG-7, and R/CC-14), and NA07OAR4310408 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce, and by appropriations made by the Oregon State Legislature. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA, the U.S. Department of Commerce, or the Oregon Legislature.

## About the Authors

The first three authors are with the Oregon Sea Grant at Oregon State University. Joseph Cone is the assistant director and communications leader. Shawn Rowe is a marine education learning specialist. And Jenna Borberg is a marine program specialist. Briana Goodwin was a member of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team in Port Orford, Oregon.

## COMMUNITY PARTNER REFLECTION

Port Orford is not exactly the quaint fishing village it is painted to be. Among other things, it is vibrant, diverse, hard working, and progressive. We have a very active artist community and a working port that contributes to a quarter of the jobs in Port Orford. The community is driven by dedicated volunteers and has a large retirement population. Port Orford was the first community on the southern Oregon coast to pass a community



supported stormwater ordinance and gained successful designation as a community supported marine reserve.

Most conservation organizations in the area work with the resource users themselves to find the best possible solutions for the users and the environment. The Port Orford climate change workshops worked very well because they were locally driven, as opposed to people from outside of town telling residents what would work best for them. Local knowledge was truly respected throughout the process. The design created by the Sea Grant Team could work in every community as long as the community is willing to shape the process.

The Port Orford Ocean Resource Team (POORT), as the local coordinating body, was asked to determine and recruit workshop participants. POORT chose community leaders who had the power to disseminate information to the community and to inform decisions at the local level. To ensure that the climate working group would be able to successfully act once decisions were made, a diverse group of stakeholders were engaged including local politicians, conservation organizations, educators, and commercial fishermen. The diversity of the working group reflected Port Orford and ensured that multiple viewpoints would be considered in discussions. The group had a strong sense of how natural processes affect our local community.

The process used by the project team to engage the ad hoc group was very effective. Asking community group members what they thought established a level of trust and respect between the group members and the project team, quickly establishing rapport that increased the comfort level of participants and contributed to a willingness to participate freely.

Providing an opportunity for individuals to write their responses to all discussion topics before holding discussions as a whole group allowed even the most reserved of participants to have a voice. All discussions and ideas were written in an area that could easily be viewed by all participants. Using this visual process allowed group members to remain constantly aware of discussion topics, allowing members of the group to elaborate and build off of each other's ideas.

The technique of creating influence diagrams in small groups was both efficient and effective. Each individual had the opportunity to record his or her own thoughts on the diagrams and then had the chance to discuss their ideas with small groups. This process was very thorough without

exhausting participants' attention. Creating the diagrams allowed for participants to stay within their comfort zones by including both oral and written forms of communication, thereby making it more comfortable for multiple personality types to engage in the process.

The strength of having community members create concept maps themselves is that a usable, community-supported document results. This process allowed the people that understand the community best to prioritize areas of vulnerability, thereby allowing the project team to provide focused information. Participants were able to take more out of the workshop because they directed the content.

The concept maps created from the workshop on climate change effects, combined with the influence diagrams, resulted in a visual representation of the community's concerns, potential interventions and responsible parties. The concept maps made it easy for any community member outside of the ad hoc group to understand the discussions and conclusions of the workshops. Furthermore, having the community design the concept maps created a sense of ownership and responsibility when it came time to take next steps.

In Port Orford, a slow, careful process for decision making works best. Community members value being informed and having their questions answered before supporting any decisions. For this reason, the Climate Change Working Group chose to start small with their next steps to ensure community support before taking stronger action. The first step at the conclusion of the workshops was to make a presentation to the Port Orford Planning Commission about the increasing wave height and workshops. The commission was amenable to including changes in the climate in their comprehensive plan and was open to continuing a dialogue with Sea Grant and the Climate Change Working Group.

The mistake in this project was not setting up permanent, local support, which has left some of the action items unfinished. Though there was significant interest in continuing to meet, once funding diminished, the working group stopped meeting. In a community where volunteers are spread thin and the city planner is only on contract, it is necessary to staff projects such as the climate change working group. Fortunately, the concept maps, intervention, and responsible parties will not soon be outdated and could be picked back up if funding were to become available.

*Briana Goodwin*





# Theoretical and Applied Perspectives on Power: Recognizing Processes That Undermine Effective Community-University Partnerships

Lorilee R. Sandmann and Brandon W. Klierer

## Abstract

Interrelational power dynamics are intimately connected to the success of any relationship and are especially critical in developing and sustaining mutually beneficial, reciprocally engaged partnerships. This work analyzes how elements of power impact the negotiation of engagement in community-university partnerships. Although this piece is a general theoretical account of power, it indicates very specific implications for community partners. A hypothetical example is used to contextualize distinct power challenges that confront community partners and faculty members during the engagement process. Specific attention is given to how organizational structure, the academic calendar, and the creation of knowledge influence produced understandings of differentials in power and differentials in need. The paper concludes with a discussion of three applied strategies that can be used to neutralize differentials in power and recognize differentials in need associated with the development of community-university partnerships. The theoretical language of differentials in power and differentials in need will arm practitioners with analytical tools to shape more meaningful partnerships.

## Introduction

Relationships require nuanced and clearly orchestrated negotiations of power. The success of any relationship, regardless of type, is often tied to how interested parties negotiate expectations and obligations. Community-university partnerships are no different. Negotiating reciprocity and mutuality and maintaining a sustained relationship are fraught with power differentials. Most of the literature that investigates and theorizes power dynamics of community-university partnerships adopts the perspective of the university. However, there has recently been an effort to articulate a community voice in community engagement research (Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2010; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). Despite this budding stream of literature, the theoretical basis of this research generally remains underdeveloped. Partners, often representing divergent orientations, strive to define their collaboration in terms of common interests and goals. However, partnerships exist within social and political contexts that produce differentials in power and inform differentials in need. If the practice of community engagement is to approach normative goals of reciprocity and mutuality, social and political structures that produce relative differentials in power and need must be recognized from multiple theoretical perspectives. This article analyzes how differentials in power and differentials in need impact the negotiation of engagement in

community-university partnerships. Essentially, it confronts this question: How do differentials in power and differentials in need impact the negotiation of reciprocity and mutuality in the context of maintaining a meaningful “engaged” community-university relationship?

In order to work through the theoretical and applied elements of power, this paper is divided into three sections. The first section presents a hypothetical example, describing an engagement situation from the perspective of a community partner. The scenario situates the theoretical power dynamics that community partners must work through in order to initiate and maintain an engaged relationship. To construct a typical composite example, we have drawn the scenario from the systematic observation and study of community-university partnerships associated with a major engagement initiative of The University of Georgia. The second section relies on the hypothetical example to analyze how differentials in power and need influence the engaged relationship from the standpoint of community. The section considers aspects related to the organization of the university, the academic calendar, and the negotiation of knowledge production. The third section provides three applied strategies for managing differentials in power and need. The authors of this article, it should be noted, have not played the role of community partner. Rather our data and analysis come from rigorous study of both theories of





power and community-university partnerships (Sandmann, Kliewer, Kim, & Omerikwa, 2010; Sandmann, Moore, & Quinn, 2012).

### **Hypothetical Example: Poliz City and a Concerned Community Partner**

Times are tough. The once-vibrant urban center of Poliz City has now withered to an unhealthy standstill. As industries shut down and relocate in the wake of the global financial crisis and subsequent economic slowdown, many local businesses and shops of the downtown area have closed, leading to urban blight and a significantly reduced tax base. The reduced tax revenue can no longer support the current level of public services (trash removal, sewage-related maintenance, public space maintenance, public employee pensions, etc.). In accordance with neoliberal theory and in the general interest of cost saving, essential social services have been cut from the city, local, and state budgets.

Cathy, a concerned citizen, knew that if nothing were done the situation would continue to spiral downward. Cathy and a small group of other citizens saw urban blight as the key problem that was stalling Poliz City's economic and social recovery. However, Cathy lacked appropriate empirical and scientific knowledge to support her policy recommendations, as well as the "legitimated" and "empirical" language that is valued by most government, nongovernmental, and business organizations. She hoped that researchers and experts from the university could assist the community in contextualizing specific community issues in a manner that would support her policy approaches and lend credibility to multiple community groups attempting to address issues impacting the urban area.

Historically, the university and various elements within the community understood their objectives as being independent from each other. Cathy, and the community group that she represented, wanted to initiate a problem-based, hopefully long-term relationship with the university. However, after a few weeks of exploring potential connections with the university, Cathy still had no inroads into the university administrative structure. As a result, with the permission of the other key community partners, Cathy decided to work directly with a university partner. In doing so, she encountered three particular challenges. First, it was difficult to maneuver through the organizational structure of the university and make initial contact. Second, the academic calendar of the university did not

mesh well with the community's projected project timeline. Third, it was difficult for Cathy and the eventual university partner, Professor Robert, to agree on the type of knowledge to be produced from the partnership. Each of these not-unique challenges is discussed from the perspective of community and in terms of the potential tensions that can result from differentials in power and differentials in need. Overcoming tensions epitomized by these three examples represents an important step in producing a theoretical conception of power that supports meaningful community-university partnerships.

### **Organizational Structures and Initial Engagement**

Community-engaged scholarship ideally involves equitable partnerships characterized by mutuality and reciprocity (Boyer, 1990, 1996). Although these concepts are essential to community engagement praxis, research on community-university collaborations shows a wide range of differentiation (Driscoll, 2008; Enos & Morton, 2003; Sockett, 1998). The inability of community engagement practice to achieve these ideal standards can be tied to seen and unseen social and political structures, which not only produce relative differentials in power, but also contextualize the community engagement experience. In many instances, as in Cathy's situation, the university is well structured, hierarchical yet decentralized, with its own procedural framework and infrastructure. The community represented by Cathy, on the other hand, is characterized by a lack of hierarchy and structure. One of the first obstacles Cathy had to overcome was entering and "engaging" with the university. Cathy did not know whom to contact to initiate such a relationship at the local university. Adding to the uncertainty, she had no specific project ideas that might help target a contact. She saw the potential to develop a variety of projects using both community and university resources, but this only expanded the number of potential entry points.

The lack of a clear entry point for Cathy to engage the university made it very difficult to initiate the process under terms of equality. Entering a highly organized, hierarchical, and formalized institution introduces degrees of power that shade any potential partnership. The community partner has to submit to a series of institutional structures and norms, but has no way of fully knowing what expectations are implicit when initiating contact with a university. In



Cathy's case the initial engagement not only was unnerving but produced differentials in power that threatened the partnership from the start. Our point is not to imply that initial engagement is always problematic. We do, however, wish to highlight how the structural organization of an institution can produce forms of power that undermine the viability of engaged partnerships.

Although university organizational structure posed a significant problem for Cathy in this case, differentials in power do not necessarily favor the university partner. Power differentials always occur in community-university relationships, but the community can sometimes be the more powerful partner (Van de Ven, 2007). This theoretical perspective applies equally to universities attempting to initiate a relationship with communities. Thus, just as negotiating the hierarchical yet decentralized structure of academia can be a daunting task for a community partner, organizational power within a community may also prove an obstacle for a university partner. However, discussions of the social, political, and anthropological dynamics of community power exceed the purview of this paper.

Cathy had to enter the imposing organization of the university to initiate the partnership. In this setting, values, internal structures, and bureaucratic patterns determine behavioral norms and influence performative actions. Entering the university structure and trying to learn and recognize these expectations without coaching or sponsorship placed Cathy at a power relationship disadvantage. The ways in which performative expectations can impact community engagement have been recognized in the literature (Miller, 1997; Moje, 2000; Smith, 1994). This dynamic can be particularly insidious for members of marginalized groups that lack certain performative behaviors and levels of social capital.

In a relationship characterized by mutuality, all entities are interdependent, all participate in the relationship, and all benefit in a commensurate manner (Still & Good, 1992). The differentials in power between the engaged scholar-researcher and the community partner affect the level of mutuality and reciprocity in the processes, purpose, and outcome of the collaboration (Stanton, 2007). However, a theoretical conception of power can enable partners to recognize sources of power differentials as elements that can enhance or undermine reciprocity. In practice, this could mean that individuals are able to recognize how contextual aspects of their organization influence

and inform the partnership. For example, members of the professoriate are typically organized by academic disciplines and drawn to have a cosmopolitan perspective (Rhoades, 2009). Thus, the framework of the university might not be conducive to maintaining the types of partnerships that community partners' desire. Understanding the basis for why community and universities have different orientations can help identify the origins of differentials in power.

### **Timing and the Academic Calendar**

Cathy was confronted with a second challenge once she navigated the differentials in power tied to maneuvering through the university structure. Professor Robert, the faculty member she eventually partnered with, would not be able to start the project until the spring semester, at that point six months away. In our hypothetical example, Cathy and the community wanted to start the engagement project immediately. However, Professor Robert could not accommodate this desire because his time was limited by work requirements for the academic semester. This is a case of differences in need challenging the effectiveness of a partnership in a context of power.

Differing time orientations often create tensions and lead to unstable partnerships. Community members may perceive a need to address their issues quickly, although doing so would necessitate taking action based on limited information. In contrast, academic norms and standards encourage faculty members to develop carefully designed courses and research projects. Such norms make higher education institutions significantly less dynamic than some community organizations. However, the need to follow carefully designed curricula and apply academic rigor in executing research moves institutions of higher education toward having longer timelines preceding a project. The time frame of semesters or quarters also places unavoidable time limitations on collaborations that involve students, such as service-learning projects. Timing can be thought of as creating a difference in need at the institution-to-institution level that cannot be solved through individual power negotiations. Moreover, the nature of the issue being addressed in the hypothetical example, Poliz City's economic recovery, is likewise a structural and institutionalized issue not amenable to immediate resolution, regardless of how urgent it seems to community members.

Even when the intentions of both parties





are genuinely committed to collaboration (Stanton, 2007), the university's schedule and timing often constrain community actions. By necessity, universities operate on prescribed schedules and academic calendars. Partnerships can extend beyond the semester, but the end of each academic term represents an artificial stopping point that interrupts engagement projects. For the community, these interruptions, although brief, may be perceived as a threat to a partnership and remind partners of the differential in need. Higher education institutions commonly measure time in semesters or other academic periods, and community engagement projects are often made to fit within the academic calendar. For the community partner, however, the need to accommodate the university-based time frame can undermine the partnership. In the hypothetical example, negotiating the timeline of the partnership was a significant point of tension Cathy confronted.

### Negotiating Knowledge

Understanding the negotiation of knowledge from the community perspective requires an appreciation of the relationship between higher education and knowledge. Within the past 30 years, fundamental assumptions underlying the relationship between the economy, the state, and the university have changed. It was once accepted that the state and the capitalist economy were structured to allow for compromise between the social needs of citizens and the outcomes produced by the market. Guided by Keynesian economic policies, the "welfare state" mediated between principles of social well being and principles of the capitalist system. Within this framework, the knowledge created within the university was seen to promote a "public good" and was removed from private industry. Essentially, the Keynesian welfare state supported a "public or common good" that provided a baseline protection and social/political space that was free from the market rationality of the capitalist system (Harvey, 2005; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

However, at some point the guiding theoretical impetus that grounded the welfare state was undermined by an emergent acceptance and application of neoliberal economic and social policies. Privatization, deregulation, re-regulation, and a general deconstruction of the Keynesian welfare state became the model. "The financialization of everything," according to David Harvey (2005), highlighted the emergence of

neoliberalism as a hegemonic force that reshaped existing social, political, and economic institutions. This neoliberal movement also impacts a variety of elements of higher education.

Market principles have begun to influence the general operation and administrative organization of universities, which now "commodify" research, teaching, and even service to fit within the logics of neoliberalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Basic inquiry-based research that promoted a broad conception of the public good started receiving less financial support compared to research with potential commercial value. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) tracked how academic capitalism influences all levels and elements of the university. Further research suggests that entrepreneurial pursuits within higher education have become the norm globally (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), so that the very notion of knowledge and its relationship to the "public good" has become commodified. The distinction between the state, the university, and industry has been blurred and in many ways has been completely eliminated. Academic capitalism, as conceptualized by Slaughter and Rhoades and Slaughter and Leslie, has become so pervasive that it must be assumed, or at least recognized, when negotiating the outcomes of community-university partnerships. In order for the community partner to successfully negotiate types of knowledge that community-university collaboration may produce, it is important to account for the way academic capitalism informs the policy environment of the university and contributes to institutional pressures that might be influencing university representatives.

As a result of the general move toward commodification of knowledge, Cathy was required to define the type of research to be performed within the partnership in this context. Community stakeholders were applying pressure on her to produce research and data directly applicable to problems in the community. At the same time, the forces of academic capitalism were applying pressure on Professor Robert to produce a research article or scholarly product appreciated within the academic capitalism paradigm. Cathy's need for applied problem-based knowledge put her in direct conflict with her individual university partner; that is, differentials in power and differentials in need coalesced to create a tension within the partnership.

Cathy had confronted the initial problem of engagement, involving differentials in power, and





then a differential in need tied to the academic calendar. This third challenge involves differentials in both power and need. The negotiation of different structures and power assigned to different forms of knowledge was even more difficult for Cathy because she had no idea of the larger policy context that informed the basis of academic capitalism. The precedence of commodified research over applied and problem-based research has evolved through time and is not intuitive. From the perspective of the community, commodified and technical research creates an access point that often excludes non-academics.

Whatever the complexities of the relationship between the community and the university, the most important goal of the community is the fulfillment of social needs (Todd, Ebata, & Hughes, 1998; Wuthnow, 1999). Ideally, the university endeavors to adhere to the standards of engaged research as suggested by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997), including (a) having clear goals for the partnership; (b) making adequate preparation for the research, including strategies of relationship building; (c) the use of appropriate research methods; (d) having significant results; (e) effectively presenting or disseminating results; and (f) reflecting on the process. However, these multifold concerns may conflict with the community interest. For example, the generalizable results that academic capitalism demands may not satisfy community stakeholders' desire for a more specific utilitarian solution. Tensions between community and university preference can be reconciled by overlapping theoretical conceptions of power. By overlaying conceptions of power upon community-university partnerships, we begin to understand how both conscious and unconscious structures and expectations need to be recognized in order to achieve meaningful partnerships based upon commitments to equality.

In practice, this might mean that Cathy can recognize differentials in need that inform differentials in power within the negotiation process by articulating the competing objectives from her perspective, thus directing attention toward specific points of disagreement. A focus on these points avoids counterproductive negotiations centered on the general disagreement of the partnership. For example, both Cathy and Robert have an interest in making the project beneficial for all interested parties. Both agree that data produced from an empirical study would be beneficial in addressing community issues. In this case the general disagreement lies in the type

of knowledge to be produced. The point that triggered the disagreement and allowed power dynamics to impact the negotiation process was the desire for a given outcome: applied knowledge in Cathy's case and commodifiable knowledge in Professor Robert's. By focusing on this issue, the two can negotiate acceptable terms of reciprocity and highlight differentials in need. This approach recognizes differentials of power produced in a policy context that assign privilege to certain forms of research.

The goal of any negotiation process is to manage power dynamics and recognize differentials in need throughout the process. Negotiations at the individual-to-individual level that focus on the trigger point of disagreement can create a space where power dynamics remain static and the interested parties can resolve points of contestation without affirming differentials in power.

Further in practice, this approach can take multiple forms. Cathy could ask the following question: How can we ensure that applied research is rigorous and attempts to produce new knowledge? This approach focuses the negotiation process on the trigger point of divergence. Furthermore, this approach empowers the community partner to maintain the terms of the partnership by highlighting aspects of differentials in power and differentials in need.

The point of this discussion is not to create an indictment of academic capitalism but to demonstrate how community partners need to consider larger social, political, and economic factors when negotiating terms of reciprocity. Community members interested in negotiating reciprocity should ask university representatives about institutional pressures and work through probing conversations that negotiate the criteria of the relationship. Once institutional pressures that inform differentials in need are identified, community partners can begin to use a shared language that moves toward more robust understandings of reciprocity.

### **Practical Implications**

For a community partner, challenges tied to negotiating the terms of effective community-university engagement occur throughout the engagement process. Community partners can better understand sources of conflict by recognizing differentials in power and differentials in need. Generally, community members and university administrators ought to establish





parameters of communication that recognize how seen and unseen structures can produce differentials in power and need. Partnerships are more likely to be successful if the terms of the relationship are transparent and are the product of a clearly outlined communication process. Structured communication ensures that a partner does not intentionally or unintentionally exploit differentials in power and that partners recognize differentials in need. Next, we present three applied approaches that can highlight how issues of power and need can be managed to support effective communication in community engagement partnerships.

### **Contractual Obligations**

A formal memorandum of agreement or a legal contract can serve as an effective basis of communication that recognizes differentials in power and need. Contractual agreements can define the obligations and expectations of each partner in the engaged relationship. Essentially, the contractual model creates a context that formalizes the communication between the community and university. This type of quasi-legal approach forces both parties to discuss the components of the relationship in very specific terms.

A major strength of the contractual approach is that it forces university-community partners to make tough decisions about the relationship up front. In most situations engaged relationships respond to conflict when it develops. The contractual approach opens lines of communication and might help prevent serious disputes from developing. Furthermore, the contractual process transfers both conscious and unconscious power differentials to a conceivably objective juridical space. Instead of confronting differentials in power on a case-by-case basis, contractual understandings of partnerships allow the stakeholders to address structural tensions in an environment that is free from the stresses of applied engagement. Said plainly, the contractual negotiation of power and engagement permits partners to discuss the terms of an engagement relationship before emotional and relational baggage develops. It is much easier to discuss power differentials in community-university partnerships in an abstract and indirect way, before the pressure of real circumstances can threaten to sour the relationship.

A drawback to the contractual approach is that it could create a very impersonal relationship. The optimal university-community relationship is nuanced and operates at both professional and

personal levels. Effective engaged relationships are made up of people concerned with relevant community issues. Contractual obligations could create a rigid and distant relationship between the community and university.

Furthermore, the contractual approach assumes that the process that produces the contract equitably represents the views of each party. However, one party of the relationship might dominate the contract negotiations, creating an engaged relationship that is not reciprocal. In some situations, strong incentives or external pressures might coerce a partner to accept a contract that does not create a reciprocal relationship. Particularly in such a case, it is possible that the contractual structure will not account for all forms of power and need.

### **Communication Training**

A second way to deal with power and recognize differentials in need in engaged partnerships is by providing communication training for participants. Effective communication is the linchpin that holds most partnerships together. Communication training can be desirable because it develops communication norms and approaches that can help engaged partnerships maintain high levels of reciprocity. Claims highlighting the importance of communication and democratic equality are also supported in political and social theory in a variety of ways. As capitalism reshapes the social, political, and economic spheres, citizens are no longer connected to historical understandings of political community (Allen, 2006). Citizens and community members, generally, are losing basic skills of civic communication and literacy (see [www.americancivilliteracy.org](http://www.americancivilliteracy.org)). Formalized engagement training has the potential to develop the skills, attitudes, and communication patterns that not only support effective partnerships, but also jump-start deliberative democracy in this country.

A drawback to communication training is that some parties in the relationship might not be receptive; this approach also assumes effective communication is something that can be learned. Ideal-speech patterns tied to standards of deliberative democracy will likely marginalize groups not able or not willing to perform the communication norms (Habermas, 1984). Besides the potential to marginalize groups lacking certain speech and communication patterns, the time and expense associated with this approach might preclude it from being cost-effective. In addition,





because participants would gain different levels of understanding from the training, communication might still break down even when overall levels of communication improve.

### **Regional/National Engagement Governing Institutions**

Although an unlikely solution for dealing with differentials in power and recognizing differentials in need, regional/national engagement boards, created to regulate and ensure standards of engagement, would have the potential to be highly effective in producing more reciprocal engagement relationships. Unlike statewide Campus Compact organizations, which catalog and connect partners, these proposed institutions would go one step further and act as a governing body. They would have the power to accredit engagement units, set professional standards, establish rules and regulations, and resolve conflicts between partners. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching applies its community engagement classification ([http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community\\_engagement.php](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php)) to assess whether institutions of higher education achieve a threshold of engagement institutionalization. However, there is the potential to develop a more robust community engagement governing board that moves beyond the description and general assessment of community-university partnerships. Conceivably such governing boards would be a type of combined regional accreditation body and mediation board.

The main benefit of this type of institutional arrangement would be standardization of processes and levels of engaged partnerships. Although the previous point highlights the potential of a governing board approach, many issues remain that could limit the success of the proposed organization. For example, many community engagement parties might be reluctant to surrender their own levels of internal autonomy to external governing bodies.

From a financial, decision-making perspective community engagement efforts at most colleges and universities operate at the fringes. However, community engagement seems to be trending toward widespread academic recognition. As of 2010, over 60 colleges and universities offered a degree for some curricular program tied to community engagement, civic engagement, or community studies (Butin, 2010). Looming social, political, and economic crises might also create a

window for community engagement to enlarge its function within academia as an avenue for renewing the larger public purposes of higher education. As more campuses offer academic programs, degrees, and certificates tied to community engagement, the likelihood of the conditions changing to support a national governing and accreditation board would seem to increase. Such a body could help move community engagement toward the core of the university by defining engagement standards as they apply to individual academic disciplines.

### **Conclusion**

Management of interrelational power dynamics is intimately connected to the success of any relationship. Engagement partnerships between the community and the university are no different. As this article has demonstrated, how flows of power are understood depends on the subject's position in the relationship. From the community partner's perspective, this initial theoretical analysis provides a framework that can inform the engagement process and define a structure that can be used to communicate the impact of power.

More than a decade has passed since Ernest Boyer (1996) called upon the academy to reconsider its public purposes. The civic and community engagement fields have come a long way during this time. However, as a practice we are reaching a critical point in academic engagement maturation. Student affairs, academic affairs, and to a lesser extent faculty units, have produced very dynamic student and community programming for various forms of engagement. Also, it seems to be clear that service-learning pedagogies and forms of community-based research have secured a place within the university structure (Sandmann, Thornton, & Jaeger, 2009). Many challenges remain despite all these points of success, but community engagement scholarship is now in a position to critically examine the praxis without fear of reprisal.

Recognition of limitations and weaknesses within the civic and community engagement practice must be brought into the daylight with the confidence that critical examination can only strengthen the approach. Civic and community engagement will achieve its true potential only if community practitioners and university scholars collaboratively and honestly address these issues. Scholarship and practice need to begin considering public engagement in relation to larger social, political, and economic issues. Traditional administrative assessment will always have a place



in community engagement programming, but it is now time to consider how civic and community engagement efforts impact larger real-world issues. The focus should be on measuring the substance of partnerships and the degree to which conditions in the social, political, and economic spheres are impacted by these partnerships. The standard of success should be the degree of impact, not indicators tied to legitimizing the administrative structure of community engagement within higher education. We recognize that this work addresses only three of the many issues that would constitute a full account of power. Further theoretical work is needed in order to develop a more complex articulation of power in the context of engagement. The future sustainability and success of academic engagement depends on creating a theoretical basis that grounds descriptive and empirical research, particularly from the neglected community perspective.

## References

- Allen, D. (2006). *Talking to strangers: Anxieties of citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Boyer, E.L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Boyer, E.L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1(1), 11–20.
- Butin, D. (2010). *Service-learning in theory and practice: The future of community engagement in higher education*. New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Driscoll, A. (2008). Carnegie's community-engagement classification: Intentions and insights. *Change, The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 40(1), 38–41.
- Enos, S., & Morton, K. (2003). Developing a theory and practice of campus-community partnerships. In B. Jacoby & Associates (Eds.), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp. 20–41). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Glassick, C.E., Huber, M.T., & Maeroff, G.I. (1997). *Scholarship assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Griggs, H., & Stewart, B. (1996). Community building in higher education: To bring diverse groups together with common goals. *Education*, 117, 185–187.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. New York, NY: Beacon Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Israel, B.A., Schurman, S.J., & Hugentobler, M.K. (1992). Conducting action research: Relationship between organization members and researchers. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 28(1), 74–101.
- Jameson, J., Clayton, P., & Jaeger, A. (2010). Community engaged scholarship as mutually transformative partnerships. In L. Harter, J. Hamel-Lambert, & J. Millesen (Eds.), *Participatory partnerships for social action and research* (pp. 259–277). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Miller, J. (1997). The impact of service-learning experiences on students' sense of power. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4(1), 16–21.
- Mittelmark, M.B. (1990). Balancing the requirements of research and the needs of communities. In N. Bracht (Ed.), *Health promotion at the community level* (pp. 125–142). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Moje, E. (2000). Changing our minds, changing our bodies: Power as embodied in research relations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(1), 1–18.
- Nyden, P., & Wiewel, W. (1992). Collaborative research: Harnessing the tensions between researcher and practitioner. *The American Sociologist*, 24, 43–55.
- Powell, K., & Takayoshi, P. (2003). Accepting roles created for us: The ethics of reciprocity. *College Composition and Communication*, 54(3), 394–422.
- Rhoades, G. (2009, January-February). Carnegie, DuPont Circle and the AAUP: (Re) Shaping a cosmopolitan, locally engaged professoriate. *Change* 41, 8–15.
- Sandmann, L.R., Kliever, B.W., Kim, J., & Omerikwa, A. (2010). Toward understanding reciprocity in community-university partnerships: An analysis of select theories of power. In J. Keshen, B. A. Holland, & B. E. Moely (Eds.), *Advances in service learning: Research for what* (pp. 3–23). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Sandmann, L.R., Moore, T.L., & Quinn, J. (2012). Center and periphery in service-learning and community engagement: A postcolonial approach. In J. A. Hatcher & R. G. Bringle (Eds.), *Understanding service-learning and community engagement: Crossing boundaries through research* (pp. 25–46). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Sandmann, L.R., Thornton, C.H., & Jaeger, J.A. (2009). *Institutionalizing community engagement in higher education: The first wave of Carnegie classified institutions* (New Directions in Higher Education,



No. 147). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley Publishing.

Sandy, M., & Holland, B.A. (2006). Different worlds and common ground: Community partner perspectives on campus-community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 13(1), 30–43.

Singer, M. (1993). Knowledge for use: Anthropology and community-centered substance abuse research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 37(1), 15–25.

Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smith, M. (1994). Community service learning: Striking the chord of citizenship. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 1(1), 37–43.

Sockett, H. (1998). Levels of partnerships. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, 8(4), 75–82.

Stanton, T.K. (2007). *New times demand new scholarship: Research universities and civic engagement: Opportunities and challenges*. The University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from [http://www.compact.org/initiatives/research\\_universities/](http://www.compact.org/initiatives/research_universities/)

Still, A.W., & Good, J.M.M. (1992). Mutualism in the human sciences. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 22, 105–128.

Stoecker, R., Tryon, E.A., & Hilgendorf, A. (2009). *The unheard voices: Community organizations and service learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Todd, C.M., Ebata, A.T., & Hughes, R., Jr. (1998). Making university and community collaborations work. In R.M. Lerner & L.A.K. Simon (Eds.), *University-community connections for the twenty-first century* (pp. 231–254). New York, NY: Garland.

Van de Ven, A.H. (2007). *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Wuthnow, R. (1999). Mobilizing civic engagement: The changing impact of religious involvement. In T. Skocpol & M. Fiorina (Eds.), *Civic engagement in American democracy* (pp. 331–365). New York, NY: Russell Sage.

## About the Authors

Lorilee R. Sandmann is a professor in the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy at The University of Georgia. Brandon W. Kliever is an assistant professor of civic engagement at Florida Gulf Coast University.





# Assessing the Culture of Engagement on a University Campus

Nancy Franz, Jeri Childers, and Nicole Sanderlin

## Abstract

This article describes one team's efforts to assess the culture of engagement at Virginia Tech. The team utilized a two-pronged approach to analyze the current culture of engagement on campus. This included focus groups with faculty, administrators, and graduate students in two colleges at the university to address pedagogy, implications, and practical issues related to engagement. Analysis of college strategic plans was also completed to assess language related to engagement and engaged scholarship. We found why faculty, administrators, and students conduct engagement work and the challenges and opportunities of doing so. We also discovered what criteria these individuals use to determine quality engagement, what they believe engagement on campus should look like, and the products derived from engagement work. This article describes our team's efforts and documents the lessons learned to inform similar efforts on other campuses.

## Introduction

Enhancing the engagement culture on a university campus is a multifaceted effort. These efforts range from a one way outreach from the university to the community, to continuing education offerings, to applied pedagogy, to community-based research.

Despite the incorporation of the term "engagement" into strategic plans, mission statements, and organizational structures, outreach and engagement activities are often not fully institutionalized or as highly regarded as other missions of the university. As a result, how to more fully incorporate engagement into the academic cultures of our universities has become a national discussion. These discussions are especially salient for land-grant universities, for which engagement is a stated mission. These institutions continue to work to institutionalize and enhance engagement on their campuses.

A key component of catalyzing cultural change is assessing the current culture of an institution to inform an appropriate change strategy. This project as part of that work examined what Virginia Tech faculty, graduate students, and administrators perceive as the engagement culture on campus. The team conducted eight focus groups with faculty, graduate students, and administrators in two colleges at the university—the College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE) and the College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS)—with the intent of further refining the definition of engaged scholarship, identifying barriers to engagement, enhancing opportunities for engagement, and creating internal and external opportunities for engagement collaboration.

Engagement terminology and intent was also analyzed in campus strategic plans to assess the culture of engagement at Virginia Tech.

## The Literature That Guided Us

O'Meara, Saltmarsh, and Sandmann (2008) frame the paths institutions take in strengthening the culture of engagement in their institutions. Holland (2005a, 2005b) described the steps on the path as levels of institutional commitment to community engagement and provided a framework for assessing commitment and culture change. Institutions with high commitment to community engagement view engagement as a central and defining characteristic, making it visible in mission statements, strategic plans, leadership rhetoric, organizational structures, curricula, promotion and tenure practices, hiring guidelines, external communications, and capital campaigns. This commitment is fully integrated into the fabric of the institution. Evidence of its integration is measurable as shown by the Penn State UNISCOPE project (Hyman et al., 2001-2002).

Ryan (1998) identified the competencies required of both leaders and institutions committed to a culture of engagement. Kezar, Chambers, and Burkhardt (2005) outlined the institutional change process in the academy, describing the institutionalization of engagement in terms of a national movement within higher education and as a process of culture change on campuses. Kezar cites key methods for facilitating organizational change that are evidence-based and measurable. Sandmann (2008) conceptualizes both the pathway of institutionalization and





the role university leaders play in shaping and transforming the culture of engagement.

The change process requires institutions and institutional leaders to intentionally build a culture of engagement, including building an infrastructure to support the development and delivery of programs that provide measurable and sustainable results. Fostering leadership commitment requires the president and provost to develop a network of leaders across institutions that are able to articulate the vision, mission, and strategy of engagement and engaged scholarship (Childers et al., 2002). Creating and fostering a network of leaders with these competencies for engagement becomes a major mechanism of organizational change. A key role of administrators in supporting culture change is to make engagement visible in rhetoric and in demonstrated results, such as rewarding faculty, celebrating engaged scholarship, providing internal funding for engaged scholars, and aligning vision and practice (Driscoll & Sandmann, 2004). Driscoll and Sandmann (2004) clearly define a methodology that institutions can use to prepare the ground for assessing institutional culture and for providing administrative leadership to support engaged scholarship. Their work informed this study by providing a framework for assessing the culture, developing the focus group questions, and for shaping the analysis and recommendations. Their findings related to 1) assessing and achieving “institutional fit” for engagement, 2) setting an inquiry-based agenda for assessment, 3) identifying connections between engaged faculty, 4) supporting engaged faculty, and 5) exploring criteria for assessing and evaluating engaged scholarship and informed our study and serve as an excellent starting point for other institutions assessing institutional culture and readiness for institutional change. In particular, their findings indicate that the critical element of this assessment is determining the expectations that faculty and administrators have for engaged scholarship. Seeking the answer to this question became the cornerstone of our study.

Ramaley (2002, 2005, 2011) described how higher education institutions achieve transformational change and become learning organizations. In 2011, at the Virginia Tech program the Engagement Academy for University Leaders. Ramaley provided a framework and described processes of routine institutional change, adoption of innovation or strategic change, and transformative change and how engagement is viewed by institutional leaders during these change

processes. Ramaley highlighted measurable steps that promote deep change and influences of the adoption process. Her framework facilitates the study of the institutionalization process and its impact on students, faculty, and the institution itself.

Any adoption of innovation within a university causes shifts in the organization’s culture. Universities that have adopted engagement, that is embedded the values and principles of engagement into the mission statement, strategic plan, faculty roles, and reward policies, and operating practices of the institution will have undergone organization and culture change. The scholars of engagement have studied organizational change in higher education and noted that the movement toward institutionalization of engagement in the organization’s culture is not a short or easy path and that some institutions may not succeed on their initial attempts at culture change (Holland, 2005b; Levine, 1980; Sandmann & Weerts, 2008). While the scholarship of engagement has yet to be fully embraced widely across institutions or disciplines, an increasing number of early-adopting institutions are moving down the path of culture change. Sandmann and Weerts (2008) have developed a framework of analysis of organizational culture that can explain why some institutions embrace engagement and why some institutions struggle with the change process. A key component of the ease of adoption is related to the change strategy used to introduce change. The first step in developing an appropriate change strategy is assessing the current culture of the institution. There are a number of strategies that can be employed during the assessment process.

## Goals and Methods

To assess the culture of engagement at Virginia Tech, the research team strove to:

- Reveal actual practice at the university
- Refine the definition of engaged scholarship
- Include all types of faculty/staff, diverse colleges, and administrative units
- Identify barriers
- Enhance opportunities

To meet these goals, a mix of research methods was utilized. First, eight focus groups were conducted with 62 faculty, graduate students, and administrators in two colleges (see Table 1). The College of Natural Resources and Environment





**Table 1.** Project Focus Group Participation Summary

College* (n = 2)	Group (n = 8)	Number of Participants (n = 62)
CAUS, CNRE	Graduate Students	5
CAUS, CNRE	Graduate Students	6
CNRE	Faculty	6
CNRE	Faculty	10
CAUS	Faculty	9
CAUS	Faculty	13
CNRE	Administration	7
CAUS	Administration	6

\*CAUS (College of Architecture and Urban Studies), CNRE (College of Natural Resources)

(CNRE) and College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS) were chosen for two reasons: a) their disciplinary traditions as applied colleges with strong outreach and engagement activities and b) members of the research team worked within these colleges and therefore had access to key administrators and faculty in each college. Internal Review Board (IRB) human subjects approval was secured in order to undertake this research. The focus group protocol was then piloted with select graduate students before full implementation. Second, strategic plans from all Virginia Tech colleges were also attained and analyzed for attention to engagement using Holland's matrix (1997).

This section explains the rationale and procedures for conducting focus groups and document analysis in this study.

### Focus Groups

Focus groups bring together a group of people to discuss a particular topic or range of issues. Focus groups are designed to determine the perceptions, feelings, and thinking of participants about issues, products, services, or opportunities. In addition, focus groups are regularly used to provide insight on organizational issues (Krueger & Casey, 2009), and are commonly found in organizational research (Schwandt, 2007).

As outlined by Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook (2007), there are several signature aspects of focus groups useful to this study. First, focus groups allow the gathering of qualitative data from individuals who have experienced a particular concrete situation that serves as the focus of investigation. In this case, the situation was engagement at Virginia Tech. Second, focus groups

aim to better understand the group dynamics that affect individuals' perceptions, information processing, and decision-making. As described by Patton (2002), through the interaction of key actors in focus groups, data quality is enhanced as "participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other" (p. 386). Additionally, in a group setting participants stimulate each other's responses, often leading to an exchange of ideas that might not occur through one-on-one interviews (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Capturing these dynamics is important when exploring the colleges in which faculty work. Third, a main belief behind focus groups is that live encounters with groups of people will yield incremental answers to behavioral questions that go beyond the level of surface explanations, thereby revealing deep insights (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). As such, the group involvement of focus groups often elicits emotions, associations, and motivations not revealed in individual interviews.

In addition to these aspects, there are several additional advantages to utilizing focus groups. Focus groups serve as an efficient source of data collection, as the researcher learns the perspectives of numerous individuals within the span of approximately one hour (Patton, 2002). In addition, the open response format of focus groups provides an opportunity to obtain large amounts of rich data in the respondents' own words (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). Finally, focus groups are enjoyable for participants, (Patton, 2002), which encourages sharing of perspectives. Because discussions are relaxed, participants often enjoy sharing their ideas and perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Despite these advantages, there are some





limitations to focus groups. Participants may not share complete or genuine perspectives due to political concerns or group think (Cresswell, 2005; Patton 2002). Group think is a phenomenon in which individuals may conceal or confuse their personal perspectives to appear in alignment with group trends and priorities (Carey & Smith, 1994, Fontana & Frey, 1994). In other words, the concern that others in the group may disagree with their perspectives or that their answer could reflect negatively on them could cause participants to suppress or invent an answer (Krueger & Casey, 2009). To compensate for these potential weaknesses, focus groups in this study were completed with multiple groups within each college. Two focus group sessions with faculty and one focus group with administrators allowed comparison of responses within each college. In addition, a second data collection method—document analysis of strategic plans—was utilized in this study to provide triangulation of data with focus groups and field notes.

### Focus Group Procedures

Focus group participants for each of the two colleges and three groups from within each college (faculty, administrators, and students) were chosen through convenience sampling (i.e. potential participants were selected from those who were close at hand). The CNRE and CAUS associate deans created a list of faculty involved with engagement work and invited them to attend the focus groups. Sixteen faculty members participated in the two CNRE focus groups and 22 faculty members participated in the two CAUS focus groups. For the administrators' focus group, all administrators were invited to attend by their dean or an associate dean. Seven administrators from CNRE and six from CAUS participated in the focus groups.

For the graduate student focus groups, an invitation to participate in the research project was sent twice through the graduate school's announcement listserv, which reaches all graduate students enrolled on or off campus. A total of six students participated. Although college affiliations were not targeted for graduate student participants, those students who responded and participated were all enrolled in CNRE and CAUS, respectively. The five graduate students participating in the focus group pilot also granted permission to use their comments for this project.

Although focus groups allow flexibility in the content and sequence of questions asked, it was

important to maintain consistency of procedures across all the focus groups. First, in cases in which consent forms had not yet been signed and received, they were presented, read, and signed before the focus group officially began. Second, as recommended by Merriam (1998) and Patton (2002), the facilitator took minimal notes during the focus groups to maximize listening and eye contact. To capture ideas and comments, between two and five note takers were present at each focus group. Third, each focus group ended by inviting participants to share other information related to the topics discussed and inquiring if participants had any further questions about the study. By opening the door for additional insights and addressing participants' concerns, the researchers sought to maximize the benefits of the focus groups.

Following the recommendations of numerous qualitative research experts, conversations of all focus groups were audio taped (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). Audio taping was useful to provide a complete record of the discussions and a reference for voice inflections and other nuances not captured by note takers during or after the focus group sessions.

### Document Review

Collection of documentation was an important part of this project. Although documents may include a wide range of materials (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002), in this case the documents reviewed included strategic plans from seven Virginia Tech colleges and the Graduate School.

Analysis of the strategic plans served important purposes for this study. First, documents provide exact information (Yin, 2003). Since organizational processes in higher education institutions tend to have a paper trail that can be mined for empirical research (Patton, 2002), documents enable the researcher to not only confirm, but provide complete details on evidence presented in interviews and focus groups (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2005). Second, documentation is an unobtrusive way to obtain and assess data (Yin, 2003). Lastly, documents enable the researcher to make inferences about the culture of engagement at the institution, to be explored during focus groups (Yin, 2003). Information in documents also provided context and confirmation for data collected from focus groups. For example, by observing the strategic plans of the two colleges studied, the researchers





**Table 2.** Methods Used to Improve Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Transferability

Credibility: Readers know results are consistent with data collected (internal validity)	Trustworthiness: Readers know findings can be trusted (external validity)	Transferability: Readers know findings relate to others' experiences (reliability)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- prolonged engagement in the field</li><li>- research team and note taker debriefing and examination</li><li>- constant comparative method of data analysis</li><li>- analytic induction</li><li>- discussion of researcher bias</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- constant comparative method of data analysis</li><li>- analytic induction</li><li>- discussion of researcher bias</li><li>- thick description developed of engagement experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- discussing unique cases and the possible resultant effects on the data</li><li>- utilizing a research team and note takers of those being studied to guide research design, participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and findings dissemination</li><li>- discussion of researcher bias</li></ul>

could observe the frequency and levels of engagement communicated by each college, thereby confirming comments made during focus groups.

### Document Collection Procedures

The documents utilized in this study were strategic plans from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, College of Business, College of Natural Resources and Environment, College of Engineering, the College of Science, and the Graduate School. To collect these documents, the researchers first searched the websites for each of the eight units to locate plans posted online. In cases where plans were not available online, the dean of each unit, through his or her assistant, was contacted and asked to provide the strategic plan for their college by email. These plans provided documentation of college-wide work, including priorities, objectives, and strategies.

One challenge in the document collection process involved revisions to the strategic plans. Some colleges were updating their plans at the time of this study. Therefore, a few strategic plans were more current than others, depending on the college revision processes.

### Data Analysis

Focus group data were analyzed by hand, noting common themes within and across groups. Researchers coded lines in the notes to identify emerging themes. Quotes from the notes were then arranged around each theme. After the coding process was conducted by individuals, the team as a group compared and contrasted interpretations

of the themes and patterns. This practice moved back and forth between inductive and deductive processes across focus groups. These procedures follow the case analysis processes suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) and grounded and pattern theory approaches to data analysis (Cresswell, 1998; Strauss, 1987).

Several steps were taken to enhance the credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability of the data (Koch, 2006; Anfar, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Rogers & Cowles, 1993). Table 2 describes these actions in detail.

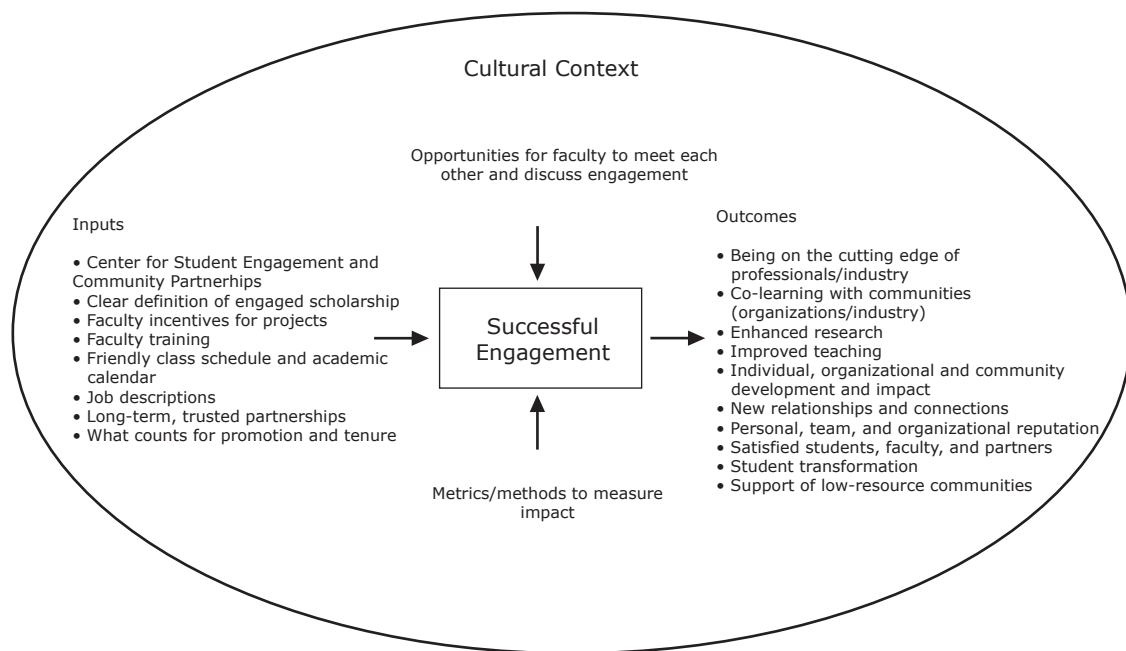
Strategic plans were plotted on the engagement matrix (Holland, 1997) and compared with focus group findings. Key word comparison was used to plot the plans on the matrix.

### Findings

At Virginia Tech, specific factors are perceived by faculty, graduate students, and administration as leading to successful engagement. Findings are summarized in Figure 1. Most often discussed about the engagement culture was the role of promotion and tenure for measuring the impact of engagement for faculty. A variety of results from successful engagement were also identified. Specific findings are detailed below.

**What is engagement?** Three predominant perspectives on engagement were expressed in the focus groups. Engagement was defined as: a) one way outreach from the university, often continuing education offerings (it is interesting to note that this definition is not consistent with the definition and principles of engagement and is evidence of a lack of a shared definition of engagement), b) student learning through service-learning and other forms of applied pedagogy, and





**Figure 1.** Campus Engagement Model

c) human satisfaction through problem solving, development of reciprocal relationships, trust building, contributing to the common good, and increased reputation and self-esteem. Some faculty saw engagement as a natural part of the research process.

**Why do faculty, administrators, and graduate students conduct engagement work?** The main reason these individuals engaged with communities was for the intrinsic value of the experience. They also believed engagement helped them keep in touch with industry and professions to be aware of trends, issues, and opportunities for student career development. Finally, they believed engagement improved their teaching and research efforts. One faculty member said, "The community has more to give me than I've had to give them."

**What are the challenges to conducting engagement work?** The most voiced challenge in conducting engagement work was faculty recognition. All participants felt the promotion and tenure system and administrators do not fully value engagement or that engagement "doesn't count." Other commonly voiced challenges to engagement were the time needed to develop partnerships and other engagement logistics, funding for engagement activities, and the differences between academic and community cultures. One long-time faculty member said, "Everyone who I have seen try [to get promotion with engagement work] has failed." Another said, "The university has a funda-

mental structure and culture that runs counter to engagement."

**What are the opportunities created by engagement work?** The most common benefit of engagement was the enhanced reputation of students, faculty, and the university. Participants also said engagement can lead to better teaching and research, funding for projects, valuable connections with those outside the university, and career development for students. As mentioned by one faculty member, "They [students] are really excited to work with actual people on actual projects."

**Who does engagement?** Most focus group participants believed engagement is the responsibility of everyone on campus due to the land-grant mission and the university's motto, "That I may serve." Campus centers and groups were specifically mentioned that focus on engagement. There was a strong feeling that people who conduct engagement work are those with a passion for it. Some faculty and administrators believed this work is best carried out by those with tenure.

**Where does engagement take place?** Faculty and students engage with a wide variety of audiences in many venues from local to international. Some faculty feel the campus climate values and supports international engagement work more fully than local engagement. One faculty member said about her local work, "If Appalachia was another country, [my engagement work] would be highly valued."





**What criteria determine quality engagement?** Participants most often felt the hallmarks of quality engagement were ongoing, reciprocal relationships with community partners, the ability to evaluate and share the impacts of engagement, and serving a need or solving problems. Other criteria for quality engagement included feedback from partners, ownership by the community of the project, co-learning between partners, scholarship, pedagogical impact, personal development, and being meaningful for all involved. One faculty member summed up the criteria of quality engagement as, “Serves a need, solves a problem, addresses real world issues, is targeted, relevant, and has duration.”

**What should engagement look like?** Overall, participants want engagement to be more fully supported and valued. Suggested methods for how this might be achieved included improved integration of engagement in the promotion and tenure process and increased support for engagement through the words and actions of administrators. Specific recommendations included increased funding to support engagement work, the provision of release time, sabbatical, and graduate assistant positions, mentoring and training for faculty, logistical assistance for engagement projects, and networking opportunities with other faculty. They also requested changes in the academic culture to more fully address community needs since academic and community needs often differ and this can stall action. Other suggestions to enhance engagement were expanding the university’s engagement strategic plan focus, work load balance with other missions, and to make engagement voluntary for faculty. One faculty member said he needs “a system where we’re not swimming upstream.” Overall, faculty want more support for engagement activities but not in exchange for increased bureaucracy.

**What are the products of engagement work?** A variety of engagement products were mentioned by participants. The general categories were scholarship, physical artifacts (i.e. plans and designs), successful long term partnerships, student development, faculty development, project development, enhanced personal and institutional reputation, and enhanced teaching and research. One senior faculty member said, “I’m asking better research and scholarly questions due to engagement. [My work is] more relevant and more powerful.”

**What are the similarities and differences on perceptions of engagement between focus groups?** Overall, the CNRE focus groups centered

more fully on research and engagement while the CAUS groups focused more on teaching. The CNRE faculty described the natural complementarity of discovery and engagement while the CAUS faculty described teaching and engagement as fully integrated. There were no notable differences between faculty and administrators within the two colleges on these topics. This difference in perception may be due to the nature of norms of the disciplines in these two colleges (Diamond & Adam, 1995).

Faculty believed engagement improves teaching and research. They were worried about measuring engagement and the mixed messages they get from administration on the value of engagement. For example, they found the recommendation to convert engagement into publications as a sign that administration does not understand what engagement is or the time it takes to conduct it. Finally, faculty believed engagement is critical for transformation of student perceptions and practices.

Students saw engagement as real life application of academic work. They believed faculty need more training in how to engage with communities. They believe the term “service” has baggage in communities. Students also believed one goal of engagement work was to tell the untold or under-represented stories about communities. Overall, students were more focused on the personal benefit of expanded learning as a result of engagement rather than how engagement could fit into teaching or research.

**What do college strategic plans say about engagement?** We assessed the level of engagement and engaged scholarship in college strategic plans using the Holland Matrix (1997). It was often difficult to find language pertaining to the concept of engagement and engaged scholarship in the plans. However, no one college strategic plan ranked consistently high or low for support of engagement. The majority of college mission statements did not reflect engagement but the plans showed strong integration of engagement into external communications and fundraising with stakeholders. According to the plans, institutional leadership and the organizational structure supported engagement, but all colleges ranked low for supporting engagement through promotion, tenure, and hiring. This was consistent with the findings of the focus group discussions. There were a variety of degrees to which colleges described the integration of engagement into student involvement and curriculum. All but two colleges described integrating engagement into faculty involvement with community-based



research and learning. Almost all of the college strategic plans indicated support for community involvement through partnerships with communities.

**Other thoughts about engagement from the focus groups.** Participants offered a variety of suggestions for improving the engagement culture at Virginia Tech. These included sharing engagement models from other universities, encouraging a bottom-up approach to culture change, providing more opportunities for faculty to meet and learn from each other about engagement, provide more incentives for faculty to engage, and recognition that engagement is not always consistent with the university as an economic enterprise. They also suggested that engagement needs to be more clearly defined internally. As described by participants, the community members that faculty and students work with are not concerned with the scholarship of engagement—how engagement work is termed or defined by the academy—as long as they get help with problems and issues.

### Lessons Learned

What seemed like a relatively straight forward plan to determine what faculty, administrators, and graduate students in two colleges at Virginia Tech believe about engagement instead became a study of a very complex concept. We hope these lessons below help other institutions with engagement work.

**Building on the University's History and Vision.** Virginia Tech has a long history of engagement due to its land-grant status, motto, and long held values of public service. This history positioned the institution well to more fully integrate engagement into the university's culture that resulted in receiving a Carnegie Engagement Classification, being awarded the C. Peter Magrath/W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award, and creating a campus Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships. These actions converged as a critical tipping point in institutionalizing engagement at Virginia Tech. Assessing the culture of engagement on any campus is context-specific. Other universities undertaking a similar assessment should design assessment tools with their specific history, context, vision and mission in mind.

**The Need for Recognition and Rewards.** The major theme that surfaced from all groups was that engagement does not count as much at Virginia Tech as it should and that more support is needed to carry out strong engagement. When you unpack

the issues embedded toward this sentiment from an organizational perspective, there is evidence that the institution does not have a unified view of scholarship or a unified typology for publicly engaged scholarship. There may also be a lack of a shared understanding of how to appropriately document this scholarship for accurate assessment and evaluation of the scholarship within the department, college, or institution. This finding is consistent with the literature on engagement (Doberneck, Glass, & Schweitzer, 2010; Finkelstein, 2001; Nicotera, Cutforth, Fretz, & Summers-Thompson, 2011). However, in spite of this perception, everyone we interviewed highly valued engagement both personally and professionally for students, communities, faculty, and the university. Focus group participants were highly motivated by the intrinsic value of their engagement activities even though they perceived an absence of extrinsic rewards such as promotion and tenure.

We discovered that words count. Faculty, administrators, and students want to know how the university defines engagement and why it should be conducted. It is also clear that incentives count. Everyone felt the engagement culture at Virginia Tech could be enhanced by providing a variety of ways to recognize and reward quality engagement. A joint effort by university administrators and faculty to tenure and promotion guidelines could improve recognition of these activities. At Virginia Tech, the Committee for Outreach and International Affairs could serve as a catalyst for this process. At other institutions committees should begin the process of reviewing reward mechanisms for engagement work in collaboration with those faculty members who are heavily engaged. One example of this process is the Penn State UNISCOPE effort (Hyman et al., 2001-2002).

Faculty, students, and administrators believe engagement is more than service-learning. They asked that a wide portfolio of engagement topics and activities be recognized and valued by the university. These appear to be important levers for catalyzing cultural change in disciplines, departments, and colleges.

**Incorporating Student and Faculty Paradigms.** The difference in perspectives between graduate students and faculty should be noted. Passion for engagement expressed by students is based on giving back to communities and helping unheard voices be heard. On the other hand, faculty and administrators focus on the academic benefits of the engagement process such as improved



teaching and research. A productive engagement culture would ideally incorporate both of these perspectives—both the personal, intrinsic value of engagement work as well as the scholarship of engagement. Future research to assess university culture would benefit by including the perspectives of graduate students, many of whom will become future faculty members and will thereby shape engagement activities on their own campuses.

**Integrating Teaching, Research, and Engagement.** Faculty and students often articulated the tensions between academic and community work. To address many of these tensions they integrated core elements of their academic work with their community engagement. For example, faculty indicated their work with communities improved their research questions and helped them generate increased revenue through grants and contracts. They also stated that students more deeply understood how theory works by applying it to community-based projects. Graduate students intentionally integrated their community engagement into course assignments and research projects. It is clear that faculty and students who successfully engage with communities as academics focus on integration rather than separation of academic and community work.

**Connecting Engaged Faculty Members.** The design of our study to include focus groups as a methodology was an intentional effort to connect faculty members who are conducting engagement work. We also started each focus group with participants providing case studies of engagement work. This helped set the stage for those who are cautious about engagement to get a better sense of what those faculty actively involved in engagement work were doing. Indeed, a theme that emerged in the focus groups with faculty members was that they wished for more opportunities to connect and network with other faculty members across the university who are also conducting engagement work. As individual interviews would not have allowed for these connections and conversations to occur, focus groups were a highly successful method to enhance personal connections.

**Expanding the Definition of Engagement.** We discovered in our focus group conversations and in follow-up discussions with engagement groups on campus that some people are trying to expand what counts as engaged scholarship while others are trying to make engaged scholarship fit the traditional revenue generation and research publication lens. Participants in this project felt the traditional scholarship lens does not recognize

the intrinsic value of engagement, the time and effort required to conduct engaged work, the value of locally and regionally disseminated knowledge, and the lack of refereed publication venues. These different approaches to defining and shaping engagement as a part of scholarship illustrate that future assessments of campus culture would benefit from discussions with faculty, administrators and students about how they themselves define engagement and how it is defined in their disciplines or at other institutions.

*Shaping Culture as an Act of Scholarship*

The research team's project design aimed to contribute to the scholarship of engagement. We designed the project to provide scholarly products about engagement. We gained Institutional Review Board approval for the project and made participants fully aware of our intent to share what was learned about engagement in scholarly ways. We chose to involve a variety of partners using action research methods to help determine the best next steps to enhance the engagement culture based on our findings.

**Providing Tools and Resources.** We discovered that strategic planning documents at Virginia Tech take on a variety of forms and use a variety of lenses in their development. A next step to more fully communicate engagement and engaged scholarship intentions through strategic plans could include 1) using consistent engagement language in all strategic plans across the university, 2) making administrators, those who create strategic communication plans, and those faculty participating in the strategic planning process more aware of the distinctions outlined in the Holland Matrix, 3) addressing the lack of information on the relationship of engagement to promotion, tenure, and hiring on campus, and 4) aligning the strategic intention and rhetoric. In many cases, institutions have aligned promotion and tenure policies with the strategic intent to elevate engagement but there is a lack of awareness of the policy changes, a lack of a unified view of scholarship, and/or a lack of consistency in the messages in strategic communications across the institution.

A theme that emerged in the focus groups was that many faculty were unsure how to go about measuring engagement. It appears that models of a wide range of engaged scholarship products or artifacts and specific efforts to help measure engagement that leads to those products could be the most important lever for changing the engagement culture on campus.



All of the focus group participants felt there was a wide variety of resources available to help them with their engagement agenda. However, they didn't know much about these resources. The project team suggested developing an online engagement toolbox for faculty, students, and engagement partners to address this need and to help unify the engagement entities on campus. We found it is critical to have a clear vision for who owns and maintains the website to ensure long term benefit for users.

**Learning about Culture Change.** Culture change is a slow process and must involve a broad cross-section of the university to be successful. It is very much an evolutionary act rather than a revolutionary one. Clear definitions of new terms, a wide range of engagement models, and engagement champions appear to be critical elements for culture change. We found change processes work best when they are inclusive, not exclusive. In fact, we hope our work will stimulate conversations with campus staff and engagement partners to determine how their perspectives are similar and different about the engagement culture for a more holistic and successful engagement effort.

### Limitations of the Study

This qualitative study focused on the engagement experiences at one university and may not reflect the engagement culture or context at other institutions. The two colleges selected for inclusion in the focus groups were chosen based on the visibility of their outreach activities and a historical tradition of engagement at this particular university and may not reflect all disciplines and units at the university. The faculty and administration in this study were invited to participate by administrators so may have felt obligated to participate. Staff were not included in the study since we were specifically interested in the faculty engagement experience and their perspectives of the administrators who guide them and the students they work with. A needed expansion of this research would include the perspectives of staff involved with engagement activities. Also, there was minimal student participation. In spite of these limitations, we believe all institutions, academic units, and disciplines working to enhance community engagement will find helpful suggestions and affirmations in our findings and lessons learned.

### Conclusions

Despite strategic emphasis on engagement, for a strong university-wide engagement agenda to be sustained as an integral part of the daily life of the university, faculty members need to see benefit to their own professional development as well as benefits to students, the university, and the community. With increasing pressure for faculty members to demonstrate excellence in research, scholarship, or creative activities, faculty members' engagement efforts need to be recognized and valued by the principal advancement structures of the university, the promotion and tenure process, and other relevant reward structures. Traditionally, outreach and engagement activities have not been as highly regarded as other missions of the university. Ultimately, those faculty involved in engagement work must voice their perceptions of the value of engagement work. To generate broad support for engagement among the faculty as a whole. Engagement activities must be viewed as equal with other missions in the evaluation of faculty.

Culture change is never easy for large organizations. However, change can often be catalyzed by listening to the voices of those closest to the points of change and taking action accordingly. This project discovered, through the voices of faculty, administrators, and graduate students, that engagement is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that requires a holistic and intentional change strategy at many levels. The passion for engagement work at many institutions is clear. However, the academic context often runs counter to the engagement culture. Universities need to find mechanisms that bridge these gaps to enhance engagement.

### References

- Anfara, V., Brown K., & T. Mangione. (2002). Qualitative analysis on stage: Making the research process more public. *Educational Researcher*, 31(7), 28-38.
- Carey M., & Smith, M. (1994). Capturing the group effect in focus groups: A special concern in analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 4, 123-27.
- Childers, J., Martin, M., Dann, M., Dufour, C., Bruns, K., & Wise, G. (2002). Outreach and engagement: Building and sustaining learning communities in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 7(1), 19-27.
- Creswell, J. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed). Upper Saddle River,





NJ: Pearson Education.

Cresswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Diamond, R., & Adam, B. (1995). *The disciplines speak: Rewarding the scholarly, professional, and creative work of faculty*. Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education.

Driscoll, A., & Sandmann, L. (2004). The roles and responsibilities of academic administrators supporting the scholarship of civic engagement. In M. Langseth & W. Plater (Eds.), *Public work and the academy: An academic administrators' guide to civic engagement and service-learning* (51-66). Bolton, MA: Anker.

Doberneck, D., Glass, C., & Schweitzer, J. (2010). From Rhetoric to reality: A typology of publicly engaged scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 14(1), 5-35.

Eisenhardt, K. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550.

Finkelstein, M. (2001). Toward a unified view of scholarship: Eliminating tensions between traditional and engaged work. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 6(2), 35-44.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (361-76). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. London: Sage.

Holland, B. (1997). Analyzing institutional commitment to service: A model of key organizational factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4, 30-41.

Holland, B. (2005a). Institutional differences in pursuing the public good. In A. Kezar, T. Chambers, & J. Burkhardt (Eds.), *Higher education and the public good* (235-259). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Holland, B. (2005b). *Scholarship and mission in the 21st century university: The role of engagement*. Paper presented at the Australian Universities Forum, Sydney.

Hyman, D., Gurgevich, E., Alter, T., Ayers, J., Cash, E., Fahnlne, D., Gold, D., Herrmann, R., Jurs, P., Roth, D., Swisher, J., Whittington, S., & Wright, H. (2001-2002). Beyond Boyer: The UNISCOPE model of scholarship for the 21st century. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 7 (1&2), 41-65.

Kezar, A. (2001). *Research-based principles of change. Understanding and facilitating organizational*

*change* (113-123). Washington, DC: ASHE-ERIC.

Kezar, A., Chambers, T., & Burkhardt, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Higher education for the public good: Emerging voices from a national movement*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Koch, T. (1994). Establishing rigor in qualitative research: The decision trail. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19, 976-986.

Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2009). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Levine, A. (1980). *Why innovation fails: The institutionalization and termination of innovation in higher education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nicotera, N., Cutforth, N., Fretz, E., & Summers-Thompson, S. (2011). Dedication to community engagement: A higher education conundrum. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 4(1), 37-49.

O'Meara, K., Saltmarsh, J., & Sandmann, L. (2008). An integrated model for advancing the scholarship of engagement: Creating academic homes for the engaged scholar. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 12(1), 47-64.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ramaley, J. (2002). Moving mountains: Institutional culture and transformational change. In Robert M. Diamond (Ed.) *Field guide to academic leadership*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Ramaley, J. (2005). Scholarship for the public good: Living in Pasteur's quadrant. In Kezar, J., Chambers, J., & Burkhardt, J. and Associates. *Higher education for the public good: Emerging voices from a national movement*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Ramaley, J. (2011). *Tales of a three-time president: Retrospective and prospective supporting university-community collaboration through transformational change*. Unpublished paper at the Engagement Academy for University Leaders, Executive Leadership Development Program. Roanoke, VA.

Rodgers, B., & Cowles, K. (1993). The qualitative research audit trail: A complex collection of documentation. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 16(3), 219-226.

Ryan, J. (1998). Creating an outreach culture. *Journal of Public Service and Engagement*, 3(2), 22-34



Sandmann, L. (2008). Conceptualization of the scholarship of engagement in higher education: A strategic review, 1996-2006. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 3(1), 91-104.

Sandmann, L., & Werts, D. (2008). Reshaping institutional boundaries to accommodate an engagement agenda. *Innovative Higher Education*, 33(3), 181-196.

Schwandt, T. (2007). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stewart, D., Shamdasani, P., & Rook, D. (2007). *Focus groups: Theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### About the Authors

Nancy Franz is associate dean for extension and outreach for families and 4-H youth director at Iowa State University. Jeri Childers is a fellow at the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement at Virginia Tech. Nicole Sanderlin is director of international programs in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech.





# Community Engagement Grants: Assessing the Impact of University Funding and Engagements

Monica Leisey, Valerie Holton, and Timothy L. Davey

## Abstract

While university-community partnerships have become a common practice for many universities, little empirical evidence is available exploring the impact of such partnerships for either the community partners or the university. This project collected data from a series of university-community engagement grants funded by Virginia Commonwealth University to understand the importance and consequences of its funding for the community partners, the university, the faculty, and the community members involved with the projects. Characteristics of the funded projects contributing to positive and continued engagement were identified. Differences in outcomes as identified by the university partner and the community partners were also identified.

## Introduction

Partnerships with community organizations provide universities opportunities for enhanced scholarship by providing additional settings for service-learning and community-based research. Furthermore, these partnerships can lead to improved outcomes for community members through the application of research findings to targeted areas of concern. Scholars cite university support for community engagement activities as a crucial factor in the success of partnerships (Chickering, 2001; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Fisher, Fabricant, & Simmons, 2004; Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998; Holland, 1997; Holland, 2000; Mulroy, 2004; Thornton & Jaeger, 2006; Ward, 1996). In their study of institutional support for service-learning, Chadwick and Pawlowski (2007) point to the issue of funding as a crucial indicator of an institution's level of commitment. Defining funding as being either "soft" (external) or "hard" (internal), the authors argue that institutions that support community engagement mostly through internal money are more likely to institutionalize and sustain the activity (Chadwick & Pawlowski, 2007). The allocation of university funds for community engagement activities is seen as a strong indicator not only of the support for community-based teaching, learning, and scholarship, but also as a sign that engagement has a value that holds permanence and prominence within the institution's mission.

In addition to official expressions of support for community engagement and the use of university funds to sponsor initiatives, an important element of commitment to the community is the assessment and evaluation of

the impact that engagement efforts have had on the community (Holland, 2000). The impact of the projects for both the community partners and the university is important not only to warrant the continuation of the projects, but also to provide data regarding important dimensions of the university-community relationship building process.

As external funding sources move to prioritize translational research, defined by the National Institute of Health (n.d.) as university-community research that moves scientific discoveries from the bench to the bedside. Understanding how to foster and support such engagement is imperative. While the literature offers some evidence about what makes a productive university-community partnership, information regarding the impact of the financial support for the projects is sparse. Given the current U.S. economy and the declining availability of resources for university-community collaborative partnerships, this study was designed to assess the impact of engagement projects supported by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

## Projects Included

VCU has incorporated working collaboratively with the surrounding metro region into its strategic plan. Included in the plan was creation of the Division of Community Engagement, establishment of a vice provost for Community Engagement, development of a university-wide Council for Community Engagement (CCE), hiring a full-time service-learning director with faculty rank, as well as creating a culture of community engagement in all university units. Financial support as an indicator of sustained commitment





to community engagement has been an important dimension of the University-Community Partnership Experiment at VCU since 1998 when external funding for such projects began.

Two separate funders of university-community projects were included in this impact assessment, as both funding sources focused on the development and maintenance of community collaboration and partnership. One funder was the Institute for Women's Health (IWH) Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Seed Grant program. The other was the CCE's Mini-Grant Program. Both programs support collaboration between the greater metro community and the university; however, the intentions of the programs are slightly different.

IWH awarded funds to investigators who had proposed CBPR projects in the area of women's health. For example, one of the grants funded exploration of the feasibility of providing a Tai Chi class at a neighborhood community center. A second funded measuring changes in perceived risk for cancer following an educational intervention about the human papilloma virus. Inherent to the CBPR methodology is a collaborative relationship between the investigator and the community partner. IWH and CBPR seed grantees are required to demonstrate such relationships within the research proposal. Two rounds of seed grants have been funded and are included in this impact analysis. A total of 13 projects received funding through this source. While the project proposals were submitted by the primary investigator, a relationship with the community partner had to be explicitly demonstrated. In some instances the partners had worked together previously; other partnerships were in the beginning stages of their relationships. Funding decisions were made through a rigorous review panel process created to mirror extramural funding sources.

The CCE projects were designed to enhance and increase university engagement with the community and contribute to scholarship and service-learning. Grants were awarded to proposals that demonstrated interdisciplinary involvement of faculty and students, addressed community-identified needs, and demonstrated substantive collaboration with at least one community partner. For example, one of the research grants funded a project that developed an interdisciplinary mental health program to increase service capacity, improve service delivery, and reduce treatment dropout for adolescent clients at a local mental health program. Another used university students

as mentors to help at-risk adolescent boys create documentary films about their community experiences. Twenty-five projects have been funded over the past three years. Decisions were made following a rigorous application and peer-review process through the community engagement grant and gifts subcommittee. This process involved members of the university and members of the public who had worked on similar projects in the past.

A final report was required identifying whether project objectives and goals were met. The report was submitted by the primary investigator, but was expected to be written by the investigative team, not just the primary investigator. Investigators for this study were interested in moving beyond knowing whether the projects were successful as measured by outputs to what impact the funding of the projects had for both the community partners and the faculty members who were awarded the funds. In essence, the investigators wanted to get to the "so what" question—why should the university continue to support such projects given the diminishing fiscal resources available. An online survey was created to capture data to help answer this question.

## Method and Procedure

Using Inquisite software, two similar yet different surveys were developed for the two groups of participants: the community partners and the faculty members. The survey included questions pertaining to project outcomes, contribution to scholarship, and development of the collaborative relationships as well as those exploring the extent to which grants helped leverage other support and student involvement. Faculty members who received the grants and their contact at the community partner organization were invited to participate in the confidential survey via email. The email included the name of the project as well as information pertaining to each project's goals and objectives and the amount awarded for the project. The recruitment email and survey were sent by an administrative assistant ensuring the survey's confidentiality.

Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted for the quantitative data using SPSS 17.0. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed by two of the investigators, comparing identified themes and negotiating differences of interpretation. Qualitative themes are provided with supporting data to demonstrate the investigators' understanding of the categories.



## Results

Participants included 21 faculty members and 16 community partners; 16 of the participants had been funded by the CCE grants and 5 of the participants had been funded by the IWH grants. Community partners included 8 nonprofit organizations, 5 area schools, and 3 local government agencies. Faculty participants included 5 members from the College of Arts and Humanities, 2 each from the schools of Education and Medicine, and 1 each from 7 other schools or departments. Participant responses were grouped according to their role: community partner participant or faculty member participant.

As these projects were intended to be collaborative, both groups were asked about their perception of the faculty members' role. Perceptions of the role of the faculty member in the projects were very similar. Community partners reported that the majority of faculty members related to the project as a partner (71.4%), not as a leader. Faculty also reported that they perceived their role primarily as partner (78.9%). It is interesting to note that 81.3% of the community partners had collaborated with a VCU faculty member before collaborating on this university grant-funded project.

Student participants were also queried. They were asked about the number of students involved and whether or not there were opportunities to use their participation in the project for future scholarship. Community partners reported that for most of the projects (60%) there were between 1 and 10 students involved; however, there were also projects that included between 10 and 30 students (20%). Data disclosed that several students were involved in small research efforts, and that at least one student used the project for additional research beyond the scope of the funded project. Two other students participated as part of their internship experience, linking their course work with hands-on experience.

Faculty participants reported similar student engagement. At the time of the impact analysis, 14 students were working with faculty on presentations and 5 on publications resulting from the project. The survey showed that several students went on to graduate school based on their experiences, using the data for doctoral dissertations; one had used the experience as entry into the professional world, giving credit to the project for his ability to obtain and succeed in his position.

**Project Outcomes.** Interestingly, there were differences between the participant groups on

whether the projects were able to meet stated project outcomes. Community partners asserted that in 86.7% of the projects, all or most of the outcomes had been met. Faculty partners reported that 75% of the projects met all or most of the stated outcomes. Reasons for meeting the project outcomes were quite similar; however, it was interesting to note the differences shared.

Data from community partners identified two themes regarding the ability to meet project objectives: relationship with faculty and organizational commitment, with the latter seeming to be the most salient factor. Reasons provided by the community partners included "outstanding collaboration, cooperation, and partnership between all of the involved entities, and excellent, effective, and efficient collaborative partnership between our organization, university staff, and students."

Commitment was also important on the part of the organization. As one community partner stated: "Commitment from the organization to utilize information generated from the project" was an important aspect of being able to meet the project's stated goals. Community partners were also able to identify time as one of the most important issues with respect to meeting the stated objective, for example, one partner said:

We began the summer classes very quickly after being notified of the grant award, so we struggled to launch our program initially. However, we are now moving closer to having enough participants; and the project has not yet been completed and has not yet had a chance to reach all of its goals. The goals will take at least a few years to be reached completely. However, the project is well on its way.

Faculty reported two main reasons for having reached the stated objectives: partner relationships and additional resources. Partner relationships included such statements as: "Wonderful support from community partner." "Key players were committed to the project and there was ample support." "Community partners were flexible and supportive."

Resources noted were: "Additional grants that I wrote have been funded and have helped to provide resources." "Additional teacher training workshops." "Training curriculum was developed successfully." Faculty partners also identified the same reasons—partner relationships and resources—for not being able to meet stated objectives.



Issues with partner relationships that did not help meet goals included: "Difficulty with two faculty members' participation in a timely manner." "Still in progress, community partner and IRB delays." Resources were also identified as a reason for not meeting stated goals: "Our community partner experienced the loss of a major contract." Reasons for not meeting the stated goals also included statements that may have hinged on partner relationships, including "Several partners abandoned the project." "[The project was] overly ambitious." "Data collection was difficult because of trust issues within the community, translation issues, recruitment of adequate number of participants into focus groups, and lack of resources for student support."

While not an explicit project outcome, the application process for both funding sources had indicated that scholarly outputs were an expectation of the projects funded. Faculty members reported that 10 of the projects resulted in one publication or conference presentation, seven of the projects resulted in two publications or conference presentations, and two of the projects resulted in multiple publications/conference presentations.

**Unexpected Project Outcomes.** Community partners and faculty partners also identified outcomes that went beyond the stated goals/objectives for the funded projects. Community partners asserted that the projects were instrumental in their having a better process of providing services. These comments included: "We have improved the management of our donated medication stock." "Both students and faculty prefer the online method to site-based older model." "Better understanding and perception of mental health issues studied."

Faculty partners asserted that all participants in the funded project benefited in ways that were not expected. From the faculty member's perspective, students, regardless of whether they were in high school or college, benefited. Examples of the added value included: "High school students are being offered provosts' scholarships and opportunities to participate in Honors College programming as freshmen." "Graduate students report greater comfort in practicum and internship experiences." "Increased numbers of graduate students request clinical placements." Similar benefits were identified for VCU as follows: "[VCU] developed an elective." "[VCU provided] further funding for a resident to expand model." "Significant clinical effects that were not expected [knowledge building]."

The unexpected benefits identified by the faculty partners for the community partners included increased ability to provide services as noted by the community partner responses: "Expansion of the model to other free clinics," and "Project has a potential benefit in recertifying providers in a more convenient and cost effective manner." But the faculty members also identified additional unexpected positive outcomes for the community partners that included: "Project included in grant application." "Participants all felt their lives were changed as a result of participating."

**Possible Future Collaboration.** All survey participants were asked about their interest in collaborating on another university-community partnership. All the community partners reported that they would be open to collaborating with VCU faculty in the future. Reasons provided depended on the positive experience with the faculty partner: "This has been a very positive partnership." "I have personally enjoyed my association with the instructor, consultant and the students." With the added resources that VCU was able to bring to the project, "[the university] has been able to provide knowledge and expertise, as well as resources to the project." "Faculty and students commit time, funding, mentoring, [and] training support that is invaluable to all area students and particularly those from underserved communities."

Interestingly, the vast majority of faculty members also reported being willing to collaborate again (89.5%), with only approximately 10% not sure or unwilling to collaborate with community partners in the future. Reasons provided for continued interest in collaboration included: "They were enthusiastic, and contributed much to the project." "Great partner, strong staff, resource shares—willing to develop and implement innovative models, collaborative clinicians." "It was a very good working relationship." "They have been very supportive and open to my work." Only one negative comment was provided by faculty members to support their unwillingness to again collaborate with the community partners: "Complete lack of response to calls and emails, and apparent racism." While this comment was not explained, it seems clear that this is an example of a lack of relationship between the community partner and the faculty member.

**Impact.** While important, meeting the stated goals/objectives for the funded projects was understood by the investigators as an insufficient measure of the actual impact of the funding



provided. Additional qualitative questions were asked of the participants in an attempt to understand the impact of the projects for VCU and the greater Richmond community.

When asked about the impact of the project, both community partners and faculty partners identified added value for the students. Students were understood to have experienced benefits beyond the funded projects by both faculty partners and community partners. Community partners shared that: "Students who participated in the project will be better prepared to contribute professionally." "[The project] provided several students real life experiences." "[The project] provided an opportunity for the students to understand the caregiver's role, the responsibilities, the frustrations and the rewards." "[The students experienced] positive and emotionally supportive learning environment." Faculty members reported: "[Students achieved an] enhanced understanding of an underserved community and population within minutes of campus." "[The project] provided publication opportunities for graduate students." "Raised interest for graduate students to pursue and apply for seed grants." "Increased training opportunities for [VCU] graduate students."

The greater Metro community also experienced benefits not explicit within the funded projects. Community partners identified additional community resources, as an important dimension of the project's impact. They stated that: "Community was provided enhanced care and more patient appointments." "At-risk African-American males found their voice and a vision for their future." "[The project] helped the community understand the value of a resource in their midst." One community partner shared that: "The community, especially the students, now has a huge buy-in to seeing the resource developed in a responsible manner—promoting conservation while allowing others to enjoy the opportunity to explore nature," an important yet unmeasured impact of this particular project. Faculty partner perspectives of the impact on the greater community included statements such as: "Area teachers were exposed to concepts, ideas, and curriculum ideas that they could take with them." "A citizen's grassroots group has come back to life and shows good support for the program." "Improved quality of mental health care for families in Richmond." Additionally, one faculty member commented that: "Underrepresented students from Richmond had the chance to

experience VCU."

Less explicit benefits for the greater Metro region were also noted by both faculty partners and community partners. These were mostly in the area of data collection in order for the region to be better understood, for example: "Project provides useful local data in order to understand Latino community needs." "Data will hopefully provide a better understanding of the factors studied." Additionally, the opportunity to build a relationship with VCU was also an added benefit noted by both a community partner and a faculty partner.

The community partner organizations and the university also experienced added benefits. According to community partners, the VCU experience enhanced their scholarship and their connection with the community, will "provide valuable research for the school" [and] "additional field sites for university staff." An important benefit noted by one community partner was that the project: "Brought together experts from a number of different disciplines and one of the lasting effects will be the continued team approach to research." Faculty partners identified university benefits in terms of VCU's ability to achieve its mission: "The project built stronger relationships among the departments." "[VCU's] mission of community engagement has been highlighted." Community partner benefits were perceived in similar fashion: as an increased ability to provide services... "build a health careers pipeline," "resource sharing," and "providing innovative models of care in the underserved."

## Discussion

Increasingly universities are recognizing that engagement with their local communities for either collaborative projects or for research are positive additions to a university's mission. With the advent of the community engagement classification through the Carnegie Foundation, more universities are searching for collaborative opportunities with their local communities. This impact analysis demonstrates that the benefits of such projects are widespread and valuable. The community partner and the faculty partner experience explicit and implicit benefits. There are corresponding benefits for the community partner agency, the university, and especially for any student lucky enough to be involved in the project.

Collaboration between community partners and universities can be a difficult process as there



are often differences in professional expectations. As reported by Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006), relationships between universities and their local communities have a history of being difficult. As universities have begun reaching beyond their walls for research sites and internship opportunities, they struggle with recognizing the needs and priorities of the community (Shannon & Wang, 2010). It is essential to explore the impact of such projects in order to demonstrate the “so what” dimension of the work being done. The outputs from each of these studies are important for the individual projects, but they may not be enough to demonstrate the actual impact of supporting university-community collaboration. Assessing the impact of VCU’s projects is a beginning look at why such projects are important.

### Limitations

It is important to note that this project is limited, as all surveys are. Because respondents were not randomly selected, it is possible that community partner participants were only those who were pleased with their collaborative experiences; all community partner participants said that they were very pleased with relationships with the university. It is also possible that the community partners were not comfortable disclosing negative information for fear that their answers would be linked to their name or organization, even though the recruitment email promised confidentiality. Additionally, all the community partners stated that they had worked with the university on projects prior to the funded grant project. This may also indicate that only community partners with positive track records collaborated on the funded projects. As is the case with all open-ended survey questions, some of the data provided did not respond to the questions asked. This could be an indication that there were important questions not asked of the participants, or that the questions were not worded well. One last limitation is that some of the projects had been finished for over two years, possibly shifting how the participants remembered the projects.

### Conclusion

The movement toward research methodologies that enhance the ability to facilitate community change, such as community-based participatory research, is still relatively new for many universities. The impact of university-community partnerships must incorporate an evaluative process to understand the outcomes of projects for both partners and the differences that partnerships

and projects make. This project provides insights into the ways that outcomes and differences are understood by each partner. It also raises important questions about the relative importance of the outcomes of the project, when compared to the impact of the relationship between the university and community partner.

### References

- Bruning, S.D., McGrew, S., Cooper, M. (2006). Town-gown relationships: Exploring university-community engagement from the perspective of community members. *Public Relations Review*, 32, 125-130. DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.02.005
- Chadwick, S.A., & Pawlowski, D.R. (2007). Assessing institutional support for service-learning: A case study of organizational sensemaking. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 13(2), 31-39.
- Chickering, A. (2001). *Maximizing civic learning and social responsibility*. Boston, MA: New England Resource Center for Higher Education.
- Ferman, B., & Hill, T.L. (2004). The challenges of agenda conflict in higher-education-community research partnerships: Views from the community side. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 26(2), 241-257.
- Fisher, R., Fabricant, R., & Simmons, L. (2004). Understanding contemporary university-community connections: Context, practice and challenges. In T.M. Soska and A.K. Johnson (Eds.), *University-community partnerships: Universities in civic engagement*. Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Press.
- Gelmon, S.B., Holland, B.A., Seifer, S.D., Shinnamon, A., & Connors, K. (1998). Community-university partnerships for mutual learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 5(1), 97-107.
- Holland, B.A. (2000). Institutional impacts and organizational issues related to service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* [Special Issue: Strategic Directions for Service Learning], 52-60.
- Holland, B.A. (1997). Analyzing institutional commitment to service: A model of key organizational factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4(1), 30-41.
- Mulroy, E.A. (2004). University civic engagement with community-based organizations: Dispersed or coordinated models? In T.M. Soska and A.K. Johnson (Eds.), *University-community partnerships: Universities in civic engagement*. Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Press.
- National Institute of Health Common Fund



(n.d.). Translational Research. Retrieved from the *Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives* website: <http://commonfund.nih.gov/clinicalresearch/overview-translational.aspx>

Shannon, J., & Wang, T.R. (2010). A Model for university-community engagement: Continuing education's role as convener. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 58, 108-112. DOI: 10.1080/07377361003661499

Thornton, C.H., & Jaeger, A.J. (2006). Institutional culture and civic responsibility: An ethnographic study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(1), 52-68.

Ward, K. (1996). Service-learning and student volunteerism: Reflections on institutional commitment. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 3, 55-65.

### About the Authors

Monica Leisey is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Salem State University, Salem, MA. Valerie Holton is a field instructor in the School of Social Work at VCU. Tim Davey is an associate dean for community engagement and director of field instruction and associate professor in the School of Social Work at VCU.



# Set Charge about Change: The Effects of a Long-Term Youth Civic Engagement Program

Robbin Smith

## Abstract

In an effort to create an enhanced sense of civic engagement within the U.S. population, a variety of initiatives have been launched recently. Predominantly, these efforts have focused on young adults in high school and college. Although some programs have targeted younger age groups as well, they are typically short in duration. This case study focuses on a small group of elementary school students who participated in a long-term youth engagement program. The participants' civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy were measured at regular intervals throughout the 17 months of the program. The findings suggest that, at the end of the project, all of the participants demonstrated increased civic knowledge and skills, and an enhanced sense of civic efficacy. An analysis of what happened during the project and the lessons that may be applicable to those who undertake civic engagement projects with younger children is also offered.

## Introduction

For some time now, academics, politicians, and the public have expressed a renewed interest in civic engagement. Thomas Erhlich (2000), in his call to revitalize higher education and democratic institutions, defined civic engagement as "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes" (Preface, vi).

## Literature Review

Many cite the work of Robert Putnam (2000) as the impetus for a larger national discussion on civic engagement. In his seminal book, *Bowling Alone*, he suggested that Americans suffered from a civic malaise that was particularly acute among the young. Putnam concluded that, "social capital has eroded steadily and sometimes dramatically over the past two generations" (p. 287). His conclusions were particularly problematic because not only did they suggest there had been a marked decline in collective action, but they also implied that the very notion of an engaged citizenry, capable of participating effectively and exercising its rights and responsibilities, had been diminished, thereby jeopardizing the health of democratic institutions. Putnam's work became a clarion call for all who had expressed concern about related declines in such disparate areas as voter turnout, trust in government and elected officials, and civic attachment.

While many researchers focused on the adult population, some scholars sought to determine if

the lack of community involvement in the general population was the result of a decline in youth civic education and civic engagement, and, if so, how to reverse that trend. Several subsequent studies found that U.S. students exhibited the same lack of engagement that Putnam had decried. For example, the collaborative Carnegie Foundation and CIRCLE Report on the Status of Civic Education and Citizenship (2003) found that "young Americans are not prepared to participate fully in our democracy now and when they become adults" (p. 8). The serious implications of the Carnegie-CIRCLE study were highlighted by the results of the subsequent 2006 National Assessment of Educational Progress study that demonstrated that in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades, only a fraction of U.S. students scored at the proficient level in civics (NCES)<sup>1</sup>.

Some of the solutions proposed and pursued to address the decline in youth engagement took the form of governmental action. When state legislators became concerned about the lack of civic knowledge in public schools, numerous states enacted measures emphasizing the importance of civic education. These measures ranged from symbolic gestures (e.g., legislative resolutions), to professional development opportunities (such as funding for teachers in the area of civics), to financing formal studies on how to increase youth civic engagement.

Other scholars, however, sought to show that the situation was more complex and yet less dire than that posited by Putnam. For example, Marcello and

<sup>1</sup>Although in the 2006 study, fourth grade students performed better than their counterparts did in 1998 (NCES, 2007). The 2010 study found a slight increase in proficiency for 4th graders (NCES, 2011).





Kirby (2008) examined trends in voter turnout and concluded that the outcome was not as dismal for youth engagement as Putnam had purported. Their conclusions were supported further by subsequent research on youth voter registration and voter turnout trends (Marcello, Lopez, Kennedy, & Bar, 2008). Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, and Delli Carpini (2006) also challenged Putnam's findings and argued that the youth of the U.S. demonstrated greater levels of involvement in charitable activities and higher levels of volunteering than older Americans. In addition, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz (2001) surveyed 90,000 students across several domains including democracy and citizenship, national identity, and social cohesion and diversity on behalf of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Torney-Purta et al. (2001) found that most of the students had a basic understanding of democratic values and processes. Moreover, a majority of the respondents recognized that electoral participation was an important facet of citizenship. All of these researchers concluded that there was renewed hope for youth civic engagement. Even Putnam (2005) acknowledged this renewed optimism indicating that much of the recent research was "a most welcome harbinger perhaps of a new-found respect for the values of public service" that might lead to "regenerating social capital" (p. 8).

Unfortunately, much of this research typically defined youth engagement as something that was only relevant to those 14 years of age and older. In fact, Marcello and Kirby (2008), Zukin et al., (2006), and Torney-Puerta et al. (2001) all surveyed students 15 years or older. And yet, many scholars who study youth civic engagement acknowledge that it is critically important to introduce engagement opportunities as early as possible and to develop activities that are long-term in nature. Levine and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2010) argued that, "by developing young people's skills of social analysis and deliberation, we help to promote democratic decision-making and thereby optimize society's support for capabilities" (p. 124). Berti (2005), for example, found that between the ages of 10 and 11, children build "a fairly standard conception of political parties, as connected to elections, in conflict with each other, aimed at producing leaders and having to do with government" (p. 82)<sup>2</sup>. Regardless of children's capacity to learn civic concepts, the Carnegie-CIRCLE report noted that "[b]etween 1988 and 1998, the proportion of fourth-graders who reported taking social studies daily fell from 49 percent to 39 percent, a steep decline that reflects

a general trend away from civics and social studies in elementary grades" (Civic Mission of Schools [CMS], 2003, p. 15).

Just as civic education has declined, so too have the opportunities to develop civic skills through youth engagement. For example, a study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS, 2006) found that only 38% of U.S. youth 12–18 years old report that they have engaged in school based service and most of this participation occurs during high school, as "[h]igh school students are 37% more likely than middle school students to participate in school-based service" (p. 7). Moreover, of the middle school students surveyed, only 7% indicated that they had engaged in a school-based service project while enrolled in elementary school. While such findings certainly are cause for concern, there are a few programs in existence today that provide an opportunity to introduce civic engagement concepts to younger age cohorts and to examine the impact of those programs in terms of: 1) the children's civic knowledge including their views of citizenship; 2) their development of concomitant civic skills; and 3) the cultivation of a civic disposition that inclines them to act as engaged citizens (i.e. civic efficacy). Youth in Action is one such program. Public Achievement (PA), which is the focus of this paper, is another. Before presenting the case study findings of PA's effect in these three areas, however, it is important to clearly delineate how the terms "civic knowledge", "civic skills", and "civic efficacy" are conceptualized.

### Civic Knowledge

The CMS formed, as an outgrowth of the 2003 Carnegie-CIRCLE report, was one of the first organizations to formally conceptualize "civic knowledge". To them, this consisted of an understanding and awareness of: important historical events; issues and actors; the structures and process of government and the legal system; the role of social movements; and the relevant social and political networks for change (<http://civicmissionofschoools.org>). This conceptualization echoed that of several previous researchers. For example, Jennings and Niemi (1974, 1981) argued that political knowledge encompassed an understanding of political structures and major political actors (including international political leaders), the party system, major historical events, and significant public policy issues. Similarly, Galston (2001) claimed that civic knowledge was limited to a

<sup>2</sup> Astuto and Ruck (2010) found that as early as preschool, young children develop identifiable civic capacities.



familiarity with “political institutions and processes, leaders and parties, and public policies” (p. 221). In a slightly different vein, Torney-Purta et al. (2001) contended that civic knowledge included an understanding of democracy, governmental and economic processes, institutions, and values, as well as the social participation values of one’s nation and the socio-economic stratification and opportunity structures for selected groups in society.

As conceptualized in this paper, civic knowledge consists of: 1) an understanding of governmental structures, actors and processes; 2) a comprehension of governmental outputs in the form of policies; 3) knowledge of non-governmental forces such as the media, interest groups, and social movements; and 4) familiarity with the prominent social networks within a given community setting.

### **Civic Skills**

While civic knowledge has a degree of certainty in its conceptualization, civic skills, unfortunately, do not. Often when academics discuss civic skills, they refer to those skills necessary to be effective citizens. In other words, they delimit and define civic skills as those skills necessary for effective political participation. At times, effective political participation is further reduced to simply electoral participation. In short, under these definitions, civic skills are merely those skills necessary to vote, and being a “good citizen” is one who actually votes. However, the concepts of civic skills and citizenship are much broader than that and widely debated. Dalton (2008) confronted this dilemma in *The Good Citizen*. He distinguished between two forms of citizenship: duty-based citizenship and engaged citizenship. Duty-based citizenship included the traditional forms of political participation such as voting, paying taxes, and obeying the law. He noted that, “these norms reflect the formal obligations, responsibilities, and rights of citizenship.” Engaged citizenship, on the other hand, related to one’s concern for others and the community and having the capacity to “understand the opinion of others” and “a moral or empathetic element of citizenship” (p. 28). Dalton found that members of the 1980s generation and Generation X were more likely to demonstrate engaged citizenship than duty-based citizenship that was more commonly found in the pre-World War II and Baby Boom generations. Thus, the younger age groups displayed a greater “concern for social rights and the protection of the disadvantaged” (p. 91). Dalton concluded that, “these orientations should promote tolerance” (p. 226).

Likewise, Loeb (2010) advocated for a form of citizenship promoted by William Deikman in which individuals have a “receptive consciousness” that “helps us view ourselves as part of a larger life process” and “lets us reach out to our fellow human beings” (p. 236). Likewise, Jennings and Niemi (1974) found that good citizens (as conceptualized by their respondents) were those who were tolerant of others, got along with other people, were considerate, and were willing to be active in their communities. Thus, while the definitions of citizenship vary, (e.g. the engaged citizenship of Dalton or the informed citizenship of Galston) at their root, they share a common concern with tolerance and respect for the views of others.

Respect for divergent views is a particularly important civic skill emphasized in youth engagement programs. In fact, the Carnegie-CIRCLE (2003) report concluded that one of the goals of civic education in all schools was to develop “competent and responsible citizens” who are “concerned for the rights and welfare of others, are socially responsible, [and] willing to listen to alternative perspectives” (p. 10). In short, active listening and a respect for diverse approaches are both key components in citizenship and, thus, important civic skills in youth engagement programs. Moreover, according to CMS, youth engagement programs should develop two strands of civic skills: 1) intellectual civic skills, such as critical thinking, active listening and “understanding, interpreting and critiquing ...different points of view” (Civic Competencies, para 2); and 2) participatory civic skills such as effective communication, building consensus, community mapping, and organizing groups. Finally, quality civic education programs will teach tolerance and respect as well as a “rejection of violence”, a “desire for community involvement”, and “personal efficacy”(Civic Competencies, para 3). Thus, civic skills relevant to youths extend beyond traditional political participation and include the ability to empathize, respect diverse opinions, and communicate effectively. The concept of the “good citizen”, then, is one rooted in civic knowledge, civic skills and civic efficacy. Efficacy, however, also has a wide variety of conceptualizations and definitions, to which we now focus our attention.

### **Civic Efficacy**

Albert Bandura (1977) argued that efficacy, specifically self-efficacy, was “a belief in one’s personal capabilities” (p. 4). Maddux and Gosselin (2003) added that “self-efficacy beliefs are not concerned with perceptions of skills and abilities divorced





from situations; they are concerned, instead, with what people believe they can do with their skills and abilities under certain conditions” (p. 219). CMS (2005) reiterated this belief by indicating that the goal of civic education should be to educate democratic citizens who “are informed and thoughtful about public and community issues, reflecting a grasp and appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy” and who have a developed sense of “personal efficacy” (Criteria for Success, para. 1). Additionally, according to Kahne and Westheimer (2006), “a sense of efficacy is a key building block for civic commitment.” They contend that, “many educators believe that if we shore up young people’s sense of efficacy (their confidence that they can make a difference), then their levels of civic and political engagement will rise” (p. 289).

Maddux (2005) further differentiated between self and collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the “group’s shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (p. 284). Of course, collective efficacy is related to self-efficacy. In fact, they are “mutually supportive” (Beaumont, 2010, p. 526). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate high collective efficacy and vice versa. Moreover, the skills and knowledge that contribute to a sense of self-efficacy for the individual are identical to those that create collective efficacy among groups. But while Maddux and Gosselin (2003) focused on self- and collective efficacy, Kahne and Westheimer (2006) and Torney-Purta et al. (2001) found distinguishing between internal and external efficacy to be more important in the political realm. .

The sense of political efficacy is usually defined as the attitude that citizens can make a difference in government decisions. It is often thought of as having two parts. External efficacy is the belief that government officials are responsive to citizen input, while internal efficacy is the belief that the individual can mobilize personal resources to be effective (p. 130).

Kahne and Westheimer argued that students in civic education programs may learn that there is a great difference between internal and external efficacy. Students who participate in a program in which they gain internal efficacy may find governmental institutions or actors unwilling to negotiate over certain public issues. In that case, the students do not gain any external efficacy and

may lose internal efficacy as a result. Thus, for the authors, any youth program that focuses on “educating citizens for a democratic society” must encourage students to “gain a sense that they can make a difference and also identify, analyze, and challenge social and institutional practices as they work to create a more just society” (p. 295). According to Torney-Purta et al. (2001), although political scientists have long expressed interest in efficacy as an important concept relevant to adult political behavior, “[t]he community and the school are among the settings in which such efficacy can be experienced, especially by young people” (p. 130). Thus, the evidence indicates that the creation and fostering of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy is vital in youth engagement programs. But how are the conceptions best introduced and developed in young children? This is a question that researchers have increasingly begun to address. An example of one such program that may offer insights into the development of youth civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy is Public Achievement.

### Public Achievement

Public Achievement (PA) is one example of a youth civic education and engagement program with the expressed goal of developing the participants’ civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy. PA is a youth engagement model begun at the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. In the prototypical PA program, college students take a semester-long course on civic education, engagement, and developing the efficacy of young children. The following semester, the college students are assigned to work with groups of children in an elementary or middle school. The children, with the assistance of their college “coach”, select a project that must be public in nature. Often these projects focus on some local concern or issue. For example, recent groups in the U.S. have focused on teen violence, the establishment of recycling programs in schools, or the improvement of the quality and nutritional value of school lunches. Whatever the topic or concern, the college students act merely as facilitators while the younger students develop their projects and see them through to fruition (Hildreth, 2000; Boyte & Farr, 1997).

The elementary and secondary students, as part of PA, gain civic knowledge about local governmental structures, the role of relevant public actors, and the history of related events while learning about civic and political concepts such as community, citizenship, democracy, and power. They also learn



and must master a variety of civic skills, such as team building, negotiating, planning, interviewing, and public speaking. See Figure 1 for an overview of the PA model.

The overall objective is for the students to acquire a greater interest in their own civic life and an ability to participate in the public debates within their own communities. The other goal of PA is to develop a civic disposition in the students such that they develop an appreciation for different views and perspectives and a sense of individual and collective efficacy. In other words, the PA program strives to provide the participants with the knowledge and skills to involve themselves in public work and the willingness to continue that engagement long after the program has ended.

The format of PA has proven to be successful and has been replicated in a variety of communities throughout the US and overseas (e.g., Georgia State College and University, Colorado College, and Northern Arizona University while internationally, programs have occurred in Israel, Northern Ireland, Poland, and Turkey).

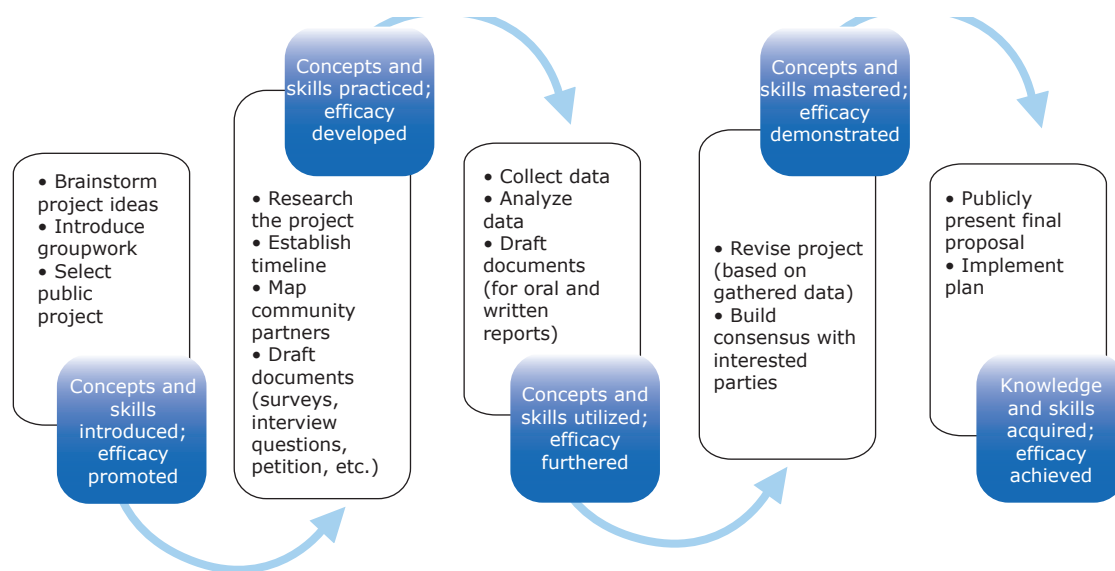
While many researchers and advocates have promoted a variety of approaches for cultivating youth civic engagement in high schools and middle schools, very few initiatives have been attempted at the elementary school level. PA is one of the few that has. In the remainder of this paper, the results of a case study of a 17-month long PA initiative are presented, and a discussion of the extent to which the PA program augmented the civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy of the participants will be reviewed.

## Methodology and Results

In January of 2009, the author began working with a group of fourth grade girls on a modified Public Achievement project that culminated in June of 2010.<sup>3</sup> The overall objective of the project was to encourage these students to view themselves as engaged citizens. The young students committed to meeting and working together every week on a project of interest to them. Prior to the inception of the program, they completed surveys on their civic knowledge, civic skills, and their own sense of civic efficacy. They repeated these surveys at the end of each phase of the project. Additionally, the young women were interviewed throughout the 17-month project about their experiences.

In the inaugural meeting, they identified a variety of potential public issues that they wished to address. Their initial topics included a review of the public library's video selections for young girls, the installation of a map of the U.S. on the school blacktop, and a conservation project. After much discussion and debate, they decided that of primary importance to them was the use of school fields during recess. Years before, the fields had been widely available to all elementary students. However, in recent years, access to the fields had been limited solely to 5th graders and only on an intermittent basis. Thus, the majority of the school children were left with the unappealing option of playing on a

<sup>3</sup>The program was modified because it lasted much longer than the typical one semester program. The project continued 17 months with the same group of young women. Additionally, there was no college student coach. The author served as the coach of the program.



**Figure 1.** The Public Achievement Youth Engagement Program Process



playground largely designed for younger children (i.e. kindergarten–second grade) or hanging out on the blacktop area congregating aimlessly. In both locations, no running was allowed due to risk of injury.<sup>4</sup> Adjacent to the playground, but down a short hill, was a large school field that remained off limits to children of all ages. Thus, the young women in the PA program sought to develop a solution to a problem that they had identified as being important to them: access to a recreational space.<sup>5</sup>

The program progressed over three phases that corresponded to the three semesters that the group worked together. Initially, the students demonstrated almost no grasp of civic concepts and ideas. They had significant difficulty differentiating the public from the private domain. For example, at the first meeting, the students suggested a variety of possible public projects including working for a church or changing the businesses in a local shopping plaza. Moreover, they had almost no comprehension of political actors or the governance structure not only within their own community, but even their own school. While the children could identify the school principal and the curriculum specialist who served as a de facto vice principal, they had no knowledge of their respective roles within the school. Nor did they understand who had jurisdiction over the use of fields at recess (e.g. one thought it was the town, another the principal, a third thought it was the teachers, and the remaining participants claimed not to know at all).

Additionally, they did not express confidence in selected civic skills. None of the group believed that they worked “very well” with children their own age. One of the participants noted that she had said she worked “somewhat well” with children her age because “we argue a lot.” Another participant said she did not like to work with other children her own age because she “liked to work by [her-]self.” Thus, the children demonstrated little civic knowledge and limited civic skills. Not surprisingly, they claimed to have no civic efficacy as well. All of the girls indicated that they believed that they had no opportunity in their own community to express their views even if they wanted to do so. In fact, the children indicated that they did not believe that there was much that they could do to change their lack of access to the school fields. Therefore, their initial evaluation of their own efficacy reflected both a lack of internal and external efficacy. Not only did they not believe

that they could make a difference, they also did not believe that anyone (be it institutions or actors) would be responsive to them. In the first phase of the project, the girls frequently noted that no one ever listened to them so there was no point in speaking up. They were, after all, “just kids.”

In Phase One, which lasted seven months, the children selected their project after much group discussion and deliberation. They then researched the benefits of aerobic versus anaerobic exercise. They collected data on the usage of school fields throughout the community by interviewing their peers at other schools. Also, they learned how to identify those with authority over the fields, evaluate competing demands within the community, map out likely community supporters, and develop interview questions for the variety of interested actors that they identified as relevant to the field issue. They also conducted their first interviews. They periodically reported on the progress of their work over their school’s public announcement system using documents they drafted. Finally, they presented their project and ongoing work to a group of university faculty and to the national director of PA at a meeting held on the university campus to discuss university-community partnerships.

In short, they gained some civic knowledge and civic skills. For example, they learned about the city system of regulating the fields (in both the parks and on school grounds) and they discovered that while the town was responsible for the upkeep of the fields and their usage after school hours, during school hours, the school administrators maintained authority over the fields and controlled access to them. Thus, they understood the relationship between the public works department, the recreation department, and the school administration. They also recognized that in order to achieve their goal, they would have to work through the school administrative network. (See Table 1 for an overview of the knowledge, skills and efficacy demonstrated by the students). Additionally, they had acquired certain civic skills. In this period, they learned to identify a public problem, express their opinions in a constructive manner, actively listen to their peers, plan and conduct their own meetings, and effectively interview adult community members. In fact, at the end of Phase One, one participant said that interviewing was her favorite task. Another student noted that while she still disliked working in groups, she liked PA because PA “works on your teamwork.” The students also learned about certain civic concepts, including public and private work, citizenship, democracy, community and power in

<sup>4</sup> And, in Connecticut, the corresponding risk of litigation.

<sup>5</sup> A typical Public Achievement group has 4–6 members although one coach typically works with two groups simultaneously.



**Table 1.** Knowledge, Skill, and Efficacy Development in a Youth Civic Engagement Program

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<b>Civic Knowledge: Concepts and Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community</li><li>• Democracy</li><li>• Citizenship</li><li>• Public vs. private</li><li>• Power</li><li>• Types of exercise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School administrative structure</li><li>• Jurisdictional responsibilities</li><li>• State regulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School policies</li><li>• Division of school roles</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Differentiation</li></ul>
<b>Civic Skills: Intellectual and Participatory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active listening</li><li>• Build consensus</li><li>• Plan and conduct efficient group meetings</li><li>• Conduct research</li><li>• Develop interview strategies and techniques</li><li>• Power map</li><li>• Data collection</li><li>• Draft documents</li><li>• Public reports</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to identify obstacles and challenges</li><li>• Organize and plan presentations</li><li>• Content analysis</li><li>• Interviewing</li><li>• Survey creation and distribution</li><li>• Initial data collection</li><li>• Data analysis</li><li>• Public presentation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accountability and responsibility</li><li>• Recognition and diverse constituencies</li><li>• Negotiation and mediation</li><li>• Persistence</li><li>• Data collection and compilation</li><li>• Proposal presentation</li></ul>
<b>Civic Efficacy: Internal</b>	Nonexistent	Nominal	Evident
<b>External</b>	Nonexistent	Nonexistent	Evident

this phase.

For all that they gained in civic skills and civic knowledge, however, there was little change in their own sense of self-efficacy. Although they were developing civic dispositions that contributed to a heightened sense of internal efficacy, they still had no confidence that the interested institutions would be responsive to them. For example, they appreciated working in a group and developed a sense of belonging to that group because their peers understood them and they thought they could “work together easier.” The participants noted that they had the ability to “participate in community things.” One young woman even claimed that, “young children can take power and set charge about change.” However, although they were developing an appreciation for each other and their group and a concomitant sense of internal efficacy, they still did not indicate that they had acquired any external efficacy. In fact, 3 out of the 5 children still indicated that they had no ability to affect change in the community because they were “only children.” The one participant who had claimed she could “take power”, in the same survey, wrote that she did not believe she could have a voice in her community because “I am a child.” Another participant said no one would listen to her because she was a child

but she would be able to tell her parents her views and they might be able to make a difference. Her views were echoed by another participant who felt that “kids can make a difference” but only by communicating to adults “what I like/dislike.”

During Phase Two of the project, the students undertook the following tasks: they conferred with a professor of physical education; conducted interviews with selected school officials; engaged in a content analysis of those initial school interviews; gathered all of the findings from their readings and their interviews and summarized then for public presentation; and developed two comprehensive surveys (i.e. one for the students, and the other for the teachers and staff). Moreover, they learned about the history of field usage at the school through interviews with older community members. The students discovered that the current limitations on field usage were a relatively recent phenomenon; that, at one point, the fields had been open to all grades. They also advanced their own civic knowledge when they learned about the school administrative structure. They discovered that the curriculum specialist was actually in charge of teacher and staff assignments during recess, not the principal. In addition, they ascertained that there were state regulations in regards to recess staffing ratios and teacher and





staff contract restrictions on imposing additional recess duties on school personnel. Collecting this information extended their civic knowledge as they began to explore the agencies and organizations that played a role in field maintenance, use, and scheduling. After interviewing the school physical education instructors and learning about their need for field space for certain curricular units, they also began to realize the important role that negotiation and compromise would play in order for them to be successful. And, finally, they further examined the concept of democracy and democratic decision-making as part of their group efforts and during the distribution of tasks as they progressed over the course of the semester. In short, they enhanced their civic knowledge of democracy, the school structure, and the relationship between school policies and state law while also garnering new civic skills such as interviewing, active listening, composing survey questionnaires for differing populations, and compiling several sources of data. They also acquired a variety of important group skills, including engaging those with different perspectives, planning and running meetings, and identifying and addressing future challenges.

Finally, in Phase Two, the students began to demonstrate increased levels of efficacy. That the students indicated they had an increased sense of efficacy in this phase is perhaps not surprising given that Hess and Torney (1967) found that “children’s sense of efficacy increases with age” and that “the sharpest increase occurred between grades four and five” (p. 68), which corresponds to the end of Phase One and beginning of Phase Two for these young women. After scheduling meetings with teachers and school administrators early in the 5th grade school year, for example, the girls commented how they would never have done that before. Four out of five of the participants indicated that they felt more comfortable approaching adult authorities to discuss school issues as a result of their participation in PA. They also began to identify themselves as “good citizens” based on their involvement at school. In fact, four of the five girls ran for the student council executive board that year and three of the four were elected.<sup>6</sup> While two of the girls were still uncertain if they could “contribute to solving problems in their community”, the other three expressed agreement with the statement. Moreover, 3 of the 5 young women strongly agreed that “it is important to be involved in one’s community” while the remaining two said that they agreed.

In the third and final phase of the project, they debated and distributed a series of tasks designed to

achieve their ultimate goal. Teams of two girls each, working in rotation, contacted every classroom teacher in grades 2-5 to arrange a time to survey those students on the use of the fields. They then surveyed every second, third, fourth, and fifth grade classroom in their elementary school using the questionnaire they had designed in Phase Two. They collected and tabulated the results from 223 students and discovered that the elementary school students overwhelmingly favored access to the fields and supported opening the fields five days a week. Additionally, they arranged and conducted individual interviews and surveys with every teacher, administrator, and staff member responsible for recess staffing. A few of those respondents raised concerns about gender exclusion (e.g., the boys might exclude the girls from the more physical games that would take place if the fields were available, whereas on the playground, there was greater gender parity). Many respondents expressed concerns about the developmental differences that would be very apparent if two grades had recess and access to the fields at over-lapping times and they preferred distinct play areas on the field for the different age groups in order to allow for differentiated play spaces. Almost all of the teachers and staff indicated that they did not believe that they had the right to grant students access to the fields. Some thought there was a preexisting rule that forbade the use of the fields during recess, while others did not believe that such a policy existed, but they also did not believe that they had the power to approve such access. Ironically, many of those interviewed noted that while they believed that the students should have access to the fields, they had no ability to change the present situation; in other words, the adults lacked a sense of efficacy.

During the interview process, the teachers and staff informed the students about the school’s emergency response teams (ERTs), the district guidelines in regards to such teams, their roles in the event of a recess emergency, and their potential impact on field accessibility.<sup>7</sup> They examined all of the data that they had collected, wrote a report, and presented their findings to the Student Government Association and to the school curriculum specialist. Thus, the girls gained additional civic knowledge

<sup>6</sup> They actually won the most seats possible because two of the young women ran against each other.

<sup>7</sup> All schools in the district are required to maintain voluntary emergency teams with teachers trained in First Aid and CPR, who, by virtue of their proximity to school emergencies, respond first but who work in cooperation and consultation with the school nurse (West Hartford School Policy 6131.1)



in the third phase of the project. The participants increased their knowledge about the division of functions within the school setting and the teachers' diverse views on appropriate forms of child play.

Moreover, they garnered additional civic skills. The young women gained numerous communication skills, including negotiation and mediation. They negotiated a resolution to the lack of access to field usage that included balancing the overwhelming desires of the students for field access with the state requirements in regards to staffing and the needs of the physical education department. They also learned that there is a crucial difference between agreement and implementation. The Connecticut State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance awarded them a citation for their leadership and their efforts to improve health and fitness in their community. However, when the citation was given, the new staffing schedule for the recess use of the fields existed but was not yet adhered to by the school faculty. Further conversations with the teachers and staff revealed that the necessary communication between the school administrators and the faculty and staff was lacking. The five girls took it upon themselves to breach the communication divide and to resolve this final issue. In other words, they also learned about bureaucracies, organizational inertia, and mediation while mastering patience and persistence. The fields opened for recess use in early June of 2010, approximately 17 months after the project first began.

In this final phase, the young women also demonstrated the highest levels of confidence and efficacy, both internal and external. At the inception of the project, the 5 participants said that they liked to work in groups only "somewhat well" with one young woman still noting that, "I like to work by myself." By the end of the project, 4 of the 5 participants had changed their responses to "very well" with one child commenting that, "Working in groups is fun and helps our social skills." One of the participants noted how her views about group work had changed; "I like it better. It is easier." Likewise, in the beginning of the project, the girls were reticent about working with adults. None of them felt comfortable approaching any of the school administrators, some of the staff and, in one young woman's case, some of the teachers. At the end of the project, 4 out of 5 girls felt more comfortable talking to adults within the school setting, and 3 out of 5 thought it was easier to approach school administrators. They also displayed much higher levels of confidence. Their heightened confidence translated to a higher level of efficacy.

As one participant stated, "People appreciate kids and their power more," while another student claimed that her group made it possible for kids to "achieve something they want to in public." A third participant said she liked PA because it "is a group where we can improve the community." In short, the young women developed both internal and external efficacy.

## Conclusions

Over a 17-month period, these young women gained civic knowledge, garnered additional civic skills, and recognized and appreciated their own sense of civic efficacy. The results of this case study reinforce the arguments of Flanagan and Faison (2001) who contended that students who participate in long-term civic engagement programs are more likely to demonstrate increased civic knowledge, civic skills and civic efficacy than their peers. In fact, the results from the case study of these young women highlight the two main and interrelated benefits of many youth civic engagement programs: 1) such programs operate to increase children's civic knowledge, certain civic skills and civic efficacy; and 2) such programs are good for the long-term health of a democracy.

Increasing the civic knowledge of youths at all age levels throughout the U.S. has become a significant goal of educators, policy practitioners, and politicians. For example, the National Education Association (2011) mission states that the goal of public education in the U.S. is to provide "individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy" (para. 7). Likewise, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, in a 2011 speech, noted that, "a foundation in civics is not a luxury but a necessity." Moreover, he said that, "Students today absolutely need a sense of citizenship, an understanding of their history and government, and a commitment to democratic values.... Civics cannot be pushed to the sidelines in schools" (para. 5). The PA program, in this case study, provided the young women with an opportunity to gain knowledge about their school and the larger community and to do so in a democratic, engaged manner. Finally, Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) introduced legislation in March of 2011 to honor the memory of Christina-Taylor Green, the young girl killed at a "Congress on the Corner" meeting in January of 2011 in Arizona. While such resolutions are normally little more than political posturing, the resolution does acknowledge "the importance of returning the teaching of civic education and civil discourse to schools, especially



for students in grades 6 through 12” and calls for “the Secretary of Education to direct schools receiving federal funding to include instruction in civic education and civil discourse.”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the resolution “encourages schools and teachers to conduct educational programming on the importance and methods of civic education and civil discourse” (House Resolution 181). The methods of a “civil discourse” are found in PA as judged by the tolerance the young women developed for divergent views. Roholt, Hildreth, and Baizerman (2007) also found that PA is a “living citizenship” program in which the participants “learned what it meant to be a member, to do democratic civic practice, to be democratic citizen, and how to do and be this democratic citizens in everyday life” (p. 103).

Additionally, a 2006 evaluation of 556 student participants in PA programs in 2005 and 2006 found that “elementary school students who had sustained participation in PA were more likely than their peers to acquire civic skills and to believe that young people can make a difference in the world. Surveys given before and after program participation showed that sustained involvement in PA was associated with strong increases on measures of civic dispositions, civic skills, and civic engagement outcomes” (RMC, 2006, p. 1). Roholt et al. (2007) note that youth engagement programs, including PA, provide students the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiential education. For the students “[l]earning was not for learning’s sake but was necessary to do the public work, their work as citizen” and they “experienced being and doing citizen” (p. 98). These findings also correlate with McIntosh and Youniss’ (2010) argument that “acquisition of skills and attitudes that constitute the elements of citizenship occurs *in the doing* within a political context” (italics added, p. 23).

Finally, youth engagement programs develop the efficacy of the participants. As Kahne and Westheimer (2006) learned, sometimes these programs develop only the internal efficacy of the group, but sometimes they operate to develop both the internal and external efficacy of the participants. In this case study, the PA participants demonstrated both increased internal and external efficacy. As one student participant said, “I like Public Achievement because I get to help make a difference and have fun with friends while doing it.” Roholt et al. (2007) agree that the students’ claims of wanting to make a difference are an important one:

Wanting to make a positive difference must become mastering the ways of thinking, doing, and being basic to socio-political activism in school, group, and community. ...When civic training is done well, as it often is in PA, and the young people believe they are learning real and useful stuff, they are more likely to become really involved, thus concretizing their typically more vague interests and goals, resulting in deeper commitment to the issue and to being and doing citizen (p. 134).

The idea that youth engagement programs might produce a deeper commitment to the community is an important benefit of such programs as well.

More importantly, and in addition to increasing children’s civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic efficacy, youth engagement programs, particularly those that allow the students to work in groups and increase the participants’ sense of efficacy, may be particularly important for future political participation, attachment, and engagement, and thus, the long-term health of a democracy. Greenstein (1974) suggested that early political learning operated to “maintain, perhaps even reinforce” (p. 83) adult political behavior. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) also found that adults who were active in civic and political affairs in their communities had been active in extracurricular activities at school and in other community and youth groups. Moreover, Flanagan and Faison (2001) explained that:

It is likely that by being a member of a group and helping to define and work toward common goals, one gets a sense of what it means to work for the common good....One identifies with the group, cares about the other group members, and wants to help accomplish the goals of the group. This group identification is an essential part of political development because political goals are rarely accomplished by individuals (p. 519).

Thus, youth engagement activities may play a crucial role in civic and political involvement in adulthood. Pasek, Feldman, Romer, and Jamieson (2008) examined this very phenomenon and found that, indeed, youth engagement programs begun in an urban high school environment did fundamentally alter the participants’ subsequent political participation two years later. Their research showed that “program exposure was consistently

<sup>8</sup>The resolution has been referred to the House Education and the House Workforce committees for further consideration.



related to long-term increases in internal efficacy, political attentiveness, and knowledge of candidate positions" (p. 33).<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Hess and Torney (1967) argued that, "[t]here is a great deal of evidence for the existence of continuity between childhood experience and attitudes and adult attitudes and action" (p. 7).

The long-term importance of youth civic engagement programs for a democracy should not be understated. Nor should the effect of the youth engagement program in this case study. As one young woman noted on her last survey, PA was "a group where kids can achieve something they want to in public." They also want to continue and add to their civic engagement experiences. The PA participants who completed their project in June of 2010 still periodically ask to undertake another. Although the group has scattered to different middle schools, they approach the author with ideas and pleas for a new PA program on a consistent basis. Whether the participants in the program will demonstrate increased involvement in adulthood remains to be seen. Clearly, one year from the end of their project, they still want to be involved and believe that they can make a difference.

## References

- Astuto, J., & Ruck, M.D. (2010). Early childhood as a foundation for civic engagement. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 249–276). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Balch, G.I. (1974). Multiple indicators in survey research: the concept "sense of political efficacy". *Political Methodology*, 1, 1–43.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy. *Harvard Mental Health Letter*, 13(9), 4.
- Beaumont, E. (2010). Political agency and empowerment: Pathways for developing a sense of political efficacy in young adults. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 525–558). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Berti, A. E. (2005). Children's understanding of politics. In M. Barrett & E. Buchanan-Barrow (Eds.), *Children's understanding of society* (pp. 69–104). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Berti, A.E., & Andriolo, A. (2001). Third graders' understanding of core political concepts (law, nation-state, government) before and after teaching. *Genetic, Social & General Psychology Monographs*, 127(4), 346.
- Boston, B. (2005). Restoring the balance between academics and civic engagement in Public Schools. In S. Pearson and S. Halperin (Eds.), *Bridging youth policy, practice, and research* (pp. 1–50). Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.
- Boyte, H.C., & Farr, J. (1997). The work of citizenship and the problem of service-learning. In R. Battistoni and W. Hudson (Eds.), *Experiencing citizenship* (pp. 35–48). Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education.
- Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools: Educating for democracy* (2005). Retrieved from <http://www.civicmissionofschoools.org>.
- Caprara, G., Vecchione, M., Capanna, C., & Mebane, M. (2009). Perceived political self-efficacy: Theory, assessment, and applications. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 39(6), 1002–1020.
- Civic Mission of Schools (2003). *Mission of Schools Report*. Carnegie Foundation and CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.
- Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools* (2004). Retrieved from <http://civicmissionofschoools.org>.
- Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & Stephens, J. (2003). *Educating citizens: Preparing America's undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., & Corngold, J. (2007). *Educating for Democracy: Preparing undergraduates for responsible political engagement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Corporation for National and Community Service (2006). *Educating for active citizenship, service learning. School-based service and civic engagement*. Brief 2 in the Youth Helping America series. Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Dalton, R. (2009). *The good citizen: How a younger generation is reshaping American politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Dávila, A. & Mora, M. (2007). *Civic engagement and high school academic progress: An analysis using NELS data*. CIRCLE working paper #52. The

<sup>9</sup>See also Galston (2003), who argued that a decline in civic attachment and civic education among young people represented a serious long-term threat to representative democracy and public deliberation and that the solution to the disengagement of youth today should be addressed by increasing the emphasis on civics in the educational system. Political science researchers have found that political efficacy is an important determinant of political participation, including electoral participation, support for party platforms, the evaluation of elected officials, and even the decision to run for elective office (see Valentine et al., 2009, and Caprara et al., 2009). In fact research on the role of efficacy in politics and political behavior has been ongoing since the 1960s (for example, Easton and Dennis, 1967, Verba and Nie, 1972, Balch, 1974, and Finkel, 1985.)





Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement.

Dávila, A. & Mora, M. (2007). *Do gender and ethnicity affect civic engagement and academic progress?* CIRCLE working paper #53. The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement.

Dewey, J. (1947). *Experience and education* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan Press.

Duncan, A. (2011). *The Next Generation of Civics Education*. Remarks of U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the iCivics "Educating for Democracy in a Digital Age" conference. March 29, 2011.

Easton, D., & Dennis, J. (1967). The child's acquisition of regime norms: Political efficacy. *The American Political Science Review*, 61, 25–38.

Ehrlich, T. (2000). *Civic responsibility and higher education*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Braxton, J. (1997). The impact of service-learning on college students. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4, 5–15.

Finkel, S.E. (1985). Reciprocal effects of participation and efficacy: A panel analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29, 891–913.

Flanagan, C. (2001). Political Development. In J. Lerner, R. Lerner, & J. Finkelstein (Eds.), *Adolescence in America: An encyclopedia* (pp. 517–520). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Flanagan, C., & Faison, N. (2001). Youth civic development: Implications of research for social policy and program. *Social Policy Report*, 15, 1.

Galston, W.A. (2001). Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4(1), 217–234.

Greenstein, F.I. (1974). *Children and politics* (7th printing). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Harriger, K., & McMillan J. (2002). *Citizenship deferred: Political attitudes, experiences, and entering expectations of first year students at a liberal arts college*. Conference Papers – American Political Science Association [serial online]. August 28, 2002:1–30.

Hart, S. (2009). The 'problem' with youth: young people, citizenship and the community. *Citizenship Studies*, 13(6), 641–657.

Hess, R.D., & Torney, J. (1967). The development of political attitudes in children. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Hildreth, R.W. (2000). Theorizing citizenship and evaluating Public Achievement. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33(3), 627–632.

Hoffman, L.H., & Thomson, T.L. (2009). The effect of television viewing on adolescents' civic participation: Political efficacy as a mediating

mechanism. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(1), 3–21.

House Resolution 181. Honoring the memory of Christina-Taylor Green by encouraging schools to teach civic education. 112 Congress, 2011–2012.

Hurtado, S., Sax, L.J., Saenz, V., Harper, C.E., Oseguera, L., & Curley, J., et al. (2007, February). *Findings from the 2005 administration of your first college year* (HERI Research Reports). Retrieved from <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/publications-brp.php>.

Jennings, M.K., & Niemi, R.G. (1974). *The political character of adolescence: The influence of families and schools*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jennings, M.K., & Niemi, R.G. (1981). *Generations and politics: A panel study of young adults and their parents*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ikedda, K., Kobayashi, T., & Hoshimoto, M. (2008). Does political participation make a difference? The relationship between political choice, civic engagement and political efficacy. *Electoral Studies*, 27(1), 77–88.

Kahne, J. & Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39(2), 289–296.

Keen, C. & Hall, K. (2009). Engaging with difference matters: Longitudinal student outcomes of co-curricular service-learning programs. *Journal of Higher Education*, 80(1), 59–79.

Keeter, S., Zukin, C., Andolina, M., & Jenkins, K., (2002). *The civic and political health of the nation: A generational portrait*. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. Retrieved at [http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/Civic\\_Political\\_Health.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/Civic_Political_Health.pdf)

Kitsantas, A. (2011). Mathematics achievement: The role of homework and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Advanced Academics* 22(2), 310–339.

Kizilgunes, B., Tekkaya, C., & Sungur, S. (2009). Modeling the relations among students' epistemological beliefs, motivation, learning approach, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 243–256.

Levine, P. & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2010). Youth civic engagement: Normative issues. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 115–138). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Loeb, P.R. (2010). *Soul of a citizen: Living with conviction in challenging times*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.

Lopez, M., Levine, P., Both, D., Keisa, A., Kirby,



- E., & Marcello, K. (2006). *The 2006 civic and political health of the nation*. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. [http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/2006\\_CPHS\\_Report\\_update.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/2006_CPHS_Report_update.pdf).
- Lopes, J., Benton, T., & Cleaver, E. (2009). Young people's intended civic and political participation: Does education matter? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(1), 1–20.
- Maddux, J.E. & Gosselin, J.T. (2003). Self-efficacy. In M. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 218–238). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Marcello, K.B. & Kirby, E.H. (2008, Feb.). *The youth vote in the 2008 early contests* (NH, MI, NV, SC, & FL). The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. Retrieved from [http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS\\_08\\_NH\\_FL.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_08_NH_FL.pdf).
- Marcello, K.B., Lopez, M.H., Kennedy, C., & Barr, K. (2008, March). *Special report by CIRCLE and Rock the Vote: Young voter registration and turnout trends*. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.
- McIntosh, H. & Youniss, J. (2010). Toward a political theory of political socialization of youth. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 23–42). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *The nation's report card: Civics 2006* (NCES 2007–476). Institute of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *The nation's report card: Civics 2010* (NCES 2011–466). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Education Association (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/42736.htm>.
- National survey of student engagement – Promoting engagement for all students: The imperative to look within*. (2008). Retrieved from: [http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE\\_2008\\_Results/docs/withhold\\_NSSE2008\\_Results\\_revised\\_11-14-2008.pdf](http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2008_Results/docs/withhold_NSSE2008_Results_revised_11-14-2008.pdf).
- Pasek, J., Feldman, L., Romer, D., & Jamieson, K. (2008). Schools as incubators of democratic participation: Building long-term political efficacy with civic education. *Applied Developmental Science*, 12(1), 26–37.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, R. (2005). A new movement for civic renewal. *Public Management*, 87(6), 7–10.
- Reivich, K. (2010). Promoting self-efficacy in youth: Research-based practice. *Communique*, 39(3), 1–4.
- RMC Research (2006). *Public Achievement 2005–2006 evaluation brief*. Denver, Co: RMC Research.
- Roholt, R.V., Hildreth, R.W., & Baizerman, M. (2007). *Becoming citizens: Deepening the craft of youth civic engagement*. London, England: Haworth Press.
- Tonn, J.L. (2005). Greater role sought for civic education. *Education Week*, 24(33), 12.
- Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schulz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. United States House of Representatives HR 181. 112th Legislative Session.
- Valentino, N., Gregorowicz, K., & Groenendyk, E. (2009). Efficacy, emotions and the habit of participation. *Political Behavior*, 31(3), 307–330.
- Vecchione, M., & Caprara, G. (2009). Personality determinants of political participation: The contribution of traits and self-efficacy beliefs. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 46(4), 487–492.
- Verba, S., & Nie, N.H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. New York, New York: Harper and Row.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K.L., & Brady, H.E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- West Hartford Public Schools, *West Hartford School Policy 6131.1*. Retrieved from <http://www.whps.org/whps/primary-offices/boe-page/policies/6000-instruction/6131-1-first-aid>
- Zimmerman, M. A. (1989). The relationship between political efficacy and citizen participation: Construct validation studies. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 53(3), 554.
- Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., & Delli Carpini, M.X. (2006). *A New engagement: Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

### About the Author

Robbin Smith, is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Central Connecticut State University.





# Fostering a Listening Community Through Testimony: Learning with Orphans of the Genocide in Rwanda

Alexandre Dauge-Roth

As a teacher of French and Francophone studies, I am eager to provide meaningful contexts of conversation in which students can improve their linguistic proficiency and develop their cultural literacy through immersion experiences. However, what shapes a meaningful context of dialogue? Is an academically generated conversation equally meaningful for students and community partners? These questions led me to reevaluate the relationship between my students, myself, and potential Francophone interlocutors in designing a course on the representations of the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. Fundamentally, one essential question arose: What are the informative, but more importantly, potentially transformative place, voice, and role I am willing to give to members of a specific community as we study their history? In short, there was a need to reflect on what it means pedagogically to implement a polyvocal and decentered mode of teaching and how it would impact methods of evaluation. By opening up an unprecedented space of dialogue, would students challenge the borders of academia and reflect upon our civic role within the testimonial encounter and the acquisition of knowledge?

As Kalí Tal (1996) asserts in *Worlds of Hurt*:

Bearing witness is an aggressive act. It is born out of a refusal to bow to outside pressure to revise or to repress experience, a decision to embrace conflict rather than conformity, to endure a lifetime of anger and pain rather than to submit to the seductive pull of revision and repression. ...If survivors retain control over the interpretation of their trauma, they can sometimes force a shift in the social and political structure. If the dominant culture manages to appropriate the trauma and can codify it in its own terms, the status quo will remain unchanged (p. 7).

To understand testimony in this light forces any academic community to grasp what role it plays in the reproduction of the political and cultural status quo when confronted with the needs, views, and challenges of minorities, foreigners, and survivors of traumatic experiences. Fostering social

spaces of testimonial encounter potentially leading to the contestation of the status quo and the cultural erasure of subaltern voices [those outside the power structure] constitutes another way to envision civic engagement for any community—be it an academic community or not.<sup>1</sup> This article examines the academic status of survivors' voices and the social responsiveness to others' histories of pain demanded by these encounters through two courses taught in French focusing on the representations of the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. Both courses explored the possibilities of civic engagement through a pedagogy where testimony is envisioned as a transformative space of encounter and survivors have a say in defining the parameters of the partnership.

## Identifying Community Partners

In the first course taught on campus in 2007, entitled Documenting the Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, students had the opportunity to engage in a semester long correspondence with Tutsi survivors while studying documentaries, films, fiction, and testimonies bearing witness to this genocide. The second course, Learning with Orphans of the Genocide in Rwanda, combined, during an intensive short-term in May 2009, on-campus preparation and off-campus study. After a week devoted to learning the history of the genocide, theoretical approaches to testimony, documentary making, and oral history methodology, students spent three weeks in Rwanda. They worked in partnership with survivors orphaned by the genocide in 1994 who have lived since 2001 within the residential community of the association Tubeho—which means in Kinyarwanda “Let’s live.”<sup>2</sup> The hope was to create and define, with our community partner, a space of encounter

<sup>1</sup>Regarding issues of academic imperialism and the risk of generating an artificial cultural solidarity among heterogeneous voices when an academic community positions itself as speaking for the subaltern, see Gayatri Spivak's groundbreaking essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (271–313). Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>To know more about the association “Tubeho” visit the site of the non-profit “Friends of Tubeho:” [[www.friendsoftubeho.org](http://www.friendsoftubeho.org)]. See also my article written with Simone Pathé, one of the student who took part to this course: “A Place we Can Talk” *Bates Magazine* Vol.107.6 (Fall 2009): 24–27 or [<http://home.bates.edu/views/2009/12/23/a-place-we-can-talk/>].





that would allow survivors to bear witness on their own terms and challenge us, their interlocutors, to explore what it means to be a listening community and what forms of responsiveness we ought to forge as heirs of the histories of pain being passed on to us. As Stevan Weine (2006) underlines in his analysis of witnessing to trauma generated by political violence:

Through testimony, survivors and receivers engage with some of the most critical political, existential, and moral questions that a society can ask concerning identity, otherness, existence, values, and enemies. ...These questions are at the core of how society and its people redefine themselves and the codes by which they live (p. 135).

It is in this light that we, the listeners, had to fully evaluate the transformative implications of learning *with* when listening was everything but a neutral practice aimed at acquiring knowledge. Here, we had to address how this knowledge required us to reevaluate the relationship between our will to know and civic demands.

### Challenges of Learning *With*

How can we not only learn from testimonies written by survivors of traumatic events but, more fundamentally, learn with survivors of traumatic experiences? This became a recurrent question throughout these courses. First, to shift from the assumption that we learn from survivors requires us to explore civic engagement as a venue for generating new forms of academic hospitality and redefining what it implies for a community to listen to trauma. For such a social dialogue to occur, it is, then, imperative to question the authority learning communities give to survivors' voices. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that learning *with* survivors who bear witness to experiences with which one cannot identify represents a demanding and potentially alienating endeavor. Thus, fostering the possibility of learning *with* requires a willingness to be interrupted, an openness to seeing our social imagery challenged, and a readiness to finding ourselves estranged within our own community. While learning from tends to maintain survivors at a reassuring distance, learning *with* supposes that survivors have not only a voice capable of attesting to a past, but also a say within the present of their interlocutors. The need to grant survivors agency and a transformative power of interruption within their interlocutors'

community is a crucial premise for envisioning listening as a form of community engagement. In our testimonial encounter with survivors, refusing to disconnect the disturbing pain to which they bear witness from the present demands they pass on to us defines then both an ethic of listening and the promise of a shared space where heterogeneous views seek to coexist with their differences.

For an academic community, learning *with* presupposes a pedagogical shift in how we consider the acquisition of knowledge, as it requires a willingness to be interrupted by survivors' lives, a readiness to be transformed by their demands and an openness to find ourselves estranged while still at home. Ultimately, learning *with* forces us to rethink the relationship between our will to know and our sense of belonging and hospitality. As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2002) highlights in her attempt to define "a politic of listening," our first duty as interlocutors "is to feel the victim's victories, defeats, and silences, know them from within, while at the same time acknowledging that one is not the victim, so that the victim can testify, so that the truth can be reached together. In this model, distance must be maintained between listener and speaker" (p. 162). Thus, to learn with survivors of traumatic violence is to negotiate the possibility of a common project without negating the uniqueness of each other's trajectories. To become a listening community by learning *with* survivors therefore constitutes a departure from a socially neutral position of learning that requires us to move beyond pity and compassion in order to face a series of thought-provoking demands. Here the learning community who asks the questions and listens is asked, in return, to respond not only to but also for those who find the means to testify.

In "The Responsibility of Responsiveness: Criticism in an Age of Witness," Ross Chambers (1996) affirms that the emergence of testimony as a prevalent genre within the literature of the twentieth century invites us to rethink what it means to read testimonies since "the writing of witness has not completed its task unless it finds a readership" and "it is necessary also for the tale itself to survive if the survival of the individual witnessing subject is not to prove futile" (p. 11). As a literary critic, he reflects upon the ability of commentary to generate pertinent forms of responsiveness to histories of pain aware that it "is always and inevitably inadequately responsive, because it is subject to all the effects of deferral" (p. 24). Therefore he comes to "recommend not responsiveness as such—an impossible ideal—but reading that is anxious about





the quality of its responsiveness to the extent that it is conscious that reading participates in a history of pain and has a responsibility of witness” (p. 24). Reading and listening to survivors’ testimonies should no longer be envisioned as a neutral practice disengaged from any social implications. Pertinent forms of responsiveness presuppose then that listeners see themselves as indirect witnesses whose responsibility is to develop a critical self-awareness regarding their own inadequacy as they respond to survivors’ stories. As such, learning *with* survivors constitutes an ethical gesture that aims to inspire, within our respective communities, forms of responsiveness where their histories of pain and ours reciprocally shape each other’s. Once a community recognizes that survivors’ histories and its own have been interwoven by the testimonial encounter, new pedagogical and civic challenges arise. How differently do survivors and their interlocutors perceive the process of learning *with*? How does the gap between our will to know and survivors’ will to testify impact on the possibility of belonging to a same community? What pedagogical and civic shifts are needed to ensure that those who bear witness to the violence they have suffered do not see themselves silenced once our will to know or duty to remember has been fulfilled? Aware that listening to testimonies of traumatic violence is an unpleasant and disturbing responsibility, how transformative can or should the emergence of such a space of encounter through witnessing be? Within academia, how is it possible to reconcile the transient nature of any pedagogical relationship and the long lasting demands of surviving trauma? Finally, what interruptions must occur within the listening community for the testimonial encounter to remain, in spite of it all, a mutually empowering experience synonymous with shared agency and a sense of belonging that does not silence the disruptive power of survivors’ demands for social recognition, justice, financial compensation, and opportunities to rebuild themselves?

### **Initial Approach to the Testimonial Encounter**

These issues related to social responsiveness to others’ histories of pain were pivotal to two courses I designed at Bates College within the French and Francophone Studies curriculum. Both courses offered multiple opportunities for direct exchange between Rwandan students who survived the genocide in 1994 and U.S. students. As a former Belgian colony after World War I, Rwanda promoted French as the major foreign language in schools until 2009, when English was

declared the foreign language of upper education. This cultural and linguistic legacy explains, in part, the attempt to create a space of encounter between American students learning French and young Tutsi survivors who found the resilience to pursue their education. In these courses, like never before, the students’ mastery of French and Francophone history was a key premise to establishing dialogue. Obviously, the fact that survivors must speak in French—for them a foreign language—about their traumatic experience is not without incidence on what can be expressed and might lead to potential misunderstandings, not to mention feelings of alienation. While it is important to keep these risks in mind, they are not exclusive to the use of a foreign language since they also exist between Rwandans for other reasons such as self-censorship, shame, social status, power relationships, and cultural codes, not to mention suspicion about their interlocutors’ motivations in regard to their actions during the genocide. At the same time, having to translate a traumatic experience into a foreign language has proven to be, at least for some survivors, a beneficial constraint as it imposes a certain distance that allows them to bear witness without it being a retraumatizing experience. As we can foresee, the required linguistic proficiency in French did by no means guarantee our mutual ability to establish a transformative dialogue and, for us, to become a listening community. We had to grapple with many other cultural, ideological, and psychological assumptions throughout both courses in order to foster a shared and mutually empowering space. Before describing in more detail how these courses were conceived around the transformative experience of testimony to foster civic skills such as critical thinking, social listening, collective action, civic judgment, imagination, and creativity, to name a few (Battistoni, 2002), it is important to expose some additional dynamics at play when learning *with* survivors.

What forms of hospitality are required from us, as a learning community, as we are interrupted and estranged by the testimonial encounter and seek to learn with survivors? First, envisioning testimony as a mutual space of encounter requires us to think about how and why survivors bear witness as well as to reflect on how and why we listen to others’ pain. According to Shoshana Felman’s (1992) analysis of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors in Claude Lanzmann’s film “Shoah,” to bear witness constitutes a gesture that not only refers to a unique position, but also to a performance of positioning through which the witness reasserts the





presence of his or her difference without having to negate the pain that is at the core of his or her sense of self:

What does testimony mean, if it is not simply (as we commonly perceive it) the observing, the recording, the remembering of an event, but an utterly unique and irreplaceable topographical position with respect to an occurrence? What does testimony mean, if it is this uniqueness of the performance of a story constituted by the fact that, like the oath, it cannot be carried out by anybody else (p. 206)?

To be aware of this performative dimension through which survivors reaffirm the uniqueness of their position is to realize that the value of the testimonial encounter does not solely reside in an exchange of knowledge fulfilling academic criteria. What does it mean, then, to become knowledgeable of our interlocutors' stories since we cannot identify with their suffering? Second, what kind of civic engagement and academic responsiveness are we, as a listening community, trying to nurture when survivors' past sufferings and current challenges become part of our respective communities through testimony? As we try to answer these questions, we must keep in mind that one of the major dilemmas for an academic community in learning *with* resides in the institutional time frame in which the testimonial encounter occurs. For survivors, the pain to which they bear witness does not cease when they stop speaking, while, for students and the instructor, there is always the option of putting the demands generated by this shared suffering on hold, not to mention of turning the page and going on at the end of the semester—uninterrupted—with the other solicitations of our lives. We, therefore, need to acknowledge that for survivors, the testimonial encounter represents more the beginning or continuation of a process aiming toward the recognition of their trauma and the daily negotiation of its present challenges rather than the fulfillment of a duty to remember, an academic performance, or a therapeutic exercise. Paradoxically, it is this very discrepancy that opens up the possibility of civic engagement since it forces both communities to negotiate what can be shared through the testimonial encounter within the present, to define how learning *with* ought to be a mutually empowering experience, and to evaluate the civic demands that passing on and receiving

disturbing knowledge generate. Encouraged by the testimonial process to reexamine the social implications of becoming knowledgeable with those we cannot identify, academic communities must explore their role as cultural vectors through which related communities can redefine their sense of hospitality and their responsiveness to others' pain. Ultimately, what is at stake in this testimonial encounter is the willingness of a learning community not so much to speak for but to be interrupted by voices and expectations other than its own and, in turn, to work to become a source of interruption, generating new dialogues within the broader communities that surround it.

### Listening as Civic Engagement

Understanding testimony as a space of social encounter constitutes a crucial shift as it affirms that survivors' views cannot be reduced to judicial proofs, historical footnotes, or academic subjects. As Jacques Derrida (2000) has underlined, the "essence of testimony cannot necessarily be reduced to narration, that is, to descriptive, informative relations, to knowledge or to narrative; it is first a present act" (p. 38). Testimony thus dramatically engages the present that survivors and their interlocutors share and mutually shape in the light of a defining past. As members of a learning community and as American citizens,<sup>3</sup> students and I had to define our role within the historical awareness Tutsi survivors sought to provoke as they agreed to bear witness. In our desire to be civically engaged, it was also imperative for our community to take into account that, for survivors, testifying does not automatically put their suffering at a more tolerable distance, nor does it necessarily amount to a personal resolution. As Chambers (2004) suggests in *Untimely Interventions*, survivors, rather than "having survived a trauma," are "still surviving experiences that were already themselves an experience of being, somehow, still alive although already dead." What is here at stake is the social acknowledgment of an aftermath defined as a state of "out-of-jointness" (p. 43). Paradoxically, it is by bearing witness to this state of "out-of-jointness" while testifying about a traumatic past, that survivors call for and open a space of encounter. To become civically aware about survivors' present "out-of-jointness," forces us to define the civic role we ought to play as we give a say to survivors

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the responsibility of the U.S. government in the genocide against the Tutsis of Rwanda in 1994, see Samantha Power, "A Problem from Hell": *America and the Age of Genocide*, New York: Perennial, 2003.





within our present. The hope here is that this form of hospitality, where the “other” has agency, might contribute to alleviating somewhat the feeling of being estranged and the pain it generates.

As an academic community, we clearly cannot change the traumatic past whose history of violence is passed on to us but, as we become heirs to this history, we have the opportunity to become engaged listeners and to develop a responsibility of responsiveness in many other ways. We can respond to the social desire to be heard, use our symbolic capital to increase the social visibility of the histories of pain that are passed on to us, generate within our communities conversations on what it means to acknowledge that the history of our community and the witnesses’ histories are intertwined, act upon the state of “out-of-jointness” in which many trauma survivors live, or engage in reflecting on how such awareness impacts our conception of hospitality. Learning *with* survivors of traumatic violence demands that we put into question the social values and imagery that contribute to survivors’ “out-of-jointness”—an exclusion that we tend, willingly or not, to reinforce if left unexamined. As Richard Battistoni (2006) suggests in his essay on civic engagement, an “added benefit to defining civic knowledge in this broad manner is that students and community members become co-creators of knowledge, rather than simply relying on ‘expert’ texts or professors” (p. 16). To become an engaged community by aiming to be co-creators of knowledge through the testimonial encounter demands that we identify and promote a sense of citizenship within academia capable of fostering mutually transformative dynamics that might enable both survivors and their interlocutors to have not only a voice but a renewed sense of agency and belonging.

In our attempt to evaluate the socio-historical forms this co-creation could take and how our anxious responsiveness could be implemented, we need to remain aware of the privilege that defines our academic position in regard to the trajectory and place from which survivors speak. In her first testimony about the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, Esther Mujawayo (2004) emphasizes the painful censorship that the listening community can generate—despite its proclaimed will to know—if it disregards the gap that defines the survivor’s position of enunciation:

As the survivor of the genocide, you don’t have the luxury of putting the horror aside: you are in it, in it. Meanwhile the

other, the one who listens, he just receives the horror through words and he, he has the luxury, or the choice to be outside it, to declare that he is unable to bear this and say: “Here stops the horror.” Myself, I do not have this choice not to bear it because I had to bear it and still have to bear it (pp. 20-21, my translation).

For us, to whom histories of pain are passed on, the option always remains to turn the page, while those who are surviving a trauma that is never over do not have this luxury. One of our first duties as a listening community is then to nurture a civic willingness to be interrupted and to refrain from interrupting those who bear witness when their words and demands no longer allow us to go on as usual. A second challenge is that we cannot speak for the survivors. We need to give them a say in the social recognition of their past trauma and in determining what paths are pertinent to respond to its aftermath. At stake once again is the resonance and agency we are willing to give to these haunting voices that question our conception of hospitality by passing on to us transformative demands in order to meet their needs. As survivors respond to our will to know, they ask in return that we translate into concrete actions our aspiration to be a responsive community where different trajectories can coexist and nurture each other to alleviate the suffering generated by a traumatic past. If demands such as justice, material compensation, and trauma counseling clearly exceed the resources of most academic communities, other demands, such as being heard, recognized, and valued as a human being without having to negate the trauma of one’s past, can and must be met. The genocide in Rwanda not only killed one million people between April and July 1994, but also killed within many survivors the belief in belonging to a community and the ability to project themselves into the future.

Equally important for a learning community that wants to become co-creators of knowledge and civically responsive is the valorization and development within academia of a “civic knowledge,” as defined by Battistoni (2006):

...[W]e have learned from students engaged in community-based experiences that civic knowledge...comes from multiple sources, including community members. It involves a deeper knowledge of issues, or what some might call the





root causes of public problems, and an understanding of how different community stakeholders perceive the issues. An understanding of “place” and the community history that provides a context for service and public problem solving—including learning about how individuals and community groups have effected change in their communities—is another key element of civic knowledge (p. 16).

Learning *with* survivors of traumatic events might then be described as a crucial venue for exploring our role as agents of democracy, as this venue not only exposes students and faculty to radically different views, but also demands that we identify with our interlocutors the social transformations needed within our community so that heterogeneous trajectories, perceptions, and needs might nurture each other.

### Developing Self-Critical Awareness

In both courses, the analysis of the competing cultural representations of the genocide against the Tutsis allowed students to develop a self-critical awareness regarding their understanding of political violence in Africa. Many came to realize how much their perception was shaped by stereotypes inherited from the colonial gaze and defined by the priorities that govern Western media’s production. Furthermore, by focusing on the various mediations through which filmmakers, authors, and survivors confer a visibility and intelligibility to the factors that led to the genocide in Rwanda, this comparative approach forced students to be actively engaged in the production of meaning. In the absence of a single master narrative capable of asserting the ultimate truth of this genocide, students had to analyze the choices, silences, rationality, and materiality of their sources according to criteria such as context of production and reception, socio-historical positionality, cultural bias and rationale, targeted audience, genre, use of legitimate speakers, rhetorical appropriation of archives, and willingness to give survivors a say or to subject them to a voice-of-God. Through this analysis of the formal and contextual constraints defining what is archived—and thus declared knowledgeable and worthy of memory—students critically evaluated the discrepancies between various mediations focusing on the ideological roots of the genocide. They positioned themselves among the competing narratives identifying

which historical causes favored its genesis and implementation, and, equally important, weighed in the (im)pertinence of the political responses to the genocide’s aftermath within Rwanda and by the international community.

The civic intent of focusing on the issue of representation was to think critically about the social discourses and political (in)actions through which the imaginary construction of an “other” within a society is achieved. This awareness regarding the roots of genocide and the role identity politics play in the “othering” of certain members of a society gave students the means to reevaluate their own responsibility when facing discriminatory discourses that cast some as strangers or outlaws within their own community. Furthermore, as students discovered through their dialog with Rwandans, for survivors, the feeling of living in a stage of “out-of-jointness” is not foreign to their social construction as “others” and the feeling of being illegitimate that existed prior to the genocide. All our Rwandan interlocutors grew up facing violent discourses that equated them to historical invaders or cockroaches who needed to be exterminated. This realization placed students before a new imperative, namely to acknowledge that no mediation—or study—of a past genocide can be neutral since each actualizes how respective communities respond to the genocide’s aftermath and the demands for justice of those who have suffered traumatic violence. While crucial, this analytical work on the genocide’s competing mediations only constituted the first stage in developing an ethic of responsiveness and the possibility of civic engagement. Indeed, by learning only from rather than with and within the shared present instituted by the testimonial encounter, students and myself could still, very easily, see ourselves as observers and citizens whose histories and communities remained immune to the histories of pain that we had the luxury of studying at a safe distance.

### From Academic Reluctance to Responsive Partnership

What then does it entail and require to listen to a survivor of genocide? To what extent can we as listeners be implicated in and through the act of listening to survivors? As Susan Sontag (2003) has shown in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, it is insufficient to document the horror humans can inflict on other humans if one does not address the ethical demands of remembering, the implications that remembrance of the past generates for our





present actions, and their intent:

To designate a hell is not, of course, to tell us anything about how to extract people from that hell, how to moderate hell's flame. Still, it seems a good in itself to acknowledge, to have enlarged, one's sense of how much suffering caused by human wickedness there is in the world we share with others. ...Let the atrocious images haunt us. Even if they are only tokens, and cannot possibly encompass most of the reality to which they refer, they still perform a vital function. The images say: This is what human beings are capable of doing—may volunteer to do, enthusiastically, self-righteously. Don't forget.

This is not quite the same as asking people to remember a particularly monstrous bout of evil ("Never forget"). Perhaps too much value is assigned to memory, not enough to thinking. Remembering is an ethical act, has ethical value in and on itself (pp. 114-15).

In order to challenge this academic reluctance to link the acquisition of knowledge through remembering with forms of civic engagement, during a research trip in Rwanda I built a network of young Tutsi survivors who were fluent in French and, for the majority, studying in Rwandan universities. In locating potential correspondents, the fact that both groups could engage with someone close to their age and relate to each other through popular culture and academic lifestyle was important. My students were between 18 and 22 years old, while our Rwandan partners were between 18 and 30. Meanwhile, everyone remained aware that they needed to engage with someone whose experience would always remain somehow foreign to their own. In *Documenting the Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda*, each American student was paired with a survivor who was willing to testify. The intent was to give students and myself the opportunity to explore through a confidential and semester-long correspondence how the traumatic events whose mediations we were studying had been lived, what scars they had left, how they had impacted survivors' lives and views, and what kind of challenges they were still generating. Thanks to weekly emails, students and survivors got to know each other's stories, valorized

each other's opinions, and progressively nurtured a relationship of trust and mutual appreciation.

In *Learning with Orphans of the Genocide* in Rwanda, following the introductory week on campus, American students and I traveled to Rwanda and spent three weeks with survivors who had become orphans in 1994 and were now living in reconstituted families within the association Tubeho. Here again, each American student was paired with one Tutsi survivor fluent in French who was willing to share his or her personal journey in a private setting. During the two first weeks of our stay, we went to our Rwandan interlocutors' universities, we visited various memorials with them, explored different regions of Rwanda together, met with members of other survivors' associations, non-governmental organizations, and Rwandans involved in the reconciliation process. These numerous meetings and discussions exposed American and Rwandan students to contrasting views about the causes of the genocide and the responses to its aftermath. This shared framework of inquiry fostered not only a sense of complicity, but also helped everyone involved in this oral history project to realize that no one possesses the ultimate truth about the genocide. Everyone had to take a position regarding sensitive issues such as identity politics in post-genocide Rwanda, the implementation of justice, the role of the international community, the duty to remember, the challenges of rebuilding one's life, and the role each of us could play in this process. These two weeks allowed us to build a relationship of trust and to acknowledge that learning about the genocide requires a dialogic process that allows a diversity of views and trajectories to coexist while we individually and collectively forge our responses to the legacy of pain left by this traumatic past. These conversations also made us realize that though we were talking about the same events, the impact of this same past within the present was not only radically different between us and survivors, but also wildly heterogeneous among survivors. This awareness forced us to refrain from generalizations and to keep in mind the plurality of responses to the genocide's aftermath. Furthermore, this experience constantly reminded us of the difficulty of making a difference on a broad scale and encouraged us to value more modest and personalized venues and outcomes.

### **Indirect Witnessing and Co-ownership**

The civic knowledge or competence that my students and I acquired through the testimonial





encounter with survivors did not only concern the past and present of our interlocutors, but also equally important, our own history and present responsiveness to others' pain. Testimony as a social encounter engages a process that forces the listening community to become more than a witness to the testifying individuals' experiences. It forces that community to become a witness to its own anxious ability to listen and to respond to the challenging and often disruptive experiences passed on to its members. As Felman and Laub (1992) have shown, engaging oneself in the practice of soliciting testimony calls ultimately for a practice of indirect witnessing and co-ownership:

By extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. ...While overlapping, to a degree, with the experience of the victim, he nonetheless does not become the victim—he preserves his own separate place, position and perspective. ...The listener, therefore, has to be at the same time a witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself (pp. 57–58).

To become civically engaged presupposes then for an academic community to develop within the testimonial encounter a kind of teaching that allows students to become aware of the inadequacy of their responsiveness toward local and foreign communities and to encourage forms of agency in association with those who remain too often culturally voiceless. Civic engagement resides, therefore, in a willingness to acknowledge that we, as an academic community, must identify what transformative dialogues need to be implemented both at a local and global level to become engaged listeners and what crucial role we ought to play in the social recognition and circulation of the histories of pain that community partners share through testimonies and oral history projects.

To address the challenges of co-witnessing and being co-creators of knowledge, in both courses students carried out a collective final project in which survivors had a say. In each case, after having gathered survivors' stories in French, students had to define how to publicly translate and document the histories of their interlocutors in order to relay their voices within our academic community and beyond. In *Documenting the Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda*, students created a

polyvocal recitative performance based on the correspondence they had maintained throughout the semester with survivors. This campus-wide event, entitled "Voices from Rwanda," forced students to apply to their own project the critical awareness they developed during the semester about the rhetorical and ethical choices behind any mediation of the genocide. Now it was their turn to define how to document the histories of pain that had been passed on to them in order to confer to these stories an unprecedented resonance within our academic community. To provide some context to this recitative act of indirect witnessing, students created a series of informative posters about Rwanda's history and culture that the public could read before the performance. After having selected excerpts from survivors' testimonies, students organized them around a series of themes, with the opening section corresponding to the beginning of the genocide: "April 6, 1994," "My Family," "Before the Genocide," "Try To Imagine," "The Importance of Testifying," "Try To Imagine... Today," "Living Together," and "Our Words."

The Rwandan survivors read the draft and amended its content according to their sense of appropriateness and how they desired to be perceived. This co-editing process offered them the ability to voice their history on their own terms, share the challenges they still face today, and articulate their aspirations with more accuracy. The setting for the performance was the following: Students relaying the words of their Rwandan interlocutors were dressed in black and surrounded the public from behind. Except for two light sources, the room of 80 seats was dark to minimize visual distraction and help the public focus on survivors' words. On a screen, the portrait and the first name of the Rwandan survivor from whom the public was hearing a testimony was projected.<sup>4</sup> In the last section of the performance entitled "Our Words," students shared their views about the transformative potentiality of learning *with* survivors:

In learning about the different ways to document the Rwandan genocide, I have discovered the difference between pity and compassion. Feeling pity can be a detrimental approach whereas compassion provokes one to create social change. Having a link with a real

<sup>4</sup>Voices from Rwanda was performed March 30 during the 2007 Mount David Summit at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine.





person in Rwanda who went through this experience was what truly cemented this mind-set for me. (Katie)

My correspondent was Jean-Jacques. When he said “because you have become my friend, I want to tell you my story,” it was as though I was directly affected. Someone that I cared about came face to face with hatred and suffered immense losses. He is suffering even now, trying to deal with the return of those who killed his friends and family. He is struggling against hate, while immersed in sorrow. I feel now that I carry a bit of this weight on my shoulders. Carrying this bit of weight is my gift to my friend. (Kate)

By sharing their mutual views and divergent expectations, American students and their Rwandan interlocutors learned from each other about the relational dynamic of remembrance, belonging, and identity. By negotiating together their differences, they were able to craft a mediation of the genocide that did not exist prior to the course and, furthermore, to generate a dialogue about this traumatic past whose aftermath was now inscribed in each other’s history and community—though in very different ways. The fact that both students and their interlocutors were given a say and an agency within the testimonial encounter, allowed everyone to use their critical awareness about testimony and the representation of pain to negotiate various forms of responsiveness according to their respective situation within the testimonial encounter. As Battistoni (2006) highlights:

Research and practice in service-learning has established the importance of giving students a voice...in the resulting discussions/reflections that accompany the community-based experience. But we are also finding that student voice means enabling students to be involved in public problem solving connected to the issues that they determine to be important (p. 23).

Ultimately, by exploring the mediations of the genocide against the Tutsis, students had to question the responsiveness of various communities—including their own—to others’ histories of pain through the relationship they sought to establish with the voices of this traumatic past, while

remaining aware that they will never fully meet the demands passed on to them by survivors.

### **Oral History as a Space of Hospitality and Advocacy**

In Learning with Orphans of the Genocide in Rwanda, the final project offered Tubeho’s members the opportunity to record their testimony on video for themselves, if they wished to do so, without their having to choose beforehand the future use of these archives. After having shared their lives for two weeks, discovering numerous regions of Rwanda, experiencing side-by-side the challenge of visiting memorials, and exchanging many views with guest speakers and among ourselves, we wanted to open for our Rwandan interlocutors the opportunity to bear witness to their past experience as well as their present views and aspirations. No one was forced to speak about the past if they wished to focus solely on the present. Furthermore, before testifying, each survivor told his or her American interlocutor the topics and periods he or she didn’t want to address. In the end, half of the members of Tubeho who were part of the project expressed the desire to testify before the camera. These six interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours—a seventh was begun but the survivor found herself overwhelmed and was not able to complete her testimony. Once everyone who wanted to be interviewed had a chance to do so, survivors asked us to create unedited DVD copies for their personal use and to select excerpts from the six testimonies in order to produce a series of short subtitled testimonies for their association’s future website. They wished to use this opportunity to voice their challenges and gain more social visibility in Rwanda as they planned to seek funding for creating collective projects for Tubeho’s orphans.

Naasson Munyandamutsa (2004), a leading psychiatrist who works with survivors in Rwanda, describes as follows the demanding hospitality we tried to offer through our oral history project:

Building peace with survivors of extreme violence, and therefore with the world, requires the determination to help them reinstitute their love for themselves, rebuild their trust in themselves, and by doing so, recuperate their self-esteem for those who have lost it—this is the supreme objective for those who have not yet been wounded (p. 166, my translation).





For those who have been spared, like my students and me, this objective can only be embraced by departing from the common perception of who we are as we agree to address the estrangement provoked by the testimonial encounter with a reality traumatic and alienating to most. This shift within the practice of listening is precisely what calls for a renewed conception of hospitality that can no longer rely on a principle of identification and transparency, since the interruption of oneself becomes the new paradigm allowing new forms of responsiveness within the testimonial encounter.

### **Responsiveness and Assessment**

Often mutually transformative, the semester-long correspondence, as well as the three weeks spent with Tubeho's members in Rwanda, forced each person to explore unprecedented modes of learning since here our interlocutors not only had a voice but also a say regarding the responsiveness we were individually and collectively negotiating as community partners. It was precisely this attempt to define pertinent personal and collective responses to a traumatic past while remaining aware of our differences within the testimonial encounter that allowed a form of civic engagement. In both courses, students were asked to write a final essay reflecting on their own experience of becoming a learning community and assessing to what extent they were able to respond personally and collectively to the implications of having been given the opportunity to learn with survivors and become heirs to these histories of pain. The students considered how they had to reposition themselves once they acknowledged that even though the violence of these traumatic histories would always remain foreign to them, the survivors' ongoing challenges had become an integral part of their own personal histories. While some economical, political, and judicial demands clearly exceeded the capacities of the listening community we sought to be, other demands—such as the desire to be acknowledged as a human being, the possibility of bearing witness, and, more concretely, the opportunity to rebuild oneself through education—were within our reach. Upon our return to the United States, students created an association on campus to increase awareness about Rwanda's post-genocide challenges and committed to raise funds to offer one scholarship annually to a member of Tubeho who took part in the course.<sup>5</sup> In both courses, facing the demands that had been passed on to our respective communities

through the testimonial encounter was then—and still remains—the major challenge to which we exposed ourselves because our responsiveness will always, to some degree, remain inadequate. While the correspondence with survivors forbids us from envisioning the study of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda as a distant and abstract event, the oral history project forced us to face the lasting consequences of genocidal violence and the active role we ought to play as a learning community. If we agree that testimony is first the performative reiteration of one's presence, then we can make it explicit for students that testimony is not so much about a past that is incomprehensible to them, but rather about the various positions and values that citizens claim within the present through the act of bearing witness or by listening to those who aspire to do so. It is at this juncture that testimony, envisioned as a space of encounter, can pedagogically and civically offer a chance to overcome our reluctance to envisioning these histories of pain as part of our respective communities. Thus, creating a testimonial relationship with survivors of traumatic violence represents one possible avenue for bridging the gap between communities who have radically different histories and priorities, as long as each community develops new forms of responsiveness to the demands generated by interweaving their histories. Engaged in the testimonial encounter, we—as an academic community working to become a listening community—had to define our civic responsibilities, knowing that our country bears some responsibility for the events that made this genocide possible. Furthermore, we had to envision the histories of pain that were conveyed to us as part of a common history whose consequences need to be shared within the present space opened by the testimonial encounter. Through our dialogue with survivors and the testimonies collected, students came to realize—at least this is my civic hope—that the pain suffered by others is not a past event, but represents for its survivors an ongoing process of negotiation in which we, the listening community, must determine our role. Since the signification of the violence of genocide and its traumatic effects has no epilogue for survivors, we must reflect on how our community can recognize this ongoing struggle and define which paths of action are pertinent within our respective communities.

Suddenly positioned by the testimonial

---

<sup>5</sup> A scholarship of \$1,200 per year covers tuition in a Rwandan university.





encounter as heirs to a traumatic experience no longer culturally disconnected from our own, we found ourselves challenged in our belief that we should never have inherited this experience of genocide because it was supposed to be and remain a foreign reality. Listening to testimonies witnessing the genocide against the Tutsis questions then both our willingness to confront disconcerting human behaviors and our sense of cultural hospitality, when hospitality is understood as interrupting oneself. The encounter with the disturbing experience of genocide can thus provoke in us one of two responses. It may, on the one hand, impose on us a duty to rethink how we position ourselves within the present and among the living in relationship to this painful past in order to recognize both its long-lasting aftermath and its present demands. Or, on the other hand, this encounter may affirm us in our unquestioned belief that our order of things is immune to the possibility of genocide and, consequently, that survivors' testimonies are "too much"—a position that does not preclude feelings like pity or call for a duty to remember. The first response represents a venue for civic engagement as survivors and their interlocutors engage in a mutually transformative dialogue, while the second symptomizes a social and cultural monologue where survivors' voices are cast as interferences with respect to an exclusive social order that defines what is culturally audible and legitimate.

## References

- Battistoni, R. (2006). Civic engagement: A broad perspective. In Kecskes, K. (Ed.), *Engaging departments: Moving faculty culture from private to public, individual to collective focus for the common good* (pp. 11–26). Bolton, MA: Anker.
- Battistoni, R. (2002). *Civic engagement across the curriculum: A resource book for service-learning faculty in all disciplines*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.
- Chambers, R. (2004). *Untimely interventions: AIDS writing, testimonial, and the rhetoric of haunting*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Chambers, R. (1996). The responsibility of responsiveness: Criticism in an age of witness. *Paroles Gelées: UCLA French Studies*, 14(2), 9–27.
- Chun, W.H.K. (2002). Unbearable witness: Toward a politics of listening. In N. K. Miller and J. Tougaw (Eds.), *Extremities, trauma testimony, and community* (pp. 143–165). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Derrida, J. (2000). *Demeure: Fiction and testimony*. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. New York and London: Routledge.

Mujawayo, E., & Belhaddad, S. (2004). *Survivantes: Rwanda, dix ans après le génocide*. Paris: Editions de l'Aube.

Munyandamutsa, N. (2004). Blessure invisible, une expérience déroutante. *Humanitaire* 10, 160–167.

Sontag, S. (2003). *Regarding the pain of others*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc.

Tal, K. (1996). *Worlds of hurt: Reading the literature of trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Weine, S. (2006). *Testimony after catastrophe: Narrating the traumas of political violence*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those who welcomed my students and their Rwandan friends from Tubeho: Faustin Murangwa Bismark, Carine Gakuba, Issa Higiro, Chantal Kabasinga, Ildephonse Kahigira, Martin Muhoza, Rose Mukankomeje, Gaspard Mukwiye, Naasson Munyandamutsa, Thomas Munyaneza, Julienne Murorunkwere, Ernest Mutwarasimbo, Gasana Ndoba, Antoine Rutayisere, Didier Giscard Sagashya, Théodore Simburudali, Assumpta Umurungi, and Freddy Umutanguha; also the members of the Imbutu Foundation, the survivors who guided us through the memorials of Gisozi, Nyamata, Ntarama, Murambi, Nyange, and Bisesero. Thanks also to Berthe Kayitesi, survivor and author who assisted me throughout this oral history project, and to my colleagues David Scobey and Jill Reich for their commitment to community engagement within academia.

## About the Author

Alexandre Dauge-Roth is an associate professor of French and Francophone Studies at Bates College. Dauge-Roth is the author of *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda: Dismembering and Remembering Traumatic History*. Lanham, MC: Lexington Books, 2010, on which he drew for this article.





# BOOK REVIEWS

---

*JCES* invites the 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, the natural sciences and math, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, the environment, law, business, and the 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





# Should the Higher Education Community Help Sustain Democracy?

Reviewed by Margaret A. Purcell

Scott J. Peters, Theodore R. Alter, and Neil Schwartzbach, *Democracy and Higher Education: Traditions and Stories of Civic Engagement*. Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, 2010, 396 pages. ISBN: 978-0-87013-976-5

Practicing public purpose is done in a variety of ways, with a multitude of publics, and with the aim of impacting communities. Ever present in this text are the underlying assumptions that: Members of higher education communities can and should impact their worlds; neither theory nor practice are best served by operating in isolation of one another; democracy will never flourish in a world where the educated function without exposure to the checks and balances of daily life. Personal interviews with engagement scholars and practitioners allow the authors to illustrate the vast opportunities for building community and enhancing theory through engagement.

The authors cite the conclusions of President Truman's 1948 Commission on Higher Education as the foundation for their arguments that academic theory building and education must go outside the hallways, laboratories, and classrooms of our colleges and universities in order to sustain a functioning democratic society. The often clinically untainted experience of teaching and learning must occur in concert with the struggles, joys, and mundane realities that constitute living. The student, the teacher, and the community interacting together with the community are able to explore and assist with civic life. The authors underscore their assertions by highlighting the work of faculty and staff at Cornell University.

The authors follow a trend in the community engagement literature that posits a high value for outreach and outreach scholarship. Cunningham and McKinney (2010) argued that deliberative democracy, applied learning, and community engagement can result in: 1) increased participation of communities in faculty research; 2) the willful participation of faculty in community outreach; and 3) greater student understanding of practice. By combining learning, service, and research, a synchronous system of theory, practice, and partnership emerges. This requires us to veer away from what Rice (1996) called the "assumptive world of the academic professional" which requires adherence to specifically defined standards of rigor, dissemination, and peer review (O'Meara, 2008). Through the profiles in the Peters, Alter, and Schwartzbach text, we are witness to a vivid picture of the struggles that practitioners face as their attempt to work sometimes within and sometimes beyond the existing rigid structure of higher education. Perhaps more importantly, it gives witness to the powerful impact that can be made when the rigid structure is allowed to become malleable. In such instances the skills and interests of university personnel and students intertwine with the needs and resources of the community in dynamic and mutually beneficial ways.

Other literature indicates that citizenship education (broadly defined) is also impactful to the communities in which such targeted education occurs. The viability of public civic education is seen as a value to the greater society beyond the world of higher education. According to the Citizenship Foundation (2012) citizenship education is successful when it teaches participants to be:

- Aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- Informed about the social and political world
- Concerned about the welfare of others
- Articulate in their opinions and arguments





- Capable of having an influence on the world
- Active in their communities
- Responsible in how they act as citizens.

O'Meara (2008) argued that community dependent faculty must be able to engage community partners and secure their trust in order to be effective. She stressed that faculty should have the ability to: discover and learn, think critically, consider and appreciate various values; recognize diverse perspectives; reflect upon experience and theory; share outcomes and paradigms with lay and academic audiences; and integrate scholarly perspectives with real world practice. All of these tenets are seen in the profiles of this text.

The people profiled are real—and sometimes raw—examples of how the hiring, firing, and reward systems in higher education espouse ambiguous messages about how to excel. There are expressions of the reality of the tenuous nature of the work as when senior extension associate Tom Maloney must wait to see if he will have his appointment renewed and when associate professor John Sipple worries that his work will not be valued by his academic peers on his promotion and tenure committee. Those profiled state that they struggled with the fluxing valuation given over time to service, then education, then research—as if they were discrete units without shared function or purpose. There is an acknowledgement that the reliance on external funding sources can lead to breaks in service and difficulty in planning for future work. Will grant funding continue? Will the university continue the staff line? Will research topics and teaching loads be viewed as acceptable? Are service and outreach valued within higher education?

Then there are questions of accepted pedagogy. Is service-learning teaching? Does it have measurable and significant impacts on student learning? Existing literature posits rich and lifelong affects of service-learning. According to King and Baxter-Magolda (1996) self-authorship and personal authority are essential to learning in the higher education setting. Self and other knowledge must be understood by learners, and the service-learning format requires that a student understand both. This outcome is highly desirable, according to the Association of American Colleges (1991), which insists that institutions must help students understand that the world is highly complex and that understanding is based upon interpretation of available information. The experience is potent for the student because it changes the student's relation

to the academic power structure (Butin, 2005). The student becomes an actor upon and within the realm of knowledge instead of a recipient of existing knowledge, according to Butin.

These outcomes are reinforced by profiled subjects. In the text, associate professor Paula Horrigan clearly articulates her passion for student engagement when she shares that "I'm interested in fostering ... democratic practices and engagement, and co-learning" (p. 121). Students are key components of a communal process. "You put them in a situation where revelation comes to them because of experience, not because you tell them," she says (p. 121). She notes that the experience in such a learning setting prepares students for future work in communities.

Learning can also be empowering as indicated by profile subject and associate professor Frank Rossi. He says that he intends to instill the instinct to question in the professionals with whom he works. He provides the latest information on horticulture chemicals to the community, but he wants them to ask how their use will impact their real world settings and their work. He works hard to link his state of the art research as a scientist to real world problems, and he strives to make his presentations understandable and useful in the community at large. He is a powerful facilitator of knowledge because he conveys information and encourages recipients to question then use what is learned within their setting.

This text is an excellent jumping off point for honest and open conversations about the role of higher education in our communities and civic life. What is our purpose and how should we function to reach our goals? This highly accessible text with modern day profiles in courage is a good place to begin to explore how we should value theory building, community education, community partnerships, and learning. As institutions and the people who embody them, are we passive conveyers of thought or nimble, responsive, active, vital members of democratic and engaged communities of lifelong learners?

## References

- Association of American Colleges. *The challenge of connecting learning*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges: 1991.
- Butin, D.W. (2005) Identity (re)construction and student resistance. In D.W. Butin (Ed), *Teaching social foundations of education: Contexts, theories, and issues*. Manwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cunningham, K., & McKinney, H. (2010).





Towards the recognition and integration of action research and deliberative democracy. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 6(1), 1 – 11.

King, P.M., & Baxter-Magolda, M.B. (1996). A developmental perspective on learning. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 163–173)

O'Meara, K. (2008). Graduate education and community engagement. In C.L. Colbeck, K. O'Meara, and A. Austin (Eds), *Educating integrated professionals: Theory and practice on preparation for the professorate. New directions for teaching and learning, Volume 113*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peters, Scott J., Alter, Theodore R., & Schwartzbach, Neil, (2010). *Democracy and higher education: Traditions and stories of civic engagement*. Michigan State University Press, East Lansing.

The Citizenship Foundation, (2012). *What is citizenship education?* Retrieved on March 20, 2012 from: <http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/page.php?286>.

#### **About the Reviewer**

Margaret A. Purcell is a faculty member in New College and the New College LifeTrack programs at The University of Alabama.



## Defining Community-Based Research

Reviewed by Glenn A. Bowen

Kerry Strand, Sam Marullo, Nick Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, and Patrick Donohue, *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003, 304 pages. ISBN: 978-0-7879-6205-0

Community engagement wears many faces. In higher education, its familiar faces include service learning, public service, advocacy and civic activism, social entrepreneurship, and engaged scholarship. Community engagement, or civic engagement, has now emerged in the guise of community-based research (CBR).

Although CBR has long been employed in addressing social challenges (Beckman, Penney, & Cockburn, 2011), it has only recently taken its place among pedagogical and scholarly approaches to civic engagement. Indeed, CBR is viewed as an extension or enhancement of service learning (DeBlasis, 2006; Kowalewski, 2004) – the pedagogy that integrates relevant community service into the curriculum – and as scholarly work by faculty (Wade & Demb, 2009).

On the face of it, CBR is simply research based in a community. Accordingly, many researchers may claim that they have been doing CBR for years. However, there is more to CBR than meets the eye. That much is clear from even a cursory glance at *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices*.

Coauthors Kerry Strand, Sam Marullo, Nick Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, and Patrick Donahue elucidate the concept of community-based research, touch on its theoretical underpinnings, provide several examples of the methodology in practice, and document its benefits. They present CBR as research *with* and *for* (not *on* and not merely *in*) the community. Furthermore, they champion CBR not only as a research methodology but also as a teaching technique and an institutional strategy for social justice.

In the foreword, Richard Couto points to an important challenge that the book offers – a challenge for faculty “to blend ... disciplinary training with interdisciplinary inquiry that is both rigorous and relevant” (p. xvi). Readers may connect his name to participatory action research (e.g., Couto, 2000), which is one of several terms used to describe the kind of research promoted in this book. The focus on faculty as the primary audience for this book speaks volumes about how far CBR has come. Traditional academic research is, by and large, an individual enterprise that concentrates on the science of discovery – that is, investigation in search of new knowledge. In contrast, CBR is a collaborative enterprise in which research questions emerge from the needs of communities and in which faculty and students along with community members become engaged in a research process that seeks to create social change.

*Community-Based Research and Higher Education* is divided into 10 chapters, beginning with the origins and principles of CBR and ending with a look to the future. In Chapter 1, Strand and her colleagues attribute CBR’s emergence as a response largely to widespread criticism that higher education was insufficiently responsive to the needs of communities. CBR, they suggest, is also a response to the growing realization that higher education had failed to prepare students for lives of civic engagement and social responsibility. The authors define CBR as “a partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change” (p. 3). They outline three major principles of CBR: campus–community collaboration; validation of multiple sources of knowledge, discovery, and dissemination; and social action/social change to achieve social justice. The





social justice goal makes CBR distinctive. No wonder that, in defining community, the authors emphasize that it consists of people who are oppressed, powerless, economically deprived, and disenfranchised. CBR, as the authors suggest, provides an avenue to the empowerment of underserved communities and marginalized people.

Chapters 2 and 3 draw attention to campus-community partnerships as the foundation for the collaboration that sets CBR apart from traditional research. In describing the benefits derived by the community, Chapter 2 focuses on how CBR collaboration can help community-based organizations achieve their social change objectives. This chapter also delineates 10 principles of successful community-campus partnerships. In this regard, it offers nothing new, except perhaps the emphasis on shared power as the basis for good research to achieve social justice outcomes. Suggesting how to turn those principles into effective practice, Chapter 3 offers the nuts and bolts of CBR partnerships in terms of finding or starting a partnership, facilitating the collaborative process, and achieving long-term goals.

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which the principles of CBR shape the design and conduct of this kind of research. The authors discuss (a) collaboration, including barriers to collaboration; (b) creation and dissemination of knowledge, including the recognition and validation of sources of knowledge that are often not legitimized by conventional research approaches; and (c) contributions to social change. To their credit, Strand et al. present CBR not as a remedy for social ills but rather as a dynamic research approach with a social change emphasis that “is a particularly difficult transition for academic researchers to make” (p. 83). As the authors assert, academics interested in CBR must adopt a new paradigm of research that considers the value and relevance, and not only the validity, of the research findings.

Chapter 5 covers strategies for addressing challenges that may arise at each stage of the research process. Familiar research methods may need to be modified and new methods employed. In the process of conducting the research, both campus and community partners stand to benefit from the transformative effects of unanticipated learning.

The next two chapters are devoted to CBR in relation to teaching. The authors – faculty members from sociology, political science, and education – provide a sound rationale for viewing

CBR as a teaching strategy. However, service-learning practitioners may take issue with the authors’ veiled criticism of their work as charity-oriented. After all, service learning does have social change goals and, properly pursued, is not any less rigorous or less relevant than CBR.

In Chapter 8, “Organizing for Community-Based Research,” campus-based administrative structures and management issues are explored. The authors recommend that CBR be assigned to an entity within an academic unit. As a follow-up in Chapter 9, they offer practical suggestions regarding the operation of a CBR center. In addition, they address the question of sustainability of CBR work and indicate the importance of rewarding faculty who embrace this kind of research.

The 304-page book closes with an invitation for readers to share the authors’ vision of higher education based on research-oriented campus-community partnerships. Such partnerships are seen as sustained, reciprocal, and transformative as institutions support communities in realizing a more just society.

Community-Based Research and Higher Education makes a major contribution to the community engagement literature. It makes clear the epistemological advantages of CBR and shows how research can respond to community needs as much as it can satisfy researchers’ interests. Readers will appreciate the many examples of CBR projects drawn from diverse institutional and social settings. Readers would appreciate even more something that is missing – a complete CBR case study, detailing such elements as identification of the research question; the specific roles of the research partners, including students and community members; the problems faced and overcome as part of the research process; and the dissemination and use of the research results. Nevertheless, this is a very valuable book, replete with insights and guidelines for CBR practice in higher education. It is recommended reading for faculty and civic engagement administrators and an excellent resource for preparing students for active, engaged citizenship.

## References

- Beckman, M., Penney, N., & Cockburn, B. (2011). Maximizing the impact of community-based research. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 15(2), 83–103.
- Couto, R. A. (2000). Participatory action in research: Making research central. *Journal of Public Service & Outreach*, 5(2), 9–16.



DeBlasis, A. L. (2006). From revolution to evolution: Making the transition from community service learning to community based research. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 18(1), 36–42.

Kowalewski, B. M. (2004). Service-learning taken to a new level through community-based research: A win-win for campus and community. In M. Welch & S. H. Billig (Eds.), *New perspectives in service-learning: Research to advance the field* (pp. 127–147). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Wade, A., & Demb, A (2009). A conceptual model to explore faculty community engagement. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 15(2), 5–16.

### **About the Reviewer**

Glenn A. Bowen is the director of the Center for Community Service Initiatives at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida.





# Community Practice Textbook Is Oriented Toward Graduate Study

Reviewed by David J. Edelman

Dorothy N. Gamble and Marie Weil, *Community Practice Skills: Local to Global Perspectives*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. 482 pages. ISBN 978-0-231-11002-0

*Community Practice Skills: Local to Global Perspectives* is a textbook aimed primarily at graduate students in community practice social work. Consequently, it is not for a general readership but provides a basis to community practice. It is also not the kind of book one reads through quickly, but rather a scholarly work with the roots of community practice and the historical development of its ideas presented in detail. It is not a handbook of actions to be taken by social workers. Although it has many positive qualities as a text, its thoroughness, for example, the format does not promote active engagement. A less dense presentation with more graphics and photographs would be very helpful.

The book is divided into 2 parts. Part I: Community Practice: Purpose and Knowledge Base, provides the basis for the analysis presented in the second part. This includes chapters discussing the meaning of community, processes associated with community practice, and social justice and human rights; presenting the eight models of community practice; discussing guiding values and the evolution of the purposes and approaches to community practice, and providing an overview of the concepts, theories, knowledge, and perspectives that guide community practice. Part II: Eight Models of Community Practice for the Twenty-First Century, centers on the scope of concern, basic processes, conceptual understanding and roles and skills important for practice in each model (p. xvi).

The focus of the book, then, is a framework of eight models of community practice placed within a local to global context, recognizing that globalization affects the way community practice social workers will practice in the future. Promoting social justice is a major theme throughout the book. Thus, understanding the framework and context are essential for students. The eight models: neighborhood and community organizing; organizational functional communities; social, economic and sustainable development; inclusive program development; social planning; coalitions; political and social action, and movements for progressive change are discussed in detail in separate chapters. Table 2.1: Eight Models of Community Practice with Twenty-first Century Contexts (pp. 26, 27), nicely summarizes the models, covering desired outcome, systems targeted for change, primary constituency, scope of concern and social work/community practice roles. A student would be thankful for this as keeping all the characteristics of each model in mind without this summary would be a daunting task.

Consequently, as a text, it would be useful to have bullets of five or six main ideas listed at the start of each chapter with the main ideas presented clearly and graphically once again at the end of each chapter. A book such as this has tremendous value as a handy reference for students and practitioners, and making the main points accessible some time after reading the book would make it more useful.

Graphics such as Table 2.2: Primary and Related Roles for Social Workers/Community Practice Workers in the Eight Models (pp. 40–44), Table 4.1: Reed's Illustrative Types of Explanatory Theories about Society and Social Change (pp. 88 and 89), and Table 4.2: Theoretical Framework for Community Practice—Macro to Micro Scale (p. 94) are very instructive and useful for students and practitioners alike and make the book more meaningful for those interested in community engagement who are not social workers.





An excellent aspect of the book is the use of case studies to illustrate most of the eight models. These are very informative and are where the global context really comes to the forefront. They also provide the most interesting reading of the volume. Case studies are taken from Eastern Cape Province, South Africa; Santa Fe, New Mexico; an unspecified sub-Saharan African country; Robeson County, North Carolina; and Durham, North Carolina. There are also frequent references to other examples in the main body of the text.

*Community Practice Skills: Local to Global Perspectives* is of interest to a sizable segment of *JCES* readers. While it is aimed at community practice social workers, there is much that is useful for others involved in community engagement as it "...presents a comprehensive guide to skills for community engagement with a knowledge base drawn from the values, purposes, and theories that form the foundation for work with communities" (p. xv). While reading it thoroughly may take some time, it deserves a place on the reference shelf of any person seriously involved in community engagement.

#### **About the Reviewer**

David J. Edelman is a professor of planning in the School of Planning at the University of Cincinnati. Professor Edelman is a member of the *JCES* editorial board.





# JOURNAL of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SCHOLARSHIP

## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The *JCES* Editorial Board invites the submission of manuscripts that relate to its mission: to provide a mechanism through which faculty, staff, and students of academic institutions and their community partners may disseminate scholarly works from all academic disciplines, with the goal of integrating teaching, research, and community engagement.

All forms of writing and analysis will be acceptable with consideration being given to research and creative approaches that apply a variety of methodologies. Manuscripts that demonstrate central involvement of students and community partners and advance community engagement scholarship will be given favorable consideration. Manuscripts should be free of racial, religious, gender, ethnic, or any other forms of bias.

Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish in this journal if accepted for publication. Manuscripts must have been submitted for exclusive publication in *JCES* and not simultaneously submitted elsewhere. Manuscripts should not have been published elsewhere in substantially the same form. Authors in doubt about what constitutes prior publication should consult the editor. At this time, hard paper submissions are not accepted. Inquiries and submissions should be emailed to:

Cassandra E. Simon, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Social Work  
The University of Alabama  
jces@ua.edu

### Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be typewritten in Microsoft Word with a separate cover page. Manuscripts should be double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point type. Article length, except in rare instances, should not exceed 25 pages, including text, tables, and references. Tables and other graphics should be submitted as separate documents with their place in the manuscript indicated. Do not include the abstract and cover pages in the page count.

Manuscripts should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (sixth edition). See guidelines at <http://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/instructions.aspx>.

A separate cover sheet with the name(s), affiliation(s), and other identifying information and contact information (address, phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses) for each contributing author should be supplied. Additionally, authors should include four to six keywords at the bottom of the cover sheet.

All identifying information or references to the author(s) must be removed from the manuscript. Manuscripts that include identifying information will not be reviewed prior to correction. Each manuscript must also include an abstract of 150 words or less that summarizes the major themes

of the manuscript. Manuscripts not meeting these criteria will be returned to the author before being sent out for review.

Authors are required to submit written permission from the original publisher for any quoted material of 300 words or more from a single source; any quoted material from a newspaper, a poem, or a song (even a phrase); and any table, figure, or image reproduced from another work.

Images must also be submitted electronically, in JPEG format, with no less than 200 pixels per inch resolution for black and white images and 300 for color. Manuscripts will undergo masked peer review. It is the intention of this journal to assign manuscripts to reviewers within two to four weeks of compliant and correct submission.

Authors will be notified of a decision in a timely manner consistent with thorough scholarly review.



# JCES

## Review Process

1

### Manuscript Receipt

- scan for style standards; request revisions if necessary
- assign manuscript number
- send acknowledgement email to primary author
- select appropriate reviewers

2

### First Review

- send to reviewers: review request, masked manuscript, review form
- reassign manuscript if reviewers are unable to complete review
- send to reviewers: reminder email one week after requested due date if reviews not yet returned
- send to editor: combined reviewer comments/rating form

3

### Editor Decision

- accept (if accepted, proceed to Step 8)
- recommend revisions; resubmit
- reject (end of process)

4

### Revise and Resubmit Request

- notify primary author of decision
- send to author: letter from editor, document with reviewer comments, manuscript edits and tracked changes
- request resubmission within four weeks

5

### Resubmission and Second Review

- scan for standards (esp. masked copy); if necessary, send author a request for revision
- reassign manuscript to original reviewers
- send to reviewers: masked manuscript, copy of masked letter from editor to primary author, masked document with original reviewer comments, review form, and masked manuscript with track changes/comments from editor
- request return of re-review within two weeks
- send to reviewers: reminder email one week after requested due date if reviews not yet returned
- send to editor: combined reviewer comments/rating form

6

### Editor Decision

- accept (if accepted, proceed to Step 8)
- accept with minor revision

7

### Accept with Minor Revision

- send to primary author: notification of decision, requested revisions to be returned within two weeks
- once revisions received, read thoroughly to ensure completion of all requests
- reject (end of process)

8

### Edit for Publication

- final editing by JCES staff
- negotiate edited manuscript with author
- send official copyright forms for primary author's signature

9

### Publication



# Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship

www.jces.ua.edu  
www.uapress.ua.edu

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

ISSN: 1944-1207  
ISBN: 978-0-8173-7406-8 (paper)  
ISBN: 978-0-8173-8599-6 (e-edition)

*JCES* is a peer-reviewed international journal through which faculty, staff, students, and community partners disseminate scholarly works. *JCES* integrates teaching, research, and community engagement in all disciplines, addressing critical problems identified through a community-participatory process.

## Subscription rate per issue:

\$50 institutional  
\$30 individual  
\$10 student  
\$24 e-edition (pdf)  
\$10 individual article (pdf)

## For subscription information, contact:

Allie L. Harper  
Box 870380  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0380  
205.348.1564  
aharper@uapress.ua.edu

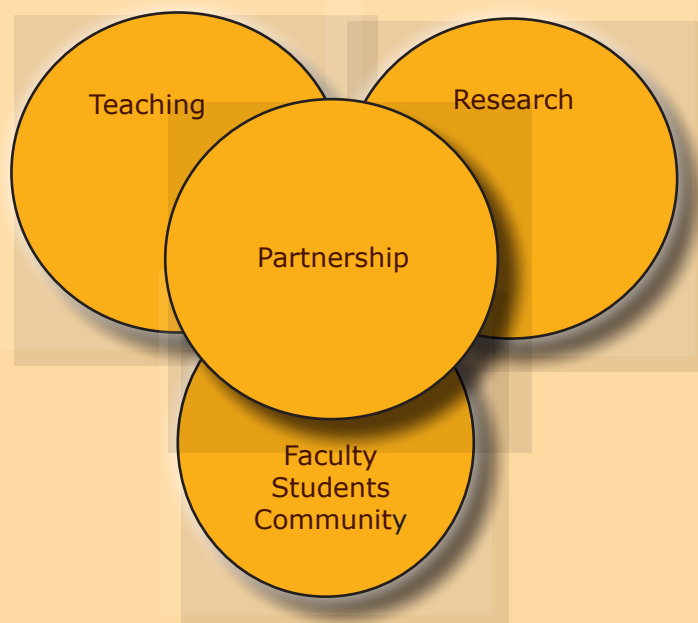
## For information about licensing JCES contact:

Claire Lewis Evans  
Box 870380  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0380  
205.348.1561  
cevens@uapress.ua.edu

**JOURNAL of  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
and SCHOLARSHIP**

The University of Alabama  
Office of Community Affairs  
Center for Community-Based Partnerships  
Box 870372  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0372

Nonprofit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Tuscaloosa, AL  
Permit 16



ISBN 978-0-8173-7407-5



*The Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* is published at The University of Alabama by the Division of Community Affairs for the advancement of engaged scholarship worldwide.