Expanding the dimensions of best practice in CBL

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Four community-based learning projects that differ across time to completion, discipline, and team are examples used in developing a framework of possible project models in which universities can engage with community partners. The case study method contextualizes this framework and produces suggestions for "best practice" when project goals change over time, and new partnerships develop, as project needs and priorities change. Authors discuss the political nature of working with various stakeholders and offer suggestions for successful project completion based on student, faculty and community partner perspectives. The authors seek to expand the scope of what constitutes best practice in CBL.

Keywords: community-based learning; collaboration; university-community relations

At any one time, community engaged universities support a portfolio of community based learning (CBL) projects.[1] These can vary from partnerships between one agency and one faculty member in a specific department to complex alliances that include coalitions of agencies which partner with multiple faculty from a variety of departments. The authors offer a framework that outlines a variety of models, using four case studies as examples, which cut across multiple semesters and disciplines and include new community stakeholders as need and projects demand. Within these case studies are embedded a diversity of relationships among students, faculty, partners and other stakeholders involved in the learning/research process and the recipients of these efforts, which can include the larger community and those engaged in the partnership itself, as well as individual consumers of services. As community-based learning and research projects, these studies have in common the goals of strengthening community bonds, facilitating collaborative partnerships in all phases of research, integrating knowledge for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders and reformulating knowledge in some form that is useful to all participants (Israel, Schultz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). Ultimately, the authors wish to expand the framework of what constitutes CBL,

move beyond generic recommendations for best practices in CBL, and encourage future conversations and collaborations that promote interdisciplinary community engagement (Gass, 2010; Lederer & Seasons, 2005; Pardasani, 2005; Saven, 2004; Sigmon, 1998).

Across disciplines, there is general agreement as to what constitutes best practices in service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011; Harris, 2010; Honnet & Poulsen, 1989; Kalu & Talmi, 2012; Smith, et al., 2011). However, best practices, such as reflection, specified learning outcomes, and connecting course work with CBL projects, are generic recommendations that are difficult to tailor to individual projects. For example, reflection as personal assessment or development of critical thinking can be in written or oral form, as can the feedback offered. Indeed, the format of reflection and feedback are determined by project length, scope and design. Even outlining program goals and student learning outcomes becomes problematic as projects modify throughout the semester due to the changing needs of the community partner (Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011). In sum, objectifying best practices as ideal types is not as important as knowing that such practices change with the changing nature of CBL.

The authors use the case study as one way of contextualizing recommendations for best

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[1] In this paper, the authors use the terms community-based learning (CBL) and community-based research (CBR; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). This language takes into account participation of multiple stakeholders who are involved in the learning/teaching process to varying degrees (Minkler, 1997; Wicks, Reason & Bradbury 2008). The term CBL credits the community as well as student participation, whereas the term service-learning places focus on the student. Nevertheless, in practice these two terms may be indistinguishable.

Figure 1:

A framework for distinguishing different types of CBL projects

Time

		One Semester	Multiple Semesters
Single Discipline	One Team	Most common type of project. Case Study: *Telstar Racing*	Used for more complex projects that offer students more time and more credit for their participation
	Multiple Teams	Single discipline teams are working in parallel toward a common goal.	Information is passed from one team to another across semesters. Case Study*: Bethany Apartments*
Multiple Disciplines	One Team	Interdisciplinary team is working within the context of a semester.	Interdisciplinary team working across multiple semesters. Case Study: *Root River Signage*
	Multiple Teams	Multiple interdisciplinary teams within the context of one semester. Uncommon format.	Multiple interdisciplinary teams over multiple semesters. Case Study: *REC Project*

(Team Characteristics — vertical axis label on the left)

practice that is tailored to project duration and type. The case study method offers a venue for describing process, using real life examples from which we observe how various stakeholders interact and often conflict (Tellis, 1997). Through case study analysis (Yin, 2004), the authors examine the unique features of a collectivity of projects (Stake, 1995), which have informed a framework of possible types (Radley & Chamberlain, 2011). We describe the challenges these case studies present, as well as how they enhance learning experiences for all stakeholders and offer suggestions for best practice under the different CBL frameworks (Fisher, Fabricant, & Simmons, 2004). We begin with the most common form of CBL, the one semester, one team project as a baseline, move toward understanding more complex projects, and conclude with a discussion of the variable benefits and drawbacks of each type of CBL experience, underscoring conditions that result in successful projects.

Figure 1 is the framework for the variety of CBL models that can be conducted within educational institutions. The horizontal dimension represents time: Semester or longer than semester projects. The vertical dimension represents the project team relationships. The relationships are broken down into two levels: Number of disciplines involved (one or more than one) and number of teams (one or more). While many universities will support projects in most of these cells, it is unlikely that a university will invest all of its energy in the most complex cells, as the costs and risks can be too high. Rather a balanced portfolio of projects is likely to be more manageable.

Overview

Community-based learning as a learning-teaching tool recognizes the mutual benefits of knowledge-sharing among multiple partners to "...improve individual and collective outcomes for those persons involved in and affected by the[se] activities" (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009, p. 2). Community-based learning dictates reciprocity across disciplines and schools within the university and extends the boundaries of the campus across institutions throughout the community (Moxley, 2004). This form of inquiry moves us beyond knowledge as fact-based toward knowledge as value-based and tied to agendas of multiple stakeholders with diverse goals that affect learning outcomes and research findings (Israel, Schultz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; London, 1999). Learning and any resultant research becomes interactive, iterative, contextual and inclusive of multiple perspectives (Reason, 1981). At the University of Wisconsin-Parkside (UWP), administrative supports to promote CBL are made possible through Continuing Education and Community Engagement (CECE) and Solutions for Economic Growth (the SEG Center), within the College of Business, Economics and Computing. Community partners for both CECE and the SEG Center include nonprofits (83% of projects), government agencies (2% of projects), and small businesses and corporations (15% of projects). CECE and SEG Centers remain important resources for faculty and provide a "front door" to the community when potential partners are seeking involvement with the university. The projects described in the case studies that give breadth to developing best practices for different types of CBL are supported through the combined efforts of these two centers.

Methodology

The authors developed the framework for this paper through discussions that began around different types of projects that involved CBL. We had observed projects which varied in time to completion and discipline involvement and so developed a framework that encompassed these types and others which were possible. Although there are existing examples of CBL projects in all the above categories, the authors selected to highlight the four case studies described, which vary by project goals, discipline involvement, time to completion, and complexity of relationships among a variety of community stakeholders.

CECE administers surveys to students, faculty and community partners on their views of the impact of each project from each stakeholder's perspective. Students complete their surveys in class at the end of the semester, so CECE has information from almost all students. Some of the comments from students in this paper are taken from these surveys. Faculty surveys are in the form of a checklist and so the authors decided to interview faculty about their experiences with each project. Although they are sent surveys, community partners often do not return them and so the authors contacted partners, when feasible, and spoke with them as well. Thus, we received more personal information from partners than we would have obtained from survey information. In some instances, we went beyond student surveys and interviewed them as well.

We obtained approval from the University IRB to interview students and community partners, and each person who participated in the interviews signed an informed consent. Interviews with students and community partners were conducted in person, while faculty usually responded to questions about their work via email. Faculty consented to allow us to use the visuals in this paper.

The four case studies described here include a one team, single discipline, one semester project, Telstar Racing; one that used multiple teams from one discipline working over multiple semesters, the Bethany Apartments Project; a third that involved one team from two disciplines that took two semesters to complete, the Root River Signage Project; and one that involved multiple teams from diverse disciplines that required two years to complete, the REC Project. The four highlighted case studies are models of CBL projects that detail a variety of benefits for learning, research, program evaluation, and developing social capital. While each has its benefits and drawbacks, each makes explicit that competing agendas may align to solve local problems, that the nature of outcomes of CBL is politically based, and that all the partners eventually learn from each other. Given these caveats, there are common elements drawn from these case studies that enhance their probability of success.

The authors begin with the simplest type of project, i.e., one semester, one team in the same discipline, as a baseline from which to generalize, and continue to describe the benefits and drawbacks of more complex projects (Bromley, 1986). We conclude by offering guidelines for strengthening project success based on types developed in the CBL framework and argue that there is no one right way to apply best practices in CBL, as projects are interactive and fluid and so best practices must be contextually based.

Single Disciplines
Telstar Racing: A Case Study of a Single Team, Single Semester Project

Most community based projects involve a single class, a single client, and take place within the context of one semester. They are task-oriented and likely require early planning between faculty and community partner to set up the project. An example of a one semester, one class project occurs in the Systems Analysis and Design class required for Management Information Systems majors within the College of Business, Economics and Computing at UWP. The project we focus on here was for the Telstar Drag Racing Team. The key business goal for this project was to create an updatable, multimedia website designed to attract new sponsors for the drag racing team. The entire class of 16 students participated in this project. In this case, no faculty nor community partner was interviewed, as the project was task oriented, i.e., to develop a logo and updateable website to garner corporate sponsors for the Telstar drag racing team. The student team met with the Telstar manager early in the semester. The goal of this first meeting was to clarify the project through the development of a project charter, a contract unique to the School of Business and Technology that specifies timelines, the business goals, and the student learning goals. The project charter provides at least one way to evaluate the success of the project from the partner's perspective. In the course of the semester, the students documented the requirements as established by the manager and owner, developed a logo for Telstar (See link to Telstar Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/), developed the web pages, and used several free software applications from companies such as Google and YouTube to create multimedia and interactive content.

Telstar Logo

Because of their task orientation, one semester projects must be planned carefully and student, partner and faculty must have a clear understanding of the outcomes of the project from the perspective of the client. In the case of the Telstar project, the primary goal of the community partner was to develop marketing tools and strategies to increase the visibility of the team and garner corporate sponsorship, a goal which was ultimately achieved. While typical of a business project, the project goal to advance the client has the potential to do so at the expense of student learning. This caveat underscores the importance of the project charter which, for this project, not only specified project outcomes for the community partner, but also for student learning. In the course evaluation, one student writes, "…many of our team members had never put a web site on the internet before, and the Telstar project allowed us to learn about the process involved in creating and publishing a web site…" However, another student says, "The biggest challenge we faced as a group was…the lack of technical skills within the group." Student capabilities when they enter a course may not meet the skills required to complete a successful project. A challenge of this type of project is that students must develop competencies early on in the semester so that the project can be successfully completed within the timeframe. In many cases, this may not be possible and one semester projects might begin later in the semester as student learning meets the threshold of skills required by the project. In this case, a few students may compensate for the lack of skills of others and although projects may be successfully completed, resentment can surface. Often, pairing students of different capabilities

within groups or assigning a leader to the team can mitigate some of these tensions.

Because of their task orientation, one semester projects are often completed outside the context of larger economic or social issues and may lack the theoretical frame that is a linchpin of any course in higher education. This is a difficult challenge for faculty to overcome and speaks to the importance of connecting classwork to engagement through reflection. Reflection in this case may come in the form of verbal feedback through problem solving among team members rather than individual, written statements about learning outcomes. Additionally, focus on the overall goals of the project is one way of connecting students to larger social issues. For example, why is it important for Telstar Racing to garner corporate sponsorship? Why is this type of organization economically vulnerable? Despite the fact that this type of project is short-lived, short-term relationships can lead to longer-term projects that can develop into sustained relationships.

The Bethany Apartments: A Case Study of a Single Discipline Team Over Three Semesters

Some projects are planned with the knowledge that they will take longer than one semester, while others are confronted with unforeseen problems that extend beyond the semester time frame. Regardless of the circumstances, faculty and students face problems of transfer of information from one class to the other, while community partners must re-train new students coming into the project at the beginning of each new semester. One community partner writes, "…sometimes you have to look at the project to see if it's something that could be like a class project that could extend beyond [the semester], just move to a new group of students versus trying to get it done [in one semester] (personal communication, April 11, 2016). This partner represents the view that rather than rushing through a project, it is more beneficial to extend the time frame of a project beyond the semester format. As an example of a multiple team, multiple semester project, The Bethany Apartments program evaluation was conducted by four different students in each of three semesters who were earning their certificates in Program Evaluation. The authors interviewed the Executive Director, Lynda Jackson, about her experience with the project, talked about the project with the faculty supervisor, and interviewed the four students who completed the project during the last semester of the study.

The Bethany Apartments of Racine provides transitional living arrangements for women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. The program offers supportive services, affordable housing, and also counsels women toward independent living skills and self-sufficiency. As an agency that depends upon contributed funds, mostly from United Way, Bethany Apartments felt pressured to provide some hard data on what happened to the women and children who left its program. There was no follow-up data on participant outcomes when Executive Director, Lynda Jackson, contacted Dr. May Kay Schleiter at the Program Evaluation Center at UWP. Schleiter and Jackson met and completed the standard Project Partner Agreement that outlined both the professor's educational goals for her students and the partner's organizational goals for the project as well as an initial timeline for completing the work.

During the first semester of the project, Schleiter divided the class into two groups of students, one responsible for the literature review on women who are victims of domestic violence and the impact on their children and one which focused on developing the research design and structured interview instrument. The following semester, students submitted documentation and a copy of the structured interview instrument to the (IRB. Students agreed to sign a confidentiality agreement, and developed a letter of inquiry for potential participants in the study describing the research, its purpose, and requesting that a signed consent form be returned. Background checks were conducted on every participating student. The IRB review process required a formal meeting and extended time for review as this project dealt with a vulnerable population. While this process may be seen as one obstacle toward completing the project, the greater scrutiny when working with vulnerable populations offers an opportunity to discuss cultural competency and the importance of protecting vulnerable populations.

Lynda Jackson came to the Program Evaluation Center to describe the mission of Bethany Apartments and later took students on a tour of Bethany Apartments prior to their contacting former residents. She states that she was kept informed about what was going to happen on the project, from the interviewing process to data analysis and interpretation. With each new group of students each semester, she provided an overview of the agency, talked about the population served, shared with students some problems they might encounter during the interview, and raised their level of sensitivity about the study population. However, she says, "Each semester, we started pretty much all over again. By the time they were pretty much on a roll, they were graduating … if there was a project manager – someone who was with the

group for three semesters ... that person could make sure that the next project manager would know who had been contacted and not contacted" (personal communication, July 1, 2009).

In the second semester of the project, students attempted to contact former residents from an address/phone list provided them, but soon learned that all had moved. Schleiter says this was the most frustrating part of the project – training students and then finding out that people to be interviewed had moved. Students did schedule interviews with former residents and some were completed behind closed doors at the agency. However, many clients didn't show up or cancelled their interviews. Students were persistent about contacting interviewees and completed a sample of 20 interviews.

The following semester, students transcribed the interviews and analyzed the text on the basis of the following goals of the former residents -- education, occupation, relationships and independence -- and wrote the final report from the coded interviews.

Schleiter notes that the workload involved with this project was heavy. The population under study is a hidden one that is difficult to locate, and even when clients were reached, they often lived far from the area, creating problems of access. Criminal background checks for students, human subjects' requirements, and the detail involved in developing the project were challenging. Students needed to be trained in confidentiality requirements, interviewing, and sensitivity to the population with each new semester.

This study benefitted the community partner, Bethany Apartments, by providing outcome information on the population served, and increasing its chances of outside funding and program support. However, students had differential benefits to learning based upon when they entered the study. Some missed out on the experience of interviewing people who were served by Bethany Apartments, while others were unfamiliar with the literature. As a result, they could not experience the totality of conducting a research project and seeing it completed.

Some of the benefits of the one team, multiple semester project result from the process itself, i.e., applying research methods to a real world issue and learning about social problems that are unfamiliar to many students. Moreover, the interaction with women in the study forced students to "take the role of the other," understanding women's decisions in light of the threats they faced.

The aforementioned project description highlights some recommendations for best practice. In multiple semester projects, coordination and transfer of information is vital. Developing student leaders to bridge the gap is one solution. Information is passed from one team to another across semesters so documentation and transfer of information, including challenges, must be communicated to each new team of students. In planning such a project, defining each stage will allow the community partner, faculty and students to gain perspective on what will be accomplished within a reasonable time frame. As Lynda Jackson recommended, a project manager or lead person can be offered this responsibility and act as a mediator among all stakeholders involved.

The next two case studies offer unique challenges for stakeholders engaged in CBL. Both are interdisciplinary and the many benefits of CBL, e.g., knowledge sharing, working with multiple stakeholders and fostering independence and leadership among students, are often mitigated by an institutional infrastructure that limits interdisciplinary collaborations (Mayfield, Hellwig & Banks, 1999). While recognizing these constraints, the following case studies focus on the best ways to support innovative solutions to complex community issues (Reich & Reich, 2006). In these scenarios, the research question drives the inquiry and moves stakeholders to reach beyond their disciplines toward a collective solution (Burgett, et al., 2011).

Multiple Disciplines

Often, faculty are concerned with preparing students to become culturally sensitive to the populations they serve, e.g., people in poverty or racial minorities. However, as Reich and Reich (2006) argue, cultural competence must be developed across disciplines as well, especially when members of different disciplines perceive themselves to be more powerful than others. Thus, not only are there political considerations among external stakeholders that impact project success, but political considerations when members of different departments consider themselves more capable or skilled than others. A benefit of interdisciplinarity is to learn about the culture and values of people in different disciplines and, more importantly, how they can work together for mutual benefit for themselves and the larger community. One way of achieving this is through learning how one's preconceptions about others impact one's own values and perceptions of others.

Root River Signage Project: A Case Study of a Multidisciplinary Team Over One Year

Since 2008, the bike path that follows Racine's Root River has been enhanced with signage that welcomes bikers and walkers with information about the history and unique

environmental aspects of the river that runs through the heart of their city. The Root River Signage Project partnered two faculty members with long histories of engaging in community-based learning projects in their own disciplines: Alan Goldsmith, Professor of Art and Graphic Design, and John Skalbeck, Professor of Geosciences. Their common goals were to increase public awareness of the Root River, to provide experiential learning for their students and to connect with city services.

An upper-level geosciences student was engaged in an independent study with Skalbeck to develop content for the signs. The team was rounded out by two digital art students who conceived the design and produced the graphics for the signage. While Goldsmith's objective was for his students to experience "a real world project where students from two different disciplines worked together," Skalbeck was looking for an opportunity for his students to learn how to make science accessible to a general audience. The authors discuss the benefits of this project through phone interviews with students and conversations with the two faculty involved.

Unique to this project was its impact on students. Art and geosciences converged to create an interactive learning environment by which students learned about disciplines with which they were unfamiliar, but collaborated to inform bike path visitors about their local environment. In addition, students learned that they must conform to partner and community needs, doing so by formatting language on signs to be reader friendly. The geosciences student,

who worked on the project over two semesters, felt that it helped her learn about networking. She also appreciated working closely with students from another discipline. "It was interesting getting the point of view of the art students. We had different ideas of what we wanted the signs to look like. We had to negotiate. There was definitely teamwork there" (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

One of the reasons this project succeeded was the small size of the group, which allowed for consistent communication with faculty, students and community partners. Larger group projects can be a challenge in universities with a majority of commuter students, like the population at UWP. The students' family and work schedules make scheduling meetings very difficult for larger groups. Also, frequent meetings facilitated a supportive relationship among students from two disciplines with two different skill sets that enhanced the outcomes of the projects. While learning outcomes may be specified prior to project development, other beneficial learning aspects are likely to develop throughout the process of a project. In this case, students learned about environmental issues, community needs, and available resources. The potential for developing professional networks was enhanced by students' interactions with community developers. Below are two examples of signs developed by the interdisciplinary team that now line the Root River bike path.

The Root River Environmental Education Community Center (REC): A Case Study of an Evolving Project Incorporating Multiple Stakeholders and Academic Disciplines Over Four Semesters

The most complex community based projects involve multiple stakeholders who enter the project at various times and for different reasons. Stakeholders who have a large vision for their communities, but lack the resources to accomplish their goals can recruit new stakeholders who have the potential to offer financial supports, as well as needed skills and expertise. In addition, multiple stakeholders are more effective in addressing complex social issues and build capacity to serve large segments of the community. As more stakeholders come on board, however, there is increased probability that conflicts will arise.

The balance of power among stakeholders can be shifted, as can the ultimate goal of the project. Momentum may be lost as projects extend over multiple semesters. Faculty who are working across multiple semesters with different stakeholders and students, must deal with "...discontinuous change at multiple points in time," yet provide leadership for students and offer consistency to stakeholders (Ivery, 2010, p. 22).

An abandoned warehouse on the site of the Root River Pathway that weaves through Racine, Wisconsin was an opportunity for the City of Racine, UWP and subsequent, multiple community partners to develop an environmental center in a low-income urban neighborhood. There were a number of levels to this partnership. At the administrative level, the Mayor of Racine and other government agencies,

e.g., Parks and Recreation and the Racine Health Department, as well as business leaders, drove the objectives of the project: (a) re-develop an area that had a number of abandoned warehouses and was located near a low-income neighborhood with high crime and unemployment rates and a large youth population; (b) enhance current assets in the area, e.g., revitalize the bike path that runs along the Root River to make it accessible to residents of the area, especially youth; and (c) expose urban youth to the assets of the river flowing through their own neighborhood. Biology and geosciences faculty at UWP mirrored the city's fourth objective to develop the REC as a means of providing experiential learning opportunities in STEM for elementary and secondary students as well as university students.

A second administrative layer, the REC Advisory Board, was organized by CECE to offer input on community needs and identify assets for developing the REC. CECE selected organizations for participation at this level on the basis of their willingness to support the mission of the project by providing resources, advocacy, support, and expertise. Among the community stakeholders on this board were Neighborhood Watch, the Nature Center and the Root River Alliance.

When the REC concept was in development, an upper level CBL course in Entrepreneurship committed to craft a business plan for the REC. The plan focused on the specific contribution of the REC, describing its location, target area and mission; and specifying possible partnerships to avoid duplication of services. The plan outlined promotional strategies, indoor and outdoor activities for the REC, and proposed classes. Finally, it outlined management and staffing needs and included the operational costs.

The first program offered through the REC, Safe Water is my Responsibility (SWIMR), taught 4th graders from the Racine Unified School District (RUSD) about water quality, e.g., urban run-off, wetland conservation and river ecology. This course was taught by hired staff and two students from UWP's Geosciences Department. Other faculty developed curricula in biology and geography which became lesson plans that are now being used by middle school teachers throughout the RUSD. As programming for the REC developed, the Advisory Committee recognized the need for revenue development and sought to establish fee-generating activities that would complement the REC's overall mission. Toward this end, an AmeriCorps VISTA member based at UWP contacted Johnson Outdoors, a local company providing outdoor recreational products and offered to "demo" their high end equipment at the REC if they would provide entry level water crafts for use. Johnson Outdoors provided eight single and eight tandem kayaks and four canoes to the REC. While these were initially meant to be used as demonstration equipment, Johnson Outdoors donated the canoes, along with paddles and life jackets. In exchange for the equipment, the REC promoted group outings sponsored by Johnson Outdoors, offered first-time buyers a place to try out new equipment and provided Johnson Outdoors an additional sales tool.

This project evolved by creating common goals from which faculty, community, and students benefitted. Three sets of coalitions were formed: one from community in both for-profit and non-profit sectors; a second from faculty across disciplines at the university; and a third between university and public K-12 schools in the RUSD. From the perspective of community partners, each one that has provided equipment, services or funding has benefitted from programs at the REC. In addition to the tremendous benefit of the REC to Southeastern Wisconsin, several significant challenges are noted. There is strong competition for resources in the area and the REC was initially seen as a threat by existing environmental centers. However, cross-promotion of all the centers, highlighting their common goals and sharing equipment and staff support alleviated much of the concern. Secondly, faculty who developed curricula for RUSD are experienced in developing programming for college students, but had some difficulty scaling the content for middle and high school students. The challenge is for faculty to work with teachers in the RUSD to develop programming appropriate for middle and high school students.

The REC project has bridged the gap across scientific, technical, managerial, and political fields to create a whole that is larger than its parts. This was enabled through the efforts of the CECE to respond to the initial concerns of political leaders and locate partners in the community whose needs corresponded to faculty goals for students and their own research interests. Moreover, the project has succeeded in unifying community stakeholders across multiple fields to work toward the sustainability of the REC. Here, we have a model in which individual components benefit, but which also contribute to the benefit of a larger good (Webb, 2009). Secondly, the completion of the REC provides a model for future projects, what Webb calls, "...a culture that makes possible active community engagement in defining and tackling the necessary changes on these issues" (p. 2). Clearly a politically-initiated effort to reduce crime and develop a blighted neighborhood, the

REC succeeded in making inroads toward changing the eco-structure of the area and enhancing learning among current and future students likely to attend the University. Strong partnerships were developed, despite efforts to garner scarce resources that were potential sources of conflict among agencies with similar goals.

The process of developing the REC points to a number of outcomes achieved by this multi-discipline, multi-team, long-term project. While the leadership of the CECE initiated a structural base for the program, that leadership was diffused among the multiple stakeholders who each took a lead in their specific area of expertise. Different coalitions had different, sometimes competing, interests in the development of the REC. Yet, through negotiations and mutual understanding of an overarching common goal, efforts to develop the REC and the surrounding area met the needs of a variety of stakeholders in government, non-profit and for-profit sectors. The university's connection with RUSD to educate primary, middle and high school students is an investment that not only prepares prospective students entering college, but also educates college students about community issues that they will face upon graduation. This project has built the capacity of stakeholders to realize their potential as part of a coalition, and has used experiential learning to enhance students' coursework to build a new community asset.

The authors estimate that about 15 government offices and businesses were involved at the inception of this project and that the University began to realize the importance of connecting with the local school district in preparing and recruiting future students to attend UWP. It is difficult to estimate exactly how many students were involved in the cleaning, preparation of displays and ongoing mentoring of others at the REC, as well as count those leaders who negotiated supports from local businesses. In retrospect, we might evaluate its success from a number of vantages and lessons learned.

The REC project was a politically-motivated one from community leaders to reduce crime and mobilize community businesses and grass roots organization to take more responsibility for the welfare of citizens in their community. From one perspective, the REC project was an experiment to assess community action. The University and faculty saw the REC as a community resource for increasing UWP's student population which has been declining over time. Additionally, faculty had a community "training ground" for students in biology, geography and the geosciences to engage in experiential learning and share their knowledge with younger students at RUSD.

Limitations

The authors have drawn materials from case studies that began almost 10 years ago. While some projects lasted years past that time, we must consider the available data and how this impacted the findings of this study. For the most part, class sizes were small. Even the Telstar project had only 16 students. The REC project, as described, had variable numbers of students who participated at various stages in this project. While this is not unusual given the nature of the project, it is difficult to estimate the numbers of students who participated in this project.

While reflection is considered an important best practice for CBL, we have no evidence of reflective exercises offered to students. Therefore, other than verbal discussions, we cannot comment on this important best practice, given the data we have. On the other hand, we have a larger perspective on best practice that is informed by issues that arose as a result of interdisciplinary collaborations over multiple semesters. In sum, the process of each framework and resultant outcomes provide a rich context for understanding the fluid nature of learning and coalition development among multiple stakeholders. This fluidity transfers to recommendations for best practice in various contexts.

Benefits of CBL Frameworks

Regardless of its duration and discipline, each project can be identified by its goals to solve local problems within a political context. Often, students lose site of the "forest" because their focus is on the "trees," i.e., getting the project done. Yet, it is vital that students understand their place in the process of community development and capacity building, whether it is utilized on behalf of for-profit or nonprofit agencies. It should be the responsibility of the faculty and community partner to lay a foundation for students so they understand how their work fits into the larger scope of benefitting the community. This realization can help students better understand the skills they have developed as a result of their CBL participation and how these skills can be communicated to future employers.

All stakeholders should realize that community projects are developmental and change with the introduction of new voices to a project. Thus, while preparation is important to understanding project goals, flexibility for change is just as important. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs), while critical for all stakeholders in understanding project goals, will likely be revised over time, especially with more

complex projects, as stakeholders enter and leave. With the involvement of multiple stakeholders with diverse interests -- some often competing -- coalition building toward a common goal is a valued art. Multi-discipline projects that extend beyond one semester require the most coordination and communication efforts, yet have the greatest potential for community development and capacity building.

The REC project revealed the benefits of working with diverse agencies toward a common goal. One of the greatest contributions to capacity building was connecting various agencies to each other. It was through shared knowledge that agencies learned of common goals and began to share resources, both programmatic and tangible. These exchanges supported agency sustainability and created interdependence, while pointing out unnecessary duplication of services. Through this process, students learned about their community, became agents of social change, had the opportunity to network with a variety of agencies, and learn about populations previously unknown to them.

Perhaps because the students themselves lacked personal resources, they were motivated to find and use free technology that was unknown even to the professors and board who monitored the Telstar project. The message here is to support student innovations, especially when students often have more technological experience than faculty or their community partners.

In this relatively new paradigm of learning, we have offered four case studies that touch on part of the framework describing types of CBL projects. Are the recommendations we make from these studies applicable to all types of CBL projects? While we know that students benefitted from their experiences, we do not know at what point the threshold of learning occurred that changed their views. All these cases were successful at completion and highlighted the steps toward achieving success from the perspective of stakeholders. What happens to learning and relationships among stakeholders when projects fail? What are the best practices that can be developed for faculty to circumvent such failures? These are critical questions, but ones that campus infrastructure should prepare to tackle.

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University of Wisconsin PARKSIDE

Appendix

Student Survey
Center for Community Partnerships, Community-Based Learning
Spring 2014

Dear Student:

We would like to find out about your civic participation experiences working with the community in this class. Your perspective will help us take students' points of view into account as we plan for future semesters. We appreciate your taking the time to complete this important survey.

Name/Number of Course _____

Name of Instructor _____

1. What is your age?   ____ Years old

2. What is your gender?   ____ Female   ____ Male

3. What race do you consider yourself? (Circle and/or write in all that apply.)

   Black or African American   Asian or Asian American   American Indian/Native American

   White or European-American   Hispanic and/or Latino

   Other: Specify _____

4. What is your class standing?

   Freshman   Sophomore   Junior

   Senior   Graduate Student   Non Degree Student

5a. What is (are) your major(s)?

   1._____   2. _____

5b. What is (are) your minor(s) or certificate programs?

   1._____   2. _____

6. Do either one of your parents have a four-year college degree?   No   Yes

7. How many hours in a week do you currently work?   ____hours

8. How many credit hours are you taking this semester?   ____ Credits

9. In this course, how would you describe your CBL project? (Check all that apply)

☐   Product (e.g. creating a logo)
☐   Project (e.g. research, literature review)
☐   Placement (e.g. volunteering, service)
☐   Presentation (e.g. campaigning, off-site demonstration)
☐   Other – Please explain:_____

Please name the community partner and write a brief description of what you did with this organization.

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. I volunteered in the community before taking this course. ____Yes   ____ No

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements, circle or write the appropriate answer:

11. The community project aspect of this course helped me to understand the subject matter and how it can be used in everyday life.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. The community project helped me to better understand the course lectures and readings.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. Community projects should be a part of more classes at this university.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. I felt that the community project I did through this course benefited the community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. I received an orientation from the community organization for this project.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. I did not feel comfortable working with the community organization.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. My community organization contributed to my understanding of this project.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. I worked directly with a community partner and/or faculty member through this course.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. This community project helped me gain professional contacts for future employment.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. I understood the purpose of this community project in relation to the subject matter being taught in class.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The community project helped me to become aware of my personal strengths and weaknesses.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22. The community project in this course assisted me in clarifying my career plans.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23. The community work took time away from more important class work.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24. The community work involved in this project made me more aware of my own biases and prejudices.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. The community project enhanced my ability to communicate in a "real world" setting.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26. The community project helped me to develop my problem-solving skills.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

27. The syllabus provided for this course outlined the objectives of the community project in relation to course objectives.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28. The other students in this class did not play an important role in my learning.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29. I had the opportunity in this course to periodically discuss my community project and its relationship to the course content.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30. The project helped me understand how to effectively discuss important community issues.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. This project helped me see how I can contribute to my community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32. After college I will volunteer/participate in the community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
33. I think it is very important to be actively involved in my community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34. I have developed close relationships with other students here on campus.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. I have developed close relationships with Parkside faculty.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36. I participate actively in student government on campus.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. This project helped me feel more a part of the Racine/Kenosha communities.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

38. I had the opportunity in this course to reflect on what I was learning from my project.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39. This community project gave me a deeper sense of commitment to future service.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. The community project increased my motivation to succeed in school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41. This community project gave me greater self-confidence.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
42. I think that my instructor deserves to be recognized for how well he/she managed the community project and integrated it with the course learning objectives.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

43. If you answered **Strongly Agree** or **Strongly Disagree** to Q42, please explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

44. How can UW-Parkside help you to increase your community involvement, both now and in the future?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

45. UW-Parkside is looking for community partners and projects to recognize for their contribution to the community and their impact on learning. Do you think this course project is worthy of such recognition, if so, why?

Name of Community Partner: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation.