

The SUNY Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement: JoSE

Volume 1

Article 4

September 2020

Critical Foundations for Civic Engagement: Reimagining Civic Learning for a University Honors Program

Alison Handy Twang

Binghamton University, atwang@binghamton.edu

Benjamin J. DeAngelis

Binghamton University, bdeange1@binghamton.edu

Justine L. Lewis

Binghamton University, jlewis47@binghamton.edu

Elizabeth A. Mellin

Binghamton University--SUNY, emellin@binghamton.edu

Katherine S H Bouman

Binghamton University, ksbouman@binghamton.edu

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/jose>



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Learning Commons](#), [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#), and the [Service Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Twang, Alison Handy; DeAngelis, Benjamin J.; Lewis, Justine L.; Mellin, Elizabeth A.; Bouman, Katherine S H; and Ziegler, William L. (2020) "Critical Foundations for Civic Engagement: Reimagining Civic Learning for a University Honors Program," *The SUNY Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement: JoSE*: Vol. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.cortland.edu/jose/vol1/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Cortland. It has been accepted for inclusion in The SUNY Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement: JoSE by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Cortland. For more information, please contact DigitalCommonsSubmissions@cortland.edu.

Critical Foundations for Civic Engagement: Reimagining Civic Learning for a University Honors Program

Authors

Alison Handy Twang, Benjamin J. DeAngelis, Justine L. Lewis, Elizabeth A. Mellin, Katherine S H Bouman, and William L. Ziegler

Critical Foundations for Civic Engagement: Reimagining Civic Learning for a University
Honors Program

As a result of calls for a renewed civic purpose in higher education, many colleges and universities are expanding and strengthening civic engagement programming. This renewed civic mission has most often manifest in growth of service-learning courses. Through these experiences, students deliver services to benefit the community while linking service to learning goals and ongoing reflection (Jacoby, 1996). Although such experiences have been linked to positive outcomes in leadership development, improved academic performance, and strengthened sense of civic duty (Astin & Sax, 1998), there is a growing acknowledgement of the limitations of service-learning practice.

Scholars have called into question the conflation of service-learning and civic engagement (Finley, 2011; Hartley, 2009), noted shortcomings in the development of civic skills (Hartley, 2009) and called attention to service-learning's tendency to adopt a model of service that emphasizes charity rather than social change (Mitchell, 2008). Still others have incorporated the voice of community partners to highlight the challenges and limitations of the practice from the perspective of community (e.g. Bushouse, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tyron & Stoecker, 2008). Acknowledging these shortcomings, scholars have also explored the conditions under which service-learning practices are most likely to lead to positive outcomes for students and community (e.g. Knapp, Fisher, & Levesque-Bristol, 2010; Mabry, 1998; Mills, 2012).

As a whole, this body of literature raises important questions about effective approaches to civic education, and whether there are scenarios in which service-learning is not the most appropriate pedagogical approach to support student civic learning. This study explores these tensions through a mixed-methods case study of the transformation of a large, required university honors course from a traditional service project to an introductory civic engagement course. The authors (members of the teaching team and the honors program staff) describe and reflect on our experiences and explore initial outcomes of the course using student course evaluations and final reflection essays. Findings signal the importance of student preparation and grounding in foundational principles of engagement before participating in service-learning experiences. These findings have implications for higher education community and civic engagement initiatives, and for the field of applied learning more broadly.

Civic Engagement in Higher Education

Colleges and universities have, historically, played an important role in U.S. democracy. Early founding documents from colonial universities signal this civic purpose and the public role of higher education was further cemented with the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (Hartley, 2009). The 1960s were marked by social activism on many college campuses (Thelin, 2016); however, by the 1990s, there were growing concerns that colleges had abandoned their historic civic role and that a college education was increasingly viewed as a private, rather than a public, good (Hollander & Hartley, 2009). Colleges faced increased pressure to deliver on career outcomes, pressure that continues

as the cost of college rises (Hollander & Hartley, 2009). In response, in 1985, three college presidents came together to form Campus Compact, and pledged to reinvigorate civic learning on college campuses (Hartley, 2009). Perhaps the most visible outcome of Campus Compact and other initiatives aimed at advancing civic engagement in higher education has been the marked growth of service-learning. Service-learning has become the most commonly utilized tool to advance civic engagement, and the literature has focused heavily on service-learning experiences (Finley, 2011).

Service-learning is often celebrated as a pedagogical tool to support student learning and development of civic responsibility while benefiting the community. Service-learning, defined as a community-benefiting experience tied to learning goals and ongoing reflection (Jacoby, 1996), is credited with enhancing student leadership skills and academic performance, and increasing students' sense of civic responsibility, desire to help others, and appreciation for diversity (Astin & Sax, 1998). Although most literature has focused on these student benefits, community partners have been found to benefit as well. Community partners report that students provide helpful services (Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008; Worrall, 2007) useful end products (Bushouse, 2005; Campbell & Lambright, 2011), bring new ideas and perspectives (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007), and are positive role models for people served (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007).

Challenges and Criticisms of Service-Learning

Despite the prevalence of service-learning as a pedagogical approach to advance student civic learning, scholars have noted a number of shortcomings and limitations to this practice. Criticisms range from inadequate connection to civic skills, reliance on a charity model of service, and challenges and negative experiences from the perspective of community partners. These criticisms are largely centered around student learning and community experiences.

Student Learning. Although service-learning has been looked to as the answer to calls for a renewed civic purpose in higher education, scholars have raised concerns that service-learning is often inadequate to prepare students for the range of civic skills needed to fully participate in democracy (Finley, 2011; Hartley, 2009; Kirlin, 2002) and that the conflation between civic engagement and service-learning is problematic (Brabant & Braid, 2009). Service participation can lead to self-efficacy in community organizing skills, but does not necessarily connect to political engagement abilities or improved understanding of advocacy processes (Colby, 2008; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2008). Even when service-learning leads to the development of political consciousness, students do not necessarily become more politically involved, and they cite numerous impediments to participation (Harker, 2016). As a result, scholars are calling for an expanded vision for reclaiming higher education's civic purpose, one that more intentionally integrates a range of civic activities (Boyte, 2008; Colby, et al., 2003).

A closely related criticism of service-learning practice is that it fails to prepare students to address the root causes of social inequalities and perpetuates a charity model

of service (Mitchell, 2008; Stoecker, 2016). Service-learning often fails to address the complex social and political structures that maintain these systems, and students are unprepared to challenge or change the status quo (Hartley, 2009). In conventional models of service-learning, students often work from a deficit-based model and are placed in a position of power and authority over the community. Students perform service without grappling with the root causes of social injustices, rarely advancing long-term solutions to social problems. These findings raise important questions about how the structure of service-learning experiences can influence student and community outcomes (Mitchell, 2008). To respond to these shortcomings, scholars have called for service-learning to be tied to education around systemic causes of social inequity, building of authentic relationships with community partners, acknowledgement of community strengths and assets, and sharing of power with students and community (Mitchell, 2008).

Community Experiences. On the whole, the service-learning literature is focused primarily on the experiences of students (Stoecker, 2016). Some scholars have explored community experiences and, overall, community partners report satisfaction with service-learners. There are, however, common challenges and negative experiences reported in the literature. Community organizations report difficulties with scheduling (Mills, 2012) and the short-term nature of service-learning (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tryon & Stoecker, 2008; Tryon et al., 2008; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007), lack of time to train and prepare students (Tryon et al., 2008), and tension between the needs and expectations of agencies and students (Mills, 2012). For example, while organizations may prefer to

assign students to simpler, task-based projects, students often expect to be given more complex and “meaningful” projects (Mills, 2012). And while volunteer support can be helpful, many agencies have limited capacity to handle an influx of volunteers at one time, especially when these volunteers require training and preparation and will, at best, work with the organization for one semester.

Factors Influencing the Outcomes of Service-Learning

Research has shown that not all service-learning experiences are created equal; a number of factors impact student learning outcomes. Studies have found, for example, that the amount of time spent at a service site impacts civic learning outcomes (Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993) and future community service (Knapp, et al., 2010). The type of service may also make a difference. Students with regular contact with service recipients, for instance, achieve stronger learning outcomes (Kohls, 1996; Mabry, 1998; Knapp, et al., 2010). The most effective service-learning courses also integrate regular in-class and written reflection (Knapp, et al., 2010; Mabry, 1998) and link experiential and classroom learning (Stelljes, 2008). The overall quality of the experience also impacts the likelihood of continuing to volunteer, with volunteers who have positive experiences becoming more likely to volunteer in the future (Pancer & Pratt, 1999; Taylor & Pancer, 2007) and making greater gains in self-identity development (Taylor & Pancer, 2007). Class size can also be an impediment to successful service-learning, as limited resources make it difficult for instructors to manage student experiences (Hill, Loney, & Reid, 2010).

The literature on the effects of required volunteerism is mixed. Studies have found that students who participated in required service programs were more likely to volunteer in the future (Metz & Youniss, 2003). Other studies have found, however, that students who are required to volunteer show weaker motivation to volunteer (Beehr, LeGro, Porter, Bowling, & Swader, 2010), decrease future intentions to volunteer (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999), decrease student sense of agency (Warburton & Smith, 2003), and fail to develop civic identity (Warburton & Smith, 2003).

Others have explored the conditions under which service is most likely to lead to positive outcomes from the perspective of community organizations. Community partners are most likely to report positive experiences when they have strong partnerships and are involved in designing the service experience (Bushouse, 2005; Campbell & Lambright, 2011; Miron & Moely, 2006). Positive community experiences are also more likely when students are engaged in service over a longer period of time (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Tyron & Stoecker, 2008; Tyron et al., 2008; Vernon & Ward, 1999; Worrall, 2007), receive adequate preparation (Mills, 2012; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Vernon & Ward, 1999) and when service is driven by project needs rather than by hours (Mills, 2012).

Case Study

Building on previous literature, case study methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018) is used here to organize reflection on the process and initial outcomes of transforming a large, required course in civic engagement for a university honors program from a traditional service-learning model to a course grounded in the principles and practices of

critical civic engagement. Case study design is appropriate for understanding a particular experience (e.g., civic learning) that is interdependent within a specific time, place, or activity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition to describing the context and course redesign, we used data to understand the initial outcomes of this course transformation.

The University Honors Program and Service-Learning

There is limited research on service-learning within college honors programs (Stewart, 2012) and existing studies have mixed results. Studies have found that honors service-learning experiences increase students' sense of civic responsibility (Stewart, 2012), encourage students to reflect on and link "service" to larger issues in society (Gibboney, 1996), and achieve positive student gains in civic learning (Simons, Williams, & Russell, 2011). Other studies, however, have found that most participants were not actively taking part in service two years later (Gibboney, 1996) and that participation in a required, first year service-learning honors seminar actually reduced leadership skills for students (Haber-Curran & Stewart, 2015). It is important to note that many of these findings are from small, elective courses and, therefore, findings have limited applicability to large, required service courses.

The Binghamton University Scholars Program, a highly selective honors program at a public research university in the northeast, began requiring students to participate in credit-bearing service of some type in 2006. Earlier iterations of this service course included 1-credit student volunteer placements coordinated by an AmeriCorps VISTA, 40 hours of required service with the addition of the lecture component, and, most

recently, a project-based service experience. Each iteration of the class fell short in delivering both student learning outcomes and strong benefits to the community. The Scholars Program completed a self-assessment with feedback from current students and alumni, with students reporting that the course lacked structure and academic rigor. With a commitment to ethical, responsible, and effective civic participation, in 2015 the Binghamton University Scholars Program, in partnership with the doctoral program in Community Research and Action, began re-imagining a required service-learning course.

The course is required for all sophomore Scholars, with around 115 students enrolled across six course sections each year. Each instructor taught two unique sections of the course using a common syllabus, readings and assignments. Instructors were PhD students with backgrounds ranging from international development, campus organizing and nonprofit management. Scholars students came from across a range of colleges and disciplines, including pre-health, engineering, business, education and more. Students entered the class with low levels of interest in the course content, with 55% of students reporting through Student Opinion of Teaching surveys (SOOTs) that their interest level in the course topic was low at the start of the semester, and only 3% reporting that their interest was high. To accommodate scheduling requirements for the students, the course could only be offered for two-credit hours, meeting for 1 hour and 25 minutes once per week. The structure of the course and background of the students presented unique challenges in designing an effective civic learning experience.

Course Redesign

Given the limitations of service-learning practice and their knowledge of best practices in civic learning, the instructors were presented with a dilemma. Faced with the reality of a large, required, two-credit course, was it possible to facilitate a service-learning experience that adhered to best practice? In particular, the instructors puzzled with the feasibility of maintaining strong relationships with community partners, providing adequate preparation for students, facilitating structured reflection, and adhering to the principles of the critical service-learning framework. Informed by the literature and their own professional experiences, the instructional team embarked on a process to reimagine the course from a traditional service project to a foundational grounding in civic and community engagement that would strengthen students' future civic work. This reflective case study recounts the experiences of the instructional team in the first three years of designing and teaching this course, presents initial course outcomes from a mixed methods pilot study, and discusses implications for college civic education theory and practice.

Our teaching team recognized that the format of the original course did not allow for community engagement based on the principles of power sharing, authentic relationships, and a social change orientation (Mitchell, 2008). Rather than retain a community service component that neither supported student development as true change makers, nor had strong positive impacts on the community, the team elected to refocus the course on preparing students for authentic engagement grounded in a critical perspective. In its new form, the course would be without a traditional service

component, but rather encourage students to deepen their understanding of civic engagement and social change. Students have no service hour requirements, but are instead introduced to principles of community engagement and accompanying theoretical perspectives, guiding them to explore their own interests, motivations and preferred strategies to create change. Course learning outcomes were to:

1. Understand and critically reflect on various approaches to contributing to civic life.
2. Identify and explore personal values, motivations and preferred approaches to contributing to positive community change.
3. Challenge assumptions of what it means to "do good" in the community.
4. Understand the roles of multiple stakeholders in addressing community issues.
5. Be prepared to apply principles of civic engagement to future community work.

The course was organized around the Pathways to Public Service and Civic Engagement from the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University (Haas Center for Public Service, n.d.). This served as a useful framework to organize content in a course grounded in critical approaches to civic engagement. The framework includes six approaches, or "pathways," to participation in civic life and social change: (1) *community-engaged learning and research*; (2) *direct service*; (3) *policy and governance*; (4) *community organizing and activism*; (5) *philanthropy*; and (6) *corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship*. These pathways allowed students to conceptualize a variety of strategies to address social inequities beyond traditional

community service projects. Some of the pathways, such as community organizing and activism, are well-suited for helping students think about long-term change over short-term relief. For each pathway, students completed readings and a short assignment. One class period was devoted to discussion and small group activities on each pathway. Another class session was dedicated to engagement with community leaders representing two pathways. Course readings used the framework of the pathways as well, and included academic articles on critical service-learning and nonprofit structure in addition to periodical articles exploring national trends and differing perspectives on contested elements of community engagement. In class, students participated in small group discussions, exploratory activities, and crossover learning that encouraged them to integrate their own outside experiences.

Through class assignments, discussions, and guest speakers, students critically examined a variety of paths to critical civic participation, challenging assumptions of what it means to “do good” in the community. The course also offered opportunities for students to connect with civic leaders from the campus and local community. More than 30 politicians, advocates, foundation leaders, researchers, educators, and other influential people from in and around the Binghamton, New York area attended panel discussion sessions to engage with students in small groups. These sessions helped students understand the real world problems facing the community and establish connections with organizations and people who work to address these issues.

Initial Reflections on Course Outcomes

After three semesters of teaching the revamped course, instructors have reflected on a number of strengths of the current course design. The variety of pathways explored throughout the semester allowed most students to find an approach that matched their unique interests, skills and life goals. Similarly, assignments allowed flexibility for students to explore the organizations and concepts they found most intriguing. Focusing on real life examples, especially from our local community, allowed students to apply course concepts to real issues and see how community leaders apply, or do not apply, ideas from readings. The format of guest sessions, although more time intensive for instructors to manage, allowed for much richer discussion and engagement than a traditional lecture or panel discussion.

Students also made progress in challenging their own assumptions of charity and what it means to do good work in the community. Grounding the course in a critical model set the stage for students to reflect on past service experiences and how they may have fallen short in incorporating community voice, sharing power and decision making, and developing long-term solutions. Students were especially struck by the lack of “right” answers in this work. Instructors intentionally selected readings, videos and guest speakers that presented alternative views, allowing students to reflect more deeply on the complexity of community work and identify their own values and priorities.

Although the redesigned course largely met the goals of the Scholars program and instructors, the team did face some challenges. Particularly in the first year of teaching, there were some negative responses among students to the fact that the course no longer

involved service. For some students, this disappointment was based on a sincere desire to help the local community or a reflection on the inherent privilege of sitting in a classroom talking about social issues rather than taking action to address them. For other students, however, this response seemed to come from resistance to the idea that they would benefit from additional preparation and learning before engaging in community work. These students believed that they already had the knowledge and resources needed, and should be able to go into the community now. It was a challenge to guide these students through “unlearning” previous assumptions about service and charity. Their reactions, however, solidified the importance of laying a critical foundation before beginning service. Instructors ultimately viewed this frustration as part of the learning process.

Data Collection Procedures

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Binghamton University granted Human Subjects approval for this study. Binghamton University’s standardized Student Opinion of Teaching (SOOT) assessment forms were distributed in all six sections of the course at the end of the semester. The SOOT assesses both the effectiveness of the instructor as well the quality of the course. Students are asked to complete the survey in class while the instructor leaves the room. A student in the class is responsible for collecting completed surveys and returning them to Computer Services. Results are made available to instructors after the semester is complete and student grades are submitted.

Students in each section were also required to submit a final reflection paper. The final reflection papers were four to five double spaced pages in length and were

submitted at the end of the course. Prompts were given to students but they had flexibility in how many, or which ones, to respond to. Student reflections were de-identified prior to data analysis.

Data Analyses

For this case study, relevant responses from 115 students (out of 121 enrolled, or 95%) to items assessing the quality of the course were examined. Specifically, five items were considered): (1) *My interest in the subject before the course*; (2) *My interest in the subject after the course*; (3) *Usefulness of texts*; (4) *Usefulness of homework assignments*; and (5) *Usefulness of class discussions*. Data management and analysis was completed using Stata/IC 15.1 for Mac. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) for each item were completed.

In addition to examining SOOT scores, 30 student reflections (until reaching saturation) from final reflection papers were also analyzed. Although a variety of prompts were provided to ignite student reflections, those of most relevance to this case study included: (1) *How has the meaning of civic/community engagement changed for you since the start of the course, and how have your personal values, motivations and preferred approaches to civic engagement changed?*; (2) *Were there particular ideas that stood out to you or made you think differently about your role in the community?* and (3) *Have you reexamined or thought differently about past or current community service experiences?* Data management and analysis was completed using QSR NVivo 12 for Mac. The constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) was used to identify manifest

content (descriptive, obvious components of text; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003) from students' final reflection papers.

Findings

Summary descriptive data are presented in Table 1. Item response scales for each item were low (1), medium (2), and high (3). Overall, SOOT scores indicated that student's interest in community engagement increased from the start of the course ($M=1.48$; $SD=.55$) to the end of the course ($M=2.20$; $SD=.72$). Class discussions also were identified as helpful to student learning ($M=2.74$; $SD=.46$).

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics, Student Opinion Of Teaching

SOOT Question	Range	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
My interest in subject before course	High	3	2.61%	115	1.48(0.55)
	Medium	49	42.61%		
	Low	63	54.78%		
My interest in subject after course	High	43	38.05%	113	2.20(0.72)
	Medium	50	44.25%		
	Low	20	17.70%		
Usefulness of texts	High	3	32.17%	115	2.18(0.66)
	Medium	62	53.91%		
	Low	16	13.91%		
Usefulness of homework assignments	High	26	22.81%	114	2.09(0.62)
	Medium	73	64.04%		

	Low	14	12.28%		
	Not Applicable	1	0.88%		
<hr/>					
Usefulness of class discussions	High	85	74.56%	114	2.74(0.46)
	Medium	28	24.56%		
	Low	1	0.88%		

The quantitative findings were consistent with, and expanded on, by qualitative findings. Across student reflections, 3 categories were identified: (1) *challenging of previous assumptions about what it means to do good in a community*; (2) *multifaceted understanding of community engagement*; and (3) *motivation to participate in responsible community engagement*. Each category is described below. Quotes from the reflection papers are used to illustrate findings.

Challenging of Previous Assumptions about What it Means to do Good in a Community

Across reflections, students discussed how their assumptions about community engagement were challenged by this course. Students talked about this both in the context of current and past engagement, which were most often direct service or volunteer activities. As one student wrote:

This class definitely challenged my ideas about direct service. Going out into the community and making a difference first hand is normally viewed as one of the most noble forms of community service. It had always seemed like the most logical way to help those in need. After numerous readings and discussions, I now feel that the reality of charitable work is much more nuanced. Doing work at a soup kitchen won't address the reasons people are going hungry in the first place. Actions with good intentions can also end up causing more harm, as is seen in many cases of voluntourism abroad.

Consistent with the results of the SOOT evaluation, students noted the contributions of class discussions to challenging these previous assumptions. Across reflections, students noted value of discussions with community members. This quote captures many student reflections about the value of panels with community members:

The panels that were organized for the class also introduced me to new ideas and perspectives. I was most interested in how the speakers gave us so many different ways to do good. They were extremely varied and I had never thought about most of the ways in which the speakers did service work. Whether it was administrating an opera company, working as a U.S. diplomat abroad, or doing pastoral work, they all provided interesting perspectives.

Multifaceted Understanding of Community Engagement

This category included student references to how their understanding about the scope and complexity of community engagement changed over time. Here students most often referenced coming into the course thinking about community engagement primarily as direct service. The emphasis on critical service-learning alongside use of Stanford's Pathways to Public Service and Civic Engagement to organize the course, may have helped expand students' understanding of the scale and scope of community engagement:

The meaning of community engagement has changed because of taking this course. Prior to the course, I believed that being engaged in the community meant that I should attend events to support good causes, or solely donate money to charitable organizations. But now I know that community engagement means much more than this. ...If there is a social issue in the community, I must actively work to find and solve the root of the issue. If the government passes a legislation that is harmful to the members of the community, it is my duty [to] be an activist so that the community members could benefit.

Motivation to Participate in Responsible Community Engagement

Lastly, in addition to challenging previous assumptions and understanding multiple types of community engagement, students also reflected on the impact of the course on their motivation to participate in future responsible community engagement. Within this category of responses, students spoke of both personal and professional ties to community engagement. Here students especially emphasized the importance of

responsible engagement that prioritized the needs of the community, as well as working towards long term solutions to the root causes of social problems. As one student reflected:

The changes this class has caused in my personal values and preferred approaches relating to community engagement have greatly influenced my approach to participating in community change in the future. Before, I was indifferent, and traditional service learning tended to be what I did because of its being heavily emphasized by our society. Although volunteer opportunities have yet to present themselves, I will attempt to have my efforts be more critical in nature and focus more on systemic injustices as opposed to patching issues, though there is nothing wrong with fixing problems in the short term.

Discussion

This mixed-methods case study examined the process and impact of revising a traditional service-learning course in a university scholars program to a foundational civic engagement course. The revised course emphasized the importance of foundational knowledge of effective civic and community engagement practices in preparing students for ethical and meaningful civic experiences. Rather than relying on more traditional models of student volunteerism, this course instead positioned community members as experts, inviting them into the classroom and allowing students to speak and learn

directly from local leaders to further their understanding of civic engagement. Findings from initial evaluations of the course suggest its impact especially in terms of building critical approaches to current and future community engagement.

This study adds to our knowledge of effective civic educational practices and addresses a gap in the literature around alternatives to service-learning. It also raises important questions about the role of preparation and theoretical grounding before sending students into the community. The classroom-based approach to engagement enabled a more targeted exploration of social inequality and complex political structures that scholars have called for in recent years (Hartley, 2009; Mitchell, 2008). Students reported experiences that challenged previous assumptions, broadened their understanding of community engagement and spurred a desire to participate in responsible community engagement. Broadly, students showed an increased interest in community engagement after participating in the course. These findings contribute to the literature and practice by presenting new ways of approaching critical civic education, in particular when the conditions of a course structure make it unfeasible to implement a service-learning approach that adheres to best practices. These findings also call attention to the role of student preparation in successful community engagement experiences, and the value of taking time for this intentional preparation and foundational knowledge-building. These insights have application not only for service-learning practice, but for applied learning in general.

Looking ahead, we will continue to refine and strengthen the current course design, continuing to emphasize critical approaches to civic engagement. Building off the value of panels with community members, we will explore ways to incorporate case studies into class sessions that engage local community members and organizations. This will have the added benefit of introducing students to real-world examples of social change. Finally, we plan to develop and implement an elective follow-up service-learning course that provides opportunities for students to apply learning from this course in community settings.

We also plan to build on this initial case study to continue to assess course outcomes. More specifically, we will add assessment measures (beyond existing standard university evaluation measures and open-ended feedback) to evaluate impacts on student development. We are particularly interested in considering whether and how critical community engagement changes among university scholars students over time as it relates to experiences in the course. Additionally, we plan to evaluate whether and how this course impacts career goals of honors students as well as short- and long-term civic engagement among honors students. These findings will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of course outcomes, and provide insights into the longer-term benefits of intentional student preparation for civic and community engagement experiences.

References

- Astin, A. W., & Sax, L.J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(3), 251-263. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/238>
- Basinger, N., & Bartholomew, K. (2006). Service-learning in nonprofit organizations: Motivations, expectations, and outcomes. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12(1), 15-26. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>
- Beehr, T. A., LeGro, K., Porter, K., Bowling, N. A., & Swader, W. M. (2010). Required volunteers: Community volunteerism among students in college classes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 37(4), 276-280. doi:10.1080/00986283.2010.510965
- Boyte, H. (2008). *The citizen solution*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Brabant, M., & Braid, D. (2009). The devil is in the details: Defining civic engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 13(2), p. 59-87. Retrieved from <http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe>
- Bushouse, B. (2005). Community nonprofit organizations and service-learning: Resource constraints to building partnerships with universities. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12(1), 32-40. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>

- Campbell, D., & Lambright, K. (2011). How valuable are capstone projects for community organizations? Lessons from a program assessment. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 17(1), 61-87. Retrieved from <http://www.naspaa.org/initiatives/jpae/jpae.asp>
- Colby, A. (2008). The place of political learning in college. *Peer Review*, 10(2), 4–8. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/place-political-learning-college>
- Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., & Corngold, J. (2008). *Educating for democracy: Preparing undergraduates for responsible political engagement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & Stephens, J. (2003). *Educating citizens*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Ferrari, J. R., & Worrall, L. (2000). Assessments by community agencies: How "the other side" sees service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 7, 35-40. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/>
- Finley, A. (2011). Civic learning and democratic engagements: A review of the literature on civic engagement in post-secondary education. *United States Department of Education*. Retrieved from

<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/qc/CivicLearningLiteratureReview.pdf>

Gibboney, R. (1996). Service learning and commitment to community: Exploring the implications of honors students' perceptions of the process 2 years later.

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 25(4), 506-524. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/nvs>

Glaser, B.G. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. *Social Problems*, 12, 436-445. doi:10.2307/798843

Graneheim, U. H. & Lundman, B. (2003). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: Concepts, procedures, and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24, 105-112. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2003.10.001

Haas Center for Public Service (n.d.). *Pathways of Public Service and Civic Engagement*. Retrieved from <https://haas.stanford.edu/about/about-our-work/pathways-public-service>

Haber-Curran, P., & Stewart, T. (2015). Leadership skill development in a first-year honors service-learning seminar. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, 7(2). Retrieved from <https://discovery.indstate.edu/jcehe/index.php/joce/index>

- Harker, D. (2016). Political consciousness but not political engagement: Results from a service-learning study. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 22(2), 31–47. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/>
- Hartley, M. (2009). Reclaiming the democratic purposes of American higher education: Tracing the trajectory of the civic engagement movement. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, 2(3), 11-30. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23744816>
- Hill, S. D., Loney, R. K., & Reid, H. (2010). Brokering service learning between a rural community and large undergraduate class: Insights from a case study. *Journal of Community Practice*, 18(2-3), 396-412. doi:10.1080/10705422.2010.490085
- Hollander, E., & Hartley, M. (2009). Introductory essay: Reimagining the civic imperative of higher education. In D.W.M. Barker & D.W. Brown (Eds.), *A different kind of politics: Readings on the role of higher education in democracy* (pp.1-14). Retrieved from https://www.kettering.org/sites/default/files/product-downloads/Introduction_0.pdf
- Jacoby, B. (1996). *Service-learning in higher education: Concepts and practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kendrick, J. R. (1996). Outcomes of service learning in an Introduction to Sociology course. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 3, 72-81. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/>

- Kirlin, M. (2002). Civic skill building: The missing component in service programs? *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35(3), 571-575. Retrieved from <https://www.apsanet.org/ps>
- Knapp, T., Fisher, B., & Levesque-Bristol, C. (2010). Service-learning's impact on college students' commitment to future civic engagement, self-efficacy, and social empowerment. *Journal of Community Practice*, 18(2-3), 233-251. doi:10.1080/10705422.2010.490152
- Kohls, J. (1996). Student experiences with service-learning in a business ethics course. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 15(1), 45-57. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/journal/10551>
- Mabry, J. B. (1998). Pedagogical variations in service-learning and student outcomes: How time, contact, and reflection matter. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 5, 32-47. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/>
- Markus, G. B., Howard, J. P. F., & King, D. C. (1993). Integrating community service and classroom instruction enhances learning: Results from an experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(4), 410-419. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1164538>
- Metz, E., & Youniss, J. (2003). A demonstration that school-based required service does not deter-- but heightens--volunteerism. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 36(2), 281-286. Retrieved from www.apsanet.org

- Mills, S. D. (2012). The four furies: Primary tensions between service-learners and host agencies. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 19(1), 33-43.
Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>
- Miron, D., & Moely, B.E. (2006). Community agency voice and benefit in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12(2), 27-37.
Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>
- Mitchell, T. D. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service-learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(2), 50-65. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>
- Pancer, S. M., & Pratt, M. W. (1999). Social and family determinants of community service involvement in Canadian youth. In M. Yates & J. Youniss (Eds.), *Roots of civic identity: International perspectives on community service and activism in youth* (pp. 32-55). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 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. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>
- Simons, L., Williams, E., & Russell, B. (2011). An exploration of the value of service-learning: Characteristics of traditional and honor service-learners. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(1), 6-18. Retrieved from <https://www.uncw.edu/jet/>

- Stelljes, A. (2008). *Service-learning and community engagement: Cognitive developmental long-term social concern*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.
- Stewart, T. (2012). Honours service-learning and civic responsibility. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 3(1), 49-60. doi: 10.5204/intjfyhe.v3i1.99
- Stukas, A. A., Snyder, M., & Clary, E. G. (1999). The effects of “mandatory volunteerism” on intentions to volunteer. *Psychological Science*, 10(1), 59-64. doi:10.1111/1467-9280.00107
- Stoecker, R. (2016). *Liberating service learning and the rest of higher education civic engagement*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Thelin, J. (2011). *A history of American higher education* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Taylor, T. P., & Pancer, S. M. (2007). Community service experiences and commitment to volunteering. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 37(2), 320-345. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9029.2007.00162.x>
- Tryon, E., & Stoecker, R. (2008). The unheard voices: Community organizations and service-learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 12(3), 47-60. Retrieved from <http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe>
- Tryon, E., Stoecker, R., Martin, A., Seblonka, K., Hilgendorf, A., & Nellis, M. (2008). The challenge of short-term service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community*

Service Learning, 14(2), 16-26. Retrieved from

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>

Vernon, A., & Ward, K. (1999). Campus and community partnerships: Assessing impacts and strengthening connections. *Michigan Journal of Community Service*

Learning, 6(1), 30-37. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>

Warburton, J., & Smith, J. (2003). Out of the generosity of your heart: Are we creating active citizens through compulsory volunteer programmes for young people in

Australia? *Social Policy and Administration*, 37(7), 772-786. doi:10.1046/j.1467-9515.2003.00371.x

Worrall, L. (2007). Asking the community: A case study of community partner

perspectives. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(1), 5-17.

Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs1>