

Community-Based Research

CASE STUDIES

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National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	7

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Relationship between Literacy and Prescription Adherence in a Somali Community <i>Bates College</i>	11
Options for Low-Income Families without Health Insurance <i>Northeastern University</i>	15
The Effects of Health and Wellness Courses on Topeka Housing Authority Residents <i>Washburn University</i>	19
Dating and Domestic Violence <i>Cabrini College</i>	22
Assessing Health Services for Immigrant Communities <i>Tufts University</i>	26

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

Using GIS to Map Patterns of Home Foreclosure <i>Macalester College</i>	31
The Social Impacts of Public Housing Relocation <i>Bowdoin College</i>	33
Evaluating Best Practices of <i>Residential Assistance for Families in Transition</i> (RAFT) <i>Northeastern University</i>	35
Excavating a “Freedmen’s Town” in Houston’s Fourth Ward <i>Rice University</i>	40
The State of the State for Washington Latinos <i>Whitman College</i>	44

ENVIRONMENT

Trail Use Conflicts in the Blue Ridge Parkway <i>Appalachian State University</i>	51
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The Environmental Sustainability of Backyard Micro-farms <i>Saint Mary's College of California</i>	55
Research for Grant Making and Local Food Systems <i>University of Vermont</i>	59
The Effects of Air Pollution on Public Health in Appalachia <i>Berea College</i>	62
 EDUCATION	
Exploring Low Levels of Parental Involvement in Schools <i>Notre Dame</i>	69
Needs-based Financial Aid Options for the State of Alaska <i>University of Alaska-Anchorage</i>	72
The Social and Academic Achievements of Upward-Bound Alumni <i>Trinity University</i>	76
 BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY	
Improving Loans for Low-to-Middle Income Business Owners <i>Lafayette College</i>	81
Tax Help for Low and Moderate-Income Families <i>Hamilton College</i>	84
Re-designing the Fire Truck for the Los Angeles Fire Department <i>Pitzer College</i>	87
Information Technology Assistance for Non-Profits <i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>	90
 REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH.....	93

INTRODUCTION

This is a collection of Case Studies from the National Community-Based Research (CBR) Networking Initiative, a project funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service through the Learn & Serve program. The project has been managed by Princeton University's Community-Based Learning Initiative (CBLI) in partnership with the Bonner Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey.

Over four academic years, from August 2006 through June 2010, more than thirty campuses participated in this effort to share high-quality CBR projects, courses, and programs. We asked participating colleges and universities to highlight representative cases of their work and to share general thoughts on developing innovative CBR projects and courses. This collection reflects the wide range of these participants – their varying experiences and the different levels of support available to them on their respective campuses. While some campuses have stand-alone community service or even CBR centers that have been in existence for some time, others are developing less formal ties to their community through the efforts of individual faculty or staff. While some regularly run community-based resource courses as part of established curricula in political science, economics, government, or anthropology, others focus on student-led independent work. And while some of the projects remain essentially concerned with traditionally “academic” questions and methods, others are more firmly oriented towards the solving of some of the most immediate problems faced by community partners.

The cases are generally constructed as answers to a series of questions we provided. These questionnaires asked participants to reflect on the development, implementation, and results of one or more of their most successful CBR projects and to offer suggestions for areas of future improvement. To showcase the full diversity of projects in which these campuses are engaged, the cases have been organized into five broad thematic areas – Health and Wellness, Housing and Community, Environment, Education, and Business and Technology. While these categories are not meant to be definitive, and many of the cases could fit just as easily into one or more of them, we hope that by grouping them in this way, others working along related thematic lines will most readily be able to benefit from the expertise of their colleagues. The cases included in these sections run the gamut, both topically and methodologically – from independent, student-driven work on the effects of low levels of literacy on treatment adherence among Somali women to semester-long courses on new models of sustainable agriculture.

The opening section, “Health and Wellness,” includes stories of classes engaged in evaluation of some of the most vexing problems of current health policy, innovative collaborations between colleges and domestic violence shelters, and long-term explorations of the challenges facing immigrants as they navigate the health system (to name just a few). The programs grouped into the second section, “Housing and Community” are notable for their use of technologies both old and new: While some are finding creative ways of using GIS mapping systems to chart the demographics of home foreclosure or patterns of income and service usage, others are involved in the labor-intensive training of students in archaeological field methods. Under the rubrics of “Environment” and “Education” cluster programs that have taken on a wide range of some of the most pressing environmental and educational problems – from the frequency with which hikers

depart from marked trails in the Blue Ridge Parkway to the beliefs about the effects of air pollution held by public health professionals; from the reasons for low levels of parental involvement in public schools to policy evaluations of the forms of financial aid favored by the state of Alaska. Finally, “Business and Technology” includes CBR projects that are concerned primarily with exploring concrete technical and/or financial problems, and with providing some form of direct assistance to community partners – whether by helping to prepare tax returns or by devising new models for fire trucks.

Although we have organized the reports in this way in order to make the book as user-friendly as possible, the issues faced by institutions engaged in community-based research are often shared, and it is worth calling some attention to these commonalities. Most of the projects remain deeply collaborative and often community-driven, even when they are not as interdisciplinary as they might be. While faculty members engaged in CBR courses occasionally feel themselves isolated, since many of their colleagues continue to remain primarily invested in more “traditional” forms of scholarship, community partners play a strong role in both developing research questions and contributing to the process of revision throughout the unfolding of the project. Among the most frequently cited challenges faced by faculty and staff who manage CBR programs are the extraordinary difficulties of coordinating the busy schedules of students, colleagues, and community partners; working towards long-term goals within the confines of short-term projects; and adequately gauging the community impact of programs. It is to these challenges that we look briefly in the closing pages, using a sample of narrative responses to more complex questions about the practice of CBR.

The work here has been edited slightly to present a consistent format, to omit information that participants did not want to be shared, and in some cases, to correct small typos and other errors, but we did not attempt to make this something other than it is—a collection of individual experiences of community-based research. We have learned a great deal from the examples provided here and from other materials generously shared by campuses in the network, and hope you will find this collection useful. Additional materials, including syllabi for some of the courses described herein, are available online at: <http://cbrnet.pbworks.com/>

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERACY AND PRESCRIPTION ADHERENCE

Campus: **Bates College**

Community Partners: B Street Health Center, Bedard Pharmacy, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (all in Lewiston, ME)

Department(s) & Title of Course: Non-departmental and non-credit CBR Fellows Seminar offered by the Harward Center for Community Partnerships

DESCRIPTION

This was a senior thesis project in which the student explored methods of communicating information about prescription medications to Somali women with low levels of literacy.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

The project was not a collaboration among faculty, except insofar as the student worked both with her primary faculty member in the Department of Biology and with me (a member of the Department of Psychology, when not at the Harward Center).

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

This was not the first project undertaken with these community partners, but rather a continuation of projects begun by the faculty member, Dr. Karen Palin, in the Department of Biology, in collaboration with members of the medical community. Members of the medical community identified the understanding of prescription medication directions as a barrier to health in the low-literacy patients of the Somali community in Lewiston. Together with these partners, cultural brokers from the Somali community helped Dr. Palin's students (first in a research seminar and later working as senior thesis researchers) to mount several projects to lower this barrier to health. The research described here is one of several projects developed under Dr. Palin's supervision.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Community partners identified the issue of non-adherence to prescription medication, participated in the planning of the research on pictograms as a form of patient education (described further below), and worked with the Somali community to secure participants for focus group and individual interviews in which preferences for and understanding of different pictograms were examined.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

(1) Do Somali immigrant women prefer the U.S. Pharmacopeia pictograms or the Dowse pictograms for conveying information about prescription medication?

(2) Do Somali immigrant women comprehend the medical information better on the U.S. Pharmacopeia pictograms or the Dowse pictograms?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The community partners mentioned above helped to determine the research questions, but the Bates faculty advisor shaped them into a form that could be subjected to systematic analysis.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

An undergraduate thesis project at Bates takes place in the course of an academic year, but this project clearly benefited from the student's involvement in a course on community-based research methods with her faculty adviser prior to senior year. The faculty member has ample experience in helping students to carve out thesis projects that can be completed in the allotted time. Nevertheless, as described below, the student wishes she could have taken this project further.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

This project was completed over two semesters.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

The primary method for assessing preference was a forced-choice multiple comparison task in which participants indicated which pictogram most effectively portrayed an intended meaning; the primary method for assessing comprehension was open-ended questions about the meaning conveyed by different pictograms.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

There were many opportunities for review and revision as the project unfolded. The student met frequently with community partners, her faculty advisor, and the CBR Fellows group, including me. As one example of the revisions that took place, in the semester preceding the start of this project, the student researcher and a cultural broker visited the homes of 13 Somali women to determine if they understood the auxiliary labels currently being used by the pharmacy serving as a community partner. This preliminary research indicated that the highest level of comprehension was for the label "take with food," with 38.5% of participants correctly

interpreting the image. These preliminary results prompted the student to return to the research literature to find other possibilities for increasing comprehension, and hence her use of not only the U.S. Pharmacopeia labels (the auxiliary labels mentioned above) but the Dowse labels as well. The latter were developed for use by a South African pharmacist.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Because the project emerged from ongoing research of the faculty member, who had an established track record of successful projects in the community, the student was able to complete the work on time. Moreover, the student herself began the work the spring before senior year, which many of our best students do in order to manage their senior theses well. Finally, the cultural broker was instrumental in gaining entrée into and the trust of the Somali participants. The student would say that she and the cultural broker were able to form a bond easily because they are both Muslims.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

One interesting challenge in this research was how to think about peer influences during testing, which likely contributed to higher levels of comprehension in one of the sessions. At first, the student thought of participant sharing as cheating and of the data obtained as contaminated. But, upon further reflection, the student thought her Western views of cheating may be inappropriate in the context of the collectivistic Somali culture. Furthermore, she reasoned, participants' sharing of answers in the research setting probably mirrors a tendency to help each other understand outside the research setting. So, the student came to the conclusion that the behavior she observed in the research setting was adaptive and the data important.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The major findings were that participants preferred the Dowse pictograms to the U. S. Pharmacopeia ones, but comprehension of most images did not meet standards for use in a clinical setting.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

As the student herself says, this research must be utilized as a first step toward finding pictograms that will enhance adherence to medical instructions. Because the pictograms preferred by participants did not reach comprehension standards necessary for use in clinical settings, further research must be undertaken. The student researcher suggests focus groups in which participants offer input on how the Dowse pictograms could be modified to increase comprehension in the local Somali community.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

The student completed a research report, evaluated by her faculty adviser. She defended her work before a panel consisting of three faculty members, one of whom came from outside the Bates community.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Yes, the research findings were shared widely. The student and her faculty adviser presented some of the research in a Public Works in Progress talk at the Harvard Center, to which community members were invited. The student also presented at the Mt. David Summit at Bates, to which the college and wider communities were invited. Finally, the student presented at the Posters on the Hill event in Washington, DC.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

Community impact was not evaluated. When an acceptable set of pictograms is finally established for this community, community impact will be examined in research.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

The student researcher acknowledged that the impetus for the project came from the health care professionals in the community, not from the Somali community itself. She struggled with this issue because she knew that stronger collaboration with the Somali community would likely lead to stronger outcomes. She advises future researchers to establish better means of encouraging Somali participation in the research so that pictograms that reflect Somali culture can be created and disseminated for use throughout the community.

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OPTIONS FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE

Campus: **Northeastern University**

Community Partner: Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island

Department(s) & Title of Course: Department of Political Science, Community-Based Research Practicum

DESCRIPTION

Due to deep, multi-year budget deficits, Rhode Island's 2008 state budget included a provision to cut more than 2,500 non-citizen children from its Medicaid program. The 2009 budget further narrowed Medicaid's income eligibility standard, resulting in a loss of coverage for an estimated 1,000 Rhode Island parents. As a result of these disturbing cuts, this community-based research project sought to explore the options available to Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island as it worked to reach out to those low-income individuals and families who lost, or never had, access to affordable health care. Given the fluidity of Rhode Island's political landscape, the CBR team examined a full spectrum of possible reform options, from comprehensive state-based initiatives to newly unveiled private-based insurance plans. An assessment of policies implemented at each level was compiled into a formal report and presented to Neighborhood Health Plan.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

This course originated as a faculty-graduate student collaboration. David Rochefort, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Political Science, and Kevin Donnelly, at the time a PhD candidate in the Department, worked together in developing this course and producing the final report.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner? Yes.*
- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Representatives from Neighborhood Health Plan played an integral role in shaping both the direction and the content of the course. The first meeting of the course took place at NHP's office in Providence, RI, where the students and NHP staff discussed ways that a community-based research project could help further the partnering organization's mission to help cover the uninsured in Rhode Island. Out of that meeting came our research agenda and specific goals for the final report. As the research unfolded, the research team received ongoing feedback and input from the community partner. The course culminated in a top-level presentation to

executives and other employees at Neighborhood Health Plan, followed by distribution of a comprehensive report detailing our findings.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The research question for this project was straightforward, but quite challenging: What options are available to Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island as it seeks to reach out to those low-income individuals and families who have lost, or never had, access to affordable health care?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The course instructor, students, and community partner each played a significant role in determining the research question.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Northeastern University had cultivated a relationship with Neighborhood Health Plan almost a year prior to the start of this project through a previous CBR project involving Ocean State Action, a Rhode Island-based advocacy group. The design for the latter project came together in the months leading up to the practicum, which was offered during the summer of 2008.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

The project was completed during one summer session, approximately six weeks long.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

The core research methods used in the production of the final report included the following: personal interviews, legislative/policy analysis, and data analysis.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Revision of the final project was an ongoing process throughout the duration of the course. Students submitted research drafts to the instructor, operating as “research team leader,” and all members of the class each week. During these class meetings, students offered each other feedback, while the instructor also gave his reactions and guidance. The final report took shape as a culmination of this continuous team effort.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

The tasks needed to fulfill the research agenda were divided among the student researchers, each of whom assumed responsibility for completing a major section of the final report. Periodic deadlines were set by the instructor to ensure that the research was completed on time.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

The most significant challenge with this project was the sheer complexity of the research area. Health care policy is among the most challenging policy domains to research, even for those trained in the field. The community partner was extremely helpful in breaking through some of this complexity by explaining intricate health insurance programs in detail with common everyday terms and examples.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The final report culminated in a number of policy recommendations for our community partner. We recommended the following eight actions to Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, in cooperation with state lawmakers, as possible steps toward expanding health care access to low-income uninsured populations: 1. Cultivate a supportive political environment. 2. Encourage state policymakers to explore new revenue streams. 3. Engage in extensive marketing and outreach to uninsured populations. 4. Create a standardized and comprehensive data source. 5. Explore the advantages of existing legislation. 6. Create a community health network. 7. Cast a wide net. 8. Offer plans with payment caps and restricted benefits. Extensive information related to the sum and substance of each of these recommendations is available in our published report, “Expanding Health Care Coverage for Rhode Island’s Low-Income Uninsured: A Review of Public and Private Initiatives Aimed at Insuring Vulnerable Populations.”

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

Based on feedback from our community partner, we know that our final report was an integral part of subsequent decision-making about how best to help those without health insurance in Rhode Island. After the final report was distributed, the community partner made numerous requests for additional copies of the report and for supplemental analysis and information that, for space reasons, were not included in the final published document.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Evaluation of student performance was based on the timeliness and quality of assigned research tasks over the period of the semester as well as overall contribution to the project. The student learning experience was also assessed through departmental and university course evaluation forms, in addition to CBR-specific evaluations.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

In addition to our community partner, copies of the final report were made available to state lawmakers, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders in Rhode Island's health policy community.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

Since what we provided in our final report was information, it is not possible to measure the direct community impact of our research aside from the comments above concerning distribution and utilization by the community partner.

- *Are there reports, research products, and/or websites that can be shared?*

The final report, along with previous CBR reports completed at Northeastern, can be accessed on-line at the following web address: <http://www.cbri.neu.edu/>

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

The process of producing community-based research can always be improved upon. In this case, more time could have been spent structuring the project design prior to the start of the class. This would have facilitated more time for research and for writing the final report.

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THE EFFECTS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS COURSES

Campus: **Washburn University**

Community Partner: Topeka Housing Authority

Department(s) & Title of Course: HS 495 – Administration and Evaluation of Human Services Programs

DESCRIPTION

Dr. Deborah Altus, professor, Human Services Department, conducted a community-based research project with her Program Evaluation class (HS 495) in Fall 2009. She and the students worked with the Topeka Housing Authority (THA) to conduct an evaluation of Health and Wellness courses that have been provided to the residents of THA. The purpose of the evaluation was to see how these courses have been impacting the lives of the THA residents. The project involved submitting an application to the University's Institutional Review Board, developing and administering a pre/post test and holding a focus group with THA residents. Students summarized the results of their evaluation efforts, wrote final reports and gave final presentations of the project. The THA administrators are reviewing the results of the students' project as part of their decision-making process in regard to allocating resources for the Health and Wellness courses. These courses are run by a Washburn University professor, Dr. Diane McMillen, along with some of her students. They are also using the results of the evaluation to improve their work at THA.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

This Course is a required course for the Bachelor's degree in Human Services

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner? Yes.*
- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The Topeka Housing Authority identified the questions they wanted researched regarding the Health and Wellness courses. They provided access to the participants for both the pre/post test and the focus groups.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

Is the educational program effective in improving the health and wellness of the residents of the Topeka Housing authority housing complex?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

Students, the staff of Topeka Housing Authority, and the team of instructors of the Health and Wellness classes.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Planning began before the class started through contact with the THA Wellness course instructors, the question evolved as the students began to interview the partner.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

It was completed in one semester.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Pre/ post test and focus groups.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

The project was revised as the focus groups came together to include additional issues beyond those originally explored.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Students had deadlines to meet for each part of the assignment so it was not going to be rushed at the last minute.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

Time is always an issue with a one semester course but it was managed by assigning deadlines.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

We learned that the residents of the Topeka Housing Authority who took part in the health and wellness classes were very satisfied with the experience. They reported increased well being and improved life satisfaction as a result of taking part in the classes. Their reaction to the classes was overwhelmingly positive and the few criticisms about the experience were relatively minor.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

They used the results in the decision-making process to re-fund the health and wellness courses for the spring semester.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Students were required to write papers and give presentations on the project. These papers and presentations were graded by the instructor. Students had the opportunity to comment on the value of the learning experience when they completed their course evaluations.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

In addition to the Topeka Housing Authority, the results were shared with the group that runs the health and wellness classes for the Topeka Housing Authority. Due to the nature of the project, we did not feel it was appropriate to share the results beyond these two groups.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

This was a one-semester project and as a result, our goals were relatively modest. We did not evaluate the research for community impact.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

This type of project should be a year long process and maybe span two courses.

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DATING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Campus: **Cabrini College**

Community Partner: Laurel House

Department(s) & Title of Course: Engagement with the Common Good (ECG), Dating and Domestic Violence

DESCRIPTION

The ECG 300 course “Dating and Domestic Violence” is a partnership between Cabrini College and Laurel House, a local domestic violence shelter. Over the course of the semester, students become provisionally certified in Domestic Violence Crisis Counseling according to Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) standards. The PCADV is the organization that provides oversight of all training programs in PA Domestic Violence shelters. To attain full certification, which would certify students to work or volunteer at any Pennsylvania domestic violence shelter, students must complete an additional eight hours of on-site training at Laurel House. This step is optional, and is one benchmark we are using to gauge student commitment to the class.

In addition to completing the domestic violence (DV) training modules, students are required to design and conduct research about dating and domestic violence among college and high school students. The purpose of this community-based research is twofold: To inform the educational efforts of Laurel House and to reinforce course-based knowledge with real-time statistics. One sustainable long term goal which Laurel House always keeps in mind when partnering with colleges is the goal of creating “lifelong ambassadors” who are aware of the warning signs of domestic abuse, and of the fact that help is available, and who have the opportunity to develop the skills and tools to help a friend, family member, neighbor, or colleague, should the need arise. Regardless of what field these young adults go into upon graduation, knowledge about dating and domestic violence is something that will serve them and their communities well throughout the course of their lives. From Laurel House’s perspective, having the opportunity to work closely with students from Cabrini in a variety of capacities helps to ensure that many students will leave college well prepared to help further Laurel House’s mission of “rais[ing] public awareness about domestic violence and...advocat[ing] for social change against domestic violence” (Laurel House, n.d.).

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

No. It exists in our core social justice curriculum.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Yes, this was the first CBR project, but there was a relationship between Laurel House and the College prior to our working together.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Laurel House provided the PCADV standard training, assisted in teaching the course, and set the research agenda each semester.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

Just as academic research often leads to more research questions, the work from one semester builds upon the findings of the previous semesters. For example, the first semester of the course asked college-aged students about their experiences with dating violence. The next semester asked similar questions to high school students. The third semester replicated these studies, but then expanded the research to identify critical junctures in student development where dating violence rates increased. The next semester, students polled high school and college students to determine if they saw dating violence as a problem and to explore the most effective ways to program for intervention. This year's study will focus on how much pre-service and in-service teachers know about domestic violence and how equipped they are to handle domestic violence issues that may arise in class.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

Laurel House established all research questions in conversation with the course instructor.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

The first section of this course was designed and run in one month. It was a tight timeline, and ill-advised.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

It has been a sustainable project for over eight semesters.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

We collected quantitative data through online surveys. While we did get IRB approval, there needs to be improvement in research design.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Absolutely. We have streamlined data collection using Question Pro and we have used this extra time to add a literature review.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Students worked in groups setting deadlines.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

During the first semesters, it was hard to pull together a presentation in the time frame of a semester. However, as we became more familiar with the process and had other finished products to look at, it became much easier to envision and implement projects.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

Dating violence is a significant problem among high school and college students.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

At the end of each semester, students present research results to the Executive Director of Laurel House in a student-lead professional grade presentation. A powerpoint containing all of the research findings is provided to Laurel House to use as needed. While the research informs day-to-day domestic violence educational programming, the research done in these classes also assists in informing educational programming at the state level. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) is undertaking the development of a new three-year Strategic Plan. Pennsylvania is on the cusp of joining several other states that have already enacted legislation requiring that dating violence prevention be part of the high school curriculum. PCADV has worked hard to ensure that this new legislation require certified domestic violence agencies to be included in the development and delivery of the curriculum. Partnering with college students to learn more about the most effective ways to provide this information to high schools students, and to ensure that colleges also educate their students about dating violence warning signs, is a natural extension of the work that PCADV has already done regarding community education. Laurel House's Executive Director is a member of PCADV's Strategic Planning Committee which has been actively meeting for the past six months. In this capacity, she has been (and will be) able to use the lessons learned, and the model developed, in partnership with Cabrini to help inform PCADV's new Strategic Plan with regard to Community Education of young adults.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Literature review, completion of domestic violence training modules, and final presentations were all assessed.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community? Yes.*
- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

At this point, this mechanism is very informal. I rely solely on conversations with my partner.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

We have established a replicable model, but we are always improving it. This year, we'd like to see more funding for Laurel House.

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ASSESSING HEALTH SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Campus: **Tufts University**

Community Partner: Immigrant Service Providers Group

DESCRIPTION

Tufts University's course, "Community Health: Theory and Practice," erases the line between community and classroom by welcoming community members into an undergraduate research seminar as they work together with students and faculty in assessing the needs of and services for the local immigrant community. Members of the Immigrant Service Providers Group (ISPG), a coalition of organizations providing services to Somerville immigrants, will collaborate with Tufts faculty to design and implement a year-long study that will enhance their work, determining to what extent immigrants are aware of opportunities available to them and what barriers and opportunities (including immigration status) affects utilization.

DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, REFLECTION

This course is a year-long seminar CBPR research seminar and to date this year we have had a number of successes--both in relation to the seminar dynamics and the research in which the students are engaging.

Seminar related successes include:

Enrollment:

This year there was a much greater demand for the seminar than in past years. In past years we had to engage in extensive recruitment for the seminar, but this year the course filled on its own over the summer.

Group dynamics and Leadership:

Based on our experiences last year we worked hard this summer to develop a course structure that would facilitate leadership development. With a study already underway, we wanted the students to feel as though they were making important contributions beyond data collection. As a result we designed the syllabus to include key research positions. At the onset of the semester students community members each applied for a specific position on the research team. Having strong faculty and community partner involvement, we were able to break the students into small groups of 2-3, and each group received specialized training. For example, those who applied for data related positions were trained to create a coding scheme and code book, while those who were working as community outreach specialists were trained by our community partner and collaborated on developing a mechanism by which to inform the broader community of the partnership.

Groups were expected to provide leadership in the seminar and in the field on their given expertise but also to participate in all areas of the project. This format has created a sense of teamwork among seminar participants and has greatly facilitated open conversation. Students recognize each others' strengths and support one another's efforts.

Additionally, this change to the syllabus has allowed us to move to student run sessions. Each week students designated project managers collect reports from their peers and faculty members. Sessions are then run like team meetings and used to process experiences in the community.

Beyond successes in the actual seminar, we have also had a number of successes in the field this semester:

Recruitment

The first big success this semester was study recruitment. We completed a number of interviews this semester, putting the project back on schedule. This is particularly exciting given our target population—foreign born individuals. New immigrants are a difficult population to reach in general and given the recent increase in immigration raids, trust in the community is at an all time low. Despite attitudes and low levels of trust we have been able to speak with a great number of people, ranging from undocumented homeless immigrants to residents who have been in the community for a number of years. The success we have experienced this semester would not have been possible without the support of community residents and partners in the classroom. Our partners from the Immigrant Services Providers Group have been excited about our success this semester and are ready for spring, when we plan to analyze and disseminate the data to community partners.

Outreach and Community Engagement

Beyond recruitment we have made a point this semester to share our project with community groups beyond the ISPG as the data we are collecting may be beneficial to many. We have been working on strengthening our relationship with the local health care organization, which has expressed an interest in having the students present in the fall. In addition, learning more about additional community resources has allowed us to provide respondents with a list of local resources.

One last success is that we have been asked by the local health care organization for a copy of our survey—as they are interested in implementing it in a neighboring community.

Challenges

We faced three primary challenges. The first was funding. Because this is an actual research study conducted in the context of an undergraduate seminar, much more time than a traditional academic course is involved in terms of study management. In addition, funds were needed to pay study subjects, in addition to community members. Because we involved additional community members, funding became an issue for us.

A second challenge was time. Everything takes more time than we planned for. We believe that time is one of the greatest barriers to engaging students in research, particularly as they have a limited amount of time. Research expectations are greater than that of a course and do not take

into account the traditional academic schedule. We need to keep students, faculty and community members involved during breaks including the summer—which is difficult with limited funding. We are meeting this summer to address this as we move forward.

A third challenge was related to community resident involvement. Although our community partners have been spending much more time in the classroom, resident participation has gone down. This is largely due to life forces which include job loss and family emergencies. Although the residents are not always in class, they do come in regularly. One additional challenge in working with community residents this semester was the time involved in helping with resume writing, job searches, proof reading and resource access.

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

USING GIS TO MAP PATTERNS OF HOME FORECLOSURE

Campus: **Macalester College**

Community Partner: Community Affairs Department of the Federal Reserve Bank, the Folwell Neighborhood Association, and the McKinley Center for Families

Department(s) & Title of Course: Geography: Urban GIS (Spring 2009)

DESCRIPTION

North Minneapolis is known nationally for its high rate of home foreclosures and poverty. The Urban GIS class worked with the Federal Reserve and two neighborhood associations to map and analyze economic, spatial and demographic patterns in North Minneapolis neighborhoods, including home foreclosures, neighborhood stability, and transportation networks. The class developed the projects in close connection with the community partners who shaped the research and offered feedback. The class presented to a broad group of stakeholders (including representatives of the neighborhood groups) at the Federal Reserve and posted their findings on the Geography department's website.

DEVELOPMENT

Professor Laura Smith has developed a long-term relationship with the Federal Reserve around researching home foreclosures. She utilized this project to establish stronger relationships with North Minneapolis community organizations. The community partners met with the professor to plan the course, the students met initially as a class with the community groups, the community groups took the students on community-led tour of their neighborhoods, and students presented their findings to the community partners at multiple stages of development.

IMPLEMENTATION

The students used a variety of research methods, such as census parcel demographics, home-foreclosure data from the Federal Reserve, and data gathered through other public sources. Each student was expected to have mapping (spatial) components to their research. The community partners were able to see the data and interpretation during the process and were able to help students make sense of the data from their own perspectives of knowing the neighborhood "on the ground." The Federal Reserve offered feedback on research questions, data collection, and the relative strengths and weaknesses in research methodologies.

RESULTS

GIS data are displayed visually in final products as maps. Thus, the magnitude of problems (such as home foreclosures) is represented in ways that are accessible and that can be used by

community members for advocacy. Maps also allow Federal Reserve staff members to concentrate their outreach activities in areas that have the greatest needs and possibilities for impact. Students, faculty, and community members all evaluated the project with forms provided as part of the National CBR Networking Initiative.

There is an expectation that this project will be one component in more extensive Macalester involvement in North Minneapolis. The Associate Director of the Civic Engagement Center at Macalester College supported the class, attended the presentations, and has worked over the past year to connect additional classes and students to North Minneapolis to learn about the neighborhoods, to formulate community-based research projects, and to volunteer/intern at other North Minneapolis nonprofits.

All the research projects for Urban GIS can be found at:
<http://www.macalester.edu/geography/faculty/smithl/courses/geog365/index.html>

REFLECTION

The course worked well with multiple community partners. We need to find new ways to share partnerships with the larger campus, so that we can develop multifaceted partnerships that involve multiple faculty and student groups. As a result of Laura Smith's class, our work in North Minneapolis as a whole has been strengthened, but right now, Professor Smith is the only faculty member who is working with the two neighborhood groups. It would be ideal to allow those community groups to be able to approach multiple faculty members with potential projects.

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THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING RELOCATION

Campus: **Bowdoin College**

Community Partner(s): Brunswick Housing Authority (and Oasis Health Network)

Department & Title of Course: Interdisciplinary Studies 240 (Maine Social Research)

DESCRIPTION

The Maine Social Research course was taught each semester for three years (2007-08 through 2009-10) and represents an effort to develop a course genre centered on year-long social science research projects with and for community partners. The course teaches qualitative interviewing and data analysis as well as social science perspectives on inequality. It requires as prerequisite a “methods” course in anthropology, economics, education, psychology or sociology. The course grew out of discussions among faculty in these disciplines and was piloted over several semesters by a sociologist and anthropologist.

DEVELOPMENT

The 2008-09 version of the course was developed in the summer of 2008 through meetings with a previous partner (Brunswick Housing Authority -- BHA) about pressing research questions. The BHA hoped to purchase some of the soon-to-be vacant family housing from the closing Brunswick Naval Air Station and to relocate families from the badly deteriorated and highly stigmatized 50-unit Perryman Village public housing project into those units. BHA would then demolish Perryman Village. In order to learn the views of tenants and to meet statutory requirements of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), BHA needed to undertake a “resident consultation.” That became our research project, which students in consultation with the BHA broadened to include a “social impact” analysis of relocation and dispersion of the loose Village community. There was no organized tenant group at the Village to consult with. I “contracted” with the BHA to create a formal consulting role for the class. A \$500 payment from BHA helped pay for the \$25 gift certificates provided to respondents. A second year-long project (not discussed here) focused on clients of Oasis Health Network – a donated services program.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the fall of 2008 a subgroup of the class of 10 students designed the qualitative interviews (in consultation with BHA) as well as the letters of introduction sent to residents. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Oversight Committee. Students began the interviews (which ranged from 15-60 minutes), transcribed them and started to interpret them. A group of 4 from the spring semester’s class continued the project, and two students received

some summer compensation to complete the interviews (29 of 50 families) and to expand the course reports to a comprehensive report to BHA and to HUD which I edited.

RESULTS

This research resulted in an extensive report about Perryman Villagers' views and experiences, titled *Perryman Village, Resident Consultation: An Analysis of the Social Impact of Relocation Final Report to Brunswick Housing Authority*. That report will be submitted by BHA to HUD at the time of its application for "disposition" of Perryman Village.

REFLECTION

This research proved to be enormously interesting to students, connected closely to other research and to student learning about social inequality, concentrated poverty and related public policies. The opportunity for students to learn from the experiences and perspectives of public housing residents was eye-opening. Student writing about this research and the final report (as well as oral reports to BHA) contributed significantly to the community partner, reinforcing students' sense of the meaningfulness of the work and their sense of empowerment as learners.

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EVALUATING BEST PRACTICES OF RAFT (RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION)

Campus: **Northeastern University**

Community Partner: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts

Department(s) & Title of Course: Department of Political Science. Community-based Research Practicum (CBP)

DESCRIPTION

Northeastern University's CBR program partners groups of student researchers—primarily upper level undergraduate students—with “community partners” or “sponsors,” who are often local not-for-profit organizations. Over the course of a semester, the students, who are enrolled in a Community-based Research Practicum (CBR) class, conduct substantive research on an area/question of relevance to the community sponsor. While there is often significant communication between the community partner and the students, the vast majority of the research is conducted by the class, which essentially acts as an independent research body. The course culminates in publication of a substantial policy report, which is available in both hard copy and electronic form.

This particular project examined the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program. RAFT, which is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Development (DHCD), provides families deemed “at-risk” of becoming homeless with supplemental cash assistance. Eligible families can use the funds for a variety of reasons, ranging from coverage of rental arrearages to transportation-related costs. The program is run by the state of Massachusetts's nine regional housing agencies.

This project was unique in that it had two sponsors, DHCD and the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts, a non-profit agency that advocates on behalf of the nine regional housing agencies. In FY09, the nine agencies were authorized by DHCD to implement their own individualized RAFT implementation plans. Prior to FY09, a relatively standardized process was promulgated by DHCD. This newfound autonomy was intended to allow the centers to craft a RAFT delivery process that accounted for the unique needs of each agency's region. In light of this change, both the DHCD and the Regional Housing Network asked Northeastern University's CBR program to conduct a comparative analysis of the nine agencies with respect to FY09 RAFT implementation schemes. The analysis utilized both qualitative interviews with staff at each of the nine agencies and quantitative analysis of a data set that accounted for a variety of RAFT related indexes, including use of funds, reasons for funding requests, the number of individuals that received funds, etc. All of these data were available on an agency-by-agency basis. Each student was assigned his or her own agency and was expected to draft an independent analysis of the assigned agency's FY09 plan. The nine separate reports were then used to identify best practices with regard to the implementation of RAFT overall.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

The course was not explicitly interdisciplinary as it was offered through the Department of Political Science. However, students from a variety of backgrounds and majors were invited to enroll in the course.

The course represented a collaboration between faculty in that the project was originally chosen and conceptualized jointly by Northeastern's Community-Based Research Initiative director and by the faculty member selected to run the practicum. From that point forward, the faculty member in charge of the practicum acted as the research project's leader. While adopting a traditional instructor's role in some respects—grading students, leading discussions, lecturing, etc.—that faculty members also contributed to large portions of the research report. Major research questions and decisions throughout the project were considered by the group as a whole, providing students with significant input into the direction of the project.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Yes, although the university had a preexisting relationship with one of the community sponsors. The DHCD administrator who approached us about this project was an alumnus of Northeastern University's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. The other community sponsor, the Regional Housing Network, was brought into the project somewhat later but made critical contributions as the voice of the nine agencies being researched and frequently worked alongside DHCD.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The community partners were involved in the development of the course/project in a number of ways. First, they selected the topical area researched. Both sponsors indicated a great need to review the FY09 RAFT provisions. However, the research group was responsible for creating the research methodology used in the study—a qualitative comparative analysis paired with a quantitative examination of the FY09 RAFT funding distribution. Second, the partners provided the research group with quantitative data. Third, they secured approval from each of the nine centers, which was needed for participation in the project. Specifically, the centers allowed our student researchers to speak with staff about the FY09 changes, although staff members always had the option to decline to speak or to speak anonymously if they were not comfortable being identified by name. Finally, there were considerable informal discussions between both community sponsors and the course instructor throughout the semester. These discussions were generally used to clarify any confusion or to update the sponsors on the status of the project.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

What sort of best practices can be deduced from the FY09 implementation of the RAFT program? Broadly speaking, under what conditions do each of the various agency-specific provisions work?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The community sponsors presented a broad research topic and the research team refined it into a more specific question.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Because the course was held during the first summer semester, there was very little time to transition from the end of the spring semester to the beginning of the course. The majority of the course was designed two months prior to the first class meeting, although significant additions continued throughout the semester. Having been involved as a research team member in a previous CBR practicum, the faculty member responsible for this course imposed fairly rigid deadlines in the initial syllabus as well as substantive research goals prior to start of the class. However, given the inherent complexity that accompanies a research project of this scope, a number of these deadlines had to be adjusted throughout the semester, thus making the syllabus something of an evolving document.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

All of the student research (the nine separate analyses), the quantitative analysis, and the recommendations were written by the end of the semester. However, significant editing was required in the months following the course's completion in order to make the report publishable.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

A two-pronged methodology was employed that utilized both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative portion primarily consisted of interviews with staff members responsible for administering RAFT in each of the nine agencies. Staff members included executive directors, managers, and intake specialists, to name a few. The quantitative portion consisted of a descriptive analysis of all of the available FY09 data for the RAFT program. This data, which was available and presented for each agency, accounted for a number of descriptive characteristics of the populations serviced and the overall intake process, such as: the overall uses of funds, the residences of recipients, and the reasons for financial trouble.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

While there were opportunities to review and revise the project as it unfolded, most of these changes were peripheral. By and large, the overall research questions remained the same, a testament to the community sponsors' desires and the time constraints imposed by the summer semester. At one point, it became necessary to scale back the scope of our data presentation, as time prohibited us from producing a more robust analysis.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

A highly structured research timeline was established from Day One of the class, although everyone was cognizant of the fact that interim deadlines do tend to get pushed back in these types of projects, depending on contingencies of the research process. Nonetheless, the initial deadlines, which were no more than optimal or best case scenarios, forced the research team to work very hard from the outset. With adequate time allowances for "make-up" work at the project's end, it proved possible for students to complete their individual assignments and to knit together a summary report by the end of the semester.

Additional tasks, such as editing or double checking/analysis, were assigned based on students' demonstrated capacities in these areas. Because this was a class of high performers, the students willingly accepted additional roles. In fact, they reported their feeling that this work contributed to their overall ownership of the project.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

The most significant challenge was the project's quantitative component. Students were all expected to complete a quantitative analysis of their agency. While it was only intended to be a descriptive analysis, the students had varying proficiencies in this area and some produced analyses that were unfit to publish without revision. This problem was addressed by a series of individual appointments between the students and the research team leader. In addition, one of the more skilled students checked and fixed the graphs used in the text. Again, this was done with significant oversight.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

We presented the following recommendations to the sponsor, which are outlined in greater detail in our final published report:

- a) Continue to house RAFT within the regional housing agencies.
- b) Network with other social service providers.
- c) Attempt to make RAFT available over a 12-month period.
- d) Consider prioritizing clients.

- e) Consider capping or prohibiting certain fund usages.
- f) Implement budget workshops.
- g) Sponsor future research on service delivery and program outcome

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

The community partners have used this research to inform administration of the RAFT program. Not only was the report distributed to each of the nine regional agencies, but the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts intends to post it on the agency's website. In addition, the Regional Housing Network presented the report to elected officials and other policymakers who were interested in learning more about the RAFT program.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Evaluation of student performance was based on the timeliness and quality of assigned research tasks over the period of the semester as well as overall contribution to the project. The student learning experience was also assessed through departmental and university course evaluation forms, in addition to CBR-specific evaluations.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Yes, research findings are available online and were widely distributed among policymakers by the Regional Housing Network.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

We did not explicitly assess community impact. However, our community sponsor has indicated that this project has proven very useful in helping the state's nine regional housing agencies to administer the RAFT program.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

In hindsight, this project may have been a little too large for a summer 1 semester. To be sure, we were able to meet all of our goals and produced a good product. However, we were forced to work under immense time constraints and pressures. Moreover, a considerable amount of editing had to be done after the semester was finished. A project of this magnitude would probably be better suited for a full semester (fall or spring), as opposed to the abbreviated summer session.

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EXCAVATING A FREEDMEN'S TOWN IN HOUSTON'S FOURTH WARD

Campus: **Rice University**

Community Partner: The Yates Museum Community Archaeology Project and the Community Archaeology Research Institute

Department(s) & Title of Course: ANTH 362/562: Archeological Field Techniques

DESCRIPTION

ANTH 362/562: Archaeological Field Techniques is a course taught by Dr. Susan McIntosh in the department of Anthropology at Rice University. Through the course, students are given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the major aspects of archaeological excavation while expanding their horizons beyond Rice's hedges into the greater Houston community. From planning the dig to actual excavation and retrieval of material, followed by processing and recording of the artifacts, their study and interpretation, and finally production of a research report, students get to experience archaeological excavation first hand.

Students participate in an excavation project located in Houston's historic Fourth Ward neighborhood on sites adjacent to the Rutherford B. H. Yates Museum. The site has the benefit of being located in the historic district of Houston's Freedmen's Town, which is the only remaining, post-Civil War, National Historic District of previously enslaved peoples in the United States. When the district was designated in 1984, it had 530 National Register structures; today, less than 30 remain. Additionally, the district is believed to be the last African American "Freedmen's Town" community in the United States that continues to be occupied, at least in part, by descendents of the original emancipated founders. All of these characteristics combine to present our students with an extraordinary opportunity to explore not only archaeological techniques, but also to explore a piece of Houston's history.

Working with two community partners, the Yates Museum Community Archaeology Project (YCAP) (<http://www.yatesmuseum.org>) and the Community Archaeology Research Institute (CARI) (<http://www.publicarchaeology.org/yates/mission.html>), students serve an important community mission to aid understanding of the impact of the African Diaspora on different communities and also to leverage archaeology as a way to build bridges among these descendents. Students are also able to contribute valuable work demonstrating the historic value of these properties, thereby aiding the Freedmen's Town descendents in their goal to have this recognized as an area meriting historic preservation by the city of Houston. During the course, students spend 40 hours or more on-site at the excavation site and many more in the labs back at Rice analyzing the uncovered artifacts.

One student project during the spring 2010 semester analyzed metal artifacts other than nails that were recovered from the excavations. (Nails were the most frequent metal artifact found -- over 50 kg of them). While extensive rust prevented the identification of many artifacts, several with known dates of manufacture could be identified, which helped in dating the formation of

deposits at the site. For example, a bullet manufactured by Utah Ordnance between 1941 and 1943 tells us that the level it was found in dates to the early 1940s or later. In addition, a “Good Luck” token from the Boy Scouts pointed to the presence of a male child at one household. This project provides a sample of the type of work students produce as part of the course.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

Two faculty members – Dr. Jeff Fleischer and Dr. Susan McIntosh - share responsibility for the course by alternating years each one teaches the course.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner? No.*
- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The Yates Community Archaeology Project (YCAP) had already developed objectives for excavations that they hoped to undertake. Since the funding they needed was never obtained, the Rice excavations pursue the same objectives using methods and recording practices that are consistent with those of YCAP.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The project’s goal is to more fully understand the lives of the inhabitants of Freedmen's Town, and in so doing to more fully incorporate the contributions of African Americans into the history of Houston.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

YCAP.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Drs. Fleischer and McIntosh met with the YCAP archaeologists and agreed on research design and methodology prior to entering into the collaboration.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

It is an ongoing project, envisioned to take place every spring.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

The standard methods of field archaeology.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

A YCAP archaeologist is always present during excavation for consultation and to advise us. Once an excavation report is produced by the students, there is further discussion regarding outcomes and how they affect the selection of the next area to excavate the following year.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Student attendance was required for a set number of sessions both in the field and in the lab. This allowed students ample experience in a variety of excavation tasks as well as artifact processing in the lab. A series of deadlines involving drafts of their descriptions and analysis, plus in-class presentations, ensured that the final report was produced on time.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

Outreach to the Freedmen's Town community members themselves is sometimes a challenge. We are often available for site tours while we are excavating, and interact with the local property owners, Boy Scout troops, etc., but we have not yet been truly successful in translating these outreach opportunities into high-quality projects that bring the results of our work to the broader community in a way that is meaningful to them.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The research resulted in an excavation report that aspires to professional standards. Students write each of the chapters, and these deal with the history of the properties excavated, prior archaeological research, excavation methodology and observations, and reports on each class of artifact recovered, plus a concluding chapter on what we are able to say about occupation and activities at that site.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

YCAP regards the accumulating database from the Rice excavations to be an invaluable tool for all its future archaeological plans in Freedmen's Town.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

The student's learning experience was evaluated through a combination of student course evaluations and student surveys from the Center for Civic Engagement. In addition, a sample of final projects was assessed by an interdisciplinary group of Rice faculty using a Rice-developed research rubric.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Several of the projects have been shared, including a poster on the major findings of the three Rice excavations (intended for display in the Yates Museum), a display of some of the children's toys recovered from the excavation (also intended for display in the Yates museum), and a multimedia presentation incorporating interviews with two longtime residents of Freedmen's Town, historical images and a soundtrack, which we hope to post on our website.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

YCAP does this assessment.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

More work to overcome the logistical challenges to more effective outreach to the local community.

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THE STATE OF THE STATE FOR WASHINGTON LATINOS

Campus: **Whitman College**

Community Partners: Walla Walla Public Schools; Washington State Farm Worker Housing Trust; Commitment to Community (C2C); and others

Department(s) & Title of Course: POL-318-A (10016) Community-Based Research As Democratic Practice, taught by Professor Paul Apostolidis (Politics) and Gilbert Mireles (Sociology)

DESCRIPTION

Beginning in 2005, this CBR course was designed to produce and share periodic reports on *The State of the State for Washington Latinos*. Annual reports have covered the social, economic, and political inequalities faced by Washington Latinos in areas ranging from K-12 education to domestic violence prevention, voting rights to housing, health care to juvenile justice.

Individual students partner with organizations serving Latinos in each of these specific areas. Fall 2009 projects again had students cover multiple issue areas, although we limited the range of issues addressed along with, correspondingly, the number of partner organizations. Multiple students were partnered with four different groups. Two of those projects were:

Farm Workers

Three students worked with Washington State Farm Worker Housing Trust. One examined the labor experiences of farm workers in Walla Walla's booming wine industry in comparison with those of workers in other agricultural sectors, and found that growers and other businesses in the wine industry are uniquely situated to address persistent job health hazards and other labor problems for workers, especially for women workers. A second student evaluated the barriers to greater job mobility and upward career mobility for farm workers and identified more extensive English language skills and better job training programs as key initiatives needed to counteract these barriers. A third student conducted a statistical analysis of the Trust's state-wide data from a survey of farm workers which revealed that these workers use public social services at extremely low rates, and while income was not correlated with service use, community engagement and language skills were.

Neighborhood Improvement

In partnership with Walla Walla's Commitment to Community (C2C), three students confronted key challenges in improving marginalized local neighborhoods that tend to have large Latino populations. Survey research of Latinos in Walla Walla indicated very low confidence in local law enforcement's ability and willingness to address housing code violations that created problems for tenants, as well as a correlation between civic engagement and knowledge regarding housing-related issues. Research based on both interviews and quantitative data from government agencies disclosed that while transportation problems are not a significant factor in local poverty in Walla Walla, a lack of reliable health care access, inadequate employment

opportunities outside the farm economy, and domestic violence – especially for immigrant women – are crucial contributors to poverty in the city. A third report showed that C2C’s method for evaluating its own effectiveness could function better if it analyzed its feedback from constituents not only in terms of their altered attitudes and sense of attachment but also their increased skills and knowledge for engaging in local civic life.

DEVELOPMENT

The initial course required students to conduct and present their completed research within a single semester. We have changed that model so that we now have a two-semester series in which students complete the research first and then, in the second semester, learn to present it effectively. Having more time to do the research in the fall also made it possible to cultivate more robust connections between students and community partners. These relationships benefitted from our “State of the State Scholar,” a student veteran of the program who received a stipend for facilitating the partnerships and coaching the students on their research. As a result, we achieved an incremental but significant increase in the quality of the research, particularly with regard to the diversity and rigor of the empirical research methods employed, but also in terms of the students’ abilities to consider and critically discuss prior scholarly work related to their topics.

Additionally, we made several other improvements. First, we put into practice a new emphasis on building sustained partnerships with a more limited number of partners. Hence all four partners had worked with us previously at least once, and in some cases several times. The point of doing this was to build mutual trust and a keener sense of our mutual expectations, abilities, and limitations, and thus a better communicative relationship. Two partner meetings were held with the professor to promote a sense of common purpose and to encourage networking among the individuals and their organizations. Second, students were given weekly assignments (“building blocks”) to prepare them step-by-step to write their Final Reports. Although multiple assignments had existed in prior years, this year we found that doing this on a regular weekly schedule enhanced the quality of the Final Reports as well as the students’ experiences throughout the semester. And third, we established expectations for more frequent student check-ins with partners – ideally weekly.

IMPLEMENTATION

Each student conducted a rigorous empirical research project geared toward producing findings that would assist local/regional organizations, local government officials, and local candidates in stimulating greater Latino civic and political engagement. The results were intended to be of use to a wide variety of other actors and organizations, especially independent local organizations. The research process taught students who had never done this sort of work before how to design and carry out a major independent empirical inquiry; it thus induced students to position their work not only within these local communities, but within various scholarly communities. All students were required to evaluate selected bodies of prior scholarship bearing on their topics. Both the intellectual and logistical demands associated with this project were thus simply

enormous. With regard to the former, we insisted on students achieving a tight integration of theory and empirical findings in their final reports – for example, by weaving together scholarly literature reviews with discussions of methods, statistical analyses, and organizational profiles. In terms of logistics, students had to take numerous trips to the locations they were studying, some of which were more than two hours driving distance from campus; others had to engage in all the trials of scheduling, recording, and transcribing interviews with individuals in these unfamiliar places; and some researchers struggled with the fragmented and often erratically managed county-based records systems, then with hours of coding hundreds or even thousands of individual names, and then in some cases with the task of learning how to do statistical regression analyses with no prior experience.

The final stage of the project this spring, as in past semesters, was to carry out an agenda of public education activities once the research had been completed. Such activities are a signature element of our approach to CBR in the project on *The State of the State for Washington Latinos*. The central idea is that the work not only should assist the specific partner organizations in their particular enterprises, but should also fuel more inclusive, active, and critically aware public conversations about how to address the inequalities the studies analyze. The main elements of this public education component of the course project were:

- (1) A class session with a speaker on public communication and media work for public policy issues, which included exercises on writing a 150-word “letter to the editor” about a key research finding and composing the “ideal headline” about the report. We thus stressed the tremendous impact that carefully selected language has on one’s ability to connect with an audience, and gave the students various vehicles for developing these skills.
- (2) Extensive group workshops and individual advising on the PowerPoint presentations the students developed as part of presentations to be delivered at two Public Meetings. We laid heavy emphasis on the need for this technology to be truly just a visual aid to the student’s oral remarks and physical self-presentation rather than being or dominating the presentation itself.
- (3) Practice sessions (“dress rehearsals”) for the Public Meetings, with peer-to-peer critique on everything from tone of voice to bodily demeanor, from pace of delivery to visual composition of slides.
- (4) A Public Meeting attended by a bilingual audience of over one hundred people where the students gave five-minute presentations about their research, placing their recommendations for action in the foreground and then supporting these proposals with reference to selected findings from their research.
- (5) A press conference with the local newspaper on the same day as the Public Meeting, involving students and faculty along with local community partners.
- (6) A breakfast meeting with representatives from the office of the Governor to discuss the

public policy ramifications of the students' research.

In a previous semester, we confronted a challenge involving the coordination of the students' research work and public education activities with our partner organization. We found it increasingly difficult to make contact, and the organization seemed to become less invested in the specifics of the project just as it was getting seriously underway. Part of the problem was that it is a volunteer organization, and so the ability of its leaders to invest themselves in projects was in a basic way contingent upon what their other commitments to job, school, and family allowed.

One thing we learned was that future CBR efforts involving these communities should partner directly with the local civic organizations that the students analyzed; but of course, discovering these organizations in the first place was a goal of this research and we could not have known about them in advance.

Another important challenge we faced as faculty was to coordinate planning of the weekly seminar meetings with the sequential assignments we gave the students regarding the CBR project. As the students began to make progress on their research and we got a clearer sense of what it would be possible and desirable to do, we had to revise our expectations regarding the substance of the reports, the organizational framework for the research and the written report, and certain deadlines for the sequential assignments. We instituted a significant improvement with our "State of the State Scholar."

RESULTS

In terms of the substance of the research, this year witnessed the following distinctive achievements:

Farm Workers:

- We now offer the first major study of working conditions for vineyard workers in the midst of Walla Walla's sensational wine boom, which itself has received much public attention but with virtually no analysis of the effects of this on workers.
- Our research on farm workers this term also goes beyond the narrower angle we've taken in the past (focusing on housing issues as such) and expands the focus to take in the circumstances in farm workers' lives that powerfully influence the kinds of housing they can get and keep: opportunities for job mobility; and their use of income supports and food aid social services.

Neighborhood Improvement:

- We provided the first-ever general study (in the community) of the major features associated with poverty here in the Walla Walla Valley.

- For our project, students produced the first-ever survey-based research on housing in Walla Walla, thus yielding more rigorous quantitative work than we've done to date on these problems.
- While previous reports featuring C2C have observed this organization's impact on the local neighborhood, this year we provided the first truly systematic and constructively critical study of this organization's self-evaluation methods.

See website for extensive information, including research reports and other student work:
<http://www.walatinos.org/>

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ENVIRONMENT

TRAIL USE CONFLICTS IN THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Campus: Appalachian State University

Community Partner: Blue Ridge Parkway

Department(s) & Title of Course: Honors 3530 Parkway Research

DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to take whatever research question the Parkway has for us, figure out what we need to learn to engage in the research, learn it, do the research, and present the results at the end of the year. Students must be able to work with a high degree of uncertainty in the course. For the three years of our project, we worked primarily on trail use issues at various locations along the Parkway, although in the third year we created interpretive podcasts and tested their use.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

Yes, it was team-taught with a staff member from the campus service-learning program, and brought in numerous faculty from different departments as the research questions required (biology, chemistry, sociology, etc.) as guest lecturers and resources for research (lab time/space, etc.).

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

No, ASU has worked with the Blue Ridge Parkway on a number of projects, and continues to do so.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

During the summer, the lead faculty member met with the Park Service employees at the main office in Asheville to discuss potential research projects for the upcoming year. Park employees also came and spoke to the class several times over the course of the year.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

How can trail use conflicts be resolved at three locations -- Rough Ridge, Bass Lake, and Hebron Falls?

1) Rough Ridge: How can visitors be prevented from leaving the trail and thereby trampling on sensitive vegetation, despite signage warning them not to? This research included counts of plant life, observations of visitors, surveys, and interviews with rangers at other parks.

2) Bass Lake: How can conditions be improved to satisfy multiple user-types (horse riders, runners, walkers, dog walkers, fishers)? This research included observations of visitors, surveys, interviews with rangers at other parks, and explorations of dog park issues.

3) Hebron Falls: How can overcrowding be dealt with? This research included observations of visitors, focus group interviews, studying of parking patterns, mapping of trail using GIS software, studying soil and water quality, and more.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The Blue Ridge Parkway staff laid out the basic issues for us, and the students worked to turn those issues into researchable topics.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Summer months were used to meet with the Parkway and to develop the initial reading list and tentative syllabus, but the course evolved over the course of each year that it was taught.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

We spent three years working with the Parkway, but each year the project was different.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Trail observations, survey research, library/internet searches for best practices, interviews with rangers.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Definitely. Every year we had to make revisions along the way as different conditions dictated, including the weather.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

We made extensive use of online course management software to manage logistics, as well as a dedicated media server for storing photos and video collected. Students were responsible for

managing their own deadlines, but we used a portion of every class (meeting once a week for a year) to check on progress.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

The most significant challenge was in establishing the proper balance of structure and openness to the course, based on where the students were developmentally. The first year we expected too much of the students in regards to setting their own tasks and deadlines. In the second and third years, we were better able to help students break tasks down into individual components, record those sub-parts with deadlines in a “public” forum (accessible to everyone in the class), and hold them accountable to those deadlines.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

Each year we presented recommendations to the Park Service, based on the research.

Our recommendations included:

- a) Updating signs
- b) Creating kiosks
- c) Creating a “photo-op” spot to minimize leaving trails for photos
- d) Setting up a dog park area
- e) Alternating running/walking directions around the lake trail
- f) Methods to minimize parking on road
- g) Backcountry toilet options
- h) Re-routing trail to minimize erosion and avoid property infringements
- i) Setting up a YouTube channel

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

The Parkway is currently following up with several of the students’ recommendations, including creating “photo-op” spots and kiosks, rerouting trails, and possibly creating a YouTube channel. In addition, a Parkway Corps group was started on campus to provide volunteers for key locations on the Parkway, serving as a source of educational information for visitors, as well as encouraging proper trail usage.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

We conducted pre- and post-course interviews with the students to reflect on their experience. In addition, every year students were responsible for specific components of the research process that they had to complete. Finally, an oral and written report was created for the Park Service, and students’ contributions to those reports were assessed.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Each year the students presented their findings and recommendations to an audience of Park employees at the Blue Ridge Parkway headquarters. In addition, we also conducted focus groups that were open to the community.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

Community impact was assessed by the degree to which the Park Service followed through on recommendations made by the students. So far, we've been very pleased with the way the Blue Ridge Parkway has implemented several of the suggestions.

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REFLECTIONS

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

Dealing with students at multiple developmental levels, and from majors all over campus, can be both exciting and frustrating. We needed to spend more time assessing where students were at, as well as having them reflect more on their abilities and the areas where they needed to learn more. Balancing self-direction with meeting course objectives is always a challenge.

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF BACKYARD MICRO-FARMS

Campus: Saint Mary's College of California

Community Partner: Siamack Sioshansi, The Urban Farmers Organization

Department(s) & Title of Course: POLITICS 122—Food Politics and Globalization

DESCRIPTION

The Urban Farmers Organization is a non-profit organization interested in a new model of agriculture that is environmentally sound, socially just, economically feasible, and culturally appropriate. To test its model, 20 backyard micro-farms were implemented in the city of Lafayette, CA: the owners provided the land and water and the nonprofit provided the labor and expertise. One of the goals was to measure the net impact of growing local food on the environment.

The students in the course designed a study where they could track and measure:

1. Input material added to each farm
2. Amount of energy used for travel, and by equipment to build and maintain each farm
3. Total natural resources (i.e., water) used to grow the food
4. Total calories of food grown in each farm
5. Total amounts of carbon sequestered into the soil
6. Total amount of carbon eliminated from the food chain by avoiding industrial food

The data will be very helpful in determining the usefulness and viability of such a project. There have been several press inquiries about this project, and having hard empirical data can go a long way toward making a case either for or against such a project.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

No.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Yes.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Development of the syllabus with faculty; design of the project; in-class presentation of the project; work in the field with the students.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The community partner and the professor.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

During the fall of 2009, there were several meetings with the community partner and with community members involved with the Urban Farmers Project in the town of Lafayette. The course was taught in the spring of 2010.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

The project will continue beyond this semester.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Work in the fields and backyards assessing soil, carbon footprint, water usage, etc.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Every time the students worked in the field, they met right after to review the work. Often some revisions were needed as the project/farming is weather-dependent.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Students had a commitment to spend a minimum of 30 hours in the field and to write a weekly report. The in-class readings complemented the work in the field and in-class quizzes kept the students on track.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

Mainly the weather—a lot of rain delayed the work so that many farms/backyards could not be worked on. It was addressed: Farming is not based on a semester schedule, but on weather conditions!

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

Backyard farming has the potential to reduce the carbon footprint of a family by producing local food that has a smaller carbon footprint than commercially-grown food. However, if the process of building and maintenance of the mini-farms is not well thought out, the backyard farms can consume a great deal of natural resources, delivering the opposite of the intended effects. Part of the solution to building effective urban farms is to organize community-based activities as described in the attached example.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

He redesigned some of the activities, and plans to present the results of this research to the community.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

The community partner presented alternatives for the students to evaluate. Alternatives were implemented and results measured. Journals were maintained and findings were presented to the class and will be presented to the community.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

The results have been shared with the immediate participants (20 homeowners). During the summer, a larger presentation is planned for the wider community and surrounding cities.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

The results were evaluated based on each member in the community “going it alone” versus participating as a group.

- *Are there reports, research products, and/or websites that can be shared?*

In addition to student journals, the community partner developed a private (by invitation only) social networking site and a private (by invitation only) video streaming site where community members and students were able to store and share their work. There are hundreds of photographs, several movies made by the students and blog posts on this site. We welcome you to join and visit the sites. Please send a request to the community partner and you will be invited to join these private sites. The request should be e-mailed to siamack@theurbanfarmers.org The community partners public site is at www.theurbanfarmers.org

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

The unusually rainy weather impacted the project. The community partner designed a number of activities that were not possible to perform in the rain. To improve the process, we would design more activities that would not be affected by the weather.

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RESEARCH FOR GRANTMAKING AND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Campus: **University of Vermont**

Community Partners:

New England Grassroots Environment Fund

Central Vermont Food Systems Council

Winooski and Burlington School Districts

Department(s) & Title of Course: HLTH 295/NR 285/PA 295 Community Based Participatory Research (graduate level, senior undergraduates by permission; interdisciplinary)

DESCRIPTION

New England Grassroots Environment Fund

NEGEF hopes to design an application with questions tailored to the general activities and objectives of small climate-focused grassroots groups and energy committees in New England. In order to design a specified grant application, it would first be necessary to better understand the community of potential Energy & Climate Action grant applicants themselves. As NEGEF is particularly focused on sharing resources with their grantees and hopes to expand their reach beyond just those groups that they fund, it was decided that our first step would be to survey the demographics of resource use and sharing in the community of local energy committees and climate-focused groups.

Central Vermont Food Systems Council

Evidence of growing interest in local foods in Vermont includes community gardens, school gardens, school-based educational programs, farm-to-table programs including farm-to-school and farm-to-restaurant programs, farmers' markets, and community supported agriculture (CSAs). There is also an expressed interest in Washington County in strengthening of local food systems through promotion of local foods. The Central Vermont Food Systems Council (CVFSC), our community partner, is a newly-formed, community-based organization with an expressed mission of "expanding and growing central Vermont's sustainable food system, to ensure that all our community has access to affordable, quality food." In June the Household Consumption committee of CVFSC was tasked with measuring household consumption and production of local food. The committee hopes the measurement will allow them to evaluate changes in local consumption over time and inform future program decisions. We developed a survey tool to capture a snapshot of attitudes and behaviors around local foods in Washington County.

Winooski and Burlington School Districts

Our prime objective is to create a Somali-Bantu culturally appropriate curriculum that will address HIV/AIDS, sex education, and puberty in school age children. This project involves working together with our community partners, the Somali-Bantu Board and interested Somali-Bantu community members. Our ultimate objective is to create a HIV/AIDS, puberty, sex education that can be used by any cultural group for educational purposes. The teaching sessions

are being videotaped (no children are in the videos) so that the parents can see precisely what is being taught. Focus groups of Somali-Bantu parents and high school students will watch these and determine what (if anything) needs to be adapted.

DEVELOPMENT

This is the third year that this course has run. The initial development of the course was done in collaboration with the community partners at that time. Following the completion of the first run through, the partners sat down with the grant group and made suggestions and recommendations for improvements to the course. Originally, the course developers selected the three partners for the course. In the second year, a group of students wanted to bring in their own partner, which we did. In the third year, we had selected four partners but then gave the students the option of choosing one of them or bringing in their own. This process took a little longer, not all of the four partners were chosen (which we had told them at the beginning but that the CUPS office would work with those not selected to see if we could find another course for them). Two were selected and one partner was added by a small group of students.

IMPLEMENTATION

Only one of the projects was completed in the one semester (CVFSC). The survey tool developed during the semester was turned back over to the community partner. NEGEF also had a survey developed and one of the students in that group was committed to carrying it out in the spring semester. The Somali-Bantu project is now the thesis of one of the students and should be completed by May 2011. Each project was discussed in class each week with review and input from the entire class and the course faculty. Groups stayed in contact with their partners on a weekly basis; many times a face-to-face meeting also occurred at least bi-weekly. One of the groups had some 'strong' personalities and the group process was a bit 'rocky'. However, the group members recognized this; various members discussed strategies with course faculty and in the end, decided that they could work out the issues. One group member was not convinced that CBPR was legitimate at the beginning of the course but as her learning progressed, she saw the relevancy of the method while admitting that she may not use it herself.

RESULTS

All results/products are turned back over to the community partners who incorporate them into their day-to-day operations. It is up to the partner to decide how to share them with the broader community. One project is still ongoing. The final surveys for NEGEF and CVFSC are attached. Student comments about the course included: "Applicability to real life research and graduate methods; Community Based Participatory research really gives you real-world hands-on experience and the tools to be able to be successful".

REFLECTION

Some students thought that there was too much emphasis on the health aspect of CBPR, which was probably due to the bias of the course faculty despite conscious efforts to limit this. In fact, this comment had been made after the first year with the recommendation that students choose a reading each week as well. This was implemented in the second and third years so that readings could come from other disciplines. This worked quite well so I am unsure what to do next. So much is related to health (environment, food systems, forestry, public policy) that it can be difficult to find other resources.

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THE EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION ON PUBLIC HEALTH IN APPALACHIA

Campus: Berea College

Community Partner: Kentucky Environmental Foundation (KEF)

<http://kyenvironmentalfoundation.org/>

Department(s): Physical Education and Health

Title of Course: HLT 210 Health in Appalachia

DESCRIPTION

Students who took HLT 210 Health in Appalachia in Spring 2009, taught by Dr. Kris Wilks Wright, partnered with the Kentucky Environmental Foundation (KEF), led by Executive Director Elizabeth Crowe, and with Judith Weckman, Director of the Berea College Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. In addition to studying various perspectives about health in the region, students created and administered a survey for health professionals to determine their understanding, attitudes, and interest in considering air quality and pollution prevention as they relate to public health and environmental health. The seven-question survey was sent to 40 health professionals, 21 of whom responded. Participants were very interested in public health, but many lacked knowledge about the health impacts of coal-fired power plants. Identifying this gap in knowledge was helpful to KEF, as it will guide their work to develop clean-air advocates within the health sector.

After the survey concluded, students presented and discussed survey results at a gathering of health care providers and interested community members. This project supports the work that KEF and a coalition of other groups in the region are doing to propose alternatives to a new coal-fired power plant in Clark County, Kentucky.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

A unique aspect of this course was the involvement of Judith Weckman, the Director of the Berea College Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. While Dr. Kris Wilks Wright (faculty) contributed disciplinary knowledge of the health field, and Elizabeth Crowe (community partner) contributed knowledge of the issue and the community, Judith Weckman (Director OIRA) contributed knowledge of assessment, research, and survey construction and implementation; she directed the survey design and implementation process.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

No. KEF has collaborated with multiple service-learning courses, in addition to hosting students for internships and work-study positions.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The community partner and faculty member worked together closely to develop the project during conversations that began a year before the class was taught. The community partner also provided readings for the students related to the CBR project, presented course content related to the CBR project during class time, led discussions, and provided feedback for the students related to the CBR project.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The survey was designed to measure the knowledge and beliefs of health care providers about the impacts of air pollution on health.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The staff of KEF established the need for the survey and determined the focus of the survey and the target audience for the survey. The specific survey questions and format were designed during the course. This process was led by Judith Weckman (OIRA Director), with input from Elizabeth Crowe (community partner) and the students.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

The CBR portion of the course was designed through discussions among the faculty member, the KEF ED and the Director of the OIRA. The faculty member and community partner began meeting a year before the course was taught. The Director of the OIRA joined the planning conversations several months before the course was taught.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

The survey was designed, administered and analyzed in one semester. However, the survey is part of a larger project led by KEF which began before the course and continued beyond the course.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Development, implementation and analysis of a survey designed for health care providers in the nearby geographical area, delivered in an on-line format.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Because the planning for this project began well before the course took place, there was time to revise the project during the planning process. The timeline for the survey development and implementation was tight, but there was opportunity to revise the survey during the design process.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Course time was dedicated to the CBR project on a weekly basis. The community partner and OIRA Director led course discussions and used course time to plan, assign tasks, review progress, and troubleshoot. Tasks were distributed among students in the class; each student chose tasks, so they were able to sign up for parts of the project that appealed to them and worked best with their schedules.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The seven-question survey was sent to 40 health professionals, 21 of whom responded. Participants were very interested in public health, but many lacked knowledge about the health impacts of coal-fired power plants.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

The survey results have been helpful to KEF as they are helping to guide their work to develop clean-air advocates within the health sector. The survey results are being used by KEF to recruit health professionals to clean energy campaigns, to produce effective educational materials, and to develop strong health messages for health professionals and the general public. This CBR project has also supported the work that KEF and a coalition of other groups in the region are doing to propose alternatives to a new coal-fired power plant in Clark County, Kentucky.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Students participated in structured reflection, including guided class discussions and structured written reflections throughout the CBR process. The faculty member used these reflections to evaluate student learning.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

After the survey concluded, the students presented and discussed survey results at a gathering of health care providers and interested community members.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

A written evaluation was completed jointly by the faculty member and community partner. Follow-up conversations with the community partner and the service-learning staff, including conversations to plan for a joint conference presentation about the CBR Innovation Grant also provided information about the community impact. Community meetings with other community partners also working on energy issues provided additional information about the community impact of this particular project.

- *Are there reports, research products, and/or websites that can be shared?*

Kentucky Environmental Foundation website - <http://kyenvironmentalfoundation.org/>

Berea College CELTS website - A Power Point presentation about the survey results presented by students at the gathering of health professionals in May 2009 is available here - <http://www.berea.edu/celts/servicelearning/learnandserve.asp>

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

Better advanced preparation for the survey distribution would have resulted in broader outreach and a higher survey completion rate.

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EDUCATION

EXPLORING LOW LEVELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Campus: **University of Notre Dame**

Community Partner: The Education Collaborative Group (ECG), Perley Primary Center, other local public schools, the school district.

Department(s) & Title of Course:

At least two courses emerged related to this project -- an Introduction to CBR created and offered by Joyce Long and taught through the Education Schooling and Society (ESS) Minor Program, and a revised required Senior Research Seminar for the same program. The Center for Social Concerns gave a course development grant funded by the CNCS grant to faculty member Dr. Stuart Greene, who revised the required senior seminar to include CBR.

DESCRIPTION

This project was a study of parental involvement in local public schools, which consisted of interventions to determine how parents might be assisted to participate more meaningfully in their children's learning.

We (Naomi Penney, Marina Navia, and Mary Beckman) chose this project to highlight because it shows what for us is moving in the direction of ideal CBR work. Rather than being short term, it's long term. Rather than ending with an output – e.g., a research report that is given back to a community organization – it has so far led to outcomes, that is, programmatic changes related to the research. Rather than being initiated by a community partner or a faculty member, it has been driven by a collaborative of campus and community partners. Though the specific project emerges in association with one program, the program is interdisciplinary and the participants in the collaborative out of which the project emerged come from a number of disciplines, including physics, psychology, economics, and English.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

ESS is an interdisciplinary program. The ECG is an interdisciplinary group. So while the research we're highlighting here is technically in education, the influences have come from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Considerable Notre Dame involvement occurs and has occurred for a very long time in the local schools. Other projects have and are continuing to emerge out of the ECG in particular.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The idea emerged from the community partner. The faculty members jumped on the concern that the local principal raised, and they drew their students into studying the question. They ultimately focused their own scholarship around it.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

How can parents involve themselves in their children's education so as to better assist their children in attaining desired learning outcomes?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

At a gathering of the ECG, Perley Primary Center Principal Darice Austin Philips articulated a serious concern about parental involvement in her school. A chorus of other principals present at the meeting echoed the concern. Two faculty members in the area of education said they wanted to work with Darice to investigate the issue.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

The issue was raised at an ECG gathering in August of 2006 with concerns about the nature of parental involvement in schools.

The ECG held a gathering (now held annually) of administrators, teachers, and students in the ESS program to give students an opportunity to hear the research concerns and choose a subject to address.

One student in particular (Joanna Mangeney, 07) took on the question of parental involvement; her results inspired Greene to continue the research.

Greene, with Joyce Long and Perley School Principal Darice Austin-Phillips, then designed a more expansive investigation and received a grant from the South Bend Community School Corporation in 2007.

In the Spring of 2007, based on their research results, the team began to include workshops for parents to become more knowledgeable and engaged in their children's learning in two different public schools.

Stuart Greene received a NCBRNI-funded course development grant in June 2007 to redesign his senior research seminar so as to include CBR and investigate parental involvement issues in local public schools as well as other issues raised by school principals.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

Approximately 3 years and still going strong.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Qualitative and quantitative.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

At multiple points over the years.

RESULTS

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Yes, within the school system, in conference presentations and journal submissions, and in a book chapter. The link to a video about this project is: <http://video.nd.edu/294-connecting-home-and-school-the-2010-ganey-community-based-research-award>

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

According to our definition of community impact, it has not attained impact. But it has moved beyond outputs and attained outcomes, as described above and in related materials.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

A more diverse group could have been involved in the project from the start. The work of the project could have been linked to larger, longer term goals.

Contact:

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Joyce Long (jlong4@nd.edu, 574-631-6567)

NEEDS-BASED FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA

Campus: **University of Alaska Anchorage**

Community Partner: Office of State Senator Johnny Ellis

Department(s) & Title of Course: Civic Engagement Certificate Capstone

DESCRIPTION

The student conducted research on needs-based financial aid options for the State of Alaska Legislature to consider as an alternative to a proposal from the Governor of Alaska to provide only merit-based financial aid to in-state residents.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

The nature of the Civic Engagement Certificate and a Capstone class at UAA is inherently interdisciplinary. However, there is only one instructor of record for the course at present. The instructor can draw on resources in other disciplines as required.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Yes.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The course has been taught for two years. This particular project was developed by the student, instructor and community partner collaboratively. The student was already discussing the topic with the legislative staff member, and approached him with the idea of doing this research for his capstone project. The staffer responded enthusiastically, and via conference call and email, the instructor, student and staffer defined the research questions and products.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The initial questions from the Senator's staff were:

What other states have a needs-based financial aid component now?

What are some compelling facts, statistics, and talking points related to the importance of a needs-based component?

The student investigated the models that the Governor’s proposal cited, known as “The Taylor Plan” to see how they compared with what the Governor actually proposed. The final questions the student investigated revolved around what the impact of financial aid systems are on students, and why policymakers should be concerned about the availability of aid.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

One of Senator Ellis’s staff members developed the initial questions for the student to investigate regarding the Governor’s proposal as well as possible needs-based alternatives. The student and instructor then built on these questions for more in-depth exploration.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

The project was developed during the first two weeks of the spring semester. CBR is an existing component of the class, so the student enrolled knowing he would be required to do such a project as the primary work of the class.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

The project was completed in one sense – the student produced several memos for the community partner and a paper at the end of the semester. However, the Legislature did not pass an alternative to the Governor’s proposal, and the Governor’s merit-based initiative was passed without funding, so their work is ongoing. The student will continue to refine his final paper and do other research on this topic.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Mostly document analysis, using primary source documents from a number of states concerning their financial aid offerings, combined with some application of research on the impact of different financial aid models on students.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

The project was done as a series of memos, and the instructor was able to review the pieces before they were submitted to the community partner.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

The student and instructor met weekly to review the work. Some of it was done in very short order to meet Legislative timelines (the legislative session in Alaska runs January – April, so it coincides with the semester).

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

Once the student had completed the immediate research pieces for the legislative office, it was hard to move him forward on the broader piece that I required as a summative assignment. He had to catch up on his other school work while balancing his near full-time work and his political involvement on campus. It was also hard to get him thinking about the broader literature and theory about student financial support when he'd been so focused on the applied work he was doing around the policy proposal. In the end, he did complete the final assignment but still needs to keep broadening his perspective in order to make his work more relevant beyond the immediate legislative session.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The State of Alaska is far behind other states in terms of financial aid options for students. The Governor's plan cited programs endorsed by the Taylor Foundation. However, the governor did not accurately represent what those financial aid options actually look like, in comparison to what he proposed.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

One of the products was put up on the Legislature's website to inform the discussion.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Through a series of reflections the student wrote over the course of the semester and a longer reflection at the end of the semester, plus ongoing discussion of the student's work.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

This wasn't done formally – though the reaction to the student's newspaper editorial was tracked.

- *Are there reports, research products, and/or websites that can be shared?*

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_documents.asp?session=26&docid=5029
<http://www.adn.com/2010/02/22/1152019/legislature-working-toward-needs.html>

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

More clarity was needed up front about how to move from the pieces directly for the community partner to the broader summative paper at the end.

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THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF UPWARD-BOUND ALUMNI

Campus: Trinity University

Community Partner: Upward Bound. We also finished up some work with South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless

Department(s) & Title of Course: Sociology, Anthropology and Urban Studies.

Three courses: Applied Social Statistics, Field Work, and Geographic Information Systems

DESCRIPTION

There were actually three projects in progress this year: two for Upward Bound and one for South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless. This year we shifted to student-led research, so each project was led by a pair of students who co-directed the project. For Upward Bound, we conducted research on their current students and also researched their alumni to see the long term effects of the Upward Bound program. For South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless, a group of Applied Social Statistics students were asked to analyze a city-wide survey of the homeless for the City of San Antonio, which recently had a data analyst position cut.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

This project was interdisciplinary, although the Geographic Information Systems class played a much smaller role this year in the project. The Fieldwork class was exclusively involved in the alumni project for Upward Bound, and the Applied Social Statistics class did all three projects.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

No, we worked with Upward Bound last year and SARAH two years ago.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Both community partners were very involved in the design of the research project. When students were assigned a project, one student developed connections with the community partner as a community liaison and met with the community partner regularly to design the project.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The Student project for Upward Bound focused on key research questions about students' comfort on college campuses, a follow-up question from last year's study. The Alumni project for Upward Bound focused on how the Upward Bound program assisted students with academic

and social achievements when they went to college. The SARAH homelessness project involved examining key demographic groups within the homeless—children, families, teens, men and women—in order to provide homeless service providers with information for grant-writing.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

It was a combined effort between the student liaison and community partner.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Because we had worked with both community partners before, the development time period this year was much shorter than in years past.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

It was completed in one semester easily. However, our commitment to working with SARAH will continue in the future.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Surveys and interviews.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Yes, the students fine-tuned the project as they went along. For example, the final report went through four different drafts before it was given to the community partners.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

As each project was different, student leaders developed timetables at the beginning of the semester to manage the logistics of their projects.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

Each research project ended with complex findings.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

Both Upward Bound and SARAH were enthusiastic about the research as it was presented. Upward Bound plans to revise their program in response to our findings on students and use the alumni findings for future grants. The 50 plus homeless service organizations within SARAH use the report to provide demographics in support of their grants for more services, and they also plan on revising the way they implement the survey next year in response to the students' findings.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Students in their standard end of semester evaluation were asked to comment on the CBR experience as well as on regular classroom issues. Students in the Applied Social Statistics class overwhelmingly reported that the project improved their understanding of statistics, and they found it an important resume-building experience.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

The SARAH homeless project findings were presented in a conference with over 40 participants.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

It wasn't this semester.

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BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY

IMPROVING LOANS FOR LOW TO MIDDLE INCOME BUSINESS OWNERS

Campus: **Lafayette College**

Community Partner: Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV) is a nonprofit in Bethlehem, PA whose mission is “to improve the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley by building a community in which all people have access to economic opportunity, the ability to pursue that opportunity, and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.”

Department(s) & Title of Course: Math 301 Case Studies in Mathematical Modeling

Catalogue description: A course which engages students in the creation of mathematical models to answer questions about a variety of phenomena. Students work in small teams on a sequence of projects which require the formulation, analysis, and critical evaluation of a mathematical model and conclude with the submission of a written report by each student.

DESCRIPTION

Using various analytical tools developed in a sequence of courses, students came up with business plans for a micro-loan program for CACLV.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

Yes and no. The project was part of the capstone course for our Math/Economics joint majors, so the project and course focus on financial and economic problems that can be solved using some standard mathematical models. The faculty member, Ethan Berkove, is in the Mathematics Department.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

The College has a long-standing relationship with this partner. It is the first time this partner was used for this course.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

Professor Berkove approached CACLV to find out if they had any questions/problems and he chose the ones that were conducive to his teaching environment. That is, the question originated with CACLV but the faculty member needed to identify that it was a problem that his students could handle.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

Background: CACLV administers the Rising Tide Community Loan Fund, which provides microloans (of less than \$35,000) to people who own small companies and whose credit scores are not high enough to qualify for a bank loan. The population served by this program includes women and minority owners and people with low-to-moderate incomes. Since beginning in 2001, they have granted 69 loans.

The Question: Given detailed information about the operating expenses, the outstanding principal, the current sources of funding the loans (CACLV operating budget, grants, donations), how can the Rising Tide program reduce its dependence on donations and become self-sufficient?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

The faculty member refined the question offered by the CACLV staff.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

There was roughly one month of discussion and revision before the assignment was presented.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

This was one of three projects completed in the course. Its duration was roughly six weeks.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Students used standard mathematical financial models to investigate. This problem was the only real-world and the only CBR project of the course and, as such, was by far the most complex one they worked on during the semester. In a real way this was the capstone of the capstone.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Working in conjunction with Berkove, the students were able to simplify their models and streamline their solutions. However, the overall question did not change.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

There were weekly deadlines, seminar presentations and meetings with Berkove.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

Berkove only indicates the challenges that the students had in wrangling with a large-scale financial problem. These are no different from the usual challenges that students have with projects in this course.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

The findings remain confidential communication with CACLV.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

In many ways, the research confirmed some of their own analysis. The students did provide some new sensitivity analysis that will help with long-range planning.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

First and foremost, students are graded on accuracy in application of mathematical models. The course is writing-intensive, so students are also graded on the clarity and economy of their use of language to explain mathematical ideas. The audience for the report was Berkove, but the financially savvy community partner is able to understand the report also. The students gave oral presentations to representatives from CACLV and their presentations were part of the grade on the project as well.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

Berkove presented the preliminaries on this project at the Patriot League Academic Conference at Bucknell University in October 2009.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

We will continue to check in with CACLV. The implementation of financial changes is slow, so the impact won't likely be seen in the short run.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

Student and faculty comments provide some insight, but they focus mostly on the mathematical aspects of the project.

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TAX HELP FOR LOW AND MODERATE INCOME FAMILIES

Campus: **Hamilton College**

Community Partner: Mohawk Valley Asset Building Coalition (MVABC)

Department(s) & Title of Course: "Policy, Poverty and Practice"

DESCRIPTION

Students enrolled in the class are required to participate in the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program. The program offers free tax help to low- and moderate-income families who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Students must attend on-campus IRS TaxWise training and obtain at least basic-level certification. Thereafter, they complete at least 15 hours of electronic tax filing as a part of their class requirement. Students can choose to visit either the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Utica or the GPO Federal Credit Union in New Hartford to complete their hours. A primary goal of the VITA project is to ensure that qualifying taxpayers receive Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs), tax refunds designed for low income households.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

Yes, several Government and Economics faculty served as guest lecturers for the class.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?* No.
- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

They provided the on-campus TaxWise training and materials for the students, and worked with RCIL and GPO to set up the volunteer time slots.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

Are individuals able to save their tax refund and ensure a greater level of future economic prosperity, or are the EITC participants primarily using their refunds to meet their basic short-term needs?

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

Professors Paul Hagstrom and Margaret Morgan-Davie

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

The CBR portion of the Econ 235 course was originally designed in 2007 by Paul Hagstrom, and has been updated each year, most recently in Spring 2010 by Professor Morgan-Davie. Any updates are done before the course starts.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

This is an on-going project.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Surveys distributed to taxpayers who signed up for the free tax prep.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Yes, this project is reviewed, revised and updated yearly so that each class benefits from things learned or recommended by the previous class.

- *How were the components of the project (tasks, logistics, communication, etc.) managed so that the research was completed on time?*

Surveys were completed by the taxpayers at the time they came in for their filing (after the student helped them complete their taxes). Also, coordinators of the project at Hamilton and in the community met regularly.

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

The greatest hurdle we faced involved transportation issues (finding enough drivers and vans to cover the time slots for which the students volunteered). This was never fully resolved, but is a problem we are addressing for next year's class.

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

Approximately 10% of respondents planned to save their tax refund; 84% planned to use it for immediate needs such as food and bills; and 16% were uncertain how they would spend their refund.

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

We are investigating the possibility of including the survey data with the Herkimer and Oneida County Indicators Data as well as having it available for the public to download from the Hamilton College web site (spec. Levitt Center).

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

We are currently working on how the broader community might use this data, along with other data from the Herkimer and Oneida County Indicators Project, to apply for grants.

- *Are there reports, research products, and/or websites that can be shared?*

<https://www.hamilton.edu/levitt/>

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

Since we now have several years of data, we plan to better integrate the analysis of the survey data into the coursework. We also hope to improve the transportation situation so we can accommodate more volunteers and community partners, serve more families, and collect more surveys. We also intend to better educate volunteers about the survey, so that we can increase the percentage of families who complete it at the end of the process.

Contact:

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RE-DESIGNING THE FIRE TRUCK FOR THE LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

Campus: **Pitzer College**

Community Partner: Los Angeles County Fire Department

Department(s) & Title of Course: Ontario Program, Senior Thesis

DESCRIPTION

We worked in collaboration with local firefighters to investigate ways to modify the fire truck. Modifying the fire truck can create a safer vehicle for firefighters and an improved emergency response time for the public. Perhaps of greatest consequence is that modifying the fire truck can shrink the vehicle. Shrinking the fire truck can change current constraints on existing city design (for example, wide roads), thus paving the way for the implementation of innovative city planning.

DEVELOPMENT

- *Was the project/course interdisciplinary or collaborative among faculty, and if so, how?*

The project required collaboration among faculty and staff, in part due to the Bonner requirement for a faculty supervisor. Susan Phillips and Tessa Hicks advised Ben Rubin on the project and provided support and suggestions for his fieldwork and research. Additional staff collaboration included Tricia Morgan for logistical support, and the Pitzer Institutional Review Board for project approval.

- *Was this the first project undertaken with this community partner?*

Yes.

- *How was the community partner involved in the development of the course/project?*

The project centered on community based research. Firefighters were asked about their experiences in the fire truck, and they provided insight about how to revise the vehicle. The final results were presented to them, and the project deliverable was left at the fire station for their reference.

- *What was/were the key research question(s)?*

The project focused on the possibility of shrinking the fire truck. Questions included if it was possible to change the fire truck, what would need to happen to shrink the fire truck, and how the new product would look.

- *Who were the primary participants in determining the research question(s)?*

Research questions were developed by staff and student researcher. Fieldwork focused on how firefighters would answer these questions, but research also considered urban planners, politicians, and the public.

- *What was the development time period (designing the CBR portion of the course, before the first class meeting)?*

Planning for the project occurred throughout the fall semester – approximately four months.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Was the project completed within one semester, or did it continue beyond one semester?*

It was completed within one semester, although there was substantial prior planning and research.

- *What were the primary research methods?*

Anthropological fieldwork, interviews, textbook research, analysis of current events, sociological studies.

- *Were there opportunities to review and/or revise the project as it unfolded?*

Yes, the project was consistently evaluated as it progressed. Overall, it remained very much the same as initially intended. The final deliverable was longer than initially projected (nearly 200 pages).

- *What significant challenge did you encounter, and how was it addressed (or not)?*

One unforeseen problem was how busy the firefighters were. Their unpredictable schedules made it difficult to set regular appointments. One way that this was solved was by arriving at the fire station and spending a long time there (instead of breaking interviews into multiple visits).

RESULTS

- *What were the findings of the research?*

It is possible to shrink the fire truck, although modifying the fire truck requires careful consideration of both firefighting and public culture.

- *How did the community partner utilize the research?*

The research provides a guide for how tensions can be minimized between firefighters and urban planners, who are often at odds with each other about city design. The guide also provides step-by-step suggestions for improving the safety of the fire truck for firefighters. Perhaps most importantly, the research sets the precedent of a community partnership between LACoFD and Pitzer College, allowing for future projects to benefit firefighters in the years to come.

- *How was the student learning experience evaluated?*

Through the completion of stated project goals and a careful analysis of the final deliverable (a final paper).

- *Were research findings or products shared with the broader community?*

The firefighters may share the report with anyone they would like. The student intends to continue to work with the findings and to share them with the larger community in the future.

- *How was the research evaluated for community impact?*

The community impact was evaluated by considering the time spent at the fire station, the interactions between students and firefighters, the quality of the interviews, and the possibility of a future partnership.

REFLECTION

- *What could be done differently to improve the process?*

The overall project was a success. Future students who work with LACoFD must consider the difficulties involved in having to work around firefighters' busy and unpredictable schedules.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE FOR NON-PROFITS

Campus: **University of Wisconsin-Madison**

DESCRIPTION

TechShop Madison is a program that engages UW-Madison students in providing information technology assistance to nonprofit organizations. The overall model we based the project on is the highly successful “science shop” structure used in the European Union. “Science shops” link university research and technical assistance resources to community-generated projects. We began working on the TechShop project in 2007 and our model has continuously evolved.

In the spring of 2009, the needs of the organizations and our student skill base led us to select Web 2.0 technologies as our IT focus. Students also consulted with nonprofits on social networking technologies and similar projects.

Based upon feedback received during the Fall 2009 semester we made it a goal to increase our “in-class” contact with students, since in previous semesters it had proved difficult to track their projects’ progress over blogging check-ins. Additionally, many nonprofit partners remarked at the final project presentation that they would have liked to see all of the other TechShop projects earlier in the semester, since they provided inspiration and ideas for their own organizations.

Therefore, in the spring of 2009 we brought our nonprofit partners to campus four times to meet with our students and TechShop staff. They came twice at the beginning of the semester for an orientation to TechShop and Social Media training, once for a mid-semester project report, and consultation, and lastly for a final event where everyone presented their projects.

Through the constant process of refining the way TechShop worked and comparing our results across the semesters we have learned a few valuable lessons. Face-to-face time was a much better method of managing students and their project progress than primarily online communication. The increase in in-person meetings allowed us to catch problems earlier and avoid the back-and-forth or lack of responses that often happened when communicating only online.

It was notable how often our nonprofit partners commented that “TechShop felt like Weight Watchers for nonprofit technology,” or other comments reflecting the same sentiment. Many of the nonprofits said they would have been capable of completing the projects on their own, however with the regularly scheduled TechShop meetings and student partner it ensured that they actually took the steps to complete their projects. With one of the key components of the TechShop philosophy being organizational capacity-building this was interesting feedback to hear. While we were able to serve in the role of growing the skills and understanding of nonprofit staff, we were perhaps just as often capable of providing motivation for nonprofits to complete important projects they had left on the back burner.

An added benefit of bringing nonprofits to campus more frequently was our ability to deliver the same message to the students and the nonprofits at the same time in the same space. This was beneficial as we conducted trainings on how to consult on and identify social media solutions. We were able to stress the importance of identifying the specific technology need in order to pick an appropriate solution. We learned that students tend to pick technologies they already know how to use, and nonprofits tend to select technologies that they think they *should* be using (often based on current trends, what other nonprofits are using, etc.). Nonprofits benefited from being in the same space in order to share past successes and failures, and explore new technologies together.

Through TechShop's triumphs and tribulations we have grown to learn the importance of consistent face-to-face interactions with students and nonprofit partners, picking projects that can be completed in one semester and can be sustained by staff after the student leaves, and identifying the root technology needs or goals as a method of picking an appropriate technology solution.

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REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

In this section, we present responses to broader questions intended to provide experienced practitioners an opportunity to reflect on their own practice of CBR.

Some of these questions include:

How do you create meaningful projects that produce tangible results?

What are the hurdles to producing impactful and sustainable projects?

How do you ensure that projects are not only participatory but driven by the community?

While these are not questions that can be answered absolutely or identically across campuses, the responses offered here provoke us to think even more creatively about not just the mechanics, but the ethics and politics of CBR. More specifically, they ask us to think further about the contexts within which our work becomes relevant, unexpected shifts in political landscapes that can delay or re-direct projects, and innovative ways of empowering both students and partners.

The final questions in this section, “Best Practices for CBR” and “Advice to New Practitioners,” may be most helpful for those who are just starting out, though we hope that they will also serve as important reminders to those who have been at it for some time!

HOW DO YOU CREATE MEANINGFUL PROJECTS THAT PRODUCE TANGIBLE RESULTS (LONG AND SHORT-TERM)?

Amy Stone, Trinity University

I think the most important thing is to start with questions that interest the community partner to make sure that the research is most important for the partner. I also think it's important that the CBR research is not the FIRST research project the students have ever conducted, that they bring some research experience with them to the classroom.

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

Projects that are most meaningful are those that concern salient public and community issues. The topic may be one that is the focus of a vigorous public debate, or it may be an issue that affects many community members but has yet to capture the attention of elected officials and the media. Similarly, studies to evaluate the outcomes of established programs can provide very valuable information for administrators and service recipients alike. Common among all these different forms of research is the objective of shedding light on a significant social problem within a defined geographic community and doing so by gathering, organizing, and analyzing data that are either original or, if available in existing documents and records, have not yet received sufficient consideration. Projects that fulfill these criteria promise tangible results because they are relevant and because they matter to one or more local stakeholder groups who can make use of the findings in informing their constituencies and in working with the governmental infrastructure of public officials, bureaucrats, and service providers.

Diane Hirschburg, University of Alaska Anchorage

This is based on the involvement and ingenuity of the faculty member, with some incentivizing from the university. Most of our projects have been one semester courses or projects that may or may not have long-term results depending on politics as much as the work done. For example, one of our students prepared a baseline carbon footprint study for the Municipality of Anchorage. However, a new mayor was elected, the person overseeing the internship and the sustainability efforts left the city, and right now the report is sitting on a shelf. On the other hand, one of our long-term projects started with research on water quality in a local stream and is now involving students in developing remediation strategies – which was not part of the original vision of the project.

Tessa Hicks Peterson, Pitzer College

Projects should sprout from community-identified needs (and assets) and be driven by that community. Faculty should have long-term investment with the community and the projects they identify and bring students in their classes into the projects as they unfold. Groups of past and current students (and other volunteers interested in the topic) should meet regularly on campus and in the community to communicate about progress on all projects. Evaluations and celebrations should occur regularly and questions should constantly be asked about whether the root problems of social injustice are being addressed (beyond short-term band-aid remedies), whether communities are being directly empowered (beyond the benefits that colleges and non-profits reap) and whether the projects continue to respond to the changing needs of the community members involved. While focusing on tangible results, projects should also dare to

think outside of the box entirely in attempts to create intentional communities and connect with larger social movements.

Don Dailey, Washington and Lee University

Student and community learning have continually been shaped through the use of “Learning Circles” that connect students with an ongoing learning community. This has occurred throughout the Poverty Initiative and through additional research projects generated through the grass roots community groups and community think tank (Commission). A learning circle exists when students, faculty, community partners, and funding agencies (if appropriate) work together as a team through all facets of the research process: defining the research questions, the research design, the design of instruments for collecting data, the interpretation of data, the identification of policy options, and the presentation of findings and recommendations through forums that involve authentic policy deliberation. In addition to the direct impact a learning circle has on student reflection and learning during the research process, an effective Learning Circle has the potential to strengthen the richness of data and the relevance of insight brought to data analysis. Collective understanding becomes more in-depth and shared across the group in a way that empowers community voice. Community involvement in the research process also has the potential to engender a sense of ownership in the Initiative. It creates greater community understanding of the research and how it can be leveraged to change policy and practice. The seeds for grassroots organizing are being planted. Community motivation to act on the research is enhanced.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST CBR CHALLENGE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

Tessa Hicks Peterson, Pitzer College

All of the above is hard to pull together with the stresses in academia that pull faculty and students in other directions, the lack of continued appreciation for communities to identify their own needs, assets, and strategies for change, and working within a time table that does not usually allow for deep relationships to bloom, long-term projects to take shape, and errors to occur without derailing enthusiasm and focus. Power dynamics make community-driven projects a challenge often for academics and students. I guess you overcome this by trying to constantly reflect on whether you are doing what you hope to, how you can build support in the community and academy to get the power and resources and respect to do the work, and remembering to feed the spirit as well as the mind and body politic.

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

The challenge was developing a framework that made it possible to remain true to CBR's distinctive character while conforming to the more familiar overarching academic model at the university. A remarkable degree of success was achieved over time, but it required clarity about the various phases and components of CBR research projects as well as levels of time management and coordination that are uncommon in other kinds of courses. A total of seven CBR course projects have been completed between 2002 and 2010. In effect, each has served as an evolving prototype for future course experiences so that over time the most effective techniques and practices have become firmly institutionalized, while occasional false starts and disappointments have also served to provide their own lessons guiding the improvement of our academic/applied hybrid.

Diane Hirshberg, University of Alaska Anchorage

Working with student schedules and commitment conflicts – I have had students begin CBR projects that they do not successfully complete due to over committing in terms of their course load, school work, or their campus or community political activities. Although I can warn students about this at the beginning of the project, the opportunity to learn and my inherent optimism convinces us to proceed. The students eventually finish the project, but with less satisfaction (on both sides) than if they could have committed more fully.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS A SIGNIFICANT HURDLE TO PRODUCING IMPACTFUL AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS?

Mike Bishop, University of California Berkeley

The most significant hurdle to producing impactful projects is the time that our student interns have to devote to this project. Even though the project is an assignment within a class that accompanies the internship program, it is but one part of the student's internship experience.

Rick Ellis, Washburn University

The biggest hurdle to sustainability of CBR for the partners is getting them to own the project and the research. Even with their involvement I believe they still see these as student assignments.

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

Like the political system overall, every organization has a limited amount of resources and attention that it can devote to particular issues. CBR projects must compete to get "on the agenda" among a host of local demands and interests. However, even well-executed research projects that address significant problems can quickly become submerged within a partnering agency that faces pressing budgetary and management issues. For their part, political audiences often do not welcome new information that conflicts with existing policy discourse and interest-group compromises. In short, there can be indifference or even resistance to the kind of independent analysis that CBR seeks to offer. This predicament underscores the need for projects that proceed on the basis of committed community partnerships including concrete plans for dissemination of research results to all relevant stakeholder groups.

Mary Beckman, Notre Dame University

CBR still tends to be seen within a short-term framework – for example, a semester-long project. The community impact framework we are using asks those engaged in CBR to think more long term and to think about how individual projects can move toward larger, longer term impact. So we are seeing "impactful and sustainable" as referring to doing CBR that approaches large goals that we hope are attained over a period of years. The more we can get people to think and work with such a long-term large framework, the more we think we will be able to produce work that leads to impact, as we are defining it here -- the attainment of community development, ultimately, which, when broken down, involves addressing certain large social challenges such as crime, education, health issues, etc.

Rycki Maltby, University of Vermont

Time. Also, not having a clear idea of project outcomes can be a hurdle. The other issue is the community partner not always being clear about what the outcome should be. When that happens, we sit down together to determine what they actually need and how can we get there.

HOW DO YOU WORK WITH OR AROUND THE LIMITS OF THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR?

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

It is necessary for the faculty member supervising each CBR project to be engaged in the period leading up to as well as following the semester-based CBR course. Beforehand, the tasks include outreach to potential partnering agencies, project identification, and recruitment of student researchers. Afterward, there must be involvement in dissemination of findings through finalization of the research report and collaboration with the partnering agency on a plan for publicity and education.

Diane Hirshberg, University of Alaska Anchorage

That's one of the challenges. We are beginning this year to "forward award" funding by soliciting and selecting faculty proposals in the spring and committing next year's funds so that faculty and students can begin CBR projects immediately in the fall semester. We don't know yet if this is an effective strategy or not.

Don Dailey, Washington and Lee University

It requires tight planning and time lines for each project. Be sensitive to the pressure points during the term for students and plan accordingly. Plan and lay out your garden before the term begins. Independent studies with a small team of students are easiest. Also, professional staff can serve as a continuing source of support and communication for a project during the transition periods that occur throughout the academic year.

Tessa Hicks Petersen, Pitzer College

Propose a year-long program!!!! OR: Have stronger leadership from faculty and community members so students just come and go within the semester system but don't disrupt the long-term aims.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT PROJECTS ARE NOT ONLY “PARTICIPATORY” BUT DRIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY?

Mary Beckman, Notre Dame

Community partners are sometimes “shy” and feel a little overwhelmed by faculty and/or students. It has been our experience that it is important to reinforce in them the idea that they are valuable partners in the project and that their input is needed.

Don Dailey, Washington and Lee University

Through learning circles that include community members, faculty, and students, we draw the community into projects from the beginning and involve them in every aspect of the research process, from research design to reflection on findings.

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

Extensive community influence is achieved in all projects through several mechanisms: 1) involvement of community groups in selecting topics for research and development of study methodology; 2) orientation of research team members to relevant policy domains—issues, actors, and programs--by community partners; 3) collection of information from community members; and 4) development of community-based dissemination strategies for completed projects.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT PROJECTS ARE NOT CO-OPTED TO MAINTAIN INSTITUTIONAL STATUS QUO BUT ARE ONES THAT ARE ABLE TO CHALLENGE THE VERY INSTITUTIONS OF POWER THAT THEY COLLABORATE WITH?

Mike Bishop, University of California Berkeley

This is a BIG CHALLENGE for us – not as far as the university is concerned, but rather city governments. Our intern/researchers are placed within government offices – including the Mayor’s office and city councilmember’s -- which is problematic for us as far as asking interns to find best policy options, not those that are already aligned with the thinking of power holders. We ask our researchers to reflect on this if/when it happens; if anything, it is a teachable moment for them as they see first-hand how institutions seek to co-opt such work.

Rycki Maltby, University of Vermont

The faculty involved in this work are very much community focused, and they ensure that the work is not co-opted. The projects belong to the community partner, not the university. Many faculty are part of the Community Participatory Action Research Network here at the university which is an alliance of faculty, staff, students and community members who seek to support and advance this methodology (www.uvm.edu/~cpar).

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

CBR projects have been cast as independent works of policy analysis. No promises are made in advance—either to our university sponsors, community partners, or study participants—about the factual information that may be brought to light through our empirical research or the nature of recommendations in public policy and program administration that we will advise based on these results.

Don Dailey, Washington and Lee University

Empower the community through grass roots community groups that have power. Leverage community power and seize the day when an opportunity for influence emerges. I think it is also important to work directly with the clients your agencies are serving (i.e., those experiencing poverty). Give them voice and organize around that voice.

**ARE THE CHALLENGES DIFFERENT IN STUDENT-LED VERSUS FACULTY-LED CBR PROJECTS?
IF SO, HOW?**

Mike Bishop, University of California Berkeley

Yes, absolutely. There is not the depth of skills and knowledge around what it means to conduct research (in the strict sense) and where they might turn for resources for/validation of their research process. At the same time – and this is only a sense – student researchers might be much more willing to suspend their predispositions and truly collaborate with community partners – seeing them as equals in the process – than faculty members.

Amy Stone, Trinity University

I've done both in my three years on this project, and I think the challenges in faculty-led projects are the ways that students miss out on some of the big picture conceptualization of the project. For student-led projects, I think students get overwhelmed by the size of the task at the beginning of the semester.

Diane Hirshberg, University of Alaska Anchorage

The challenges are different – students don't necessarily have the skill set faculty have in terms of research, nor in terms of confidence when they are starting out. One of my students this semester learned that she could call people and interview them and it wasn't disruptive or a problem – things I take for granted. There are also respect issues – sometimes community or governmental agencies will respond differently to faculty than students – our students are sometimes simply blown off, even though the quality of the work they do can rival that of faculty!

WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DO YOU PROVIDE FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE LEADING CBR PROJECTS?

Mike Bishop, University of California Berkeley

We provide information on how to communicate generally and with community partners; how CBR fits into “generic” research as a reference; strict timelines, including when to meet with partners and what they should discuss; and a seasoned student leader who has been through the process before and can guide them through the process. Ideally, these researchers have proven their commitment and skill set in working in community in prior leadership/service-learning projects before taking on a CBR project.

Diane Hirshberg, University of Alaska Anchorage

On our campus there are several ways we support CBR. One is the Undergraduate Research in the Community award, which is awarded through our office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship. <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ours/opportunities/research/undergraduate-research-community.cfm> This provides funding for student projects and a stipend, and requires students to have a faculty advisor.

WHAT ARE YOUR “BEST PRACTICES” FOR CBR?

Lisa Whitaker, Lynchburg College

Faculty are invested in creating and sustaining meaningful relationships with community partners.

This includes faculty engagement off-campus and on-site in the community. This means attending meetings at sites in the community with community members and nonprofit/coalition representatives, attending meetings with students when they are meeting partners rather than sending students out by themselves, and working alongside students and community partners while project activities are ongoing (for example, assisting when in-person surveying is scheduled outside the local Wal-mart). It also means that faculty (and, by osmosis and training, their students) regularly communicate with community partners, whether in person, by phone, or through email. My experience during seven years of helping develop CBR projects leads me to believe that this level of personal investment is rare. While colleges and universities can and should incentivize CBR in their promotion and tenure practices (and other ways), this best practice really can't be incentivized. Faculty need to be genuinely interested in this type of teaching and research work to create and sustain (the requisite) productive and meaningful relationships in the community.

Everyone involved in the project knows what they will specifically be contributing, and there is an agreement (written or otherwise acknowledged) that includes a commitment to completing the project even if it requires an effort by the partners beyond their regular schedules.

For example, a faculty member may need to polish a final version of the project's end product after a semester or academic year ends. Students may need to work out in the community more than the required number of service-learning hours. Community partners may need to assist with data gathering on a weekend or after work hours. This level of commitment is only possible if everyone feels the project is "worth it" and might actually have an impact, and if they have a genuine interest in the members of the community that the project is intended to serve. Here again, this is most likely to occur only if relationships have developed and if there is some confidence in the project plan and a sense of ownership about its execution.

Mary Beckman, Notre Dame

- Ongoing review and revision of our own programs
- Personal follow-up with community partners to assist them in refining research questions.
- Personal attention to individual faculty and student project ideas and interests.
- Long-term, deeply developed partnerships between campus and community.

- A learning community or dialogue series that continues to address issues of concern to faculty, such as how to teach CBR and how to address institutional constraints within the university.
- Facilitating community-university contact, e.g., via a dinner where people can network, with poster sessions that show works in progress and results, and where grants and awards announced.

Diane Hirshberg, University of Alaska Anchorage

Projects must meet a need identified by a community partner, and be mutually developed and agreed upon by the partner, the faculty, and the student. The project should be outlined and mapped as completely as possible, but allow flexibility for unexpected obstacles. The final report should be celebrated as an accomplishment, not just as a credit.

Mike Bishop, University of California Berkeley

- Not all agencies are looking for CBR projects. Meet them where they are, which does not mean ignoring them altogether. Start with a day-long service project; provide them an intern; and then talk CBR.
- From above, researchers should be in touch with their service-learning offices, which have a wealth of community contacts!
- Work with the same agencies year after year, which allows for students to expand on or fill in research done by previous student researchers.
- Meet with community partners at least one time in person to explain purpose of the project; and then have frequent email/phone contact.
- Utilize graduate students if you have them on your campus to support undergraduate efforts. This provides for great modeling opportunities and the grad students are put in a position of teaching CBR – a win/win.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO NEW CBR PRACTITIONERS?

David Rochefort, Northeastern University

Have confidence that academic skills and knowledge are powerful tools that can be put to use in the service of community needs. Work at effective ways of doing this consistent with your individual background, interests, and goals.

Involvement in community-based research does not detract from one's strengths as an academic. Rather, new learning always takes place that can deepen and broaden one's understanding of the community and the complex contingencies of social action, while providing inspiration for future teaching and scholarship.

CBR offers an opportunity for student mentoring that can be surprising in its intensity and mutuality, contributing to the formation of relationships that are memorable and long-lasting.

Involvement in CBR will inevitably change one's view of the academic profession by challenging the dominant paradigm concerning what constitutes scholarly productivity, teaching effectiveness, and community "service." Gaining awareness of this alternative perspective will not always be comfortable, but it will be provocative and consciousness-raising.

Amy Stone, Trinity University

Prepare, prepare, prepare before the semester starts.

Mary Beckman, Notre Dame

Consider outputs, outcomes, and a long-term framework toward impact, as you develop and nurture projects.

Document, document, document.

Don't underestimate the importance of diverse voices in all the work.

From the campus side, be very attentive to nurturing community partnerships well and over time.