



THE CORELLA & BERTRAM F.
BONNER FOUNDATION

Professional Development for Community-Engaged Learning and Scholarship Workshops for a Cohort of Faculty, Student Leaders, and Co-Educators **#7: Critical Perspectives and Inclusive Voices**

Overview

This session engages faculty and the cohort participants in wrestling with some of the shortcomings of community-engaged learning, service-learning models, and methods. For instance, discussing Tania Mitchell's and related scholars' works, participants will consider issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, power, and privilege. As educators, they will have a chance to consider how to develop their CEL projects and courses in ways that avoid or handle problems with stereotyping, white-centric experiences, or other issues in their courses. They will also examine the importance of community voices and outcomes, equal to student learning or teaching outcomes, through discussion of Randy Stoecker's work.

In this facilitator's guide, you will find:

- I. Session Introduction and Outline
- II. Materials Needed (Articles, Handouts, etc.)
- III. Suggested Facilitator's Guide
- IV. Additional Resources
- V. Credits and Citations

Please note that this session is designed to use participatory practices which support the creation and growth of learning communities. Use of AV and technology are minimal or optional. You may download related slides, but all handouts can also be presented without this equipment.

Session Introduction and Outline

This session is intended to be used in conjunction with guiding a cohort of faculty (or other educators) involved in building community engaged teaching and learning into coursework. Its aim is to acquaint participants with some of the critical perspectives about service-learning and community-engaged learning, especially those that pertain to diversity and inclusion (and ways to avoid course-based experiences that perpetuate stereotypes and often harm students and communities). Additionally, themes point to community voice and change (as equal to the goal of student learning). Some of you may want to have faculty read additional books or articles Please review and modify sections to fit your institutional context and participant knowledge base.

Suggested Agenda (60 minutes):

- I. Reading and Discussion of Case Study
- II. Critical Service-Learning and Social Justice
- III. Additional Critiques and Community Change
- IV. Application of These Ideas
- V. Next Steps & Meeting Announcement

Materials Needed

Print and have copies of the following handouts, or alternatively share these documents electronically with participants before the session. These are intended as resources to build understanding by participating faculty (and others), but reading them is not necessary for preparation for this session. Make sure to take some time to prepare the opening activity, using the links provided to find data from the National Center for Education Statistics and US Census.

- Handouts (Included in this document)
- Mitchell, T. D. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service-learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(2), 50-65.
- Mitchell, T. D., Donahue, D. M., & Young-Law, C. (2012). Service learning as a pedagogy of whiteness. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(4), 612-629.
- Stoecker, R. (2009). Are we talking the walk of community-based research? *Action Research*, 7(4), 385-404.
- Sturm, S., Eatman, T., Saltmarsh, J., & Bush, A. (2011). *Full participation: Building the architecture for diversity and public engagement in higher education*. White Paper, Columbia University Law School, Center for Institutional and Social Change.

Suggested Facilitator's Guide

I. Reading and Discussion of Case Study (suggested time 15-20 minutes)

Welcome participants to the session. Ideally, this session occurs somewhere mid-way through your cohort's professional development (whether it is provided in a compact few days or over the course of a term or year).

Provide some context for the session and first activity, grounding it in your institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion. For instance, you might want to:

- Review your institution's mission statement and current strategic plan pillars related to diversity, including of students and faculty (drawing this from your website and publications)
- Review your institution's demographics (by gender, race, ethnicity, first generation, etc.), for students (you can find this at: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>)
- Review your institution's demographics (by gender, race, ethnicity, age, rank etc.), for faculty and staff (you can find this at: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>)
- Review your community's demographics (by race, ethnicity, language, household status, poverty levels, employment) (you can find this at: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>)

If diversity of your faculty is an issue at your institution, you may want to distribute the article *Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Public Engagement in Higher Education*, written by Susan Sturm, Tim Eatman, John Saltmarsh, and Adam Bush. Touch on a few points from it, including the key argument that the effectiveness of community engagement depends on and is interrelated with a commitment to full participation by diverse individuals and groups. On a campus,

these initiatives ought to:

- 1. Increase student access and success, particularly for underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students;**
- 2. Help to diversify higher education faculties, often with separate projects for hiring, retention, and climate;**
- 3. Promote community, civic, or public engagement for students (including in co-curricular and curricular forms); and,**
- 4. Increase support for faculty's public or engaged scholarship (this draws from p. 5).**

These points might tell well with the institutional change initiatives you are working on concurrently with your faculty cohort. If they do, note when you will be discussing those change projects.

Then, transition into the first activity, passing out the handout entitled “Case Study of a Service-Learning Course” and getting the participants into pairs or triads. You should read these two pages (Handout 1) prior and be ready to discuss it. Also read the analysis of the case study in the article (found on pp. 619-620).

Give the participants 5-7 minutes to read the case study. Then, engage them in discussing the questions (on the handout), which are:

- 1. What observations or reactions do you have to the case study and to what occurred in Professor Daniel's course?**
- 2. What larger themes does the case study suggest are at work, especially for students in the course and for community residents served by the course?**
- 3. What might Daniels have done to more effectively prepare the students for the service-learning experiences or to help them reflect on and process their experiences during the course?**
- 4. What thoughts or take aways do you have as an educator from this case study?**

Hopefully, your participants will observe and discuss themes like:

- The experience reinforced stereotypes.
- Only white students participated in the discussion.
- Students of color appeared silenced.
- The project did not appear to use an assets-based approach.
- Daniels waited until very late to provide more guidance and reflection.
- This brings up issues of privilege, whiteness, oppression, race, injustice.
- This case study points out the potential problems with CEL, which can harm students and members of the community.

If you want to, read or have participants read portions of the article in which the authors share their analysis of the case study, clearly identifying the issue of whiteness in the example. Here's an excerpt on the next page:

The pedagogy of whiteness also can shape how service is framed for students, which in turn limits their opportunities to learn. In the case of this sociology class, service at Wilson Middle School is framed as a way to learn about the “problems and challenges” of urban education. Without denying the very real inequities and injustices of urban schooling, this service learning project could, in addition, be framed as a way to learn about “funds of knowledge” from the community (González, & Moll, 2002; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Moll & Greenberg, 1990) to learn that communities have assets as well as problems (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1997). Without framing service in the context of also learning about resources and strengths in a community, we worry that white students might believe the community has nothing worth learning and that the only worthwhile lessons come from learning how to help those who are “underprivileged” or “unfortunate.” This framing can lead to a deficit view of children of color in urban schools (Delpit, 1995) and fragment how white students understand their privilege, that is, as a reason to help others less fortunate, not as a result of structural inequities in society that have given them advantages.

Framing service only in negative terms also has consequences for students of color. It sends a message that instructors think they too must have been unfortunate or underprivileged and that the communities from which they came have only problems and challenges. Students of color may find that white students, or even the instructor, assume that they can explain phenomena at schools like Wilson or share experiences similar to those of students at Wilson.

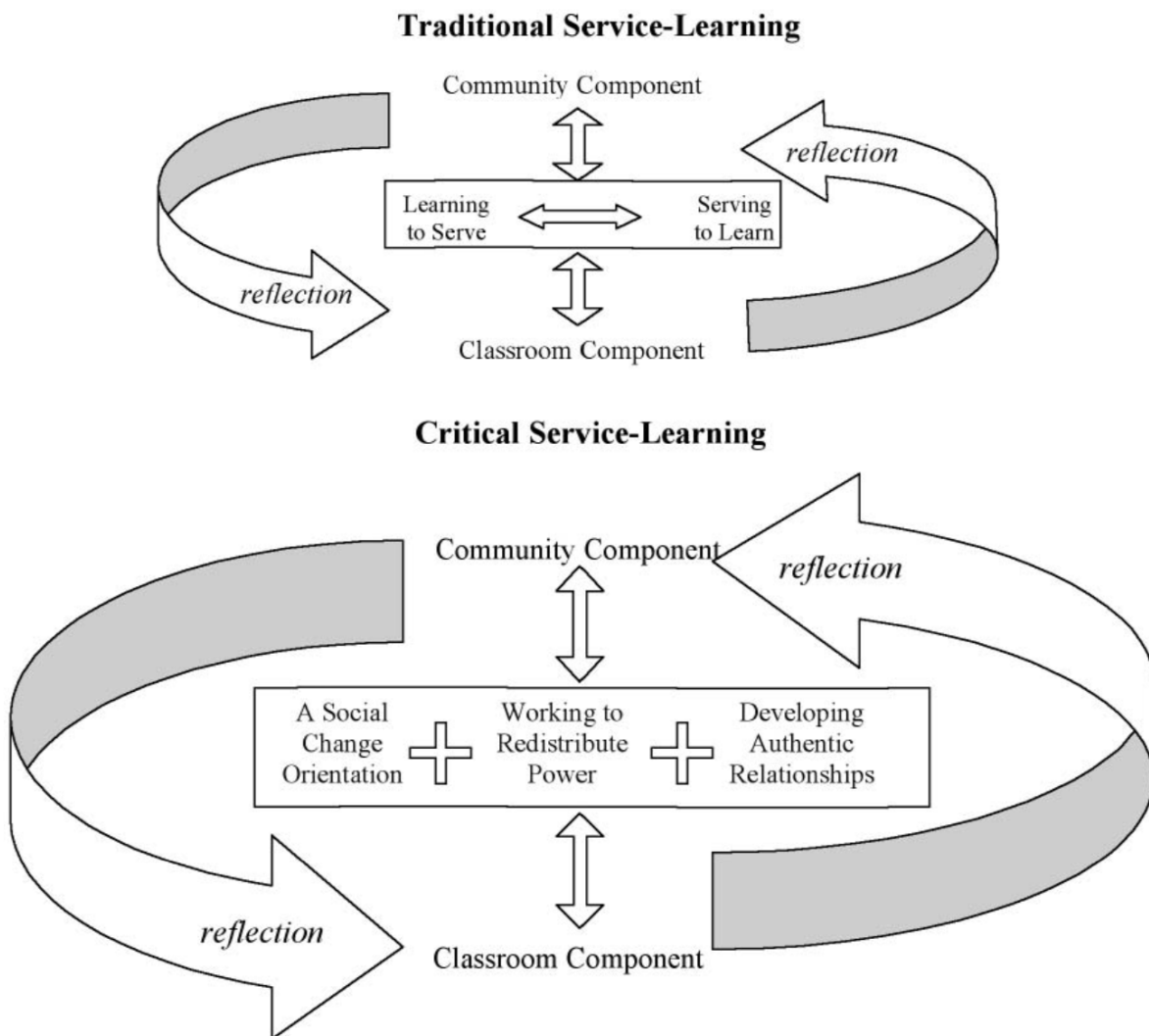
Given that service was framed as a chance to examine problems in a school, perhaps not surprisingly, students return from their service site seeing only problems. Might white students in Daniels’ class be identifying and seeing the situation at Wilson through the eyes of their own experience or from those of white teachers? In what ways are white students learning to see urban schooling through the eyes of the children of color or through lenses that consider systemic and institutional factors that shape children’s behavior and achievement in school (Ferguson, 2001; Kozol, 2005; Lewis, 2003)? Daniels’ observation that her students “usually” express their shock at Wilson and its students during the first class conversation implies that the course curriculum does not prepare students for what they will see or how to make sense of it.

II. Critical Service-Learning and Social Justice (suggested time 15 minutes)

As you move through the first activity, gauge your participants' comfort with discussing the case study and the issues at work. You may want to note that you will have some additional professional development or time for discussing issues of power, privilege, race, ethnicity, silence, etc. If you need additional help or resources, contact the Bonner Foundation or consult some of the organizations mentioned as resources at the end of this guide.

Next, transition from the case study discussion by having participants go to Handout 2: Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning. You'll see a graphic that looks like this:

Figure 1.
Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning



Introduce this graphic, developed by Tania Mitchell, as a way to think about a more critical form of community-engaged learning that also works to address inequities and power imbalances, which are

bound to come up through the community-based projects that students and faculty are involved in with CEL. This is a very important approach, as without frameworks like this one, various forms of community engagement often reinforce inequitable and unjust gender, racial, cultural, economic, familial, and other social structures.

Ask participants to spend 5-6 minutes writing down some ideas for their own coursework and projects that would help to use a critical SL / CEL approach. Then, ask some individuals to share them.

Ideally, they might bring up such action steps and takeaways including:

- Embedding training and reflection throughout the course and projects
- Asking staff and student leaders to help design and lead reflection
- Working with experienced student leaders (like Bonners) to help design and run the projects
- Working with other colleagues who have expertise in critical reflection and issues of diversity
- Providing additional training and professional development (such as on having difficult dialogues, confronting issues of oppression, etc.)
- Sequencing projects and courses, so that the work with the partner continues and it can address community change and social justice
- Teaming up with other faculty across disciplines and staff across programs

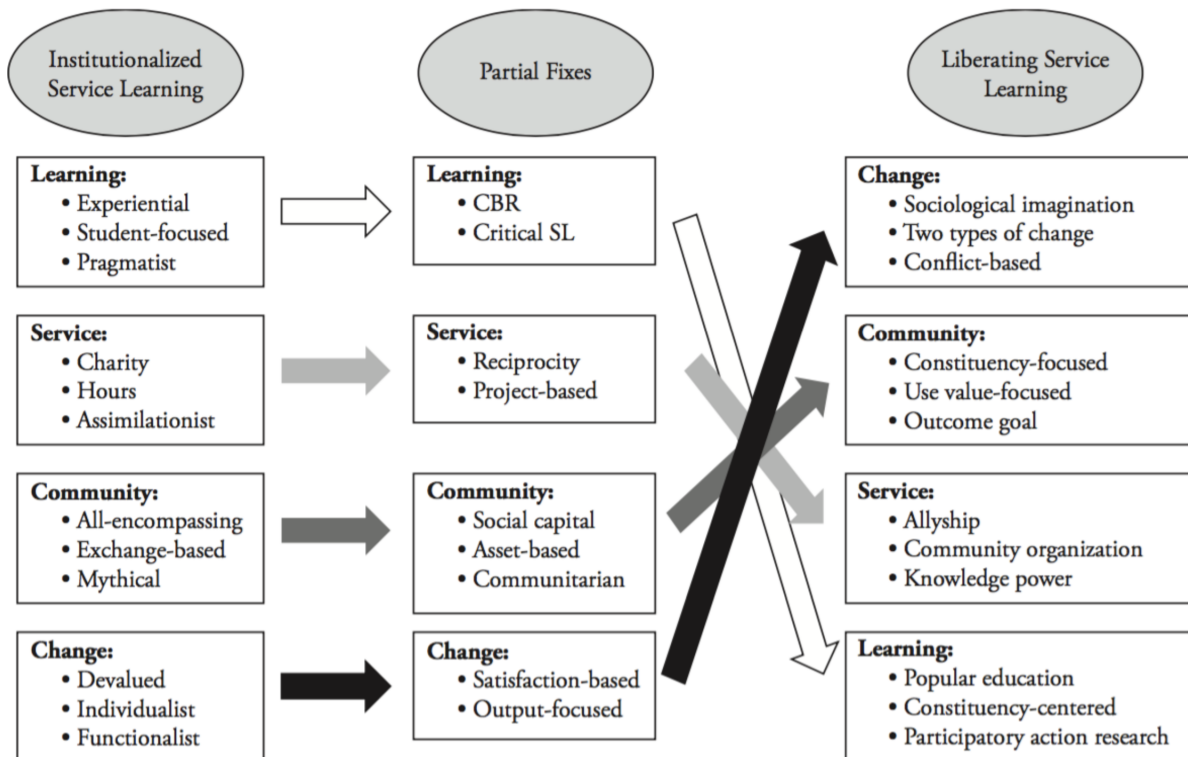
III. Additional Critiques and Community Change (suggested time 15 minutes)

In this section, you're going to introduce a broader critique of service-learning and CEL, developed by Randy Stoecker. Stoecker is also the author or editor of several relevant books and volumes you may want to briefly touch on as resources or share pieces of, have for borrowing, or use for a reading group. You can briefly review them and their content with the group:

- **The Unheard Voices: Community Organizations and Service Learning (2009):** This volume explores the impact of service learning on a community, and considers the unequal relationship between the community and the academy. Using eye-opening interviews with community-organization staff members, *The Unheard Voices* challenges assumptions about the effectiveness of service learning. Chapters offer strong critiques of service learning practices from the lack of adequate training and supervision, to problems of communication and issues of diversity. The book's conclusion offers ways to improve service learning so that future endeavors can be better at meeting the needs of the communities and the students who work in them.
- **Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach (2012):** is an in-depth review of all of the research methods that communities can use to solve problems, develop their resources, protect their identities, and build power. With an engaging writing style and numerous real world examples, Randy Stoecker shows how to use a project-based research model in the community to: diagnose a community condition; prescribe an intervention for the condition; implement the prescription; and evaluate its impact. At every stage of this model there are research tasks, from needs and assets assessments to process and outcome studies. Readers also learn the importance of involving community members at every stage of the project and in every aspect of the research, making the research part of the community-building process.
- **Liberating Service Learning and the Rest of Higher Education Civic Engagement (2016):** Stoecker questions the prioritization and theoretical/philosophical underpinnings of the core concepts of service learning: 1. learning, 2. service, 3. community, and 4. change. By "liberating" service learning, he suggests reversing the prioritization of the concepts, starting with change, then

community, then service, and then learning. In doing so, he clarifies the benefits and purpose of this work, arguing that it will create greater pedagogical and community impact.

Introduce the framework.



Have participants work in small groups to review and apply the framework, checking off how they think that their own coursework and projects fall into these three columns. If participants have not read the book or article you shared, reassure them and have them work from a general understanding of the concepts here. Ask them to focus on two main questions, found on the handout:

1. ***How might you, as an educator, design and implement your CEL in ways that prioritize change equally with student learning?***
2. ***What strategies can you use to embed allyship or community organizing with community partners and helping them access and generate the knowledge that will give them power and catalyze community change?***

This should generate a rich, possibly even spirited discussion, of the priorities and pitfalls of community-engaged teaching and learning.

IV. Application of These Ideas (suggested time 5-10 minutes)

After you've worked through these sections, your participants are likely to have a lot of new ideas, questions, or even concerns about their work on CEL courses and projects. Reassure participants that community-engaged teaching is a developmental process, and that the purpose of these discussions are to properly prepare for and handle difficult issues.

Ask participants to take a few moments and write down 1-2 realistic takeaways from this session. If you have time and want to encourage trust in your community of practice, have participants share them in pairs or out loud.

As facilitators, also share a few commitments or next steps you will take to support the cohort.

V. Next Steps and Meeting Announcement (suggested time 5 minutes)

Wrap this session with some open reflection (i.e., what did people think, how do they feel). If issues have emerged that will prompt you to seek additional training and support, reiterate what will happen next.

Credits and Citations (APA):

This workshop and the series of Professional Development for Community-Engaged Learning and Scholarship has been developed by Ariane Hoy, Vice President, Rachayita Shah, Community-Engagement Scholarship Director, and the Bonner Foundation staff team for use by colleges and universities. It integrates scholarship including:

- Mitchell, T. D. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service-learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(2), 50-65.
- Mitchell, T. D., Donahue, D. M., & Young-Law, C. (2012). Service learning as a pedagogy of whiteness. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(4), 612-629.
- Stoecker, R. (2009). Are we talking the walk of community-based research? *Action Research*, 7(4), 385-404.
- Sturm, S., Eatman, T., Saltmarsh, J., & Bush, A. (2011). *Full participation: Building the architecture for diversity and public engagement in higher education*. White Paper, Columbia University Law School, Center for Institutional and Social Change.

You can find many other articles and books by Mitchell and Stoecker online.

Additional Resources for Facilitator and Faculty Participants:

If you want help with additional training and support around issues of diversity, privilege, and power, you may want to contact:

- Sustained Dialogue Institute (<https://sustaineddialogue.org/>) which has successfully provided training and support for many faculty groups. They are also a National Bonner Partner organization. Contact Rhonda Fitzgerald or Michaela Grenier at SDI.
- Support and ideas for handling difficult dialogue in courses can also be found from “Courageous Conversations (<https://courageousconversation.com/about/>).
- Another narrative that might be useful for helping cohort participants understand and discuss white privilege can be found from Christine Fleeter at <http://christinesleeter.org/becoming-white/>

- If faculty or other participants are resistant about discussing race, you might also consider integrating the work of Robin DiAngelo. You can start with the article “White Fragility,” which is also explored more recently in a book.
- If faculty or other participants want or express more interest in understanding and introducing issues of racial and economic equity and opportunity, for example for the issue of education described in the case study, you might also consider literature in that arena. An author to start with is Gloria Ladson-Billing’s work on critical race theory and opportunity gaps. See for instance:
 - Ladson–Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into practice*, 34(3), 159-165.
 - Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 11(1), 7-24.
 - Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational researcher*; 35(7), 3-12.
 - Ladson-Billings, G. (2013). Critical race theory—What it is not!. In *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 54-67). Routledge.

Handout 1: Case Study of a Service-Learning Course

This case study is drawn verbatim from an article. Please read it and discuss the questions that follow.

Soc 152, Sociology of Education, is a popular course with undergraduates at State University, enrolling the maximum 50 sophomores, juniors, and seniors every Fall. The class includes a mix of departmental majors and students fulfilling the university's social science requirement. Both groups cite the course's service learning requirement as one of their reasons for signing up, and year after year, the course receives generally high ratings in end of semester reviews.

Dr. Sharon Daniels has been teaching the course for the last eight years and considers it one of her favorite classes to teach. The goals of the course are for students to connect education to a number of sociological phenomena, such as social mobility, stratification, social capital, and social reproduction. Two years ago, she introduced service learning as part of the course, hoping to focus more on the dynamics of race, class, and gender in schools. She found that the involvement with community organizations revitalized her interest in the course and provided students with real world experiences to accompany the textbook and articles in her course reader. Professor Daniels was attracted to service learning because it spoke to her concern that academic knowledge be used for social good. She also believes that service provides a rich opportunity for "border crossing" and remembers her own first experiences with service and, as a white person, having the feeling for the first time of being in situations where she was a minority.

On the first day of class, Daniels tells students about the service learning project and her goal of connecting experience to the sociological theory they will be studying in the course. She explains her rigorous service learning requirements. Students are expected to spend a minimum of four hours per week in service at a school, and this service must be outside work they might already do, such as serve on a parent-teacher organization or tutor a niece or godchild. When students present conflicts with jobs or families, she recommends another sociology course without service learning.

Students are free to serve at any school but Daniels explains that the campus service learning office has created a partnership with Wilson Middle School, a school with a mostly African American and Latino student body, just a few blocks from campus. About a dozen students choose to work in the Wilson tutoring program. With some of the lowest standardized test scores in the city, Wilson is always requesting tutors from the university. Daniels believes serving at Wilson will be good for her students because it will expose them to many of the problems and challenges of urban schools. Concerned about her students' safety, Daniels explains that, while Wilson is nearby, the neighborhood connecting school and university is not without crime. She warns students to be alert and ideally travel in pairs.

Daniels knows that reflection is key to learning from service and connecting service to course content so she assigns journal entries every week and structures reflective conversations into class every other week. Usually during the first conversation, several students tutoring at Wilson express their shock at how poorly students read and how discipline at the school is "out of control." Daniels acknowledges that the school may be very different from their own middle school experiences. Several of Daniels' white students discuss conversations they had with Wilson students and express their sadness at the home lives of some students, whether because the family is poor, a parent is missing, a sibling uses drugs, or a friend has experienced violence. Daniels noticed that most of the students of color in her class remained silent during the discussion, and she left the class thinking about what she could do to encourage their greater participation in the future.

Daniels saves the last reflection session of the class to focus on the intersection of race with the service learning project. When students bring up issues of race earlier in the semester, she acknowledges these issues and informs students that they will be looking at these in more detail toward the end of the semester. In part, she waits until the end of the semester to make sure that students know each other

better, something she believes will contribute to the kind of safety needed to discuss a sensitive and possibly contentious issue. To prepare students for the session, Daniels assigned several articles, one on critical race theory and several on the intersection of race and education, looking in particular at causes and consequences of the “education gap” in K-12 schools.

She opened the discussion by asking students how they see race as a component of what they are learning in their service at schools. One white student, Erik, says that the problems at Wilson are not really about race. He has talked to several teachers and says, “It’s not like they’re racists. They really care about the kids there.” Another white student, Joanne, offers, “It’s really as much about poverty as about race” and adds, “I don’t think it’s surprising that there’s an achievement gap when most of the African American and Latino students at Wilson come from poor families.” Wanting to draw some of the students of color into the discussion, Daniels asks Tracey, an African American sophomore who has written some of the most thoughtful reflective journals, what she thinks about Joanne’s comments. Daniels notices that Tracey pauses before answering, as if she is considering several different responses, and then says, “I am only speaking for myself and my experience, but it’s never not about race in American schools.” The class becomes quiet and Alexis, choking back emotion, says,

This class is so powerful for me. I have been struggling with feeling helpless as a White person to make any kind of difference. I feel like this problem is so huge it’s not going to change soon, but at least I’m making a difference right now with one student that I’m tutoring in math. I feel like this is all any of us can do.

With class coming to an end, Daniels thanks the students for being so candid in sharing. She worries that some students still do not understand the arguments of critical race theory but she can cover them during the review session before the final. She thought the discussion was sometimes “messy” and other times “tense” but believes those emotions go with the territory of discussing real life, particularly race in the United States. She knows how Alexis feels but is glad that service learning has provided such a rich opportunity for some of her students to learn from others.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What observations or reactions do you have to the case study and to what occurred in Professor Daniels’ course?

2. What larger themes does the case study suggest are at work, especially for students in the course and for community residents served by the course?

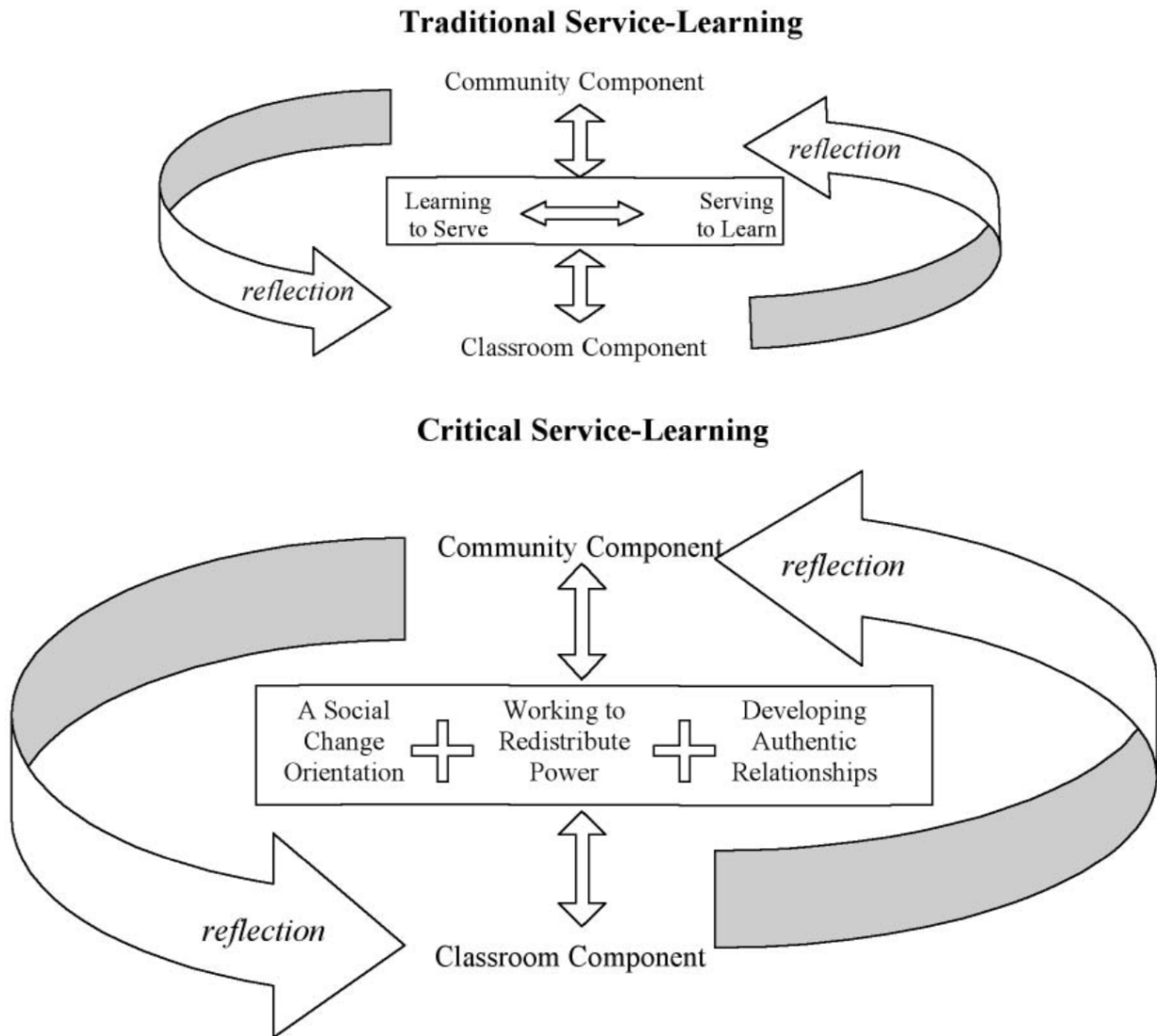
3. What might Daniels have done to more effectively prepare the students for the service-learning experiences or to help them reflect on and process their experiences during the course?

4. What thoughts or take aways do you have as an educator from this case study?

Source: Mitchell, T. D., Donahue, D. M., & Young-Law, C. (2012), pp. 617-618.

Handout 2: Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning

Figure 1.
Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning

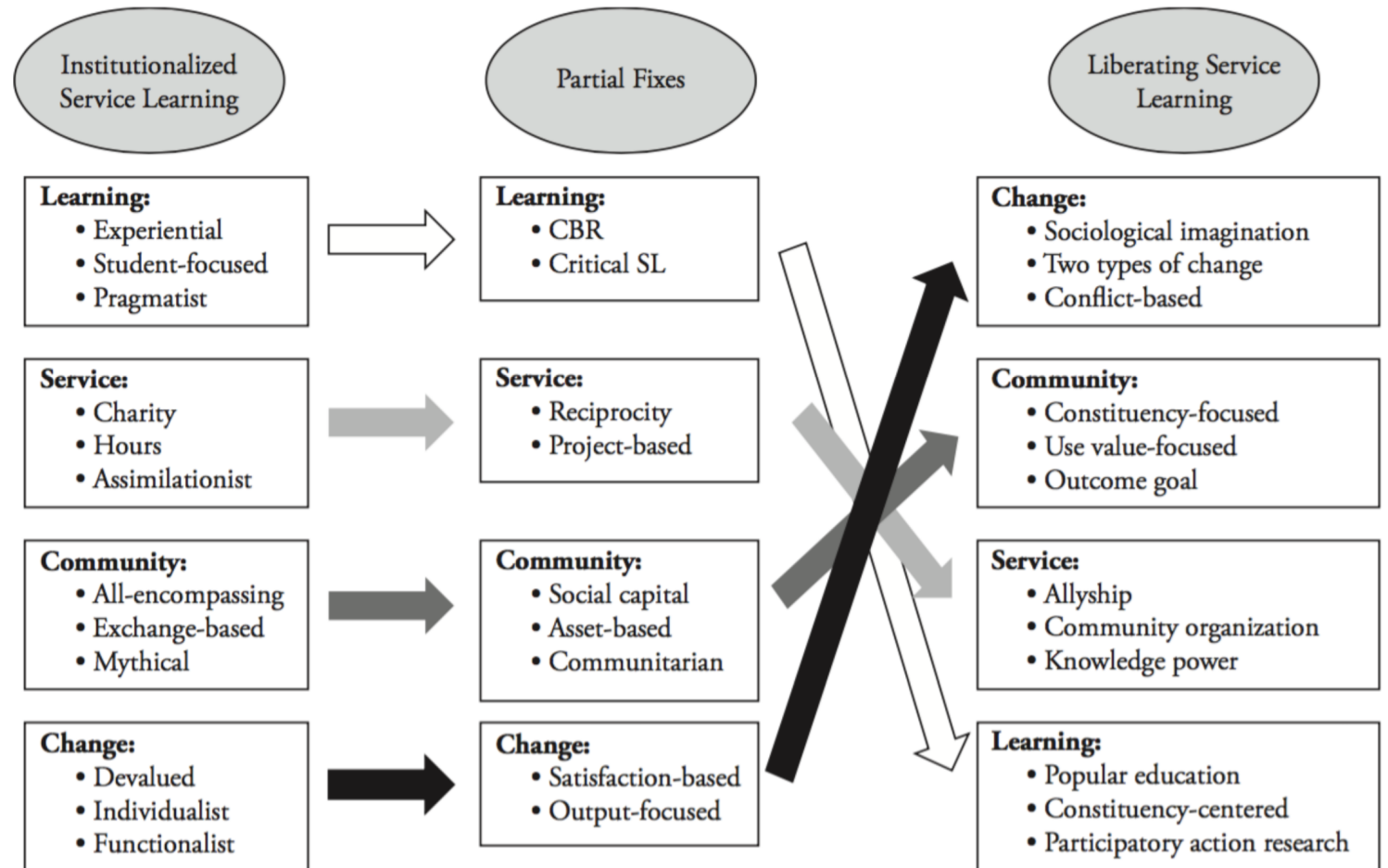


Source: Mitchell, 2008, p. 53

Spend a few minutes writing down some ideas for your coursework and projects that would help to use a critical approach.

Handout 3: Liberating Service Learning

Stoecker (2016) argues that to truly effect change, faculty members and other campus constituents must prioritize community change as much as student learning and change the way in which they partner with community groups to engage in participatory projects that address issues.



1. *How might you, as an educator, design and implement your CEL in ways that prioritize change equally with student learning?*
2. *What strategies can you use to embed allyship or community organizing with community partners and helping them access and generate the knowledge that will give them power and catalyze community change?*