

An Introduction to Place

Adapted from Brown University's "Providence is Not Your Playground" and to be customized to your place

Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: This workshop introduces participants to placed-based education, local resources in the community. It provides them an opportunity to reflect on their own role and their institution's role in their respective communities, and introduces strategies for community engagement.

Overview: This workshop introduces participants to place-based education and encourages them to reflect on their sense of humility, vulnerability, and authenticity when doing community-engaged work. In order to maximize learning, it is recommended that participants learn about historical context, power, and privilege relevant to their institution and communities. **The workshop requires additional research on the part of the facilitator in order to prepare and customize the power-point presentation.**

Bonner Outcomes:

A: Bonner Learning Outcomes			
Civic Agency	X	Empathy	
Civic Identity		Integrative Learning	X
Critical Thinking and Perspective Taking		Leadership	
Communication Skills		Place-and Issue-Knowledge	X
Diversity and Intercultural Competence		Social Justice	

B: Knowledge Areas	
Place-Based Knowledge (Local history, economics, politics etc.,)	X
Issue-Based Knowledge (Poverty, homelessness, hunger etc.,)	X
Civic Knowledge (Role of government, policy implications etc.,)	X

C: Bonner Skill Set					
Personal Skills		Leadership Skills		Professional Skills	
Active Listening		Conflict Resolution/ Mediation		Budgeting	
Balance/ Boundaries	X	Delegation		Evaluation / Research	
Communication		Planning		Event Planning	
Decision-Making		Public Speaking		Fundraising	
Organization		Running a Meeting		Grant Writing	
Planning		Teamwork		Marketing/Public Relations	
Reflection	X	Working with Diverse Groups	X	Volunteer Management	
Time Management				Networking	
Goal Setting				Public Education / Advocacy	

Session Goals / Learning Outcomes:

Participants will:

- Demonstrate familiarity with place-based education and knowledge of historical context of the community/communities in which they are engaging.
- Learn about and reflect on their roles and their institutions' roles in regards to power and privilege.
- Practice cultivating a sense of empathy, humility, vulnerability, and authenticity.
- Discuss strategies for community engagement within place-based education.

Materials:

- **Additional research on the part of the facilitator**
- Edited powerpoint
- Blank paper for every student
- Pens
- Strategies for engagement handout (included)

How to Prepare:

Facilitator should research social justice issues related history about their community and the institution's relationship in that community and add this information to the provided powerpoint. Facilitator should also research and include examples from their institution in the sections on "political power," "economic privilege," and "social capital." Facilitator should become familiar with the concept of place-based education and be prepared to model vulnerability (i.e. give personal examples, own analysis of issues) with participants. Facilitator should review the powerpoint ahead of time and make all necessary edits, including [insert school/community name] with your school or community's name.

Brief Outline:

This workshop leads participants through an introduction of place-based learning, individual reflection and group sharing, and leaves participants with strategies for engagement. The workshop is organized around a powerpoint to help guide the facilitator and participants. The goal is for participants to be introduced to a critical perspective of the ways places are inhabited and their own role in this understanding. It is important for the facilitator to set a reverent tone.

The outline should last approx. 60-90 minutes and has the following nine parts:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1) Materials & Introductions | suggested time 3-5 minutes |
| 2) Session Agenda / Outline | suggested time 2 minutes |
| 3) Learning Outcomes | suggested time 2 minutes |
| 4) What is Place? | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 5) Place-Based Education | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 6) Historical Context | suggested time 10-15 minutes |
| 7) Contextualizing Ourselves | suggested time 3-5 minutes |
| 8) Contextualizing [insert school name] privilege | suggested time 7-10 minutes |
| 9) Strategies of Engagement | suggested time 5-10 minutes |

Your Plan

Part 1) Materials & Introductions







Suggested time: 3-5 minutes

Before starting the workshop, facilitator should pass out a blank sheet of paper to all participants. Facilitator should explain that they will hold onto the paper until facilitator says when to use it.

Introduce yourself and then have participants introduce themselves. Include: name, role, and one adjective to describe their community. *Let participants interpret community however they see fit (hometown, college/university city, nation of origin, etc).*

Part 2) Session Agenda / Outline

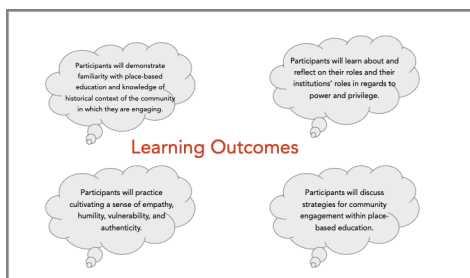
Suggested time: 2 minutes

Agenda Review	
Learning Outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 
What is Place?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 
Historical Context	<input type="checkbox"/> 
Contextualizing Ourselves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 
Contextualizing [insert school name] Privilege	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 
Strategies of Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> 

Review the agenda with the group. This will set the context for what is to come.

Part 3) Session Goals / Learning Outcomes

Suggested time: 2 minutes

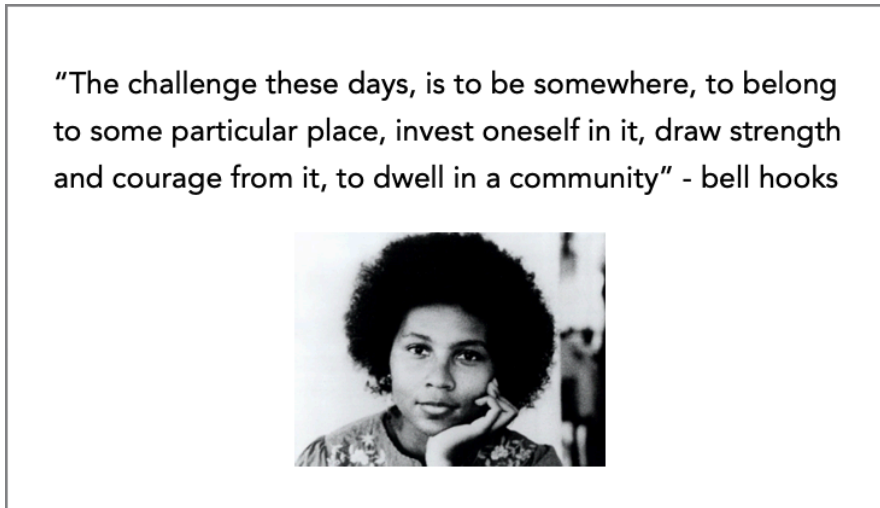


Review the session goals/learning outcomes, so participants know what they should be getting out of this training. Throughout the workshop participants should be reflecting and situating their learning based on the articulated outcomes.

Part 4) What is Place?

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Read bell hook's quote from the slide:



Take a pause. Tell the participants to use the blank sheet of paper that was handed to them at the beginning of the workshop to quietly and individually reflect on the following questions. Give them 5-7 minutes to do so.

What does it mean to call a place home? Who is allowed to be a member of a community? When can we say that we truly belong?

[Information about the author. The quote and questions are from "Belonging: A Culture of Place"(2009) bell hook's book on community and the intersections of identity. bell hooks (1952 - 2021) was a black female, Kentucky author, feminist, and social activist.]

Part 5) Place-Based Education

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Place-based Education

The problem

"In an increasingly globalized world, there are often pressures for communities and regions to subordinate themselves to the dominant economic models and to devalue their local cultural identity, traditions and history in preference to a flashily marketed homogeneity. Furthermore, at a time when industrial pollution, biodiversity/habitat loss, and aquifer depletion are becoming widespread and acute, such pressures often exacerbate the problems by encouraging unsustainable patterns of consumption and land use, and by weakening familial and community relationships that are deeply tied to the local environment. A process of disintegration occurs as basic connections to the land fray and communities become less resilient and less able to deal with the dislocations that globalization and ecological deterioration bring about. A community's health—human and more-than-human—suffers."

Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities (Nature Literacy) by David Sobel
Published February 15th 2006 by The Orion Society (first published January 9th 2004)

After participants have individually reflected, bring them back together. Have a volunteer read the first quote on the slide. This quote sets the stage for the problem that place-based education seeks to address.

"The path to a sustainable existence must start with a fundamental reimagining of the ethical, economic, political and spiritual foundations upon which society is based, and that this process needs to occur within the context of a deep local knowledge of place. The solutions to many of our ecological problems lie in an approach that celebrates, empowers and nurtures the cultural, artistic, historical and spiritual resources of each local community and region, and champions their ability to bring those resources to bear on the healing of nature and community."

A way forward

Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities (Nature Literacy) by David Sobel
Published February 15th 2006 by The Orion Society (first published January 9th 2004)

Place-based Education

Next, ask for a volunteer(s) to read the next few quotes and definitions from the slides. These quotes speak to the way in which place-based education is a path forward to addressing these complex problems in our society.

"A significant transformation of education might begin with the effort to learn how events and processes close to home relate to regional, national, and global forces and events, leading to a new understanding of ecological stewardship and community. This, I believe, supports the propagation of an enlightened localism—a local/global dialectic that is sensitive to broader ecological and social relationships at the same time as it strengthens and deepens peoples sense of community and land."

A way forward

Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities (Nature Literacy) by David Sobel
Published February 15th 2006 by The Orion Society (first published January 9th 2004)

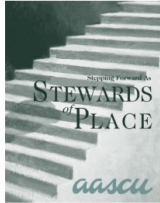
Place-based Education

You can add your own analysis as you see fit. Invite a few participants to share interpretations and examples from their prior exposure to different communities.

Next, introduce definition of "public engagement" using the following slide:

Definitions

Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place, report by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) used in conjunction with its American Democracy Project.



Public Engagement is:

- Place-Related.** While the demands of the economy and society have forced institutions to be nationally and globally aware, the fact remains that state colleges and universities are inextricably linked with the communities and regions in which they are located. Exercising "stewardship of place" does not mean limiting the institution's worldview; rather, it means pursuing that worldview in a way that has meaning to the institution's neighbors, who can be its most consistent and reliable advocates.
- Interactive.** The etymology of the word "engage" speaks to the intertwining or meshing of entities. In this context, engagement refers to a spirit of give and take by the university and its partners. For institutions, this means occupying the role of learner as well as teacher. For community and regional partners, this means looking to the university as a resource, not necessarily as "the answer."
- Mutually Beneficial.** Engagement should inure to the benefit of both parties involved. These initiatives should expand the learning and discovery functions of the institutions while enhancing community capacity to address and resolve the issues they confront. The work of the engaged institution is to be responsive to public needs in ways that are appropriate to the institution's mission and academic strengths. Engagement initiatives should also build greater public understanding of and support for the role of the campus as a knowledge asset and resource.
- Integrated.** At a campus level, engagement must permeate all levels of the institution, and be integrated into its policies, incentive structures, and priorities. At a departmental level, engagement cuts across the imperatives of teaching and scholarship to bring unparalleled opportunities for the entire campus community—faculty, staff, and students.

To transition to the historical context, explain that community is a complex idea; rooted in an understanding of identity and history.

Part 6) Historical Context

Suggested time: 10-15 minutes

Present your prepared information about the historical context of both the community in itself and your institution's role in the community's history. Also, include information about resources and services available in the community through local nonprofits and government offices. If you have limited access to information about either the community's history or the institutional history, focus on whichever history is most relevant and/or you have access to the most information.

Part 7) Contextualizing Ourselves

Suggested time: 3-5 minutes

Give participants time to reflect on their own role and their institution's role in these histories. Have participants pair up with someone nearby and discuss the question on the slide: *What are the implications of [insert school name]'s history for us?*

Part 8) Contextualizing [insert school name] privilege

Suggested time: 7-10 minutes

Present the three categories (political power, economic privilege, and social capital) by reviewing the definitions and describing the examples you prepared that relate to your institution's role in these categories.

Political Power

Power here references our capacity to "get things done." It is influenced by systems and institutions and is inequitably distributed. Political power describes our ability to influence and control politics.

Economic Privilege

Resources and advantages that have monetary value.

Social Capital

Refers to the connections between individuals or entities that can be economically valuable, directly or indirectly. These relationships between individuals and companies can lead to a state in which each thinks of the other when something needs to be done.

Have participants pair up with someone different (from the last question) and discuss the following questions: *How do you think [insert school name]'s political*

power, economic privilege, and social capital, will impact your time at [insert school name]? How will it impact your work as a Bonner?

Part 9) Strategies of Engagement

Suggested time: 5-10 minutes

End the workshop by introducing best practice strategies (see slides) for community engagement. You don't need to spend too much time on each slide. It is meant to be concise and poignant. However, when you see fit, add your own additional interpretation of the strategy. The slides cover the following strategies of engagement:

- ◆ Learn, but do not expect to be taught
- ◆ Listen, with the intent of learning not responding
- ◆ Ask why? Be critical of your actions and the space you take
- ◆ Ally is a verb, not a badge of honor. It works in the present
- ◆ Understand that you have power and know when to use it, hint: the answer is not all the time
- ◆ Take an asset-based approach, value local expertise, knowledge, and experience
- ◆ Know that [insert school name] is a center of knowledge not the center of knowledge
- ◆ Own impact, expect to be held accountable for your actions. Welcome criticism. Acknowledge and apologize for harmful actions
- ◆ Change
- ◆ Consider [insert school name]'s role, in constructing and supporting systems that create and perpetuate inequality

Credits:

Developed in 2018 by Liz Brandt, Bonner Foundation Community Engagement Director. Adapted from Brown University's "Providence Is Not Your Playground" presentation given at 2017 Bonner Fall Directors and Coordinators Meeting, presented by Juan Carlos.

Works referenced

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), *Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place*, 2002.
- Hooks, Bell. *Belonging a Culture of Place*. Routledge, 2009.

- Sobel, D. (2005). Place-based education: Connecting classrooms & communities. Great Barrington, MA: Orion Society.

Additional Resources:

Goodman, Diane J., Helping Students Explore Their Privileged Identities, 2007.

Wise, Tim. On White Privilege, 2008. (video)

Strategies of Engagement

- ◆ **Learn**, *but do not expect to be taught*
- ◆ **Listen**, *with the intent of learning not responding*
- ◆ **Ask why?** *Be critical of your actions and the space you take*
- ◆ **Ally is a verb**, *not a badge of honor. It works in the present*
- ◆ **Understand** that you have **power** and know when to use it, *hint: the answer is not all the time*
- ◆ **Take an asset-based approach**, *value local expertise, knowledge, and experience*
- ◆ Know that **[insert school name]** is **a center of knowledge, not the center of knowledge**
- ◆ **Own impact**, *expect to be held accountable for your actions. Welcome criticism. Acknowledge and apologize for harmful actions.*
- ◆ **Change**
- ◆ **Consider [insert school name]'s role**, *in constructing and supporting systems that create and perpetuate inequality*