Preface

This work, Student Experiences and Educational Outcomes in Community Engagement for the 21st Century, is a continuation of the ideas set forth in the first book, Community Engagement Program Implementation and Teacher Preparation for 21st Century Education (IGI Global). While the first volume concentrated on community engagement, teacher preparation and program implementation, this volume shifts the focus to students’ experiences with community engagement across a variety of educational contexts. While originally conceived as one thought, students’ experiences were teased apart from teacher preparation and program implementation to highlight their experiences and specifically how community engagement prepares them to be global citizens.

AUDIENCE

Much like the first book, the second book provides K-12 teachers and administrators, university faculty and administrators, and community volunteers—all “change agents”—with the information and ideas they need to implement community engagement in their classrooms, both face-to-face and virtual educational contexts. Consequently, this book is an important resource for K-12 teachers and administrators who may be considering implementing community engagement in this educational context, based on how others have implemented it in similar contexts to help prepare students to be successful in a global society. The book is also a significant resource for university faculty, staff, and administrators who also are interested in implementing community engagement within the higher education context to build bridges between the university and their communities.
This book is divided into three sections and includes a total of eleven chapters. Section One includes five chapters on community engagement collaborations; Section Two includes two chapters on community engagement in virtual educational contexts, and Section Three includes four chapters on topics for further consideration.

Section 1, “Community Engagement Collaborations across Curricula and Contexts,” includes five chapters that focus on community engagement collaborations across curricula and contexts. These include the following:

**Section 1: Community Engagement Collaborations across Curricula and Contexts**

Chapter 1, “Impact of Community Engagement in Higher Education,” by Michelle Huddleston (Tennessee Technological University) presents an exploratory study that examines the impact of community engagement on the attitudes and perceived impact of college students having participated in Community Engagement (CE), measuring how effective CE is, and how well these goals are met on a college campus. Mainly examined in the chapter is the relationship between impact and student participation in CE. Results presented suggest the amount of connectivity a student feels to the community will play a role in his or her continued college career.

Chapter 2, “Experiential Learning, Service Learning, and Engagement in a University ESL Setting,” by Michael Fields (University of Delaware’s English Language Institute [ELI]) presents action research carried out with graduate international students at the ELI and the various community engagement projects they have completed. His chapter examines the implementation of community engagement with a population of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners that is not often considered in community engagement work – graduate students – and discusses several different community engagement projects, rather than just one, which is what most work of this type does.

Tim Micek’s (Ohio Dominican University) and Judith Monseur’s (Antioch University Midwest) chapter, “It Depends on the Type of Program: Student Perceptions of Service-Learning,” Chapter 3, presents a study of the effects community engagement organizations had on Master of Arts (MA) of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) candidates’ experiences. Findings from the study, that (1) the organizations in which the participants served affect the TESOL candidates’ experience of service-learning and (2) teacher preparation programs should prepare candidates for the realities of this experience, are discussed in detail in the chapter.

Chapter 4, “Community Service-Learning: Recruiting and Retaining Psychology Majors for Service in Low-Income Communities,” by Tomesha Manora Farris, Denise
Ross, Brandi Fontenot, Gaige Johnson, Margaret Uwayo, and Garrett D Warrilow (Western Michigan University), focuses on recruiting and training psychology majors to work in low-income communities by engaging them in service, research, and teaching activities in a middle school located in a high-poverty community with the use of the Service, Teaching, and Research Training (START) Model. The chapter discusses the semester in which the psychology undergraduate and graduate students collaborated on a literacy and classroom management project with a local middle school in a low-income community. It includes results of the project, which showed an increase in the number of psychology students interested in working with low-income populations and high rates of satisfaction for the teacher who participated. Barriers and facilitators to implementation are also included in the chapter.

To conclude Section 1 of the book, Chapter 5, “Service-Learning in Action: Students, Inmates, and a Storybook Project,” by Lindsay Blumer, (Ripon College), presents a case study of a unique collaborative service-learning program between the Center for Social Responsibility at Ripon College and the Green Lake County Correctional Facility (GLCCF). The chapter discusses the study of the Storybook Program, including the theoretical framework of adult literacy pedagogy, the methods, which include college students meeting with inmates to select and practice reading children’s books on video, and the results, which include multiple simultaneous psycho-social outcomes for all involved.

The two chapters of the book in Section 2, “Community Engagement Online,” focus on the implementation of community engagement in virtual educational contexts. These include the following:

**Section 2: Community Engagement Online**

The first chapter in this section, Chapter 6, “E-Service Learning in Virtual Teamwork,” by Melody Rawlings and Megan Downing (Northern Kentucky University), focuses on the benefits and challenges of e-service learning in virtual teamwork. The chapter also presents sources for e-service opportunities and instructional design strategies to equip instructors with the tools for implementing this valuable learning experience into the online environment and to enrich the global education of the growing number of online students.

Chapter 7, “Preparing Distant Learners to Work in Global Societies with E-Service Learning,” by Rick Brockmeier (Northern Kentucky University), focuses on the integration of an e-service-learning project to specifically prepare distance learners to work in global contexts, and identifies best practices for e-service-learning from these projects. The chapter also includes a discussion of project implications.

The final four chapters of the book comprise the final section titled “Further Considerations.” These include chapters that encourage the reader to further consider
other issues regarding community engagement and student educational experiences in the 21st century. These include the following:

**Section 3: Further Considerations**

The first chapter in this section, Chapter 8, “Service Learning for the Community College Student,” by Roch Turner (University of Montana, Bitterroot College), outlines the many reasons behind a consistent and relevant implementation of community engagement, or service learning opportunities for students on community college campuses. This chapter offers a roadmap for creating service learning opportunities ranging from an initial community needs analysis to volunteer recruitment and management. The author of this chapter spends a considerable amount of time on reflection activities for community college students, which is vital to the success of service learning.

Chapter 9, “Supporting Graduate Students to Implement Community-Engaged Research,” by Audrey Faye Falk and Brittany Vine (Merrimack College), describes one program’s approach to facilitating graduate students’ acquisition of community-engaged research skills and offers recommendations to faculty involved in such work. Moreover, a discussion of the many challenges to developing and implementing community-engaged research and assisting graduate students to do so in non-profit and community-based work, which require relevant training and experiences to do this work effectively is also included.

Chapter 10, “Challenges of Practicing and Honing Leadership Skills through Cross-Cultural Service Learning,” by Jeff Zimmerman (Northern Kentucky University), focuses on a service learning project geared towards undergraduate U.S. leadership students on a summer study abroad program, and provides insight into the unexpected cross-cultural challenges faced by service learning project coordinators in an overseas setting. The chapter discusses how the service learning project coordinator faced a variety of unexpected cross-cultural challenges upon arrival in a host culture. Moreover, this chapter highlights some universal cross-cultural challenges, why they can be expected, and why they are often difficult to resolve. Potential solutions addressing these challenges in the context of cross-cultural service learning projects are also explored in the chapter.

Chapter 11, the final chapter, “Deepening of Critical Thinking Skills of Students Through the Use of Civic Engagement,” by Marcia Hunter (Southwest Tennessee University), proposes a model for bringing community, or civic engagement and critical thinking together to meet both educational and societal needs. Because critical thinking is a necessary skill for effectively navigating modern society, but is not always taught in schools, students are at a disadvantage. This chapter discusses
how the proposed model provides effective strategies for teaching civic engagement, which includes critical thinking skills, outside the classroom.

In conclusion, the research on community engagement presented herein showcases how students are enriched, engaged, and empowered by it in ways that are not found in the traditional classroom alone. The research herein also highlights how community engagement assists students in finding their place in the world by engaging with communities, whether it is in an online learning environment, or with low-income middle school students, or with inmates, or those in another country. Finally, the research contained in this book highlights how community engagements provide students with skills (e.g. leadership, teamwork, critical thinking), power, and agency they need to make changes in the world in order to enrich, engage, and empower their communities and the people within those communities.