Chapter 10

Situated Learning Meets Community Needs:
Anatomy of a Community–Based Learning Project on Chicago's West Side

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes a community-based learning project (CbLP) in the Chicago West Side community of Austin. This learning setting provided the context for applying instructional strategies, methods, and techniques that are grounded in principles of social-situational learning and competence-based education and the education philosophy of emancipatory or popular education. Student perceptions are presented in excerpts of their critical reflection journals and learning product samples, which were both resource contributions to the community and deliverables

for assessment and evaluation of learning for students. The chapter illustrates key features of designing and facilitating learning within a civic engagement-themed CbLP.

INTRODUCTION

During the Summer of 2018, adult students, who were enrolled in competence-based undergraduate and graduate program courses, joined together to assist with a community needs assessment at the request of local community activists on Chicago's West Side. The West Side is a predominantly underserved area of Chicago consisting of *West* Town, the Near *West Side*, the Lower *West Side*, Humboldt Park, East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, North Lawndale, South Lawndale, and Austin. This project focused specifically on Austin, said to be one of the most dangerous and crime-ridden communities (Tanveer & Bauer, 2016). In spite of this reputation, the instructor for this course, who is known to her students as "Dr. G.," offered this opportunity to engage in an authentic community action research project. Her long-standing participation in community work had provided her with the evidence that strong and varied assets exist among the residents and community-based organizations there. In her experience, collaborations between adult learners and residents in community settings are not fraught with hateful racism or marked by violence. Grounded in an education philosophy of emancipatory education (Freire, 1970) and asset-based community development (McKnight, 1980), and armed with the experience and insights gained from several decades of having worked as a community organizer in the now so-termed urban communities, Dr. G. collaborated with a former fellow graduate student during her own studies at Northern Illinois University, Ronald, to facilitate this community-based learning project.

This project lent itself well to the purpose of the university courses and to designing individual learning goals and objectives for adult participants. The three courses intersected at several points: They shared an overall purpose of exploring how volunteers and community activists can partner and collaborate to address community issues; the course outcomes included the ability to identify and analyze social theories, educational philosophies, and value systems; the competence assessments criterion of successful application of civic engagement strategies; and the skill of developing and applying participatory action research methods. These shared goals and outcomes made it possible to create an authentic learning community among diverse course participants in the context of a CbLP.

This chapter, co-written with project participants, chronicles the instructional design approach applied during the summer project; shares a sample of a learning product (Appendix Four) that provided evidence of learning; and conveys insight of the perceived benefit of this CbLP in excerpts of students' reflections. It delineates

the practices that had lend themselves best to grasp academic content gained through readings; practice collaborative learning in authentic settings; focus on critically reflective thinking; foster civic engagement skills; and heighten self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. This chapter speaks in one voice; however, it is actually a blend of the project's archivist, David, who archived materials of the project activities, the instructor of record, Dr.G., who guided students through the project in the communities, within learning studios, and at the University campus, and post project analysis of materials with Pauline and Jasmine.

BACKGROUND

The Genesis of the Project

When Ronald approached Dr. G. to assist with a community needs assessment project in the West Side community of Austin, she considered combining several under-enrolled courses within the context of a community-based learning project (CbLP). From an andragogical perspective, it made sense to enhance students' academic learning about civic engagement and research while simultaneously addressing genuine problems in a community setting. The imminent closing of more public schools and the lack of parent engagement in the Austin community at the time presented a prime opportunity to emphasize reciprocity and collaboration among community stakeholders with the input of university students in a project that intended to optimize resources in support of the community activism Ronald envisioned. Moreover, such a project would challenge adult students in the competency-based adult education graduate and undergraduate programs to develop learning outcomes and deliverables in a self-directed, learning-how-to-learn manner (Smith, 1987) and within a collaborative and situated learning approach (Wenger & Jave, 1990), supported by individual and group critical reflection (Brookfield, 1985).

When combining the courses' goals, participants created a collaborative action research project around the efforts of community activist Ronald to champion the concept of establishing a Frederick Douglass Family and Community Engagement Resource Center (DFCERC). The DFCERC would provide a new community facility in Austin within a school building. For the DFCERC to become a reality, approval from the Chicago Public Schools district (CPS) would be required because it would share the building and its facilities of the existing Frederick Douglass high school. Therefore, documentation of community input was needed for CPS approval via its Community Action Council process. Participation in advancing the support of the DFCERC concept would serve as a worthy cause to engage students in this "learning by doing" exercise in community activism, civic engagement, action research, and analysis of asset-based community development theories.

Community Interest in the Collaborative Project

CPS funding of the Frederick Douglass High School (FDHS) was at risk due to its declining student enrollment that has dipped to as low as around 100 students, from its past historic high of 1500 students. With this underlying issue, Dr. G. and students agreed that the collaborative research project could be multi-faceted and yield beneficial information for the effort. Findings were expected to include supporting testimonials from community members and provide information to aid in decision-making concerning the advancement of the DFCERC concept, or a future similar project. For the DFCERC concept to realistically work, a symbiotic relationship would need to exist between it and the existing high school. Community activists expressed the hope that a DFCERC would also provide services and extra-curricular activities for the school, which might drive up student enrollment numbers and ensure survival of the high school during the school closing decision making by CPS. At the same time, the CPS downsizing efforts of that school might also benefit economic development were the school partially repurposed. Investment in the high school campus facilities and development would provide access to human care, educational, training, cultural, and recreational uses and could create entrepreneurial endeavors and job opportunities, as it is a prime real estate location because of its proximity to the Chicago Loop. Even if this particular DFCERC concept was not to become a reality, the documentation of community input and analysis of the data and concept would be beneficial to the proponents of a DFCERC in negotiations with CPS. Participation in its advancement as part of the course, in turn, provided students with significant real-world learning to understand the interaction of different issues and perspectives of stakeholders in the community, and how respective agenda may coincide or be at odds with each other. Dr. G. anticipated that insight about these different agenda would heighten the capacity of students to analyze how a community activist might develop a strategy to partner appropriately with community stakeholders and assist a community to achieve its goals. Within these considerations, the participants in the summer project began to structure their work and study.

MELDING COMMUNITY NEEDS WITH COURSE OUTCOMES

Developing Student-Driven Learning Goals

Dr. G. stressed that the process of the project would need everyone's willingness to collaborate, and the mantra became "trust the process." This kind of civic engagement and social justice-oriented research project needed to grow organically to achieve desired results through collective action. A solid example of this kind of approach

is well described in the Gustavus Adolphus College Community-based Service & Learning unit. The College is classified by Camus Connect (See https://compact. org/who-we-are/) and received the Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification. The approach is based on these program principles:

- **Reflective Practice:** Course requirements and syllabus provide a method for students to reflect on what they learned through the engaged experience and how these relate to the subject of the course, as well as to students' civic development and responsibility.
- **Community Partner Involvement:** Community partners are consulted at key stages during the project and their input is woven into project implementation. A final evaluation of the project and partnership is completed, shared appropriately, and used to make needed changes to future activities.
- **Focus on Realistic Solutions:** Research results and recommendations focus on realistic solutions and appreciation of community assets rather than merely pointing out problems and deficits
- **Appropriateness of Student Preparation:** Students are appropriately prepared academically and provided with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successfully completing the engagement project. Source: https://gustavus.edu/communityservice/faculty.php

These principles guided the project from the inception of the course as students developed individual learning goals and objectives. This process included aligning the expressed community goals to these learning activities and products each student sought to accomplish. The readings on the topics introduced students to different perspectives, values, and models of community advocacy, civic engagement, strategies for activists, and research methods. The concept of empowerment *by, with*, *and for* the people was in alignment with the assigned readings. As expressed by Freire, "Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building […]" (1970, p. 28).

Based on our readings, we considered that imposing knowledge of what students, as outsiders might think is best, would likely fall flat in such a project, even when well-intended. This was definitely confirmed in our interactions with community residents.

This insight guided students in that they agreed that community input was essential in developing the project and their activities in it. The texts laid the theoretical

foundation and, in combination with initial interactions with community members, began to help students frame individual outcomes in their learning contracts.

Challenges and Successes in Developing and Achieving Learning Goals

For this CbLP, students needed to first get to know the stakeholders in the community, and what interests and needs they had already identified to better understand what was desired. This integral aspect in the project planning process was aligned to the practices of community-based learning projects; however, this first step also delayed clarity on specific individual course outcomes, learning activities, and deliverables students needed to develop. This community-driven approach to establishing learning outcomes in a social-situational context is the crucial difference between CbLP and service-learning. Basically, in the project, participants could not start the study based on pre-determined learning outcomes and deliverables; instead they needed to identify community needs to which particular learning objectives, the instructional and learning activities, and the evidence of the particular competence each student sought to achieve in the project had to be aligned.

These challenges in competence-based and social-situational approaches needed to be overcome with transparency about the messy-ness of this process. Acknowledging the challenges also presented myriad opportunities for reflection and self-directed learning. Dr. G. created space for teams and partnerships among students and community members to emerge organically. From an instructional design perspective, moving the learning activities out of the classroom and into the community and engaging diverse stakeholders was an imperative to both, aligning overall course goals to community needs and achieving learning objectives in authentic, performance-based environments. Specifically, the collaborators:

- Developed student-driven learning objectives and learning products based on an authentic dialogue with community members about real problems
- Adapted course activities and readings as incidental/unintended learning situations emerged
- Practiced critical reflection in action with flexibility
- Identified the documentation and reports Ronald and the community needed.

Two weeks into the course, participants met with community members as a first activity after the invitation by Ronald to engage in such a project to the students on campus. A service day at the Frederick Douglas High School in Austin was the backdrop for the first meeting in the community. After a large assembly at the high school on a Saturday morning, Serve-A-Thon participants engaged in building

Figure 1.

benches, painting, cleaning, and repairing at the school. Students interacted with parents, Local School Council members, the school principal, and other volunteers to get a first glimpse at the perspectives and values, and at the hopes and needs by community residents for their school.

The serve-a-thon at the high school this weekend was amazing. When I worked side-by-side with students and parents of the school, I realized how their perspective about what needs to be done must be included in any decision-making about the school and the center. They know about what assets there are among the community members. This is exactly what Professor McKnight described in the video we watched in class.

Subsequently, our third large group session at the University campus focused on debriefing from this activity at the high school (see Appendix One). It was during this third course session that we juxtaposed principles of partnership building and community development within a popular education framework (Freire, 1984), the ABCD model of community development (McKnight & Block, 2010), and principles of rules for radical (Alinsky, 1989) with our experiences at the high school service

day. During that session, participants grouped themselves into Work Teams and crafted specific plans for their learning activities. These teams (see Appendix Two) would eventually produce a combined report of their analyses of community input and their findings for use by Ronald, which included a detailed strategic planning instrument and training workshop for community organizations. The next section speaks to the specific *how to* of instructional strategies and methods, employed in this CbLP.

Instructional Strategies, Methods, and Techniques

In keeping with the principles of adult learning (Knowles, 1984), this activity operationalized the four principles of andragogy in the following ways:

1. Adults are self-directed and should have a say in the content and process of their learning.
    a. Students developed a mind map of issues, needs, and problems they had identified from the meeting with community residents
    b. Individualized learning objectives flowed from the identified community needs
        i. This information was summarized and shared with community members for feedback
    c. Each student designed a Learning Contracts of learning objectives and deliverables that guided their study during the CbLP that incorporated the community feedback.
2. Adults have experience upon which to draw and learning should focus on adding to such prior learning
    a. Students identified the gaps in their knowledge and skills with respect to the course content and goals and the vetted community needs by analyzing their explicit and tacit knowledge
    b. Based on this analysis, each student committed to specific contributions they could make, which became the deliverables in their course work
    c. Students grouped into Action Teams based on particular knowledge and skills that could aid in addressing identified community needs. These teams constituted a kind of learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1990) as students exchanged knowledge and skills in a co-teaching fashion among peers.
3. Adults prefer practical learning and content should focus on issues related to their work or personal life
    a. The CbLP was an authentic setting in which the students' study led to valuable action, reports, and materials for the community

  b. The actions, reports, and materials were informed by the knowledge and skills already possessed by students <u>and</u> combined with content presentation of theories and models in conventional classroom settings

  c. I turn, new learning occurred through the social situational learning approach with its peer teaching *in situ* in this community setting.

  d. The measurable outcomes of this project came in the performance-based assessment of the learning products, i.e., the actions and materials

4. Learning should be centered on solving problems instead of memorizing content

  a. The community needs, or the problems to be addressed, connected students with community activists and members

  b. These connections also resulted in incidental learning with respect to analyzing a problem from a variety of vantage points; observing agency among community members; applying strategies gained through reading and discussing theories of action research or community organizing, for example, and receiving immediate feedback in the environment.

This commitment to the principles of adult learning mandated a good deal of flexibility of students and instructor. Therefore, a key feature of engaging in a CbLP of this nature pivots on the kind of instructional approaches and their level of transparency to the learners. For a group of adults, who come together to share their experiences, knowledge, and discoveries in order to enhance their grasp of the tacit knowledge they already possess and the explicit knowledge they seek to gain, Dr. G. first utilized standard instructional strategies to scaffold this process.

Strategies of Instruction

1. Group Instruction took place at the University campus and at community organizations' sites. Some of these sessions were mandatory while others were labeled Learning Studios, and served as optional opportunities to debrief, share ideas, and work on materials, e.g., creating motivational interview instruments, compiling historic community data on education, or developing a strategic planning model for CBOs.

2. Self-paced Instruction had students work independently and also in groups in the community or at campus. Campus served as the resource with access to library services and printing, for example. Students did venture into the community in groups or individually, attending church services or special events and festivals in order to engage with residents.

3. On-the-job Instruction, which in this CbLP meant learning in the environment of the community, was in evidence through participation in community meetings

of task forces, volunteering at the service day, or attending gatherings at local restaurants.

4. Instructions through job aids was provided by the instructor and community members. These were used in the other three strategies, as appropriate. For example, the instructor supplied students with articles and websites relevant to students' respective tasks; she provided session summaries of group instruction or learning studio discussion content; and students received information by community sources, aka Realia, such as announcement fliers, program descriptions, or meeting minutes. The creation of job aids, therefore, required the timely and immediate, in-the-moment, response by the instructor and not too often can these be prepared in advance of a CbLP of this nature.

These four strategies of instruction served the learning needs of adults in this CbLP quite well, primarily in that they flexibly and reciprocally enhanced the flow of information and feedback among all project participants throughout the summer project (See Appendix Three).

Methods of Instruction

The instructor delineated a particular array of instructional methods and provided a theoretical framework for her approaches that move along a spectrum of very directive to a consultative instructional role (Strohschen, 2016). Students discussed the approaches the instructor would follow. As the course progressed, the students moved from a dependent mode to more and more independent and then interdependent, that is self-managed, learning activities. Dr. G.'s instructional methods included:

1. Lectures with A/V components by
    a. Instructor
    b. Student-led content presentations
    c. Guest speakers live or via technology (Skype, ZOOM)
2. In-session practice exercises
3. Small group/in-session collaborative work
    a. Optional Learning Studios
    b. Computer lab research
4. Library Tutorial and Consultations
5. Individual Learning Contracts (drafted by Week 3 of the Seminar with subsequent revisions)
6. Session Summaries by Instructor
7. Weekly 1-1 coaching sessions with Instructor (teleconference, FaceTime, or in person).

For instructors, it is imperative to provide the rationales to students for using particular strategies and methods and to offer choices of how to guide students through the learning at hand. In the context of sharing basic concepts of learning styles and preferences and the basics of the instructional phases, student empowerment (Cervero, 1996) is encouraged throughout the project. The very values of CbLP mirrors the approaches for studying the content of community empowerment, action research, and civic engagement. In this CbLP, students benefited from flexibility of instructional methods, after they had decided to group themselves into teams to address identified community needs. This is noteworthy because of the hoped-for empowerment and relevant learning, as students "took over" how to go about their own learning in smaller groups and decided on the learning products that would constitute the course deliverables.

PROJECT STRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The Seminar Structure and Reflection

Overall, the CbLP followed the format of a seminar, defined as follows*: "The Latin seminarium originally referred to a plant nursery, a place of great growth. From this came the German seminar, referring to a formal educational group led by a professor."* Source: https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/seminar.

The seminar structure focused participants on how students would support one another in professional and personal growth as everyone was tasked to engage in designing the course. This meant challenges and, at times, confusion, as it veered greatly from conventional instructor-driven design and delivery of a course. This project was taught in an experiential format, i.e., while the instructor suggested course topics and a framework of outcomes, the course learning objectives and learning activities needed to achieve stated course goals were not predesigned by the instructor. They evolved during the progress of the course as described above. Although Dr.G. guided students' self-directed learning activities as needed, the process was not a top-down banking method (Freire, 1970). Reflective participation and guided critical reflection became pivotal in this community-based learning project. Madsen & O'Mullan (2018) underscore this point, i.e., that reflection helps

[…] draw out issues around power and participation as fundamental for successful research partnerships, particularly multidisciplinary partnerships, intent on the co-creation of knowledge. Such issues related to recognising partnerships and the underlying assumptions when these partnerships cross boundaries include transparent

communication, power and decision-making processes, critical self-awareness, and negotiated meaning and identity. (p. 27)

Challenges and Benefits

A challenge for instructors with this approach is to strike a balance between guiding individual student's self-directed student learning activities and time trying to accomplish common course goals in the project. This can be a "herding of cats" endeavor. Students are also challenged by managing their confusion as they try to find their place in the project, while figuring out how to best contribute to it. Both instructor and students are then challenged together by the course outcomes not being as predictable as in a traditional course with a pre-designed curriculum. The feedback phase of the instruction and large group critical reflection session are vital. One of the most beneficial technique was the 1-1 exchanges between each student and the instructor.

In our project, Dr. G. would reassure students during moments of uncertainty in our project that this approach is messy by design. All agreed to trust in the process. We could do so because of the transparency of the processes that were based on learning theories in the field of adult education. The coaching role played by our instructor personalized our learning. It was a new experience but so very successful. I felt validated as an adult and really learned a lot.

As an added educational benefit, the occasional chaos during the project was managed by the instructor so that it provided an additional conceptual theme for consideration. Those moments were a window for students to peer into the kind of challenges that community activists face while working in the real world of community development. Building off such disorienting moments (Mezirow, 1991) during the large group sessions on campus, the group would analyze topics ranging from current Chicago politics to historical study of the US Civil Rights movement to vantage points that often-mirrored ideas of Freire (1970) and Alinsky (1989). Students were encouraged to share what they had observed during their community work. This critical group reflection led to analysis of value systems and paradigmatic assumptions (Brookfield, 1995), for example, and was necessary to provide a context for learning when students grounded themselves in those insights as they worked in the community project. It was beyond the scope of the course to determine merits of any specific political ideology, being a course in community activism not political activism. That being said, there was at the same time an acknowledgment that community and political activism overlap in the real world.

CONCLUSION

As a framework for bridging academic theory and real-world application, this CbLP sought to support students' learning while addressing real-world problems through community engagement. Our CbLP was solidly grounded in the very andragogical principles of adult teaching and learning. It incorporated social-situational learning n with its community practice setting. It allowed students to implement an individualized curriculum in their learning contracts. It adhered to the values of action research with its collaboration with community stakeholders from the inception of the project. As is described thoroughly by several adult educators in a recent handbook on teaching and learning (Strohschen, 2017; Strohschen, 2009; Yeh, 2013), many learning theories underpin this approach. Essentially, it is based on reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships between instructors, students, and community stakeholders. With our participation in the community service day, we had begun to build such relationships, not only among students and teachers but also with community residents. To the date of penning this chapter, several students continue with their engagement in the community.

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APPENDIX 1

Large Group Updates and Debriefing

Saturday, July 20, 2018

The Storefront, Pilsen

We gathered to debrief on team activities over the past two weeks. Our community partners did not join us but were in touch after the meeting with some comments on their needs.

1. Building Partnerships

The participants at the Serve-A-Thon at the FDHS described their experience of working in a small team to complete the tasks of building wooden planters. This after-action report and analysis yielded some keen insights from participants of the event as much as the rest of the group:

- Cultural and personality characteristics play a key role in communicating. Generally, people from high context cultures seek to collaborate and acknowledge one another's perspectives; while those from low context cultures emphasize task completion.

"The concept of high and low context was introduced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in his 1976 book Beyond Culture, and it refers to the way cultures communicate." Hall makes a key statement that can explain our different takes on communication and reality, "[…] logic, which is an invention of Western culture dating back to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. "Logic enables men to examine ideas, concepts, and mental processes by following low-context paradigms" (1976, p. 213).

- Deliberate clarification of *how to* cooperate (to act or work with another or others) and collaborate (work jointly on an activity, especially to produce or create something) is crucial prior to engaging in a group project
- Ground Rules need to be delineated and agreed upon. *By, with, and for* a group of partners-to-be
- Checking one's ego at the door is important but with awareness of why
- Freire tells us, "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation (1970, p. 47).

- "Any situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his or her pursuit of self-determination as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human." (170, p. 55).
- Alinsky states, "The area of experience and communication is fundamental to the organizer. An organizer can communicate only within the areas of experiences of his audience; otherwise there is no communication. […] Through his imagination he is constantly moving in on the happenings of others, identifying with them and extracting their happenings into his own mental digestive system and thereby accumulating more experience." (1989, p. 46).
- Self-knowledge (critically examining and then understanding of oneself or one's own motives or character and one's values) is imperative for partnering!

2. Team Reports

It is not easy to navigate through an organically growing course content and format ☺ KUDOS to our teams for having accomplished so much and gaining rich insights into the wonderful world of partnering for social action. Dr. G. expressed some recent considerations of hers about the need to finding that agency which would most reach others in a "return to humanity." She pondered that, as a White woman (*with all of its the value-laden connotations and stereotypes and the reality of social White Privilege*), working with other White people to examine experiences and realities might move others to action that is beyond "helping the poor" by stepping and speaking up in situation of injustice and inhumane behavior. After her diatribe ☺, we turned to team reports. Here some general points:

- Teams posted information (or ought to) on their activities on the respective folders on D2L. Please post your information and findings for all to review.
- Paridhi, Kodjo, and Luz have ventured into Austin to meet with community members, take photographs, and investigate happenings at local churches, 5th City, and other NFPs
- Pauline and Jasmine completed a certificate program on motivational interviews and will apply these strategies to community residents
- James, Jeff, Gail, and Saif engaged in a flurry of exchanges, set up a SharePoint, and are almost finished with the completion of a document and training workshop design for sustainable community development strategies and tactics

- Marcia identified Austin community leaders and will conduct interviews with them, joined by Barbara
- Derrick completed a survey with West Side veterans and is compiling a contact list and outline of assets they can bring to FDHS
- Catrice has developed an action plan for a domestic/violence trauma recovery program
- David has become the group's Archivist and Historian to capture our format and processes. He is working with Dr.G. to chronicle our learning journey
- One idea floating about is to develop a written and/or A/V portfolio of our Summer Community-based Learning Project and present at a conference and/or create a publication. Saif said so ;-)! Let's explore this.

3. Next Steps

- We meet next FRIDAY at our Loop campus location
- Do post your information from team work/activities on D2L
- Read your sources and texts
- Think through how our final ALL GROUP Portfolio might look and specifically what you will contribute

APPENDIX 2

Project Team Structure: Using Different Student Teams to Organize and Manage Course Workload

To better organize the workload in our Community-based Learning Project, we divided the topics for which research will be performed across different teams of students, each with a unique focus. These six teams for our class were as follows:

- **Team Diverse Narratives** was tasked with capturing a snapshot of the social and economic reality of the Austin area. The team assessed a cross section of stakeholders in the community about needs and assets in the community that might be used in promoting the DFCERC, or another future similar concept.

- **Team Motivational Interviews** was tasked to apply motivational interviews to identify desired support programs and education activities for families and engage community members in supporting their local high school that might also be used in promoting the DFCERC, or another future similar concept.

- **Team Roadmaps** was tasked with conceptualizing strategic approaches to community development through cross-sector collaborative partnerships. Their research findings involved review of "roadmap" concepts in business/industry domains for adaptation in the community. The team also investigated project and team management strategies for not for profits that might be beneficial to the community as part of the DFCERC, or another future similar concept.

- **Team Veteran** was tasked to study the feasibility of engaging local veterans as volunteers to support training and mentoring of Austin area youth, based on the rich knowledge and skill base that veterans have to offer, as well as to provide positive role models for youth. It was thought that DFCERC, or another future similar concept, might tap into this unique community resource.

- **Team Government** was tasked with inquiring into local politics and how involving elected officials might impact success in implementation of the DFCERC, or another future similar concept.

- **Team Class Historian/Archivist** was tasked with research into the evolution of the Community-based Learning Project, to document an overview of this effort. While not defined as an actual team, compiling the research findings of the different teams into a final unified report to be presented to the community

involved virtual collaboration over D2L. This team was comprised of the instructor and students voluntarily joining in this effort, working against the clock with the end of the term closing in. A final mad dash for the finish line was a fitting way to end this course because experimental learning and activism can both be haphazard or messy at times.

APPENDIX 3

Excerpts of Archived Insights on the Project by Students

Student Interaction With Each Other

Ae learned quickly that communications among course participants required a common platform, for visibility of work being done across the different teams, so we agreed upon use of the university sponsored message board system, Desire 2 Learn (D2L). On the message board, we created areas for each student team to post ideas, events, activities, and so and the instructor added commentary and suggestions. Files could be uploaded as attachments to threads, to include text, video, picture, and audio files.

It was still ok for teams to communicate among each other, concerning coordination of sub-tasks within their own team prior to sharing with class, with whatever tools that they selected. Examples of these tools included G-Mail and WhatsApp. One team of information technology minded students, even went as far as to set up their own on-line document repository, using Microsoft SharePoint. But still the bottom line was that, communications common to all class participants would be transacted using D2L, like for example communications to the entire class by the instructor, or posting of team deliverables, for compilation into the final class project end product.

Student Awareness of Ethical Standards Related to Research Projects That Involve Human Subjects

When embarking on an educational research project like this where you are dealing with real people in the real world, one is reminded of the importance of ethics and compliance training related to research involving human subjects. DePaul University provides this training to its faculty and students using the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) that is a subscription service providing on-line training courses that are applicable to those engaged in academic research. This training is trackable, in that training progress and completion records as well as related test scores are retrievable on-line.

Student Interaction With People Outside the Class Room

Information was collected by student teams from members of the community, considering advice from our readings concerning differences in communications styles. While interviews with community members were prearranged at common meeting place in the community like with a senior citizen center, local businesses or

VFW members, for example, some more adventurous students engaged members of the community randomly in person-on-street interviews. Some students used personal observation instead of interviews to collect information from the community, that included photography to document observations, as well as writing their reflections on experiences.

For students who conducted action research, use of a written questionnaire were their initial approach. We agreed with Ronald, that questionnaire has its place as a starting point to collect information from people, verbal interviews while more challenging, can give the interviewer greater freedom to go off script of their initial interview questions, to adjust for unexpected interviewee responses. Also, related is that while crafting an interview template is useful as a starting point to organize one's thoughts prior to conducting interviews, it should not constrain the interviewer in their questioning. We agreed that dialogue was important to gather pertinent information.

To prepare students researchers for interviewing, as well as partnering with the activists, the instructor discussed differences in communications styles of people from different cultures, and how student awareness of these differences could impact strategies to interact with different people in communities. Several texts and feedback from community members guided the design of data collection approaches.

Accounting for Differences in Student Learning Styles and Experiences

The instructor was aware that not all students who signed up for the project were aware of its nature as an experimental learning experience based on reflective participation, or even have had a prior educational experience like it to use as a point of personal reference, since the banking concept of education is more common.

Also, the instructor was aware that student research project participants can come from very different backgrounds from those of the students. While for example some were urban residents, others can be from the suburbs, and some were international students. So, with this diverse background of students, we needed to find common ground. We found it in the challenges of collaborating with community residents. Some students might already be familiar with the community in question by living in proximity to, or even in it, but others might have little or no prior experience with the community being researched.

The instructor managed these differences by providing a range of learning opportunities to students that would benefit students of differing prior experience. For example, less experienced students, could gain greater learning benefits from more structured learning experiences, to introduce them to the community, like participation in community events for example, or gathering at an off-campus

meeting venue closer to the community. On the other hand, students with greater prior experience with the community were more autonomous in the research project to engage in the community, like traveling around the community and interviewing people in it.

Also, the instructor identified people from the community for student interview opportunities. These people were known to the instructor, for example, people who owned small businesses that served their communities, like a shoe shop, a restaurant, and a local newspaper.

It was necessary for students to request prior clearance from the instructor to contact others for interviews, not previously identified by the instructor. This was because some structure needed to be maintained by the instructor in the interview process, to avoid the potential of students while well intentioned, to inadvertently become "loose cannons" in the community.

Related to this was the emphasis communicated by the instructor of the importance of building trust in the community for partnerships to develop.

Leveraging Individual Differences in Student Skillsets and Experience for Common Benefit of the Class Project

In addition to large group planning meetings and community meetings, the instructor would interact with students individually in coaching sessions, or 1-1s as we called them, to come to an agreement on how each of their unique skill sets, interests, and personal associations could best benefit the project. Each student brought something unique to the project. Examples included a student with access to local officials at Chicago City Hall and the Public School system and a Veteran Marine with contacts to other military veterans and veteran groups. This gave access to statistics and individuals to interview. Also, some students with skill sets in the behavioral sciences contributed to the research project with knowledge of designing motivational interview techniques. Students with interests as diverse as study of local history, knowledge of the local real estate market, and business development, including not-for-profit enterprises, had contributions to make as well.

APPENDIX 4

Sample Learning Product (Deliverable) of *Team Roadmap*

Figure 2.

FDHS Community Center:
A Proposal Development Roadmap

Gail Debbs and Jeff Phillips / August 2018 / LLS 440

Figure 3.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Proposal Development Phase and Project Descriptions

Phase 1 Initiation and Feasibility Study	Phase 2 Community Research	Phase 3 Proposal Development

• Establish Board of Directors and key stakeholders
 	
• Competitive services survey or assessment
 	
• Identify other potential threats (real estate zoning, tax law, etc.) to the program
 	
• Estimate the number of resources/people needed to run the program
 	
• Estimate time of completion
 	
• Define high-level program objectives and stakeholders
 	
• Estimate financial requirements
 	
• Conduct legal due diligence to discover any significant risks to the program
 	
• Conduct policy research to identify any barriers (or opportunities) to the program
 	
• Assess available assistance programs and grants
	• Identify community leaders and influencers
	
	• Create a Community Engagement Plan
	
	• Conduct surveys to collect demographics, services needs and other data
	
	• Conduct interviews with community members to validate and enhance survey findings
	
	• Document community history and stories
	
	• Identify potential donors and other support, such as pro bono legal, marketing and accounting services
		• Write a comprehensive proposal that includes materials based on information gathered in Phases 1 and 2
		  • Overview of objectives
		  • Expected outcomes
		  • Business model and plan
		  • Financial commitments (secured and expected)
		  • Marketing plan
		  • Community communications plan
		  • Short-term roadmap
		  • High-level, long-term roadmap
		• Review plan with stakeholders and revise plan as needed
		
		• Legal sign-off of proposal in preparation for submission

Figure 4.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Proposal Development Program Duration

	2018		2019											
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1: Initiation and Feasibility Study														
Phase 2: Community Research														
Phase 3: Proposal Development														

Figure 5.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

		2018		2019											
		Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1 Projects: Initiation and Feasibility Study															
P1.1	Establish Board of Directors (core members)														
P1.2	Define program charter, objectives, milestones key stakeholders, additional board members														
P1.3	Estimate financial requirements														
P1.4	Estimate the number of resources needed														
P1.5	Estimate the timeframe for completion of project														
P1.6	Conduct a business feasibility study														
P1.7	Identify services that will support the program														
P1.8	Conduct legal due diligence to discover any significant risks to the program														
P1.9	Conduct policy research to identify any barriers (or opportunities) to the program														
P1.10	Assess available assistance programs and grants														

Figure 6.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

	2018		2019											
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 2 Projects: Community Research														
P2.1 Conduct surveys to collect demographics, services needs and other data					■									
P2.2 Conduct interviews with community members to validate and enhance survey findings					■									
P2.3 Create a Community Engagement Plan					■									
P2.4 Identify community leaders and influencers					■	■								
P2.5 Document community history and stories					■	■								

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Figure 7.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

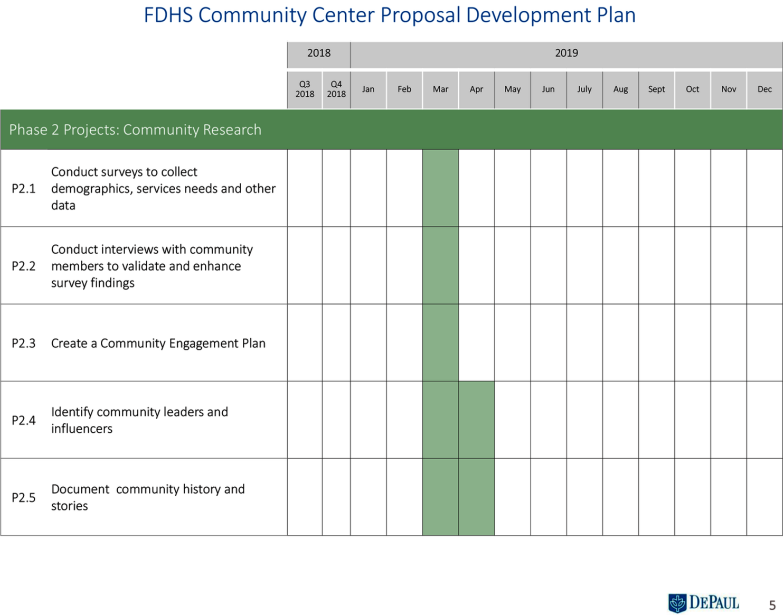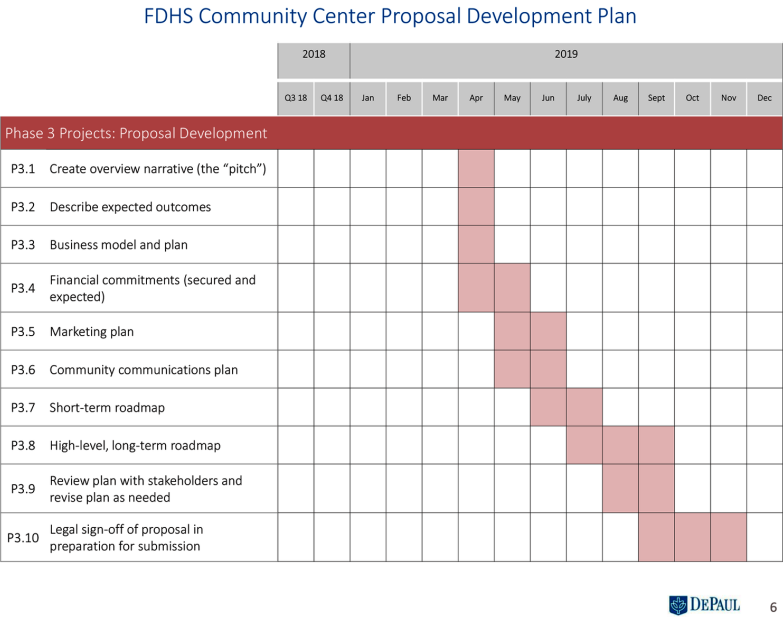|	2018		2019											
	Q3 18	Q4 18	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 3 Projects: Proposal Development														
P3.1 Create overview narrative (the "pitch")						■								
P3.2 Describe expected outcomes						■								
P3.3 Business model and plan						■								
P3.4 Financial commitments (secured and expected)						■	■							
P3.5 Marketing plan							■	■						
P3.6 Community communications plan							■	■						
P3.7 Short-term roadmap									■	■				
P3.8 High-level, long-term roadmap										■	■			
P3.9 Review plan with stakeholders and revise plan as needed											■			
P3.10 Legal sign-off of proposal in preparation for submission											■	■	■	

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Figure 8.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Phase 1: *Initiation and Feasibility Study* projects

	Tasks	Description	Required Resources	Timeline
P1.1	Establish Board of Directors (core members) and key stakeholders	Meet with the board to define who are the decision makers and what are their expectations or objectives for this program	• 1 or 2 people to interview panel	1 to 3 months
P1.2	Establish key program objectives and milestones.	Agree upon Setup a project deliverable (Roadmap or through Microsoft Project to lay out all of the details so that milestones or Phase Gate completion is aligned with the schedule.	• 1 person familiar with Microsoft Project or similar application	1 to 3 months
P1.3	Estimate financial requirements	A high-level summary of required investment, approximate operations budget, and other expenses required to maintain the program	• 1 to 2 people with business, accounting, or related experience	1 month
P1.4	Estimate the number of resources needed	For each phase of the project there has to be an estimate of the number of resources needed to successfully complete the project on budget and on-time; with an operational budget in place once the project is in place.	• 1 person with business experience or and analytical skills	1 month
P1.5	Establish a timeframe for the completion of the project	While working to complete milestones for the project, we should highlight the start and end dates for each item so that we don't overlook any specific details or milestones	• 1 to 2 people with project planning experience	1 month

Figure 9.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Phase 1: *Initiation and Feasibility Study* projects

	Tasks	Description	Required Resources	Timeline
P1.6	Conduct a business feasibility study	An objective assessment of the likelihood the proposed Community Center can thrive as a business	• 2 or more persons with business analysis experience	2 months
P1.7	Identify services that will support the program. Write a cost estimate. Identify available assistance programs and grants	Reach out to businesses in the community that may be willing to provide pro bono services for professional services such as legal and accounting	• 1 person with people skills who can visit can call potential service providers	1 month
P1.8	Conduct legal due diligence to discover any significant risks to the program	Fortifies the Feasibility Study by uncovering legal barriers to any component of the program and road map	• 2 or more attorneys and/or paralegal staff to gather and analyze data and to recommend ways to mitigate risks	3 months (Possibly ongoing)
P1.9	Conduct policy research to identify any barriers (or opportunities)	Interview businesses, research crime statistics, review local laws to understand real estate, zoning, land use, and other law- or policy-based barriers	• 2 persons with research skills, speaking to the Alderman, police, city authorities	3 to 4 months (Possibly ongoing)
P1.10	Assess available assistance programs and grants	Research existing programs, foundations, grants, and other sources of funding for the project	• 1 researcher/writer, persons with knowledge or contacts in the funding organizations	2 months

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Figure 10.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Phase 2: *Community Research* projects

	Tasks	Description	Required Resources	Timeline
P2.1	Create surveys	Instruments used to collect demographics, services needs and other data. Should include online and paper versions	• 1 or 2 people with experience creating surveys, questionnaires	1 to 2 months
P2.2	Conduct interviews with community members	Used to validate and enhance survey findings	• 5 to 10 persons with people skills, able to conduct door to door or phone interviews	1 to 3 months
P2.3	Create a Community Engagement Plan	A set of practices and guidelines for interacting with the community, describing the general messaging, tone, and "dos and don'ts" when interacting with interviewees	• 1 to 2 people with project or program planning experience, communications skills	1 month
P2.4	Identify community leaders	Establish contact with persons of influence in the community who are likely to support the objectives of the program. Politicians, clergy, activists, etc.	• Any number of people with connections to community leaders	2 months
P2.5	Document community history and stories	Through interviews, collect "a day in the life" stories, family and community histories that help show the strength and longevity of the local community and its families	• 3 to 5 people with interviewing skills and basic writing or story telling skills	1 to 2 months

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Figure 11.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Phase 3: *Proposal Development* projects

	Tasks	Description	Required Resources	Timeline
P3.1	Create overview narrative (the "elevator pitch")	Two to three paragraphs that describe the current problem or need, and the envisioned outcome of the program, described in a way that will inspire readers or listeners to engage, participate, or contribute their time or resources	• Writer, preferably with proposal development experience • Copy / story editor	1 month
P3.2	Describe expected outcomes	The benefits and changes that the program will bring to the community, explained in a bullet list with more detail than the elevator pitch	• Writer with business writing or proposal development experience • Copy / story editor	1 month
P3.3	Create business model and plan	Description of how the community center will operated, its sources of income and other support, and a three to five year projection of its growth	• Writer with business plan development experience • Business consultant or MBA student	1 month
P3.4	Identify financial commitments (secured and expected)	Obtain written letters of commitment (or firm intention) to financially supporting the program from donors, board members, supporting organizations and other sources	• Accounting professional or financial planner • Board members with donor and investor commitments	1 to 2 months
P3.5	Marketing plan	Traditional marketing plan that outlines the target customer demographic, campaigns, and channels of communications, frequency of messaging, etc.	• Writer with business marketing experience • Marketing advisor or Communications expert	1 to 2 months

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Figure 12.

FDHS Community Center Proposal Development Plan

Phase 3: *Proposal Development* projects

	Tasks	Description	Required Resources	Timeline
P3.6	Develop Community Communication Plan	Develop a plan for ongoing communications with the community, including program news, status updates, meeting notices, community forums, etc.	• 1 to 2 persons with marketing, writing, public relations or change management experience	1 to 2 months
P3.7	Short-term roadmap	A visual map that illustrates the milestone goals of the community center in the first three years of its operation (must be supportable by projected incomes)	• Writer • Person familiar with project planning tools	1 to 2 months
P3.8	High-level, long-term roadmap	A loftier, more aspirational roadmap that looks forward five to ten years and includes programs, facility expansion, and future services (does not need to financially justified)	• Writer • Person familiar with project planning tools	1 to 3 months
P3.9	Review plan with stakeholders and revise plan as needed	Present draft of plan to legal resources, board and stakeholders for review. Collect and incorporate feedback	• Board members • Stakeholders • Writer or notetaker • Attorney or legal resource	1 to 2 months
P3.10	Legal sign-off of proposal in preparation for submission	Review with legal resources, obtain validation that the proposal is ready for submission	• Attorney or legal resource	1 to 3 months

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