Chapter 16

Principles in Practice:
Supporting the Development of Critical Community–Engaged Scholars

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ABSTRACT

This chapter offers faculty and institutional leaders a set of principles and practical approaches for designing and supporting courses that develop and mentor emerging community engaged scholars at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The learning outcomes and design features of these courses provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and values that are required for undertaking ethical sustainable critical community engaged scholarship (CCES). The chapter begins with an overview of the CCES framework that guides the authors’ specific courses and their commitments to supporting the development of community-engaged scholars more broadly. The chapter describes several courses that share the CCES framework but vary by size, disciplinary foundation, and engaged-learning approach. These courses are used to consider the development of students’ capacities and values, the interplay between CCES and pedagogical best practices, and the role of institutional supports in enabling CCES and navigating institutional challenges to community-engaged teaching and learning.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers faculty members and institutional leaders a set of principles and practical approaches for designing, implementing and supporting courses that develop and mentor emerging community engaged scholars at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The learning outcomes (LOs) and design features of these courses provide students with opportunities to develop and master the knowledge, skills and values that are required to do ethical sustainable critical community engaged scholarship (CCES).

Using a critical community engaged scholarship (CCES) framework (Gordon Da Cruz, 2018), we offer insights and examples from a range of undergraduate and graduate, community-engaged social science courses, designed and taught by professors with several years of experience in the field and supported by a community engaged CESI at [a mid-sized Canadian university]. The CESI brings together community and campus skills and resources and leverages university resources in order to advance community-identified research goals. The CESI and its team of nine staff members -- which includes a Community Engaged Learning Manager, a Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator, and a Director who is a PhD-trained community engaged researcher and arts-based practitioner -- provide essential institutional support for faculty, community partners and students working towards CCES.

Co-authored by three faculty affiliated with the CESI and its Director and based on several past and ongoing collaborations with community partners, this chapter begins with an overview of the CCES framework that guides our courses in particular, and our commitment to supporting the development of community engaged scholars more broadly. Next, we describe several courses that use the CCES framework. These courses vary in a number of ways, including differences based on their sizes, disciplinary foundations, and engaged learning approaches. However, they share their commitment to CCES. Our examination then turns to how CCES principles and practices are operationalized through these examples. Specifically, we focus on: developing competencies for CCES; creating alignment between pedagogical best practices and CCES; accessing and creating meaningful institutional support, including for the purpose of navigating challenges; and improving student research capacity and social outcomes through CCES.

Our objectives for this chapter include:

- describing the term Critical Community Engaged Scholarship (CCES) and the related framework that guides our course design and delivery;
- exemplifying a range of community engaged learning opportunities available to undergraduate and graduate students via three different models of community engaged teaching and learning (CETL);
- identifying the opportunities and challenges that exist in operationalizing the principles underlying CCES;
- exploring the potential knowledge, skills and values that students can develop via three models of community engaged teaching and learning;
- highlighting the alignment that exists between pedagogical best practices and CCES;
- examining the potential outcomes and impact for community and community partners available via critical community engaged learning; and
- describing the important role that academic institutions can play in supporting and helping to navigate the tensions associated with CCES.