
Active Learning Beyond the Classroom

Community-Engaged Learning Case Studies

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Sitting in a classroom is part of the college experience—a necessary and valuable venue for delivering information, ideas, concepts, and theories. But how memorable is this experience? How often does a student recall with great fondness and excitement the bare classroom walls, desks, and overhead projectors? How often does a student exclaim “Wow . . . What a cool classroom!” Probably not often, if at all. Instead many of us remember the field trip—whether, as children, when we boarded a bus for that much-anticipated ride to the state capital or, as college students, when we took the time to visit a community center. Trips to community spaces allow for an embodied education: We navigate new landscapes and people with our bodies and minds, become active agents of our learning through discovery, and thus more effectively memorialize lessons and verbalize our recollections with “Wow . . . What a cool experience!”

Active learning and community-engaged learning are both approaches that are gaining attention and practice as effective university teaching pedagogies. Yet the two fields and literatures do not often engage with each other. In this chapter, we argue for bringing together pedagogy in both active learning and community-engaged learning to improve student outcomes in achieving learning objectives, foster civic participation, and address community concerns in the places we study. We begin this chapter with a brief review of active learning and community-engaged learning literature to identify areas of convergence and gaps. We then provide several case studies of community-engaged active learning projects to demonstrate the impact of this approach on student outcomes and community partners. We conclude by highlighting commonalities across the case studies by discussing possibilities and pitfalls of such an approach.

Literature Review

Active and experiential learning depend on the idea that learning happens through connecting or maintaining a connection between an action and its consequences. The idea of learning by doing and by relating that activity to a learner’s existing knowledge and experience emerged

from constructivist learning theories developed by Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, and others who assume that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner rather than wholly acquired from an outside source. The theory of active learning is also linked to the concept of metacognition, the learner's awareness of their level of knowledge and understanding—what they already know and what they still need to work on or find out (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Active learning provides an opportunity for a person to direct their own learning, as it depends on their engagement with an activity (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008). This also brings to light what the learner may already know and what they still have to learn, either from the experience gained through the activity they are working on or from another source.

Community-engaged learning, where students actively engage with issues or problems in the community and intentionally reflect on their experiences, is an active learning modality that is different in setting but similar in impact to active learning taking place in the classroom, laboratory, or other, more traditional, settings. However, in practice, the literatures of active learning and community-engaged learning have diverged widely, and there is little overlap between the research on active learning on campus and experiential learning in the world beyond.

Active learning pedagogy is employed in a variety of ways in the classroom. Relying on Bloom's taxonomy, instructors lead students in activities of sharing ideas with peers (i.e., think-pair-share); completing worksheets for films, guest speakers, and other activities; solving problems using new technologies, data sources, and skills learned in class; and addressing current needs in collaboration with community partners. All these approaches to active learning help students apply skills and knowledge gained in class to a hands-on activity to enhance student learning (Gilboy, Heinerichs, & Pazzaglia, 2015). Each skill offers a different level of engagement with current events and stakeholders outside the class. However, much active learning occurs only within the silo of academic space. In this chapter, we provide case studies of how this pedagogy can engage with community partners (and thus build on community-engaged learning pedagogy) not only to enhance student learning of specific skills, but also to increase civic consciousness (Blouin & Perry, 2009).

Increasingly, student engagement beyond the classroom is viewed as effective for providing students with hands-on, practical experience in applying classroom material to real-life contexts, increasing civic responsibility, and contributing to community needs. The Association of American Colleges and Universities recognizes community-engaged learning and active learning practices, such as collaborative assignments and participation in learning communities, as high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008). Community-engaged and active learning practices overlap in some ways—such as drawing from the direct experience of students—but community-engaged learning extends active learning experience beyond the classroom to consider potential benefits to the community both through students' coursework and by fostering active and engaged citizens (Bringle, Clayton, & Hatcher, 2013). Distributing these and other high-impact practices throughout the curriculum is intended to increase student engagement, learning, and retention.

More recently, community-engaged learning also emphasizes student learning. Unlike

community service work, which often involves “volunteering in the community with no direct relationship or application to course curricula, learning goals, structured reflections, and acquisition of skills” (Delano-Oriaran, 2015, p. xxxvii), community-engaged learning deliberately links community service with educational objectives (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999). Effective community-engaged learning projects must include student learning and achievement of educational goals; they must also provide something meaningful to the community (Jacoby, 1996). As such, a properly designed and implemented community-engaged active learning project benefits everyone directly involved, and, in some cases, benefits can extend to people indirectly involved. This chapter describes case studies seeking to do just that. Each of the examples involved a course in which one of the coauthors was involved or for which colleagues generously shared their experiences. These illustrative cases, both short-term and year-long projects, show the benefits to student learning and to communities that can bring together active and community-engaged approaches to learning.

Case Studies

One-Time Projects

We begin our analysis of active and community-engaged approaches to learning with several case studies that include one or more visits from students to locations, groups, or actors beyond the classroom. One-time projects are effective for taking active learning beyond the classroom without needing a longer-term commitment from community partners. The following case studies can be highly effective for increasing student exposure to diversity and multiculturalism and thus enabling students to rethink commonly held stereotypes and providing opportunities for students to link class content to life on the ground.

Seeing Sustainability in Action. This first case study describes a short-term engagement beyond the classroom and demonstrates how student engagement and understanding of topics relate to environmental citizenship. The course students attended is a new addition to UNC Charlotte’s General Education Program. Many departments across the university offer the course on different topics but with similar goals of teaching critical thinking and communication. The course, available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, is designed to offer a bridge of continuity between freshmen and the experience with first-year writing. Ideally, the course uses active and integrative learning to sharpen critical thinking and communication skills.

This case study focuses on a class taught by one of this article’s coauthors. Student learning objectives include understanding citizenship as evolving to accommodate (or not) environmental rights and duties. A previous active learning project for the class was to take on an environmental challenge for an average of three weeks. A few examples of challenges included changing one’s diet to vegetarianism or veganism, recycling all waste, and lowering one’s carbon footprint with alternative modes of transportation. The assignment’s learning objective was for students to learn through personal experience how difficult it is for the average person to make sustainable everyday life choices. This type of experiential learning would help stu-

dents be equipped to identify the necessary system changes that need to be made for more sustainable living. Every semester, a handful of students in each class took the project seriously and were able to produce a meaningful narration of their experiences and to identify the necessary infrastructural and institutional changes needed for a person to have access to sustainable choices. For the rest of the class, personal narrations of experiences were largely flat, canned, and/or outright fabrications.

To address those deficiencies, the environmental challenge project was replaced with a fieldwork assignment in which students were required to visit a site or event that claims to promote sustainability. They could go alone or in groups, and they were expected to have a conversation with someone at the site or at the event. Using an ethnographic approach, the students then wrote about their observations, including critiquing how well the site or event was meeting sustainability goals. This assignment was well received and more effective for several reasons. First, it was not as daunting as a three-week life change, and thus students followed through with the assignment. Second, students were able to see sustainability/environmentalism on the ground within communities of people that, overall, are very much like themselves, their family members, and/or friends. What may have seemed exotic and foreign to them was normalized. The verbal engagement, whether a casual conversation, an informal Q & A, or a formal interview with fellow community members, can deepen this normalization of sustainability/environmentalism. Finally, students, especially when they visit with a friend or a group of classmates, do not experience the isolation of taking on an environmental challenge on their own. In this case, having students witness sustainability within their own communities as it is practiced beyond the classroom is more accessible, effective, and enjoyable than engaging in an individual act or simply discussing environmentalism in class. The following are two examples of fieldwork options in this class:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Recycling Facility. In a general education course focused on sustainability, students learned hands-on about recycling through a tour to the local recycling facility. The tours were led by the facility director who emphasized the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) throughout the tour that included seeing recycled benches used on site, a short video and discussion about the recycling process generally and in the county, a Q & A, and finally a short tour of the recycling floor. Students, dressed in safety vests and helmets, were able to see the trucks dump recyclables and trash, the workers sort through the materials, and the final bales of paper and plastic resources sold to other businesses. Students asked many questions during this leg of the tour that were answered with a good dose of southern humor by a person working on the floor.

Following the tour, students wrote about their fieldwork experience, and many made meaningful connections to class content and texts. Participants were able to see the process of recycling on the ground and were also able to learn things absent from the text, such as the biggest problem the recycling facility faces: people throwing things in their bins that cannot be recycled at that facility. It was illuminating for the students to hear firsthand from recycling staff, "Oh, everything can be recycled . . . just not here," along with references to plastic and paper as resources rather than trash. Furthermore, at one visit, students were able to meet a fellow

community member there as a volunteer and hear her talk about the importance of helping to keep the city sustainable. Finally, by observing the actual process and getting to talk with facility staff and volunteers, students were encouraged to think critically about how well the facility was meeting its goals. Indeed, many students were quick to point out that the facility would do a better job with a better-educated public.

The fieldwork experience enhanced student learning objectives in several ways. First, students were able to think more critically about the recycling process because they were able to move beyond a theoretical description in a textbook. Second, students were able to identify ways that county sustainability efforts intersect with private businesses, highlighting the need for a wide range of community partnerships. Finally, students identified access to education and information as key for increasing productivity within sustainability efforts.

Earlier visits to the recycling facility fostered a working relationship between the course instructor and the facility director. Through this relationship, plans are underway for students to further engage with hands-on community issues through assisting the facility director with her tours for school-aged children. A select number of undergraduate students will work on devising an age-appropriate recycling art project and will enhance the tours with implementation of the craft project. The small group of select students will serve as a pilot program that will help us determine the viability of expanding the scope of involved students. Expanding the project will allow students to meet additional learning outcomes, including identifying children as active citizen participants and community stakeholders that should be included in sustainability efforts and recognizing the value of art as an effective tool for fostering community involvement.

Veg Fest. In another example, students were engaged in actively learning about sustainability through interactions with community groups at Veg Fest. Veg Fest, which was first organized and hosted by the Humane League, is an annual vegan expo event held in the fall in Charlotte. In 2018, Veg Fest was attended by more than 6,000 people of diverse socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds. Equally diverse vendors, ranging from local restaurant representatives, local and artisan food purveyors, botanical soap and oil makers, and animal and human health and hunger advocacy groups were present. The venue offered a rich cross-section of the multiple passions, concerns, and reasons behind the vegan movement.

For this event, students attended Veg Fest and had at least three separate conversations with representatives at any of the vendor tables about their goals and commitments to veganism. Students then wrote the observations and reflections in fieldwork assignments. Notable surprising observations, as recorded in their fieldwork write-ups, included that the hunger advocacy group, Food Not Bombs, prepared vegan meals for the homeless every Sunday, that many African Americans were into veganism, and that vegan food, especially from the food trucks, could taste so good. Students also observed how environmental groups are linked to more than animal welfare; many of the vendors advocated for human well-being and the mitigation of climate change by opting for a dietary change—ideas that linked to class content on environmental change. Students were also asked to consider how well the event met the goals of sustainability. This supported critical thinking as students reflected on how much

consumerism was present at Veg Fest, admired efforts toward promoting animal well-being, and recommended ways vendors could broaden their sustainability goals by reducing their food and product packaging and eliminating plastic bags. Finally, this event also normalized veganism, which is often stereotyped as some sort of exotic fad movement. Building on these experiences, representatives from the local Humane League were invited to class to talk about animal welfare, human health, and the environmental impact of livestock.

Exploring a “Good Life” Through Community Visits and Interviews

This case study provides another example of taking active learning outside the classroom for an undergraduate general education course fostering critical thinking and communication. This course topic was “A Good Life” and was taught through a religious studies department. It examined definitions and ideas of a “good life” throughout western history in ethics, philosophy, religious studies, and psychology. A key learning objective was for students to use critical thinking to assemble evidence for generating their own valid and defensible definition of “the good life.” Building on readings, writings, visitations, and interviews, students produced a final, polished ePortfolio. The class was fully flipped through consistently and seamlessly integrating short lectures, weekly quizzes, and team-based active learning projects. Active learning was further extended with community-engaged integrative learning.

Similar to the case study above, community engagement arises through active learning projects that immerse students in nearby communities to gain an understanding of the multiculturalism and diversity where they live. Community engagement was accomplished through two assignments: an interview with someone from a different generation and a visitation to a community center that promotes happiness and well-being.

Assignment 1: The Interview. Students interviewed a person from another generation using these guiding questions:

- **What is a good life?**
- **How does one go about living it?**
- **How is happiness defined and understood?**
- **What are the problems we humans must address?**

Students were assessed by a write-up of the interview where they were required to make connections between course content and the interview. A specific student learning outcome was the application of theoretical models of happiness to the interviewee’s responses. Careful analysis of the interview allowed students to think critically about the strengths and limitations of theoretical models. These firsthand accounts of adversity and happiness also deepened the students’ appreciation and understanding of the power of storytelling through interpersonal engagement.

Assignment 2: The Visitation. The visitation assignment required students to visit an *unfamiliar* religious or civic organization and submit a fieldwork write-up. Like the interview assignment, students were assessed by how well they were able to connect ideas and theories about happiness to their actual encounters with individuals and experiences at the community

site. An additional key student learning outcome was reflection on how answers to “What is a good life?” were often dependent on cultural context.

Semester-Long Projects

Community-engaged learning courses that span a full semester enable collaboration between students and nonprofit organizations, city agencies, and other stakeholders on more in-depth projects. They also require more hands-on engagement from instructors and community partners and thus can be more of a commitment than the lower-stakes cases discussed above. This section provides two case studies to demonstrate how students can engage hands-on with course content through such collaborative research projects.

Public Computing Centers. The first project involved a small group of students in a geographic information systems (GIS) course. The GIS course, enrolling upper-level undergraduate and graduate geography and urban studies students, provided training on basic GIS skills. Learning outcomes focused on theoretical and practical uses of GIS, including representation of geographic information, creating GIS databases, and performing spatial analysis. It included lectures and working lab sections. In addition to lab assignments and a midterm exam, graduate students completed a community-engaged active learning project using GIS skills learned in class that produced not only a project for graduate students but also a report for the city agency working on the same topic.

To connect classroom content with hands-on learning in the community, students mapped locations of public computing centers (PCCs) for a municipal agency tasked with establishing new locations throughout the city. This project took place in an industrialized northeast U.S. city where, at the time of the project, nearly 40% of the residents did not have Internet access at home. To address this issue, the municipal government created centers with public computers and staff members in places such as libraries and community centers. These spaces provided access to computers and technology training as well as a community gathering space that helped to foster a low-stakes environment for residents to become familiar with the technology.

In collaboration with city staff, the students and instructor identified these research questions: Which PCC sites serve the most clients? Are those sites located in areas of low Internet adoption? What other accessibility factors impact utilization rates? The students then analyzed data routinely collected in existing PCCs, such as number of users, tasks, locations, etc. Specific skills learned in class and applied to the research included geocoding (or mapping geographic coordinates of specific sites), attaching data to those sites, spatial analysis comparing locations to demographic data (i.e., identifying sites serving clients located within 1,000 feet of block groups with low Internet adoption), and representing the data through maps. Students presented their report to city staff at the end of the semester. This engagement with a city research question enhanced student learning through hands-on engagement with real-life data. In a class already embedded in active learning pedagogy (through lab assignments), this project went one step further by asking students to identify a research question and then to apply a combination of learned skills to answer the question. It also enabled the students

to learn about issues affecting the local region (such as a digital divide), thus increasing their civic consciousness.

Designing Qualitative Research. Another semester-long, community-engaged project provided active learning opportunities for graduate students enrolled in a qualitative methods class. This class involved graduate students in hands-on development of research instruments to support a local organization seeking to better assess its impact. Student learning objectives for the class focused on designing and implementing qualitative research methods including defining research questions, identifying the best methods to answer the questions (interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.), and designing a related research protocol. The course instructor built on an existing community partnership to provide students a hands-on opportunity to apply those skills beyond the classroom. The local organization constructs aquaponics systems and implements STEM curricula in K–12 schools. The organization’s leadership expressed a need to better understand the impact of its programming on students and teachers to improve its work. These goals could be matched with the student learning objectives to foster an active learning approach to community-engaged learning.

The project began with forming an agreement between the course instructor and the organization’s leadership regarding the expectations of each partner, the process for the project, and the expected outcomes. This step is important for ensuring that all partners recognize the goals of both student learning and achieving organizational goals. Throughout the semester, the organizational leadership provided graduate students with detailed information about its research questions, mission, and operations. This knowledge-sharing occurred through the organization’s staff visits to the graduate class, class visits to program sites, and graduate student interviews of relevant stakeholders (staff, students, teachers, and school decision makers). In addition to acquiring information to build research tools, students used each of these steps to practice different research methods, such as interviewing and participant observation.

In the classroom, graduate students worked together to define the research questions to be answered. Then as each method was discussed in class—interviews, focus groups, surveys, participatory action research, etc.—students considered the effectiveness of that method to answer the research questions. Once the top three methods were identified, students worked in groups to design research protocols for implementing that method. The protocols detailed how the research will be completed: questions that will be asked, identification of research participants, and how to embed the research into existing programming. Throughout protocol development, students and organizational staff developed tools best suited to the organization’s needs. Students presented their final research instruments to the organization’s leadership at the end of the course. The final product was a set of research protocols ready to be implemented by the partner organization.

This project enhanced student learning of qualitative research methods through hands-on experience designing research tools. Students also practiced implementing qualitative research through gathering and analyzing information needed to design the research. Finally, students learned more about the local context where they study and how to use skills learned in the

classroom to impact that context. The community-engaged nature of this active learning project also produced a set of tools to support the mission of a local organization.

Year-Long Projects

Finally, we present a year-long case study that involves a longer-term commitment by both the instructor and students. While often requiring additional resources, such higher stakes projects can also yield higher impact on meeting student learning objectives. In 2001, UNC Charlotte established a learning community program that today offers 17 different residential and nonresidential opportunities for first year and new transfer students. Options are either discipline-specific or values- and skills-specific. Discipline-specific learning communities include business, communications studies, community psychology, computing and informatics, criminal justice, education, engineering, English, health, history, psychology, and sociology. Programs centered on developing values and skills include gender excellence, global village, leadership, passport leaders, SUCCESS, transfer students, and transition opportunities. Each program requires a two-semester commitment on the part of the student and the successful coordination of teaching faculty, staff, and peer mentors. The objectives of the program include helping students transition to campus life academically and socially and increasing student success in academics and community engagement. These goals are achieved in these learning communities through common courses, innovative curricula, and cocurricular activities (<https://lc.uncc.edu/overview>). The programs are designed with integrative learning that fosters critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

Whereas the common goal is to promote campus community engagement, many of the programs extend this engagement to the greater Charlotte community through community-engaged activities. The Health Connection program—the focus of this case study—is a residential learning community made up of first-year kinesiology, nursing, public health, and social work students that was established in 2004 by the College of Health and Human Services. Today, active learning is coupled with community engagement through a project performed at The Pines at Davidson, a retirement community of nearly 350 residents located in Davidson, North Carolina. The retirement community includes the Schramm Health Center that accommodates residents with assisted living needs, full-time care needs, or residents with dementia.

Students in the two-semester-long program are expected to commit 12 hours of community-engaged learning per semester at the Schramm Health Center. Students also enroll in a Prospect for Success course in the first semester and a liberal studies course titled Issues of Health and Quality of Life in their final semester. They also complete a capstone project by the end of the program. The community-engaged learning hours largely revolve around social interaction with the residents, such as playing games, taking walks, or simply sitting in conversation. These experiences provide students with opportunities not only to assist the residents but also to prepare for the design of their final project that will be a hosted event revolving around resident interests. Past events have included a Jenga game event, a Kentucky Derby party, a high tea, a baseball-themed event, and craft projects, such as making birdhouses, painted plant pots, and dining room centerpieces. The community-engaged learning hours provide students

with enough interaction and socialization to plan for and create a multigenerational experience that culminates in a memorable social event.

Throughout the program, students are expected to apply course content to their community-engaged work and to the design and implementation of their final projects. For example, key course content includes the International Council of Active Aging (ICAA) Model that posits seven dimensions of wellness, nine principles of active aging, and a continuum of physical function. While performing their service hours, students can help seniors fulfill many of the ICAA Model's recommendations for well-managed active aging such as positive social interaction, emotional support, cognitive and intellectual exercise, and physical activity. A key component for student preparedness includes exercises employed by the instructor to simulate the experience of common physical limitations that come with aging. Students practice physical activities while using devices that impair their sensory and ambulatory abilities. For example, special goggles to limit vision and noise-canceling headphones to inhibit hearing allow students to virtually experience sensory deficits. Students wear thick gloves while tying their shoe laces to experience dexterity limitations, climb stairs while breathing through a straw to simulate the impacts of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and use walkers and canes to experience ambulatory challenges.

As with any community-engaged learning activity, there is a risk of posing a burden on the hosting community when students show up unprepared or disinterested. The course instructor mitigates this risk by preparing students for the lived realities of the residents, by requiring student commitment to the project in the form of a signed contract, and by personally intervening by conferencing with any problematic students. The commitment, energy, and resources (including assignments, but also meaningful working relationships with community partners) of the instructor are key to this project's success. The commitment of these resources, time, and energy also provides dividends in student learning. Students are exposed to the health care field with a group of people with whom they may not regularly interact. The projects benefit both the students and the seniors residing at the center. Students learn health profession skills and benefit emotionally through seeing positive results of their interaction with seniors; the community partners benefit from student resources for creating happier, more comfortable, and healthier spaces for residents. The success of this project opens up opportunities for similar partnerships with other health service centers in the region.

Case Study Possibilities and Pitfalls

There are several themes evident across the case studies in this chapter. This final section pulls together these themes through discussing possibilities and pitfalls that can inform future work seeking to integrate active and community-engaged learning pedagogies. We focus especially on how to prepare and the benefits of starting small; the importance of journals, debriefing, and otherwise engaging with student experiences back in the classroom; and balancing the expectations of students and community partners.

Starting Small. Low-stakes, one-day projects are, for many, the best way to start implementing community-engaged active learning. Planning is manageable, and committed relationships with community partners are not always necessary. At the very least, such projects offer more impactful active learning opportunities than those available in the classroom, but assignment directions must be clearly detailed and explicit with stated learning objectives. Using prompts in connection to writing assignments can assist students with clear articulation of how their community experiences have deepened understandings of in-class instruction. They can also expose students to different community landscapes and demographics and deepen their understanding of shared spaces. Last, such projects can offer instructors a sandbox experience: a place to begin with a student exercise that can be expanded into a more meaningful and immersive community project, a place where challenges and mistakes are better managed, and a place where instructors gain the necessary experience and community contacts to plan with precision a more ambitious project.

In-Class Reflection. Occasionally, students resist taking active learning pedagogy outside the classroom when they do not recognize the contributions to learning objectives. In the case studies discussed, a key aspect for fostering success is reflecting on out-of-classroom experiences back inside the classroom. Reflection journals and in-class debriefs are particularly helpful tools for enabling students to assess what they learned throughout the project. Students can take field notes on their experiences, complete in-class reflection journals, and/or engage in conversations regarding learning outcomes. In the Seeing Sustainability in Action case study, students were equipped with directions on how to prepare for the visit, how to take notes on site, and how to best synthesize all gathered content into an ethnography. In the Qualitative Methods case study, students wrote reflection journals at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. These journals questioned students about baseline learning objectives asking: What are qualitative methods and what types of knowledge can be acquired with that methodology? The journals also asked students about the context within which they worked by posing questions such as: What have you learned about our social and ecological context, and how has your perception of the city changed throughout the semester? Encouraging students to reflect on these questions and then discussing them with classmates can help students recognize learning achieved during community-engaged active learning classes.

Balancing the Expectations of Students and Community Partners. Finally, in community-engaged active learning projects, objectives of multiple partners are pursued. From the academic perspective, achieving student learning objectives are critical. At the same time, it is necessary to contribute to community partner objectives to produce tangible impacts and continue favorable partnerships. All too often, classes or student research create products that are not relevant to community partners and/or are relegated to dusty shelves. To better contribute to community outcomes, projects must be designed in collaboration with community partners. To that end, for longer-term projects, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) can be developed between course instructors and community partners before a course begins. Such written communication clearly explains the roles and responsibilities of each partner (including the students), objectives, and deliverables. Developing projects in collaboration with

community organizations ensures a more solid partnership that can maximize both student learning and community objectives (Blouin & Perry, 2009).

All parties must also be mindful of what can be accomplished based on the time available, student abilities, and constraints of learning objectives. In the Qualitative Methods example above, students were not asked to evaluate the community partner's program. Because students in that class were only learning how to design research, there was not sufficient time or student ability to also carry out such research within the confines of a single semester. To achieve learning outcomes relating to designing multiple methods of research, the students also spent class time discussing methods that were not likely to be implemented by the community partner for logistical reasons. To ensure that students had hands-on experience with designing a variety of types of research, students spent time on work that was not always directly relevant to the community partner. It is important to be clear at the outset about everyone's expectations for the collaborative work and to find ways to complement the course learning objectives with each community partner's objectives.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we argue that attending to both active and community-engaged learning pedagogies is effective for improving student learning outcomes and civic consciousness. Through several case studies, we presented a continuum of engagement from low-stakes, one-time visits to community events to higher-stakes, full-year projects of student cohorts collaborating with community partners. The examples provided were effective in a myriad of classes from lower-level undergraduate general education to graduate courses. These case studies all present ways to bring active learning pedagogy (learning through doing) outside the classroom to give students more meaningful and sustained opportunities to practice skills and concepts learned inside the classroom. We also highlight the importance of making clear connections between learning in and out of the classroom through field note assignments, debriefing, and journaling. To be effective, these projects require proactive planning and true collaboration with community partners that identify the objectives and capabilities of each stakeholder in the project early. We invite those just starting to implement active learning practice and seasoned practitioners to consider the promises afforded students from engaging community partners in their work. When accomplished successfully, such active learning projects open possibilities for greater learning and engagement with the environments we study.

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