

Lessons from the Labor Organizing Community and Health Project: Meeting the Challenges of Student Engagement in Community Based Participatory Research

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Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) provides opportunities for scholars and students to respond directly to community needs; students also practice critical thinking, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills necessary for professional life and engaged citizenship. The challenges of involving undergraduate students in CBPR include the need for on-going training due to student turnover and mismatches among scholars’ research agendas, campus calendars and community action timelines. We assess these challenges in the context of a yearlong CBPR project that examined the social and environmental impacts of warehousing in Inland Southern California. We found that matching new students with experienced team members and collaborative discussions of quarterly reports with our community partners helped to train and integrate students as they joined the project throughout the year. This practice also helped to reduce scheduling conflicts and ensure healthy and productive relationships with our community partners.

Keywords: community based participatory research (CBPR), warehousing, experiential learning, labor organizing, community partnership, environmental activism

Introduction: CBPR, Warehousing, and the Undergraduate Experience

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is a collaborative approach to research that stresses campus-community partnerships with the potential to engage faculty and students from multiple disciplines in problem solving with community organizations and those they represent. These partnerships include non-professional investigators, who will very likely be affected by the research in question in the production of knowledge. This distinguishes the CBPR approach from more traditional, positivist research methodologies. CBPR is particularly well suited to studies that seek to both identify locally specific and culturally sensitive responses to community issues,

and to empower and mobilize communities to act. According to Horowitz et al. (2009):
Community participation can help ensure that study goals are relevant to the population; that the means of accomplishing them are sensible; that the program considers the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the target group; and that results are shared, sustained, and used for the good of the community.

The working conditions of Inland Southern California's warehouse workers, and the air pollution that plagues the neighborhoods adjacent to the region's sprawling warehouse complexes, are among the most pressing issues facing the communities surrounding the University of California-Riverside (UCR). This article identifies and analyzes the lessons learned about including undergraduate students in a CBPR research project—Labor Organizing Community and Health (LOCH)—designed to increase public awareness of these problems and strengthen workers', residents', and university members' abilities to work collectively to improve working conditions for warehouse workers and reduce air pollution in the region.

We worked with Warehouse Workers United (WWU), a regional labor organization committed to improving warehouse workers' jobs and quality of life, and Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ), one of the nation's oldest and most effective environmental health and justice organizations. The socioeconomic and environmental impacts of warehousing are increasingly significant issues of concern for the campus community as well. Warehouses that provide logistical support for Wal-Mart and other major American retailers are located within two blocks of the university, and some of the campus's low-income students come from communities directly impacted by warehousing. Lauded for its diversity, contributions to social mobility and commitment to public service (Wilson, 2014; US News and World Reports, 2014), UCR represents a natural base for CBPR about warehousing in the region.

The LOCH project emerged out of initial collaborations among UCR's Labor Studies program and our partner organizations that had been ongoing since 2008. Initially, these collaborative activities focused on student intern recruitment and co-organizing public events, yielding strong and effective working relationships as well as increased public awareness of the labor and environmental issues associated with the region's warehouses. The Director of UCR Labor Studies Program and the Program Assistant participated in meetings and events organized by WWU and CCA EJ; the Director and Executive Director of CCA EJ, later joined the Board of Directors for Warehouse Workers Resource Center (WWRC), a non-profit workers' center that provided WWU's members and other warehouse workers with resources and services.

A Community Outreach and Teaching grant from UCR's undergraduate research office provided funding for the LOCH project, which deepened ties among WWU, CCA EJ and UCR's Labor Studies program, and established new connections with other university institutions that facilitate CBPR—the Center for Sustainable Suburban Development and the Undergraduate Research in the Community (UGRC) Program. LOCH developed through a series of meetings and consultations to clarify project goals and activities. Our commitment to incorporate undergraduate researchers and interns in the project required strategizing about how to: provide on-going training

for students; coordinate investigators' research agendas, campus calendars and community action timelines; and appreciate differential student and community member commitments over time (Flicker, Savan, McGrath, Kolenda, & Mildenberger, 2008; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Stoecker, 2008; Walsh, Rutherford, & Sears, 2010). Our approach to these challenges focused on coordinating support for students' production of a research report, two short documentary films, three public presentations, and a project website (ucrgreenlearning.org). These related projects enabled students to learn about important issues affecting their community and develop skills in survey administration and personal interviews, videography and film editing, community organization and mobilization, teamwork, event organization and public speaking.

Following a review of the literature on CBPR that emphasizes the benefits and challenges associated with engaging undergraduate students, we detail the pedagogical components of our project and reflect on their relative success with respect to involving undergraduate student researchers and interns constrained by an unforgiving quarter system in ongoing CBPR work. In conclusion, we found that while internship courses maintained student participation over the course of the academic year, necessary instruction in research methods and filmmaking required academic coursework. This focused coursework also sustained motivation for the project and improved students' final research reports and documentaries. In addition, requiring students to produce quarterly reports on their work was essential for documenting progress and integrating new students into the project each quarter while preparing them to assume responsibility for scholarly and creative work in progress. Sharing and jointly discussing these reports with our community partners provided a valuable means of maintaining healthy and productive collaborative relationships among university researchers, community partners and students. We conclude by considering the benefits of these strategies and practices for other CBPR projects.

Literature Review: The Origins and Significance of CBPR

CBPR originated with Kurt Lewin's (1948) development of participatory action research, which requires that those who are affected by research findings be involved in the research itself through a cyclical knowledge creation process of fact-finding, action and reflection. The more proximate influences of CBPR lie in the development of alternative, revolutionary research methods during the 1970s by scholars working with economically and socially oppressed communities throughout the developing world. Paolo Freire (1998) is frequently credited with developing the dialogical method of co-learning and action premised on critical reflection that guides CBPR projects and practices today. Contemporary adaptations vary considerably by academic discipline, practice and substantive foci; however, all embody this characteristic integration of research, action and education. Hence, CBPR represents an investigatory approach that is markedly distinct from conventional, scientific approaches to research, due to its intentional inclusion of community organizations and lay scholars (see Barley, 1953; Schneider, 2000) in the design and implementation of research projects intended to produce social change as well as (social) scientific results (Argyris, 1994; Chandler & Torbert, 2003; Elliot, 1991; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Israel

et al., 1998; Maguire, 1987; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; McTaggart, 1989; Minkler, 2000; Reason, 1994; Selener, 1997; Stoecker, 2008; Strand, 2000).

CBPR challenges scholars to create knowledge that balances the goals of satisfying disciplinary requirements for valid research and benefiting the communities under investigation (Macaulay et al., 1999). Participatory research often represents a best strategy for investigation and analysis (Chandler & Torbert, 2003; Feynman, 1998). For example, involving practitioners in scholarly research is common in the natural sciences, which have historically relied on amateur, or “citizen,” scientists to assist with data collection, and when appropriate, to contribute to research design and reporting (Macaulay et al., 1999; Schneider, 2000). More recently, the practice has become common in the policy and health sciences and other fields defined by their responsibility to the public (Flicker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008; Schneider, 2000; Viswanathan et al., 2004). The participatory action model engenders popular education, an empowering strategy of co-learning and capacity building aimed at groups lacking socio-economic power and full access to political processes (Boyer, 1996; Carr & Kemmis, 1996; Israel et al., 2003; Kelly, 1995; Macaulay et al., 1999; McDonald, 2012; Minkler et al., 2008; McTaggart, 1997). Ann Macaulay et al. (1999) explains with a quote from Smith, Willms and Johnson (1997) that “When people form a group with a common purpose, investigate their situation, and make decisions ... [they] are transformed—losing fear, gaining confidence, self-esteem, and direction” (para. 4).

The positive impacts of CBPR extend to campus-based researchers, who develop new skills and derive meaning from their lives through their collaboration with practitioners and community members (Boyer, 1996; Viswanathan et al., 2004). Faculty and graduate students consistently express a desire to “give back” to the community and “connect” their professional lives with their experiences as residents and citizens (Nyden, 2003). Undergraduate students characteristically appreciate opportunities to take part in CBPR and other forms of experiential learning. Today’s undergraduates often have considerable volunteer experience—thanks to college-preparatory high school program requirements—and flock to internship and service-learning programs, in addition to seeking research opportunities close to and/or relevant to the communities near their campuses (Nyden, 2003). While professional acknowledgement for faculty engaged in CBPR remains mixed (Calleson et al., 2005; Nyden, 2003; Spence, 2001), students gain significant social insights and opportunities for personal growth as well as invaluable work experiences from their involvement in participatory research (Elliot, 1991; Fontaine, 2007; Kelly, 1995; Reardon, 1998).

CBPR also reflects well on the colleges and universities that support it. Philip Nyden (2003) argues that because CBPR naturally frames issues and attendant research questions in interdisciplinary terms and brings disparate campus and community interests together, it represents a key resource for colleges and universities seeking to sustain their relevance in a changing world where they are no longer regarded as exclusive sources of information and knowledge (Spence, 2001; Walshok, 1995). The benefits of CBPR are not guaranteed (Flicker, 2008; Spence, 2001). In addition to the cultivation of mutual trust among collaborators and their extended commitment, CBPR requires the development of a practicable research and communication infrastructure with a critical level of institutional support (Lantz et al., 2001). Meredith

Minkler et al.'s (2008) efforts to understand the factors necessary for CBPR identifies mutual respect between campus-based researchers and community-based partners and appreciation of the complementary skills each party contributes to their common enterprise as essential for successful collaboration. Consistent with other research on the challenges of CBPR (Israel et al., 2003; Minkler 2005, Stoecker, 2008; Wallerstein, 1999), Minkler et al. (2008) also highlight the importance of recognizing organizational and practical differences that often exist between campus and community regarding commitment to the project or related policy agenda, such as different schedules, optimal research methods and reporting practices. Efforts to anticipate and mitigate such differences will likely result in more successful CBPR.

The Benefits and Challenges of Involving Undergraduates in CBPR

CBPR provides an ideal framework for integrating research, teaching, and service activities in what Stanley Saxton (1993) calls the “citizen-scholar model.” This model seeks to combine academic instruction with practice in the local community, including engagement with business, educational and social service organizations (Saxton, 1993; see also Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Strand, 2000). Such hands-on learning experiences provide students with opportunities to develop practical skills while learning about and positively impacting their community, which overall often makes them more engaged and active learners. Depending on the requirements of a given project, students may gain experience in professional teamwork, public speaking, research methods, and any other number of skills associated with their academic and post-graduate careers (Elliot, 1991; Strand, 2000; Stoecker, 2008; Walsh et al., 2010). Additionally, CBPR projects support students’ acquisition of experience in civic engagement, political awareness, improved critical thinking abilities, and stronger commitment to social justice (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Strand, 2000). They develop more “care and enthusiasm” because they are positioned to view their work as helping others, gaining a sense of autonomy outside of the classroom and public recognition for doing socially meaningful work (Strand, 2000).

Students also bring important resources and insights to CBPR projects. In practice, relying on student researchers and interns further stretches limited budget funds. Student involvement expands and strengthens important “town and gown” connections (Flicker et al., 2008; Marullo & Edwards, 2000). This pathway to campus-community integration is especially apt in cases where a campus’s student body is notably more socio-economically, racially and ethnically representative of the local community than its faculty.

Yet undergraduate student involvement in CBPR presents challenges that must be recognized and addressed. Undergraduates are typically less experienced with respect to the methodological and technical skills required for successful research and creative projects. To the extent that the community organizations’ willingness to partner with universities is driven by a need for professional knowledge and skills, novice student researchers represent a potential liability. In addition, students’ relative lack of historical or contextual knowledge and social and professional experience may engender cultural insensitivities. Consequently, students typically require time-consuming

education, training, and community immersion in order to participate successfully in CBPR (Stoecker, 2008; Strand, 2000). While the obvious remedy for this situation is to integrate training in both the research methods and the various technical and social skills that a project requires, the academic calendar can complicate this effort (Stoecker, 2008). The underlying mismatch between the academic calendar and the community partners' timelines can constrain the student's ability to honor their commitments to CBPR projects (Walsh et al., 2010). Sam Marullo and Bob Edwards (2000) explain that "the engaged scholar weaves together local and regional constituencies with enduring ties to specific places with students who are seasonal migrants" (p. 896).

The LOCH project provided an opportunity to resolve some of the challenges associated with integrating CBPR and experiential learning. Due to our tight budget, we relied on course credit as the primary source of student compensation, though this tack required teaching overloads for supervising faculty. We also needed to accommodate our community partners' limited availability due to insufficient staffing and other work obligations that were more directly and immediately related to their organizational missions or funding. In response to these and related constraints, our administrative strategy focused on selective student recruitment and a training program tied to a yearlong course sequence with quarterly opportunities for students to join the project.

The Labor Organizing Community and Health (LOCH) Project

The LOCH project responded to the common concern among WWU, CCAEJ, and community-oriented research centers and undergraduate programs at UCR about the social and environmental impacts of warehousing in Inland Southern California. More than 40% of the goods arriving in the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor, amounting to approximately 25% of the United States' maritime trade, flow through the warehouses and distribution centers located in Inland Southern California (Gilmore, 2011; Southern California National Freight Gateway Collaboration, 2011). Blue-collar warehouse workers are among the lowest paid of Southern California's 100,000+ logistics employees (DeLara, 2013). The typical warehouse worker is Latino, with a high school education at most, and supports a family on an average annual salary of \$22,000, at or just above the poverty line (Allen, 2010; Allison et al., 2013; Bonacich & DeLara, 2009; DeLara, 2013). Many of these workers are hired through staffing agencies, which further reduces wages, employment stability and access to benefits and promotions (Bonacich & De Lara, 2009; see also Struna et al., 2012).

Warehousing also affects residents of the region's predominantly low income and Latino areas near the freeways and railways that make up most of the continental goods movement infrastructure (Houston et al., 2008; Schweiter & Valenzuela, 2004). Many suffer from respiratory impairments and experience higher than average incidences of cancers and air pollution-related illnesses (Rodrigue et al., 2001; Sundarakani, 2010; Vasishth, 2007). Particulate pollution from the more than 200,000 diesel trucks on the region's roads daily is especially problematic. Long-term exposure to this kind of pollution is associated with reduced lung function, increased emergency room visits and hospital admissions for respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and higher mortality (Brunekreef & Holgate, 2002; Pope et al., 2009; Sharp, 2003).

The LOCH Course Sequence 2012-2013

The institutional centerpiece of our project was an interdisciplinary course sequence consisting of a CBPR methods and practices seminar, a documentary filmmaking practicum, and individual internships. This approach took advantage of existing courses in a resource-conservation mode that reflects Christine Walsh et al.'s (2010) admonition to integrate the CBPR training and practice within academic programs. This arrangement reduced direct project costs and contributed to enrollments, but complicated coordination among the three major factions: faculty responsible for project administration and those teaching required courses; students who needed to work as a team despite differences in their course assignments; and community partners charged with supervising students with necessarily quite different training and skill sets. Despite these organizational trials, students successfully designed and implemented a survey of warehouse workers and produced two documentary films. Their collaborative research and documentaries were presented to a standing-room only audience of students and other interested members of the campus community, warehouse workers, WWU and CCAEJ members and supporters, and residents of the neighborhoods nearby the region's warehouses.

The LOCH sequence was developed for a core group of students who would begin in the fall quarter, yet still accommodate the entry of additional students throughout the academic year on the basis of project needs and student interest. We recruited the initial student cohort of 18 during the late summer of 2012 via a campus email flyer that elicited about 30 student applications. Our research team selected the students who most closely matched the project in terms of their interests and skills, giving priority to students who spoke Spanish and/or had access to cars. We assigned them to work with either WWU or CCAEJ based on their stated interests, striving for an equal number of interns for each organization. In the fall quarter, these students enrolled in a Public Policy course in CBPR methods and practices with the UGRC Program Director. The course introduced the principles of CBPR, providing an overview of the role of nonprofit organizations in society and preliminary training in survey research and interview protocols, with required weekly reflection on project activities in process. Students who joined the project later in the academic year were encouraged to take this course at that time.

In the 2013 winter quarter, students enrolled in "Sustainability and the Future of Democracy," a Media and Cultural Studies course that integrates documentary film making as a means of increasing students' understanding of community concerns and creative bases for empowerment. Students learned to identify ideological frameworks that condone unsustainable ways of living and were encouraged to find ways to use media—film, in particular—to challenge these dominant viewpoints which deny and obfuscate questions of social justice. Students' filmmaking projects justified an experiential learning model and provided examples of successful individual and communal initiatives despite limited resources or skills. Student filmmakers revised and improved their films in consultation with supervising faculty during the quarter.

Students were also required to enroll in one or more individual internships with UCR's Labor Studies Program or the Department of Sociology's Research

Internship Program. Student interns worked directly with WWU (14 students) and CCAEJ (4 students). Under faculty supervision, the project's graduate student assistant coordinated interns' assignments during weekly meetings of the individual internship course. This course was vital for maintaining student involvement in the year-long project by permitting students to join the project at the start of any quarter, extend their engagement with our community partners, and/or participate in the project even though they were ultimately unable to enroll in the film-making course due to scheduling conflicts, enrollment ceilings or the need to take other courses for their majors. Unfortunately, students who enrolled through only this internship course did not receive the same level of training as their peers who had enrolled in the full interdisciplinary course sequence.

Established relationships and close collaboration between the Labor Studies and Sociology Department internship programs and our community partners ensured that students benefited from internship experiences that featured an adequately supervised, challenging and meaningful work experience coupled with academic course requirements and opportunities for reflection. The substance of students' internship responsibilities depended heavily on which of our community partners—WWU or CCAEJ—they worked with, and whether or not they had taken the filmmaking course. Students assigned to work with WWU focused on documenting working conditions in the region's warehouses by administering a survey and/or producing a documentary film about the consequences of global capitalism for warehouse workers. Those assigned to work with CCAEJ campaigned for Proposition 39, a tax initiative to fund "clean energy" jobs and projects, and produced a documentary film on the impacts of the logistics industry on air quality in Inland Southern California.

Loch internship with WWU. WWU interns conducted a survey of 136 warehouse workers employed in a variety of warehouse locations throughout the region; survey results documenting their employment conditions were summarized in a research report and presented to the public. This research project provided a significant source of data on the large number of immigrant warehouse workers who are hired through temporary agencies and not uniformly counted in extant labor statistics. In the fall of 2012, students worked with WWU's Research Director to design a survey of warehouse workers and initiated its administration. In the winter of 2013, students finished collecting surveys of warehouse workers. Under the guidance of the WWU's Research Director and UCR faculty and staff, these students focused on cleaning and analyzing the survey data throughout the spring of 2013. The findings from this survey were later used to produce a working paper on warehouse workers' low wages and lack of benefits, especially among temporary workers (Allison et al., 2013).

Also during the fall of 2012, student interns began working on a film to document working conditions in the region's warehouses, as well as WWU's efforts to address the legal and health-related problems associated with the long-hours, poor training, lack of safety precautions and inadequate wages and benefits characteristic of many blue-collar warehouse jobs. They continued their work during the filmmaking course in the winter of 2013. The film focused on Wal-Mart and the role of neoliberal capitalism in compromising fair wages and a good living to workers across the world. Students recognized the global relevance of the film's examination of the struggle for

better working conditions when a building collapsed in Bangladesh in April 2013, killing 1,129 garment factory workers. Like many of Inland Southern California's warehouse workers, these factory workers had been subcontracted to produce clothing for Wal-Mart and other major retailers. Students responded to this tragedy by extending the concept of community to include the globe, identifying connections between local and global struggles for raising minimum pay and protecting workers' health while guaranteeing safe working and living environments and social justice. The final version of the film featured warehouse workers and those organizing them, and incorporated events organized by WWU throughout the 2012-2013 academic year, including membership meetings, press conferences and protests; it also included our survey results. During the spring of 2013, WWU interns edited their film and entered it into a student film festival. The film did not win the competition; however, the festival screening broadened the audience for this film to include more students and faculty.

Loch internship with CCAEJ. In the fall of 2012, CCAEJ interns helped to mobilize student voters in a successful campaign to pass Proposition 39, a tax initiative to fund "clean energy" jobs and projects. This experience enabled students to become more familiar with the organization, its issues and its organizing work. These interns also identified and began interviewing key leaders within the organization as a basis for a second film project that would continue during the filmmaking course and throughout the remainder of the academic year.

The film on air pollution, created in collaboration with CCAEJ, draws attention to the impact of truck traffic to and from the large warehouses located in Inland Southern California on the health of those living in the surrounding communities. It featured community residents and CCAEJ organizers, and focused on the external environmental costs of the warehouse industry on the region in terms of air and water pollution, destruction of habitat, and loss of biodiversity. The film also highlighted the disproportionate effects of pollution in general on those living in low-income areas near the freeways, warehouses and railways that make up the Southland's goods movement infrastructure. In the spring of 2013, two of the CCAEJ interns completed and revised the film for a public screening.

Public presentations and project website. In the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013, student interns shared their research and creative projects in progress at the UGRC Program CommuniTea, a bi-annual event that showcases undergraduate CBPR projects to students, staff, faculty and community partners. Additionally, with guidance from faculty and staff associated with the LOCH project, students produced accessible summaries of the survey results and screened their films to a full house that included more than 90 members of the campus community, warehouse workers and their families, and residents of the communities surrounding the region's warehouses. The event included remarks by current warehouse workers and CCAEJ founder. Student researchers and filmmakers were acknowledged for their hard work and successful documentation of the impacts warehousing had on the region. Related visual media capturing WWU and CCAEJ members and interns in action throughout the year were integrated into the project website, which also included the project description and other pedagogical materials on the impacts the logistic industry has had on Inland Southern California (ucrgreenlearning.org).

Pedagogical Outcomes

The LOCH project provided powerful learning experiences for the students, who contributed as full partners with university researchers, WWU and CCAEJ organizers, and community members, to raise awareness of the social and environmental impacts of warehousing on Inland Southern California. Students' participation in the project facilitated their acquisition or further development of a range of critical scholarly and life skills, including: the construction of an academic literature review; research that required Institutional Review Board approval for use of Human Subjects; documentary film-making; survey construction and administration; database development; quantitative data analysis; coordination and outreach for public events; teamwork; and knowledge construction about, and connection with, local communities. These results are documented in an internal UCR qualitative analysis of the CBPR methods and practices seminar that draws on student reflections and post-seminar surveys. The analysis demonstrates that students gained increased knowledge related to the community issues addressed in the project, improved their understanding of research and research methods, and clarified their career or graduate school goals.

The ranking of UCR as one of the nation's most diverse universities proved to be an asset with respect to deepening students' knowledge about the communities located near the campus. Our experience represents a stark contrast to Tessa Hicks Peterson et al. (2010), whose inexperienced, white, upper-middle class students found it difficult to avoid 'clientelism,' or situations in which a relatively powerful and rich 'patron' provides services to a relatively powerless and poor 'client.' Our student researchers and interns were largely students of color from working class backgrounds, many of whom easily perceived the problems with clientelism and felt a close connection to workers' and residents' struggles. Yet our middle-class students, and even those from working class families associated with other industries, found the project to be eye opening. One student remarked that:

As a college student coming from a middle class family, it's hard to imagine what some of the lower class families go through. By doing CBPR, I had a chance to open my eyes to see the different social classes around me and how different it is for some people [who are] trying to support their family.

Another wrote, "I had never given much thought to the people who actually were warehouse workers for corporations like Wal-Mart and it breaks my heart to know what they have to go through for such little in return."

Participation also enhanced students' research skills and experience. Despite UCR's reputation for diversity, most of our student researchers had never engaged with communities located near campus or elsewhere in the region, let alone worked on research or creative projects relevant to them. Many students reflected that their participation in the project was an empowering experience. With respect to filmmaking to democratize the process of knowledge creation, a student said, "It was a rewarding experience to give [Inland Southern California] a voice that is often silenced by corporations in power." Students were also inspired by the social justice activism carried out by their community partners. Another student said, "Being a CCAEJ intern taught how

much harm is being done to [Inland Southern California's] air quality and that it is possible for under-privileged community members to fight against large corporations.”

In addition, many students were prompted to reconsider their future career and educational goals in relation to social justice. This outcome is consistent with Sam Marullo and Bob Edwards's (2000) argument that providing multiple opportunities for student action is a means of ensuring that service learning experiences contribute to social justice rather than charity. Helping WWU to mobilize more than 30 of their fellow students for the May Day rally for workers' and immigrants' rights in Mira Loma, California was particularly meaningful to students, one of whom explained:

May Day was the first time I participated in a rally and what I learned from that event was that we are all people, no one is above or beneath anyone else and we all should have equal opportunities and rights.

A student intern reflected on how the film screening strengthened his commitment to work towards social justice in the local community:

When a community gets together, anything can be done. The impact we had on the community...strengthened the movement and the community and you can see everybody's eyes light up at the film screening and the passion of the belief of this will get done and we are a step closer. I felt as if I was part of the community...like I was living here more than five years and that we shared the same air for a long time and those were my neighbors being mistreated at work. ... I am going to leave UCR next year and I want to continue to be an activist and carry on the issues and struggles of this community because this too is my community.

In sum, students involved in the LOCH project gained training and experience in survey research, filmmaking, public speaking, teamwork, and event organizing. In addition, their participation in the project increased their awareness of local issues and sense of connection to community members outside the university, and inspired them to work towards social justice in the future (see Strand, 2000; Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

LOCH Challenges and Lessons Learned

The greatest challenges associated with involving undergraduate students in the LOCH project concerned ensuring adequate student guidance and supervision, onboarding new students who joined the project as interns after the project began, and scheduling. Issues of student guidance and supervision were rooted in the need for continual improvement in campus-community relationships in the interest of greater clarity around the division of labor and definition of participants' roles and responsibilities (Flicker et al., 2008). Although the project was initiated in the course of collaborative discussions and grant writing with our community partners, and designed to fulfill community partners' own stated research needs and goals, the mismatch between community partners' timelines and the academic calendar surfaced quickly. For example, the fall of 2012 was an election year, and CCAEJ was committed

foremost to voter mobilization in support of a statewide ballot initiative focusing on environmental justice (Proposition 39). Staff needed student assistance to mobilize voters and did not have the capacity to help supervise students' research as initially planned. As a result, students assigned as CCAEJ interns did not even begin to document the environmental impacts of the logistics industry until after the November election, less than a month before the quarter ended. This delay made it difficult for these students to complete research comparable to the survey-based research underway by the students interning with WWU. Meanwhile, WWU staff and students redesigned the survey of warehouse workers without consulting university researchers. Consistent with Stoecker (2008), we found that "continual effort" and additional meetings were needed to communicate and improve our research plan in light of emergent challenges. We incorporated additional joint project meetings throughout the remainder of the project.

Supervisory capacity was also problematic both on campus and in the community. University faculty and staff were juggling multiple responsibilities, limiting their availability to meet with students and community partners. Students had difficulty scheduling meetings with CCAEJ staff and were unable to attend CCAEJ's pre-arranged training sessions, some of which preceded our academic year. This situation frustrated students and some left the project or began to work with WWU. The CCAEJ staff responsible for supervising interns responded to the difficulties inherent in managing the LOCH project along with many other community organizing responsibilities by opting to work with fewer students on a project that was more limited in scope than envisioned. Specifically, CCAEJ's initial project goals included collecting oral histories from community residents and producing a written report; its staff chose instead to participate in the film project alone. The limited focus and reduced student labor contributed to the production of lower quality film than we had anticipated.

Similarly, WWU was unable to provide much supervisory capacity for the filmmaking, directing its limited resources exclusively to the survey project. What we had imagined would be a fairly straightforward process of survey development and administration became problematic. The list of warehouses where CCAEJ sent students to recruit survey participants was dated; some of these warehouses were no longer in operation and students wasted time trying to identify and locate warehouses currently in operation. Though this situation frustrated students and delayed and complicated survey collection, successfully updating the list of warehouses in operation was a valuable exercise for students and an important aid to WWU. Transportation and Spanish language facility were also issues. Elaborate carpool arrangements were needed to enable car-less student interns to complete their research. This process was further complicated by the need to include a fluent Spanish speaker in most survey teams to ensure that the large number of monolingual Spanish speakers among our sample of warehouse workers would have the opportunity to participate. Then, by spring, WWU staff became busy preparing for legal hearings, leaving them unable to supervise students at all for weeks at a time. During those times, university faculty and staff assumed greater responsibility for student supervision.

Students were also concerned about their safety while collecting surveys. One issue involved surveying at warehouses after dark, which was easily and quickly

resolved: all surveying was scheduled during daylight hours. The hostile response by employers to the survey work was more problematic. WWU interns surveyed workers in warehouse parking lots during shift change times or workers' lunch breaks. Although we prepared students for the discomfort inherent in this part of the research design, we did not anticipate public confrontations. In fact, warehouse security staff frequently interrupted the surveying and warehouse supervisors dissuaded workers from participating in the survey. These problems grew worse over time as news of the survey spread. In response to this situation, we advised students to leave if warehouse security requested they do so. The unfortunate lesson learned is that opposition from powerful actors in the community can hinder social transformation (Maguire, 1987; Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

A major problem for the LOCH project related to supervision was managing student turnover. Although we did consider limiting participation only to those students who could make a yearlong commitment, the reality is that some terrific potential researchers and interns simply could not, or emergent issues precluded their later involvement. Campus and community leaders alike sought to ensure as many opportunities for student involvement in the project as possible. We developed a program for facilitating the transfer of the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary for successful integration into the process to new students as they joined the project. Requiring students to prepare and share quarterly reports and versions of the documentary films in process worked very well for this purpose. New students were able to read the report from the previous quarter and watch the films, which provided them with a sufficient understanding of the ongoing project for them to contribute quickly to next steps. In addition, students who continued the project were either partnered with new students in order to help to train them, or given new tasks that did not require prior experience and training. In this way, students learned both team work and leadership skills.

Considering the scope of the LOCH project and the number and range of participants, it is no wonder that our greatest challenge was coordinating everyone involved over the course of the academic year. Students' course schedules varied and many were busy with work, family obligations and/or student activism, making it difficult to identify a weekly meeting time that worked for even most of them. Due to the academic quarter system, these meeting times and students' internship responsibilities had to be re-organized every twelve weeks. By spring, the only hour during which students could all meet with the project's graduate assistant made it difficult for faculty and community partners to interact directly with the students. Moreover, one hour to provide guidance on three projects (two films and a survey-based research project) was simply insufficient, but our budget precluded additional support personnel. Such problems were better resolved in a subsequent project by only enrolling students available to meet in pre-arranged joint meetings with both faculty and community partners.

Collaboration among university personnel and representatives from our community partner organizations was difficult as well. WWU and CCAEJ found the deep and extended collaboration this project required practically unmanageable. For example, although we had envisioned a single documentary film, by spring both WWU and CCAEJ staff had agreed that it would be better for students to produce

two separate films instead. Joint meetings that included university faculty and staff as well as WWU and CCAEJ staff were similarly hard to coordinate due to unanticipated demands that conflicted with pre-arranged meeting times. The constant rescheduling of meetings was psychologically draining and precipitated disconnected feelings for the project as a whole. A successful, one-time event to bring together WWU and CCAEJ members to view the two films and discuss them was insufficient by itself for developing deep ties among them. Nevertheless, collaboration through this project in addition to other joint projects, both at UCR and beyond, may have strengthened the relationship between WWU and CCAEJ. After the completion of this project, WWU and CCAEJ received a joint grant to carry out civic engagement projects in Inland Southern California. Subsequently, when WWU lost its funding, their staff moved into CCAEJ office.

University faculty and staff supervision of the students' research and film projects on campus limited the direct interaction of community partners with students and limited community immersion. Although students were encouraged to attend and document WWU and CCAEJ activities and actions, it was difficult to hold students accountable for this involvement given their varied course and work schedules and the lack of transportation for some students. Since the student interns worked more closely with university staff than the organizations, they sometimes lacked motivation to attend these events. While students developed connections to the community and social justice goals in general, these associations usually did not last. Both WWU and CCAEJ expressed frustration with this outcome and a greater desire for the students to work more closely with them off-campus in the interest of supporting additional and/or follow-up CBPR projects (Stoecker, 2008; Walsh et al., 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the pedagogical goals of this project was to develop mechanisms for addressing student turnover that is endemic to the "stop-start" academic calendar (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Stoecker, 2008; Walsh et al., 2010). We found that making it a requirement for students to write quarterly progress reports on their research and produce interim versions of their films was very helpful for summarizing work progression and for integrating new students into the ongoing project. Students enrolled in the CBPR methods and practices seminar were required to complete a research paper or other significant deliverable (such as a short film). Research papers included a literature review and paid careful attention to research question selection and research design. Students who collected data were also required to discuss their findings (or initial or expected findings) in light of their literature review and hypotheses derived. Subsequent students then revised and updated earlier drafts of these reports and films. Appendix A provides the suggested outline for this paper; the course syllabus is provided in Appendix B.

These quarterly reports and films helped to educate and train new students about the project and what would be expected of them in the next stage of the research. Joint discussions of these assignments provided students with feedback from investigators, internship supervisors and each other, which helped to ensure that the

final products fulfilled the collaborative goals of the project. Additionally, experienced students were partnered with new students for training purposes. Like Randy Stoecker (2008), we also used independent studies (or in our case, internship courses) to provide course credit throughout the academic year to help maintain student involvement in the project.

Successful and sustained community-university partnerships require financial as well as human resources, both from the university and from community partners (Reardon, 1999; Minkler et al., 2008). Without such resources, partnerships tend to be strained and short-term. By the end of this project, CCAEJ recognized that it lacked sufficient organizational staff to continue an on-going relationship with UCR while carrying out its other activities in the community. Meanwhile, the university eliminated the UGRC Program and associated courses, further limiting the university staff available for helping to recruit and train students for future CBPR projects.

Despite these setbacks, the success of the LOCH project provided the foundation for a second research grant from the Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California (CCREC) to partner with WWU. We used the lessons learned from our completed work together to improve the organization, administration and outcome of the new project. For example, in anticipation of scheduling and transportation challenges, student interns were required to be available for a pre-selected weekly meeting with the faculty on campus and to attend scheduled events organized by WWU staff at that organization's location—often in the evening or on weekends—making it easier for our partners to participate (see Walsh et al. 2010). Successful intern candidates were also required to have a car and be fluent in Spanish. While these requirements disqualified some interested and capable students, they eased coordination efforts and ensured more consistent and fruitful communication among community partners, faculty researchers, and student researchers and interns.

We further strengthened our efforts to clarify and enforce the roles and responsibilities assigned to university faculty and staff, community partners and students by establishing mutually available dates and times, and scheduling courses, trainings, and events with less formal check-ins in advance (see Flicker et al. 2008). In addition, with multiple campus and community organizations involved, it was essential to establish clearly defined research goals and identify deliverables prior to the beginning of the project. Finally, we reaffirmed the need for maintaining constant communication and the flexibility to address changes in the supervisory capacity of community partners and unforeseen challenges in data collection.

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Appendix A: Suggested outline for quarterly research report

Length: 10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font

- I. Introduction & Literature review- 2-3 pages
- II. Research question and the reason for it- 1/2-1 page
- III. Research design and method- 1-3 pages
- IV. Results or expected results- 1-2 pages
- V. Next steps- 1-2 pages
- VI. Personal reflection- 1 page
- VII. Conclusion- 1/2-1 page

Appendix B: Syllabus for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity in the Community Course

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity in the Community (UGRC) Reflection and Dialogue Seminar

*“Collective **action** [and **reflection**] can reshape our lives and the world around us; it can also change the way we see ourselves—not as individual struggling in isolation to survive, but as part of a collective of shared interest and vision. This can be a transformative and empowering experience and demonstrates in practice the limits of individualism. Changing society is a way of changing ourselves.”*

– Adamson et. al 1998

Overview: As a primary compliment to faculty-mentored research and creative activity in the community, this seminar provides an opportunity for peer consultation as well as guided and independent reflection through written and oral work. Readings will also be provided on various topics that will deepen the students’ understandings of the issues affecting the environmental, social, economic and political well being of our surrounding community. Outside speakers and community leaders may also be invited to participate with UGRC students on topical issues related to community engagement and development in the region. Outside activities will also be arranged. Class will rely upon the use of iLearn to connect students to other resources and to one another.

NOTE: This class consists of work in and outside of the classroom. Therefore, it will be imperative that you meet with the instructor as often as possible in order to improve and facilitate relations with faculty mentors and community partners.

Expectations and Commitments to the Seminar Community:

a) Attendance and Investment. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the hour and will be updated on iLearn. Attendance, however, is not enough—learners are expected to be present and engaged in the community around them.

b) Reading / Reflection. Learners will have reflection questions posted in the Discussion section of the iLearn page and are expected to post a meaningful reflection on the readings, activities, and discussions each week. Readings are available on iLearn. Readings are mandatory and have been carefully selected to build skills and theory that assist students in research projects.

c) Community Connection Activities: Opportunities for enrichment are available throughout the quarter. UGRC learners are required to attend at least one community activity as part of the UGRC experience, in lieu of a regular class meeting during week 8. This activity will count for students’ attendance grades for this week.

d) Community Based Research Project and Paper: Each student will participate in a community based research project throughout the quarter, working closely with a faculty mentor and community partner. Steps and requirements involved in this project include: research question selection, research design selection and justification, literature review, and a final 10 page, double-spaced paper or other significant deliverable. Expectations for the “deliverable” and alternatives to a traditional paper will be discussed in the seminar.

e) Networking and Dialogue: For registration into the UGRC iLearn group, please contact Director of Undergraduate Research. In addition to a personal weekly reflection, each student should submit two (total during the quarter) meaningful responses to other students' reflections.

f) Academic Integrity: Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and fabrication, will not be tolerated in the seminar. Violations of UCR's Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at <http://conduct.ucr.edu/policies/academicintegrity.html>.

Grading: This is a Credit/No Credit course; therefore, the grading for this course will be broken down this way:

Attendance, participation	10
iLearn Posting	4
Undergraduate Research Grant	1
Literature Review and Project Proposal Packet	1
Final Paper	4

Students must earn at least 15 of the 20 available points to earn a passing grade.

Seminar Outline

Week 1- October 1: Introduction to Community-Based Research

Agenda:

- Opening Introductions/Group Check-in
- UGRC Pre-Class Survey
- Group procedures/expectations (190 Forms, iLearn, schedule, papers, etc.)
- Group decision-making on expectations, guiding values and confidentiality for seminar
- Make appointment to meet with the instructor within the next two weeks

Take Home Activities:

- Student proposal forms- basic information
- Turn in 190 forms, meet with mentors and organizations.

Week 2- October 8: Reflection-action (praxis), reimagining “research”

Readings:

- “Origins and Principles of Community-Based Research” Community-Based Research and Higher Education, Strand et al.
- “Questions are More Transforming than Answers” from Community: The Structure of Belonging by Peter Block

Agenda:

- Discuss worksheets and readings
- Points for Review: IRB and Human Subjects Procedures, Professionalism and Accountability
- What is a literature review?

Take Home Activity:

- Begin literature review
- Student proposal forms- research question and design, faculty mentor and

- community partner information
- Begin IRB process if necessary

Week 3- October 15: Research Practices in Community-Based Research

Readings:

- Selection from Stoecker, Randy. “Beyond Information: Research as an Organizational Lifestyle” Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach. Sage Publications. 2005.

Agenda:

- Discuss readings and share research questions and design
- Discuss literature reviews, paper outline, alternative deliverables
- Healthycity.org quick training

Take-Home Activities:

- Continue literature review (Due in class next week!)
- Continue working on research question and design (Due in class next week!)

Week 4- October 22: More Research Practices in Community-Based Research

Readings:

- Babbie, Earl. “Chapter 4: Research Design.” The Practice of Social Research. Wadsworth Publishing Company. 1998.
- “Research Practices in Community-Based Research” Community-Based Research and Higher Education, Strand et. al.

Agenda:

- Discuss readings and share research questions and design
- Discuss literature reviews

Week 5- October 29: Research Design: Skills, Resources, and Planning

Readings:

- Stoecker, Randy. “Head and Hand Together: A Project-Based Research Model” Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach. Sage Publications. 2005.
- Hermanowicz, Joseph C.- “The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed” Qualitative Sociology. Vol. 25. No. 4. Winter 2002.

Agenda:

- Discuss readings and project progress
- Points for review: Data gathering and analysis

Week 6- November 5: Community Organizations in [city name]

Readings:

- Partnering with Youth Organizers to Prevent Violence: An Analysis of Relationships, Power, and Change
- The Community Foundation 2010 Annual Report **OR** Silverman, Carol, Arleda Martinez, and Jaime Rogers. *Inland Empire Nonprofit Sector: A Growing Region Faces the Challenges of Capacity*. San Francisco: James Irvine Foundation, 2009. Print.

Agenda:

- Discuss reading

- Points for review: grant writing and capacity building

Week 7- November 12: Historicize, Contextualize, Problematize: Nonprofits

Readings:

- Kivel, Paul. “Social Service or Social Change?” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex*. Ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. Cambridge, South End Press. 2007.

Agenda:

- Discuss reading
- Social Service or Social Change activity

Week 8- No class: complete community connection activity if haven’t already done so

Week 9- November 26: Project Planning and (Re)Evaluation and Sharing Our Research

Readings:

- “Assignment on Delivering an Effective Public Talk with PowerPoint” National CBR Network Wiki.
- “Assignment on Developing Talking Points for Media Outreach” National CBR Network Wiki.
- “Section 6.1: Disseminating Results” The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group. *Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum*. 2006.

Agenda:

- Sign up for potluck items
 - Presenting Our Research: Lessons in Public Speaking and Research Presentation
 - Elevator Speeches
- Take-Home Activity: Final reflection paper due electronically next week

Week 10- December 3: Reflection and Pot Luck

Agenda:

- Reflection
 - o What have you learned about your community and about yourself?
 - o What is the most important lesson you’ve learned?
 - o What are your recommendations for this movement/project for the future?
 - o How does this project inform and change your lifestyle, perception of the world, and values?
- Post-seminar surveys
- Participation forms
- Closing statements.
- Gratitude

Take-Home Activities:

- Reflection: How will your research project stay “alive”? What are you leaving behind—for whom and why?
- Continuation forms

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