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One Happy Union: Infusing Community-Based Learning Projects through Online Instruction

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Both community-based learning (CBL) and online learning are popular pedagogical practices, with distinct benefits and issues for teaching and learning. The integration of these practices may seem challenging, but they can be compatible. This article seeks to provide effective examples and support for conducting CBL projects in online courses while supporting the belief that criteria such as reinforcement, evaluation, feedback, and motivation (Berge, 2010) can be achieved through congruent CBL and online instruction. The theoretical basis for the projects identified in this work adhere to the tenets of quality online design, which are student-centered, and evoking principles of project-based learning (PBL), anchored instruction and situated learning.

Keywords: online learning, project-based learning, innovation, technology, pedagogy, assessment

Introduction

Both community-based learning (CBL) and online learning have long been popular pedagogical practices for effective instruction. Each has distinct benefits for teaching and learning, and provides teachers ways in which they can differentiate learning. The merging of these two practices may seem challenging, and many may question the instructor's ability to appropriately monitor CBL activities while teaching via distance learning. As part of their mission, many colleges and universities express the need to engage and interact with various stakeholders in the community. Berge (2010) contends, in the book *Pedagogical Models: The discipline of online teaching*, that "choosing the appropriate teaching methods and strategies related to such factors as reinforcement, feedback, evaluation, and motivation usually have a much larger effect size than does the delivery system for most students under most conditions" (p. 87). This article seeks to provide examples and support for conducting CBL projects in an online course and supports the belief that the above criteria can be achieved through the marriage of these two teaching strategies: community and online. The examples used in this article are in the field of sport management, but CBL projects across various academic disciplines could also be considered for these types of projects.

Community-Based Learning

Increasingly more institutions of higher education are being recognized for their institutional focus on CBL. At the authors' university, CBL is defined as "the collaborative engagement of students, faculty, administration and community experts designed to provide students with rich, real-world opportunities that enhance student learning, personal development and civic involvement while also contributing to the enrichment and well-being of the local community and beyond" (University of North Florida, n.d.[a]). Further, being "community-based" denotes "forms of university activity in community settings beyond the campus that may be local, regional, or global and is characterized by an exchange between the community and university of resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity" (University of North Florida, n.d.[b]).

In 2011, the authors' institution received the prestigious community engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The designation coincides with university efforts to link the institution's Quality Enhance Plan (QEP) to CBL. In addition to the Carnegie classification for the institution, the university also created incentives for departments within the university to attain the distinction of being classified as a "Community Engaged Department." Receiving this designation provided departments with additional funding for supporting CBL projects and professional development for the faculty who elect to participate. The authors' department has received this designation and the projects described in this article are associated with such efforts. For many, CBL and service-learning are terms used to describe the same type of pedagogical approach. Community-based learning can have two different levels: one where the student is observing and discovering their community, but not providing service, and the other would be the extension to provide service. For the purposes of this article, the application of service-learning principles will be associated with the practice of CBL. This connection is as explained in the ensuing section.

Connecting Community-Based Learning to Service-Learning

As previously stated, CBL and service-learning are commonly associated pedagogical practices that provide avenues for moving teaching and learning out of the traditional classroom and into the community where learning outcomes can be integrated into a particular context. A testament to the commonality of service-learning implementation is found in the fact that as of 2010, one-quarter of all elementary and secondary schools, one-half of all community colleges, and over one-quarter of the universities in the U.S. were participating in service-learning, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service (2011).

While many may think that CBL and service-learning are synonymous terms, this does not have to be true. Community-based learning, also known as community-based education, place-based learning, and place-based education, refers to the instructional strategies and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities (The Great Schools Partnership, 2014), which could range from simple observation and analysis to actual service projects. In

comparison, Bringle & Hatcher (1996) define service-learning as being an:

> …educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (p. 223).

Accordingly, service-learning is an activity that could take place either in the community or in the classroom.

While the merits of service leaning are plentiful, the essence of service-learning activities involves students engaging in service to their community that also enriches their academic and personal development (Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005). Ng (2012) indicates that service-learning "is one of the active learning strategies that aims to foster better understanding of course content and broader appreciation of the discipline" (p. 2). For example, a meta-analysis of service-learning programs by Celio, Durlak & Dymnickipp (2011) identified significant gains in five outcome areas: attitudes toward self, attitudes toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance.

Service-learning has become a popular pedagogical method that moves teaching and learning out of the traditional classroom and into the community where learning outcomes can be integrated into a particular context, including in higher education settings. The importance of service-learning was espoused by Allen (2011) in her book *Civic Engagement and Service Learning in a Metropolitan University: Multiple Approaches and Perspectives*, where she provides a rationale for the popularity of service-learning by stating, "The rise and expansion of service-learning in American colleges and universities attests to a new wave of interest in reconnecting higher education's original mission–to better serve humanity" (p. 13). In a testament to service-learning's popularity in higher education, Campus Compact's (2014) annual membership survey reported that of the 434 responding member institutions, 91% provided classes that are identified as service-learning courses. Moreover, 64% of the responding member institutions required service-learning as a component of the core curriculum (Campus Compact, 2014).

The integration of CBL and service-learning activities are congruent with Dewey's (1997) philosophy of experiential education, as service-learning is a student-centered pedagogical practice that combines classroom curriculum with community service. Students learn by interacting with others in real-world applications of their learning in the service of others, as learning takes place in a social context (Dewey, 1997). A great connection point for the concepts of community-based learning and service-learning comes in the term "sentipenstante." According to Gregg, Atkins, & Lee (2014) sentipenstante is "the process of combining thinking with feeling" (p. 12). This concept of sentipenstante is used to illuminate the significance of encouraging students to associate their outer knowing with their inner knowing (Gregg, Atkins, & Lee, 2014; Rendon 2009). As such, CBL in the form of service-learning is an ideal instrumentation for fostering sentipenstante "as it requires that students engage fully, and oftentimes outside of their comfort zones" (Gregg, Atkins, & Lee, 2014, p. 12). Thus, this fits into the primary goals associated with CBL instruction and the desired

benefits associated with its implementation.

A critical aspect of any service-learning project is the student's reflection of their experience (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005). Students need to have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and make meaning of them. Such opportunities allow "ideal time for students to use critical thinking skills to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what they have learned" (Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005, p. 12). This reflection should reveal the humanitarian benefits of the experience as well as the academic content that was applied to the particular activity.

Online Learning

Online learning has become a common classroom alternative in higher education, and one that is still growing. During the 2007-08 school year, about 4.58 million undergraduate students, or 20% of all undergraduates, took at least one distance education course (US Department of Education, 2011). The rate of students taking distance courses is growing in numbers as the percentage of undergraduates who took at least one distance education course rose to 27% in 2013-14 (US Department of Education, 2015). These are the latest figures from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), but undoubtedly this trend will continue to expand. Because of this change, educators need to review and revise their classroom strategies as they shift to online learning. Where educators may have previously considered activities such as service-learning as only an in-person situation, today we need to integrate the drive to be community-based with sound online instruction.

The pedagogical strategies identified in this article detail activities involved in a sport management curriculum. Numerous scholars have examined the role of online instruction as it pertains to sport management and related fields (e.g., Bennett, 2002; Bennett, Henson, & Connaughton, 2001; Cantoni, Kalbaska, & Inversini, 2009; Cote, Chen, & Keppell, 2008; Danylchuk, Doherty, Nicholson, & Stewart, 2008; Konin, 2004; Ransdell, 2008; Sawicki, 2008; Schembri, 2009; Stier & Schneider, 2009; Stow, 2005). Such scholars have noted the instructive value and appositeness of online learning in sport-related disciplines. Online components of sport-related courses are to be treated as an extension of the traditional classroom experience (Miloch, Lee, Smith, & Restine, 2012).

According to Hiltz (1994), the online course is a "teaching and learning environment located within a computer-mediated communication system" (p. 3). This online learning environment will require more self-control and proactive learning on the part of the student to construct knowledge, acquire skills, and initiate participation in community-based service-learning. Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) recognized that "an area that lends itself well to self-regulation is distance learning…[s]elf-regulation seems critical due to the high degree of student independence deriving from the instructor's physical absence" (pp. 231-232). Numerous interrelated factors have created problems for students in online courses, such as lack of time and environment management skills (Osborn, 2001) or mismatch between students' interest and course structure (Chyung, 2001; Kember, Murphy, Siaw, & Yuen, 1991).

Incorporating effective and appropriate interactive instructional materials and

technologies are recommended and commonly suitable, particularly when promoting active learning strategies (Durrington, Berryhill, & Swafford, 2006; Miloch et al., 2012; Pavey & Garland, 2004). Such tools are to be utilized as a means to enhance course assessment–including meeting course objectives and measuring student learning outcomes (Cote, Chen, & Keppell, 2008; Jacobs, 2005; Miloch et al., 2012). As such, instructors are to be mindful of factors such as course content, student performance, and usability strategies (Miloch et al., 2012) (see Table 1: Instructor considerations).

Table 1: Instructor Considerations

Factors	**Detailed Considerations**
Course Content	Course content should focus on desired student learning outcomes (SLOs).
Performance	Performance refers to the ability of users to efficiently interact with the course-provided online content. This includes factors such as the speed in which students can download videos, play podcasts, open course-provided materials, and interact with one another through live chats, wikis, or discussion boards. It is important for instructors to be mindful of students' technological needs and abilities.
Usability	The usability of the Learning Management System (LMS) (i.e., BlackBoard, Moodle, Google Course Builder) must be a key focal point when utilizing the LMS, which must be easy to navigate for students (adapted from Miloch et al., 2012).

Conceptual Framework

The Online Learning Consortium and the North American Council for Online Learning (2007) identified elements for effective online-learning courses including: learner-centeredness and constructivist project-based learning (PBL) activities. One aspect of the student-centered approach is the use and application of the student's interests and environment. Project-based service-learning provides educational opportunities that are interdisciplinary, student-centered, collaborative, and integrated with real-world issues and practices within the students' community, making the learning relevant and useful as students establish connections between school learning and actual community processes. When teaching online with CBL this means that a class could be spread across a wide range, with students working in a variety of situations at different locations. The theoretical basis for this project follows the tenets of good online design which is student-centered along the lines of the principles of PBL (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palinscar, 1991; Dewey, 1997; Kilpatrick, 1918), anchored instruction (Bransford & Stein, 1993), situated learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989), and conditions of learning (Gagné, 1987) where learning

occurs by doing (von Kotz & Cooper, 2000). These structures afford online learners the opportunity for in-depth investigations and the learners become more autonomous, integrating their own learning strengths and goals as they construct personally meaningful artifacts that represent their learning. This meaningful learning occurs through PBL to actively engage students in developing their own content and resources to which they receive feedback. The attributes of this learning are active, constructive, intentional, and authentic (Cunningham, 1992). The projects designed by the students in project-based learning situations are intended to have meaning in light of the students' own goals and should be:

- Active–interacting, manipulating, observing, interpreting and constructing
- Constructive–integrating new experiences and prior knowledge
- Intentional–articulating ideas, decisions, strategies and solutions
- Authentic–situated in real-world tasks
- Cooperative–occurring in social groups (Jonassen, 2000, p. 11)

With PBL, students acquire content knowledge, skills and dispositions in the process of creating an authentic, realistic project modeled on a template that an expert or professional might create. Cognitive apprenticeship is a teaching approach in which teachers model the processes students are learning and teachers coach students toward expert performance. PBL is a form of constructivism which integrates the development of skills and content knowledge by engaging in tasks where learners acquire skills and content, while at the same time having personal relevance for the students, providing a real-world context for that learning (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1992; Warlick, 1999). PBL guides provide a context for students in real-life roles or situations to apply the tools of a knowledge domain in creating a project that engages learners in authentic tasks in which they explore open-ended professional situations. Both approaches involve long-term immersion in work that is often collaborative. At its core, PBL has a process-oriented experience that leads to a performance assessment (Esch, 1998), and allows the student a real experience that they can personally reflect based on their knowledge, dispositions, and feelings (sentipenstante).

Sample Projects

Example 1: Event Audit

Project background. *Foundations of Sport Management* is a required course for students entering the Athletic Administration graduate program who do not have a Bachelor's degree in Sport Management or a closely related field. The purpose of the course is to expose students to the foundations of the following components of sport management: socio-cultural aspects in sport, management and leadership in sport, marketing in sport management, ethics in sport management, communication in sport management, budget and finance in sport management, legal aspects of sport management, and economic aspects of sport management, and governance of sport. This course is taught every fall semester and typically has 15-20 students enrolled.

Since the *Foundations of Sport Management* course was established, enrolled students have always been involved in a CBL project. The course is a prerequisite course designed to provide students with an overview of sport management, exposing

them to components of sport and an appreciation of the importance of field experiences in sport management. Over time, the course has evolved from a hybrid format to a fully online format. Students are involved in facilitating and planning a community-based event (an ideal project historically has been the selection of a 5K run hosted by Girls on the Run that takes place on the university campus annually). Girls on the Run is an organization where there is an established community partnership in place on campus and the event is repeated at multiple locations around the country on the same date. This partnership was established by the instructor and has been ongoing for a significant number of years. In addition, this event fits perfectly within the parameters of the semester. The 5K run takes place the same weekend each year and it is the last weekend of our fall semester. While this is the recommended site for this course, students are able to work with other community partners as long as the instructor has approved the site. While students are not required to attend any face-to-face class sessions with the instructor, they are required to work with and attend the event (e.g., Girls on the Run 5K Wonder Run) as a part of the class requirement. Students who do not live in the immediate vicinity of the university are asked to submit a proposal for an alternate event. Students are encouraged outside our geographic area to first seek a "Girls on the Run" event in their area for the CBL component of the course. Students are able to get site approval by contacting the local event organizers for volunteer opportunities and then submitting the proposed event and volunteer description to the instructor for approval or refinement. Events such as this are dependent on volunteerism; both by the students and the hosting organization, the students are able to provide a number of support roles while working with a larger class group, or by themselves when at other geographic locations.

Project description. There are three aspects of the project for which students receive a grade: 1) hours worked with the community organization, 2) a sport event audit, and 3) a digital storybook (which requires pictures of the student at the event–"selfies" acceptable). For this assignment, students are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours with the identified community organization (Girls on the Run 5K or other instructor approved sport agency if they are not in the local area). These hours are to be spread out over the semester as planned with the volunteer coordinator/supervisor at the sport organization. Students are involved with employees of the organization as well as with other community volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator of the organization provides the students with dates and times when various components of the event planning will take place and they sign up to participate. Those components include fundraising and sponsorships; food and beverage; race day packets; run day set up and clean up; marketing; logistics; entertainment and t-shirts. The designated supervisor who validates the hours spent with the organization also evaluates students individually, and provides the feedback to the instructor of the course.

At the end of the semester, students must submit two tangible aspects to a final project: sport event audit and a digital storybook. The purpose of the sport event audit assignment is to have students evaluate key elements comprising a sporting event experience from a management perspective. Educators often use this type of project as a culminating assessment of content knowledge taught over the course of the semester. The expectation is that they have a working knowledge of the concepts taught in the

course and are able to apply their knowledge to a "real" setting. In this case, students must attend the other approved event and focus on the elements that comprise the overall experience of a spectator or participant. They are to role play as though they have been hired as a consultant by the sport organization running the event to evaluate its operations. In other words, they are to critically think through the event through the lens of the person in charge of managing the event and report what improvements they would make concerning the event. These elements include:

1. Pre-event advertising and promotions to attract attendees
2. Traffic control and parking (ease of access to and from event, price, attendants, signage, etc.)
3. Registration (time effective, organization, etc.)
4. Seating for spectators (ease of access, service of ushers, comfort, etc.)
5. Merchandise (if appropriate–availability, product, prices, etc.)
6. Restrooms (access, locations, adequate number, cleanliness, etc.)
7. Signage (sponsor signs, informational signs–locations, size, clutter, etc.)
8. Atmosphere (public announcer, music, fan behavior, participants, etc.)
9. Event-extenders (fan involvement opportunities, pre/post activities for participants, etc.)
10. Facility (race course, safety concerns, location, etc.)
11. Personnel (how effectively did service personnel perform their tasks, were event personnel easily distinguishable by their attire, were they cheerful, knowledgeable, etc.)

Each item is to be evaluated from a management perspective in their reflective thinking and writing component as they shift their perception from that of a sport spectator to one of an event manager. Additionally, students are asked to consult with others at the event (not classmates) to acquire observations other than their own regarding the various event elements. They are not to simply give a personal account of their experience, but instead, they are asked to think in broader terms like a manager. For example, the student may have had a good experience parking because they know the campus, but what about those who are not students (evoking the notion of "moments of truth")? Furthermore, they should walk around the stadium to check to see if there are safety issues they may not be able to see from where they were sitting or standing. An additional "attention-to-detail" component is to make sure that the student examines the restrooms from the perspective of a consumer that may need to use such facilities. This provides an additional "slice-of-life" connection to the project.

The event audit should be between 10-12 pages in length, typed, double spaced, and include page numbers. The report should contain an introduction, headings for each of the eleven elements, and a conclusion summarizing the students overall impression of the event from a management perspective. Descriptions of each element should be brief and emphasis should be placed on critical appraisal and evaluation. If no improvements are needed, then they are asked to explain why they feel the way they do.

In addition to the sport event audit, students are also required to create a digital storybook to complement their audit and the work they have done all semester with the organization. The digital storybook gives the students a context for what they have

learned and experienced. It provides them an opportunity to visualize the concepts that have been taught in the class. This is a visual compliment to the sport event audit and therefore should be reflective of their learning as prompted by that assignment. The digital storybook also allows them to be creative and to share what the experience has meant to them personally. It should highlight the areas with which the students were involved and there should be a focus on creating a visual representation of their experiences for someone who was not there. While there are not any specific prompts (unlike the sport event audit), the students are encouraged to use this as a way to add visual representation to their learning throughout the semester. The storybook should begin with, and include, all of the student's work leading up to the event as well as the day of the event. Students are asked to be creative with this assignment but must include the following components:

1. Pictures from the event or activity in which the student participated
2. Personal narration of the student's story
3. End product should be a 5-7 minute digital story of the student's experiences with the approved event

For this component of the project, students will need a digital camera (i.e., one on a smart phone) and a microphone (either built in their computer or hooked up to their computer). The digital story, which is their reflection on the event and their learning, can be developed from any of a variety of programs (i.e., iMovie, MovieMaker, PhotoStory, narrated PowerPoint). Students are afforded the flexibility to utilize other digital storybook developmental resources as long as the utilized software allowed for a final product that can be uploaded to and viewed by the instructor and the class with an additional written reflection focusing on their learning. Example tutorials are provided, such as how to use PhotoStory to create their digital story (http://www.drscavanaugh.org/digitalcamera/photostorytelling/storytelling_PhotoStory.htm).

Example 2: Sport Facility Risk Assessment

Project background. *Sport Facility & Risk Management* is a graduate course that provides students a comprehensive knowledge base pertaining to a plethora of sport facility and risk management matters. In this class, students are able to develop an understanding of pertinent venue management concepts including facility planning and utilization, event administration and risk management, as well as marketing and financial issues related to sport venue management. Since the inception of the *Sport Facility & Risk Management* course, students have been required to select a venue to conduct a "sport facility risk analysis." The sport facility risk assessment project is an ideal component for this class as it serves as a comprehensive project that allows students to demonstrate their acquired knowledge in the pertinent course content areas. These multi-faceted projects include observation, measurement, assessment, and reflection on relevant sport facility and risk management matters, and at the conclusion of the project a comprehensive portfolio is submitted, supplemented by post-review reflection activities. Before starting the course, students are to select a sport venue of their choice. These include a wide assortment of venues (i.e., indoor ice sport complex, multi-sport training venue, collegiate sport complex, and youth sport centers).

It should be noted that if a student is not in the local university area, or not located in close proximity to another class member, the individual could do a modified version of the assignment on an individual basis. For students at a distance, accommodations are made to do a facility risk assessment of an approved venue by first getting approval from the location and the instructor. This is a major consideration moving forward as inevitably the geographic reach of the online students will grow. Over the past two academic years, this project has transitioned into more of a purposeful CBL focused project.

The shift in focus of the project was spurred on by a department-sponsored "community partners retreat" held in the summer of 2012. One of the community partners attending this event was the countywide athletic director for the local public school system. After collaborative game planning, it was determined that a partnership-focused approach for this particular assignment could provide a mutually beneficial effect. The instructor met with the district athletic director to strategize the best means for effectively implementing the revised project. The athletic director identified potential district high schools in which students could conduct their reviews. Students were partnered in teams of two; online students were allowed to work alone if there were no other students in their immediate area. The team members selected their schools from the available list. Students were then given the information regarding the protocol for gaining access to the class as well as the procedure for conducting the facility risk analysis, including the grading schematic.

The second time the class was taught, a further element was added to the project aimed at providing enriched community-based learning. For the revised project, students were partnered in groups of three. Another modification made was the incorporation of reviewing two different schools for comparison sake. Preparations were made to seek input with the district athletic director to select the appropriate schools. Since we were examining more schools this year, it was decided to branch out and assess venues at both middle school and high school levels. Each group was tasked with reviewing a total of two secondary schools of the same classification (i.e., two high schools or two middle schools). A further important implementation was to have each group examine schools representing different identified attributes–one inner city school and one suburban school. It was determined that this approach would add a valuable dimension to this project, one in which students could evaluate the characteristics of each school by further comparing/contrasting the institutions, including the disparity of resources afforded to each school.

Project description. To conduct the facility risk analysis, students choose representative sport-related venues at the selected schools which include an assortment of types of venues, such as football fields, baseball and softball fields, gymnasiums, tracks, etc. Students are required to apply venue risk management analysis as instructed by the teacher-provided prompts. Findings are compiled as a portfolio which contains a detailed review of the venues with the identification of potential risks for each venue and a discussion of the assessment and treatment for such risks. This analysis is to include pictures, metrics, and other supporting documentation (i.e., ADA compliance form, school district risk management forms, and miscellaneous school/school district risk management documents). The written component of the project

is supplemented with an audio-visual CBL reflection, which may be scored using the AAC&U Value Rubric for Integrative Learning (https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/integrative-learning). This reflection can be submitted in various technological formats (i.e., narrated PowerPoint, YouTube videos, presentation via screen-capturing software [e.g., Screencast-o-Matic], digital storybook).

Students also have a forum to reflect on this assignment with a virtual presentation, where they provide an overview of the overall project, their role in completing the assigned tasks, a comparison of the schools, and make connections to CBL considerations. Community based-learning considerations are further assessed through the examination of relevant "Integrated Connections" using the AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric. This can be accomplished by responding to the following prompt:

> From a community-based learning perspective, I want you to draw on your experiences in this project. I want you to address learning considerations and relevant factors associated with your involvement and understanding of the respective schools that you assessed. In this discussion you are encouraged to draw on your personal experiences and making connections to our course curriculum. I want you to compare and contrast the two schools that you reviewed and evaluate their facilities. Be sure to talk about the defining characteristics of the schools and how equitable you feel that the schools' resources are. I also want you to address what you learned from this experience and what impact this assignment has made on your academic understanding as well as your understanding of community-based learning initiatives.

The reflective component provides the students the opportunity to further gauge their experiences and understanding by looking at various facets of the assignment. This includes reflecting on their understanding of the concept of CBL. As the class members provide reflective journaling, they are further able to address integrated connections. Integrated connections are defined by the university as being the "[a]bility to understand across both curricular and co-curricular experiences, from making simple connections among ideas, concepts and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex and unscripted situations" (University of North Florida, n.d.[c]).

Student reflections have provided rich insight into the experiences, including learning that transpired and connections made to community-based engagement. Students were glad to be involved in such a project and were amazed to see the disparity that existed in regards to venue quality and the potential safety concerns at the respective schools. Furthermore, groups displayed feelings of concern and empathy, and expressed the desire to help (e.g., seeing what could be done to raise money for protective netting at a baseball field).

Students also provided insightful feedback regarding ways to further enhance the project. They liked the ability to compare venues, but did denote time demands and the difficulties in scheduling site visits that were in agreement with all group members' schedules. Furthermore, the class has traditionally been taught in a condensed

"mini-semester" format, and it was recommended the course be moved to a traditional semester timeframe which allowed for greater time to get this task completed. The instructor had long considered this suggestion and this sentiment validated these thoughts. As a result, the project will be more flexible moving forward and better able to serve the needs of the students while still meeting the appropriate learning objectives.

From a CBL perspective, students were to also draw from their personal experiences while addressing learning considerations and relevant factors associated with students' involvement and understanding of the respective schools that were assessed. This included comparing and contrasting the attributes of the two schools, particularly in regards to the evaluated facilities, and defining the characteristics of the schools and how equitable or disparate the schools' resources appeared to be. Students were to reflect on what they felt that they learned from the experience and what impact this assignment made on their understanding of CBL initiatives.

Discussion

Online educators should consistently try to find ways to build and sustain feelings of a course-related virtual community with the class, and reduce the transactional distance perceived with the absence of face-to-face interactions in online courses. Facilitating stronger feelings of the course's virtual community is important for retention, student satisfaction, and learning outcomes in an online course. While developing a sense of an online course community is important, the notion of "community" can cause various issues for instructors when deciding to engage in CBL learning initiatives in addition to other online course considerations. The ensuing passages will address nuances associated with these projects in the form of challenges and opportunities moving forward.

Challenges

The integration of CBL with online instruction may seem challenging for those wishing to embark in such collaboration. Clearly it can be done, but planning, effort, and strategies to ensure quality are essential. The challenges are numerous and include considerations such an instructor's ability to appropriately advise and monitor CBL activities and properly assess student learning from a distance. Other challenges that can occur include concerns associated with students' ability to find appropriate resources to conduct the tasks. This can include finding suitable class activities, partnership groups, and appropriate assessment measures. Instructors need to be mindful of the various obstacles and logistical roadblocks that can occur as well. For example, for the sport facility risk assessment assignment, students are to enter public school settings. Provision and alternate accommodations should be considered in instances where required permissions are necessary in order to gain access to restrictive venues. There may be specified safeguards in place, such as background checks, including fingerprinting. Additionally, the importance of knowing who to contact and having access to "gatekeepers" is significant.

Finding engaging methods to keep students motivated is of the utmost importance. Furthermore, finding engaging ways for students to reflect on their experiences

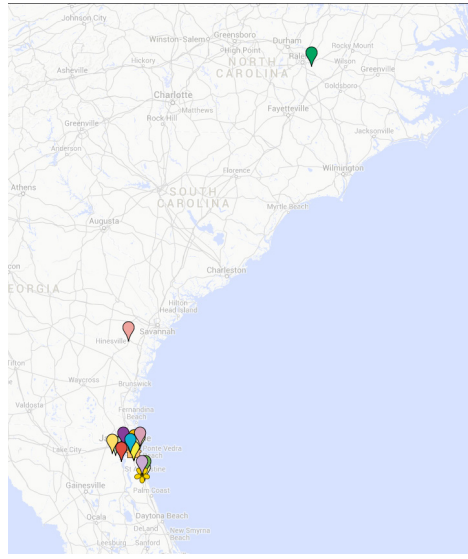
will encourage them to be more mindful of themselves, the learning process, and the importance of community connections.

Opportunities

While instructors need to be mindful of the various challenges that exist, they should also be encouraged by the vast array of opportunities that can be presented when trying to marry online instruction with CBL initiatives. The chance to broaden one's horizons and further develop communication skills that include distance learning methods can be extremely valuable for both learners and instructors. Utilizing a variety of technological enhancements and developing new pedagogical methods, which further bolster online course activities can provide greater opportunities of educational growth for all parties that are involved.

Many opportunities exist to help familiarize class members with the "place" where learning occurs and enhance the learning community through the use of an interactive map with the locations of course participants identified (see Figure 1). The maps have the potential to help with the development of a "community within the class" and to recognize the need to identify new "close to student" opportunities. Knowing student locations can also assist the instructor to be aware of possible impacts on students due to environmental situations that could affect their work and help them tailor proximity-based resources for students, such as field-based opportunities. Additionally, the class map is a potential tool for matching students who may be geographically remote from the college, but close to each other for group projects For instance, similar connections could be made by students doing an event audit from a geographic location that is different than that of the on-campus activity.

Figure 1: Sample map of student locations for one of the author's courses that had a CBL activity.



Conclusion

This manuscript addressed issues of significance pertaining to the implementation of CBL projects through online instructional methods. The synergic approaches afforded to such endeavors can be a great benefit to students, faculty, and community stakeholders. Gaps still exist for the implementation of such online CBL projects and for pedagogical questions, such as the impact on partnered organizations and creating a fair evaluation structure for student performance when students are working in a variety of situations. A discussion of CBL (and service-learning) pedagogy as it merges with online instruction was exemplified through detailing two different course assignments: an event audit and a sport facility risk assessment. Each of these projects demonstrated the emphasis that the university, college, and department place on community engagement. The implementation of these projects via online instruction provided various challenges and opportunities for continued enhancement.

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