COMMUNITY-BASED INTERNSHIPS

How a Hybridized High-Impact Practice Affects Students, Community Partners, and the University

Ben Trager

Abstract

This qualitative participatory action research project demonstrates how participation in a community-based internship (CBI), a hybridization of service-learning and internship practices, affects undergraduate students, community partners, and the university at a large public university. This article outlines a rationale for the study, demonstrating that robust knowledge regarding the effects of service-learning and internships exists, but there is a need to understand how hybridization of these high-impact practices (HIPs) affects program stakeholders. Next, the participatory methodological procedures will be highlighted as they are integral to the presentation and interpretation of the data. The findings will demonstrate that although stakeholders in a CBI have similar experiences to traditional service-learning and internship programs, the hybridization of these HIPs creates a unique environment that shapes these experiences. Furthermore, the participatory inquiry raises questions regarding how research ought to be conducted in service-learning and community engagement.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are charged with preparing students for their future professional roles (Coker et al., 2017) while maintaining a civic mission of developing engaged citizens (Ehrlich, 2000). Internships and service-learning experiences have been proposed as pedagogical practices that fulfill these goals—internships as a means to prepare students for professional life (Silva et al., 2016) and service-learning as a means to support the university's civic mission (Nichols, 2016). Therefore, understanding the structure of a program that amalgamates these two high-impact practices (HIPs) (Kuh, 2008) through an examination of the experiences of stakeholders of a community-based internship (CBI) is important. Furthermore, both internships and service-learning are relatively well understood and conceptualized in existing literature, yet there is much less information regarding the hybridization of these practices. Both service-learning and internships have been recognized for their positive impacts on students and have evolved into widely implemented practices; therefore, combining the two into one learning experience seems to be a pathway for future educational practice that meets the goals of HEIs.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this action research project is to understand the effects of stakeholder (undergraduate students, community partners, and the university) participation in a CBI at a large urban public university with the intention of enhancing program development. Community-based internships or civic internships are defined as a hybridization of service-learning and internships since they combine the attributes of service-learning and internship pedagogies (Bringle, 2017). This study seeks to answer the following questions: How does participation in a CBI affect stakeholders? What do stakeholders consider the benefits and challenges of their participation in the CBI?

Context

Investigation of a CBI requires a familiarity with existing knowledge of internship and service-learning structures and impacts. Before exploring these pedagogical practices, a brief discussion of HIPs provides a rationale for conceptualizing the CBI as a hybridization of internships and service-learning. According to Kuh (2008), both internships and service-learning are high-impact educational practices, which are defined as teaching and learning practices that are grounded in student activity, engagement, and collaboration. Students who partake in HIPs have shown gains in deep learning and personal development. More recently, hybridization of these practices has been described in the literature. Bringle (2017) termed the pedagogical practice of mixing service-learning with internships as "civic internship/pre-professional courses" that combine "the best attributes or pre-professional and career-oriented courses with service-learning in a manner that provides pre-professional experiences that contribute to a students' career trajectory as well as their personal and civic development" (p. 54). Although Bringle provided a clear theoretical foundation for conceptualizing the amalgamation of internships and service-learning, further exploration of how this hybridized practice affects stakeholders is necessary. The impacts of service-learning and internships on students, community partners, and the university have been widely discussed in the literature. Therefore, this study seeks to contextualize findings within this existing body of knowledge.

Service-Learning

Although community-based learning (CBL) is an ever-evolving practice, its impacts—especially those of service-learning—on students have been well studied (Murphy & Flowers, 2017; Saltmarsh, 2005). These impacts stretch well beyond academics. Research shows that participation in service-learning not only affects academic performance (Astin & Sax, 1998; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Sax & Astin, 1997) but also has ramifications on development of civic and social identity (Astin & Sax, 1998; Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Harker, 2016; Moely & Illustre, 2016; Peterson, 2009), leadership skills (Moely & Illustre, 2016), career discernment and professional development (Mitchell & Rost-Banik, 2019), and other social skills (Astin & Sax, 1998). Brabant and Braid (2009) distilled

the benefits of service-learning by identifying four learning outcomes: (a) enhancement of disciplinary-based competencies, (b) development of social and personal responsibility, (c) fostering intercultural competencies, and (d) civic engagement.

Although much evidence suggests that student engagement in service-learning experiences has positive impacts on academic, civic, social, and personal development, research has demonstrated that if service-learning is not carefully implemented, it can have negative impacts on students. According to Eby (1998), some academics "question service-learning because they claim that it does not address real community problems, because it is not real learning and because it teaches students inadequate understandings of service and social issues" (p. 1). The legacy of ingrained colonial power structures and inculcated value systems are ever present in student experiences (O'Grady, 2000), and service-learning is not exempt from these influences, which are often manifested as assumptions of community-engaged scholars. Green (2003) asserted that whiteness and middle-class privilege are often ignored characteristics by those who perform service-learning and those who write about it. Mitchell et al. (2012) built on this concept and termed unexamined service-learning practices as a "pedagogy of whiteness—strategies of instruction that consciously or unconsciously reinforce norms and privileged developed by, and for the benefit of white people in the United States" (p. 613). Although service-learning experiences provide a variety of benefits to students, the literature demonstrates that these benefits must be considered in conjunction with pitfalls that might reinforce normative power structures.

Service-learning and the partnerships that support these programs also have impacts on partnering organizations. Often, through the implementation of service-learning and other CBL programs, partnering organizations such as HEIs, public school systems, and community-based organizations experience increased capacity to achieve their missions. Through partnership, HEIs and school systems are able to provide improved educational environments for their students (Anderson et al., 2009; Foote & DiFilippo, 2009). Sandy and Holland (2006) described a variety of benefits experienced by community partners engaged in service-learning partnerships, which are arranged in the categories of direct impact, enrichment, and social justice. Through partnership, community partners experienced increased capacity, direct impact on clients, and organizational development. Sandy and Holland also described how these partnerships increase overall community capacity and social capital, creating environments oriented toward the common good and transformational change.

While service-learning partnerships have been shown to support the goals of community partners by increasing capacity for achieving their mission, the personal relationships that develop through CBL programs also serve to benefit the partnering institutions. The exchange of information that occurs when individuals from distinct organizations work in partnership can bring new resources and ideas to organizations (Shumer et al., 2009). Furthermore, partnerships between organizations can also increase access to institutionalized resources and increase visibility and presence of HEIs in the community (Shumer et al., 2009). The implications of engaging in service-learning as a pedagogical practice reach beyond the realm of student learning and development. Therefore, understanding how programs enveloped by service-learning practice affect all involved stakeholders is necessary.

Partnering institutions also experience challenges when seeking to implement service-learning programs. In an

HEI-public school partnership described by Anderson et al. (2009), challenges included finding the time to implement and incorporated meaningful service-learning experiences into the curriculum, developing and maintaining open lines of communication, coordinating schedules, and navigating ownership of decision-making. Foote and DiFilippo (2009) found that low commitment levels from youth, incomplete tasks, low enrollment, and curriculum flaws posed challenges to a service-learning partnership. Although service-learning programs have been demonstrated to benefit partnering institutions, these partnerships are not without challenges. The implementation of such programs can manifest issues related to logistics, communication, and pedagogical practice.

Internships

Research demonstrates that internships are beneficial to students, HEIs, and employers. Students who participate in internship programs are afforded the opportunities for personal and professional development. Through these experiences, students develop interpersonal skills such as teamwork and communication (Divine et al., 2007; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2001; Thiel & Hartley, 1997; Wilton, 2012) as well as cognizance of workplace culture (Corey & Stuart, 1973; Divine et al., 2007) and networking opportunities (Gault et al., 2000; Taylor, 1988). Other potential benefits to students include better chances of quickly finding a job and advancing in a chosen career (Coco, 2000; Divine et al., 2007; Gault et al., 2000; Gower & Mulvaney, 2012; Kotcher & Lerner, 1990; Taylor, 1988; Thiel & Hartley, 1997; Weible, 2009), higher starting salaries (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2001; Taylor, 1988), and broadly applicable leadership skills (Coco, 2000; Gault et al., 2000; Taylor, 1988; Thiel & Hartley, 1997). Furthermore, internships also mediate the transition from college to work life as they provide opportunities for students to experience work environments before they complete their studies (Silva et al., 2016). Through internships, students are afforded experiences that better situate them to enter the workforce, both in terms of skill development and access to opportunity.

HEIs and employers also benefit from internships. HEIs benefit by building a connection to the community through internship placements (Divine et al., 2007), attracting more diverse students (Thiel & Hartley, 1997), and capitalizing on employer knowledge as a source for enhanced student learning (Swift & Kent, 1999; Thiel & Hartley, 1997). Employer benefits from internship programs include reduced turnover (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2001), demonstration of social responsibility within their communities (Thiel & Hartley, 1997), strengthened ties to HEIs (Divine et al., 2007), and inexpensive student labor (Coco, 2000). The range of benefits experienced by traditional internship stakeholders implicate the necessity to investigate if and how these benefits are replicated in community-based internships at nonprofits and other public institutions.

Yet research has shown that internships are not universal solutions, and like with service-learning, the mode of implementation has an effect on student learning outcomes. An evaluative study by Lain et al. (2014) characterized two forms of internships: educative and non-educative. Lain et al. found that educative internships, that is, those that were directly connected to learning with formalized structures, led to better employment outcomes. They found that non-educative partnerships lacked the structures, such as contracts, long duration, and partnership oversight, to ensure that students were actually benefiting from their experiences (Lain et al., 2014).

This conclusion provides a rationale for linking internships with other established pedagogical practices, such as service-learning, to shore up the necessary structures to ensure intended outcomes.

Internship experiences can create challenges and negative outcomes for all stakeholders involved. Students may encounter unclear job expectations and future job prospects, be denied relevant or educative job tasks, receive little training or feedback from employers and faculty, and experience logistical issues such as transportation and tuition costs (Maertz et al., 2014). Employers also experience challenges such as little return on investment into interns, low commitment and professional skills of interns, difficulty in providing meaningful work experiences, and liability issues related to employment laws (Maertz et al., 2014). When implementing internships, educational institutions might see increased administrative workload, time lost on other demands such as teaching and research, low motivation of administrative tasks due to the low status of the work within institutions, and legal liability issues associated with intern placement (Maertz et al., 2014). It is apparent that although internship programs do provide benefit, these programs also create challenges that must be considered.

Community-Based Internship Program at an Urban Public University

The specific CBI in this study has existed in some iteration for over a decade at a large urban public university. Currently, the CBI is developing into a more formalized program, with incoming students required to enroll in a one-credit course aimed at developing the following competencies: critical thinking skills; intercultural competence; effective communication skills; and civic, social, or environmental responsibility. During the course, students engage in professional development topics and participate in ongoing reflection exercises that culminate in a personal reflective narrative. Once the course is completed, students continue at their community partner sites and participate in co-curricular reflective activities throughout the duration of their participation in the CBI.

The community partner sites are a diverse array of nonprofit organizations and schools from across the metropolitan area. Students typically work 5–12 hours per week throughout the academic year and earn between $10 and $14 per hour. These positions are funded through federal work-study, and students must be eligible for this form of financial aid to participate in the CBI. Community partners who join the CBI agree to serve as co-educators and onsite supervisors to the undergraduate students, approve student time sheets, attend recruiting events, and complete end-of-the-year performance assessments for each student employee.

Research Design

This project seeks to understand a CBI through the shared experience and social interaction of stakeholders. Methodologically, this research orientation calls for a qualitative paradigm, which allows the researcher to create complex and holistic descriptions through analysis of words and experiences of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although there are varying methods of qualitative research that could address the questions of this study, the nature of the program and positioning in the landscape of community partnerships provide guidance for

the specific mode of inquiry. The CBI in this study occurs through partnerships between stakeholder groups, all playing an integral role in the implementation of the program. In a study of campus-community partnerships, Sandy (2007) found that relationships, shared leadership and authority, and mutual benefit are characteristics of effective partnerships. These characteristics direct the research to a participatory methodological paradigm, which honors and enhances the program culture by strengthening partnerships through practice. The research project also seeks to apply the research findings to enhance the CBI as it develops. This orientation toward change and applied outcomes can be addressed through an action research methodology.

These characteristics and orientations meld together as participatory action research (PAR). According to Moss and Haertel (2016), "PAR is grounded in a deep respect for the wisdom and practices of the communities where research is undertaken" (p. 183) and "the activities undertaken in PAR and the methods employed are determined in collaboration between researchers and community members" (p. 184). This conception of PAR serves as the methodological guide of this study for two reasons. First, it incorporates and values a diverse array of perspectives throughout the research process. Participants are considered as co-researchers in all stages of the research. Second, collaborative work is the privileged method for uncovering meaning and creating knowledge. The work completed in PAR is consistently oriented toward collaboration. In PAR, the research facilitator and participants, who are named co-researchers for the remainder of this article, work in concert rather than the research facilitator simply doing work through participants. This collaboration allows for knowledge generation while also honoring the context and core principles of the phenomena under study. It must be noted that PAR does not claim to be value neutral. The structure of the methodology implies that the goal is to confront problems or challenges and develop solutions (Root, 2007), and in this specific context, the research aims to understand a CBI so that action can be taken to improve its implementation.

Reflexive Statement

Qualitative inquiry—especially those forms that rely on social construction of meaning—requires an illumination of a researcher's epistemological and ontological positions. I believe that meaning and knowledge are generated through social interaction and that the experience of this interaction is informed by the specific sociocultural environment shaping one's epistemological stance. This position is most closely related to social constructivism, which describes knowledge development "as socialization, a process of acquisition of skills, knowledge, and dispositions that enables the individual to participate in his or her group in society" (Sivan, 1986, p. 211). Social constructivist epistemology allows communities to determine what is "good" or "important" knowledge, permitting the proliferation of diverse bodies of knowledge and placing knowledge in community context, as "the locus of epistemic concern properly shifts to a relevant social group" (Kelly, 2006, p. 36).

Yet the current status of the world as a multicultural and stratified system creates a power dynamic between different epistemological positions. The dominating mainstream ways of knowing often determine who possess power based on their individual epistemological positions. Therefore, researchers, in an epistemic position of power, must take caution when assessing the epistemological assumptions of others. They must engage in critical

self-reflection and social interaction to build understanding, as each individual possesses a unique set of cultural dimensions (race, gender, religion, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation, citizenship status, etc.) and dimensional interactions. These dimensions and their interactions exert influence on an individual's understandings and experiences of knowledge, power, and privilege (Hyde, 2012). The social context of knowledge and the stratified value ascription of knowledge frameworks cause certain epistemological and ontological stances to be marginalized. In consideration of this epistemological positioning, I seek inclusive research methodologies that highlight, uncover, and amalgamize knowledge from multiple sources and perspectives.

Methodology

According to Stringer (2007), "The task of the community-based action researcher . . . is to develop a context in which individuals and groups with divergent perceptions and interpretations can formulate a construction of their situation that makes sense to them all" (p. 41). Action research seeks to develop knowledge through the collaborative construction of meaning, and this sentiment served as a guiding principle for the research methodology. Throughout all stages of the project, I sought to engage co-researchers to understand, interpret, analyze, and share their own experiences through socially oriented data collection processes, transparency of data sets, and co-construction of findings through collaborative data analysis.

Sample

The sampling strategy began by identifying key stakeholders through a social analysis (Stringer, 2007). As the research facilitator, I determined who had a stake in the program: students, staff at community partner sites, and university staff. Concurrently, I sought to include diverse representation among the stakeholder groups, seeking a balance of community partner sites and student job roles. According to Stringer (2007), this process of cultivating diversified representation of stakeholder groups is essential to create an environment in which all stakeholders, not just those who actually participate in the project, feel that they have voice in the research process. This process can be likened to a sampling strategy of maximum variation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Once key stakeholder groups were established, individuals were invited to participate in the project. The overall population of those involved in the program during a given year is between 40 and 50 students, 15 and 25 community partners, and four university staff. The students range in academic status from freshman to seniors, hold diverse internship positions, and possess varying levels of experience within the program. The community partners come from nonprofit organizations and schools from across the city, representing various focus areas including hunger and homelessness, environment, youth mentoring, workforce development, disability resources, the arts, and public health. To facilitate a collaborative process (Stringer, 2007), I chose to limit the sample size to no more than 10 individuals. As there are three distinct stakeholder groups, this allowed for two to four individuals from each group. The final sample included four students, three community partners, and two university affiliates. Two students worked at public schools as tutors, one student worked at a food pantry, and

the fourth student worked at a youth sports mentoring organization. The three community partners represented two sites: the executive director and the volunteer coordinator from a local food pantry and a school support teacher from a public Montessori school. During the period of the study, the Montessori school was in its first year of partnership, with two students working through the CBI; the food pantry was in its second year of the partnership, with two students working through the CBI. The university affiliates included the HR manager and me, the program coordinator.

This sample size requires a confrontation with generalizability as the capacity to generalize findings of qualitative research to other settings is a frequent criticism of the method. The issue of generalizability is not limited to qualitative research; it surfaces in all methods. According to Firestone (1993), generalizability calls on researchers to make claims about the applicability of their research to other settings, and this criticism is common to all forms of research. Firestone writes, "Generalizing from data is always problematic at best. Since Hume . . . philosophers and researchers have understood that generalization requires extrapolation that can never be fully justified logically" (1993, p. 16). Research requires readers to engage with and assess the work that is presented. When engaging with action research studies, it is through this assessment that readers are able to transfer findings from a specific instance to their own contexts (Henriksen & Mishra, 2019). Action research produces conditions and findings that align with this type of generalization, known as case-to-case generalization (Firestone, 1993), which seeks applicability within one local context and transferability to other contexts. Case-to-case generalization became prominent in qualitative research when it began to be utilized for program evaluation (Firestone, 1993; Tsang, 2014). According to Costello (2003), qualitative researchers, and action researchers in particular, can achieve this type of generalizability if they share details of study contexts and methods with their readers, who can infer a study's relevance to their own situations.

Data Collection & Collaborative Analysis

Those who agreed to participate in the project were invited to two separate preliminary meetings, with one meeting for the community partners and the university staff and the other meeting for students. Separation of stakeholder groups, especially those groups with potential power differentials, can create environments in which individuals feel more comfortable sharing their experiences (Stringer, 2007). Informed by a format proposed by Stringer (2007), the co-researchers engaged in the following six questions:

1. What is the purpose of the meeting?
2. What are the issues in the community-based internship (CBI) program that need to be addressed?
3. How does the CBI affect our work and lives?
4. Where does action in the CBI take place?
5. When does action in the CBI take place?
6. What are the effects of the CBI?

During the community partner and university staff meeting, I asked the attendees to write responses to the questions. Following the individual time, the group split into two "mini" groups to engage in conversation surrounding each individual's responses to the questions. These groups provided an opportunity for participants to work with one another in a more intimate environment and were intended to build camaraderie and a sense of ease. After these conversations, the larger group reconvened to hold a large group share-out regarding the six questions. I helped guide the conversation, and one participant served as a scribe, writing down and highlighting important information on small note cards.

During the initial student meeting, rather than following the prescribed agenda, students chose to write silently in response to the six questions and then come back together as a single group to discuss their responses. Although this choice deviated from the planned method, it is supported by the pragmatic and collaborative nature of action research. After the students completed their written responses, I led a discussion regarding the students' responses to the questions. This meeting proceeded like a traditional focus group, as I had limited input in the actual data generation process and served more as a facilitator, guiding the conversation while the students responded and reacted to one another's responses.

As the audio recordings were transcribed, I made notes regarding emerging themes, patterns, and reflections. I then created a concept map that served as a guide for initial coding of the data. I coded all data points, including the group meeting transcriptions and the co-researcher's written responses using In Vivo coding, process coding, descriptive coding, holistic coding, and sub-coding (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2009). I began the second cycle coding process with focused coding before moving forward with a collaborative approach to theoretical coding. First, I iteratively reread the codes and the data and then created categories through the frame of the initial research question and based on frequency and significance (Saldaña, 2009). I organized the categories into a table and created a concept map (Figure 1), which were both not shared with participants until after they had completed their own thematic analysis.

During the next phase of second cycle coding, the different stakeholder groups and their corresponding data remained separate, as the distinct groups may have diverging perspectives and experiences of the same phenomena. Such separation allows between-group differences and commonalities to be identified (Stringer, 2007). Before each meeting, I reviewed the data sets, copied each exemplar quote from each code, and pasted these quotes into one large document. I shared this document along with raw transcripts with the co-researchers. I created a general analysis meeting agenda, and I prepared a one-page brief describing theming and concept mapping for the co-researchers to provide background knowledge regarding the analysis process. At the beginning of each meeting, the co-researchers reviewed the documents, and then the groups decided how to proceed with the analysis.

The student data analysis meeting included two students from the initial meeting and me. The group read through the data and created themes. Once we had completed this process, we shared our individual themes with one another by writing them on blackboards. Through dialogue, we then narrowed the themes down into a single set, but we ultimately decided that another meeting would be necessary to finish the process by substantiating the final themes with data and creating a concept map. We met twice more to read through data points, assign
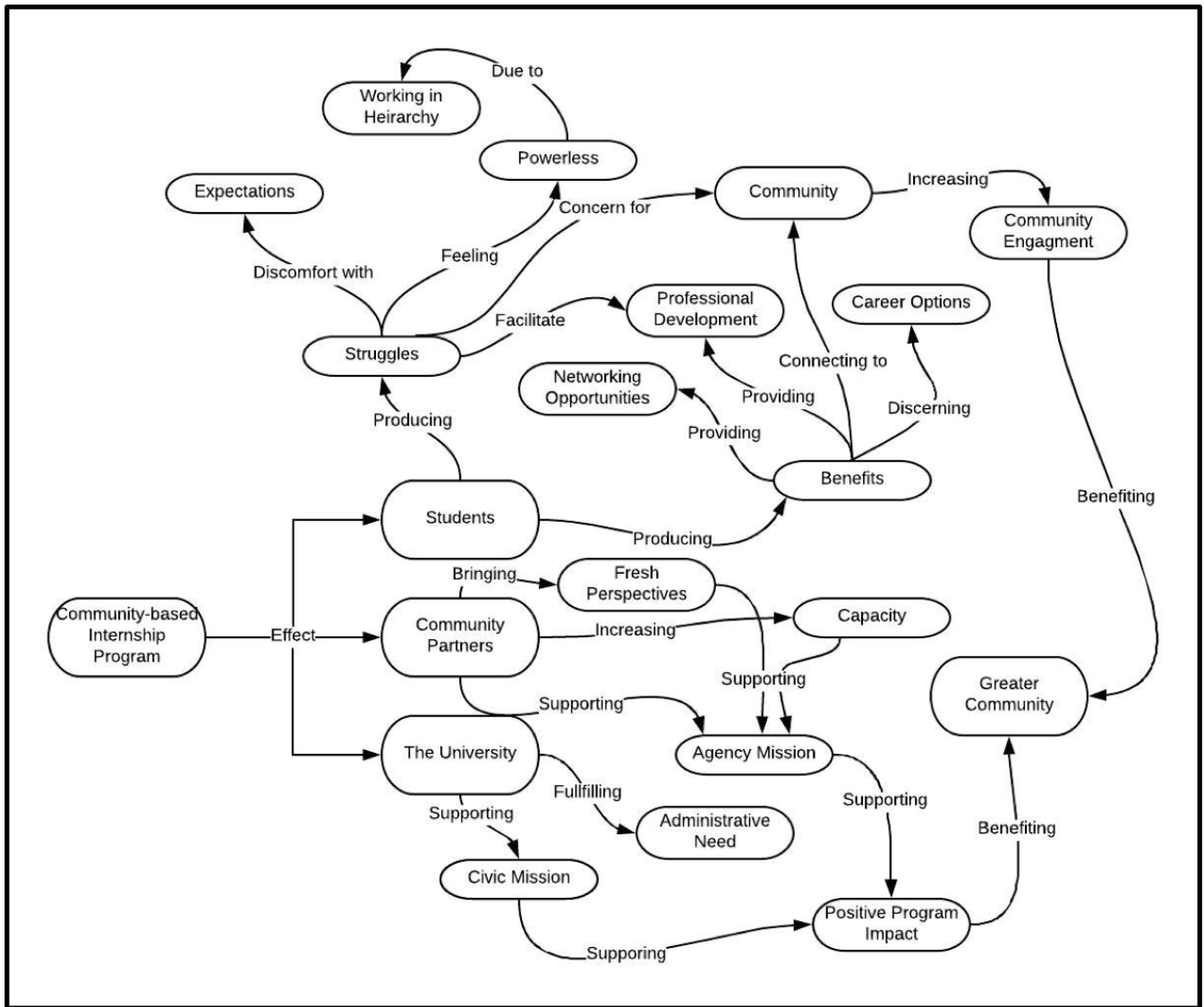
Figure 1. Facilitator Concept Map

them to themes, and arrange the themes in relation to one another. Finally, I transferred this representation of the data into a concept map (Figure 2), which was reviewed and approved by the students.

During the community partner and university staff analysis, the group decided to start collaboratively and work together to create themes. Although this deviated from the plan and the student process, this flexibility allowed for the co-researchers to have authority in the analysis process. We cut up the exemplar quotes and started theming. Each co-researcher read exemplar quotes aloud to the group, and then we discussed to which theme or category the quote belonged. At first, themes were broad, but as we moved through the quotes, themes began to narrow and form clusters and groups. This process was time consuming. We held another meeting a week later, during which we clarified established themes, organized themes into a graphic representation, and supported findings with exemplar quotes. At the end of the second meeting, we discussed how the data should be translated to a concept map, which was then derived from the graphic representations. After that meeting, I created the concept map (Figure 3) and shared it with other co-researchers.
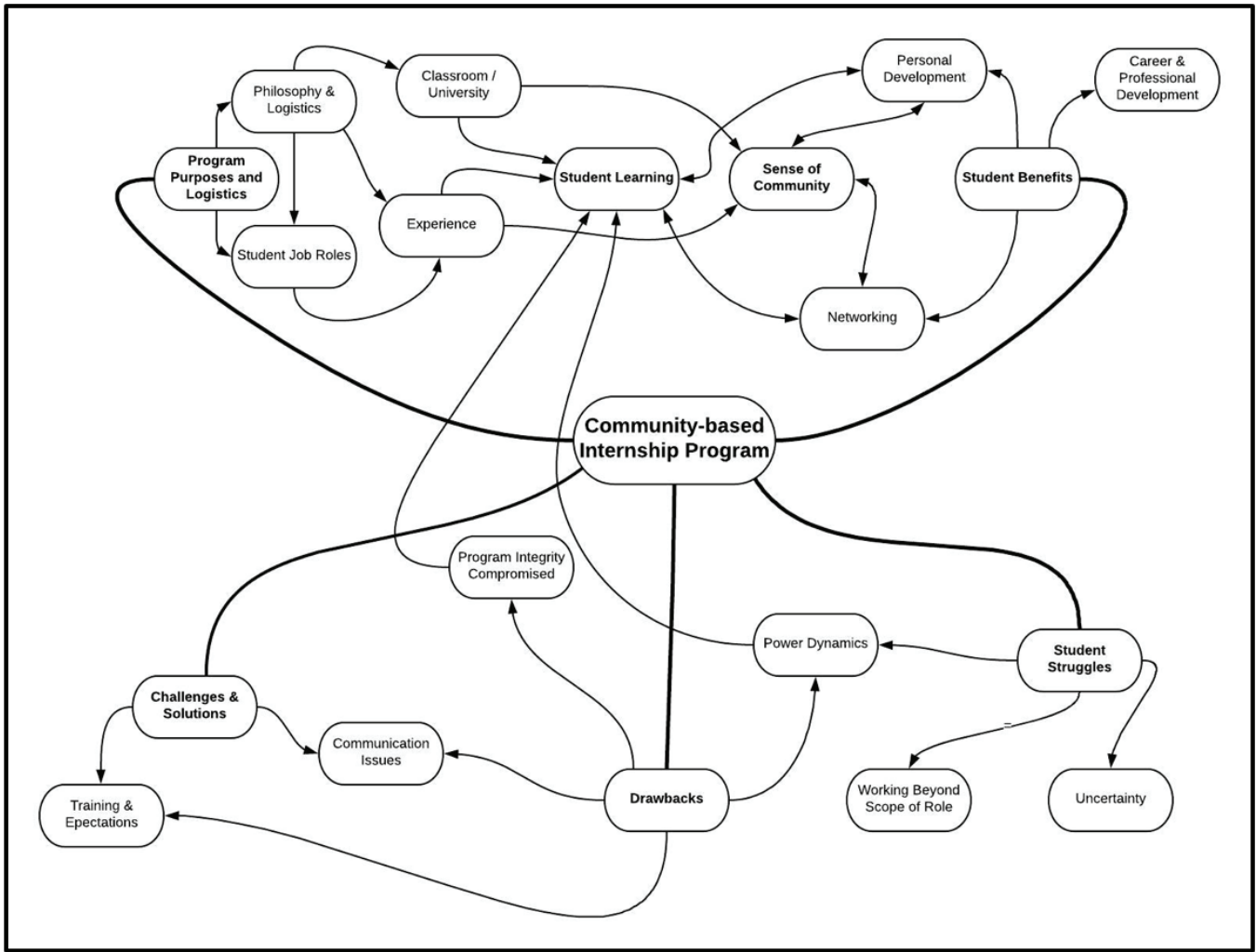
Figure 2. Student Concept Map

Finally, the two groups convened for an action planning meeting in which the initial results and the three concept maps were shared across groups and preliminary action plans for program improvement were discussed. The co-researchers decided that the three distinct concept maps should not be combined into a single representation of the data; rather, all three should be used in concert to describe the findings.

To help organize the data for presentation of findings, I used the concept maps from each research group to create two thematic tables, one representing the student findings and another representing the community partner and university staff findings. These tables listed each theme from the concept map with all its supporting exemplar quotes. To facilitate the final synthesis and presentation of the data, I reviewed the concept maps and thematic tables to distill a cogent set of final themes. These themes and their relationship to the research questions are discussed in the following section.
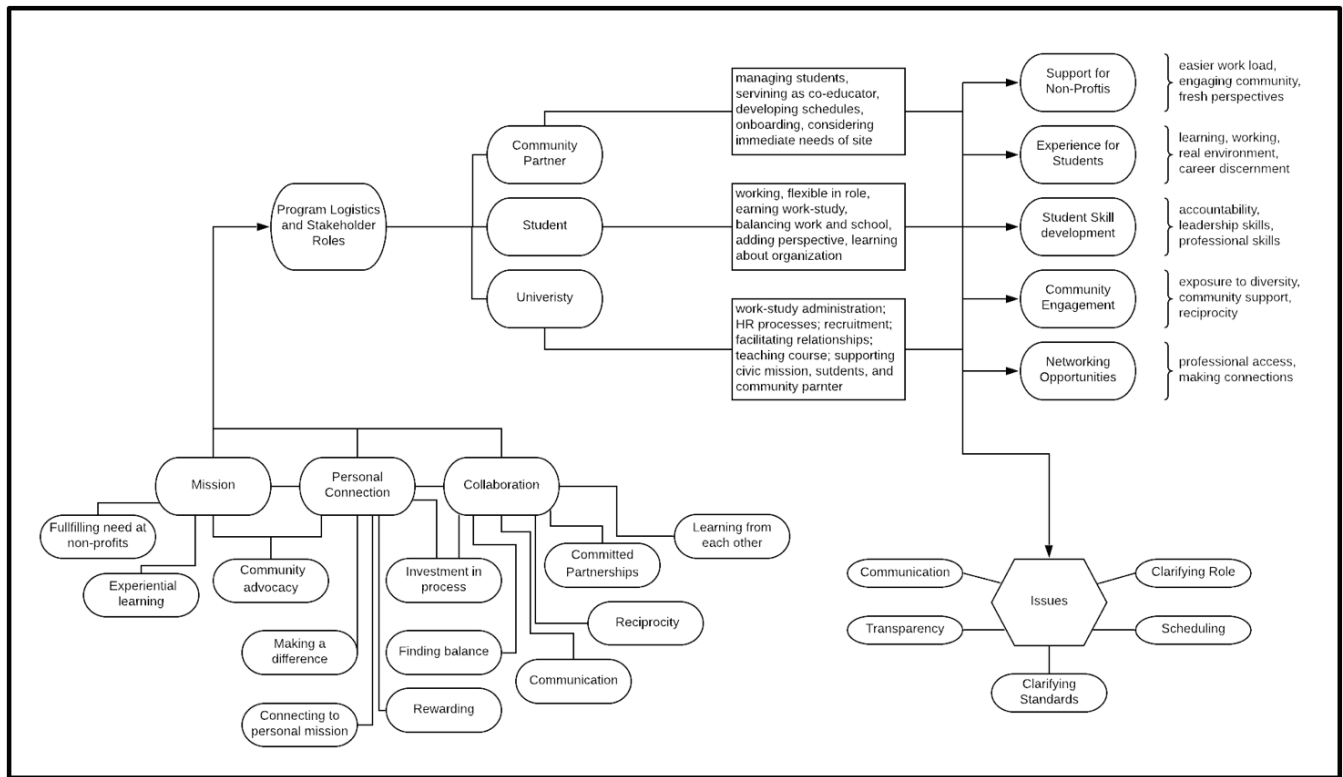
Figure 3. Community Partner and University Staff Concept Map

Qualitative Analysis

The data analysis indicates that all three stakeholder groups—the university, community partners, and students—experience benefits, opportunities, and challenges as a result of their participation in the CBI, and these effects are a combination of those of traditional non-hybridized internship and service-learning programs. Furthermore, stakeholder experiences in the CBI are not entirely positive or negative and are sometimes tension filled. While some effects of participation are clearly identified as beneficial or challenging, some are framed as somewhere in between, with stakeholders recognizing that some of the more difficult aspects of the experiences have potential to yield both challenges and benefits. After the conclusion of the collaborative analysis, I synthesized the following categories to aid in the presentation of the data within this context. Where possible, categories have been created using the words of co-researchers: they include (a) the mission and fresh perspectives, (b) student learning and benefit, (c) community and civic mindedness, and (d) drawbacks and challenges.

The Mission and Fresh Perspectives

Community partners and university staff framed much of their experiences through an institutional lens, expressing their experiences in terms of how they believe the CBI impacts their respective institutions. The data analysis demonstrates that the university meets an administrative need and maintains focus on the institutional mission

through program implementation. Community partners express that participation in the program brings "fresh perspective" and fills an "actual need in nonprofits" by increasing overall capacity to complete the work of their organizations. Although the effects are framed from an institutional perspective, both community partners and university staff discuss the overall environment of the CBI, one that is steeped in personal connection and collaboration.

The university meets an administrative need of using work-study funds in community service settings through the CBI. During the full group conversation between the community partner and university staff, Claire, a community partner, wondered, "I do believe isn't there something the federal government requires of a university when they have work-study? Like it's filling an actual requirement . . . for the university to receive the federal funds to do work study." As the university program facilitator, I clarified that "the university has to use a percentage of our work-study off-campus every semester in order to keep the money flowing . . . we're meeting an administrative need for the university." The review of literature suggests that universities may perceive internship programs to be resource intensive, and the work of running such programs may carry little cachet. Yet the funding structure of this particular program fulfills an administrative need through its implementation. This characteristic of the program could help ameliorate resistance from university stakeholders and other administrators when developing and implementing policies that govern such programs.

The CBI also helps the university fulfill its civic mission of engaging with the greater community while building professional skills of students. Amber, a university staff person, notes the following:

> They're (students are) seeing how it is helping them have more of a holistic approach on the community and what people who benefit from these services, how it's affecting their lives and benefiting their lives. And having a part in helping in that mission and that cause, it empowers them . . . couple that with (university) trying to get the learning experience of this student, it helps them be more engaged in their work and it becomes more meaningful and personal to them and drives them to want to make a difference.

Amber's perspective indicates that the program supports the university's mission of creating meaningful educational experiences for students while also providing them with opportunities to develop a civic identity through contact with the community. Claire also notes the university's engagement with the community: "the university wants to be represented in the community . . . It's beneficial to the university to be present." She articulates that the university achieves its goal of being present in the community by offering such a program.

This connection to the civic mission of the university through the CBI echoes the impacts of service-learning programs at HEIs. These institutions value the connection to the community and the opportunities afforded through this connection. The data suggests that this CBI yields a similar effect on the university, as it is a channel for the university to connect with the broader community. Furthermore, participation in the CBI provides an opportunity for students to develop their civic and social identities, which is an impact that has been widely associated with service-learning programs.

The community partner effects of participation in the CBI include increased capacity and the infusion of

fresh perspectives within organizations. This increased capacity is in direct correlation with benefits experienced in stand-alone internship and service-learning programs, and the idea of fresh perspectives can be related to the benefit of information exchange through individual relationships in service-learning programs. In a small group conversation, Emma, a community partner, indicates this benefit: "to have just this fresh perspective come in and kind of say hey these are some of the things that I've witnessed that have been really frustrating with the small groups of students that I was working with." Susan, another community partner, echoes this sentiment in the large group conversation:

> If I'm stuck at intake, I can't engage with the volunteers or take over in certain areas, but when I see the CBI student, I'm just like "oh my gosh!" It just lifts off a burden, it's like "oh my goodness" . . . So like when they get there, we're splitting the work and it's not so overwhelming for anybody. I really appreciate it whenever they are there too.

The experiences of Emma and Susan suggest that the presence of students participating in a CBI brings new perspectives and increases work capacity, which both support the work already being done at their organizations. These effects of the CBI support the overall mission of the community partner organizations.

The university staff and community partners also describe the program environment, emphasizing features of personal connection and collaboration. The data suggests that collaboration is a key feature of the CBI, and a personal connection to the work is important for the community partners and university affiliates. Discussing her experience working within the program, Amber notes, "the work is very rewarding because I see, I get to hear and be a part of this (CBI). So, it's job security in one breath but it's also very enriching and rewarding to me to know that I'm a part of that." Not only does Amber recognize that her responsibilities related to the CBI are a regular part of her work, but she also feels a sense of personal enrichment and reward through her participation in the program. Claire, a community partner, describes reciprocation as a motivation for improving the program: "I mentioned that I wanted to give back to a program that's giving back to the community and so coming to say 'you know your students are helping us and our community all the time. What can we do to give back to the program?'" Claire's desire to "give back" demonstrates that a collaborative orientation exists within the CBI. These stakeholder experiences and perspectives suggest that the university staff and the community partners affiliated with the program possess a personal connection to the CBI and that a collaborative environment is inherent to the program culture.

Student Learning and Benefit

The CBI creates opportunities for experiences that facilitate student learning and professional development, which have been described as impacts of both service-learning and internships. Amber articulates how she believes the CBI affects the students she works with, "But the learning outcomes and the experience they gain, I think, is just more enriched, and the CBI allows for that to happen from that experience working at that agency."

Amber suggests that the learning outcomes designated in the tandem course combined with working experiences at the agency, a hybridized learning experience, produce a robust learning environment for students. The role of the course and reflection is also emphasized by Amy, a student in the program: "that's kind of the time where we get to step back and critically think and engage why what we're doing is important and what we're getting out of it." Amy's words demonstrate that a course-based reflective component combined with general internship work enhances her learning experience.

In her experience at a public school, Theresa, a student, describes how her role has facilitated her professional development:

> It does have a lot of advantages to be exposed to a classroom very often, because you do get a sense of classroom management, just from observing and from being in the environment so long, day in and day out, and you do get skills from it that are helpful, at least if you're in the realm of education in your own career.

Through her role as a tutor, Theresa is able to draw on her experience to make conclusions regarding her own skill development related to her career.

Yet student experiences are not framed as entirely positive or beneficial. While students are afforded opportunities to build general professional skills, they must also confront the realities of working in the public sector and are exposed to social issues in a real-world context. Dawn's experience as a CBI student working at a Montessori school illustrates this point:

> but I think for me, personally, being in my own community, with my own people, and seeing it run by people who aren't my people . . . and to see that my people are treated, I don't . . . that has taken a . . . I don't want to say negative effect on me, but it's given me . . . it's made me want to hurry up and get into my profession. . . . There's a need for more teachers of color.

Not only does Dawn's experience demonstrate that participating in a CBI has the power to facilitate career discernment, but it also creates opportunities for students to confront social issues—sometimes overlooked in traditional service-learning and internships—in a context that is relevant to them. Theresa expresses the tension of wanting to support her organization but also needing to follow policies:

> Yeah, you do have to maneuver that fine line as a CBI student sometimes, where you want to help this placement site . . . but you also have to set boundaries sometimes of what you feel comfortable with, or what you really shouldn't be doing.

Some CBI students must navigate defining their roles and responsibilities while at work. Although this can be uncomfortable, it does provide opportunity to develop this skill as they begin their careers.

Similar to outcomes of traditional internships, students, community partners, and university staff note net-

working opportunities as a student benefit of participation in a CBI. Claire describes the network access provided to students who participate in this particular CBI:

"families of more means have more connections to help their children when they first get out of college to land that first job . . . And the reality is if your family is not coming from an economic means like that, those connections may not be as think. Where this is giving those connections . . . So their family might not have that connection but their experience does."

I echo this sentiment: "students who demonstrate financial need are having an opportunity to have access to this professional network in way that they may not normally have access to." Importantly, students also articulate the benefit of network access. Dawn paraphrased advice she received from the school principal:

"Okay, when you graduate, if this is what you want to do, here's my contact information, come meet with me when you're ready and we'll get you in the process of potentially working here, or helping you to do what you need to do so you can work here."

Each stakeholder group recognizes that students gain access to professional networks through participation in the CBI.

Overall, the effects of participation on students are framed primarily on individual impacts. Stakeholders focus on how students benefit from the program, how they struggle, and what they learn through their participation. Students in the CBI are afforded opportunities for professional development, career discernment, and network building. They also confront social issues and reflect on the importance of their work at public schools and nonprofit organizations.

Community and Civic Mindedness

Participation in the program also helped to develop a sense of community and civic responsibility among stakeholders. As described earlier, Claire's orientation toward reciprocity and wanting to give back demonstrates that she is motivated to support a program that she has found beneficial and valuable for her community. This reciprocal orientation also serves to create a sense of collaboration and community within the program. Community partners also recognized that the work done by students enhances a sense of community in their work environments. Emma describes the effect of CBI students' presence in her school:

At a school we're you know very short-handed, and it's so nice when we have mentors come in for the students, they (the students) really appreciate knowing that the community loves them and having these people coming here to listen to them read or prepare a snack with them it's really neat just to have that you know a fresh person, fresh energy in their classroom.

Later Emma clarifies her point: "that cultivation of community is the most important aspect to me." Through their work, Emma feels that the CBI students help to demonstrate community care for her grade school students. From the community partner perspective, the CBI helps build a sense of community within the organizations.

The student experiences in the CBI demonstrate deeper understandings of the local community and a sense of civic responsibility. One student, Brett, developed a new perspective regarding a city neighborhood:

> my perspective definitely changed with just the area of (city), because I always had the perception that the north side was a terrible place, there's gunshots all the time or something, and it's . . . I feel as if I'm home and perfectly fine.

Through his experiences, Brett's previously stereotypical perception of a city neighborhood transformed. Several student statements indicate that the students developed a sense of civic responsibility through their roles at their CBI site. Amy, the student who interned at a food pantry, worries about food insecurity—"it makes me really nervous and I think about it more, like food security, that issue specifically, because of my job through CBI"— and she expresses a personal connection to the issue: "there's like this sense of urgency and this sense of concern for our community now that this is going on." Beyond fulfilling a job role, Theresa has a sense of responsibility: "I'm still responsible for these students and their knowledge." Dawn critically reflects on her role: "I maneuver as a student, as a community worker, and it really makes you examine not just yourself but the community as a whole, and how you can really impact the community." The students' experiences in the program demonstrate that the students do not just see their roles as a means to develop professional skills. They also see how their work connects back to the communities they serve, and they demonstrate a sense of responsibility for the impact of their work within those communities.

Drawbacks and Challenges

Stakeholders also face challenges in their work in the program. These challenges range from basic logistical issues, such as training, onboarding, and creating student schedules, to more pervasive structural issues, such as modes of communication and program transparency to student confrontation of structural power dynamics. The data indicates that there is a need for the CBI to focus on clarifying modes of communication, role expectations, and program standards. Community partners experience situations that demonstrate a need for further transparency and fluid communication within the program. During a small group discussion, Susan describes a communication challenge of working with students in a CBI: "I will go like a month without a CBI student . . . it's like 'is this person okay?' like 'they haven't contacted us, hopefully they're okay.' So I think it's just . . . also communication wise." Susan expresses concern and frustration with a lack of communication and clarity regarding schedules. In the conversation that followed, Susan's supervisor indicates that students did in fact have set schedules, and I emphasized, "As far as the students, you (community partners) can definitely set a schedule and they should show up." This exchange is indicative of communication and transparency issues that exist within the CBI.

Standards and procedures, as well as who has the authority to establish and enforce these structures, seem to be misunderstood both inter-organizationally between the community partner and the university and internally at the community partner site.

Furthermore, communication regarding the CBI, the students, and the student roles is recognized as an important issue. Dawn recalls the incoherence she encountered when seeking to understand what was expected of her at her site. She recalled, "So when I went from the coordinator to the teacher to the principal, there [were] different expectations." Yet Dawn recommends a simple solution: "just having a conversation with the site supervisor; what can and can't be done from the student." These remarks are an example of how students encounter ambiguity at their sites, which stems from a need for more communication regarding the CBI and role expectations. The issue can arise from the nature of internship placements, as Dawn notes, "because the person that you're communicating with is kind of like the liaison, not necessarily the teacher." Dawn's experience demonstrates a desire for clarity in communication across all levels of the program, and her words express this sentiment: "one of the things that I struggled with most was that there was not communication across the board . . . so I just think there needs to be more communication."

Students confront power dynamics in their work settings, at times feeling powerless to take action. In describing her experience working in a school, Theresa noted power dynamics in a variety of locations:

> I don't necessarily agree with a lot of things that are being done in schools, and you get to see underrepresented people, people of color, being treated different ways than other students. I don't know, you get to see a lot of different aspects in education. Some you like and some you dislike, but you kind of have to maneuver through, because you aren't in charge of that classroom, you aren't in charge of that school, you only have a certain say in the things that go on.

Theresa struggles with manifestations of power and control through the realization that students of color are treated differently than other students. She also confronts the awareness that there is a system of control and that she only has a certain amount of authority based on her role positioning. Dawn also struggles with power dynamics:

> There is technically a hierarchy, and kind of gets you prepared to know, okay, there is an order, and you kind of have to follow it to a certain extent. So I am thankful that I was able to see it here (in the CBI), so that when I'm in my own classroom I'm not like "This is my classroom and I'm going to do things completely different," because I know that I don't have the capability to do that.

Through her experience in the CBI, Dawn confronts the realities of being an educator and the structural forces that shape how she can engage in her future profession. Although these experiences with power dynamics are complex, students recognize that these challenges can be productive. Theresa has had experiences that, in her words, "really put me off to being an educator," but the struggles she deals with also provide opportunities to

grow. Through her experience, Theresa is discerning what kind of educator she may choose to be and is also learning how to "maneuver through" a work environment. Dawn recognizes that confronting these issues in the CBI has prepared her for her future career as it has provided her a preview of what to expect as a professional educator.

Conclusion

The qualitative analysis demonstrates that participation in a CBI affects the university, community partners, and students in a myriad of ways, many of which mirror the effects of non-hybridized internship and service-learning programs. Through the CBI, the university is able to meet administrative needs and build a closer connection to the community. There is evidence that CBI also helps the university meet its mission of preparing students to enter the workforce as well as remain connected to its civic mission. Community partners found the infusion of fresh perspectives from students and the increased work capacity beneficial to their organizations. Students' experiences indicate that they build professional skills, encounter opportunities for career discernment, and gain access to professional networks. They also develop a sense of civic identity while confronting social issues and power dynamics within the context of their work and learning.

Many of the stakeholder experiences within the CBI are related to what previous research on service-learning and internships has uncovered regarding the effects of those programs. What is unique in this hybridized environment is that stakeholders are experiencing the effects of both HIPs within one experience. Rather than only developing connections to the community or providing opportunities for civic identity development, the university is also able to provide work experience that prepares students to enter the workforce. While students are building translatable professional skills and networks, they also meaningfully engage with issues that directly affect the communities in which they work. Community partners benefit from the increased capacity and fresh perspectives brought by students through their work. Although these effects are also experienced by partners that participate in stand-alone service-learning and internship programs, the results of this study seem to indicate that the hybridization of these practices may create an environment in which these effects are enhanced. The melding of practices ensures that students engage in meaningful work that increases organizational capacity as well as creates a space in which the student perspective is considered as value additive. Students not only gain valuable professional experience, whether related to skill development, career discernment, or network access, but also engage in reflective practice that facilitates connection to the communities they work in and the issues their work confronts.

The results indicate that the hybridization of service-learning and internships does create unique conditions that enhance experiences of stakeholders. Bringle (2017) noted that service-learning brings reflective practice and a focus on partnerships. The experiences of stakeholders in this CBI support these claims. Both the university staff and student stakeholders recognized the value the course-based reflection component brought to the program. Although reflection *can be* part of the learning process in internship programs, it is *essential* to service-learning practice. The results of this study demonstrate that the integration of service-learning practices into an

internship framework creates an enhanced experience for the students in which they were able to recognize the importance of their work and how they were learning from it. Service-learning's focus on reflection could also serve as means to address challenges faced by students in internships. Through reflection, students can work through issues of motivation and commitment, skill development, and navigating the work environment.

Through practice, service-learning lends a variety of partnership models that can be applied to other forms of experiential learning (Bringle, 2017). The results of this study indicate that partnership grounded in collaboration and reciprocity is an important characteristic of the CBI. This reciprocal and collaborative partnership is essential in service-learning (Bringle & Clayton, 2012; Hickey, 2016) and has shaped how both community partners and university staff approach the work they do in a CBI. It seems as though service-learning paradigms of partnership can create an environment in which stakeholders can be more open to democratic or collaborative ways of implementing an internship program, which may allow for more stakeholder buy-in through shared authority. As the results have indicated, both community partners and university staff feel personally invested in the program and the work they do. This partnership orientation and personal connection may be an important characteristic of future hybridized pedagogical practice.

The mutual benefit to all stakeholders and perceived positive effects on the communities served through the CBI could provide a rationale for the implementation of this hybridized HIP more widely in the future, especially within similar contexts. Not only do the findings indicate that a hybridized service-learning and internship program creates an environment that yields similar benefits, opportunities, and challenges of stand-alone HIPs, but they also demonstrate that hybridization creates a unique environment that amalgamates these effects within a single experience. Furthermore, the integration of structures from two HIPs could help to avoid the pitfalls that arise when they are implemented as separate practices. Yet there is a need to more deeply interrogate specific aspects of stakeholder experiences. Students indicate that they face power struggles and discomfort with expectations, and all stakeholders recognize issues with program transparency. All stakeholders face challenges and drawbacks that could be further interrogated in future studies, and a deeper exploration of the root causes of these issues could provide additional insight into how they could be ameliorated.

Although a qualitative participatory framework was an appropriate approach for this inquiry, it did have several limitations. Working with a wide variety of people in a collaborative way proved to be challenging. Coordinating meetings around busy schedules took much time and effort. Ideally, the initial group of co-researchers would have been able to contribute to all stages of the research process, but two students and a community partner did not participate in the collaborative analysis and action planning meetings. A larger initial sample could have ameliorated the effect of attrition on the data analysis by including more co-researchers and further diversifying the representation of job roles and community partner organizations. Therefore, further research is needed to provide more insight into stakeholder experiences within CBIs. Also, as this is a collaborative project, preparing the study's findings for a public audience has been problematic. After the initial collaborative analysis and action planning, much of the preparation for dissemination fell to me, the project facilitator. To make our results discernible, I made many decisions regarding the presentation of findings that were not collaborative. In the future, an important question ought to be added to all final meetings of collaborative research groups: "How

do we make our findings discernible to a broader audience?" Information from such a question could be used to help guide the public presentation of a study.

Finally, despite the endemic challenges of participatory research methods, this mode of inquiry is important in the field of service-learning and community engagement (SLCE). PAR has the potential to create a positive feedback loop for program development. This particular project enhanced the connections between co-researchers and has strengthened the collaborative culture of the program. PAR makes sense in contexts that are defined by relationships, and engaging in PAR has potential for strengthening these relationships. This has implications for the study of SLCE in the context of higher education. Research, especially qualitative research, ought to be informed by context. My experience with this project raises questions regarding the appropriateness of research methods in SLCE. Further interrogation of how we ought to engage in SLCE research is a pressing need in our field. It is necessary to explore how PAR and other collaborative research methods can serve not only as processes to yield data and action plans but also as a means to strengthen relationships between program partners and nurture genuine partnerships.

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Author

BEN TRAGER serves as the Director of Community-Based Learning at the Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, and Research at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM). In this role, he supports service-learning and other experiential learning practices across the university. Ben is also a doctoral candidate in the Urban Education Doctoral Program at UWM. His research interests include the institutionalization of service-learning and high-impact practices, workforce development, and collaborative research methods within the context of service-learning and community engagement.