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Service-Learning Incorporates Novel Paradigms for Faculty, Stakeholders, and Students

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Becca Berkey, Cara Meixner, Patrick Green, and Emily Eddins, (Eds.) (2018). *Reconceptualizing Faculty Development in Service-Learning/Community Engagement: Exploring Intersections, Frameworks, and Models of Practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. 370 pages. ISBN: 978-1-62036-613-4

A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition.

—Gloria Anzaldúa (1987)

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza

Anzaldúa's words create a beautiful yet haunting metaphor guiding readers into the malleable world of service-learning and community engagement in *Reconceptualizing Faculty Development in Service-Learning Community Engagement: Exploring Intersections, Frameworks, and Models of Practice*.

Because categories of experiential learning are hands-on and self-reflective—recursive and symbiotic—faculty benefit from training that effectively enables them to collaborate with a wide constituency of stakeholders as they incorporate novel paradigms of pedagogy into service-based instruction. Practitioners, professionals, and faculty alike recognize that merely slotting service projects into higher education curricula misses the pedagogical goal of translating experiences into viable learning realities that ultimately instill behavioral change.

The underlying theme of this book places educational value upon these initiatives, serving as the clarion call to empower faculty to reconceive their roles as educators. Within this context, faculty learn to create and implement programs turning students into citizens concerned about transferring their knowledge into effective projects to serve community and society. The text also examines how faculty view themselves throughout the training and implementation processes, encouraging facilitators to guide faculty members through a graduated process of expertise and self-reflection.

The governing—but not sole—metaphor of borderlands probes whether service-learning/community engagement (S-LCE) in pedagogy and practice resides at a crossroads of faculty

development and S-LCE, a path where these two paradigms meet, or whether S-LCE and its attendant milieu create a new, intentional—and perhaps liminal—space for discourse, engagement, and scholarship/research. Clearly, the audience covers a host of constituencies and stakeholders as the collection provides case studies and strategies as means of fostering engagement with S-LCE across campuses, across disciplines, across communities.

In “A Holistic Framework for Educational Professional Development in Community Engagement,” by Marshall Welch and Star Plaxton-Moore, the authors contend that doctoral students who may eventually teach in S-LCE and participate in community-engaged scholarship possess a dearth of competencies; therefore, they propose a broader view of equipping learners, from faculty development to professional education, providing a holistic model for professional progression. Following a review of the literature, they synthesize all precepts into a matrix for professional education for S-LCE stakeholders (e.g. faculty, students, administration, partners). Notably, the holistic framework provides the foundation on which all other essays build. In Chapter 2, “Faculty as Colearners: Collaborative Engagement and the Power of Story in Faculty Development,” Timothy K. Eatman lists three main objectives, to: a) reflect on the current landscape of the higher education and engagement movement, b) focus on colearning and possibilities for institutional change, and c) share insights from models. Eatman deliberates on the powerful implications of publicly engaged scholarship at that critical juncture between faculty and community partners, with his conclusion resting on models of transformation that arise from story—that is, sharing in order to create meaning and advance the mission of the university to do good work.

In Chapter 3, “Models and Genres of Faculty Development,” Emily O. Gravett and Andreas Broscheid argue for backward design as a point of origin for effective faculty development, that is, selecting the learning outcomes and then considering the product and process that will best create that educational experience. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 offer additional models preparing faculty to teach service-learning/community engagement. Chapter 4 includes three diverse case studies: Boise State University, in which three entry pathways for faculty determine their position in the overall training model; Georgia College and State University, in which practitioners progress from apprentice (novice faculty) to journeyman (grant-supported) to master and then fellow, these last roles demonstrating exemplary work and involve grants and fellowships; and Portland State University, in which programs fashioned allow for three levels of activities and implementation. Across all three cases, the prerequisites of scaffolded learning and stakeholder involvement emerged, as did the recognition that resource allocation and support structures should emphasize community needs.

Chapter 5’s “Learning Communities as a Creative Catalyst for Professional Development and Institutional Change” (Star Plaxton-Moore, Julie Hatcher, Mary Price, Carey Borkoski, Vanya Jones, and Mindi Levin) centers on faculty learning communities or the variation, community of practice. Both entities can employ strategies to overcome barriers to faculty engagement, for example, lack of resources, time constraints, and promotion limitations, while raising the profile of S-LCE initiatives. The authors present case studies to illustrate approaches to designing and implementing faculty learning communities at three universities—University of San Francisco, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and Johns Hopkins University. Goals stretch from cross-disciplinary learning and support to defining public scholarship in the context of promotion and tenure to building online networks for enhancing faculty development in service-learning pedagogies. Appropriately, this chapter cites Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning, a theory privileging reflection and abstraction to translate new knowledge into practice, an excellent example of precisely what professors strive to achieve in teaching S-LCE practices.

For those with limited resources, Chapter 6’s “Mission-Driven, Low-Cost Creative Practices” (Anne Green, Anne Marie Keffer, Kim Jensen

Bohat, Melody Bowdon, & Amy Zeh) offers insights into mentoring relationships, professional networks, and summer development as means to boost participation and unite scholars and practitioners, while Chapter 7, “Dynamics on the Edge: Exploring Roles and Intersections of Service-Learning and Community Engagement and Educational Development,” by the editors, reverts back to the metaphor of junctures between practice and scholarship and seeks to unite the case studies in the former chapters with the unit isolating challenges and opportunities. Further, here authors identify the distinctions between faculty educational developers and the more logistical role of the S-LCE professional, arguing for both as necessary components in a unified partnership that furthers understanding, awareness, and effective collaboration.

In Chapter 8 Chirag Variawa offers a multidimensional S-LCE self-reflection of his journey from student to teaching assistant to faculty member, while Stephanie T. Stokamer echoes throughout Chapter 9’s “The Intersection of Institutional Contexts and Faculty Development in Service-Learning and Community Engagement” those precepts in Chapter 7 regarding the efficacy of fostering collaboration between stakeholders in S-LCE. Issuing the trope of choreography for effective S-LCE performance, Gabriel I. Barreneche, Micki Meyer, and Scott Gross in Chapter 10 offer excellent advice for novices embarking upon S-LCE, replete with guiding principles and criteria for success, urging readers to step into the dance of partnerships with “mutual benefit, shared respect, and sustainable long-term” commitment (p. 260).

Finally, the closing two chapters issue a definitive call for faculty engagement. The potential exists, according to Sherril B. Gelmon and Catherine M. Jordan in “Connecting Service-Learning and Community Engagement Faculty Development to Community-Engaged Scholarship,” for faculty and professionals to correlate their work in S-LCE with a scholarly focus in community engagement studies. Gelmon and Jordan open with a lucid presentation of the various and tangential types of scholarship in which practitioners, educators, and professionals contribute, offering a clear orientation to community engagement studies, scholarship of teaching and learning, and scholarship of engagement, all as possibly emergent from S-LCE pursuits. The final chapter, Richard Kiely and Kathleen Sexsmith’s “Innovation Considerations in Faculty Development and

Service-Learning and Community Engagement: New Perspectives for the Future,” addresses the hallmarks of high-quality S-LCE, while presenting a model for faculty development that situates itself directly in the experiential learning camp. The authors incorporate a model consisting of four lenses with which to view S-LCE as transformative in higher education, culminating with a fifth lens as point of departure for heady dialogue and critical self-reflection.

For someone not aware of the nuances within nomenclature or the distinctions between developers or trainers, this book proves difficult to navigate on one level, for it assumes familiarity with the complexities of S-LCE. The editors’ ethnographic narrative at the beginning becomes lost in the rest of the advanced primer, for it accords a self-reflective lens that does not necessarily add to the overview of faculty development in S-LCE. Borderlands, on the other hand, proffers an excellent metaphor for the juncture of faculty education/training, S-LCE, and scholarship. For one unfamiliar with the intricacies of S-LCE, continually referring back to the listed abbreviations and sorting through the distinctions therein is cumbersome. Although not the goal of the book, the necessity to unify terms, scholarship, and roles becomes apparent; perhaps including a glossary of definitions codifying nomenclature and references would provide clarity.

Overall, the book delivers an effectual blueprint for equipping faculty to teach S-LCE, with sound rationale, research, and studies;

further, its honest approach to limitations and challenges rings true. While the essays’ trajectory directs readers from theory to framework (literature to design to implementation to expected outcomes), perhaps the book’s greatest strength resides in the numerous tables capturing value systems, matrices illustrating frameworks and case studies, and graphs orienting readers to model progressions and histories. Personal reflection questions in the introduction challenge readers to embark upon this journey through the borderlands of service-learning and community engagement, an apt metaphor for that crossroads at which we find ourselves, a crossroads where service to others promotes civic engagement, faculty evolution, and scholarship opportunity.

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About the Reviewer

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