

Waterloo ExL Community of Practice
Community Service Learning – [Kelly Anthony](#)
Friday, September 28 – EC1 1227

Theme: Crossing the Town/Gown Divide

Kelly's Notes:

What is EL?

“Simple participation in a prescribed set of learning experiences does not make something experiential.

- not linear, cyclical, or even patterned.

- series of working principles, though varied in when they happen

-- required no matter what activity the student is engaged in or where the learning takes place” (Chapman et al 1995, p. 243).

Chapman et al. have provided a list of characteristics that should be present in order to define an activity or method as experiential.

1. Mixture of content and process: There must be a balance between the experiential activities and the underlying content or theory.

2. Absence of excessive judgment: The instructor must create a safe space for students to work through their own process of self-discovery.

3. Engagement in purposeful endeavors: In experiential learning, the learner is the self-teacher, therefore there must be “meaning for the student in the learning.” The learning activities must be personally relevant to the student.

“Successful EL

learners have:

- willingness to reorder or alter their conception of a topic. - can reason for themselves/ successfully explain their position. --They have clarity of purpose with tasks they undertake,
- self-management skills necessary to work successfully both alone and in a group. --are aware of the “rules” governing their discipline or mode of operation,

-but are open-minded, and able to work with people with different views.

Finally, in control of their voice—they can

identify the role of emotion in their learning, as well as reflect on how they have come to their new knowledge (Moon, 2004, p. 163).

- 1) There is our context at UW
- 2) There are issues of cultural and community sensitivity/competence
- 3) There are pragmatic issues
- 4) There are legal/ethical implications at the Univ level
- 5) There known knowns, unknown knowns, and Unknown unknowns!
- 6) There are discipline specific issues, challenges, supports, concerns, expectations
- 7) There is your own comfort and capacity for being flexible, organic, patient, willing to abort/reroute
- 8) There is a non profit sector that feels and often is- overburdened, under-resourced, and committed first to Social work/college/humanities students whose degrees mandate community impact/involvement
- 9) There are previous few opps. for accolades, glory, grants
Finally-
There is real potential for harm. Real harm.

WHY on gods green earth would anyone care?

- 1) Your students can effect change.
- 2) You can support that.
- 3) It will benefit them and open career doors, lifelong transformative experiences
- 4) It is an obligation as civic citizens to get involved in our community beyond voting. Doing it through your work is a natural if not easy way to do that!

This first meeting, we will try to talk about the why, and a little about the how and impact.

This is designed to be a CoP- we get together, we share, brainstorm, support, inspire.

This is CoP students' learning for good lunchnlearn #1!

Amanda's Notes:

- Exploring the idea that people have power and they don't utilize
- See opportunities when students want to work for good and figure out how to make it happen for them
- EL can be non-linear, not cyclical, there is no pattern
 - o Our classes can look different term to term
- EL can be a transformative educational experience
- Marks will be higher and that's ok because it is a transformative experience
- What if it takes away from time students should be reading the material that relates to the experience? What happens to the understanding of course content
- Students have to learn to be self-teachers
 - o Have to be comfortable failing, missing the mark
- Engaging in purposeful endeavors
- Modelling the behaviour of self teaching

- What are we up against when it comes to EL?
 - o Context at UW
 - o Research intensive
 - o Issues of community sensitivity – how can we learn this?
 - o Pragmatic issues – logistics, how to get to the experience? Is there time?
 - o Legal and ethical implications
 - o Every opportunity is optional
 - o Unknown unknowns
 - o Discipline specific issues
 - o Your own ability
 - o Under-resourced non-profit sector
 - o Few opportunities for accolades
 - o Risk and potential for real harm – we have great intentions but things go off the rails
- We have an obligation to support the students that want to work for good
- Obligation to be a good civic citizen

Exchange idea on how students can learn for good

- Q to KA: how did you start? Program evaluation class, 130 students, two community partners approached KA, know her from community work (on a board, board meeting), issues in DTK or Cambridge: safe injection site, homelessness, problem: disagreement on what to do, KA proposes partnership to figure out: how many people were drug addicted on the street, how bad off are they? KA proposes this to students but high risk and there is a lot of interest because this is their town, invite community stakeholders into the class – this is the course content of program evaluation, form two sub-classes on this issue and another for access to midwife care, everyone else works on survey questions and different elements that don't require the interaction with the people
- The students act as volunteers for the organization, not part of the class
- Have to be flexible and able to pivot the course content based on the opportunities you get with community partners – don't have to change learning outcomes but think about how to maximize in-class time
- Q to KA: how to build these relationships? How do you get opportunities? Have to be a member of the community you are interested in connecting with – that is helpful and open doors to new opportunities
- Do you have to go through ethics? No because not disseminating data, just providing to the partner. Many would die on the vine if we had to. However, in some cases yes.
- Is there a reflection? How do you wrap up the experience? Depends! Some area to improve to help students understand the idea of self-teaching. KA says she wishes she could report MORE to students about what their impact was and this could be a way to make the connection. Leave it open that students can stay involved with the community partner
- Sean (3rd year social entrepreneurship) bring community partners into the classroom repeatedly. Partners working in the same domain but different stakes on the issues – example: sustainable food systems: policy makers, farmers, researchers – second half of the course students test out their ideas for intervention

- Wayne (Venture course) students can opt-in to work with community partner OR work on their own start up
 - o Students want more! But partner only wants about 6 weeks of participation
- When do we have the first introduction with the community partner? Can it be too early
- Jennifer: introduced cases to the students, get them all to the same place and then intensive course with stakeholders, at the end of the week they present evaluation plan
- Graduate student: consistent work and full day events, working with a community partner and one you could choose to work with – students continued to work with that partner even after the course was complete – that is for more advanced class
- Suzanne – dementia expert – how to make community connections? How can students see dementia in context and offer something to the organization – students create “life books” for individuals with dementia to help them remember their life – always be mindful that the benefit is more for the partner than the student and in this case they accomplish that!