What is Community-Based Learning?

Updated by: Isabelle Jenkins, MDiv, PhD
Director
Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning,
Teaching, and Engaged Scholarship

Developed by: Michelle Sterk Barrett, PhD, Former
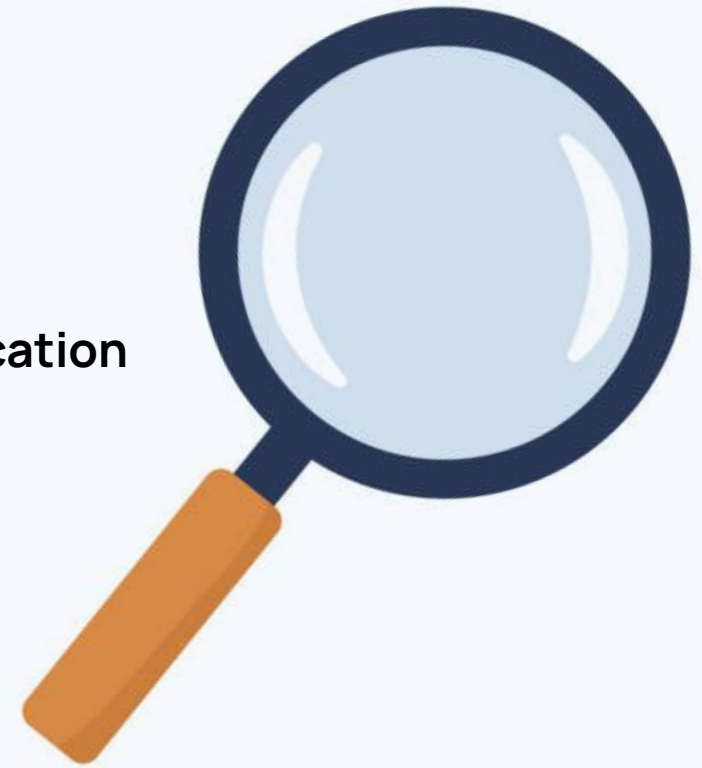director of the Donelan Office and current director of
the J.D. Power Center

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Part 1: Overview of Community-Based Learning (CBL)

1. Defining CBL
2. Differentiating CBL from other forms of experiential education
3. History of CBL
4. Learning/Development Theory
5. Research on Service-Learning/CBL

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Defining CBL - How we define CBL at Holy Cross

Community-based learning (CBL) is a teaching approach that connects classroom learning objectives with civic engagement. Engagement occurs through service that meets commuity-identified needs or through research and experience that holds promise of social or scientific value to the community. In this mutually beneficial process, students are able to gain a deeper understanding of course content by integrating theory with practice, while communities gain access to volunteers, resources, and the wide-ranging research and scholarly expertise housed in the College's many disciplinary departments.

Consistent with the Holy Cross tradition of preparing students for a lifetime of learning and moral citizenship, through CBL students re invited to reflect upon moral and ethical questions of social responsibility while considering how to live purposefully and contribute positively to society.

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Defining CBL - Themes incorporated into the Holy Cross definition

- Integration of theory with practice
- Pedagogical strategy
- Reciprocal partnerships that simultaneously meet community needs and course learning goals
- Critical reflection
- Includes service, community-based research, and experiences of potential value to the community
- Language consistent with widely-adopted best practices

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Defining CBL

- Nationally and internationally, there is variation in how the term CBL is used. Some institutions may include anything that involves off-campus, academic learning under the umbrella of CBL. Others define CBL more narrowly to include only service learning (SL) activities.
  - SL = Although specific definitions vary, there is broad consensus that service-learning engages students, community members, staff, and instructors in co-creating strategies that integrate academic material, community-engaged activities, and critical reflection to advance both learning and social change ([Stith et al., 2021](#)).
- CBL and SL are often considered interchangeable in professional and academic writing. SL used to be the term used more frequently in widely-cited research studies because it pre-dates the existence of the term CBL, but now CBL, civic engagement, community engagement, and community-engaged learning are the most common terms.
- **At Holy Cross, CBL has been implemented primarily in a manner synonymous with SL, but has also included some community based research, internships, practica, field work, etc.**
- Many of our peer institutions (i.e., Amherst, Georgetown, Mt. Holyoke, Oberlin, Smith,) use the term CBL.

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Differentiating CBL from other forms of experiential education

- How is CBL different from community service?
  - Community service is not explicitly or formally linked to academics.
  - Community service does not typically emphasize integration of theory and practice. Community service is not a pedagogical strategy.
  - Community service does not usually emphasize reciprocity in partnerships (focus is on needs of the service site not the learning goals of the student).
  - Critical reflection may or may not occur after service experience.
  - COMMON MISCONCEPTION: CBL class = a class + some community service
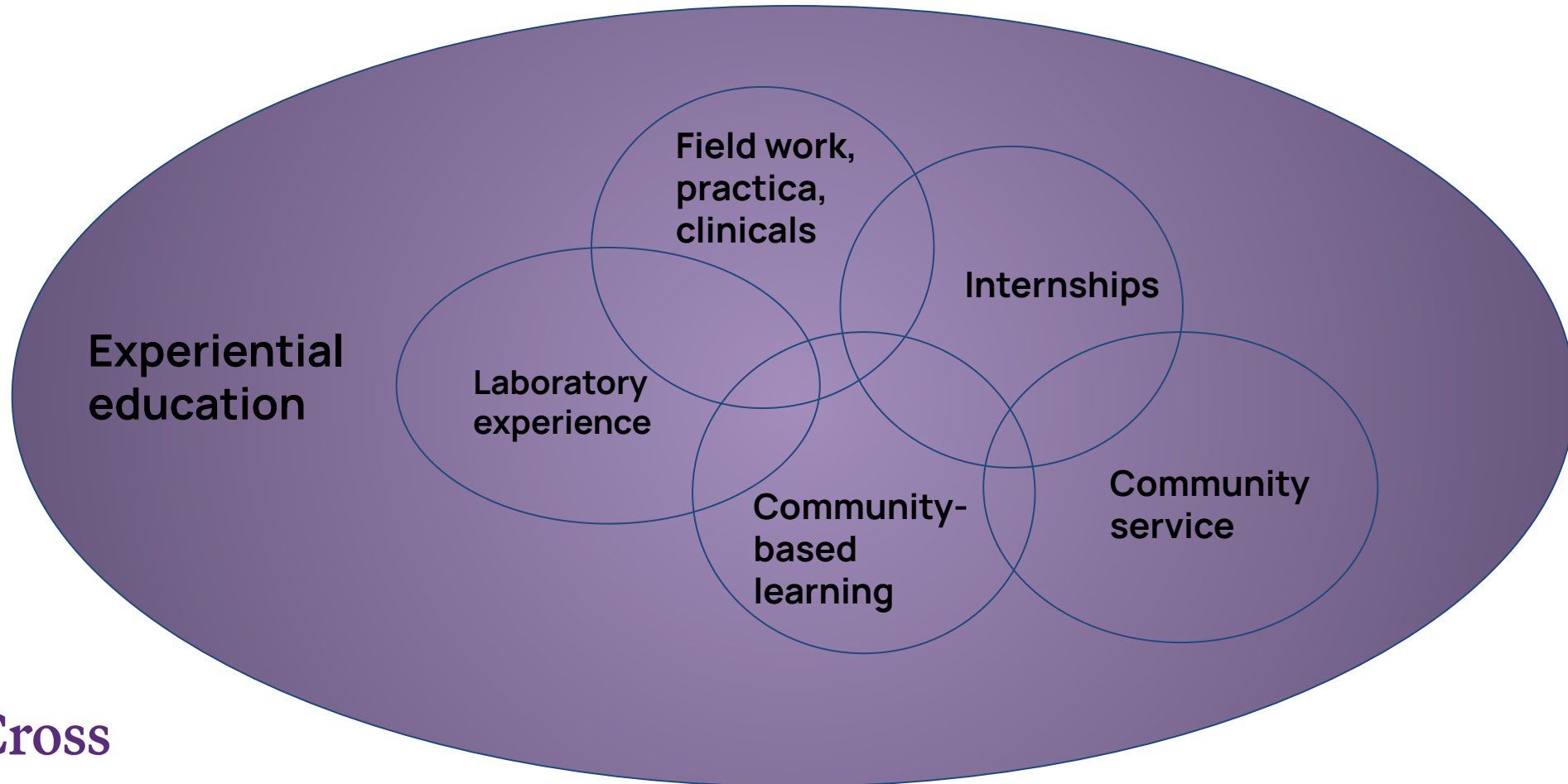
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Differentiating CBL from other forms of experiential education

- How is CBL different from other forms of experiential education at Holy Cross?
    - The activities of CBL and other field-based learning experiences can be identical, especially if they are in a non- profit or governmental setting.
    - All forms of experiential education use a pedagogical strategy that combines experience with learning goals.
    - All forms of experiential education have the potential to be of mutual benefit to students and communities.
    - The difference is the emphasis:
        - **The learning goals of CBL are focused on academic content and civic engagement, not professional development**
        - **Reflection activities are emphasized as a central means to achieve learning goals in CBL.**
        - **The reciprocal nature of the partnerships is central to CBL.**

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Differentiating CBL from other forms of experiential education

- Types of experiential education

Experiential education

Field work, practica, clinicals

Internships

Laboratory experience

Community-based learning

Community service

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History of CBL

- 1889: Jane Addams & Ellen Starr Open Hull-House; Jane Addams brings students to settlement houses to understand poverty
- 1916: John Dewey argues, in *Democracy and Education* (1916), that students must be engaged not just in thought, but in action, and that this mode of education is crucial to the formation of responsible citizens
- 1966: Term "service-learning" used to describe a project linking Tennessee universities with community development organizations
- 1970: Boston College's PULSE Program founded
- 1985: Campus Compact founded by presidents of Brown, Georgetown, Stanford, and the Education Commission of the States to promote and support campus-based civic engagement efforts

- 1989: Wingspread "Principles of Good Practice in Service Learning" written (further refined by Dr. Jeff Howard in 1993 and 2001)
- 1990: Ernest L. Boyer publishes *Scholarship Reconsidered*, igniting a scholarship of engagement movement and expanding the integration of service and community engagement into scholarship and teaching
- 1993: Learn & Serve America is created as part of the Corporation for National & Community Service, which leads to widespread establishment of campus SL offices/centers
- 1994: *The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* founded
- 1997: Campus Compact VISTA program established
- Late 1990s: New terms and concepts begin to emerge in addition to SL (community-based learning, community engaged learning, civic engagement, community engagement, education for active citizenship)

History of CBL (cntd.)

- 2001: First international conference on service learning held (Annual International K-H Service-Learning Research Conference)
- 2001: Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning established at Holy Cross
- 2005: The International Association for Research on Service- Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) founded
- 2006: Carnegie Foundation introduces the Community Engagement Classification
- 2008: Holy Cross is awarded the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

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- 2008: Tania Mitchell expands and popularizes the concept of critical service-learning, in her article, "Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning" calling attention to questions of power and authentic relationships in CBL/SL
- 2017: Holy Cross receives an $800,000 Mellon grant to create the Scholarship in Action Program (SIA)
- 2018: Holy Cross' faculty assembly votes to include publicly-engaged scholarship in its tenure and promotion guidelines, a recommendation in the report of the ad hoc Committee on Nontraditional and Emerging Forms of Scholarship
- 2019: Aurora Santiago-Ortiz builds on the concept of critical service-learning, wondering if it can be decolonized in her article, "From Critical to Decolonizing Service-Learning"
- 2023: Campus Compact publishes *Anti-Racist Community Engagement: Principles and Practices* (Santana et al.)
- 2023: The Donelan Office expands its programming and staffing to incorporate SIA into its portfolio, debuting the new name, The Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning, Teaching, and Engaged Scholarship
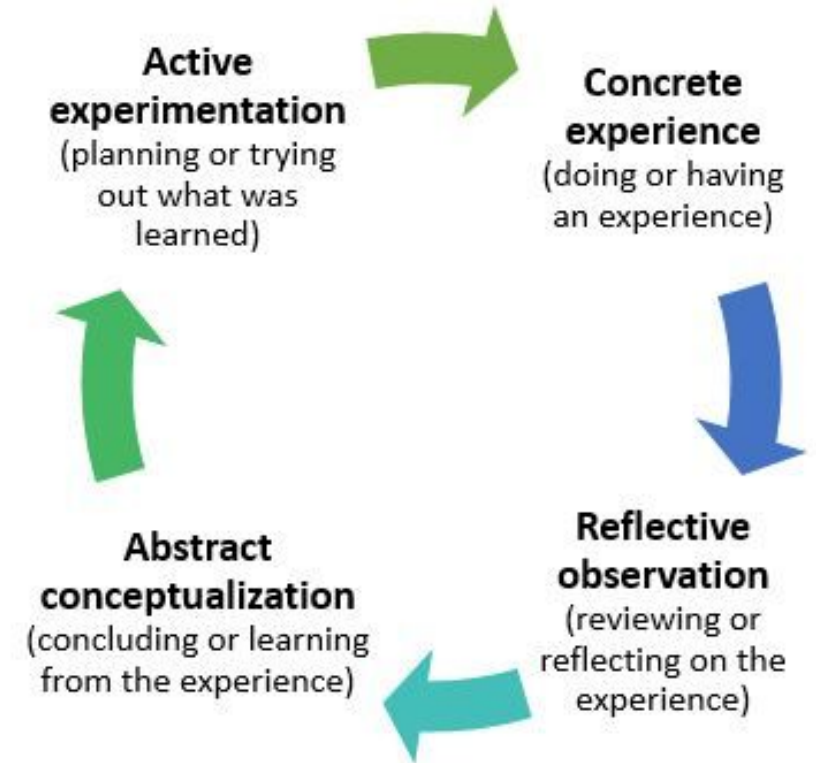
Learning/Development Theory

- Based upon research, George Kuh (2008), the developer of the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), consistently promotes CBL/SL as among the [highest impact educational practices](#) on student engagement and student success.
- Theories from Ibarra, Kolb, Ladson-Billings, Paris and Alim, Sanford, Yosso, and student development help explain why.

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Learning/Development Theory - Kolb (1981)

- [David Kolb's (1981) Learning Model](#) suggests that effective learning takes place when students are able to complete a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation as illustrated in the graphic. Traditional courses focus solely on the abstract conceptualization (theorizing) aspect of the model without placing the theory within context. Thus, traditional courses prevent the possibility for students to learn from experience and apply theory to experience.
- "Immediate concrete [affective] experience is the basis for observations and reflection. An individual uses these observations to build an idea, generalization or 'theory' from which new implications for action can be deduced. The implications or hypotheses then serve as guides in acting to create new experiences" (Kolb, 1981, p. 235).

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Graphic from:
https://educationaltechnology.net/kolbs-experiential-learning-theory-learning-styles/
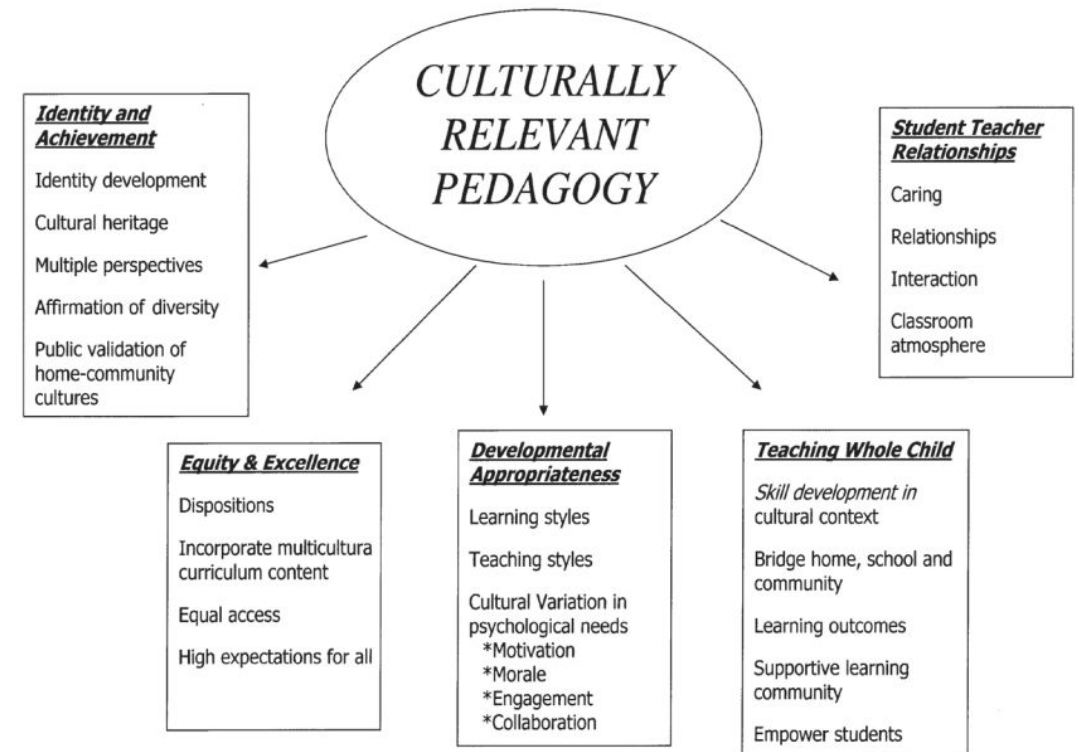
Learning/Development Theory - Student Development

- [Love and Guthrie (1999)](#) argue that each of the major cognitive development theories (Baxter Magdola, Belenky et al, King & Kitchener, and Perry) includes what they label the "Great Accommodation." This is the point of largest change in cognitive development and occurs when an individual transitions from viewing the world as comprehensible to seeing the world as complex and unknowable.
- Major student development theories ([Chickering and Reisser, 1993](#); [Sanford, 1962](#)) also point toward the role that encountering difference and facing disequilibrium can play in facilitating significant personal development for undergraduates.
- Sanford (1962, 1967, 1968) discusses the need for a proper balance between challenge and support for healthy development to occur.
- [Ibarra (2001)](#) argues that, depending upon cultural background and gender, students have varying needs of context and collaboration for effective learning to occur.
- "Dewey was aware that the intellect cannot be separated from the heart…learning needs to be "wholehearted," tying feeling to intellect…caring leads to the need to know" ([Eyler & Giles, 1999](#), p. 84).

part 1
Learning/Development Theory - Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

- Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is a teaching strategy that may resonate more with students from diverse backgrounds. Put forth by scholars such as Ladson-Billings (1995) and further developed by scholars such as Paris & Alim (2014), CRP contains several elements:
  - Identity development & affirmation
  - Equitable expectations for excellence
  - Appropriately meeting the developmental needs of all students
  - Holistic teaching
  - Interpersonal/caring relationships
  - Social & Racial Justice
- CBL/SL can be a way to practice CRP as it brings multiple perspectives into the learning environment, can help students feel seen and validated, and enable students to develop relationships with their teachers and peers.

Figure I
The Principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Identity and Achievement
Identity development
Cultural heritage
Multiple perspectives
Affirmation of diversity
Public validation of home-community cultures

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Student Teacher Relationships
Caring
Relationships
Interaction
Classroom atmosphere

Equity & Excellence
Dispositions
Incorporate multicultura curriculum content
Equal access
High expectations for all

Developmental Appropriateness
Learning styles
Teaching styles
Cultural Variation in psychological needs
*Motivation
*Morale
*Engagement
*Collaboration

Teaching Whole Child
Skill development in cultural context
Bridge home, school and community
Learning outcomes
Supportive learning community
Empower students

Graphic from: Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011

part 1
Learning/Development Theory - Sense of Belonging & Community Cultural Wealth

- Scholars such as Strayhorn (2012) argue that sense of belonging is integral to success for college students. Sense of belonging includes several elements: seamless student experience, mental health and well being, active and engaged learning, co-curricular and social engagement, and mentoring and support. CBL/SL is an active/engaged learning pedagogy and therefore may promote students' sense of belonging, particularly students from diverse backgrounds (e.g., He, 2019).
- Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model highlights the various forms of capital BIPOC students may have that are not traditionally recognized as capital by higher education institutions (aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital). Depending on the CBL/SL experience, these forms of capital can be particularly important for the experience to be impactful.
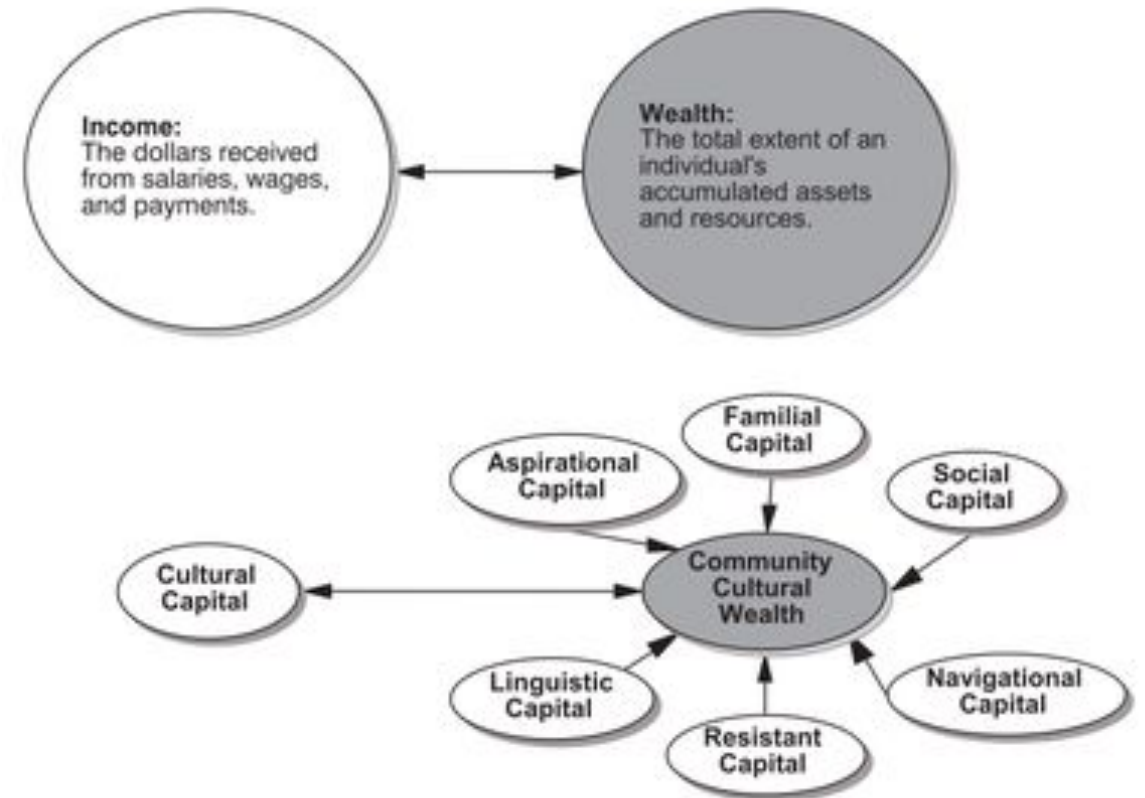

Figure 2. A model of community cultural wealth. Adapted from: Oliver & Shapiro, 1995

Graphic from: Yosso, 2005

Learning/Development Theory

- Thus, according to theory, CBL is a high impact practice because it:
  - Enables students to learn in a variety of modalities
  - Enables the possibility for cognitive dissonance/disequilibrium to occur in a setting where students can receive support from faculty, peers, and course content
  - Resonates with the learning style of students from a variety of cultural backgrounds
- CBL also:
  - Helps cultivate a sense of belonging
  - Can be a form of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
  - May enable BIPOC students to utilize their cultural capital and/or celebrates and uplifts the cultural capital many BIPOC students have

Research on SL/CBL

In 2001, researchers at Vanderbilt University ([Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray](#)) conducted a thorough literature review to summarize the findings from CBL/service learning research. Studies have consistently found CBL/service learning positively impacts or has a positive relationship to:

- Academic learning (as reported by students and faculty)
- Academic outcomes such as complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development
- Students' ability to apply what they have learned
- Personal development such as sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development
- Interpersonal development and communication skills
- Reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding
- Sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills
- Likelihood of graduating
- Career development
- Relationships with faculty and satisfaction with the college/university

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Research on SL/CBL

In 2022, the American Association of Colleges and Universities released the report, _The Effects of Community-Based and Civic Engagement in Higher Education_, a synthesis of 53 studies published between 2011-2021 that examined high impact educational practices, many of which were studies on CBL/SL. They found that CBL/SL continued to have positive outcomes in six areas:

- increased personal and social responsibility
- development of positive mindsets and dispositions
- improved graduation and retention rates
- learning gains
- improved intellectual and practical skills
- increased career-related skills

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Part 2: CBL at Holy Cross

1. The Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning, Teaching, and Engaged Scholarship
2. Holy Cross mission and CBL
3. Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm
4. Research on CBL at Holy Cross

part 2
The Donelan Office

The mission of the [Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning, Teaching, & Engaged Scholarship](#) is to engage faculty, staff, students and community partners in teaching, learning and engaged research that address pressing community issues. In the Jesuit tradition, and through service and research guided by principles of social justice, mutuality and reciprocity, we promote participatory experiential learning and research opportunities that foster the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources and include those affected by the issues throughout the process. Central to our practice is dialogue, reflection, co-learning and long-term commitments to participation.

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How we help to implement CBL:
- Provide pedagogical resources for faculty, such as in-person gatherings/trainings and asynchronous resources
- Consult with faculty on syllabi writing and assignment creation
- Develop and nurture community partnerships that faculty can partner with for placements and projects
- Connect faculty directly with community partners to co-create CBL together
- Provide and fund transportation for Holy Cross students to get to their off-campus agencies
- Facilitate grant resources for faculty, staff, and students (The Marshall Memorial Fund and Scholarship in Action)
- Provide resources for reflection and/or facilitate in-class and out-of-class reflection sessions
- Support students through 1:1 advising and through our student leadership program, the CBL Intern Program

Holy Cross mission and CBL

In 2000, Fr. Kolvenbach, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, outlined a [vision](#) for Jesuit higher education stating:

"Our universities also boast a splendid variety of in-service programs, outreach programs, insertion programs, off-campus contacts, and hands -on courses. These should not be too optional or peripheral, but at the core of every Jesuit university's program of studies…. Every discipline, beyond its necessary specialization, must engage with human society, human life, and the environment in appropriate ways, cultivating moral concern about how people ought to live together."

"We must .. 'educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world.' Solidarity is learned through 'contact' rather than through 'concepts' … When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection. Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of the world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively."

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Holy Cross mission and CBL

Excerpt from the [Holy Cross mission statement](#):

"To participate in the life of Holy Cross is to accept an invitation to join in dialogue about basic human questions: What is the moral character of teaching and learning? How do we find meaning in life and history? What are our obligations to one another? What is our special responsibility to the world's poor and powerless?"

"Shared responsibility for the life and governance of the College should lead all its members to make the best of their own talents, to work together, to be sensitive to one another, to serve others, and to seek justice within and beyond the Holy Cross community."

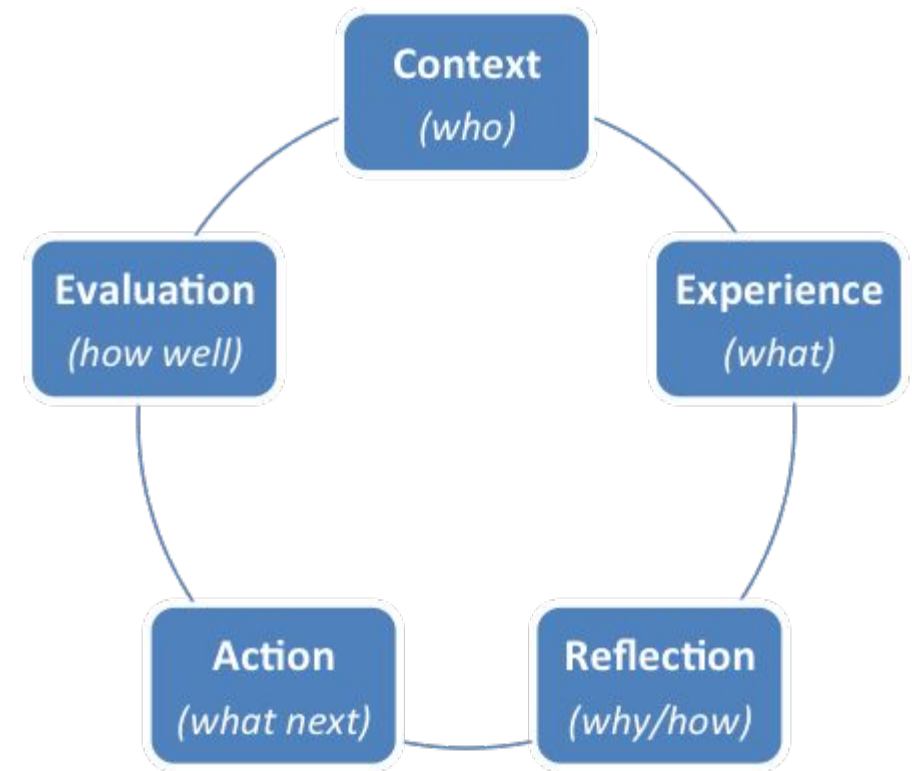Holy Cross

Holy Cross mission and CBL

Consistent with the mission of Holy Cross, and the vision of Jesuit higher education outlined by Fr. Kolvenbach, CBL offers students the possibility to engage in the "gritty reality of the world" in order to meaningfully reflect upon the question of what responsibility each of us, and Holy Cross as an institution, has towards creating a more just society and we can use our individual gifts and talents and our collective resources, privilege, and power to contribute toward this aim.

Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

- The pedagogy of CBL also aligns with the [Ignatian pedagogical paradigm](#)
- The five elements of Ignatian pedagogy - context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation - derive from the underlying principles, values, and actions in [St. Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises.](#)
- According to the paradigm, all learning is:
  - Situated in a specific context.
  - Rooted in previous experience and the result of new *learning experiences*.
  - Dependent upon - and deepened by - reflection about those experiences.
  - Made meaningful when new knowledge is put into some kind of action.
  - Reinforced by explicit evaluation (and ultimately, *self*-evaluation) of those actions and the degree to which learning has occurred.

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Graphic from:
https://www.slu.edu/cttl/resources/ignatian-pedagogical-paradigm.php

Research on CBL at Holy Cross

Holy Cross faculty and Donelan Office staff have done a few research studies on the experience students have in CBL at Holy Cross, specifically, finding, generally, that CBL enables students to learn better than they would in a typical classroom, to learn about social justice issues and how they might work to address them, to connect course content with "real-world" experience, to more deeply live out Holy Cross' mission, and to feel hopeful about the future:

- [Actualizing Mission and Holistic Education through Service-Learning](#) (PDF) (pp. 93-115)
- [Combining High Impact Practices to Facilitate Hope for Young Adults Transitioning into College](#)
- ["I Will Be Forever Changed": Encouraging Meaning-Making in Service-Learning](#)
- [Service-Learning: A Powerful Pedagogy for Promoting Academic Success among Students of Color](#)
- [Teaching About Substance Use Recovery: The Pedagogical Power of Community-Based Learning](#)

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Part 3: Mutual and reciprocal relationships with community partners

1. **Reciprocity**
2. **Mutuality**
3. **Re-thinking assumptions (Hurd & Stanton, 2022)**

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part 3
Reciprocity

As Serve Learn argues, "in order to sustain service-learning within an integrated curriculum, there needs to be **reciprocity**. By this, we mean an ongoing collaboration that is meaningful for both learners and community partners. It is important that the benefits of service-learning are felt on both sides. Not only does this ensure long-lasting sustainable relationships between students and the community around them, but it creates a positive attitude and meaningful interactions for both."

Reciprocity is an interaction between two or more parties. This interaction needs to be mutually beneficial, where each will play a role in the interaction. It is interaction that is placed on the basis of "you do something for us, and we will return the favor and do something for you", thereby answering each other's needs. Often with community service it is one sided "we will do something to/for you", the shift towards reciprocity happens when we understand the assets of the community partner and learn from them.

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Reciprocity

Henry and Breyfogle (2006) put forward an "enriched form of reciprocity" in their article, [“Toward a New Framework of “Server” and “Served”: De(and Re)constructing Reciprocity in Service-learning Pedagogy.”](#)

Key elements of enriched reciprocity are: collective goals, full participation from the partner/public, honesty about boundaries and power, generative outcomes for all, envision the "possibility for unlimited exchange" (p. 33).

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TABLE 1.
Differences between Traditional and Enriched Forms of Reciprocity

	Traditional	Enriched
Goal/Objective	Individual	Collective whole
Perception of Power	Levels of authority	Shared authority
Partner Identity	Maintains institutional identity	Larger definition of community
Boundaries	Works w/in systems to satisfy	Transcends self-interests to create larger meaning
Outcomes	Students changed	All parties are changed
Scope of Commitment	Tightly defined	Generative

Comparison of Essential Elements in Traditional vs. Enriched Forms of Reciprocity, (Enos and Morton, 2003, 25).

Table from:
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1068073.pdf

part 3
Mutuality

As [Bemme et al. (2022)](#) point out, "there is no singular definition of mutuality" (p. 546). Elements of mutuality include:

- "reciprocal transactions and exchanges"
- "mutual influence and responsiveness"
- "interdependency and a sense of common purpose"
- "exercised in an egalitarian manner"

Acknowledging the power dynamics inherent in CBL (and in any exchange between an institution of higher education and the community in which it is embedded), as well as the challenges that come with sharing power and exchanging resources, mutual partnerships are a goal of CBL and help to make the experience as meaningful and impactful as possible for all involved.

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part 3
Re-thinking assumptions

While reciprocity and mutuality are important elements of campus-community relationships, there are assumptions that can be made when using such terms, as well as assumptions made in creating CBL experiences more generally. Scholars Hurd and Stanton (2022) offer a framework for *community development-focused, multilateral,collaborative, sustainable justice-oriented partnership SLCE [service learning and community engagement] practice* that is helpful in bringing to light assumptions made and challenges in developing strong campus-community partnerships. The following table offers helpful recommendations:

Table 2. Re-thinking assumptions of SLCE and higher education community engagement.

- **Move beyond "partnership pairs" aimed at improving social service provision or generating technical solutions** and toward *collective, sustained efforts among an intentionally-diverse, multilateral set of stakeholders* to develop a shared understanding of local history, patterns of inequality in access to resources and decision-making, and how to supporting capacity among community members (including the most marginalized) to research and understand patterns and to carry out plans to address them.
- **Move beyond "co-creation" understood as an equal role of all stakeholders in deciding how work is done** (and the terms under which it is done) and toward commitment to *community-directed decision making and a capacity-building orientation* aimed at supporting the participation and leadership of those marginalized or most affected by the problem.
- **Move beyond "reciprocity" understood as agreement and cooperation** and toward *the favoring of understanding over that of agreement*, where reciprocity depends not essentially on agreement/cooperation but on a process of collaboration rooted in thoughtful negotiation and compromise over potentially-conflicting approaches to change and justice in the name of trust-building and shared commitment to mutually envisioned long-term outcomes or goals. In this approach, engaging tensions and negotiating power relations within and between participating organizations are core dimensions of the group's commitment to work together.
- **Move beyond "shared authority" understood as equal influence by all autonomous stakeholders on how projects are designed and implemented** and *toward a commitment to center the perspectives and agency of those most often dismissed and left unheard* and who experience the problem most forcefully. In other words, IHE and their representatives play a role of "humbled responsiveness."
- **Move beyond "mutual responsibility" understood as a two-way exchange of value** and toward a *collectively-negotiated, long-range set of social justice or societal outcomes and associated actions* that move beyond providing "services" to people "in need."

Table from:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15575330.2022.2121297?scroll=top&needAccess=true

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Part 4: What are the components of a good CBL experience?

1. Sanford's theory of challenge and support
2. Challenges through cognitive dissonance
3. Support through: relationships, application, and reflection
4. Transactional vs. transformational
5. Principles of good practice

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Sanford's theory of challenge and support

Sanford (1962; 1967; 1968) proposed that as a result of facing challenging stimuli, one seeks to reduce the tension associated with disequilibrium by using coping strategies and responses that have been successful in the past. However, some stimuli are so challenging that prior strategies and responses are ineffective. Because former modes of response will not suffice in the face of this new challenging stimulus, the person is required to innovate and respond in a new manner. It is in this innovative process of developing a new response that Sanford argues the possibility for growth occurs.

Sanford also argues that it is necessary to balance challenge and support throughout this difficult process of development. Too much challenge can hinder the possibility for growth because: a) a student may react defensively and resist change or b) a student may face such excessive strain that it leads to mental health problems (Sanford, 1966, p. 45). To counter these possibilities, Sanford believes it is crucial to offer a student the appropriate level of support when challenges become overwhelming.

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Challenges through cognitive dissonance

CBL offers the possibility for cognitive dissonance/disequilibrium to occur in a manner that can stimulate growth as outlined by Sanford (as well as other developmental theorists) through:
- Exposure to diverse perspectives/experiences that do not fit with prior perspectives/experiences.
- Learning that social problems are more complex than they might have previously appeared and that there are no easy solutions to these problems
- Being asked to reflect critically in a manner that pushes "students to explore the assumptions that underlie their own perceptions and the way that society is organized" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 198)

Note: Research has found that community-based learning is a more effective pedagogy (in terms of achieving desired student developmental outcomes) when students are engaged in the community for more than 15-20 hours throughout the duration of the course (Mabry, 1998; Gray et al., 1999). This is likely related to the possibility for challenge to occur.

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Support through relationships

Numerous studies have found that supportive relationships play a key role in high quality community-based learning experiences (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hatcher et al., 2004; Kiely, 2005; Radecke,2007) .

Caring relationships with faculty, peers, and/or those at community agencies can be a significant source of support as students face challenges associated with CBL (and otherwise).

Astin et al. (2000) conducted a comprehensive investigation of how service learning affects students by collecting longitudinal data from 22,236 undergraduates. The researchers found that discussing service with peers and faculty "account for more of the effects of service on the dependent measures than do other mediating activities....What is particularly interesting is that it is discussion with other students that most strongly mediates the effect of service on these outcomes. In other words, the opportunity to "process" the service experience with other students appears to be a powerful component of both community service and service learning" (p. 33).

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Support through application

The application of the community engagement experience to course material can serve as a form of support in that it provides frameworks through which students can process and make sense of what they are experiencing in CBL. Course material can provide insights that help students construct new ways of knowing.

Additionally, studies have found that applying community experiences to course content is key to achieving desired learning and developmental outcomes (Astin, et al., 2000; Eyler et al., 2001; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Peyrot, 2005).

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Support through reflection

Reflection is a means through which relationships can be built, application of community experience to course material can occur, and through which students can process the challenges they are facing.

Eyler ([2002](#)) believes that reflection on the community-based learning experience is "the process by which individuals develop the capacity to understand and resolve complexity" (p. 522) and that there needs to be continual opportunities for student observations to be "processed, challenged, and connected with other information" (p. 526).

Reflection takes many forms with the most prominent being discussions with other students, discussions with faculty, journal writing, and reflective papers ([Gray et al., 1998](#)).

The quality of reflection in CBL can vary tremendously and the quality level can have an impact on the student development that occurs (Ash & Clayton, [2004](#), [2009](#); [Eyler & Giles, 1999](#); [Eyler, 2002](#); [Gray et al., 1998](#); [Hatcher & Bringle, 1997](#); [Hatcher et al., 2004](#)).

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part 4
Conducting high quality reflection

Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede's (1996) "4 C's" of Reflection:
- Continuous: reflection activities are undertaken throughout the CBL course, rather than intermittently.
- Connected: reflection efforts are structured and directly related to the learning objectives.
- Challenging: reflection efforts set high expectations, demand high quality student effort, and facilitate instructor feedback that stimulates further student learning.
- Contextualized: reflection activities are appropriate to the particular course, and commensurate with and complementary to the level and type of other course learning activities (cited in Howard, 2001, p. 20).

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) suggest that reflection should:
- Link CBL experiences to course learning objectives through journals, directed writing, and class discussions;
- Have guidance that includes clear expectations and criteria for evaluation;
- Occur at least once a week;
- Include feedback and assessment of student understanding of how course material connects to service;
- Include the opportunity to clarify values in light of service experiences.

Stith et al. (2021) developed a the critical service-learning reflection tool to support instructors, students, staff, and community members in reflecting critically and setting goals that move their practices towards justice. They areas of focus for reflection they suggest are:
- Authentic Relationships
- Equitable Classrooms & Cognitive Justice
- Reckoning with Systems
- Social Change Skills
- Redistribution of Power

Transactional vs. Transformational

[Clayton et al.](#) (2010) suggest, "improving relationships in intentional ways may enhance outcomes for all constituencies, although this is a hypothesis that can be empirically evaluated" (p. 6). Transformational relationship enable "both persons [to] grow and change because of deeper and more sustainable commitments" (p. 7).

Figure 2
Preliminary Continuum

Transactional   Transformational
[—   —]
1   10
    *Short-term   *Long-term; indefinite
    *Project-based   *Issue-based
    *Limited, planned commitments   *Dynamic, open commitments
    *Work within systems   *Create new systems
    *Maintain separate identities   *Create group identity
    *Accept institutional goals   *Critically examine goals

            EACH BENEFITS   EACH GROWS

Holy Cross

part 4
8 principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities

1. Intention: All parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience.

2. Preparedness and Planning: Participants must ensure that they enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives and activities are defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds.

3. Authenticity: The experience must have a real world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. This means that is should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.

4. Reflection: Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.

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8 principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities

5. Orientation and Training: For the full value of the experience to be accessible to both the learner and the learning facilitator(s), and to any involved organizational partners, it is essential that they be prepared with important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner's appreciation of the context and skill requirements of her/his work.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: Any learning activity will be dynamic and changing, and the parties involved all bear responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide the richest learning possible, while affirming the learner. It is important that there be a feedback loop related to learning intentions and quality objectives and that the structure of the experience be sufficiently flexible to permit change in response to what that feedback suggests. While reflection provides input for new hypotheses and knowledge based in documented experience, other strategies for observing progress against intentions and objectives should also be in place. Monitoring and continuous improvement represent the formative evaluation tools.

7. Assessment and Evaluation: Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes. Assessment is a means to develop and refine the specific learning goals and quality objectives identified during the planning stages of the experience, while evaluation provides comprehensive data about the experiential process as a whole and whether it has met the intentions which suggested it.

8. Acknowledgment: Recognition of learning and impact occur throughout the experience by way of the reflective and monitoring processes and through reporting, documentation and sharing of accomplishments. All parties to the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience.

Source: [Society for Experiential Education](#)

Holy Cross

Part 5: Additional resources available via The Donelan Office/Holy Cross and externally

1. Ignite (intranet for **holycross.edu** users)
2. Holy Cross' Center for Inclusive Excellence in Teaching
3. External resources
   - Website and social media
   - Community engagement-related organizations
   - Community engagement-related journals
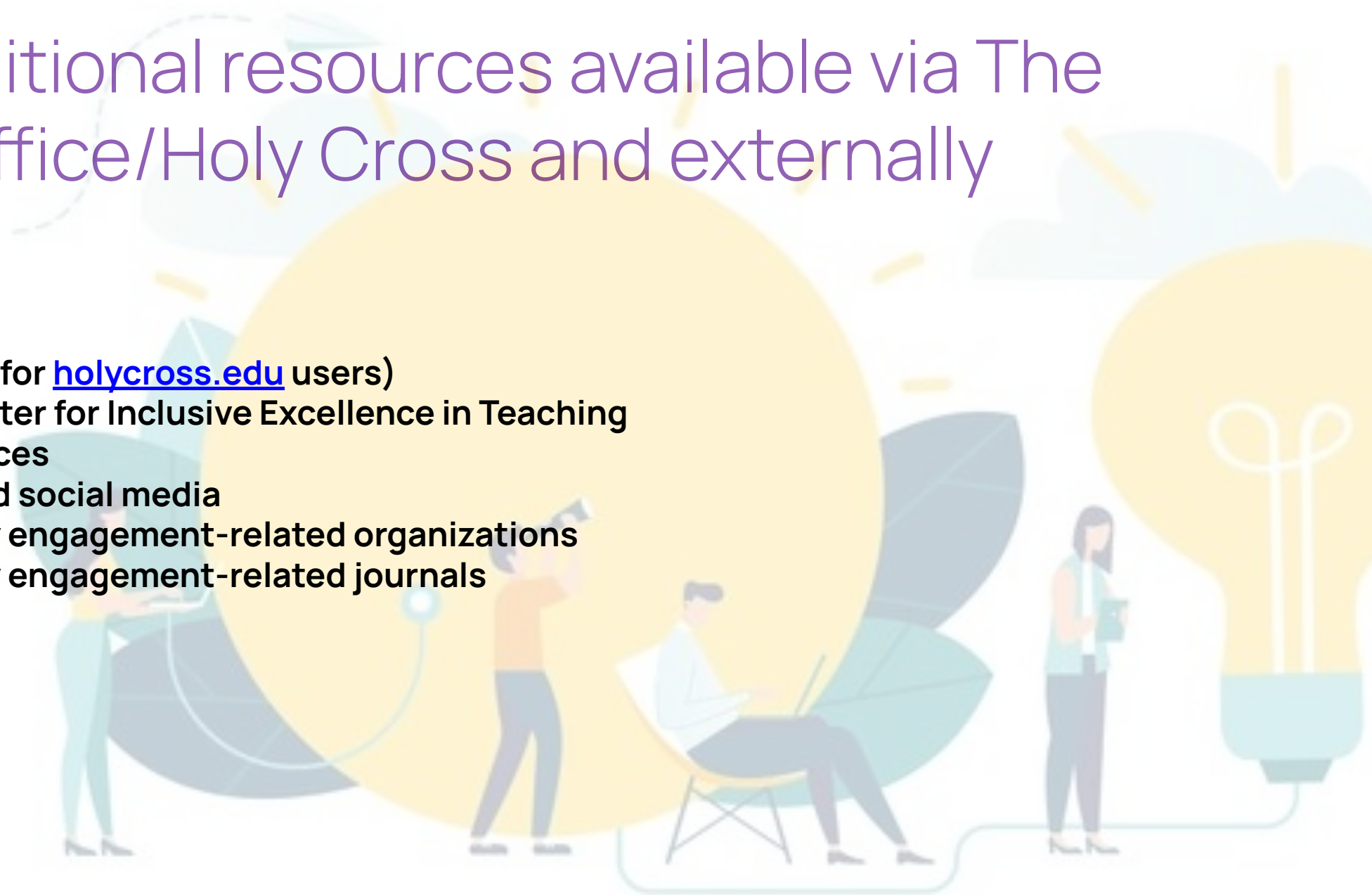
Holy Cross

Ignite

Ignite is Holy Cross' intranet, an internal internet where offices, departments, and programs post information and resources. Note: Ignite is available to users with a Holy Cross email address only.

Login to Ignite to access the Donelan Office's site. Our Ignite site contains resources for students, faculty, and staff. Resources include:
- A shared google folder for faculty with resources for teaching CBL and for community engagement scholarship
- Information about CBL project and placement courses
- Information about the CBL Interns, our student leadership program
- Information about the Marshall Memorial Grant Fund and Scholarship in Action
- Donelan Office news and events

Holy Cross

Center for Inclusive Excellence in Teaching (CIET)

Holy Cross' Center for Inclusive Excellence in Teaching, launching in 2025-2026, will serve as a convening site for discussion about teaching, encourage and support faculty-initiated pedagogical inquiry, develop and evaluate teaching-related projects, and support student-centered pedagogical approaches that are grounded in the scholarship of inclusive teaching and learning.

The inaugural director of CIET is Dr. Kathy Takayama, who comes to Holy Cross following a distinguished career as a faculty member and administrator at many institutions of higher learning. Most recently,, she served as the Executive Director of the Center for Professional Development and Inclusive Excellence, the Executive Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Interim Dean of Faculty Affairs at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in Okinawa, Japan. Her previous engagements include leadership positions at numerous centers for teaching including at Amherst College, Bates College, and the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University. Kathy holds a doctorate in biochemistry and molecular biology from Rutgers University Medical School in Piscataway, New Jersey, and she completed postdoctoral training and a faculty position at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

The Donelan Office looks forward to collaborating with CIET in its first year and in the years to come.

Read more about the College's commitment to inclusive excellence in President Rougeau's strategic plan, ASPIRE.

Holy Cross

part 5
External resources

Community-Engagement Related Organizations:
- [AAC&U](#) is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. AAC&U initiatives relevant to community-based learning include the following: [Bringing Theory to Practice](#), [Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement](#), [Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility](#), and [High-Impact Educational Practices](#).
- [The American Democracy Project](#) is a multi-campus initiative focused on higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy.
- [Bringing theory to Practice (BT2P)](#) is a national project, headquartered at Elon University. It is a community of educators committed to holistic change. They offer grants for civic engagement, student wellbeing, engaged learning, and more. They also work to help academic institutions collaborate across academic sectors and with their communities. They have published several books and offer a detailed newsletter.
- [Campus Compact](#), a national higher education association, is dedicated to campus-based civic engagement. Campus Compact promotes public and community service that develops students' citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides [resources](#) and training for faculty seeking to integrate civic and community-based learning into the curriculum.
- The [Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities](#) (CUMU) has become a leading voice and forum for higher education leaders anchoring and energizing urban and metropolitan communities. CUMU helps its members contend with the complexities of their work by providing opportunities for them to exchange ideas for how to dismantle barriers and institutionalize practices that enable intentional, transformative change involving students, faculty, staff, and community partners.
- [Imagining America](#) is a consortium of universities and organizations dedicated to advancing the public and civic purposes of humanities, arts, and design.
- [The International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement](#) promotes the development and dissemination of research on service-learning and community engagement internationally and across all levels of the education system.

part 5
External resources

Community-Engagement Related Organizations (cntd)：

- [The National Center for the Study of University Engagement (NCSUE)](#) seeks a greater understanding of how university engagement enhances faculty scholarship and community progress. The Center convenes scholars and community fellows to explore ways of creating institutional support for building truly collaborative arrangements.
- [The National Society for Experiential Education (SEE)](#) is a nonprofit membership organization composed of educators, businesses, and community leaders founded in 1971 that strives to cultivate educators who effectively use experiential education as an integral part of personal, professional, civic, and global learning.
- [The New England Faculty Development Consortium (NEFDC)](#) is a not-for-profit, regional organization dedicated to enhancing the professional development of faculty and administrators committed to excellence in teaching and learning. Each year the NEFDC sponsors a full day conference in the fall, followed by three related workshops in the spring. The Consortium also publishes *The Exchange* in the spring, and occasional special issues, providing an opportunity for members share their work in a peer reviewed publication. They offer financial awards to members of up to $2,000 in the spring to encourage and support the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- [Outreach Scholarship](#) is a national conference which provides an opportunity for critical reflection on the public mission and work of an academic institution and serves to strengthen institutional support for engagement and public scholarship.
- [Society for Experiential Education:](#) Founded in 1971, the Society for Experiential Education (SEE) is the premier, nonprofit membership organization composed of a global community of researchers, practitioners, and thought leaders who are committed to the establishment of effective methods of experiential education as fundamental to the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower learners and promote the common good. SEE sustains a great variety of experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, micro-experiences, service learning, global experience, and more. The Society's vision is to expand the perspectives shared and voices heard throughout our growing profession so that they are representative of the practitioners and students in the field of experiential education.

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Community-Engagement Related Journals:

- *Catalyst:* Created in partnership with the North Carolina Campus Engagement and Wake Forest University's Office of Civic & Community Engagement, *Catalyst* seeks to amplify the diverse voices of our field, engaging all stakeholders in meaningful dialogue that leverages our collective power to shape the global conversation about higher education's intrinsic social value.
- *Citizenship Teaching & Learning* is a peer-reviewed journal focuses on citizenship teaching and learning in all contexts, for all ages, within and beyond schools. It brings together the work of researchers, policy-makers, administrators and practicing professionals in this important area.
- *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice* is a peer-reviewed, open access journal, sponsored by the University of Miami and Rutgers University. It is a site for sharing research and practice emanating from university-community collaborations. It was created to highlight research that describes, examines and evaluates the many different forms of university-community collaborations.
- *ENGAGE!* is committed to advancing the field of community engaged research (CER) and community based participatory research (CBPR) in urban settings, nationally and internationally. The journal addresses current issues, and challenges, facing urban communities. *ENGAGE!* invites discussion and development of empirical, conceptual, and theoretical articles that make substantial contributions to the field in all areas of community engaged research, evaluation and assessment. The journal provides a forum for community scholars and university scholarly exchange of research findings ideas that advance knowledges that make a societal impact.
- *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* captures the best current scholarship in experiential learning: how it can be defined, strengthened, promoted, and assessed for the sake of educational effectiveness and equity.
- *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* is a refereed journal that responds to an emerging global movement of collaborative, critical and change-oriented community-university research initiatives. It provides a forum for academics, practitioners and community representatives to explore issues and reflect on methodological practices relating to the full range of engaged activity. The journal publishes empirical and evaluative case studies of community-based research and pedagogy; detailed analyses of partnership models, processes and practices; and theoretical reflections that contribute to the scholarship of engagement.

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Community-Engagement Related Journals:

- *[The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement](#)* (IJRSLCE) is a peer-reviewed online journal dedicated to disseminating high-quality research focused on service-learning, campus-community engagement, and the promotion of active and effective citizenship through education. IJRSLCE is international in scope, with an interest in service-learning and community engagement both in the United States and around the world.
- *[The Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education](#)* is an on-line, open access, refereed journal concerned with exploring community engagement and community-based learning perspective, research, and practice.
- *[The Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship](#)* (JCES) is a peer-reviewed international journal through which faculty, staff, students, and community partners disseminate scholarly works. JCES integrates teaching, research, and community engagement in all disciplines, addressing critical problems identified through a community-participatory process.
- *[The Journal of Experiential Education](#)* (JEE) is an international, peer-reviewed journal publishing refereed articles on experiential education in diverse contexts. The JEE provides a forum for the empirical and theoretical study of issues concerning experiential learning, program management and policies, educational, developmental, and health outcomes, teaching and facilitation, and research methodology.
- *[The Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement](#)* serves "as the premier peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal to advance theory and practice related to all forms of outreach and engagement between higher education institutions and communities."
- *[The Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education](#)* is an online, international, peer-reviewed journal for the dissemination of original research regarding effective institutional-community partnerships. Its primary emphasis is to provide an outlet for sharing the methodologies and pedagogical approaches that lead to effective community-identified outcomes.
- *[The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning](#)* (MJCSL) is an open-access journal focusing on research, theory, pedagogy, and other matters related to academic service-learning, campus-community partnerships, and engaged/public scholarship in higher education. MJCSL is published by the University of Michigan's Edward Ginsberg Center, with support from Michigan Publishing.

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Community-Engagement Related Journals:

- *[Public](#)* is a peer-reviewed, multimedia e-journal focused on humanities, arts, and design in public life. It aspires to connect what we can imagine with what we can do. *Public* is interested in projects, pedagogies, resources, and ideas that reflect rich engagements among diverse participants, organizations, disciplines, and sectors. It is part of the national consortium Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, committed to the relationship between culture and participatory democracy.
- *[Reflections](#)* is a peer-reviewed journal that provides a forum for scholarship on public rhetoric, civic writing, service-learning, and community literacy. Originally founded as a venue for teachers, researchers, students and community partners to share research and discuss the theoretical, political and ethical implications of community-based writing and writing instruction, *Reflections* publishes a lively collection of scholarship on public rhetoric and civic writing, occasional essays and stories both from and about community writing and literacy projects, interviews with leading workers in the field, and reviews of current scholarship touching on these issues and topics.
- *[The Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning and Community-Based Research](#)*, is a refereed, multidisciplinary, online undergraduate journal that advances knowledge in new scholarly arenas by presenting intellectual and reflective work by undergraduates. The *Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning and Community-Based Research* is open to undergraduate students in the U.S. and across the globe in all subject areas.

Thank you!

Contact the Donelan Office at:
donelanoffice@holycross.edu

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J.D. Power Center
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