

Community Engagement Competencies for Graduate and Professional Students: Michigan State University's Approach to Professional Development

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Increasingly, graduate and professional students arrive at institutions of higher education with personal and professional commitments to make the world a better place through community engagement; however, departments often do not incorporate outreach and engagement into graduate curricula (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006). As a result, students must seek out supplementary professional development opportunities to increase knowledge, strengthen skills, gain experience, and reflect critically on engagement. In 2008, Michigan State University initiated a competency-based Graduate Certification in Community Engagement to meet the professional development needs of students who aspire to be community-engaged, tenure-track faculty; community engagement professionals; extension educators; or engagement professionals in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. This paper chronicles the evolution and emergence of community engagement competency areas identified through iterative cycles of participant evaluation and alignment with faculty community engagement competencies. In the conclusion, the authors address limitations, potential adaptations, and future directions for these community engagement competencies.

An increasing number of graduate and professional students arrive at institutions of higher education with personal and professional commitments to making the world a better place through community engagement (Jaeger, Sandmann, & Kim, 2011). The editors of *Publicly Engaged Scholars: Next-Generation Engagement and the Future of Higher Education* note that the next wave of scholars are “a much more racially and ethnically diverse group, are increasingly public in their identities and are developing new patterns of engagement that are changing the nature of teaching, learning, and knowledge generation” (Post, Ward, Longo, & Saltmarsh, 2016, p. 1). This next generation is committed to equality, social justice, civic duty, and the public purposes of higher education, but is often confronted by institutional structures, policies, and practices that delegitimize their experiences, perspectives, and approaches. They are often frustrated by departmental curricula that fail to address community engagement (Applegate, 2002; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006) and instead emphasize “competitive individ-

ualism, without attention to the consequentiality of research for public purposes” (O'Meara, 2011, p. 185).

To honor their personal and professional commitments, community-oriented students have to pursue supplementary professional development about community engagement through workshops, fellowship programs, and certification programs. Acknowledging the need for such opportunities, community engagement leaders advocate for professional development that goes beyond increasing knowledge and strengthening skills; they advocate for the creation of “academic homes” for community-engaged scholars (Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O'Meara, 2008) through “more intentional and useful ways that prepare students for successful careers as engaged scholars” (Post et al., 2016, p. 191).

What might an intentional professional development program for graduate and professional students about community engagement look like? What community engagement competencies might guide graduate professional development?

How might a combination of knowledge, skills, action, and reflection be used to prepare the next generation of community-engaged scholars and practitioners?

This paper provides one response to the above questions by describing key competencies that have emerged in the field, explaining how they have been adapted for graduate and professional students, and chronicling the evolution of 20 community engagement competency areas that guide Michigan State University's Graduate Certification in Community Engagement, a university-wide professional development program for masters and Ph.D. students from any department. First, the process of identifying, expanding, and refining the community engagement competencies for graduate and professional students is explained. Next, the community engagement competency areas, organized into eight broad dimensions, are detailed with accompanying citations that could be used as assigned readings or workshop materials. Finally, the conclusion outlines limitations and invites the readers to imagine ways to adapt the community engagement competency areas to better suit their students, institution, and community contexts.

Evolution of the Graduate Certification

In 2008, faculty and academic staff in MSU's Office of University Outreach and Engagement developed the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement. Modeled after MSU's Certification in Teaching and Learning approved by Academic Governance, this professional development program similarly requires participants to attend seminars, complete a mentored community engagement experience, and prepare a written portfolio that is presented to a committee for final approval.

The Graduate Certification is organized as a competency-based curriculum, where skills, abilities, and knowledge are emphasized. Demonstration of how learners apply the ideas in practice is the main focus of assessment (Voorhees, 2001). In keeping with competency-based education, participants are permitted to request substitutions for the seminars, as long as the substituted experiences cover material similar to the seminars and they can demonstrate understanding and practice of the main seminar ideas in their projects and portfolios (i.e., show they have mastered the competency). For example, community psychology graduate students who have completed a three-credit program evaluation class often request substitutions for the evaluating community partnerships competency.

Tenure-track faculty, senior level administrators, academic staff, MSU Extension professionals,

community partners, and program alumni teach the two-hour, Friday afternoon seminars. Each seminar addresses a community-engagement competency, draws upon three to five assigned readings, and incorporates active learning activities, such as think-pair-share, case studies, scenarios, and panels.

The mentored community engagement experience involves 60 hours of outreach or engagement activities, conducted with off-campus community partners. Participants may conduct community-engaged research, community-engaged creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service and practice, or community-engaged commercialized activities. The Office of University Outreach and Engagement assists participants in finding community partners, as needed.

The written portfolio and presentation to the advisory committee and program participants is the final requirement. The portfolio presentation provides an opportunity for the student to describe themselves publicly as a community-engaged scholar or practitioner and to discuss their work as community-engaged scholarship or practice. The advisory committee certifies that the participants have mastered the competencies in the program through the use of a rubric and portfolio assessment. More details about how the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement curriculum is enacted are in Matthews, Karls, Doberneck, & Springer (2015).

When participants successfully complete all three requirements (i.e., seminars or approved substitutions, mentored community engagement experience, and written portfolio and presentation), they earn an official credential on their academic transcripts.

Beginnings: Initial Community Engagement Competencies

For the first three years (from 2009-2012), MSU's institutional definition of outreach and engagement guided the graduate professional development program. Institutionally, outreach and engagement are defined as "a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research [and creative activities], and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and disseminating knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions" (Michigan State University, 1993, p. 1). This institutional definition distinguishes outreach and engagement from other activities that are often included in the service categories, such as serving on department or university-wide committees, contributing to disci-

plinary associations, volunteering unrelated to the faculty member's discipline or community partnerships in their academic field, and conducting outside work for pay unrelated to departmental or university work.

During these early years, the MSU Graduate Certification's curriculum was organized around seven competency areas identified by the faculty and staff advisory committee (referred to hereafter as the advisory committee). Those competency areas included the following: history and foundations of community engaged. scholarship; initiating and sustaining community partnerships; community-based, participatory research; capacity building for sustained change; evaluation of community partnerships; ethics in community engagement; and working with diverse communities. Participants were required to incorporate all competencies into their mentored community engagement experiences, written portfolios, and portfolio presentations.

Listening To Participant Evaluation: Second Iteration of Competencies

At the end of year three, experience with the participants and formally gathered evaluation data pointed to the need to revise the curriculum to better match the participants' personal and professional learning interests. For example, participants interested in service-learning were underserved by

a curriculum that presented community-based, participatory research as the only type of community-engaged scholarship. As a result, community-engaged teaching and learning was added to the list of competencies. Participant evaluation data also revealed the need to understand various collaboration techniques, so that community partner voice could be incorporated into engagement processes. A techniques competency was added to explore listening, brainstorming, prioritizing, and decision-making approaches for small community groups or large numbers of stakeholders. Participants also requested workshops on communicating with public audiences since departmental mentoring focused almost exclusively on communicating with academic audiences through grants, conferences, and peer reviewed publishing. The advisory committee also added systems thinking and critical reflection to the list of competencies during this iteration.

Introduction of the Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure

In 2014, the advisory committee developed the Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure (see Figure 1) to translate the institution's definition to an individual or community partner level, so that the parameters of what counts as community-engaged scholarship and practice¹ were clarified for the students and their community partners. The figure

Figure 1
Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure



states: Foundational scholarship informs and guides your engagement experiences with your community partners, which then generate new scholarship and practice for both academic and public audiences. The arrow at the bottom of the figure indicates: Community-engaged scholarship and practice take place in collaboration with community partners who contribute local, indigenous, and/or practitioner knowledge throughout the engagement process. Collaboration techniques are used to elicit community partners' perspectives and to provide voice to them in decision-making processes that shape community-engaged scholarship. Figure 1 reinforces the institution's definition of community engagement as a scholarly activity that takes place in the context of strong community partnerships.

Foundational scholarship is defined as the body of knowledge, including theories and conceptual frameworks, which informs and guides community-engaged scholarship and practice. Foundational scholarship may be (a) related to the social issue of concern; (b) theories, conceptual frameworks, or models from the scholar's discipline or field of study; (c) from the scholarship of engagement; (d) from the scholarship of teaching and learning; (e) related to the population, community, context, or setting; (f) related to paradigms, methodologies, or approaches; (g) related to collaboration techniques, methods, or engagement processes; (h) associated with reflection, assessment, evaluation, or lessons learned; or (i) some combination of the aforementioned kinds of foundational scholarship.

As an illustration of *foundational scholarship*, consider a social work faculty member studying the early stage impacts of a weekend backpack food program to alleviate hunger in middle school children living in a low-income housing community. The community-engaged faculty member might draw upon the following foundational scholarship: research about food insecurity and hunger (social issue of concern), program implementation in low-income housing communities (scholar's discipline or field), effective practices for engaging middle school children (population), and developmental evaluation (evaluation, reflection, assessment).

This definition of foundational scholarship reinforces the idea that community-engaged scholars and practitioners should draw upon theories, conceptual models, and/or best practices to inform and guide their community engagement activities. In other words, community engagement is a *scholarly* endeavor. This emphasis on scholarly foundations distinguishes community-engaged scholarship from other forms of community work, especially community service and volunteering, which often lack a connection to scholarship.

Engagement experiences with community partners in the center of Figure 1 refers to four distinctly different types of community engagement activities, including community-engaged research, community-engaged creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service and practice, and community-engaged commercialized activities (Doberneck, Glass, & Schweitzer, 2010).²

Community partner voice, an essential component of community-engaged scholarship and practice, is represented by the arrow at the bottom of the figure. Community partner voice refers to the explicitly recognized value of incorporating contextually-appropriate local, indigenous, and/or practitioner perspectives throughout the process of engagement. In contrast to traditional scholarship, which privileges scientific knowledge and excludes other forms of knowledge, this stance fully acknowledges that community engagement takes place at the intersection of multiple knowledge cultures (i.e., individual knowledge, local knowledge, specialized knowledge, organizational knowledge, and holistic knowledge, including indigenous knowledge (Brown & Lambert, 2013)). Community partners' tacit and implicit knowledge is incorporated into project decision-making through different degrees of collaboration, shared authority, mutual benefit, and reciprocity.

Depicted on the right side of Figure 1, community-engaged scholarship generates *scholarly products* for two distinct audiences: academic audiences and public audiences (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). *Academic audiences* refers to higher education colleagues in disciplines, disciplinary associations, and institutions of higher education, who evaluate the quality of scholarship through the rigor of peer review in journal articles, conference presentations, fellowship proposals, grant proposals, and scholarly awards (Lamont, 2009). *Public audiences* refers to community partners, practitioners, policy-makers, media, and members of the general public; each audience has specific preferences for communication style, content, and evidence, with an emphasis on credibility, accessibility, and timeliness (Baron, 2010; Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010).

In an intentional departure from the outreach and engagement literature, this definition of community-engaged scholarship and practice does not require a university to be a partner in community engagement activities. In other words, it is possible for a nonprofit leader, business professional, or government official to practice community-engaged scholarship – as long as the activity is guided by foundational scholarship, involves community partners in

the decision-making process, and generates scholarly products for academic and public audiences. This reframing allows graduate and professional students, especially those with non-higher education career aspirations, to envision their pathways as community-engaged scholars and practitioners (Gilven, Roberts, & Martin, 2012; Post et al., 2016; Whitchurch, 2012). The reframing also decenters the university in community-engaged scholarship and legitimizes leadership for community-engaged scholarship that comes from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Despite a growing interest in and number of professional development programs for graduate students interested in community engagement (Allen & Moore, 2010; Doberneck, Brown, & Allen, 2010; Matthews et al., 2015), little discussion about graduate community engagement competencies was taking place at the national level during this period. To gather national feedback, the advisory committee presented different aspects of the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement at Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conferences in 2013, 2014, and 2015; International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement Conferences in 2013 and 2015; and the National Alliance for Broader Impacts in 2016. Through roundtable discussions, paper presentations, and in one case, electronic voting to rank competencies, conference participants provided generally positive feedback with suggestions for additional competencies about advocacy and leadership for community engagement within institutions of higher education.

By the end of the next three years (from 2012-2015), the MSU Graduate Certification curriculum was expanded to include an additional six core competencies: variations in community-engaged scholarship; techniques for community collaboration; community-engaged teaching and learning; systems approaches to community change; critical reflections on identity and culture; communicating with public audiences; and communicating with academic audiences. Participants were expected to incorporate all 13 competencies into their mentored community engagement experiences and reflect on all competencies in their written portfolios and presentations.

Aligning with Faculty Engagement Competencies: Third Iteration of Competencies

Over the summer of 2015, the advisory committee critically examined the literature about faculty competencies for community engagement, including the novice-intermediate-advanced model devel-

oped through the Community-Campus Partnership for Health FIPSE-funded, national charrette process (Blanchard et al., 2009) and subsequent implementation of that competency model at various campuses (Blanchard, Strauss, & Webb, 2012; DeLugan, Rousses, & Skram, 2014; Jameson, Clayton, Jaeger, & Bringle, 2012). The faculty community engagement competencies were valuable in aligning, expanding, and reframing the existing curriculum into a multi-dimensional set of community engagement competency areas for graduate and professional students. Table 1 shows how the faculty competencies mapped over to the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement Competency Areas.

First, in its critical examination of the faculty competencies, the advisory committee noted that the list had expanded from 14 to include 27 competencies with a multitude of learning objectives and a range of emphases. For example, some faculty competencies focused on changes in *attitude* (e.g., commitment to social change), *knowledge* (e.g., paradigms for community-engaged scholarship), or *skills* (e.g., ability to write grants supporting community-engaged scholarship). Some faculty competencies focused on knowledge, skills, and experiences *with external community partners* (e.g., skills in establishing, maintaining, and strengthening partnerships; working effectively with and in diverse communities); while others focused on *internal or institutional leadership* for community-engagement (e.g., ability to mentor junior colleagues; ability to share learning about community engagement with other faculty). Still other faculty competencies focused on skills needed for *bridging between community and university* (e.g., ability to negotiate across community-academic groups and contexts; ability to transfer skills to the community, thereby enhancing community capacity). All of these elements are important; however, this mixture of emphases limited the development of a coherent approach to graduate professional development.

Second, the advisory committee recognized that some faculty core competencies were not developmentally relevant to graduate and professional students (nor were they meant to be since they were originally conceived of as *faculty* competencies). Re-framing some faculty competencies more generally could better serve graduate and professional students. For example, the faculty competency “the ability to serve on reappointment, promotion, and tenure committees” could be reframed as “the capacity to serves as peer reviewer of community-engaged scholarship.” Similarly, faculty competencies related to career management such as “ability to balance or integrate tasks in academia (e.g., re-

Table 1
*Faculty Competencies Mapped Over to MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement
 Competency Areas*

Community Engagement Competency Area	Blanchard et al., 2009, 2012	Jameson et al., 2012	DeLugan et al., 2014	MSU
Understand concepts of “community engagement” and “community-engaged scholarship”	*	*	*	*
Ability to convey clearly to others the meaning of “community” and “community-engaged scholarship”		*		*
Ability to connect my understanding of community engagement and community- engaged scholarship with definitions used by others and thereby nurture meaningful discourse		*		*
Familiarity with basic literature and history of community-engaged scholarship (i.e., Boyer, Glassick, etc.)	*	*	*	*
Understanding of the various contributors to community issues, including economic, social, behavioral, political, and environmental factors	*	*	*	*
Skills for fostering community and social change		*		*
Commitment to fostering community and social change		*		*
Knowledge of the principles of community- engaged scholarship (i.e., theoretical frameworks, methods of planning, implementation, and evaluation)	*	*	*	*
Skills in applying the principles of community- engaged scholarship in practice		*		*
Ability to work effectively in and with diverse communities	*	*	*	*
Ability to negotiate across community-academic groups and contexts	*	*	*	*
Ability to write successful grant proposals expressing principles and approaches to community-engaged scholarship	*	*	*	*
Ability to write articles based on CES processes and outcomes for peer reviewed publication	*	*	*	*
Ability to collaborate with community members to generate significant, useful products of community-engaged scholarship that influence practice in the community		*		*
Ability to collaborate with community members in community capacity building endeavors		*		*
Ability to transfer skills to the community, thereby enhancing the community capacity, and to share skills with other faculty, recognition by the community	*		*	*
Ability to share my learning about community- engaged scholarship with other faculty		*		*
Ability to integrate research, teaching, and service through community engagement		*		*
Knowledge and successful application of definition of “community-engaged scholarship,” CES benchmarks, scholarly products, outcomes, and measures of quality	*		*	*
Understanding of the policy implications of CES and ability to work with communities in translating the process and findings of CES into policy	*		*	*
Ability to balance or integrate tasks in academia (e.g., research, teaching, service), posing special challenges to those engaged in CES in order to thrive in an academic environment	*		*	*
Knowledge of the role of community-engaged scholarship in my institution’s review, promotion, and tenure process		*		*
Ability to effectively describe scholarly components of community-engaged scholarship in a portfolio for review, promotion, and tenure	*	*	*	*
Knowledge of the reappointment, promotion, and tenure process and its relationship with CES; ability to serve on an RPT committee	*		*	*
Ability to mentor students and junior faculty in establishing and building a community- engaged scholarship based portfolio	*		*	*

Community Engagement Competency Area	Blanchard et al., 2009, 2012	Jameson et al., 2012	DeLugan et al., 2014	MSU
Ability to integrate community-engaged scholarship into my work with students (via teaching or research activities)		*		*
Ability to collaborate with students as co-educators, co-learners, and co-generators of knowledge		*		*
Ability to collaborate with community members as co-educators, co-learners, and co-generators of knowledge		*		*
Ability to provide leadership on my campus's efforts to advance community-engaged scholarship		*		
Understanding the conditions for and the dynamics of strong partnerships in community- engaged scholarship		*		*
Skills in establishing, maintaining and strengthening partnerships in community- engaged scholarship		*		*

search, teaching, and service) posing special challenges to those engaged in CES in order to thrive in an academic environment” (Blanchard et al., 2009) could be reframed as skills for successful community engagement careers for graduate and professional students (i.e., presenting oneself as a community-engaged scholar or practitioner).

Finally, embedded in some of the faculty competencies were ideas that merited fuller attention, rising to the level of their own competency. For example, in the list of faculty competencies, evaluation was embedded in “knowledge of the principles of community-engaged scholarship (i.e., theoretical frameworks, methods of planning, implementation, and evaluation” (Blanchard et al., 2009, p. 52). The advisory committee thought evaluation merited its own competency since formative evaluation supports knowing-in-action and improves ongoing collaborations; summative evaluation documents impact for community engagement; and partnership evaluation contributes to the scholarship of engagement and advances the field.

With all of these ideas – the competencies in the existing MSU graduate certification, six years of evaluation and feedback from participants, the faculty community engagement competencies, the committee members’ own ideas, and feedback gathered at national conferences – the advisory committee conducted a qualitative sort to organize the brainstormed collection of competencies. Using post-it notes on a conference room wall, advisory committee members arranged and re-arranged the competencies into a logical and scaffolded progression, moving from basic understandings (knowledge) to implementation (skills) through critical reflection. The advisory committee considered several ways of grouping the competencies over the summer months and came to final consensus on a curriculum that includes eight dimensions and 20 community engagement competency areas,

and that provided a strong scholarly and practical preparation for graduate and professional students from various departments with a range of career goals.

For the past two years (2015-2017), the MSU Graduate Certification curriculum has been organized into eight dimensions and 20 core competency areas. Participants are required to attend seminars about all of the competencies; however, in accordance with good practices in adult education, participants have been given choices about which competencies they include in their written portfolios and presentations. For their written portfolios, they are required to reflect on 15 of the 20 community engagement competency areas. Typically, they write about one type of community-engaged scholarship (e.g., community-engaged research and creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, or community-engaged service and practice). Participants may also select which approach or perspective to community-engaged scholarship (e.g., asset-based community engagement, capacity-building approaches, or systems approaches to sustained change) to address in their written portfolios. For their portfolio presentations, participants are required to speak about two community engagement competencies of their choosing. Requiring a broad familiarity with most of the community engagement concepts in the written portfolios balanced with a more in depth treatment of the key areas relevant to their mentored community engagement projects allows participants to customize their learning to better match their disciplinary approaches to community engagement, the needs of their community partners, their own personal and professional interests, and the context of their community work. Both the written portfolio and portfolio presentation are used by the advisory committee to evaluate each student’s mastery of the competencies.

The Eight Dimensions and 20 Community Engagement Competency Areas

The eight dimensions of this curriculum include: foundations, community partnerships, criticality in community engagement, community-engaged scholarship and practice, approaches and perspectives, evaluation and assessment, communication and scholarly skills, and successful community engagement careers. The eight dimensions provide organization and scaffolding to the 20 community engagement competency areas listed in Table 2.

Foundations

Foundations, the first dimension of the curriculum, establishes a shared understanding of basic history of community engagement concepts, introduces a common vocabulary that crosses disciplines, distinguishes among types of community-engaged activities, and emphasizes the breadth of what counts as community-engaged scholarship. The Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure is introduced and unpacked as part of this dimension. With a thorough understanding of foundations, learners should be able to articulate their understanding of community engagement and connect their scholarship to the broader scholarly discourses in their discipline and the field of community engagement (Jameson et al., 2012).

1. History of community-engaged scholarship. The curriculum for this competency includes the history of the community engagement movement in U.S. higher education (Boyer, 1990, 1996; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010; McCloskey et al., 2011; Sandmann, 2008); distinctions among service, outreach, and engagement (Neumann & Terosky, 2007; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011); definitions for community, engagement, scholarship, and community-engaged scholarship (Nexus Community Partners and the Building the Field of Community Engagement Partners, 2015); and importance of local, indigenous, and/or practitioner knowledge in the process of engagement (Brown & Lambert, 2013; Schön, 1995). Learners should be able to identify and incorporate foundational scholarship into their community engagement, name the community (or communities) they engage, locate their work on an outreach-engagement continuum, and identify knowledge contributions made by their community partners.

2. Variations in community-engaged scholarship. The curriculum for this competency makes distinctions among community-engaged research, community-engaged creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service and practice, and community-engaged commercialized activities (Doberneck et al., 2010); explains degrees of engagement in collaboration and decision-making

Table 2
MSU Community Engagement Competency Areas for Graduate and Professional Students

Dimensions	Community Engagement Competency Areas
Foundations	1. History of community engaged scholarship 2. Variations in community engaged scholarship
Community partnerships	3. Initiating community partnerships 4. Sustaining community partnerships 5. Techniques for community collaboration
Criticality in community engagement	6. Engaging with diverse communities 7. Critical reflection and critical thinking 8. Ethics in community engaged scholarship
Community-engaged scholarship and practice	9. Community-engaged research and creative activities 10. Community-engaged teaching and learning 11. Community-engaged service and practice
Approaches and perspectives	12. Asset-based community engagement 13. Capacity building for sustained change 14. Systems approaches to community change
Evaluation and assessment	15. Evaluating community partnerships 16. Peer review of community-engaged scholarship and practice
Communication and scholarly skills	17. Communicating with public audiences 18. Communicating with academic audiences
Successful community engagement careers	19. Documenting and communicating accomplishments 20. Community engagement across the career span

(Doberneck & Dann, 2016; Stanton, 2008); and describes patterns in disciplinary differences in community engagement (Buzinski et al., 2013; Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017). Learners should be able to distinguish other variations including social issue addressed, community or communities engaged, community partners, partnership structure, duration of collaboration, intensity of activity, and motivation for engagement (O'Meara, 2008). The importance of a range of scholarly products for both academic and public audiences is emphasized (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). Learners should be able to identify their type of community-engaged scholarship, describe their variation of community engagement, explain community partner voice in decision-making at different stages of their engagement process, and link their community-engaged scholarship or practice to their discipline or field.

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships, the second dimension of the curriculum, focuses on respectful and effective ways of partnering on engagement activities with partners beyond the borders of campus. In addition to understanding the general principles of partnering, learners become familiar with specific techniques or practices for initiating and maintaining community partnerships (CTSA, 2011; Enos & Morton, 2003; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003); learn about common partnership pitfalls and how to avoid them; and hear directly from community partners about their perspective on partnering with the higher education community.

3. Initiating community partnerships. The curriculum for this competency focuses on pre-engagement and early phases of partnership development, including the identification of potential partners and the assessment of mutual readiness and capacity to engage (Center for Community Health Partnerships, n.d.; National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools, 2008; Ochocka, Morlag, & Janzen, 2010). Active listening and dialogue skills are emphasized as ways to establish rapport and build trust. Various partnership structures and approaches to negotiate agreements about shared expectations and responsibilities are covered, including memoranda of understanding, logics models, etc. (Gust & Jordan, 2006; Strand et al., 2003). Learners should be able to identify and establish respectful and responsive partnerships based on reciprocity and attend to both the task and relationship aspects of partnership-building (Ochocka & Janzen, 2014).

4. Sustaining community partnerships. The curriculum for this competency focuses on strengthening and maintaining community partnerships.

Discussions focus on structures and practices for following through on shared expectations; developing effective communications; establishing processes to learn through experience and reflection to make adjustments over time; and developing shared leadership, capacity building, and decision-making responsibilities (Duran et al., 2012; Gruenbaum, 2011; Hatcher, Warner, & Horbrook, 2011; Vaterlaus, Skogrand, Higginbotham, & Bradford, 2017). Celebrating accomplishments and concluding a community partnership, when appropriate, are also emphasized. Learners should be able to strengthen, continue, or reimagine community partnerships, including the implementation of specific strategies to build capacity for sustained collaboration over time.

5. Techniques for community collaboration. The curriculum for this competency recognizes that degrees of collaboration range from minimal consultation to co-creation and co-generation. Multiple collaboration techniques are introduced to demonstrate different degrees of collaboration; achieve different purposes (e.g., brainstorming, gathering input, prioritizing, decision-making); and maximize resources, time, and partner preferences (Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007; International Association for Public Participation, 2007a, 2007b; Wates, 2015). For example, the techniques seminar covers mind-mapping as a technique for brainstorming, world café as a technique for gathering input, sticky dot voting as a technique for prioritizing, and win-win negotiations as a technique for decision-making. Learners should be able to use their expanded toolbox of engagement techniques to incorporate community partner voice into their engagement activities and explain why their chosen techniques were appropriate for their type of community-engaged scholarship and practice.

Criticality in Community Engagement

Criticality in community engagement, the third dimension of the curriculum, focuses on “ways of developing meaningful collaborations with community partners—across lines of difference” (Warren, Park, & Tieken, 2016, p. 247). The three competencies within this dimension recognize that multiple forms of diversity strengthen community-engaged scholarship and, as a result, demand criticality and reflexivity so that deeply entrenched systems of inequality are not perpetuated during the engagement process. This third dimension also reflects two of the criteria for evaluating quality community engagement promoted by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health – reflective critique and consistently ethical behavior (Jordan, 1997).

6. *Engaging with diverse communities.* The curriculum for this competency focuses on understanding individual, social, and cultural differences that influence relationships in community-engaged scholarship. Learners are expected to critically examine their own identity and positionality, including race, class, gender, culture, power, and privilege, and to understand how those factors may influence relationships with communities and community partners with the goal of anticipating and managing potential misunderstandings proactively (Jurin, Roush, & Danter, 2010; Lynch, 1998; Warren et al., 2016). Cultural humility and reflective practice are offered as positive mindsets and practices for respectful community engagement (Gallardo, 2013; Luft & Ingram, 1955). Learners should be able to describe their own positionality, acknowledge power asymmetries present in their community partnerships, identify structural and cross-cultural differences they encounter, and describe how they navigated through those differences.

7. *Critical reflection and critical thinking.* Both critical reflection (reflective critique on one's positionality) and critical thinking (reflective critique on theories, conceptual frameworks, or ideas put into practice) are essential elements of community-engaged scholarship. The curriculum focuses on the habits of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1995) as well as the transformative learning effects of pre-reflection (Springer & Casey, 2010), learning through experience (Boud & Walker, 1985; Gibbs, 1998), and meta-reflection (Findlay, 2008). Learners should be able to critically reflect on both their identity and their ideas and describe gaps between what was expected and what happened in their specific community engagement context. They should also be able to articulate lessons learned from their community engagement experience.

8. *Ethics in community-engaged scholarship.* The ethics curriculum acknowledges negative historical legacies affecting some communities (Buchanan, Miller, & Wallerstein, 2007) and focuses on these critically important questions: Who participates? Who does not? and What can be done to incorporate voices traditionally left out of the process? (Chambers, 1983, 2006; Chevalier & Buckles, 2008; Cornwall, 2008; Sarkissian & Hofer, 2008). In addition, power dynamic and asymmetries, social and cultural differences, and legal obligations including professional codes of ethics and Institutional Review Board requirements for community-engaged research and research about community-engaged teaching and learning are reviewed. Learners are expected to anticipate potential ethical issues and manage them in ways that fulfill, and go beyond,

the professional and legal requirements to engage with community partners ethically and respectfully.

Community-Engaged Scholarship and Practice

Community-engaged scholarship and practice, the fourth dimension of the curriculum, focuses in depth on three different types of community engagement activities. For each type of community-engaged scholarship, different paradigms, theories, approaches, and degrees of engagement are explored. Case studies, scenarios, and examples illustrate strengths and challenges associated with each community-engaged scholarship type.

9. *Community-engaged research and creative activities.* The curriculum focuses on community engagement activities associated with the discovery of new knowledge and development of new insights (community-engaged research) or the creation of new art, literature, or performance (community-engaged creative activities) (Doberneck et al., 2010). Differences between traditional research and creative activities and community-engaged approaches are explored, as are various stages in collaborative research or creative processes (Gruenbaum, 2011; Flicker, Savan, McGrath, Kolenda, & Mildenerger, 2007; Overby, 2016; Paskick, Goldstein, & Nuygen, 2010; Strand et al., 2003). Learners should be able to link their community-engaged research or creative activities to theoretical or conceptual frameworks for research or creative activities (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003), explain how community partners had voice in the decision-making process (Doberneck & Dann, 2016; Stanton, 2008), and describe the outcomes of their community-engaged research or creative activities.

10. *Community-engaged teaching and learning.* This curriculum focuses on ways to partner with others to share existing knowledge with various types of learners in three different settings – formal (i.e., K-12, higher education service-learning), informal (i.e., workshops for the general public, trainings for practitioner audiences), and nonformal (i.e., managed learning environments, self-directed learning resources) (Doberneck et al., 2010). Often both the community partners and learners have a voice in the community-engaged teaching and learning process (Bringle et al., 2009; Jameson et al., 2012; Littlepage & Gazley, 2013). Participants are taught the IPERCED approach to community-engaged teaching and learning, which emphasizes investigation, preparation, engagement, reflection, connection, evaluation, and demonstration/celebration (Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 2015). Participants should be able to

link their community-engaged teaching and learning activities to theoretical or conceptual frameworks, especially those from the scholarship of teaching and learning (Saltmarsh, 2010), explain how community partners (and learners when appropriate) had a voice in the development of the teaching and learning activities (Doberneck & Dann, 2016; Stanton, 2008), and describe the outcomes of their community-engaged teaching and learning activities.

11. Community-engaged service and practice. Community-engaged service or practice is associated with the use of university expertise to address a specific issue identified by individuals, organizations, or communities and may take many forms including technical assistance, consulting, or clinical service (Doberneck et al., 2010). Viewing community partners as sources of local, indigenous, and/or practitioner knowledge and as co-generators, co-creators, and co-learners in the process is emphasized to mitigate against the charity mindset associated with some community service activities (Munsil, 2003). Learners should be able to link their community-engaged service or practice with theoretical or conceptual frameworks, explain how community partners (and community partner clients, if appropriate) had voice in the decision-making process (Doberneck & Dann, 2016; Sanders, 2008; Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Stanton, 2008), and describe the outcomes of their community-engaged service or practice.

Approaches and Perspectives

Approaches and perspectives, the fifth dimension of the curriculum, focuses on three lenses or frames on community-engaged scholarship and practices. These frames help to foster lasting social change so that community engagement efforts are sustained over time. All three approaches focus on ways to build upon what is already working in communities; bring more diverse perspectives into the community engagement process; and prevent the formation of dependency relationships.

12. Asset-based community engagement. Asset-based community engagement is a way of framing community work that emphasizes the community's existing skills, experiences, or resources – or its assets – instead of its deficits (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Curriculum for this competency focuses on distinguishing between problem-focused and asset-focused framing of community work; the identification of seven types of community assets or capitals (Flora, Flora, & Gasteyer, 2016, Gaines & Haines, 2016); and the role of asset mobilization and expansion in sustained community change

and empowerment. Learners should be able to use asset-focused language to frame their community engagement work, collaborate with community partners to identify and mobilize community assets (Emery, Fey, & Flora, 2006), and strengthen or expand community assets through their engagement processes.

13. Capacity-building for sustained change. Capacity-building is an approach to community work that strengthens confidence, builds skills, increases knowledge, and expands resources (Rural Economic Policy Program, 1996). The curriculum explores the complexity of capacity-building (Beckley, Martz, Nadeau, Wall, & Reimer, 2008), its cultural nuances (St. Onge, Cole, & Petty, 2003), and the importance of scale (Simpson, Wood, & Daws, 2003). In addition, reciprocity in capacity-building emphasizes the expectation that university partners learn, grow, and change as part of the engagement process as well (Cushman, Powell, & Takayoskhi, 2004; Powell & Takayoshi, 2003). Learners should be able to articulate why a capacity-building approach is important for sustaining change in their community setting and identify specific capacities being built (what), at what levels (with whom), and in what ways (how).

14. Systems approaches to community change. Community-engaged scholarship frequently involves working with communities to tackle complex problems, also known as “wicked problems” (Rittel & Webber, 1973) or “messes” (Ackoff, 1999). Such problems are characterized by the absence of a clear definition, a large set of interrelated factors, conflicting perspectives on the nature of the problem and how to address it, and uncertainty about the consequences of any particular action (Snowden & Boone, 2007). This competency focuses on three fundamental concepts shared by all systems approaches: boundaries, perspectives, and relationships (Imam, LaGoy & Williams, 2007). *Boundaries* define what lies inside or outside of the scope of inquiry. Systems thinking also involves viewing situations from a variety of *perspectives*. As systems theorist Churchman wrote, “A systems approach begins when first you see the world through the eyes of another” (Churchman, 1968, p. 231). All systems approaches are concerned with understanding the dynamics of *relationships* between systems and among system components. Learners are expected to name the various contributors to community issues, including economic, social, behavioral, political, and environmental factors” (Jameson et al., 2012, p. 54); identify the boundaries of their project (i.e., what falls inside and outside project scope); describe how a variety of perspectives were included in community en-

agement activities (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008; Sarkissian & Hofer, 2008); and discuss the inter-relationships and influences among various system components related to their community work.

Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation and assessment, the sixth dimension of the curriculum, focuses on determining the value and impact of community partnerships, community engagement activities, and scholarly products resulting from engagement activities. Evaluation of community-engaged scholarship and community partnerships is one way of turning community engagement activities into scholarly products for academic and public audiences, thereby contributing to the scholarship of engagement. This competency also reinforces the importance of conducting community-engaged scholarship and practice in ways that reflect a high degree of quality and rigor in both the process and outcomes of the community engagement activities.

15. *Evaluating community-engaged partnerships.* Evaluation, defined as the “identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object’s value (worth or merit) in relation to those criteria” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2010, p. 5). The scholarship and practice of evaluation provides a wealth of approaches, designs, and methods that can be employed to assess the processes, outcomes, and impacts of community-engaged scholarship. This curriculum focuses on developmental, summative, and formative approaches to evaluation as well as the development of both outcome and process criteria of merit. Reciprocity, shared benefits, and the rigorous documentation of benefits to the community (a hallmark of community-engaged scholarship) are emphasized (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). Learners should be able to select an evaluation approach appropriate for their community engagement activities, collaborate with community partners in the design and implementation of an evaluation, and assess both the processes and outcomes of their collaborative community work and their partnership.

16. *Peer review of community-engaged scholarship and practice.* The lack of capacity to review and evaluate community-engaged scholarship is often cited as a major barrier in the field (Jordan, 1997). Unlike the other community engagement competencies that focus on improving the learner’s knowledge and skills in community engagement, this competency focuses on strengthening the capacity to improve the field of community engagement overall. Learners are expected to rec-

ognize historical and contemporary standards for quality and excellence in community-engaged scholarship and practice [CES4Health.org, (n.d.); Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997; Jordan, 1997; Lynton, 1995; Michigan State University, 1996; Seifer, 2007] and learn how to provide critical yet constructive feedback as a peer reviewer of community or academic work, including nominations for community engagement awards, grant proposals, journal articles, and conference proposals. The curriculum also emphasizes the significant role community partners may play in the peer review process (Gelmon, Jordan, & Seifer, 2013). As a by-product, learners may also better understand how to frame, implement, and document their community-engaged scholarship to meet common standards of quality, rigor, and excellence. Learners should be able to identify or propose appropriate review criteria for community-engaged scholarship or practice; rate the community engagement activity or products using those criteria; and provide critical, constructive feedback.

Communication and Scholarly Skills

Communication and scholarly skills, the seventh dimension of the curriculum, reflects the final section of the Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure, where community engagement activities generate scholarly products for both public and academic audiences. Ellison & Eatman (2008) describe the relationship between these audiences as The Whole Figure Eight, with the community-engaged scholar or practitioner looping back and forth between the two parts of the figure eight (p. x). Traditional scholars focus almost exclusively on presenting their work to academic audiences; in contrast, the commitment to sharing scholarship back with community partners and to public audiences distinguishes the community-engaged scholar and practitioner from the traditional scholar.

17. *Communicating with public audiences.* The curriculum for this competency area focuses on the important differences between effective communication with academic and public audiences; the different public audience segments, including policy-makers, non-governmental organizations, practitioners, managers, scientists, participants, and the general public, and their respective communications preferences (Baron, 2010; Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2010); and the importance of collaborating with community partners in the co-development of public communication and dissemination plans. Learners should be able to identify multiple public audiences for their community-engaged scholarship; propose a communication/dissemination

plan to reach the identified public audiences; and develop scholarly, yet accessible, communications materials in a variety of formats.

18. *Communicating with academic audiences.* The curriculum for this competency area focuses on generating scholarly products for academic audiences including peer reviewed conferences, journal articles, and competitive grants. Strategies for disseminating scholarship to both disciplinary and interdisciplinary community engagement audiences and techniques for involving community partners in the production of scholarly academic products are covered (Ahmed & Palmero, 2010; Bordeaux, Wiley, Tandon, Horowitz, Brown, & Bass, 2007; Forchuk & Meier, 2014; Smith, Rosenzweig, & Schmidt, 2010). Learners should be able to identify academic conferences, peer-reviewed journals, and funding sources to support their community-engaged scholarship and articulate why these outlets are an appropriate fit for their community-engaged scholarship and practice.

Successful Community Engagement Careers

Successful community engagement careers is the eighth and final dimension of the curriculum and supports identity formation and career pathways for community-engaged scholars or practitioners (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Colbeck, 2008; Green, Harrison, Jones, & Shaffer, 2016; Whitchurch, 2012). Participants learn how to make their community work visible (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999) through the development of an overarching narrative to “tell their engagement story” (Warren et al., 2016), to collect evidence of partnership and impact to support that narrative (Franz, 2011), and to seek career pathways supportive of community-engaged scholarship and practice across the career-span (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Gilven et al., 2012; Post et al., 2016).

19. *Documenting and communicating your engagement accomplishments.* While the majority of the competencies focus on knowledge and skills for engaging with communities, this competency rests on the acknowledgement that doing good work (Palmer, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2002) is necessary but not sufficient for a successful community engagement career. Community-engaged scholars and practitioners must also make the processes and impacts of their engagement visible to others by connecting their work to the broader context of scholarship and practice in their respective fields (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Jordan, 1997; Lynton, 1995) in ways that are scholarly, persuasive, and supported with evidence. Learners are expected to develop critically reflective narratives

that connect their engagement work to their broader field or discipline, describe the trajectory of their scholarship or practice over time, incorporate community partner feedback into their account of accomplishments, and provide documentation to support claims made in their narrative (Franz, 2011; Seifer 2007).

20. *Community engagement across the career span.* The curriculum for this competency area focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary to transition from graduate student life to a professional career, whether it be as a community-engaged tenure-track faculty member, higher education professional, practitioner in industry or government position, or community partner. Community-engaged career pathways, job search strategies, professional networking opportunities, and preparation of materials, including the development of an online presence, are covered (Joiner & Busse, 2008, 2010; Karls, 2012; University of Georgia, Office of Service Learning, 2012). The curriculum also emphasizes different expectations and opportunities at different career stages (Ellison & Eatman, 2008), the importance of developing synergy or integration across roles and responsibilities (Bloomgardin & O’Meara, 2007), and boundary-spanning skills required for professionals operating in “the third space” (Weertz & Sandmann, 2010; Whitchurch, 2012; Yip, Ernst, & Campbell, 2011). Learners are expected to develop job search materials and strategies that reflect their values, commitment, and experiences with community-engaged scholarship and practice.

Concluding Thoughts

Limitations and Potential Adaptations

Professional development about community engagement for graduate students is in its nascence, with certifications, specializations, and degree programs emerging relatively recently (e.g., Emerging Engagement Scholars Workshop in 2007, The University of Georgia’s Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement in 2012, University of Louisville’s Community Engagement Academy in 2015, Point Park University’s Ph.D. in Community Engagement in 2015, to name a few). Few long-term or comparative studies have been completed. The existing literature about these programs raises more questions than it answers, specifically in particular about how institution type, degree program, discipline, type of community-engaged scholarship, and career goals might shape professional development for community engagement.

For example, the eight dimensions and 20 en-

agement competency areas were developed and refined at Michigan State University, a land-grant, research-intensive, Carnegie-engaged institution, with a long-standing institutional commitment to scholarly outreach and engagement (Glass, Doberneck, & Schweitzer, 2010). While the curriculum was informed by national conversations about competencies for community engagement, the 20 community engagement competency areas emerged from the context of this particular institution, in a particular place, at a particular time. It is likely that faculty, staff, and students from other colleges and universities, especially from other types of institutions (i.e., faith-based, minority-serving, urban, or regional institutions) might emphasize some competencies over others or identify additional competencies for graduate and professional students at their respective institutions.

This graduate curriculum was developed for both master's and Ph.D. students, even though graduate students at those two levels of graduate education may have different learning interests, career goals, and professional development needs. Recent scholarship points to specific challenges doctoral students face as they complete community-based research projects for their dissertations, including funding, courses, advising, mentoring, professional development, leadership, and advocacy skills (Franz, 2013; Jaeger, Sandmann, & Kim, 2011; Jaeger et al., 2014; Warren et al., 2016). Future refinements in a graduate curriculum for community-engaged scholarship may propose separate tracks for students pursuing different levels of graduate education.

Similarly, this university-wide curriculum was developed to serve graduate and professional students from all disciplines at a large, research-intensive university. Emerging scholarship is beginning to reveal distinct variations in the way community engagement is framed, practiced, and evaluated in disciplines or in disciplinary groupings (Buzinski et al., 2013; Doberneck et al., 2012; Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; Kecskes, 2006; Lamont, 2009). Future refinements in a graduate curriculum for community-engaged scholarship might include a combination of general foundational materials coupled with curriculum specifically tailored to disciplinary groupings. This approach would better incorporate disciplinary scholarship about community engagement and use language, theoretical models, and conceptual frameworks closer to the students' own experience in their field as well as potentially develop disciplinary-based peer groups [see Latimore, Dreelin, & Burroughs (2014) in natural resources; and Warren et al. (2016) in educational research].

Finally, this graduate curriculum was designed

to address all types of community-engaged scholarship – research, creative activities, teaching/learning, service/practice, and to a lesser extent, commercialized activities. The rationale for such breadth is based on the potential for future faculty to integrate community engagement into multiple faculty roles over their career span (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007; Ellison & Eatman, 2008). However, a counter argument could be made for more specialized graduate curricula to focus in-depth on a single type of community-engaged scholarship, such as community-engaged research and service (see Community-Based Public Health Certificate, The Johns Hopkins University (2017); community-engaged creative activities, Imagining America's PAGE fellows (2017); or community-engaged teaching and learning (see Graduate Certificate in Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning in Post-Secondary Education, Portland State University (2017)).

Future Directions for Graduate Professional Development

Since the third iteration of the core competencies in the MSU Graduate Certification in Community Engagement, several important national initiatives have further refined community engagement competencies for service-learning professionals, extension professionals, and community engagement professionals. In *Diving Deep in Community Engagement: A Model for Professional Development*, McReynolds and Shields (2015) defined four roles for community engagement professionals: institutional leader, organizational manager, community innovator, and field contributor. For each role, they outlined multiple core competencies with novice, intermediate, and advanced level practices (three levels similar to the Blanchard et al. 2009 faculty competency model). The following year, Suvedi and Kaplowtiz (2016) published 33 competencies for extension professionals in *What Every Extension Worker Should Know: Core Competency Handbook*. Their process skills and competencies tools emphasize program planning, program implementation, program evaluation, and communication skills. In conjunction with Campus Compact, Dostilio (2017) led a national initiative to identify and define competencies for community engagement professionals, which were published in *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education*. Dostilio and colleagues identified and promoted six responsibilities, including (a) leading change within higher education, (b) institutionalizing community engagement on campus, (c) facilitating students' civic learning and development, (d)

administering community engagement programs, (e) facilitating faculty development and support, and (f) cultivating high-quality performance. For each responsibility, knowledge, skills and attitudes, and dispositions are defined. All three of these recent scholarly pieces continue to refine content areas and competencies for graduate and professional students primarily interested in non-tenure track positions in institutions of higher education.

As the field of community engagement matures and as our collective understanding of what it means to be a community-engaged scholar and practitioner deepens, we will likely see the landscape of professional development about community engagement for graduate and professional students continue to evolve (Morin, Jaeger, & O'Meara, 2016). With the future proliferation of professional development programs for graduate and professional students, it is the authors' hope that the next generation of community-oriented students find their "homes" as community-engaged scholars and practitioners (Sandmann et al., 2008) – in the academy and beyond.

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Notes

¹As the Community-Engaged Scholarship Figure was developed, the advisory committee decided to use the phrase community-engaged scholarship *and practice* to reflect the perspectives of some participants, especially those at the master's level or enrolled in professional schools. Participant evaluation data showed that for many of the participants who viewed themselves as practitioners, the phrase community-engaged scholarship did not resonate with them. The growing literature about community-engaged practitioners – many of whom take scholarly approaches to their work but do not view themselves as scholars – supports this perspective (Dostilio, 2017; Suvedi & Kaplowitz, 2016; Whitchurch 2012).

²The phrase *community-engaged teaching and learning* has been intentionally used in this article to distinguish between teaching and learning activities in which community partners have had voice in the process from those active learning strategies that do not include community partners. Typically, *engaged teaching and learning* refers to high-impact teaching practices that include the following: first-year seminars and experiences; community intellectual pursuits; learning communities; writing-intensive courses; collaborative assignments and projects; undergraduate research; diversity/global learning; service-learning/community-based learning; internships; and capstone courses and projects (Kuh, 2008). The majority of engaged teaching and learning activities do not expect community partners to contribute to student learning, at the minimum, or involve community partners as co-teachers and co-learners, at the maximum. The only exception is service-learning/community-based learning, which is both an engaged teaching and learning and a *community-engaged teaching and learning practice*.

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