Original Research

Developing Equitable and Mutually Beneficial Virtual Community-Engaged Learning Opportunities

Casey A. Knifsend[1] and Chong U. Choe-Smith[2]

[1]Department of Psychology, California State University, Sacramento, [2]Department of Philosophy, California State University, Sacramento

Editor: Valerie L. Holton, Ph.D.

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an abrupt shift to virtual community-university partnerships for many community partners, instructors teaching community-engaged learning courses, and students. This shift exacerbated challenges to fostering mutually beneficial, equitable community-university partnerships, potentially affecting access to and participation in programs benefiting K-12 and college students. This paper discusses the Writing Partners letter exchange program, highlighting how challenges were considered and addressed and ways we could improve in future semesters of community-engaged learning. Assessment data using surveys suggested challenges related to exchanging letters virtually and using videos instead of an in-person university campus tour. Solutions included partnership meetings and early planning for future virtual events. We then discuss lessons learned and future directions for mutually beneficial and equitable community-university partnerships that could involve virtual work for various reasons. This paper adds to emerging literature that shares experiences related to virtual community-engaged learning. Sharing our experiences and lessons learned through the Writing Partners program will inform educators and administrators interested in implementing similar letter exchange programs and those interested in learning more about community-university partnerships in the virtual space.

Keywords: community partnerships; community-engaged learning; pandemic response; equity; mutual benefit; assessment

Original Research

Introduction

The abrupt transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated shifts in community-university partnerships. In many cases, in-person engagement opportunities traditionally pivoted to the virtual space within weeks or months. This transition presented new considerations and challenges for working towards mutually beneficial and equitable community-university partnerships (Ohmer et al., 2022). As defined in greater detail below, community-university partnerships are mutually beneficial when the interaction enriches both the community and the university, and they are equitable when the opportunities are fair and open to all and address any barriers to equitable participation (e.g., Orellana & Chaitanya, 2020; Ruch & Trani, 1990). The focus of this paper is on strategies for collaboration with these values in mind, with a discussion of a case study of Sacramento State's Writing Partners program (i.e., a letter writing program between K-12 and college students) and challenges and opportunities moving forward during later phases of the pandemic. This paper extends an earlier presentation in the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) Learning & Sharing Virtual Series on this topic (August & Knifsend, 2020).

As we transition to a new normal with many community partners still relying on entirely virtual or hybrid opportunities, whether due to preference (e.g., youth crisis line deciding virtual operations suit their work best) or necessity (e.g., a surge in COVID-19 cases or closures due to wildfire smoke, or other events), we can learn from the experiences of the past two years and think ahead to envision community engagement for our students that continues to be mutually beneficial and equitable. We focus on two main questions in this article: How do we continue to support mutually beneficial practices for community partners, instructors, and students? How do we ensure equitable opportunities for all students?

Defining Mutually Beneficial and Equitable Community-Engaged Learning

The Community Engagement Center (Center) at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State), as with similar centers at other colleges and universities, pivoted in various ways to accommodate the changes at our institution and community partner sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sacramento State is a large, diverse regional university, with more than 10 percent of our students participating in community-engaged learning (Reid, 2020). The Center aims to meet the demands of the moment while also advancing our institutional priorities, including mutually beneficial community-engaged learning as expressed in our Anchor University Initiative (Sacramento State's Anchor University Task Force, 2019), and equity and inclusion as described in our Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan (California State University, Sacramento, 2021).

Our Anchor University Initiative centers on long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships in its aims for community-engaged learning. As an Anchor University, "the University [is] on course to align our resources and efforts so that we cultivate and develop long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with our community partners in pioneering endeavors to address our

Original Research

community's priorities" (Sacramento State's Anchor University Task Force, 2019). The Center for Community Engagement of California State University also recently provided a system-wide definition for community-engaged learning, which highlights the importance of collaboration: "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and community partners (entities, organizations, or groups with whom a relationship can be developed) in which students learn and develop through participation in the collaboration; the outcomes of which benefit the common good" (COCCE, 2022). Elements of community-engaged learning include reciprocal partnerships, benefits to the common good, academically relevant community involvement, civic learning goals, critical reflection activities, and integrated assessment of discipline-based and civic learning goals (COCCE, 2022). Common to different conceptions of community-engaged learning, including ours, is the essential element of mutually beneficial community-university partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Ruch & Trani, 1990; Waldner et al., 2012).

Extending these definitions, partnerships are mutually beneficial when the partnership enriches both the community partner and the university through enhanced student learning and student participation in service to the broader community (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Ruch & Trani, 1990; Waldner et al., 2012). Such partnerships are characterized by a sense of trust (De La Garza & Kuri, 2014), collaboration, reciprocity, and democratic decision-making (Ohmer et al., 2022). Mutually beneficial partnerships sometimes involve formal (e.g., survey) and/or informal (e.g., conversations) data gathering to understand community priorities, as well as strategies that are responsive to these priorities and the interests of the groups that are served (Saw et al., 2021). During the earlier stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining mutually beneficial partnerships was possible with certain community partners engaged in essential services, such as education and health, but more difficult with those who had to curtail their services entirely or significantly. Much of the continued community-engaged learning was done virtually, and some partners maintained virtual work a few years later. Regardless of modality or form, consistent with our institutional commitment to mutually beneficial community engagement, interaction with the community should advance student learning and address a particular community need or interest.

At Sacramento State, community engagement is also influenced and shaped by our other institutional priorities, including a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. In particular, according to the Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan (California State University, Sacramento, 2021), equity is defined as "the presence of structures that recognize the impact of systemic bias and discrimination and work to ensure opportunities and fairness for all." The Center aims explicitly to provide learning opportunities that are equitable, inclusive, and accessible to all students and that address important social justice issues relevant to our broader community. Community partners include those oriented towards advocacy, human rights, diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, food, and housing security, and education (including our Writing Partners letter exchange program, as described below). Fostering equity-minded community-university partnerships entails ensuring shared power in the partnership, employing a strengths-based approach, co-developing learning and projects with the expertise of community

partners, and centering opportunities for marginalized groups of community members, instructors, and students (Orellana & Chaitanya, 2020).

Consistent with empirical findings (Francom et al., 2021; Frank et al., 2021; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Lai & Widmar, 2020; Sanders & Scanlon, 2021), the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequities in community-engaged learning, particularly with unequal access to technology within the home. Structural inequality in access to technology, including computer ownership and high-speed internet access, disproportionately affects low-income households and minoritized ethnic-racial groups (Kim et al., 2021; Sanders & Scanlon, 2021), thereby affecting the nature and quality of participation for community partners, instructors, and students. For example, K-12 teachers in Mississippi and South Dakota reported difficulties related to unreliable internet and computer access, difficulty contacting and communicating with students, and limited knowledge of strategies for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Francom et al., 2021), and these types of difficulties disproportionately affect under-resourced schools (Ma, 2021). Similarly, we observed these challenges within our Writing Partners program (as described below) and at other sites collaborating with K-12 schools. With these added demands, collaboration is critical to reduce any additional burden of virtual community engagement and maximize the involvement and enrichment of all parties involved in the partnership.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online work made the Center's job more challenging, it also opened opportunities for greater collaboration with community partners and the effective use of technology in creative, responsive ways. Collaboration on alternatives to face-to-face interaction should continue to enhance student learning, serve the broader community, and ensure opportunities and fairness to all involved, particularly those disproportionately affected by the shift to virtual community-engaged learning. Collectively, mutually beneficial and equitable community-university partnerships enrich collaboration for all involved, as described below in a case study of our Writing Partners program.

Writing Partners Case Study

Focusing on mutually beneficial and equitable community engagement, we turn to a case study of Writing Partners at Sacramento State, a letter exchange program for elementary school and college students initiated by Sacramento State's Community Engagement Center. Traditionally, in this semester-long service learning program, 5th and 6th-grade students and college students exchange approximately three hand-written letters. The letters focus on a range of topics, including those relevant to the course (e.g., in a course on Child Psychology, discussing issues related to self-concept and identity) and the college experience in general (e.g., what a college class is like). The culminating event is a visit to the university campus, with elementary school and college students meeting in person for a campus tour. For elementary school students, the program aims to provide a sense of connection and community and cultivate a college-going identity while providing a forum for practicing reading and writing skills. The program fosters a

sense of connection and community for college students, deepens learning through real-world connections with course content, and provides practice writing for different audiences.

The Writing Partners program shifted to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic, changing the nature of the program substantially. Instead of hand-written trading letters, letters were exchanged virtually through a Google Drive link unique to each pair of elementary school and university instructors. The culminating event consisted of a Zoom call with a customized virtual tour of the university. Rates of participation in the program declined during the pandemic, likely due to various factors. Although the same number of college instructors engaged with the Writing Partners program in Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 (13 instructors), the program served fewer elementary school students (Fall 2019: 691 students; Fall 2020: 540 students) and engaged fewer college students (Fall 2019: 638 students; Fall 2020: 529 students) during the earlier months of the pandemic.

Given stressors in shifting online for both elementary school and university instructors, a key focus on ensuring a mutually beneficial and equitable experience regarded an understanding of the extra burden on both elementary school and university partners. The platform on which letters were exchanged was one important area to consider in the Fall 2020. Due to their familiarity and expertise with Google, elementary school instructors preferred a different platform (Google Sheets and folders) than the university (Microsoft Teams). In collaboration with Sacramento State's Community Engagement Center, Information Resources and Technology office, and Risk Management office, a unique Google Drive link was generated for each pair of elementary school and university instructors to upload and download letters. Feedback from all partners was considered when structuring these procedures, reflecting democratic decision-making, shared power, collaboration, and co-development of the platform with the expertise of elementary school teachers, characteristic of mutually beneficial and equitable partnerships (Ohmer et al., 2022; Orellana & Chaitanya, 2020).

Despite these changes to the program, virtual programming presented additional issues regarding mutual benefit and equity for the Writing Partners program. Notably, technological issues affected all parties. Many students at Sacramento State report unmet basic needs. Seventy-six percent of students receive financial aid (University Communications, 2020), 12.6% report having experienced homelessness at some point in their academic careers, and approximately 47% experience food insecurity (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2019; Reid, 2018). Accordingly, having institutional support for reliable broadband internet, access to a laptop or computer, and adequate processing speed for the culminating event was essential to college students participating in this program. Through financial support from various sources (e.g., Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund), Sacramento State loaned students laptops and internet hotspots, providing some students with the necessary equipment for this program (Ruble, 2020). Elementary school students likely faced similar challenges, given research on the digital divide affecting youth from minoritized ethnic-racial backgrounds and lower-income families disproportionately (Francom et al., 2021; Frank et al., 2021; Kiebler & Stewart, 2021; Lai & Widmar, 2020; Sanders & Scanlon, 2021), although we did not collect data on this topic.

Ongoing efforts were revised to assess the elementary school and university instructors' and college students' perspectives on the program in Fall 2020, consistent with data collection to inform partnerships (Saw et al., 2021). For instance, elementary school teachers ($n = 6$ completing survey) reported positive experiences in terms of perceived support, compromise, and communication but challenges in terms of time spent and difficulty with uploading and downloading letters. Teachers also expressed both positive sentiments and challenges regarding the virtual campus tour. Of the four teachers who participated in the virtual campus tour, three reported that their students learned key academic information about Sacramento State 'to a great extent' (a '4', rated on a 1 = not at all to 5 = to a very great extent scale). Challenges included difficulty playing campus tour videos initially and feedback on the content, including that the videos lacked perspective on what a college classroom looks like. Similarly, college instructors ($n = 5$ completing survey) reported both positives (e.g., enthusiasm of elementary school partners and a forum for sharing struggles during the pandemic) and challenges (e.g., time shifting to virtual format and difficulties with the culminating event). Although these small n's limit generalizability, these accounts gave us an idea of the instructors' perspectives in our program. While college students' qualitative responses generally reflected positive experiences in the program, independent-samples post-test data collected in Fall 2019 ($n = 68$) and in Fall 2020 ($n = 83$) reflected that Fall 2020 students ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .87$, rated on a scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) reported less agreement with the statement "I wish to seek out service learning classes" at Sacramento State than Fall 2019 students ($M = 3.90$, $SD = .96$; $t(150) = 2.663$, $p = .009$). While other cohort effects could explain these differences (e.g., number of letters exchanged or experience within the university classroom), the shift to virtual learning may have affected students' intent to connect with the community through future service-learning courses. These data helped us better understand the experiences and priorities of multiple parties involved in the program, including instructors and college students, ultimately informing future iterations of the program (Saw et al., 2021).

Quantitative and qualitative feedback was incorporated into program modifications beginning in Spring 2021. In considering both formal (i.e., evaluation surveys) and informal (i.e., feedback provided in meetings) feedback (e.g., Saw et al., 2021), the Community Engagement Center, elementary school teachers, and university instructors were able to adjust the program to meet the needs of all parties involved better. Community Engagement Center staff provided an orientation to the virtual program at the beginning of the term, demonstrating the virtual letter exchange to help demystify the process. Discussion of and planning for the culminating event began at this meeting to assist with coordination and propose using breakout rooms for students to meet. The Community Engagement Center also hosted check-in meetings throughout the semester, including one for elementary school teachers to discuss how the program was going. Overall, these efforts consistently fostered a mutually beneficial and equitable partnership. Efforts like collaborating on the platform for letter exchange minimized the burden on any one partner through collaboration (Ohmer et al., 2022) and responding to partners' expressed needs and feedback (Saw et al., 2022), and ensured that interested school sites were able to participate in the program effectively (California State University, Sacramento, 2021).

Original Research

In sum, the Writing Partners program shifted to a virtual format abruptly in Fall 2020, continuing its aims to build and/or strengthen literacy and writing, connect K-12 and college students, and reinforce college-related identities. Shifting to the virtual format, however, presented challenges, including those related to ensuring mutually beneficial and equitable community-engaged learning. We could respond to some of these challenges creatively and effectively through collaboration with community partners. With the possibility of partial or entirely virtual community-university partnerships and community-engaged learning in the future, additional challenges and opportunities should be considered, as discussed in the following section.

Other Community-Engaged Learning Challenges and Opportunities

Continued reliance on online or hybrid learning during the ongoing pandemic has raised challenges and opportunities for maintaining mutually beneficial and equitable community engagement. For community partnerships that continued during the pandemic through virtual and hybrid modalities, instructors and community partners had to be creative in developing new ways to stay connected and new hands-on learning opportunities for their students. For community partnerships unable to offer opportunities during the pandemic, the unintended break effectively provides faculty opportunities to rebuild stronger connections with community partners and reassess current needs and interests. Considering the challenges and opportunities of virtual community engagement and lessons learned over the past few years, whether due to preference or necessity, is critical to consider the possibility of continued fully or partial virtual operations. Below, we review data on remote and face-to-face operations from Spring 2021 to Spring 2022 before discussing community engagement in the future.

Community Engagement from Spring 2021 to Spring 2022

The data on community engagement suggests that, during the last two years, many community partners shuttered their face-to-face operations and transitioned to virtual services or suspended their operations entirely in compliance with state or local rules. The data also suggest that community partners continue to rely on entirely virtual services, or a combination of virtual and face-to-face services, even as they resume some face-to-face operations.

According to college student surveys collected by the Center in Fall 2021 ($n = 80$), 35.3% of students reported being physically present at a community partner site; 64.7% of students reported that their service-learning course did not involve them being physically present at a community partner site. When asked how often they were physically present at a community partner site, student responses were as follows: 11.8% less than once a month; 5.9% once a month; 35.3% once a week; 47.1% 2-3 times a week, and 0% 4-5 times a week. Although opportunities for students to volunteer on-site varied depending on the community partner and the nature of their services, sometimes involving frequent face-to-face interaction, the data suggest that most (64.7%) service-learning opportunities did not involve physical presence at a community partner site in Fall 2021.

Original Research

According to community partner survey data collected from participating community partners in Spring 2021, with responses from 61 community partners that offer either service learning or academic internship opportunities, about 66.7% of respondents anticipated offering either remote services or a combination of remote and face-to-face services in Fall 2021. Only 33.3% anticipated offering only face-to-face services, which is consistent with the student survey data. According to community partner survey data collected from participating community partners in Spring 2022 with 57 responses, by that time, about 60% of respondents offered face-to-face services, and about 40% offered either remote or a combination of remote and face-to-face services. The survey responses also indicated that 66.7% of respondents anticipated offering only face-to-face services in Fall 2022, while 33.3% anticipated offering a combination of face-to-face and remote services. Despite this dramatic, though not surprising, the turnaround in face-to-face operations, only 36 of 57 respondents indicated that they could envision a role for students in assisting with their services in Fall 2022.

The data indicate that community-engaged learning continued on a smaller scale during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some community partners continued to welcome student volunteers or interns but relied more heavily on remote or a combination of remote and face-to-face modalities. Although beyond the scope of this article, it would be interesting to look more closely at the specific ways that student volunteers and interns continued to serve during the pandemic. For instance, did remote work involve virtual engagement or some other type of remote work (e.g., phone calls to clients)? For our purposes, the data confirmed that community-engaged learning courses continued through remote or hybrid modalities through Fall 2021 and then opened up considerably by Spring 2022. Even during and after Spring 2022, community partner operations and their ability or willingness to offer community-engaged learning opportunities continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and relied on a combination of remote and face-to-face modalities. Thus, while looking to the future, it is especially critical to reflect on lessons learned from the past few years and how we can ensure mutually beneficial, equitable community engagement with continued remote and/or virtual community engagement.

Community Engagement In the Future

We do not have or do not yet have data on whether community partners will resume face-to-face operations fully in future semesters. Still, the COVID-19 pandemic may have lasting effects on community partnerships, at least in the near future, including continued reliance on virtual and face-to-face modalities. As we consider the future of community-engaged learning, this offers those who recognize the benefits of experiential learning the to embrace these changes and re-envision community engagement that is mutually beneficial and equitable.

Community engagement during the ongoing pandemic and beyond needs to be equitable for all parties. As discussed in our Writing Partners case study, greater reliance on technology raises the additional challenge of ensuring equitable access to equipment and broadband internet. As others have noted, the pandemic exacerbated existing inequities, particularly with regard to already

underserved populations. Certain populations, particularly minoritized, low-income, and/or rural households, are the most impacted with the least access to their own devices and broadband internet (e.g., Frank et al., 2021; Sanders & Scanlon, 2021). While children in more affluent areas had ready access to technology to make the transition smoother, other children experienced long delays in accessing technology and resuming instruction (see Kim et al., 2021). Now in the later stages of the pandemic, community partners (even those providing essential services) are limiting face-to-face interaction with the public to varying degrees, relying on virtual or hybrid modalities. For successful community-engaged learning courses, faculty and community partners must ensure that student volunteers or interns and the community groups they serve have access to technology and that any other necessary precautions are in place to proceed equitably and responsibly.

Sacramento State and its community partners also adapted their operations to address the changing circumstances and comply with state and local rules. With little advance notice, Sacramento State paused face-to-face instruction in March 2020, required all courses to be taught online later that same month, continued predominately online instruction in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, and began resuming face-to-face instruction with online and hybrid options in Fall 2021 (California State University, Office of the Chancellor, 2022). In response to the pandemic, by October 2020, California State University campuses had distributed more than $18 million in new equipment, including more than 21,000 laptops and other devices and 10,000 mobile hotspots (Ruble, 2020). As mentioned previously, these efforts were essential to greater equity in community-engaged learning experiences, including participation in the Writing Partners program. Although it may be impossible to prepare for every contingency, we are now better equipped with the technology necessary to pivot to online and hybrid modalities through such efforts.

Community engagement during a pandemic also must be mutually beneficial for students, instructors, and community partners. As faculty connect or reconnect with community partners, new opportunities are available for greater collaboration on continuing the partnership in an emergency and developing innovative alternative plans that provide reciprocal benefits for students and the community. Implementing innovative online teaching tools and resources in service-learning courses could allow students to continue having meaningful and impactful interactions with the community. For example, DePaul University's Online Community Engagement program developed and offered self-directed modules, each of which culminated in an event featuring a community activist guest speaker from DePaul and Chicago communities (Baron et al., 2022). Through thoughtful collaborations between the university and community partners, communities also could continue to benefit in different but substantial ways. Examples during the pandemic included college students creating storybooks and educational videos (Schmidt, 2021), developing engaging and interactive online learning opportunities for Latinx children (Kim et al., 2021), organizing a book drive to promote agricultural literacy (Jones & Disberger, 2021), and offering virtual services including skill sharing, writing letters to healthcare workers, seniors, children, and people experiencing homelessness, and organizing small donations (Tian & Noel, 2020). As discussed above, through thoughtful collaboration, the

Original Research

Writing Partners program also offered an example of how faculty participating in the program and its elementary school partners could transition to a virtual letter exchange program by using tailored Google Drive links and a culminating event consisting of a virtual campus tour.

Moving forward, assessment efforts should continue to align with values of mutually beneficial, equitable community-university partnerships. Overall, engaging in community-based research where community partners' knowledge and expertise are centered in the design and implementation of assessment efforts is critical (Dodge & Pawaskar, 2020; Kuttner et al., 2022). Thus, future efforts should involve further partnerships in assessment and programming. From our perspective, one significant addition is to include elementary school students in the Writing Partners program in assessment efforts. Although data collection with children involves added considerations (e.g., need for parent/guardian consent and child assent; use of age-appropriate measures), having children's voices represented in the design and implementation of the program would help ensure it is meeting their needs. Potentially, surveying parents/guardians may help us understand technological barriers and inequities faced by families. Lastly, although we surveyed college students' experiences with the program, we did not ask about technical issues or other obstacles faced. We also do not have data reflecting the experiences of those who do not participate in community-engaged learning. For example, it would be critical to know if some students self-select from optional service-learning courses due to challenges or inequities. Adding these questions would inform support and resources aimed toward equity.

As many universities and community partners transition from virtual programming back to face-to-face, the lessons learned over the last two years have taught us that community-engaged learning can continue amid unanticipated events or crises in mutually beneficial and equitable ways. While some have suggested that online service learning opportunities, in general, may be more or equally effective compared to face-to-face experiences (McGorry, 2012; Waldner, 2015), the current article only addresses the need to plan for alternatives for mutually beneficial community engagement when face-to-face engagement is limited or impossible. Moving into the future, as faculty and community partners are committed to providing high-quality experiential learning opportunities, they have more opportunities to collaborate to identify and address current needs and interests to decide if face-to-face, virtual, or a combination of each best suits their programs and courses (Schaus et al., 2022), and to develop robust contingency plans in case of a disruption to operations. Such contingency planning may allow the continuation of community-engaged learning opportunities in times of crisis. Contingency planning also may provide opportunities to learn more about the clients served and the community partner's most urgent needs and interests, such as access to technology at home or basic services and essential medical care. Ohmer et al. (2022), for example, describe how their community-university partnership responded to an urgent need for seniors to be vaccinated and, specifically, support two large-scale vaccination clinics. Others have emphasized the need and significance of continuing service learning during a crisis because service learning cultivates moral development in students while also serving underserved or marginalized populations whose needs may be greater in crises (Kim et al., 2021; Tian & Noel, 2020). There is not less, but possibly more learning for all those involved with community-engaged learning in times of crisis.

Original Research

Conclusion

Together, a review of the literature and our experiences with our Writing Partners program during the COVID-19 pandemic suggest challenges and opportunities in virtual community-engaged learning. Use of technology allowed community partners to continue providing critical services and opportunities for student and university engagement during this time. In many ways, however, the pandemic (and related shifts to virtual programming) exacerbated existing inequities, including those related to the digital divide (e.g., Sanders & Scanlon, 2021) for community and university partners. To maintain values of mutually beneficial and equitable community-engaged learning, engaging in collaboration and co-development of programming with an intentional sharing of power was critical. In many places, an assessment supported us in understanding when partnerships were mutually beneficial and equitable, as well as places we could improve.

We advance several recommendations for community-engaged learning during subsequent stages of the pandemic and beyond, including ensuring all parties are still afforded institutional support for technology and contingency planning for future crises. At the time of writing this paper, COVID-19 infection rates are increasing steadily, and federal health officials recommend masking indoors in several California counties. In addition, drought conditions in California and related fires, as well as other extreme weather events across the nation and world, may necessitate pivoting fully or partially virtual for community-engaged learning in the future. Thus, it is prudent and necessary to reflect on lessons learned during the pandemic and to plan for future virtual community-university partnerships and community-engaged learning.

Original Research

References

August, R. A., & Knifsend, C. A. (November, 2020). *Developing accessible and mutually-beneficial remote/virtual community engagement learning opportunities.* Best practice session at Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Learning and Sharing Virtual Series, Virtual Presentation.

Baron, D., Liggons, K., Pintor, D., Handrup, J., & Silva, R. A. (2022). Online community engagement enhances service learning. *Vincentian Heritage Journal*, *36*(2), 1-11. https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol36/iss2/7

Bringle, R. G. & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *67*(2), 221-236. https://doi.org/10.2307/2943981

California State University, Office of the Chancellor (2022). *The CSU responds to the Coronavirus pandemic.* Retrieved June 7, 2022 from https://www.calstate.edu/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx.

California State University, Sacramento (2021). *Antiracism and inclusive campus plan*. Retrieved June 17, 2022 from https://www.csus.edu/diversity-inclusion/_internal/_documents/antiracism__inclusive_campus_plan_ada_compliant_-20210630_final.pdf

Chancellor's Office Center for Community Engagement (COCCE). (2022, January 26). *CSU-CEL taxonomy: Classifying a student-centered approach to community-engaged learning courses.* https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YYGOnxzl6zrRWlBO2I5p-tYt6vD7FGDN/view

Crutchfield, R. M., & Maguire, J. (2019, April). *California State University Office of the Chancellor study of student basic needs.* Retrieved June 29, 2022 from https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/student-success/basic-needs-initiative/pages/default.aspx

De La Garza, T. O., & Kuri, L. M. (2014). Building strong community partnerships: Equal voice and mutual benefits. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *13*(2), 120–133. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2013.821064

Dodge, K., & Pawaskar, S. (2020). Innovation through community partnership mapping and analytics. *Metropolitan Universities*, *31*(2), 111–130. https://doi.org/10.18060/23787

Francom, G. M., Lee, S. J., & Pinkney, H. (2021). Technologies, challenges and needs of K-12 teachers in the transition to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *TechTrends*, *65*(4), 589–601. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-021-00625-5

Frank, J., Salsbury, M., McKelvey, H., & McLain, R. (2021). Digital equity & inclusion strategies for libraries. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, and Inclusion*, *5*(3), 185-205. https://doi.org/10.33137/ijidi.v5i3.36190

Jones, S., & Disberger, B. (2021, May/June). How COVID prompted service learning to come alive. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, *93*(6), 21-22. Retrieved June 29, 2022 from https://www.naae.org/profdevelopment/magazine/archive_issues/Volume93/2021%2005%20--%20May%20June.pdf

Kiebler, J., & Stewart, A. J. (2022). Student experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives from first-generation/lower-income students and others. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *22*(1), 198-224. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12288

Kim, C. M., Silverman, B. R., & Cortes, C. (2021). The challenges and opportunities of sustaining academia-sponsored community service programs for Latinx youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Hispanic Education*, *20*(3), 328-341. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192720980294

Kuttner, P., Antunes, A., Cachelin, A., Fitisemanu, L., Folau, M., Hart, S., & Salcedo, A. (2022). Establishing principles for community-based research: Story & power in the Community Research Collaborative. *Metropolitan Universities*, *33*(3), 52–68. https://doi.org/10.18060/25819

Lai, J., & Widmar, N. O. (2020). Revisiting the digital divide in the COVID-19 era. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, *43*(1), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1002/aepp.13104

Ma, J. K.-H. (2021). The digital divide at school and at home: A comparison between schools by socioeconomic level across 47 countries. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *62*(2), 115–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/00207152211023540

McGorry, S. Y. (2012). No significant difference in service learning online. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *16*(4), 45-54. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v16i4.218

Ohmer, M., Finkelstein, C., Dostilio, L., Durham, A., & Melnick, A. (2022). University-community engagement during a pandemic: Moving beyond "helping" to public problem solving. *Metropolitan Universities*, *33*(1), 81–91. https://doi.org/10.18060/25329

Orellana, C. K., & Chaitanya, A. (2020). Striving for equity: Community-engaged teaching and learning through a community practitioner and faculty coteaching model. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 24*(2), 85-106. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1267716.pdf

Reid, D. (2020, January 31). Sac State earns Carnegie title for community engagement. *Sacramento State News*. https://www.csus.edu/news/articles/2020/1/31/Sac-State-earns-Carnegie-title-for-community-engagement-.shtml

Reid, D. (2018, February 12). CSU study shows students' food, housing needs abound. *Sacramento State News*. https://www.csus.edu/news/articles/2018/2/12/csu-study-reveals-student-hunger,-homelessness-still-problem.shtml

Ruch, C., & Trani, E. (1990). Scope and limitations of community interactions. *Metropolitan Universities*, *1*(3), 27–39. https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/article/view/19157

Ruble, A. (2020, October 12). *CSU helps bridge the digital equity divide.* The California State University System News. Retrieved June 7, 2022 from https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/CSU-Helps-Bridge-the-Digital-Equity-Divide.aspx

Sacramento State's Anchor University Task Force (2019). Transforming Sacramento State into an Anchor University: Assessments and Recommendations. https://www.csus.edu/experience/anchor-university/_internal/_documents/anchor-university-full-report-8.30.19.pdf

Sanders, C. K., & Scanlon, E. (2021). The digital divide is a human rights issue: Advancing social inclusion through social work advocacy. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, *6*(2), 130–143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-020-00147-9

Saw, A., Nau, S., Jeremiah, R. D., & Zakaria, N. b. (2021). Laying the groundwork for participatory research with a Rohingya refugee community. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000431

Schaus, M., Larkin, S., & Wilkinson, D. (2022). All that you can't leave behind—Essential post-COVID technology and pedagogy. *Metropolitan Universities*, *33*(1), 27–36. https://doi.org/10.18060/25331

Tian, Q. & Noel, T, Jr. (2020). Service-learning in Catholic higher education and alternative approaches facing the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *23*(1), 184-196. http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2302142020

Schmidt, M. E. (2021). Embracing e-service learning in the age of COVID and beyond. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/stl0000283

University Communications (2020). *Sacramento State fact book*. [Fact book].
https://www.csus.edu/experience/fact-book/_internal/_documents/fact-book-2020_vfinal_revised.pdf

Waldner, L. S., McGorry, S. Y., & Widener, M. C. (2012). E-service-learning: The evolution of service-learning to engage a growing online student population. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *16*(2), 123-150.
https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/936

Waldner, L. (2015). eService-learning: Breaking through the barrier. In J. R. Strait, K. Nordyke, & A. Furco (Eds.), *eService-learning: Creating experiential learning and civil engagement through online and hybrid courses* (pp. 20-39). Stylus Publishing.