

Lilly Conference San Diego: Teaching for Active and Engaged Learning

February 27-29, 2020

Title of Presentation: “Community Conversations of Neighborhood Stakeholders as Narrative for Experiential Learning”

Abstract: *The goal of this project is to apply a place-based, narrative approach to experiential learning based on a poverty-stricken area, while invigorating both the community and student learning by means of “community conversations.”*

The project is centered on three key principles:

- 1) “Community Conversations” in focus groups provide narratives for experiential learning activities;*
- 2) “In order to prepare for an increasingly diverse society and to help students navigate diverse learning environments, many institutions of higher education have developed programs that support student learning and competencies around inter-group relations;” and*
- 3) Universities, as research centers, can be place-based “anchor institutions” for the purpose of playing a critical role in the civic life and economy of a city.*

Session Outcomes: At the end of this session, participants will be able to

- (1) understand how *community-based research* can be incorporated into experiential learning modules;
- (2) apply *case study* research to experiential learning modules; and
- (3) incorporate *focus group narratives* into experiential learning modules.

Session Description: The goal of this presentation is to discuss the application of a community-based study titled “Community Conversations of Neighborhood Stakeholders as Narrative for Experiential Learning” to developing experiential learning modules for several disciplines.

Session participants will be invited to suggest concepts for developing experiential learning modules related to community-based research. The potential usefulness of community-based research to the student community is that it supports the understanding of “opening communicative space” where individuals in a shared social world join together to analyze practices that facilitate injustice.¹

Ideas generated from this conference session will be incorporated into learning modules, to be utilized to develop (1) interdisciplinary, experiential learning modules, and (2) manuscripts to be submitted to appropriate journals (e.g. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) for publication.

The Case Study: The case study is located in the City of Atlanta’s Neighborhood Planning Unit V and focuses on a “community in social crisis” due to inadequate affordable housing, employment inequity and persistent poverty—in combination, “the most urgent moral problem in contemporary society ... in the midst of unprecedented affluence.”

Table 1. Demographic Comparisons--NPU-V and City of Atlanta

Variable	NPU-V	City of Atlanta
Population	15,427	498,059
Racial Composition	5% White 89% Black 2% Asian 2% Hispanic 2% Other	36.0% White 51% Black 5% Asian 5% Hispanic 3% Other
Unemployment Rates	8.6%	5.5%
Median Household Income	\$24,091	\$58,167
Percent Living Below Poverty Line	35%	18%
Bachelor’s Degree	16%	29%

Source: 2019 ESRI Business Analyst Online via Atlanta Regional Commission

Development of Experiential Learning Modules: The development of experiential learning modules is based on the case study data. The project objectives include

- ❖ development of interdisciplinary, experiential learning modules, incorporating focus group narratives that provide opportunities for a variety of high-impact practices, including community learning, collaborative projects, and capstone seminars;ⁱⁱ
- ❖ integration of experiential learning modules in courses in various disciplines, including humanities, social sciences, and sciences; and
- ❖ opportunities for students to apply relevant theory to qualitative, narrative analysis of the recorded and transcribed focus groups.

Presentation Activities: Think-Pair-Share and Problem-Based Learning (20 min)

Think-Pair-Share: Session participants will be asked to think about how a community-based case study related to social justice issues can be applied to an experiential learning module for a variety of disciplines; then participants will be asked to pair up to share their ideas.

Problem-Based Learning: Given the social justice issues characteristic of the “community of focus” case study, how can the narratives from the focus groups be applied to experiential learning assignments?

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ⁱ Habermas, J. (1996).

ⁱⁱ Weller & Saam (2019).

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