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Community-Engaged Scholarship: Toward a Shared Understanding of Practice

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Abstract: Community-engaged scholarship (CES) is frequently recommended as a postsecondary practice for producing knowledge to address real-world issues and support the public good. But CES has multiple meanings, and understandings overlap with similar terms, such as publicly engaged scholarship. I draw upon recommendations in the field to propose an integrated definition and articulate six components of CES; this framework can elucidate the practice for those new to the field and provide a foundation for current CES practitioners to share recommendations across disciplines, measure outcomes, and engage in future research and theory-building. I conclude with theorizing a new term *critical community-engaged scholarship*.

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INTRODUCTION

The deaths of Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Tanisha Anderson, and Sandra Bland and investigations of the disproportionate use of police force against Black and Brown men in Baltimore, Ferguson, and Cleveland are bringing new attention to issues of racial equity and human rights in the United States. In one of the most basic areas of human rights—access to clean air—more inequities exist: racial and ethnic minorities and low-income communities have greater exposure to fine particulates and ozone, both of which are associated with negative health effects (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). In another area of human rights—public education—racial, ethnic, and socio-economic minorities experience further injustices: unequal access to engaging curricula, highly qualified teachers, low student-to-teacher ratios, high expectations, fair discipline, high-quality school facilities, and equitable high school graduation rates (Diamond, 2008; Ferguson & Mehta, 2004; Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Kozol, 2005; Office for Civil Rights, 2014; Orfield, 2004; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012; Orfield & Lee, 2005). As racial and socio-economic inequities like these proliferate, the question arises: how can universities play a role in developing knowledge, policies, and practices to address these public issues?

Many postsecondary institutions are committed to answering this question; in a review of the mission statements from a diverse set of more than 300 U.S. higher education institutions, Furco and Goss (2001) found that 95% of these mission statements include civic purposes, like “advancing the public good” and “exercising influence on behalf of humanity and civilization” (Furco, 2010, p. 375). One way many universities and colleges attempt to achieve these goals is through *community-engaged* or *publicly engaged scholarship* (Boyer, 1996; Campus Compact, 2011; Stanton, McKnight Casey, Darwin, Howard, & Jacoby, 2007; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011).

Broadly defined, community-engaged scholarship (CES) refers to mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and communities designed with the intention to collaboratively develop and apply knowledge to address consequential public issues, like police violence and inequitable access to education. The collaborative aspect of CES distinguishes it from other, more traditional types of research and carries multiple benefits: indigenous knowledge can improve the quality of university research (Colbeck & Wharton Michael, 2006), members of marginalized communities and community activists often have more knowledge of the impacts of a public issue than academic researchers (Calhoun, 2008, p. xx), and, in the words of Duncan-Andrade (2007), “[those] most disenfranchised from society are the ones ... most likely to be willing to take the necessary risks to change a society” (p. 625).

CES projects vary in design and scope. Though sometimes confused with service-learning, which has a core focus on student-learning, CES more centrally focuses on the collaborative development and application of scholarly knowledge to address pressing social issues.¹ An example CES project could entail a community organizing group and local parents collaborating with an education professor and students to develop a research project on obstacles to children receiving a high quality education. Or an urban and regional planning professor might collaborate with residents of a subsidized housing community wanting effective strategies for building peaceful community-police alliances. However, CES has multiple meanings in the literature (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005), and these definitions overlap with other terms, such as the “scholarship of engagement” (Sandmann, 2008). This disarray of terms creates confusion over terminology (Giles Jr., 2008; Howard, 2011), which could make it difficult for practitioners from diverse disciplines to share recommendations for best practices. For those currently practicing some form of community-engaged scholarship, this article synthesizes recommendations of experts across disciplines, such that scholars in public health who often call this work “community-engaged scholarship” (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2011) can borrow and learn from the expertise of faculty in the arts, design, and humanities who often call this work “publicly engaged scholarship” (Imagining America, 2015) (and vice versa). Further, for those new to the field of public scholarship, the synthesis of interdisciplinary recommendations can be used as a tool to explain the practice. Thus, in this study I ask:

What are the common understandings of and converging recommendations for carrying out “*community-engaged scholarship*”, “*publicly engaged scholarship and teaching*”, “*community-engaged research and teaching*”, and “*community-based research and learning*”?

The article uses concept analysis to provide a clear articulation of the converging understandings of and recommendations for carrying out CES² (and associated terms) with the goal of synthesizing literatures for a coherent

¹Further distinctions of service-learning and CES are articulated in the history section.

²In this article, I use the name *community-engaged scholarship* because this term incorporates the language of several terms and is used frequently both in the literature and by campus-community organizations, particularly in the field of public health, (see, e.g., the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, Volume 16(1), 2012 and the CCPH website). However, the recent collaborative publication with AACU and Imagining America uses the term *publicly engaged scholarship and teaching*. Given the leading roles these two organizations play in the fields of democratic education and engaged scholarship, this could emerge as the more utilized term in the field.

understanding of recommended practices. Such an articulation can be used to develop university and college³ policies for hiring, promotion, and tenure that are conducive to CES. Further, clearly defined concepts can be measured; therefore, this CES definition can facilitate the development of measurement tools and support future research. This article lays the groundwork for building a set of best practices for university and community partnerships that have the goal of working to advance the public good, right inequity, and strengthen our democracy.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: A BRIEF HISTORY

CES has been utilized in various forms for quite some time in the academy. The origins of CES are often traced back to the land grant movements of the 1860s, the practice of settlement houses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and New Deal programs focusing on immigrant education and civil rights organizing (Avila-Linn, Rice, & Akin, 2012). In particular, multiple scholars of color in the academy have utilized these ideals of integrating scholarship and community engagement for many years (Hale, 2008; Sanchez, 2004; Stevens, 2003). Particularly in the fields of American studies and ethnic studies, scholars have:

...straddled the boundary of the academy and the public. ... From W.E.B. Du Bois to Ernesto Galarza, scholars from ethnic communities have a long tradition of finding multiple ways of affecting public policy, contributing to academic research, and engaging diverse publics often ignored by the rest of academia. (Sanchez, 2002, p. 17)

Thus, engaged scholars have a long history of developing methods for incorporating political concerns and community expertise into scholarly endeavors (Hale, 2008). Judith Francisca Baca is one contemporary example (Sanchez, 2002). Currently a Professor of Art and Chicano Studies at UCLA, she began her professional career as a youth arts director. Starting in 1974, Baca engaged more than four hundred youth and young adults to collaborate with scholars, oral historians, local artists, and community members to construct "The Great Wall of Los Angeles," a mural which commemorates the contributions that ethnic peoples played in the history of California.

While engaged and activist scholars in the latter half of the 20th century continued to develop and refine methods for integrating community expertise and scholarship (Hale, 2008), a younger movement—service-learning—started gaining momentum. Service-learning became a prominent pedagogy for colleges and universities to actualize their commitments to civic education

³For the sake of brevity, I will use university in the remainder of the article with the understanding CES can be practiced at both universities and colleges.

and community engagement in the mid-1980s and early 1990s (Hartley & Hollander, 2005). When CES is applied as a teaching pedagogy, it can be confused with service-learning; however, it is important to distinguish the two. Service-learning includes experiential learning, an individual reflection component, service to the community, and the integration of service with academic learning (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles Jr., 1999; Harkavy & Hartley, 2008; Jacoby, 2003; Mitchell, 2008; Rhoads, 1997; Seider, Rabinowicz, & Gillmor, 2011; Stanton, Giles Jr., & Cruz, 1999). Service-learning has a central focus on balancing community growth and student learning (Furco, 1996), with aims such as increasing students' abilities in applying academic content (Jacoby, 2003), as well as their commitments and capacities for democratic engagement (Battistoni, 1997). Whereas service-learning forefronts student learning and service *to* the community and critical service-learning balances student learning and service *with* the community (Mitchell, 2008), CES focuses instead on knowledge application and the collaborative production of knowledge or scholarship to address pressing social issues (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). Thus, while there are some common elements between service-learning and the pedagogical applications of CES, they are distinct concepts, and this article focuses on CES.

Presently, CES is being integrated across the realms of research, service, and teaching. For example, a graduate class on community organizing and research methods—in which students, faculty, and community organizing groups collaboratively investigate and publish successful strategies of community organizing groups working for education reform (Warren & Mapp, 2011; Warren, Oh, & Tieken, forthcoming)—illustrates how community engagement can simultaneously bolster research, scholarship, and teaching and be of service to the public good. Given the widespread applications of CES across the realms of research, teaching, and service and the promise CES holds for supporting universities in actualizing their public, civic, and social justice missions, it is vital that we better understand CES and the particular dimensions that are recommended to achieve these goals.

METHODS

Analytic Framework

Concept analysis is a methodological strategy for understanding concepts or ideas and, therefore, is an appropriate analytical framework for conceptualizing the meaning and dimensions of CES. Used frequently in the field of nursing, the purpose of concept analysis is “to expand and develop [a] knowledge base” (Rodgers & Knafl, 2000, p. 1) or to “promote organization of experience [and] facilitate communication among individuals...” (Rodgers, 1989, p. 330). Concept analysis is useful when confronting confusing

terminology or different understandings of key concepts across fields that can hinder communication and synthesis (Rodgers, 2000b). Clarifying concepts makes them more useful and meaningful to both researchers and practitioners (Rodgers, 2000a).

Analytic approaches to concept analysis vary; this paper draws most strongly upon the evolutionary approach because the purpose of this model—to promote organization of ideas and experiences and to facilitate communication among individuals (Rodgers, 1989)—mirrors the purpose of the paper, that is, developing a unified understanding of CES. The evolutionary view integrates entity-based concept analysis—which views a concept as a thing with an abstract mental image and physical reality with bounded and rigid borders across contexts—and the dispositional theory, which focuses on concepts as making certain behaviors possible (Rodgers, 2000b). According to dispositional theory, one can only act “professionally” if one has a concept of what acting professionally entails. The evolutionary view integrates these perspectives to define a concept as an abstraction expressed in some form, through words or otherwise, and emphasizes that a concept is formed—or becomes associated with a particular set of attributes—through socialization, culture, and public interactions. In the evolutionary approach, understanding a concept requires analyzing attributes or characteristics for their resemblances—rather than for adherence to a strictly defined classification—seeking to ascertain whether they cohere as a concept (Rodgers, 1989).

The most common method of concept analysis involves reviewing and analyzing the literature as data (Morse, 2000; Rodgers, 1989). The evolutionary approach includes naming the concept of interest and identifying surrogate terms, choosing appropriate criteria for selecting literature to review, identifying the attributes of the concept that are named in the literature, pinpointing consequences or goals of a concept, identifying related ideas to the concept of interest, and selecting a model case.

Data Analysis Steps

To address my research question on the common understandings and converging recommendations for best practices in engaged scholarship for the public good, I began with naming the concept of interest—CES—and identifying surrogate terms: *community-engaged scholarship*, *public scholarship*, *active and engaged scholarship*, *curricular engagement and outreach and scholarship*, *community-based research and learning*, *scholarship of engagement*, and *publicly engaged scholarship*.⁴ Next, I conducted a review of the

⁴I did not include definitions/recommendations focused solely on more specific types or aspects of community-engaged scholarship, such as *participatory action research*, because I was aiming to develop a broad-based definition with components and recommendations applicable across the various types of engaged scholarship.

literature on CES and these associated terms. I focused on recommendations for sources from two leading organizations in the field of community- and civic-engagement and campus-community partnerships: 1) Campus Compact, a national coalition of almost 1,200 college and university presidents⁵ and 2) Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH), a non-profit organization of more than 2000 individuals, community organizations, and academic institutions promoting health equity and social justice. Additionally, I sought recommended sources from the websites and reports of other key professional organizations in the field: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Committee on Institutional Operation Committee on Engagement, Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, and the Scholarship of Engagement Online. From this review of literature, reports, and professional organizations' websites, I selected 28 sources (starred in the references), all of which included a concrete definition or description of CES or the aforementioned terms and, in many cases, recommendations for carrying out these concepts.

For the most part, the articles and websites were descriptive or prescriptive: describing what CES is and prescribing what university personnel should be doing, as opposed to empirically-based studies. From these sources, I compiled common understandings of and suggestions for carrying out CES (and the aforementioned terms) into one document for analysis. Preliminary review indicated that there was considerable overlap across definitions and recommendations for these various terms, confirming the applicability of the evolutionary concept analysis strategy (Rodgers, 1989).

To identify the attributes of the concept that were frequently named in the literature, as well as pinpoint goals and recommendations related to the concept, I utilized MaxQDA, a software program for qualitative data analysis. I systematically coded the data (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)—the document including the multiple definitions of and recommendations for carrying out CES—first through open coding, in which labels are attached to smaller chunks of data such as individual lines or sentences. Then, in a second more focused and selective phase of coding, I grouped and sorted the initial open codes into thematic clusters or *axial codes*. For example, the open codes of “two-way knowledge,” “learn from community,” “community as experts,” and “knowledge in application” led to the axial code “collaborative knowledge production.” Further, the open codes of “real-life problems/social issues,” “community as experts,” and “community-identified needs” inspired the axial code “community-identified issues.” And the open codes of “integrate service with academics/research,” “integrate scholarship/research

⁵Many of the articles I analyzed are recommendations from the *Research University Engaged Scholarship Toolkit* (Stanton & Howard, 2011).

and teaching with service” and “impact research/scholarship” resulted in the axial code “integration with faculty scholarship.”

The axial codes became the six components for community-engaged scholarship. Next, I returned to the data and—guided by the axial codes—synthesized the context of the coded text segments across the 28 sources into one integrated theory (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998): my working definition for the concept of CES.

To strengthen the validity of my analysis, I shared my findings with two interpretive communities (Maxwell, 2005). One interpretive community—consisting of five colleagues who engage in educational research for racial and social justice—provided their perspectives on my theoretical framework, analysis, and interpretation. The second interpretive community included three CES practitioners from University of California, Berkeley,⁶ who gave feedback on whether my definition and components were consistent with practices in the field.

DEFINING CES: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE WITH COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS PUBLIC ISSUES

I begin this section with the definition of CES and then articulate each of its six components. The six components include recommendations for strategies to practice CES and, in some cases, broad-based goals for or outcomes of CES.

What is Community-Engaged Scholarship?

Though language differed from source to source, a concept analysis of the literature resulted in the following definition of CES: *community-engaged scholarship* encompasses mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and communities⁷ that seek to collaboratively develop and apply knowledge to address consequential public issues in our democracy. Six recommended CES components emerged repeatedly in the literature: 1) a focus on real-life social problems that are defined with or by the community; 2) scholarly investigation of these real-life social problems or public issues; 3) community-university partnerships that are collaborative and reciprocal

⁶University of California, Berkeley was chosen as a best practices institution based on their state-wide and national recognition for their diversity courses, service, and community-engagement (Cockrell, 2012; Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010; Humphreys, 1997).

⁷The meaning of “community,” who is part of a community, and the assumptions surrounding an understanding of “community” that is geographically-bounded are written about in depth by other researchers (see, e.g., Butin, 2012). For the purposes of this paper, I will use community broadly to refer to individuals and groups of people outside the university, often predominantly of racial/ethnic minority and lower SES backgrounds.

and in which community partners have shared authority in defining success; 4) the generation of knowledge to address and improve public issues that is collaboratively developed by universities and communities; 5) the utilization of institutional resources and knowledge to address these real-life social problems; and 6) the production of scholarship with relevance to faculty members' research agenda and teaching practice.

Component 1: Community-Identified Issues

The first component of CES covers who should select the public issues on which to focus. In contrast to typical academic research that looks to the canon of scholarship to define social problems worthy of analysis, in CES multiple sources emphasized the importance of community members or university-community collaborations identifying the public issues. Community members should work together with faculty and students to "define real-world problems in all their complexity" (Colbeck & Wharton Michael, 2006, p. 17). Public issues could come from an array of areas: economic development, social or cultural expansion (Stanton et al., 2007), education and the economy, agriculture and food, access to healthcare, urban revitalization, conservation of the environment, and natural resources (Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999).

In practice, this could mean that a professor consults with community organizations to develop topics for courses or research projects. For example, a professor teaching a course in gender studies could meet with gender and women's rights nonprofit organizations to ascertain what issues are currently affecting their members and what course research projects could address these issues. Or an education professor's research study could be motivated by a community organizing group expressing a need to understand how teachers and school staff could be more accessible so that parents who do not speak English may be involved in decisions at a school.

Component 2: Scholarly Investigation of Public Issues

The second CES component is the importance of conducting scholarly investigations of real-life public issues and/or producing scholarship about such issues. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) provide standards for assessing university scholarship more generally: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. However, applying these standards in the context of interdisciplinary research practiced collaboratively with university and community members raises questions: who gets to establish the goals? What constitutes effective presentation? And to whom should scholarship be presented? These questions were not clearly and consistently addressed in the CES literature. For example, some sources emphasized the importance of a product of scholarship:

... community-engaged research/creative activity, community-engaged teaching, and community-engaged service may be enacted in a scholarly way, but may not comprise scholarship unless a product (which may include many forms as outlined in ... university-wide promotion and tenure guidelines) is created and made available for peer-review. (Janke, Clayton, Lucas, & Shelton, 2011, p. 1)

As opposed to emphasizing a product, other sources argued CES should: include scholarly investigation, actively interrogate traditional understandings of scholarship, and question the legitimacy of a peer-review process that does not include community members or scholarship that is published in journals exclusively available to those with university or monetary access (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). They highlighted the importance of “enlarging the conception of who counts as ‘peer’ and what counts as ‘publication’” and viewed such broadening as “part of something bigger: the democratization of knowledge on and off campus” (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. iv). Ellison and Eatman (2008) pushed for viewing scholarship and scholarly knowledge production along a continuum in which academic public engagement is fully and equally valued. Thus, while there was agreement on the importance of scholarship/scholarly investigation broadly construed, there was not clear consensus on precise standards for carrying this out.

Component 3: Collaborative and Mutually Beneficial Community-University Partnerships

The third CES component focuses on important characteristics of community-university partnerships. Virtually every article, report, or website I consulted emphasized the importance of partnerships that were reciprocal, collaborative, and mutually beneficial. Community engagement should include a commitment to “two-way streets” in which respect is given and received for what each partner brings to the table (Carnegie Foundation, 2010). Such relationships were established in multiple ways. For example, they could be built in part through some of the other components of CES, such as seeking community members’ input in identifying public issues and valuing community expertise in the production of knowledge. Some sources highlighted the potential power imbalance between those with university backing and community members and argued for actively taking steps to ensure power imbalances were addressed in order to facilitate reciprocal partnerships (see, e.g., Avila-Linn et al., 2012). Occasionally sources also explicitly emphasized the importance of having shared authority in defining success—another key action that could improve community-university partnerships (Saltmarsh, Giles Jr., Ward, & Buglione, 2009).

In practice, a reciprocal partnership could include a professor designing a course research project with a product that fulfills a community-identified

need, such as developing a website to share information about how to influence current city council policies that affect community members. For such a project to support both community-university reciprocity and also scholarship, faculty would need to consider whether the research that leads to the website includes “clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, reflective critique, rigor, and peer review” (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005) with careful consideration of who constitutes a “peer.”

Component 4: Collaborative Knowledge Production

The fourth key component of CES is the location of knowledge production. In contrast to knowledge *from* the university being used to address issues facing communities, multiple sources on CES emphasized the importance of the *collaborative* production of knowledge. While previous ideals for university members may have focused on outreach and service to the community, CES valued knowledge-generating tasks that were shared with community partners and university members; everyone had a role in public problem-solving (Saltmarsh et al., 2009). CES explicitly recognized that new knowledge was created when theoretical knowledge was applied in the field or when indigenous knowledge informed university research (Colbeck & Wharton Michael, 2006).

One example of such knowledge generating tasks could be housing activists and university researchers collaborating for deeper understanding of the impact of a particular housing policy in a community: “Housing activists often know more about housing issues than academic researchers. . . . But researchers may be able to analyze data in ways that reveal previously unseen or at least inadequately demonstrated patterns in the facts” (Calhoun, 2008, p. xx). Another example of a collaborative knowledge generating task could be community members or organizations identifying bias or knowledge gaps on Wikipedia and working with university students and faculty to design and conduct research to address these biases and gaps (Robinson, Personal communication, 9/4/2012).

Component 5: Institutional Resources for the Public Good

The fifth CES component involves connecting institutional resources and knowledge with community knowledge and issue identification to solve real-life public issues. Diverging from many traditional higher education practices that restrict the use of university resources to people directly affiliated with the institution—such as opening courses only to tuition-paying students or providing library cards only to faculty, students, and staff—as Boyer (1996) wrote, “. . .the scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems” (p. 21). Universities are often resource-rich in areas such

as libraries, technology, research-expertise, and information. Communities, though often low in access to material resources, are high in knowledge on the practical application of theory and the impacts of structural inequity. This CES component is about broadening access to university resources and committing to connect these rich resources to the knowledge and issue identification stemming from the community.

Utilizing institutional resources for the public good could include course projects like interviewing community members to understand the significance of one community organization's artifacts and then using interview findings to describe and archive the artifacts in university libraries (Rodríguez, Personal communication, 9/20/2012). It could also include videotaping academic lectures on topics community organizations have identified as relevant to a public issue, making these lectures available on Youtube for public viewing (Bazian, Personal communication, 9/12/2012), and then researching the impact of the lectures on issues like community or community-university collective action. Or it could be something as simple as a faculty member collaborating with community members on a research project and ensuring that community members get access to the university's library.

Component 6: Integration with Faculty Scholarship

The last key CES component recommends that the community-based research or project be integrated with and forward the faculty member's scholarship. For example, Imagining America's report on promoting public scholarship in the arts and humanities calls for CES to be "...integral to a faculty member's academic area" (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. 1). The importance of integrating community engagement with scholarship—in an area in which faculty can share expertise—is in part to support research and collaborative knowledge production that result in viable strategies to address public issues (Janke et al., 2011) and in part to support engaged scholars achieving tenure, such that they can stay in the profession long-term and continue to impact social change (Ellison & Eatman, 2008).

For a faculty member in art practice, this could mean a community-university partnership that leads to a collaboratively produced public mural. For a faculty member in public health, this could be designing a participatory action research project with community members impacted by a health policy initiative to collaboratively study the policy's effectiveness. For faculty members more generally, each community-engagement project may not be tied specifically to one piece of scholarship; however, consistently engaging with community members and organizations in class and research projects can alter the perceptions that guide their research, which research questions they pursue in systematic ways, and the solutions they investigate for viability (García Bedolla, Personal communication, 11/20/2012; Rodríguez, Personal communication, 9/20/2012).

DISCUSSION

The definition and six components of CES I have detailed here represent converging opinions of those in the field on what CES is and what dimensions are important for practicing it. For faculty and university administrators who are new to CES, these concepts provide a means for understanding the field and a guide for shaping university policy and practice. For faculty, students, and community members who practice CES, they can be used as a roadmap for designing community-engaged research and courses and suggesting areas for future research or policy development.

Implications for Policy and Practice

CES is more likely to be practiced if university policies support the recognition and promotion of faculty undertaking this type of scholarship. Ellison and Eatman (2008) published a robust report—based on 19 interviews resulting in more than 400-pages of transcripts—on promotion and tenure for CES faculty in the arts, humanities, and design. They make 12 recommendations for revising tenure and promotion guidelines, among them “define public scholarly and creative work” and “develop policy based on a continuum of scholarship” (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. V). This broader understanding of scholarship is important to ensuring that research with and for the public is rewarded in the promotion system, and the six CES components can guide university policies that support these recommendations. For example, to define public scholarly work and evaluate its quality, tenure and promotion committees could assess whether and how a CES faculty member’s scholarly activity incorporated each of the six CES components. Additionally, a policy could explicitly state that the university values faculty collaborating with community members to choose public issues for research.

In regards to practice, the articulation of converging CES recommendations can be used to facilitate both the induction of new scholars to the field of CES and interdisciplinary collaboration. With clear and consistent language to talk about experiences, those who already are or want to practice CES or one of its associated terms—whether in public health, education, the arts, or other disciplines—will be able to learn, adopt, share, and refine best practices in the field. Thus, this analysis and synthesis of CES expertise from a wide range of actors can be used to support universities in fulfilling their civic missions to advance the public good.

Implications for Future Research and Theory

Measurement. A precise definition also brings forth the possibility of measurement and researching impacts. Without a way to measure CES, it is difficult to systematically evaluate the impact of the work in large-scale CES studies and to ascertain whether there are similar practices across diverse

contexts that have successful outcomes for community members, students, faculty members, or policy initiatives. The CES definition can guide the creation of measurement tools; I created one such tool to study the impacts of incorporating CES into diversity courses on student learning for democratic engagement (Gordon da Cruz, 2016). For example, to measure the component of collaboratively choosing public issues to target, students were asked to what extent they agreed with the following prompt: *the community-based project in this course was jointly designed by community members together with the professor, graduate student instructors, or course participants*. The CES measurement tool made it possible to evaluate, across thousands of students taking courses in an array of disciplines, the conditions under which the incorporation of CES into diversity courses was associated with growth in a variety of student learning outcomes. The results of such studies can be used to justify CES to university administrators and external funders.

There can be risks associated with reducing complex concepts such as community-engaged work into Likert scale questions for quantitative measurement; we could, for example, miss the nuances, intricacies, and aspects of the work that are perhaps not articulated or easily measurable, yet held as core assumptions by many in the field. However, quantitative measurement allows us to systematically evaluate what is working and what is not in ways that can support more just outcomes. Thus, with a concrete definition and corresponding measurement tools, researchers can proceed cautiously and measure impact to better understand how we can practice CES in ways that advance the public good, right inequity, and strengthen our democracy.

Future research. Tools for measurement could also help in future research to establish answers to some of the questions raised by analyzing converging CES recommendations. While I was not seeking tensions across definitions and recommendations, I found there remain many unanswered questions—about how to put concepts into practice—and tensions: areas in which the literature and practitioners may find disagreement about best practices. For example, as referenced in CES component two, there are questions about what constitutes scholarship and scholarly investigation. Further, while virtually every article, website, or report used the term community, few explicitly defined who is or should be included in a definition of community.

These areas for future research are already beginning to be explored in a new collaborative publication from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AACU) and Imagining America entitled, *Publicly Engaged Scholarship and Teaching*. For example, in an article from this publication concerning how to create an academic culture that supports CES, the authors propose concrete recommendations across four categories, such as tenure and promotion policies to reward innovative and diverse forms of scholarship (Saltmarsh et al., 2015), thus beginning to address the question of what should count as scholarship. Additionally, in an article on public

engagement in higher education, Eatman and Peters (2015) write, “publicly engaged scholarship is defined by partnerships that join the knowledge and resources of higher education with those of the public and private sectors to enrich research, creative activity, and public knowledge” (paragraph 7). The explicit inclusion of *private* sectors in public or community partnerships deviates from the rest of the literature I reviewed and raises questions for future research: should private sectors be included in CES? Is this a way in which CES and publicly engaged scholarship differ? Researchers should continue to explore these complex issues to understand if how we answer these questions influences how effective universities are in collaborating with communities to address issues for the public good.

Theory. In offering the CES definition above—based on the converging understandings across the articles surveyed—I am concerned about the lack of an explicit focus on social and racial justice. CES stands on the shoulders of activist scholars (Avila-Linn et al., 2012) who have united university resources, systematic research practices, and community expertise to work for racial, gender, class, and social justice. Yet the six CES recommendations that emerged from the reviewed literature did not explicitly name the importance of a commitment to justice, deconstructing systemic inequities, or other tenets of critical theory. Instead, the frequently mentioned goal in the literature was working for the “public good.” One possibility is that these commitments are not named because they are so core to many CES practitioners that they are assumed; alternatively, for others, a commitment to the “public good” may not be motivated by racial or social justice. Thus, I argue that for those who are practicing CES with aims of deconstructing systemic injustices, an explicit articulation of this commitment could help focus efforts—to share best practices, measure outcomes, and engage in future research—towards this end.

Future theory-building should consider how the definition and recommended components for CES might differ if an explicit focus on justice were named. Critical theory is appropriate to draw on for building such a theory of CES because of its focus on emancipatory aims (Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Young, 1990). An initial definition of *critical community-engaged scholarship* (critical CES) might include: authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships that develop and apply critically conscious knowledge to public issues with the goal of redistributing power and making society more just. Future theory-building should deconstruct and reconstruct this definition of critical CES, along with forging recommendations for CES components with a named emphasis on dismantling systemic sources of inequity and advancing justice.⁸

⁸I theorize critical CES in a forthcoming article, “Critical Community-Engaged Scholarship: Communities and Universities Striving for Racial Justice” (Gordon da Cruz, forthcoming).

CONCLUSION

In the context of our diverse and inequitable nation, it is now more crucial than ever for U.S. higher education institutions to fulfill their public purposes. With complex issues to address—like the racially disproportionate use of police force, differential access to clean air and other shared resources, and unjust outcomes in public education—we need university and community experts collaborating to develop knowledge that can alleviate these problems. Indeed, many higher education institutions are reaffirming their commitment to public purposes and scholarship that advances the public good (Furco & Goss, 2001). Drawing upon recommendations of those across varied disciplines who undertake university-community partnerships with the goal of developing knowledge in support of the public good, the understanding of CES articulated here provides clarity and direction for disseminating successful practices, measuring outcomes, and engaging in future research. It also suggests an area of further theory-building: a critical CES that not only supports the public good, but explicitly seeks to dismantle structural inequity and build a more just democracy.

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