

Collaboratory Design Think Tank : Community Engagement Curriculum

Monday, November 12, 3:30 pm-5 pm, 6 E 16th St. Room 1618

Attendees: Evren Uzer, Sujatha Jesudason, Elliott Montgomery, Austen Osworth, Gustav Peebles, Brian Erickson (Note: Ana Baptista, Nitin Sawhney and Joseph Heathcott will share thoughts independently as they can't participate in this meeting due to conflict)

Facilitators: Michele Kahane, Masoom Moitra

Meeting Objective:

Social engagement with communities and organizational partners lies at the heart of the mission of The New School. While numerous courses, research projects, initiatives, labs and workshops are conducted in partnership with external stakeholders, our academic community and students continue to feel the need for curricular tools that equip them to be prepared to work in sensitive contexts. The objective of this collaborative session with socially-engaged members of The New School's academic community is to lay a groundwork for the development of curricular tools that is useful to our broader community of social engaged educators, practitioners and scholars.

Discussion Notes:

PURPOSE

- Orient students to themes of power and privilege and how to ethically and equitably approach socially-engaged research in and with communities
- Develop best practices and methods for measuring long-term impacts of socially-engaged research, both positive and negative (i.e. does socially-engaged research deliver lasting impacts beyond the course of a semester)
- Address gaps and lack of standards within The New School community for how to ethically and effectively approach social engagement (i.e. often piecing together resources and orientations from siloed centers within The New School or drawing from external partners)
- Compensate community partners, faculty (including PT faculty) and graduate students adequately for time spent building effective collaborations or providing technical expertise.
- Create an adaptable, customizable curriculum that responds to unique nature of collaboration in various community settings (not a cookie cutter approach)
- Prevent community engagement and public scholarship projects from perpetuating cycles of marginalization.
- Create transformative experiences for students, a core tenant to engaging in social impact research and advocacy.

STRATEGIES

- Create partnerships between students and community partners (organizations) that last throughout the trajectory of a graduate student's studies in order to build trust and longevity that can be difficult to accomplish in a single semester.
- Clarify course sequencing, especially at undergraduate level, to ensure students pursuing social engaged coursework receive "101" level orientation to ethical themes in year 1.
- Develop curriculum in partnership with a "community scholars" program -- bring in community stakeholders in the design stage.
- Invite external partners into classrooms to orient students to dynamics of power, privilege and how those play out in collaborations.
- Develop focused, intensive modules on themes of socially engaged research and public scholarship that can be delivered as part of a studio/seminar. See recent race and class seminar series from the 2017 - 2018 academic year as an example. Also incorporate principles from feminist theory into student modules.
- Create long-term research and engagement opportunities for faculty.
- Consider limiting outside socially-engaged research opportunities to graduate-level students and create internal opportunities for undergrads to "play" model behavior for later implementation. This allows for learning from mistakes without causing undue harm to outside partners, communities (e.g. model U.N.)
- Interview students registered in community engagement courses to gauge readiness and familiarity with principles and identify appropriate referral or alternate training opportunities for students needing greater orientation.
- Ensure institutional values around community engagement and public scholarship shape hiring practices at The New School (i.e. faculty seeking to incorporate socially engaged research into teaching should have a demonstrated history of experience/success).
- Interview faculty seeking to teach community engagement focused courses for their preparedness and familiarity with socially-engaged research best practices.
- Develop faculty training workshops, modules to beef up skills in socially engaged research best practices.
- Develop student course sequences that emphasize methodology first, and then practice.

INDIVIDUAL INPUT

- Academic Research Support- provide training in (David Ngo and Michael Schumer) research ethics and training in do no harm.
- Student Health Services has also provided training in....
- Rob Robinson seminar on race and class
- Write On in the MFA Creative Writing school developed a one semester methodology program to orient fellows to best pedagogy practices before inserting them in community-based classrooms to teach.

The New School Collaboratory seeks to optimize the social and educational impact of academic collaborations with communities. [Learn more about how we do this.](#)