Introduction to Research on Service Learning and Student Civic Outcomes

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The current context for community engagement in American higher education places an emphasis on civic outcomes for college students (e.g., National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). There is a consistent call for a renewed commitment of colleges and universities to create campus cultures that support and challenge student understanding of and commitment to civic participation. This call has come from national associations and membership organizations, foundations, and government entities, and is coupled with academic leadership at colleges and universities across the country, indeed the globe. This call has contributed to a sustained movement in higher education over the past two decades to support the civic development of college students and graduates.

In terms of national associations, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) has provided significant leadership for initiatives (e.g., Civic Engagement VALUE rubric, annual conferences) and publications (e.g., Liberal Education, Diversity & Democracy). Since 2002, the Bringing Theory to Practice project, funded through foundations and private
gifts, has functioned in close collaboration with AAC&U to support a number of initiatives that link liberal learning with civic engagement practices and the well-being of college students (e.g., grants to more than 300 institutions, conferences, *The Civic Series* comprised of five monographs on civic learning). In 2012, the AAC&U, the Bringing Theory to Practice project and others were convened by the U.S. Department of Education to form The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. The resulting study, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future* highlights the importance of civic learning as a fundamental aspect of liberal education and recommends that public policy endorses “civic learning for democratic engagement as an expected component of program integrity and quality standards at all levels of education”, including all types of post-secondary education (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p. 34). The AAC&U tracks the ongoing use and impact of the *Crucible Moment* report, and to date more than 48,000 copies of the report have been downloaded and viewed through the AAC&U website (https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/CrucibleUpdate2016.pdf).

Similar initiatives have been sponsored by other national associations. Since 2003, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASC&U) has supported the American Democracy Project, an ongoing project that involves more than 250 colleges and universities that support the civic development of college students. In collaboration with AASC&U, in 2009, our Center for Service and Learning hosted the *IUPUI Symposium on Assessing Student Civic Outcomes* and this initial gathering of scholars laid an important foundation for this current volume (Keen, 2009). AASC&U is also a lead collaborator on *The Democracy Commitment*, an initiative among community colleges to advance and study the
impact of community college experiences on student civic outcomes. Additionally, the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, beginning in 2012, has sponsored the Lead Initiative to advance a Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement constituent group within co-curricular programming. Each year professionals from more than 100 campuses share good practice through structured collaboration, peer mentoring, and national conferences. Thus within the domains of both curricular and co-curricular initiatives, there is a strong emphasis on civic learning.

Membership organizations that support civic engagement have also seen a steady growth over the past two decades. Campus Compact, this year celebrating its 30th Anniversary, represents more than 1,100 colleges and universities and is comprised of a network of 34 state and regional compacts throughout the United States. Other membership organizations (e.g., Anchor Institution Task Force, Community-Campus Partnerships in Health, Imagining America, International Association for Research on Service-learning and Community Engagement, The Research University Civic Engagement Network) are comprised of academics with specific disciplinary interests and approaches to community engagement and public scholarship. Journals within the field of civic engagement (e.g., Journal of Public Service and Outreach, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Public: A Journal of Imagining America, The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement) and special awards and designations (e.g., Thomas Ehrlich Civic Engagement Faculty Award, Ernest A. Lynton Award for Scholarship of Engagement, William M. Plater Award for Leadership in Civic Engagement, Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship) reinforce the level of commitment to the public purposes of higher education. In addition, there are parallel
international initiatives focused on service learning and civic engagement across the globe (e.g., Talloires Network, Campus Engage, Service Learning Asia Network, Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario, Ma’an Arab University Alliance for Civic Engagement, South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum, Engagement Australia, Europe Engage).

The call for civic renewal in higher education is also supported by foundation programs and private funding to support program implementation (e.g., Carnegie Foundation, Charles Engelhard Foundation, Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation, Kettering Foundation, Lumina Foundation) as well as research on student civic outcomes (e.g., Spencer Foundation, Teagle Foundation, Templeton Foundation). Of these foundation initiatives, one of the most important catalysts for change in American higher education has been the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. To date, a total of 361 colleges and universities have received this elective classification by completing an extensive application portfolio of evidence demonstrating institutionalized and effective community engagement. Although this classification covers a broad spectrum of institutional factors, attention is also given to assessment of student learning and civic outcomes resulting from service learning courses and other forms of community engagement.

**IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research**

This volume, as well as the entire *IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research*, is one response to this call for renewed emphasis on civic engagement in higher education. The overarching goal of the series is to stimulate more and better research on service learning. This third volume is focused on providing an analysis of student civic outcomes and contributing to
research strategies for enhancing an understanding of the means to prepare students for civic participation through their personal and professional lives. In the second volume, Clayton, Bringle, and Hatcher (2013), *Research on Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Assessment, Vol. 2A and Vol. 2B*, research was conceptualized as incorporating theory, measurement, design, and practice. Authors of chapters in that volume were specifically asked “to introduce theories and measurement approaches from cognate areas, to use those theories to critique extant research studies (including designs and analyses), and to integrate those theoretical lenses with what has and has not been undertaken and learned in work to date in order to generate recommendations for practice and an agenda for future research” (p. 17). This general framework for understanding research also shaped the guidance that authors were given in the present volume.

*Figure 1.1.1.*

*Research situated within the context of theory, measurement, design, and practice.*
With the goal to advance research on student civic outcomes, we have requested chapters for this volume that conceptualize civic outcomes and the nature of service learning’s contributions to civic outcomes, present theoretical frameworks, and suggest research methodologies. Part I provides an overview of civic learning outcomes and then lays a foundation for the importance of service learning course design and implementation to reach civic outcomes. In Part II, authors identify key relevant cognate theories from various disciplinary or theoretical perspectives on civic outcomes, provide a critical evaluation of past research on service learning from that perspective, identify a research agenda for future research based on the theoretical perspectives and what has not been studied in past research, and identify implications for good practice for service learning based on the analysis. In Part III, authors describe specific research methods and designs (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, cross-institutional research, longitudinal research, gathering authentic data, using local and national data sets) to
improve research, provide a review and critique of past research using a particular methodological perspective, and make recommendations for future research to advance understanding of the relationship between service learning and civic outcomes. Each chapter provides useful information to both practitioners and researchers and clarifies the rationale for practice recommendations emanating from both cognate theories and past research approaches.

There are a number of intended purposes that shaped the design of this volume, as well as the invitations extended to chapter authors. Although the chapters have implications for assessment, program evaluation, and course design, our primary goal is to improve research on service learning and student civic outcomes in higher education. We asked authors not only to review the literature to date but also to provide a forward thinking perspective on where research should be focused to improve understanding of student civic outcomes through service learning. Many authors have identified key questions that can shape the research agenda going forward and they illustrate how cognate theories generate new or refined questions related to designing service learning courses and their connections to civic outcomes. The authors have identified theories from cognate domains (e.g., education, critical theories, philanthropic studies, political science, psychology, well-being) to generate a new set of questions and recommendations to deepen understanding of service learning. Although there are gaps that exist in terms of theoretical perspectives that are not well-represented in this volume, other disciplinary sources are available (e.g., sociology, see Follman, 2015; religious studies, see Devine, Favazza, & McLain, 2002; economics; see McGoldrick, Battle, & Gallagher, 2000; Zlotkowski, 2000) to support scholarship and practice. The chapters in this volume extend past analyses and provide new insights to service learning researchers and provide other researchers with ideas about how
service learning can provide in vivo ways to evaluate and refine the relevance of cognate theories for student civic outcomes.

Although the primary focus is to provide resources to researchers, the intended audience for the book is intentionally broad and includes graduate students, institutional researchers, scholars and teachers, program evaluators, assessment practitioners, and scholars of teaching and learning. We view scholarship as a broader category of inquiry, analysis, and synthesis than research. Both the scholarship on teaching and learning and rigorous research strategies can enhance the understanding of the broad range of civic outcomes that can be achieved through service learning, including the long-term commitments of college graduates to be actively engaged in their communities after graduation as citizens and civic-minded professionals.

Although our focus is on American higher education, research within K-12 education has been brought to bear on analyses, and there are implications from each chapter for scholars focused on civic development among youth and high school students as well as for those designing co-curricular programs and activities to develop civic outcomes (Bringle, Studer, Wilson, Clayton, & Steinberg, 2011; Weinberg, 2005). Similarly, we appreciate contextual issues associated with situating this volume primarily within the American context (e.g., Hatcher & Bringle, 2012). Going forward, we aspire to a subsequent volume on framing civic outcomes from various cross-cultural perspectives and exploring the similarities and differences in concepts such as civic-minded graduate (Hatcher, McIlrath, McMillan, & McTighe-Musil, 2014). We would expect, however, that this volume will provide inspiration, advice, and resources for international researchers who study service learning and civic outcomes of their students.
Civic Engagement and Service Learning

Civic Engagement

Within the field of community engagement, definitional issues often arise (Holland, 2000). Figure 1.1.2 takes the traditional faculty activities within universities (i.e., teaching, research, service) and illustrates that each has implications for both faculty and students and each can occur in communities as well as on campus (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999). Courses can be delivered at off-campus sites in communities, researchers can collect data in communities, and faculty can share professional expertise in communities. In addition, Figure 1.1.2 illustrates that these three areas can overlap; although not shown in this diagram, the intersection of teaching and research can occur both on campus and in communities. Community involvement, then, is teaching, research, and/or service (and their intersections) that takes place in communities. Community involvement activities are defined by place; they can occur in all sectors of society (e.g., nonprofit, government, business) and in local or international contexts (Bringle, Hatcher, & Clayton, 2006).
Civic engagement, however, not only indicates where community–campus interactions occur but also specifies qualities of process (i.e., how it occurs). Bringle et al. (2006) differentiate between community involvement and civic engagement in the following way:

Civic engagement is a subset of community involvement and is defined by both location as well as process (it occurs not only in but also with the community). According to this distinction, civic engagement develops partnerships that possess integrity and that emphasize participatory, collaborative, and democratic processes (e.g., design, implementation, assessment) that provide benefits to all constituencies. (Bringle et al., 2006, p. 258)

This differentiation between activities done only in communities and activities done *in and with* communities (Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2011; Kirby 2010; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton...
2009) illustrates that the public purposes of civic engagement “go beyond outcomes benefiting either the academy (i.e., students, faculty, institutions) or the community (i.e., organizations, residents) to include collective capacity building, collective transformation (i.e., growth), and the mutual empowerment of all participants as democratic agents” (Bringle & Clayton, 2012, p. 104). One implication of this characterization of civic engagement is that civic learning outcomes can be designed within and emanate from various civic engagement activities (e.g. civically engaged teaching, research, service). An additional implication is that civic learning outcomes are not limited to only students but can also occur for faculty, campus staff and administrators, community partners in community-based organizations, and community residents.

**Service Learning**

Because there are a number of definitions of service learning (Jacoby, 2015) and there is a lack of clarity about service learning as a high-impact teaching strategy (Finley, 2011; Giles & Eyler, 2013), for the analysis and examination of research on service learning in this volume, we have asked authors to use a common definition. We define service learning as:

a course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility. (Bringle & Clayton, 2012, p. 105; adapted from Bringle & Hatcher 1996)

A number of characteristics embedded within this definition are further described below.
Civic outcomes. In the definition, “personal values and civic responsibility” acknowledges a unique contribution that service learning provides to broadening and deepening the specific and general learning outcomes in higher education: civic learning outcomes. Figure 1.1.3 illustrates three domains of learning objectives: academic learning, civic learning, and personal growth. There is accumulating evidence that each of these domains can be enhanced through service learning (e.g., Bowman, 2011; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011; Novak, Markey, & Allen, 2007; Warren, 2012; Yorio & Ye, 2012). Figure 1.1.3 also illustrates that the civic outcome domain can be an integral part of the academic content of the service learning course (area #4) or students’ personal development (area #6) as well as an area of growth and learning that independently but intentionally occurs (area #2). Jameson, Clayton, and Ash (2013) provide an analysis of research that has been conducted across disciplines on academic learning, examining both research that measured changes across time and research that compared service learning to traditional pedagogies. The purpose of this volume is to examine how research on service learning can contribute to civic outcomes, including civic outcomes that might be a part of course content or related to personal growth. Civic outcomes are complex (Hatcher, 2011), they vary across disciplines (Battistoni, 2002), and they typically are described as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors (chapter 1.2; chapter 1.3).

Figure 1.1.3.

Learning domains that community service can enhance (from Bringle, Reeb, Brown & Ruiz, 2015).
1. Community service illustrates or informs a deeper understanding of an academic concept, theory, or research finding (e.g., students learn to differentiate the use of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and punishment while they reflect on their observations of an elementary teacher’s interaction with children in the classroom).

2. Community service contributes to civic growth in ways that are not necessarily related to the course content (e.g., students increase their knowledge of the nonprofit sector or better understand the dynamics of power and privilege, but these are not topics in the psychology course).
3. Community service contributes to personal growth in ways that are not necessarily related to the course content (e.g., students clarify personal values or career plans, but these are not topics in the psychology course).

4. Community service connects academic content to civic learning (e.g., the course content covers intergroup contact theory and students learn better approaches for interacting with diverse groups in the community based on the theory and research presented on the intergroup contact theory as well as better learning the material on intergroup contact hypothesis).

5. Community service connects academic content to personal growth (e.g., the course presents information on nonverbal communication and students analyze nonverbal cues at the site and become more aware of their nonverbal cues that they are displaying at the service site).

6. Community service contributes to civic learning and personal growth in ways that are not necessarily related to the course content (e.g., students become more knowledgeable about a community issue and more empathetic toward those persons associated with the community issue, but the community issue is not a specific topic in the psychology course).

7. Community service connects academic content to civic learning and personal growth (e.g., the course content on stigma influences how students conduct their service activities, the power of stigma in their interactions and the interactions of others, their awareness of their own attitudes and prejudices, and their understanding of the course material on stigma).
Type of community activities. The definition of service learning includes service activities within community settings that are mutually selected or developed by instructors and community partners in a way that meets learning objectives for the course and that benefit communities. Service learning courses can include at least four types of community activities by students (e.g., Bringle, Reeb, Brown, & Ruiz, 2015; Florida Department of Education, 2009): (a) direct service learning, (b) indirect service learning, (c) research service learning, and (d) advocacy service learning. These categories are not mutually exclusive and community-based activities might involve one or more of them. The type of community-based activity that is most appropriate for a service learning course will be the result of considering learning objectives and discussions with community partners.

Reflection. In addition, the definition identifies reflection as a central component of service learning. Well-designed reflection activities should (a) intentionally link the service experience to course-based learning objectives, (b) be structured, (c) occur regularly, (d) allow feedback and assessment, and (e) include the clarification of values (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthiah, 2004; Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). Good reflection can occur before, during, and after the community service (Eyler, 2002). Structured reflection has been found to support academic learning (Jameson et al., 2013); yet informal reflection has also been found to have an additive value to the likelihood that students report civic outcomes after the college years (Richard, Keen, Pease, & Hatcher, under review).

Relationships. The definition of service learning highlights the importance of particular types of relationships and partnerships between the campus and community in order to reach civic outcomes (Bringle & Clayton, 2013). Consistent with Dewey’s (1916) analysis, building
democratic capacities is contingent on face-to-face interactions in the public sphere, and “society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships” (p. 99). Levine’s (2013) research found that simply involving students in community service activities was insufficient for developing civic learning and civic skills; deliberate collaboration was more effective for developing civic outcomes. Bowman’s (2011) meta-analysis found that face-to-face interactions with diverse groups resulted in favorable and significant effects on civic attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behaviors, compared to classroom-based educational experiences and co-curricular activities. Students must also be involved in collaborative relationships in the civic realm. Partnerships between students and community members that contain democratic qualities, (e.g., fair, inclusive, participatory; Saltmarsh et al., 2009) are critical to developing civic outcomes. Bringle, Clayton, and Bringle (2015), using psychological theory and research, explore how the democratic nature of partnerships can be related to the development of civic identity of students. Engaging in democratic partnerships can also enhance civic skills and civic identity of faculty, staff at community organizations, administrative staff and leaders on campus, community leaders, and residents, although this is largely unexplored in empirical research.

**SOFAR.** Although the focus of this book is primarily on students, there are many stakeholders in and contributors to the service learning endeavor. Some of the primary stakeholders are identified in the SOFAR model (Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010), which identifies the various relationships that are formed between Students, staff at community Organizations, Faculty, Administrators, and Community Residents or clients in a service learning course. Although this volume is focused on the process of producing civic
outcomes for students, the process can also be analyzed for other constituencies. Accordingly, we have asked authors to identify implications for the other constituencies, when relevant.

**IUPUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses**

With heightened interest in high impact teaching strategies (Kuh, 2008; Finley, 2011) comes heightened institutional accountability to gather data related to the efficacy of service learning courses. Researchers, in turn, need to attend to the course design, implementation of the course, and the students’ experiences in the course as part of the research process (Giles & Eyler, 2013). Very few studies assess the quality of the service learning course from the perspective of course design, the instructor, the students, or community partners (e.g., Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). This focus of inquiry can broaden a more extensive agenda of types of evidence about service learning course quality, sources of evidence about course quality, and their relationships to outcomes, particularly civic outcomes (Terry, Smith, & McQuillan, 2014).

In order to assess student learning and improve the quality of course design on our campus, the IUPUI Executive Vice Chancellor asked that each unit (e.g., Center for Service and Learning, Office of International Affairs) with responsibility for a high impact teaching practice (e.g., internship, service learning, study abroad, undergraduate research) develop a framework (i.e., taxonomy) for course design. This initial step is part of a comprehensive campus assessment strategy managed through the Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support. Influenced in large part by the California State University’s analysis of high impact practices (e.g., learning communities, summer bridge, undergraduate research), this assessment approach has been adapted by our campus to gather data on course design in a systematic way from
instructors. In the Center for Service and Learning, we recognize that this institutional assessment task is an important way to support both good practice and future research. After conducting an extensive literature review on service learning research and best practices, including Jacoby’s (2015) recent work, we identified six essential attributes of service learning courses. Next, we articulated a range of characteristics for each attribute (from low intensity to high intensity) based on research findings. We then obtained feedback from colleagues and content experts, presented a draft of the taxonomy through a webinar series sponsored by the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (Hahn & Hatcher, 2015), and made subsequent revisions. The IUPUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses (see Table 1.1.1) has the potential to contribute to the campus and to research on service learning because the taxonomy:

1. Creates a common approach in working with instructors to support the fidelity and quality of high impact teaching practices, including service learning courses.

2. Supports institutional assessment and research on high impact practices by asking instructors to report on selected course attributes (dimensions of the course design that may vary from low intensity to high intensity), and then explore the relationship between these course variables and student outcomes;

3. Informs and advances a research agenda for service learning by identifying those course attributes (i.e., variables) that may relate to student outcomes, (e.g., civic learning, academic learning, personal growth), as well as other outcomes (e.g., faculty development, community impact, community partner collaboration and satisfaction).
4. Supports institutional and multi-campus research on service learning courses through the use of a common taxonomy that describes variations in course attributes.

5. Provides a framework and approach for other institutions to either adapt or adopt the taxonomy, depending upon how service learning is conceptualized within institutional mission and context.

Table 1.1.1

*IUPUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses – Course Design Centric for Institutional Assessment and Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Course Attributes</th>
<th>Low Intensity</th>
<th>Medium Intensity</th>
<th>High Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Reciprocal partnerships and processes shape the community activities and course design.</td>
<td>The instructor contacts a community organization to host students and provides a brief overview of the course (e.g., learning outcomes, syllabus) and the purposes of the community activities.</td>
<td>The instructor meets with the community partner(s) to discuss the course (e.g., preparation/orientation of students, learning outcomes, syllabus), and to identify how the community activities can enrich student learning and benefit the organization.</td>
<td>The instructor collaborates with and learns from the community partner(s) as co-educator in various aspects of course planning and design (e.g., learning outcomes, readings, preparation/orientation of students, reflection, assessment) and together they identify how the community activities can enrich student learning and add to the capacity of the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Community activities enhance academic content, course design, and assignments.</td>
<td>The instructor includes community activities as an added component of the course but it is not integrated with academic content or assignments. The syllabus does not address the purposes of the community activities.</td>
<td>The instructor utilizes the community activities as a “text” to provide additional insight into student understanding of academic content and ability to complete assignments. The syllabus describes the relationship of the community activities to learning outcomes.</td>
<td>The instructor integrates the community activities and relevant social issue(s) as critical dimensions for student understanding of academic content and ability to complete assignments. The syllabus provides a strong rationale for the relationship of the community activities to learning outcomes.</td>
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### 3) Civic competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, disposition, behavior) are well integrated into student learning.

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructor focuses on discipline-based content with little attention/priority given to civic learning or development of civic competencies.</td>
<td>The instructor focuses on discipline-based content and connects to civic learning and civic competencies when relevant to the community activities.</td>
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### 4) Diversity of interactions and dialogue with others across difference occurs regularly in the course.

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>The instructor and the course and community activities offer students limited opportunities for interaction and dialogue with others across difference.</td>
<td>The instructor and the course and community activities engage students in periodic interactions and dialogue with peers across a range of experiences and diverse perspectives.</td>
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### 5) Critical reflection is well integrated into student learning.

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>The instructor asks students, on a limited basis, to create reflective products about the community activities, usually at the end of the semester.</td>
<td>The instructor structures reflection activities and products about the community activities that connect the experience to academic content, require moderate analysis, lead to new action, and provide ongoing feedback to the student throughout the semester.</td>
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### 6) Assessment is used for course improvement.

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>The instructor articulates student learning outcomes but no measurement tool is in place for assessing the service learning component of the course.</td>
<td>The instructor articulates student learning outcomes and uses a measurement tool to assess the service learning component of the course.</td>
</tr>
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Within the taxonomy are variables in course design that relate to civic outcomes including opportunities for reflection, orientation of community activities, dialogue across difference, and student interaction with community members. For example, Conway, Amel, and Gerwien’s (2009) meta-analysis of service learning’s association with academic, personal, social, and citizenship outcomes found that programs with structured reflection were associated with greater changes in these outcome measures than those that did not. Moely and Illustre’s (2014)
study also showed that opportunities for reflection were positively associated with learning about
the community and mastering academic content. Regarding orientation of community activities,
Moely, Furco, and Reed’s (2008) multi-campus study found that students who indicated a
preference for charity or social change orientations to community activities, or both, had better
learning outcomes and changes in attitude when there was a fit between service preference and
actual community activities than when they experienced a lack of fit. Bowman’s (2011) meta-
analysis of college diversity and civic engagement indicated that diversity experiences were
related to increases in civic attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behaviors. Also, the magnitude
of this association was higher for interpersonal interactions with racial diversity than for
curricular and co-curricular diversity experiences. Likewise, Nelson Laird’s (2005) research
indicated that college students with increased exposure to diversity, especially participation in
diversity courses and positive experiences with diverse fellow students, were more likely to have
higher scores on social agency, critical thinking disposition, and academic self-confidence. The
six course design attributes identified are only a sample of potential variables that could be used
to measure course quality and that might influence student outcomes.

The meaningfulness of the taxonomy as an adequate sample of important course
components warrants empirical evaluation. We acknowledge and have identified “gray areas”
(see figure 1.1.4) that include additional variables that are not part of the taxonomy. Some of
these additional variables are explored more fully within this volume. For example, campus
mission and culture (chapter 1.2; chapter 3.3), the instructor’s teaching philosophy and
epistemology (chapter 1.3; chapter 2.7), and prior learning experiences or motivation of students
(chapter 2.1; chapter 2.4). The six course attributes as well as the variables within the “gray area”
are dimensions of service learning course design that may vary from low intensity to high intensity and each may have a particular link to student civic outcomes that future research should investigate.

Figure 1.1.4. 
*Service learning course attributes.*

We acknowledge that identifying the various component parts of a service learning course poses significant challenges for research, and clarity about the “it” under study is fundamental (Finley, 2011; Giles & Eyler, 2013). This is a complex task, and we acknowledge
that there are other attributes that may be critically important to the design and implementation of a service learning course (e.g., chapter 2.2). To that end, exploring the practices and attributes embodied in the definition of service learning (Bringle & Clayton, 2013) as well as the six course attributes described in the IUPUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses should contribute to improved research and research that will more clearly enhance understanding for how particular qualities of a service learning course contribute to civic learning.

Finally, the initial use of the taxonomy for campus-level assessment, as currently presented, is based on a self-assessment of the course attributes by the instructor. At the end of the semester, instructors of high impact practices will be asked to report on three course attributes, and this campus census will be used to understand the relationship between course attributes and student self-reported learning across service learning courses and other high impact teaching practices. The taxonomy, and its use, should be modified and expanded so that it can solicit similar assessments from students as well as community partners. The taxonomy represents further clarity for researchers to address “the vague specification of the experiences students actually have in their service learning classes” (Giles & Eyler, 2013, p. 55) and provides a tool to assess course quality and to relate course quality to variations in course outcomes. This would allow an evaluation of the similarities and differences among different perspectives (e.g., faculty, student, community partner) on the quality of the service learning course and empirical evaluation of the relative importance of different perspectives on civic outcomes.

**Conclusion**

We initiated the concept for this book a number of years ago and are pleased to see it through to completion. As mentioned previously, in 2009, our Center for Service and Learning
hosted the *IUPUI Symposium on Assessing Student Civic Outcomes*, an invited gathering of twenty-two scholars in collaboration with the American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASC&U). That gathering was one of the first of its kind to bring together scholars across higher education with a common interest in student civic outcomes (Keen, 2009). George Mehaffy, then Vice President for Academic Leadership and Change at AASC&U noted:

> While the conclusions demonstrate that there is much work to be done, this initial conference provides a great beginning of a substantive national dialogue, cross institutional collaboration, further study, and the development of improved assessment processes and instruments to gauge progress in the civic engagement field. If we are entering an era when learning outcomes assume more importance, then those of us in the civic engagement field must make sure that among learning outcomes, civic outcomes occupy a prominent position (Mehaffy, 2009, p. 1).

Since that time, there have been various initiatives and subsequent gatherings of scholars, including the *Civic Learning and National Service Summit* at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University and the *Bringing Theory to Practice National Initiative on Well Being* in Washington, DC in 2014. Through each of these events, as well as professional relationships established with scholars at national conferences, we have been honored and inspired to work with and identify dedicated scholars who are advancing research on service learning and student development in important ways. Seeing the number of graduate students and young scholars who are establishing their scholarly trajectory within this line of inquiry is gratifying.
The chapters in this volume were designed to support this type of scholarly path. Theories are identified, new questions are posed, complexities are presented, and methodologies are recommended to deepen the inquiry and improve the research on the relationship between service learning and civic outcomes. Indeed, the field has grown over the past two decades, and the questions that have emerged within this volume alone demonstrate that there remains significant work ahead. Given our common aim to enact the public purposes of higher education, we trust that this volume will contribute to and deepen understanding of how to best develop civic-minded graduates (Steinberg et al., 2011), civic-minded professionals (Hatcher, 2008), and civic-minded institutions (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012) through a renewed commitment to service learning. Education is a public good that sustains democracy and civil society, and service learning is a pedagogy that is well positioned to contribute to this goal. We posit that participation in well-designed service learning courses is one of the best pedagogies, if not the best pedagogy, for generating civic outcomes among college students. The extent to which this claim holds true in American higher education and across various cultural contexts will inform the longevity and adaptability of this approach to teaching and learning.
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