

Community Arts-Based Learning for Interdisciplinary Pedagogy: Measuring Program Effectiveness Using Design Imperatives for 'a New American University'

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Abstract : Community arts-based learning and participatory education are pedagogical techniques that serve to be advantageous for students, curriculum development, and local communities. Using an interpretive approach to examine the significance of this arts-informed research in relation to the eight 'design imperatives' proposed as the new model for measuring quality in scholarship for Arizona State University as 'A New American University', the purpose of this study was to investigate personal, social, and cultural benefits resulting from student engagement in interdisciplinary community-based projects. Students from a graduate level music education class at the ASU Tempe campus (n=7) teamed with students from an undergraduate level community development class at the ASU Downtown Phoenix campus (n=14) to plan, facilitate, and evaluate seven community-based projects in several locations around the Phoenix-metro area. Data was collected using photo evidence, student reports, and evaluative measures designed by the students. The effectiveness of each project was measured in terms of their ability to meet the eight design imperatives to: 1) leverage place; 2) transform society; 3) value entrepreneurship; 4) conduct use-inspired research; 5) enable student success; 6) fuse intellectual disciplines; 7) be socially embedded; and 8) engage globally. Results indicated that this community arts-based project sufficiently captured the essence of each of these eight imperatives. Implications for how the nature of this interdisciplinary initiative allowed for the eight imperatives to manifest are provided, and project success is expounded upon in relation to utility of each imperative. Discussion is also given for how this type of service learning project formatted within the 'New American University' model for measuring quality in academia can be a beneficial pedagogical tool in higher education.

Keywords : community arts-based learning, participatory education, pedagogy, service learning

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