Community-based Research Pedagogy Guide

**Defined:** Community-based research is a collaborative effort between academic researchers and non-academy based community members that aims to generate social action and positive social change through the use of multiple knowledge sources and research methods. Ideally, the research questions originate from off-campus communities and the process involves meaningful participation by all partners in every stage of the research.

**NOTE:** EDGE activities need not be complex to be effective!

CBR is collaborative, change-oriented research that engages faculty members, students, and community members in projects that address a community-identified need. Further, there are three central features of the pedagogy:

1. CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members;
2. CBR seeks to democratize knowledge by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination; and
3. CBR has as its goal social action for the purpose of achieving social change and social justice.

Porpora (1999) argued that community-based research might be considered "a higher stage of service-learning in that it combines service, teaching, and research" (p. 121), and Willis, Peresie, Waldref, & Stockmann (2003) described community based-research as "an intensive form of service learning" (p. 36). Stoecker (2001) wrote, "In the most concrete sense, CBR involves students and faculty working with a community organization on a research project serving the organization's goals" (p. 35).

**Best Practices in Community-Based Research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue, 2003).**

**Community Partnerships**

1. Successful community partnerships are those where partners (1) share a world view, (2) agree about goals and strategies, and (3) have mutual trust and mutual respect.
2. Community partners (1) share power, (2) communicate clearly and listen carefully, (3) understand and empathize with each other's circumstances, and (4) remain flexible.
3. Successful partnerships are those in which (1) partners' primary interests or needs are met, (2) partners' organizational capacities are enhanced, and (3) partners adopt shared, long-range social change perspectives.

**Teaching and Learning**

4. Focus on collective/collaborative learning that de-emphasizes hierarchy, including authority differences between teacher and student.
5. Demystify conventional knowledge, including the notion that objectivity is impossible, that knowledge in not neutral, and that people's lived experiences are valid sources of information.
6. Focus on teaching for social change.

**Research Design**

7. Develop a research design in which everyone participates in discussion and decisions at every stage of research.

**Web Resources:**
Colorado College: Introduction to CBR
http://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/cce/community-based-research/introduction-to-cbr.dot

The Challenges and Rewards of Community-Based Research and Scholarly Engagement
QEP Initiatives as an Entry Point to Community-based Research

Days of Service:
- **Description**: The QEP Office organizes four college-wide days of service each academic year: 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance (September), Make a Difference Day (October), Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (January), and Global Youth Service Day (April). On these days, GPC partners with community-based organizations near GPC campuses, and students serve their communities to meet community-identified needs.
- **Example**: Students participate in a Day of Service activity as part of an introduction or beginning to a more extended CBR project.

GPC Reads:
- **Description**: GPC Reads is a college-wide, interdisciplinary reading club that engages faculty, staff, and students in reading books by regional authors, provides opportunities for these authors to visit campus and engage with the GPC community, and coordinates co-curricular learning opportunities focused on the themes of the books.
- **Example**: Students read the GPC Reads selection then work on a research project with a community-based organization and tie the research back to the course learning outcomes from GPC Reads.

Democracy Commitment:
- **Description**: The Democracy Commitment (TDC) is a national initiative providing a platform for the development and expansion of community college programs, projects, and curricula that engage students in civic learning and democratic practice.
- **Example**: With a community-based organization, students work on a research project that deals with concepts of civic learning and/or democratic practice. Likewise, students may discuss how the presence or absence of civic learning and/or democratic practice affects their CBR project.

Bridging Cultures:
- **Description**: Bridging Cultures to Form a Nation is a national initiative supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). At GPC, the project seeks to facilitate the study and application of civic engagement and democratic thinking regardless of citizenship and to broaden the perception and understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.
- **Example**: With a community-based organization, students work on a research project that deals with concepts civic engagement, democratic thinking, and/or global citizenship. Likewise, students may discuss how the presence or absence of civic engagement, democratic thinking, and/or global citizenship affects their CBR project.

For more information about Community-based Research or utilizing QEP initiatives as an entry point to Collaborative Learning, please contact Sean Brumfield (sean.brumfield@gpc.edu, 678-891-2305) or Mary Elizabeth Tyler Boucebcı (maryelizabeth.tylerboucebci@gpc.edu, 678-891-3174).