Research that matters: transforming community based education through feminist pedagogy and public scholarship

Amber J. Johnson
Eastern Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: http://dc.ewu.edu/theses

Recommended Citation
http://dc.ewu.edu/theses/384
Research that Matters: Transforming Community Based Education Through Feminist Pedagogy and Public Scholarship

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science in Communications

By

Amber J. Johnson

Spring 2016
THESIS OF AMBER J. JOHNSON APPROVED BY

Dr. Patricia Chantrill, Chair of Graduate Committee

Dr. Jessica Willis, Member of Graduate Committee

Dr. Julia Smith, Member of Graduate Committee
MASTER’S THESIS

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master’s degree at Eastern Washington University, I agree that the JFK Library shall make copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that copying of this project in whole or in part is allowable only for scholarly purposes. It is understood, however, that any copying or publication of this thesis for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature  Amber Johnson

Date  06/03/2016
Abstract

This is a qualitative analysis of focus groups conducted with “Community Partners” (mostly Directors of non-profit social service agencies who have previously partnered with Eastern Washington faculty in community-based education efforts) in the Greater Spokane Area. This research is designed to address shortcomings of current forms of community based education, identify strategies for strengthening the partnerships that exist between Eastern Washington University and the surrounding community, and to establish the need for community based research at the graduate level.

By conducting focus groups, this study analyzed Community Partner perceptions of community based education and research before and after watching a video about shifting perspectives on volunteerism. The resulting evidence concluded that there is a gap between what Community Partners and Eastern Washington University are currently doing and our readiness to solve community problems through graduate level research.

Keywords: community partners, research, service learning, community based education, community engagement, constructivist, focus groups, public scholarship, and qualitative literature.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank my family. I appreciate all of your encouragement, selflessness and understanding through this process. Specifically, I want to thank my grandparents; Carol Ann and Lester Johnson, as well as Lana and Craig Gruenig, my parents; Shelle Goforth and Erik Johnson and best friend; Ross Johnson. I love you all so much, and am so thankful I was blessed with the best family I could ever ask for. A special shout out to Ross; I hope you know how proud of you I am, and I cannot wait to see you achieve all your dreams, I love you buddy.

Secondly, I am forever thankful to Dr. Patricia Chantrill, my thesis chair. Her endless amounts of guidance and time she dedicated to help this thesis come to fruition. Without your reassurance, patience, and thoughtfulness I couldn’t have accomplished this. I will forever be appreciative of how you allowed me to grow as a person and as a scholar. Thank you, Patty.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jessica Willis, the second member of my graduate study committee. I appreciate your knowledge and wisdom within feminist theory, your flexibility with my schedule and the articles you rounded up for me. Thank you.

Also, I want to thank my best friend who has become a sister to me. I know the last two years I have been stuck studying, writing papers and stressing out to the max, but you have stood by me and understood without any questions. Thank you, Jenn Taylor.
Another person I am extremely thankful for is Stephanie Helbling. Your encouragement, enthusiasm and never ending support during the craziest and busiest time of my life has been nothing short of amazing. Thank you for being my rock, my solid ground and my place to turn to when I wanted to run away. You are the best thing, and I couldn’t be more thankful for you. You’re my favorite.

Lastly, I would like to thank Lindsey Klemmer, my person in charge since day one of graduate school. These last two years have flown by, and it has been a wild ride. Thank you for always being there not only as a classmate but as a friend. I am forever grateful for you, and look forward to maintaining this friendship for years to come. You will go on and accomplish great things, and I am so very proud of you.

Again, thank you all for being there for me every step of the way. Graduate school wasn’t easy, but it was sure worth it.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Abstract**

**Acknowledgments**

**Chapter 1- Introduction**

- Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 1
- Paradigm ........................................................................................................................................ 2
- Strategy of Inquiry ......................................................................................................................... 4
- Key Terms ..................................................................................................................................... 5

**Chapter 2- Literature Review**

- Literature Search Strategies ........................................................................................................ 9
- Overview of Literature .................................................................................................................. 9
- Service-Learning in Spokane’s Higher Education Institutions .................................................. 10
- The Influence of Feminist Pedagogy on My Approach to Public Scholarship ............................ 19
- Public Scholarship ....................................................................................................................... 27

**Chapter 3- Methodology**

- Overall Approach ....................................................................................................................... 38
- Data Collection ............................................................................................................................ 41
- Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 42
- Obstacles ....................................................................................................................................... 43

**Chapter 4- Results and Discussion**

- Overview ...................................................................................................................................... 44
- Research for their Organization ................................................................................................... 47
- Service-Learning .......................................................................................................................... 48
- Public Scholarship ....................................................................................................................... 49
- Partnerships ................................................................................................................................. 51
- Graduate Students ....................................................................................................................... 53
- After the Burst of Brilliance Talk ................................................................................................ 56
Topic Focused Questions.................................................. 57
Question 1......................................................................... 57
Question 2.......................................................................... 60
Question 3.......................................................................... 64
Question 4.......................................................................... 66

Chapter 5-Conclusion

Summary............................................................................. 69
Future Research................................................................. 73

Appendices

Appendix A: 2015 CP and Graduate Student Surveys......... 75
Appendix B: 2015 CP Survey Responses............................ 76
Appendix C: Community Engagement Grant.................... 77
Appendix D: Change of Protocol....................................... 81
Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form and Agenda......... 82

References
Chapter 1-Introduction

Catholic Charities Director Rob McCann’s “Burst of Brilliance” [hereafter “BOB”] Talk at the 2015 Community Engagement Institute (CEI) in Spokane, Washington really spoke to me. This speech was the catalyst to my research. McCann exposed a gap in community engagement and service-learning that I needed to explore. His entire narrative was framed in a metaphor: the community partners were compared to either a “lifeguard” or a “hiker,” and those members of the community that are served by social service agencies like Catholic Charities are “people drowning in the river.” He recognized that community partners were skilled and experienced “lifeguards” rescuing people who have “fallen in the river” every day. However, there was no time to “hike” upstream and find out what’s making people fall in the river in the first place. Community Partners [hereafter CPs] did not have or take the time to proactively hike up river because they were too busy rescuing people who had fallen in.

After watching McCann’s presentation, I was haunted by a question: What is a hiker supposed to do? This research is designed to answer that question by addressing perceived shortcomings of current forms of community based education [hereafter CBE], identify strategies for strengthening the CBE partnerships that exist between Eastern Washington University and the surrounding community, and to establish the need for community based research at the graduate level.

As a graduate student born and raised in Spokane, I could not have picked a better place to conduct my research and contribute to my community. Spokane
boasts rich historical partnerships in service-learning and volunteerism between local non-profit, social service organizations and the two public community colleges (Spokane Falls Community College and Spokane Community College), two public baccalaureates (Eastern Washington University in Cheney and Washington State University’s Spokane campus), and two private institutions with social justice built into their missions early on (Whitworth University and Gonzaga University). This research is focused on CBE efforts at Eastern Washington University, though it is situated within the context of a region-wide phenomenon. Importantly, this research hopes to create opportunities to strengthen community-campus CBE partnerships and provide graduate students with opportunities to pursue “research that matters.”¹ In addition to situating EWU graduate students as experts in research capable of helping to solve community problems, this research seeks to enact the fundamental concepts contained in EWU’s Mission Statement: “Eastern Washington University expands opportunities for personal transformation through excellence in learning.”

**Research Paradigm**

After reviewing the five paradigms in the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 100) I aligned most with the gray area between critical theory and constructivism. However, I realized I wanted most to observe the dialogue between community partners and interpret their perceptions. Therefore, I have adopted a constructivist point of view; specifically, I sought

¹ CMST 550 graduate students conducted a survey of other graduate students across 6 disciplines to determine what they wanted most from research projects. “Research that matters” surfaced as the prime directive.
opportunities to understand perceived barriers and promote a perception of graduate research that benefits Spokane communities. I wanted to utilize the strategies of inquiry under the constructivist paradigm to gain understanding by interpreting subject perceptions, evaluate the current conditions and then proceed to offer alternatives to current perceptions.

My paradigm not only assumes hermeneutics (defined as “the study of the methodological principles of interpretation” by Merriam-Webster) and dialectic (defined as “discussion and reasoning by dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation; specifically: The Socratic techniques of exposing false beliefs and eliciting truth” by Merriam-Webster), but also the co-creation of perceptions. By identifying existing perceptions, introducing an alternative (the “lifeguard and hiker” video by Rob McCann), and engaging the CPs in a discussion and the exchange of new ideas that they formulated from new understandings, CPs were able to co-create a new reality from each other. This is precisely what the constructivist paradigm encourages ((Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, Table 6.3 p. 100).

The constructivist paradigm also covers informed sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience, the “passionate participant” as a facilitator, and a catalyst for action (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, Table 6.4 p. 101). These three aspects are obvious outcomes from the focus groups I conducted. The sophisticated reconstructions and vicarious experiences captures what community partners contributed to the groups. As facilitator, I was able to create the opportunity for extended dialogue, resulting in richer data than could be found in
simple survey responses. Importantly, the video by Rob McCann offered a metaphorical call to action for all “lifeguards” to become “hikers,” and yet he does not explain how that transformation takes place. Denzin and Lincoln provide an answer in their discussion of the “Hermeneutic Cycle”: “Actions lead to collection of data, which leads to interpretation of data which spurs action based on the data” [p. 105]. This cycle reflects my goal for this entire research project: to collect data, to interpret the data, and to put public scholarship into action that serves the community.

**Strategy of Inquiry**

In Part III of the Sage Handbook for Qualitative Research (2011), the authors move beyond the research paradigm to determine an appropriate strategy of inquiry: “A strategy of inquiry describes the skills, assumptions, enactments, and material practices that researchers-as-methodological-bricoleurs use when they move from a paradigm and a research design to the collection of empirical methods” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 246). The strategy of inquiry that fits my research design is a case study approach. A case study is “an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 301). A case study using focus groups conducted with community partners as participants allowed me to investigate the missing link between hikers and lifeguards.

My research is designed within a Constructivist Paradigm, using a Case Study Strategy of Inquiry, and applying a Focus Group Method. Focus groups require that the facilitator follow an agenda [see Appendix E] that enables the
participants to drive the discussion around prompts. The group discussion is recorded and transcribed. Ultimately, through observation and interpretation of the discussion, including the ideas, opinions and conversations that occurred, the results are analyzed and conclusions can be drawn.

In order to advance my understanding of CP perceptions of research, I had to move beyond the surveys we conducted in the spring of 2015 as part of our CMST 550 class. The surveys revealed that CPs had varied interpretations of the role of research in their work, many of them isolating research into “market surveys” and other “lifeguard” activities. Focus groups allowed for an expanded discussion that included the idea of actually solving community problems, going beyond the “Band-Aid approach” that many CPs were familiar with, and perhaps the opportunity to change perceptions on the value and availability of graduate student research for local organizations.

**Key Terms**

**Key Terms:** community partners, research, service learning, community based education, community engagement, constructivist, focus groups, public scholarship, and qualitative study

**Community Partners**- A Community partner may be, but is not limited to, the following: local, state, national, international, public, community-based, private and academic organization. Partnerships will promote student engagement, workforce development, continuing education, community service and collaborative and community-based research. (Indiana).
Research- The word research has been given numerous definitions, many of which are remarkably narrow, such as defining research as strictly within particular definitions of the 'scientific method.' In contrast, we are using a much broader definition. Research is a systematic inquiry into aspects of our world. It is systematic because, whatever the method, we proceed through specific and purposeful steps in designing research, data collection, and analysis. Research is inquiry because it invariably involves questioning – though definitive answers may be elusive or not even the goal. (Foundations).

Service Learning- Service learning is a process of involving students in community service activities combined with facilitated means for applying the experience to their academic and personal development. It is a form of experiential education aimed at enhancing and enriching student learning in course material. When compared to other forms of experiential learning like internships and cooperative education, it is similar in that it is student-centered, hands-on and directly applicable to the curriculum. (Office).

The critical difference and distinguishing characteristic of service learning is its reciprocal and balanced emphasis on both student learning and addressing real needs in the community. Course learning objectives are linked to meaningful human, safety, educational, and environmental needs that are co-determined with community partners and service recipients. Course materials such as lectures, readings, discussions, and reflection activities supplement the student service. In turn, the service experience is brought back to the classroom to enhance the academic dialogue and student comprehension. Students work on real problems.
that make academic learning relevant while simultaneously enhancing their social skills, analytical ability, civic and ethical responsibility, self-efficacy, and career development. (Office).

**Community Based Education** - a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage, and natural environments. Community-based learning is also motivated by the belief that all communities have intrinsic educational assets and resources that educators can use to enhance learning experiences for students. (Community-Based).

**Community Engagement** - the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices. (Walker).

**Constructivist** - Relativist ontology (realism), transactional epistemology, hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Users of this paradigm are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world…value transactional knowledge. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 92).
**Focus Groups**- Focus groups were originally called "focused interviews" or "group depth interviews". The technique was developed after World War II to evaluate audience response to radio programs (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Since then social scientists and program evaluators have found focus groups to be useful in understanding how or why people hold certain beliefs about a topic or program of interest. A focus group could be defined as a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue. (Marczak).

**Public Scholarship**- At the level of the institution, public scholarship means optimizing the extent to which University research informs and is informed by the public good, maximizes the generation and transfer of knowledge and technology, educates the public about what research the University does and listens to the public about what research needs to be done (Public).

**Qualitative Study**- Qualitative refers a way of conducting, and conceiving, of research. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument or the tool for designing, collecting, and analyzing research. Qualitative research, in contrast to quantitative research, generally does not translate aspects of the world into numbers to be analyzed mathematically. Instead, it analyzes the world through the lenses the researcher brings to bear on the data. (Foundations).
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Literature Search Strategies

This literature review was conducted on the academic database JSTOR, using variations of the following search words: Feminist pedagogy, service learning, community based research and public scholarship.

Dr. Jessica Willis is the only professor on EWU’s campus who has a PhD in Women’s and Gender Studies (from Clark University, Worcester MA.) In order to learn more about feminist pedagogy, I signed up for Dr. Willis’ WMST 410 Feminist Theory held during the winter quarter of 2016. Dr. Willis also served as a resource in locating scholarship on the topic of Feminist Pedagogy. I also queried three of the founding members of the Inland Northwest Service-Learning Partnership [hereafter referred to as INSLP], including Sima Thorpe, Patricia Chantrill, and Rhoetta Rhodes, for the history on the development of service-learning in institutions of higher education in Spokane. Much of the literature review on Public Scholarship began in the spring 2015 CMST 550 course.

Overview of Literature

The current conversation that informs this thesis ranges from an understanding and use of service-learning as a pedagogy, an exploration of ties to feminist pedagogy, and the more recent development of community-based research or “public scholarship” in graduate programs across the nation. I divided the literature review into these three main sections, in that order. There is very little conversation in terms of bridging the gap between feminist pedagogy and
public scholarship, but the similarities and overlaps are important to understand. I suspected there were useful, perhaps even uncharted connections between feminist pedagogy and public scholarship that could help to resolve existing concerns about the state of CBE in the Spokane region. Ultimately, this literature review attempts to show the distinctions and the similarities between the three areas or “conversations” regarding community based education, feminist pedagogy, and public scholarship opportunities.

As I was pulling articles, it was apparent that the earliest emphasis on community based education had been on service-learning, but the evolution of that pedagogy involved a broadening of the concept such that community-based education [CBE] became the broader term more connected over time to concepts of community based research and public scholarship. I wanted to focus more on community based research and public scholarship, but it was also important to note the evolution of these practices in higher education from the earliest occurrences of service-learning.

**Literature Review, Part 1: Service-Learning in Spokane’s Higher Education Institutions**

This is the first of three reviews of the literature. After exploring the history of the development of service-learning in the region, the second review will focus on Feminist Pedagogy. The third will focus on Public Scholarship. Together, the three reviews will provide a context for understanding the connections between service-learning, feminist pedagogy, and public scholarship.
Ultimately, this literature review will expose gaps in the literature that my research hopes to close.

Most of this section comes from the “History of the Inland Northwest Service-Learning Partnership,” provided by the three founders of the higher education service-learning partnership that developed in the Spokane region around the year 2000. Founders were asked to provide their recollections via email. Additionally, INSLP published a “Grand Slam Handbook” for faculty participating in their “2002 Service-Learning Summer Grand Slam,” a series of early workshops and seminars devoted to developing faculty leadership. In the handbook, a brief history of the two-year development of INSLP is outlined:

In the fall of 2000, Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University & Spokane Falls Community College united to create the Inland Northwest Service-Learning Partnership (INSLP). In 2001, both Whitworth College and Spokane Public Schools joined the effort to consolidate regional service-learning efforts. This collaboration combines our resources, allows us to learn from each other, and helps create a comprehensive and consistent vision for service-learning in the Inland Northwest. Through this intercollegiate partnership, our community agencies will become true partners in service-learning, our faculty will have the support of their peers at three institutions and from agencies where their students serve, and our students will have greater opportunities to learn from meaningful service.

However, service-learning was already well-established in Spokane high schools and had begun to take root in higher education institutions prior to INSLP’s founding in the year 2000. This portion of the literature review will
begin with a working definition of service-learning and follow with a description of how the higher education institutions in the Spokane region, through the help of INSLP, adapted and adopted the pedagogy and practice of service-learning, ultimately evolving from service-learning into a larger framework of activity.

Service-Learning Defined and Institutionalized in Spokane

According to one of the earliest authors and service-learning proponents on the national stage, Barbara Jacoby, “Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes.” (1996, p. 2). At about the time Jacoby was writing Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices, service-learning had already been well-established in some of Spokane’s high schools. It was also taking root at Gonzaga University.

The genesis of service-learning in higher education in the Spokane region really begins with one woman. Sima Thorpe had received her bachelor’s degree at the University of Oregon in education in the 1980s. She experienced something called “field studies” as part of her secondary certificate process. Field Studies included a reflection component and placed college students in K-12 classrooms to provide additional support for the homeroom teacher. Sima took that experience and began teaching in middle schools in Oregon. She then moved to Spokane in 1989 and served as a legal advocate for the poor for over five years. This led to her application for a newly-formed position as Gonzaga University’s
Director of Volunteer Services. When she was hired, she brought many of her contacts as a legal advocate with her. Her hiring committee included a few, core faculty who were determined to help the university recruit someone who could start a robust service-learning program at the university. At the time, there were “maybe 2 or three” classes that could be included under the “community based education” umbrella.

Within two years of Ms. Thorpe’s arrival at Gonzaga, she had worked with faculty to develop more than a dozen service-learning courses, strengthened the reflection component for all classes, and extended the reach of the new Center for Community Action and Service Learning [CCASL, pronounced like “castle”]. She was also developing a large outreach process to bring additional faculty into the service-learning board, eventually signing on newly-hired Dr. Patricia Chantrill in the fall of 1995. By the fall of 1999, Patricia Chantrill had transferred over to Eastern Washington University in the Communication Studies Department. That same year, Sima Thorpe was asked to sit on the hiring committee for Spokane Falls Community College and hired Rhosetta Rhodes as SFCC’s Director of Service-Learning under the Office of the President.

In the year 2000, Washington Campus Compact released a “call for proposals” for individual institutions in the state to apply for a Learn and Serve grant. Dr. Kevin Kesces, then working for Washington Campus Compact, visited institutions across the state to assist with the work of applying for the grants. He came to the still-forming University District in Spokane to meet with the Director of Service-Learning at SFCC (Rhosetta Rhodes), the delegation from Eastern
Washington University (Patricia Chantrill and Virginia Hinch, then assistant director of Career Services), and Sima Thorpe, representing Gonzaga. All three institutions were hoping to apply for the grant individually and weren’t aware until they arrived to meet with Dr. Kesces that the other institutions would be coming. Then, Kevin Kesces left the room at some point, and the women were left to discuss the process together. At some point, one of them (no one will admit who started it) said, “Why don’t we collaborate on this and get three times the grant?” [Side note: when Sima Thorpe learned about the feminist pedagogy angle of this research and recalled the collaborative moment described above, she exclaimed, “How’s that for feminist activism? The man leaves the room and the women put together a collaboration!”] The discussion then turned to reminding each other that the three institutions were not in competition for the same students, that the primary goals were shared by all, including the need to institutionalize service-learning on all three campuses and provide Spokane’s many community partners with some uniform protocols for working with all institutions in the region. Dr. Kesces returned to the room to find all participants animated and excited about the possible collaboration that would result, seeded by much needed grant money.

This type of collaboration had never been attempted before, according to Campus Compact. Rhosetta Rhodes knew Sima as having been on the search committee that hired her; Patricia Chantrill worked with Sima and learned about service-learning when she was newly hired at Gonzaga. With much fanfare, they were awarded their “collaborative grant” and formed the Inland Northwest
Service-Learning Partnership, [INSLP, colloquially pronounced “in-slip”] in 2000. Within two years, they would be hosting “grand slam” summer programs for faculty and service fairs and training workshops at each campus for community partners. Spokane Community College, Spokane Public Schools (District 81), and Whitworth University joined INSLP within those first two years and helped to establish what is now a thriving 16-year old partnership in the region. Since 2014, INSLP has also been hosting an annual “Community Engagement Institute” or CEI. This year’s institute, held at Whitworth College and co-hosted by the Southern Poverty Law Center, included peer-reviewed faculty research sessions, a community partner recruitment fair, and student project posters. What began as an opportunity to “norm” the service-learning process for community partners across the region has developed into a vibrant and powerful service-learning voice in Eastern Washington.

Today, each of the original three institutions and those who have joined them can boast robust and thriving service-learning initiatives on their campuses. Each also maintains their campus identity by defining service-learning and community based education as it pertains to their individual missions.

At Eastern Washington University, the mission statement the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) proposes connecting the campus “to the wider community through meaningful, reciprocal partnerships in order to enrich student learning, address critical community need and foster a culture of civic responsibility and community engagement.” The phrase “service-learning” is no longer a dominant part of the mission, though “addressing critical community
need” has become a prominent feature of the “partnerships” Eastern seeks. Three sub-components round out the mission particulars, including “providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful service both in and out of the classroom,” “supporting faculty practice in service-learning, community based research, and community-engaged scholarship and creative activities,” and “developing mutually beneficial partnerships to strengthen our local, regional and global communities.” The mission of Eastern’s OCE provides a glimpse into where this institution has come from its earliest days at the founding of INSLP. In fact, even the Inland Northwest Service-Learning Partnership is no longer focused on service-learning alone. (EWU).

At Gonzaga University’s Center for Community Action and Service-Learning (CCASL), the Mission Statement is more succinct: “To develop students with an ethic of service and a lifelong thirst for social justice.” CCASL’s Vision Statement is more complex, and yet the phrase service-learning is nowhere to be found in the year 2016:

In the Ignatian Tradition of educating women and men for and with others, CCASL works with staff, faculty and community partners to develop relationships grounded in reciprocity that strive to meet the needs of the community while providing a transformational student learning experience.

During this experience, students hone their intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional gifts in service for the common good. Students develop an orientation towards service and grow in their understanding of
complex issues contributing to injustice. As graduates, they will have the
desire and ability to fight oppression in their own communities and will
seek solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. (Mission).

In contrast, the mission statement of Spokane Falls Community College’s
Center for Service Learning, as the center’s name implies, retains the service-
learning focus, now in tandem with other forms of experiential learning: “Service-
learning, practicums and clinicals provide high-quality learning opportunities by
optimizing teaching and learning through coordination between classroom
faculty, individual students, and our community partners. While at SFCC,
students are encouraged to become involved with the greater Spokane community
through civic engagement and volunteering activities. Campus clubs also include
volunteering as one of their core values.” (Community).

The mission statement of Whitworth University’s Office of Community
Engagement includes the charge to help “to coordinate and resource current
activities of Whitworth faculty, staff, and students in the greater Spokane
community. The OCE’s mission is to provide a clearing house to communicate
both internally and externally what the college is doing in the area of community
engagement. The office is also charged with generating new ideas as well as with
seeking additional funding for such efforts.” Again, as with Eastern and Gonzaga,
this four-year institution is using the term “community engagement” where it
once focused on “service-learning.” The trend suggests a broadening of the
concept of service-learning to include a focus on the community while, for the
first time, addressing the notion of “sustainability.” (Whitworth).
The “Struggle”

Throughout Spokane’s 20-year history of community based education in higher education, INSLP’s unique collaboration between institutions has helped to develop a strong and vital network of community partners, all of whom direct non-profit agencies. One of the agencies, as mentioned before, is Catholic Charities. When Rob McCann offered his speech on “lifeguards and hikers,” he stunned the audience by explaining that his organization served over 78,000 Spokane residents in 2014, and that number was expected to climb every year. Clearly, service-learning allowed thousands of college students to take part in that important “lifeguard” activity, but very little “hiking” had taken place. Additionally, as with service-learning partnerships nationwide, Spokane proponents had begun to question why all these civically-engaged students weren’t increasing the incidents of voter registration, political activism, problem-solving, and social justice. Put another way, why were people still falling in the river?

As early as 1999, when Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles’ published their work, “Where’s the Learning in Service-Learning?” the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* proclaimed that “It is hard to overstate the importance of this book to the field.” Using data from two national research projects involving interviews of students before and after the service semester, the authors demonstrate for the first time that service-learning improves academic achievement. And yet, the fact that service-learning was good pedagogy begged the question of whether it was good service for the community.
Twelve years later, award-winning service-learning scholar Andrew Furco framed the problem as the “service-learning struggle” to balance experiential education between learning objectives and benefits to the community. He expressed his concern that “the definitions for service-learning are as varied as the schools in which they operate,” (Furco, 2011, p. 71) and asked how we might distinguish service-learning from other forms of experiential education (i.e., internships, cooperative education, field study, apprenticeships, etc.). Clearly, there is an effort to move toward a more precise definition, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is a corresponding effort to include various forms of experiential education under the larger umbrella of “community based education.” It is at this point that the conversation takes a related, if often obscured, turn from service-learning pedagogy to that of feminist pedagogy.

Literature Review, Part 2: The Influence of Feminist Pedagogy on My Approach to Public Scholarship

“Long before Campus Compact was even a gleam in civically engaged presidents’ eyes, the young discipline of women’s studies was designing community-based learning options for students…. It is time to credit women’s studies and its sister programs in ethnic studies for anticipating what would help students thrive, democratic societies flourish, and higher education restore its public purposes (Musil, “Educating” par. 7-9).
According to the authors of the Introduction to the June 2012 Special Issue of *Feminist Teacher*, “civic engagement remains a contested topic among feminist scholars and teachers” (Costa and Leon, p. 171). The alleged contest is ironic; these same authors claim community-based education has been a staple of women’s studies since the first U.S. programs were established in the 1970s. The authors also claim that WGS scholars favor terms like “activism,” “social justice,” and “praxis” over the more mainstream terms like “service-learning,” and “civic engagement.” But the contest between feminist scholars and mainstream civic engagement proponents goes beyond vocabulary. Importantly, the authors note that “feminist scholars remain highly suspicious of civic engagement projects advanced by university administrators and colleagues in other disciplines because of their perceived potential for reinforcing the very power inequalities that feminists have worked so diligently to expose and challenge.”

Women’s and Gender Studies scholar Betsy Eudey (2012) attempted to quell that suspicion by requiring the students in her civic engagement courses to “learn to assess their specific community…for the ways in which inequalities of power manifest themselves and to conceive of possible interventions.” Eudey claims that feminist pedagogies can “support civic engagement by making explicit the interplay among the theoretical, personal, and communal and diminishing the political/apolitical divide” (p. 238).

This seems to be the primary concern for feminist scholars with regard to community engagement. Instead of challenging and overturning power inequities, community engagement activities, as they are currently practiced, risk preserving
the status quo and maintaining the power dynamic between higher education institutions and the communities they intended to serve. In other words, feminist pedagogy demands that partnerships in the community make “hikers” of students capable of collaborating toward social justice with a community that has defined and expressed a need.

The kick-start to creating movement and change within our communities and ourselves is rooted within feminist pedagogy. The ability to transform perceptions, understandings and pre-conceived notions through feminist pedagogy allows participants to become engaged with each other and create understanding about the issues that reinforce inequities in society. “Feminist Pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning-engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with the community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change” (Shrewsbury, p. 6.)

Looking over the surveys from the spring 2015 CMST 550 class, it was clear that institutional partners and CPs needed to rethink their perspective on community based education, having existed for nearly two decades in an arrangement that had, so far, only produced more lifeguards. The privileging of course-based learning objectives had obscured and replaced the drive for social change at the heart of community based education. In order for a mutually beneficial partnership between graduate students and community partners to take
place, the introduction of a feminist perspective would create opportunities for collaboration between equal partners.

Nowhere is this need for equality among all collaborators more evident than in the 2015 study by faculty members Cynthia Ganote and Patrizia Longo, “Education for Social Transformation: Infusing Feminist Ethics and Critical Pedagogy into Community-Based Research.” Ganote and Longo, both of Saint Mary’s College in California, examine their own case designed to shift the “theoretical underpinnings” of CBR by creating a linked course sequence in which “collaboration” among CPs, the faculty, and the students was the primary objective. And yet, the authors were confounded when students complained about the “collaborative grading process” involving the faculty and the CPs, causing these researchers to conclude that students could not withdraw from their “individualist thinking” completely—even when these same students chose the course for its collaborative theory and practice.

While this case study provides useful parameters for designing CBR, the irony of leaving students out of the “collaborative grading” and subordinating them beneath the teachers and the CPs in a course designed to level inequalities, is stunning. Students must have felt like they had been tricked into collaboration, where the ultimate inequity enshrined in the classroom and the community was maintained. The “professionals” upheld the privilege of evaluating the students, though the students did not have the opportunity to evaluate either the CPs or the teachers. In order for truly collaborative projects to work, students must be
included as equal partners. Their buy-in and their research expertise are, otherwise, squandered in favor of maintaining the status quo.

It is common that students come together and collaborate on college campuses to make changes happen. Currently, at Eastern Washington University the proposed multicultural center has been a hot topic and is creating both tensions and opportunities between faculty and students and administrators. There have been many discussions, focus groups and communications in forms of letters and demands to make the multicultural center something that is appropriate and practical for everyone. The students, in particular, are ensuring that their voices have as much weight, if not more weight, in the design of their proposed center.

Other major examples of student activism include participation in civil right, in the womenʼs rights movement, in the strike at Kent State for the invasion of Cambodia, and even the 2009 Iranian Green Movement (though, this latter example resulted in international condemnation of Iran for their malicious way of handling the protests.) Students can have an impact on society more than many people realize or give them credit for. Therefore, it is important to get them involved in creating a better community because they can and will make a difference.

In order for any change to occur in society, there has to be a willingness for equal partners to address a need defined and expressed by the community. This need can take many forms, but there is often reluctance from individuals who feel they lack the power to make a change. To create empowerment within a person or group, there has to be a “concept of power as energy, capacity and
potential instead of domination” (Shrewsbury 8). It may be that encouragement is one of only two actions standing between someone who wants to make a difference and actually being able to make a difference. The second action is collaboration. Therefore, it is imperative that feminist pedagogy, and its essential reliance on collaboration, informs and influences other community based pedagogies to realize the ultimate goal of solving social problems. It is not enough to stand aside other “lifeguards” in the ever-expanding task of retrieving drowning people from the river. Feminist perspectives create the opportunity to “hike” up the river and seek solutions that will prevent people from falling in the river in the first place.

One example of feminist theory that drives the idea of empowerment home is a 2015 TED Talk by Roxane Gay entitled “Confessions of a Bad Feminist.” In this TED Talk, Gay confesses that even though she may be a “bad” feminist, it is better than not being one at all. In that sentence, she is purging her on guilt in front of a sympathetic audience, allowing them to feel empowered as well. Even if we are not the “loudest, man-hating, hairy-legged, outgoing and forthcoming feminists,” even if we make the small choices to be somewhat of a feminist, we are still doing it right. Throughout the speech, Gay tells the audience of her story of perseverance and hardships. Despite her personal challenges, she makes the choice daily to do what is right for herself, for her nieces and for all women. In her speech, Gay calls on her audience to understand that they, too, can make the right decisions and empowers even the flawed or “bad” feminist to go out and do so.
Feminist theory and pedagogy also calls for people to work together and cooperate. In order to understand one another and move towards a common goal, it is important for cooperation to eclipse competition between people. As noted in the “History of Service Learning in Higher Education in the Spokane Region,” (the first part of this literature review), INSLP was founded by three women willing to work together instead of against each other to reach a common purpose. Even Ganote and Longo, the scholars who inadvertently left students out of the collaboration, cite feminist scholar Muriel Dimen’s quote “You can experience your separateness only through knowing, sensing and intuiting the other at the boundaries between the two, between self and other” (Dimen 47). This is entirely true for students as service learners. It is crucial for a student to actually experience what it is like to work together and cooperate outside their comfort zone to not only grow as a person, but as a researcher. The student then gets to experience the ups and downs of working with a partner or partners and has to deal with those experiences as arise. However, as rooted in the theory of feminism, the student is not alone with those challenges and celebrations and gets to ride the waves with the organization they are working with.

Feminist pedagogy allows the participants to be involved in the process at every step along the way, learning from multiple teachers, serving in multiple ways. This collaborative, barrier-leveling process increases understanding and allows for the students and community partners to really grasp the process of research that will be conducted, including the methods, data collection, data analysis and the debriefing of information.
I have talked mostly about the student and community partner relationships, but I also need to discuss the importance of the professors involved in community partnership classes. A professor not only needs to understand the importance of every class that is taught for research and communication purposes but also they need to create a place of learning for students to develop and grow.

In “Integrating Feminist Epistemologies in Undergraduate Research Methods” (1994), scholar Patricia Ewick proclaimed that, “as teachers and instructors, we are not simply purveyors of knowledge; we are also producers of knowledge” (p. 92). It is significant to note that professors play a major role in community based research, especially those who adopt a feminist pedagogy. The professors involved need to be available and work with the students to teach them how to do the research. There must be a working partnership between the professor, the community partners and the students. An open communication system, true collaboration, and mutual benefit that privileges solving community problems requires that the professor, the students, and the community partners all agree to work with one another in terms of time, teamwork and end goals.

**Literature Review, Part 3: Public Scholarship**

The University of North Dakota maintains web pages devoted to varying definitions of “Public Scholarship” from across the country [see https://und.edu/centers/community-engagement/resources/psdefs.cfm]. Of those listed, the definition of Public Scholarship that seems the most coherent comes from the University of Minnesota: “At the level of the institution, public
scholarship means optimizing the extent to which University research informs and is informed by the public good, maximizes the generation and transfer of knowledge and technology, educates the public about what research the University does, and listens to the public about what research needs to be done” ("Reports and References—Public Scholarship Committee, April 2003," University of Minnesota, www1.umn.edu/civic/archives/cholar.html, retrieved April 26, 2004).

The phrase ‘public scholarship’ can also be understood as a synonym for ‘Community-Based Research’ (CBR from here on out). CBR populated many more articles on JSTOR than simply public scholarship. I wanted to know what CBR stood for specifically and how the public scholarship definition fit into a CBR definition. Community engagement scholar Randy Soecker tells us that, “One specific form of CBR is that which engages students as researchers, expanding on the practice of service learning” (2003, p. 50). Although the definition of public scholarship is more complex for the scholarly community that practices it, CBR is community based and therefore goes hand-in-hand with public scholarship. But, it is useful to take note of the definition above as it considers “research” as “expanding the practice of service learning.” Beyond specific projects, mostly involving a form of volunteerism that enables “lifeguard” activities (preserving the status quo), research is here perceived as creating an opportunity that service learning does not usually provide.

Stoecker’s research also identifies four preliminary questions to ask before beginning a CBR project: (1) Who sets the schedule? (2) Who determines the
labor pool? (3) Who controls the product? and (4) Who gets the funding? These questions speak to obstacles and potential hazards to aligning a public scholarship ideology in a graduate program with a community partner. However, throughout the case study, some of these challenges were put to rest by giving the community partners more power and influence in the partnership, allowing them to envision opportunities to collaborate on answering those four key questions. Stoecker defines CBR as “a recently popular model of community–higher education collaboration that combines various forms of action-oriented research with service learning to support social action for social justice (26). He claims that CBR includes “charity service learning, social justice service learning, action research, and participatory research. Charity service learning and action research combine to produce the dominant mainstream CBR model. Social justice service learning and participatory research combine to produce the radical CBR model” (28). Stoecker says that each of these theories of CBR are grounded in different theories about society, different approaches to community work, and may, in fact, combine or conflict with each other.

Four years after Stoecker’s work was published, author Glenn Bowen offered an alternative set of distinctions between Problem-Based service learning and community-based research in his article titled, “Undergraduate Research and Service Learning”:

**Problem-Based Service Learning** (PBSL) engages students in seeking solutions to real, community-based problems. Students, usually working in teams, relate to the community like consultants working for
a client. They work with community members to understand a particular social problem or need. This service-learning approach calls for students to have some knowledge that they can draw upon to formulate and propose authentic, viable solutions to community problems. Such knowledge is gained through research (Emphasis added).

In Community-Based Research (CBR), students and faculty collaborate with community partners on research projects that address community-identified needs and promote positive social change.

Research questions emerge from the needs of communities. CBR aims not merely to generate knowledge but also to ensure that knowledge contributes to making a concrete and constructive difference in a community. CBR emphasizes the use of multiple methods of discovery and the dissemination of the knowledge produced (2007, pg. 1). (Emphasis added).

In order to become hikers themselves, it is imperative that CPs become true collaborators in the design and implementation of the research that is conducted. Additionally, as Stoecker reminds us, “Communities are also in better position to know their needs and capacity limits,” making their presence and participation early on in the research design an essential component of successful CBR (Stoecker, 28). Finally, CPs must be empowered to acquire and use the research results, rather than merely keeping it bound within the University’s
libraries. Research design, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination become, in the CBR model, a collaborative enterprise at every step.

Stoecker revealed that the most frustrating part of CBR is control of the funding, or lack thereof. Jumping through hoops to retain grant money and then the inability to control some of the unforeseen overhead costs from the University made CP finances even tighter. Financial terms need to be part of the initial negotiation between public scholars and CPs. Ultimately, the author concludes that, “The primary form of campus-community partnerships revolves around information processes, and provides the first open door to equality and justice” (pg. 45). The working relationship between the community and the University is the heart and soul of CBR and public scholarship. Without true collaboration and partnership, the community suffers from an inability to make good research work for them.

Many institutions of higher education are turning to public scholarship, mostly at research universities, mostly for doctoral candidates. Most institutions of higher education require some form of civic learning as a part of their curriculum. More than two decades after service-learning came to higher education, institutions are beginning to take graduate-level CBR seriously, moving on from the imbalance that privileged learning outcomes over social justice outcomes.

This is not to say there’s no longer any need for service-learning at the undergraduate level. Quite the contrary: students are coming to higher education with community based education experiences gained in high schools. Colleges
and universities can expand upon those early experiences by reinforcing the feminist pedagogy and focus on power inequities that initially faded from service-learning courses. Finally, at the graduate level, these students are ready to move beyond understanding problems and work to actually hike up the river to solve them using multiple methods of rigorous graduate research as their contribution to the collaboration with CPs.

Community Partners have noticed that their partnerships with higher education haven’t taken them beyond being lifeguards. In 2012, even the federal government’s Department of Education funded a report with the Association of American Colleges and Universities called “A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy’s Future urging colleges to make civic learning and democratic engagement “an animating national priority” in order to help the country emerge from what it called a “civic recession” (Crucible, 2012)). The term “civic recession” comes from a 2011 statement made by Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education:

“Each generation must work to preserve the fundamental values and principles of its heritage...to narrow the gap between the ideals of this nation and the reality of the daily lives of its people; and to more fully realize the potential of our constitutional, democratic republic. We can emerge from this civic recession, but to do so will require a full-scale national investment from every level of government and every sector of society” (Crucible, pg. xii).
Although there have been many successes, especially in those universities with institutionalized support, there have also been frequent negative effects on newer public scholarship explorations. “Informants told us that community-based research is often based on stereotypes of communities, may further stigmatize communities of color, and is often problem focused. Furthermore, people said that although institutions often purport to collaborate with the community, many power imbalances interfere with partnering on an equal basis.” (Researcher and Researched p. 134). These claims against CBR echo the concerns that feminist pedagogy had for community-based education that originated from administrations and colleagues from other disciplines. One trend to counter these negative effects comes from an approach called “Asset Based Community Development” or ABCD.

Asset-based community development (ABCD) differs from needs-based community development in that it focuses primarily on honing and leveraging existing strengths within a community rather than bolstering community deficiencies. Related to tenets of empowerment, it postulates that solutions to community problems already exist within a community’s assets. Principles that guide ABCD include:

1. Everyone has gifts: each person in a community has something to contribute

2. Relationships build a community: people must be connected in order for sustainable community development to take place
3. Citizens at the center: citizens should be viewed as actors—not recipients—in development

4. Leaders involve others: community development is strongest when it involves a broad base of community action

5. People care: challenge notions of "apathy" by listening to people's interests

7. Listen: decisions should come from conversations where people are heard

8. Ask: asking for ideas is more sustainable than giving solutions

*(What is Asset-based community development (ABCD)? ABCD Institute. Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation.)*
ABCD assumes there are five key assets in any given community: individuals, associations, institutions, physical assets, and connections. These assets are broken down into three categories: Gifts of individuals, Citizens’ Associations, and Local Institutions. Asset maps are used in lieu of needs maps which focus solely on communities as problem sources. Asset maps, on the other hand, focus on community assets, abilities, skills, and strengths in order to build its future. Below is the map that John Kretzman and John McKnight created in 1993:
The negative effects of using a need-based, as opposed to an asset-based model, were frequently cited in case studies involving public scholarship. These issues could be solved by using the collaboration practices such as those in feminist pedagogy where community members and public scholars work together to first identify community strengths to address community issues.

Dr. Chantrill and I are working together to create a Public Scholarship Certificate for graduate students at Eastern Washington University, but she isn’t the only professor involved in making community based research a staple at the university level. Johns Hopkins University professors were interviewed to understand their views, experiences and perceptions of community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Kennedy, pg. 6). Interviewees identified public scholarship as a partnership between the community and the university. They perceived the community as more than just a platform for accomplishing learning objectives by giving time and student labor to. Communities and community partners become, for these faculty, a major player whose opinions and help matter in order to benefit all parties. This is different than just service learning because it requires the community to think outside the old way of how students interacted with the community and instead work together to create a mutually beneficial plan to achieve goals for both students and the community. This model of public scholarship privileges the community first (either needs or assets).

The respondents from John Hopkins University overwhelmingly had positive and successful experiences with CBPR. However, these successes weren’t met without a fair share of challenges, including some I’ve experienced in
the process of designing and implementing this research. The questions these
faculty raised were reminiscent of those raised by Stoecker’s research and his four
preliminary questions to ask before beginning a CBR project: How to define
community? How to define CBPR? Which part of the community will be most
beneficial to all parties? How to balance the power? How to address skepticism
from community partners?

These are all challenges that can be met and overcome, in part, through
strategies found in feminist pedagogy. Faculty also identified the need to diversify
academic research faculty, offering a series of research classes (instead of just one
or two), and finding a power balance between institutions and community
partners. Ultimately, public scholarship will take work, and it will take testing and
reworking and testing again depending on the specific community and institution.
However, the benefits to the institution, the students and the community partners
entirely outweigh the time it may take to get it right. Once public scholarship
takes place, it will thrive and become valuable to all parties involved.

Although there were initial challenges, the success and repetition of CBPR
clearly shows that the obstacles that had to be dealt with did not outweigh the
results achieved from CBPR. Professors that were interviewed noted that their
CBPR classes had much higher enrollments and retention. It was also mentioned
that their own research quality was enhanced. CBPR not only benefits the
community and the students involved, but also the professors who diligently
spend their time, effort and resources helping conduct the research needed for the
community. Although these are tangible successes, there are also intangible forms
of success that have come from CBPR such as relationship building, experience, and personal satisfaction. These types of successes may go under appreciated, but in developing citizens who will give back to the community, these are the successes that will make all the difference.

The phrase, “If you want to get something done, ask a busy person” holds true. If you want to get something done, a graduate student and a professor with time constraints have learned how to get things done. Even though time is usually a negative part of research, such as finding the time to do it, the time it takes to conduct it, and the time it takes to debrief research, time is precious to a busy person and will more than likely be used to the fullest advantage. It is my opinion, informed by the Johns Hopkins faculty, that graduate students and graduate professors are your ideal candidates to conduct CBPR, CBR, and Public Scholarship.

**Summary**

Although it seems like feminist pedagogy and public scholarship should go hand-in-hand, until now there is no clear evidence that they have been essentially linked. Feminist pedagogy is also present in various service-learning practices, but public scholarship would fail without the tenets of feminist pedagogy at the outset. The ultimate goal of coupling public scholarship and feminist pedagogy is to increase collaboration between scholars and community partners to create a community that is stronger for the effort. This can and will be accomplished when the components of feminist pedagogy and public scholarship work together.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

Overall Approach

In the spring of 2015, my CMST 550 classmates and I co-designed an online survey for community partners and graduate students about research. The graduate student results are not part of this study, except to note that their primary desire was for “research that matters.” By that, they wanted to be involved in exciting, relevant, and vital research. The survey of community partners can be found in Appendix A. We intended to learn more about community partner [hereafter, “CP”] perceptions of research. The EWU Office of Community Engagement provided a listing of 53 CPs who currently partner with Eastern faculty on service-learning projects. By dividing up the list of 53 CPs, each student took 10 names and called the agency phone number. Once we reached the CP by phone, we arranged to send out follow-up emails to those who agreed to participate in the survey. Those follow-up emails explained how the CP was to access the online survey, the consent form protocols, and described the purpose of the survey. The survey itself was hosted online using OrgSync software via the EWU Office of Community Engagement.

Out of the 53 invitations, only a dozen CPs agreed to participate in the survey; every CP who rejected the invitation cited not having the time to participate. For the 10 CPs who did end up taking the survey (two agreed to participate but did not follow through by taking the survey), we discovered that the online survey posed some limitations. Foremost among them were the preconceived notions about what research was and how it could serve the
agencies in question. [For more detail on the survey instrument and results, including word clouds of the key themes, see Appendix B.]

The results of the survey indicated that CP experience with research was nearly non-existent and limited to “market surveys” and other organizational tools used to provide targeted insights into “consumer perspectives” and “guide organizational strategy for maintaining a competitive advantage.” [Definition adapted from the National Business Research Institute, https://www.nbrii.com/products/market-research-surveys/]. CPs responded that previous research was based mostly on finding trends, explaining behaviors, and industry based surveys of those community members who used the agency’s services. One respondent specified that research was used to gather data, facts and information to increase their knowledge and apply it to their organization. This response is notable for its reliance on research for mostly inventory purposes, often driven by demographic data.

The most significant portion of the CP research perception results was the answer to the question “What does your organization see as the biggest challenge to do research?” The answers included shortages of time, volunteers and participants. The answer “time” came back as a sole response 50% of the time. If time is the single biggest challenge for CPs, any solution will need to reduce their overall time commitment while providing CPs with resources that actually reduce their time as “lifeguards” and help them prevent people from “falling in the water in the first place.” In other words, solutions that offer preventative measures
without creating additional time-consuming tasks would best benefit CPs in their work serving the community.

**Change of Protocol**

Another worthy response to note, is when asked what research for their organization could accomplish, a respondent stated, “identify gaps of service.” This response is key to the goal of this study, specifically to identify how research really could benefit the community and the CPs who serve it. After reviewing the survey responses, it became clear that a more face-to-face interaction through focus groups would yield better data that could help to understand existing perceptions and offer alternatives to misconceptions of research. With this new perspective in mind, Dr. Chantrill and I applied for a grant through the Office of Community Engagement at Eastern Washington University, this application can be found in Appendix C. With this grant we were able to hire a transcriber to track the focus groups so the analysis could be performed accurately. In order to conduct the focus groups, we also applied for and was granted a Change of Protocol [Appendix D] through the IRB. We were then able to create a consent form and focus group agenda for the participants [Appendix E].

Focus groups allow for ideas to generate and flow as well as build off of one another. The benefit to focus groups is the ability to create dialogue and generate new ideas and opinions in contrast to a one-on-one interview. The variety of perceptions from various participants allowed for conversation to develop and verify or change pre-conceived notions potentially allowing change to occur in the mindset of an individual.
Within a focus group, we allow ourselves to create benchmarks, to understand where we are in a certain process. Benchmarking is used to evaluate and compare current conditions with a previous standard or result. The fundamental reason why a focus group is the method of choice for this research project is that it can challenge unacknowledged perceptions about the limitations of research without being heavy handed or coming from an “expert” source. In a sense, the 2015 survey responses serve as a “benchmark” for where community partners are in terms of their readiness to engage with EWU graduate students in Public Scholarship projects.

The overall goal for this research project is to create a partnership between Eastern Washington University and community partners built on a solid foundation of graduate research to enable growth for graduate students, the organizations they are working with, and the community as a whole. The focus groups done in this study are specifically dedicated to evaluate CP perceptions regarding research and help them develop an understanding of what public scholarship is and how research could benefit their organization. Within the focus groups, community partners will also become more familiar with what resources are available to them, especially through their partnership with Eastern Washington University.

**Data Collection:**

I conducted two focus groups with approximately three participants each, all within administrative positions for their organization, for one hour at a time. The benefit to having two small groups is to get enough participants to generate
ideas, attempting to avoid ‘group think’, and still appeal to the busy lives of the volunteers. Throughout the focus groups, there will be multiple forms of interaction including a brief introduction, a brainstorming activity, word association, A “Bursts of Brilliance” or “BOB” Talk video from the Community Engagement Institute hosted at Gonzaga University in 2015, [see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EQL60VmgaA] and some strategic questions to generate discussion. The focus groups conclude with opportunities for focus group participants to ask final questions and discuss opportunities for future collaboration.

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed by a research assistant hired for this purpose. Once transcribed, the transcripts were examined for patterns, underlying perceptions and opportunities to expand shared definitions of research. Writing exercises conducted during the focus groups were also gathered and used to discern reactions to the video and to compare and contrast the brainstorming activity results between participants and the two focus groups as a whole. The results will be used to design and implement a CP-friendly Certificate of Public Scholarship Program under Eastern Washington University’s College of Business.

**Data Analysis:**

All data was examined for patterns, underlying perceptions and opportunities to expand shared definitions of research. The most important goal of the focus group was to track shifting perceptions from the initial opinions
expressed in the 2015 surveys and those expressed after the video that focus group participants were exposed to.

Opportunities for future research on this topic would include possible recruitment tactics for community partners to get more involved, as well as for public scholars from local universities. It would be beneficial to further this research throughout the community into other universities or a wider variety of community partners to gather more research and create further change.

Obstacles:

Some obstacles I encountered while conducting the focus groups included finding the right time for community partners to come in, dealing with last minute cancellations, and persuading some community partners to take time out of their “lifeguard” work to explore how research could benefit their organization.

As previously mentioned, these community partners are changing—even saving—lives, and things come up. Last minute cancellations were not uncommon for this group of participants. Additionally, the phone calls and emailed invitations did not include details and definitions of Public Scholarship in order to prevent influencing perceptions before the focus group. While this was necessary to maintain the integrity of the study, the lack of information made persuading CPs of the necessity to take part more difficult than it might otherwise have been.
Chapter 4- Results and Discussion

Overview

The focus groups began with a word association exercise. The participants were asked to take a minute and write down some words or phrases to the question, “What words/descriptors come to mind regarding “research” for your organization?”

After that activity, the answers were collected and formulated into word clouds. These were then shown to the participants at the end of the focus groups. They were able to see what they previously thought of research and their organization and then could see how that perception had transformed after watching the video and discussing with their peers about research through the focus groups.

Next, we conducted another word association, but with specific words for two reasons: the word association served as a “baseline” for measuring participant attitudes about research before the video. The exercise also helped to generate conversation among the participants in order to reinforce the importance of discussion between all participants as the norm of the focus group. Further, the exercise allowed participants to express their familiarity with the terms and any connotations they aligned with them.

This type of ice-breaking activity informalizes the exchange, invites conversation, and encourages the CPs to discuss their ideas and understandings together. Each term was read by the facilitator in a sequence as a prompt for CPs to respond to. Once the prompt was given, the CPs had unlimited opportunity to
discuss their initial reactions as well as deliberate together on more nuanced and collaborative responses.

These prompts included four terms: “service-learning,” “public scholarship,” “partnership,” and “graduate students.” Each word was chosen for its “generative” properties (prompting expanded discussion about attitudes and ideas) and their interrelated potential. For example, “service-learning” served to give participants a point of common understanding that could later be tied to the less familiar notion of “public scholarship,” allowing them to seek connections between terms they knew and newer constructions. With all terms, they started out with more positive responses, gradually becoming more evaluative as more time was given to the discussion (and it was clear there would be no punishment for less-than positive responses.) Service-learning is a common phrase that all participants would be familiar with, as the participant list was derived from the Office of Community Engagement’s existing list of Community Partners for service-learning projects. It was an obvious place to start.

The next term, “public scholarship,” prompted less confident, more exploratory responses, but it also indicated the level of familiarity with the term, if any, and any pre-existing attitudes about it. Importantly, this phrase functioned as a way for CPs to reach, to see if they could create shared understanding of the term based on their more assertive responses to “service-learning.”

Next, I wanted to understand their views on “partnerships,” the good and the bad. I wanted to hear about their experience in working with other people, what they thought went well and what they didn’t. A word association was not my
only resource for this as I did ask questions about a partnership later on in the focus group, but the initial prompt also served as a benchmark to compare responses later in the focus group.

Lastly I wanted to see their views on graduate students and how that perspective may influence their ideas on community based research. Some CPs may have had great experiences and may be eager to work with graduate students; some may have had negative or no experiences working with graduate students, so this term was meant to determine relatively familiarity. This term also allowed CPs to distinguish between their experiences with undergraduate students and graduate students. And, importantly, it served to give participants an opportunity to share their knowledge of and expectations for working with students who bring advanced research experience to the partnership.

The following results include word clouds created from wordle.net. Word clouds [hereafter known as “Wordle”] count the word frequency from text that is entered. Wordle is really only a primitive tool, as it doesn’t help us to discern where the words occur in context. But, it does give us some indication of what words mattered most to the respondent.
Research for their Organization:

It was apparent from the beginning that each community partner had different perspectives on what research was. As shown in the wordles below, many of the words are the same size, showing that the number of times they populated were the same. However, one group did mention ‘learning’ ‘knowledge’ ‘test’ and ‘questions’ more frequently than the others. This states that their perspective of research is investigative. They desire a scientific approach, and a question that needs to be answered in order to learn and solve a problem.
Service-learning

This phrase provoked the following responses:

Group 1

Group 2
Most of these words come with a positive implication: growth, relief, motivation renewal, mutually beneficial, etc. It was apparent that throughout this association both focus groups really saw service-learning as a positive phrase. Many offered examples of service-learning, some talked about the benefits of service-learning and others just stated what they believed service-learning was. Overall the context was positive and there were no apparent negative feelings towards service-learning.

The wordles really depict an image about service-learning. As pictured, the biggest and bold words include; help, hands, mission, staff, development and outside. The community partners view service-learning as an action: helping others, helping the organization to achieve the mission, thinking outside the box. Many of the words create an image of a helping hand, development, and assistance to the organization to achieve a common goal. In these wordles, it is obvious that community partners don’t equate service-learning with research. This is a gap that needs to be filled as there is an opportunity to help these organizations with public scholarship potentials.

Public Scholarship

This was my whole project, my whole intention, and here it was and no one really knew it was being talked about. One person even stated, “I wanted a definition because it is a phrase I am not familiar with” another said, “I haven’t heard that phrase before…” others offered a guess at the definition such as “by meaning I am creating is a publically funded scholarship and discounted or free
ability to participate in conferences like that.” [Note: the idea of “public scholarship” didn’t serve to mitigate the common definition of “scholarship” to mean an award for academic achievement, as opposed to academic study or learning].

It was not surprising that people didn’t know what public scholarship was. In fact, their honesty in not knowing the term and the vulnerability they demonstrated by taking a chance to create an explanation was an opportunity the video could help with. I did not give any background or any information on what exactly public scholarship was.

This phrase provoked the following responses:

Group 1

- behind
- employment
- someone
- game
- management
- bases
- public
- heard
- discounted
- participate

- free
- like
- conferences
- abilities
- something
These responses had much less words than service-learning and there was no clear focus in any of them. CPs preferred instead to simply echo the words they heard from others.

**Partnerships**

This phrase provoked the following responses:
After asking what came to mind when I said the word “partnerships,” the answers were a little surprising. I come from a background of really beneficial working relationships when it came to partnering up with others. However, it became apparent that not all partnerships are positive, nor do all partnerships generate results desired by both parties. One of the first responses was “I have done work on partnership and collaboration; take away is increase risk in two parties, takes deeper level into mutual engagement.” The participant’s honesty allowed me to change my perspective. Instead of immediately jumping to solutions though, other people took what was said and turned it around, “work with other people, raises bar of performance.” These two views of a partnership show the variations on what a partnership means to CPs. Therefore, it is important to ensure the value of partnering with EWU for future research projects.

Even though there was no clear focus in the wordles done for partnership, the terms “Mission” and “Working” populated for more than one participant. Both
times, the responses were in the context of working towards a common mission. The end result was the driver for their understanding of partnership.

This list of words and phrases that the CPs came up with leaned more towards a positive perspective than negative, however there were definitely some vague and slightly negative responses that deserve further exploration. Perhaps for future research it would be beneficial to really understand how dysfunctional partnerships develop in order to prevent them from occurring. It is also important to learn that devotion to a mission of “lifeguarding” could undermine a partnership that was intent on “hiking,” perhaps altering the mission in the process.

**Graduate Students**

This phrase received a couple laughs and chuckles from the focus groups when I said it out loud. I am unsure if they laughed because they didn’t think I was serious or because they didn’t want to give me an answer.

This phrase provoked the following responses:

**Group 1**
I appreciated CP understanding of traits graduate students had. For instance, it was nice to know they perceived that graduate students were aligned with increased responsibility, fulfillment of learning goals, ambition and hard work. I also believe that by specifically stating graduate student instead of college student, I was able to differentiate from undergraduates and really get a feel for the views of CPs who may or may not have experience with graduate students. Importantly, many of the participants in the focus groups expressed a desire to become graduate students themselves.

When viewing the wordles, there were many different descriptions of graduate students, but the one that stands above the rest is “need.” Out of context,
this term can be interpreted in many ways. However, in the context of the “graduate student” prompt, this respondent was talking about the need for graduate students. The respondent listed opportunities that could be supplemented with help from graduate students while also giving some specific examples of past experiences.

It is telling that CPs associated graduate students with internships, indicating that they understand that graduate students are more advanced in some way than undergraduates, perhaps comparable to the difference between student volunteers and interns. Essentially, the internship reference also indicates these CPs may have limited to no experience with graduate student projects. Their exposure is limited to undergraduates who begin as volunteers and may return to more advanced position as interns before they graduate.

By stating that graduate students have increased responsibilities, it is likely that the CPs recognized that most graduate students are full time employees who work during the day and go to school at night, while squeezing in family here and there, some homework and eventually a thesis. This can be both a good and bad thing. Being a busy person means you know how to get things done, you don’t wait around for someone else to do them, and you have a ‘go-getter mentality.’ These could be appealing characteristics for potential partners. However, by being a busy and responsible person, time becomes even more of a constraint. Scheduling conflicts occur, and CPs already have to deal with tight deadlines and scarce amounts of free time.
The only negative answer offered was about not always making it a functioning experience. The CP who gave this response did not appear willing to elaborate, but I sensed that “a functioning experience” arose because of the always present time constraints. It takes a lot of time to develop and maintain functional relationships, perhaps more so with graduate students whose expectations for learning might be higher than the average volunteer who walks through the door.

**After the Burst of Brilliance Talk**

After the video, I didn’t ask questions right away. Instead I waited to hear what their thoughts were to the Rob McCann BOB talk. They were nodding their heads, behaving as if the idea of “lifeguards” was all-too familiar to them, even if McCann doesn’t say how to transform from a lifeguard to a hiker. They stated things like “Preaching to the choir” and “prevention versus reactionary” as well as “fixing bigger problems for the population that they serve, our audience is getting older before they are getting younger.” After watching this video, participants appeared to gain a broader perspective of what could be accomplished in the community, even if they were unsure of how to transform from their current lifeguard activity. Instead of waiting and reacting to issues, they appreciated the need to be proactive in solving them. The next step would be to show how partnering with higher education to utilize resources and benefit from graduate research might give them some options they hadn’t thought of before.
Topic Focused Questions

After the video was watched and initial reactions had settled in, I then wanted to ask some topic pointed questions of my participants. With these questions I hoped to gain an understanding of current conditions, both positive and negatives, and determine the relative readiness and interest in Public Scholarship partnerships. By starting with a focus on their particular organizations and the opportunities for research at the local level, the questions expand to get participants thinking about opportunities that would have community-wide benefits.

Question 1

What are the top priorities for you in terms of the research resources a partnership with Eastern might offer?

I asked this question to the CPs so they knew I understood that they had to juggle a lot of things, yet I also knew they had specific tasks and ideas generating as soon as the video was over. They were thinking about hiker activities versus lifeguard activities and the difference between service-learning and public scholarship lies within that difference as well. By asking the CPs to pick out top priorities that could use the research Eastern could provide would really set apart some answers that were not useful to Public Scholarship. Since this question was specific to their organization, the answers varied across the CPs.

One CP discussed how she only really worked with WSU students because they have the nutrition program. She hadn’t really even thought of
working with EWU students since EWU doesn’t have this program. After this participant spoke, she then added that research on grant writing, and job shadowing would be beneficial to her organization and the student. Although this might not necessarily be the research we would conduct in the Public Scholarship realm, to see the options for other student involvement and not specifically for the service-learning portion of nutrition and feeding people was a fantastic change of perspective for that CP.

An interesting perspective came just a few moments later from a different CP in the same group: “Sometimes we don’t know, it’s nice for the students to come in and have those ideas, we are jaded by research, leery, how do we prove that what we do is effective without doing a control group? I believe in the power of students and what they can bring but it’s hard to answer in this context with that they see being helpful.” This statement says all too well what I believe is most useful to CPs. It is the new perspective students can bring to the research being done, the expertise, the unbiased view. CP already have so much experience dealing with the everyday wear and tear of being lifeguards. Bringing in student researchers to help accomplish a common goal and mission would be more than helpful to any organization. It would be beneficial to work with fresh set of eyes and ears, a student skilled in methods of research and analysis. And yet, this CP also indicates that there is hesitation in providing the graduate student with a project the student will find valuable enough.

A couple other CPs discussed that students have their own reasons for serving. This was not entirely my intention with this question but they explained
that having a student who is committed to their mission and their organization has always turned out better for them than those who just were assigned to work with them. There is definitely something to be said when someone has a passion and a desire to contribute to an organization and their community, and their work ethic shows that. Respondents also went on to state that they would like students to know more about the needs and concerns of who they serve so they can better serve them. I think the video really showed how important it was to work on prevention of situations instead of reactions, and that sunk in.

Public scholarship begins and ends with a collaboration between CPs and the University. While service-learning is perceived at the undergraduate level as privileging learning outcomes, Public Scholarship at the graduate level is intentionally designed as a collaboration that begins with community-expressed research goals.

A slightly off-topic answer that foreshadowed the next question include one CPs perceptions of previous partnerships with EWU classes: “We have met with some folks at EWU and didn’t get too far. We had a good partnership with the business class, but from my perspective the length of service time is an issue. Quarters are short, and there is no encouragement to form a real partnership if is a short term relationship.” Another respondent quickly added, “I would have to echo just the length of time…” These two statements generated spontaneous discussion in the group about how to make a research partnership work on a quarter system. They discussed a “three-quarter trial,” where one group started the research by creating an instrument, the next quarter research was conducted, and
then lastly, the research was analyzed. It was encouraging to hear the CPs working through the “quarter problem” and collaborating to discover ways to make such a partnership work. They all realized the main issue and were brainstorming ideas on how to solve it already. Again, they were working to solve the “time” problem, this time relative to the quarter calendar system.

Lastly, a different CP replied to the “top priority” question by noting the desire for “valuable research, instead of wasting time producing a report, a win-win situation that student produced and helped both the student and the agency.” Specifically, this response really hones in on the intent of Public Scholarship: to give back to the community and the agency while engaging newly trained and passionately committed graduate students who can readily and accurately conduct research on behalf of the community. The CPs seemed able to straddle the perspective of graduate student skill development and that of community needs with some dexterity. They expressed interest in helping graduate students use what they have learned in their programs while contributing to the communities where their schools reside.

Question 2

What are some of the possible obstacles you might encounter when working with the university to conduct your research?

After reading some case studies on public scholarship and obvious answers to the first question, my immediate thought for this second question was “time.” There are only 24 hours in a day, and we can’t extend that, but what
graduate students can do is make the most of it. Making the most of the time we have is one of the key capacities graduate school forces upon students in “sink or swim” fashion; it becomes a necessary life skill once we accept admission to graduate school.

Piggybacking off the first question, one of the focus groups talked about length of time with the students again. The concern was for relationship-building and how the length of time (specifically the 10 week quarters) would not be enough to build a solid partnership. They all agreed that it “felt more like a short handshake” than any sort of partnership. For the CPs to feel like the “partnership” was more than just an inconvenience they had to abide, there needed to be a longer period of time devoted to their organization than just one quarter.

The CPs discussed the importance of bringing creativity and energy to this sort of project; however, they also expressed concern that they don’t currently have the time to devote to the “luxury” of creativity and energy because they are too busy trying to keep their own heads above water (an interesting use of the “drowning in the river” idea), let alone help a student meet specific criteria for a class. I did not intervene or tell them what the potential plans could be. I wanted to know their raw concerns so they could be addressed and resolved in the design of whatever solution EWU eventually offered. The CPs also discussed the problem of scheduling conflicts. This one was obvious for me before I even asked the question because that has been my biggest hurdle as a graduate student. Attempting to nail down proper times for everything is difficult when everyone is busy, let alone working full time or volunteering. It is difficult to find the time to
devote to things that are not requirements or basic necessities, especially if you are too busy being a “lifeguard” to take the time to hike up hill and work on research that could prevent the number of people from falling into the river in the first place.

Other CPs were worried about their own lack of experience with research. They confided that they were unsure what research could potentially bring to them and how they would know it was legitimate and useful, especially if it wasn’t conducted by an expensive, professional research organization. This concern was only brought up once, but even then it was an interesting perspective and viewpoint. As a proponent of Public Scholarship, I would definitely have to structure the foundational methods class to really focus on what constitutes rigorous and valuable research, for both the integrity of the University and the agencies we work with.

Ironically however, the CPs brought up longevity in a positive sense. This had been an issue only seen as a negative until one person spoke up and took a different spin on it. This CP discussed how service-learning could be implemented in the undergraduate level and then taken to the next level by graduate students wanting to do more than just be lifeguards. This perspective could work wonders, especially for students who want to give back to their community beyond volunteering their labor as lifeguards. Actually applying knowledge and research design and implementation skills would help students to experience the transition from “student” to “professional,” from “volunteer” to “research collaborator,” from “lifeguard” to “hiker.” This response also reminded
me how important it would be to make collaboration a universal term, applied to faculty and CPs and students alike.

Lastly, the other main response to this question was a question about whether this would be a paid opportunity for students or not. One CP talked about the interns they had with her organization and how even though they rotated every year, they were able to pay them and that made a huge difference for her in comparison to previous years where it was strictly volunteers. I believe this goes hand-in-hand with previous statements on passion as well though. If someone can find passion in what they are doing, the fulfillment of the emotional satisfaction will suffice. However, one CP stated, “you get what you pay for” while a different CP had an opposite view in reference to personal experience with service learners: “…[O]ne thing I like about service-learning people, learning on cutting edge, people that want to learn and are excited and bring energy, capturing that…” One CP was focused on a form of social-exchange theory and expressed the belief that if the assistance is free, they shouldn’t expect too much from the results. Another CP responded by expressing appreciation for the passion students could bring, that passionate students were a refreshing change of pace.

As a graduate student who has to work full time in order to survive and pay my bills, I can vouch for the reluctance some graduate students might have when it comes to doing volunteer work. The bills don’t stop coming in even if I am doing good work for the community. However, one of the things we realized when we conducted our survey of graduate students in the spring of 2015 was that “research that matters” and solves problems for our own communities is the kind
of research graduate students long to do. Public Scholarship opportunities can help students get through grind of a research project by realizing its impact immediately, giving research questions focus and relevance. It is that relevance, that connection between the work of conducting and evaluating accurate, rigorous research and the expressed desire to take part in solving long-standing community problems that is most likely to persuade graduate students to engage in “research that matters.”

**Question 3**

**In your view, how would the work of your organization and the research Eastern graduate students could provide enhance/improve our shared community?**

After creating an understanding of potential difficulties, I wanted to focus the CPs back to the potential for their organizations and the larger community.

The first answer I received was, “our options are limitless with that one.” For a CP to grasp that there is so much potential in a working relationship with EWU and the community was exactly the kind of spark I wanted to ignite. This answer was followed up with opinions for research in businesses, private enterprises, public organizations which in turn can all affect the local community. One CP noted that if business trends are discovered (through research) early, businesses can adapt and circumvent potential problems. The other CPs appeared to understand how this business example could be applied to their own work in social service agencies.
Another immediate response to this question was a CP talking about how they once were in college at EWU, “I want to get back in and give back with my college education, but then I am able to call on someone and it creates relationships, all about relationships, besides results. We have to prevent brain drain; kids go away and get an education and then don’t come back.” This perspective was unique because the CP offered such a positive take on community relationships that are built from alumni of local universities. In the same breath they mentioned how students go away to colleges because the opportunities are there and then help their new communities and don’t come back, so it is important to create the relationship on both ends to keep the hard working students here in Spokane so they want to stay and contribute later on in life.

In response to that, another participant talked about the workforce and how there are so many factors that go into today’s resumes that it is imperative to make those relationship connections. A student can have the most polished resume, but if there isn’t a certain connection, the door to opportunity may be closed. The CPs in this group talked about how the university is in a unique situation to give back to the community and create the alumni relationships with organizations, sort of a cycle process where students come in as interns or Public Scholars and end up with real world experience and relationships and eventually land a job out of college. It creates a self-sustaining cycle, especially if Public Scholarship can be implemented to help organizations.

Finally, in response to this question, some CPs expressed they wanted tangible outcomes from this relationship, something they could see results or a
product of. Without disclosing the details about Public Scholarship’s philosophy, it is important to realize that CPs were anxious to take ownership of the research once it is completed. Public Scholarship is intended to belong to the public; inherent in the philosophy is the essential act of delivering the research to the community that needs it.

**Question 4**

**How can research serve to break down barriers (institutional, organizational etc.) and encourage collaboration across institutional barriers?**

I left this question as broad as possible to allow participants to explore the possibilities, to consider both local and global applications. Could Public Scholarship really be used to solve bigger problems? I wanted to know their thoughts.

One of the first responses included the consideration of third world countries and being able to conduct research to help benefit relief efforts, “where there isn’t time to work on being a hiker since they are so focused on being lifeguards.” This same CP continued, “It is hard to sift through multiple cluster indicators, and specialized research can be helpful or donor research for a lot of different organizations, the kind of projects used for multiple organizations.”

Others went local and wanted to learn about consumption behaviors of their community in order to get information about where messaging needs to go in social media, local news stations, etc. They talked about how Spokane and Cheney and the Spokane Valley are three completely different areas, so targeted
research for those who use their services would be beneficial to their organization. This response was much more focused than the broader goal of gathering information on third world countries. The effect that Public Scholarship can have locally, nationally and around the world has so much more potential than even I thought was possible.

The other focus group took a different spin on this question and discussed leaving Spokane to get PhD’s, competition between nonprofits and agency integration. This discussion was much more focused on local barriers and collaboration.

Specifically, one CP stated, “We as nonprofits think we are competing for the same dollar, but are we? Grant funders want to fund something new and innovative, organizations are stuck with creating programs to get the money. Why can’t they fund what is already working?” Others chimed in and agreed with this statement. If this is the hot button issue, then this is the issue we need to work on solving. The question remains: Are agencies competing for the same dollar? One CP said, “we are connected but not seen as you want.” She added that some CPs work together to help the community while others have similar services and are competing for the same federal grants and opportunities to serve the needs of people. There has to be a better way to serve people, and Public Scholarship may be the key to bridging the gap that CPs face daily.

‘Interagency relationships’ was a topic that was brought up more than once and is an interesting idea of an organic partnership. The logistics weren’t entirely clear, but the intention was to create information sharing, consistency and
best practices that organizations can use to better serve their community. In a way, this sounded like the concept that formed the Inland Northwest Service Learning Partnership back in 2000. But, again, the main concern with interagency collaboration expressed by the CPs was the lack of time, finances and limited resources to create such a plan. This topic was spread to a more national level instead of just local nonprofits. To really sit down and construct a best practice for a chain of organization would be time consuming yes, but also beneficial to the agency. Just as INSLP saved time and allowed for sharing of resources between several higher education institutions in the Spokane area, interagency collaboration on research could benefit the larger community without having to compete for limited resources.

A concern about limited time seems to be the biggest barrier in all aspects of this project, and if a graduate student can help alleviate some of that concern, then Public Scholarship could benefit any community.
Chapter 5-Conclusion

Summary

After conducting and analyzing the focus group data, results indicated a gap between current practices and CP readiness to conduct research partnerships aligned with public scholarship philosophy and practice. And yet, by interpreting dialogue in conjunction with examining the wordles created, the CPs revealed that research would make a positive impact on their organizations and the lives of the community. Learning about Public Scholarship, even indirectly, allowed for the CPs to think beyond their experiences with service-learning and grasp what could really happen in a partnership that took it to the next level.

Community Partners do not have time or financial and other resources to conduct research that could be beneficial to them. By expanding existing perceptions of the benefits of research (i.e., becoming “hikers”) and joining forces with local Universities, the resulting partnerships will benefit CPs and their organizations, the community, the students and the Universities that invest in this new way of doing things.

To transition from continually being lifeguards and rescuing people already in difficult situations, Public Scholarship offers the opportunity for CPs to be hikers. Students and CPs can work together to create a relationship that empowers the organizations with research and allows them to continue their work with the community. By becoming hikers and looking to use research to prevent problems from occurring, instead of continually reacting to situations, the community partners will be able to better aid the needs of the population they
serve. This will create a cycle of less people to serve, keeping the population out of the river of turmoil. With less people to serve, the community partners can have even more time for preventative measures while giving more service to those who still need it.

Public Scholarship allows the research to be owned by the CPs as well as the students. It is a mutually constructed project and there is so much opportunity created within research for communities. The potential is, as one CP noted, “limitless.” Research is timely, costly, and needs to be done accurately. When CPs take advantage of the resources available from local Universities and graduate students, the time, cost and worry about being done correctly, decreases considerably. Eastern’s Public Scholarship Certificate should include a three-quarter design to allow for stronger partnerships as the research progresses. This would benefit the students going through the program, allowing them to make connections with the CP’s and build lasting relationships, the CP’s would have the data they need and want to help their organization, and the community would have a successful individual and organization that is making strides to better help the people they serve.

If we take into consideration what the literature review and focus groups identified as opportunities, we combine what we know from the national perspective with what we learned from the local dialogue. The literature review revealed practice-gaps as well as many strategies for developing a successful Public Scholarship program. Notably, CBE must adopt, for both undergraduate and graduate programs, a feminist pedagogical approach. This is especially true
for CBR or Public Scholarship, as the essential collaboration with the community that feminist pedagogy demands creates authentic research opportunities driven by community-expressed “needs” or opportunities (as opposed to privileging course-based learning objectives). Feminist scholars who conduct CBE have given us the blueprint for taking their “activist” model with a focus on “social justice” and undermining inequities to the realm of research that helps CPs be more proactive and prevention-based about their work.

In addition to the intentional adoption of feminist pedagogy, a viable and thriving Public Scholarship program must consider moving beyond the “need based” approach and adopting something more like the ABCD or asset-based approach to determining research project goals. This asset-based approach will also help to prevent the view that higher education institutions know more about what’s best for the communities they reside in than those who live in those communities and have a history of working with existing assets to solve problems.

Finally, the literature review indicated that CBR is too often based on stereotypes of communities and may further stigmatize those communities already impacted by power imbalances. The ideal Public Scholarship program would need to insist on partnerships founded on equality and true collaboration with community members. Many newer qualitative methods would help to resolve this, especially those that privilege the community voice through narrative inquiries. Graduate students could actually choose methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials that honor the expertise of community voices. While Eastern
Washington University is well-versed in community partnerships, the Public Scholarship program at the graduate level needs to underscore how easily existing relationships can slip from true collaboration and even create new power imbalances that interfere with partnering on an equal basis.

From the focus groups, CPs discussed how they were not always satisfied with service-learning partnerships, especially because they often seemed designed with student-benefit in mind (as opposed to mutual benefit with the community). CPs were, of course, most concerned about the time commitment of building new partnerships based on research projects. Thus, before a Public Scholarship program can be launched full-scale, CPs would need assurances that “research that matters” will actually save time in the long run and change the nature of their work from 24-7 lifeguard services.

Additionally, CPs indicated that the quarter system is not ideal for long-range partnerships. By scheduling the Public Scholarship program across three quarters, and perhaps inviting CPs into the process as early as first quarter activities, the opportunities for CBR partnerships increase. An ideal public scholarship program running across three quarters could take this form: the first quarter would be to introduce students to program philosophy and practice; the second quarter would be to identify and collaborate with CPs on research design and goals; and the third quarter would be for conducting and evaluate research before public dissemination of results.

The focus group discussions also indicated that a vital Public Scholarship program in the region requires CPs and the higher education institutions to learn
new ways of establishing and sustaining authentic partnerships. Not all partnerships are successful, and not all partnerships can be sustained beyond the parties involved in any given academic year. Sustainable, authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships take work, and any successful public scholarship program will require an intentional commitment to creating something worthwhile.

The transformation from Service-learning to Public Scholarship is similar to the transformation from undergraduate to graduate students. An undergraduate service-learner benefits the community by helping full-time lifeguards fish people out of the river while achieving academic goals. However, graduate students are ambitious, next-level thinkers and go-getters. The research and help they could provide through public scholarship not only will allow CPs to focus on what they are already doing, but will greatly improve the community that they are working with. In the end, that is what we all want, to leave the community better than we came into it.

**Future Research**

For future research on Public Scholarships, it would be imperative to understand partnerships more in depth. As depicted in my results, partnerships can either be viewed as good or bad, and learning what creates a good, positive experience and what creates a negative experience would be useful when partnering a community agency with the University.

Also, after reviewing case studies on Public Scholarship, finding out the correct power balance between CPs and the University before conducting the
research would be useful. This was the biggest issue I saw most often in the readings, and it is possible the focus groups I conducted revealed some ambivalence about the power balance between higher education institutions and community agencies. It is important that a power balance be negotiated early on, even as the design of the research is being discussed. Finding the most appropriate balance of power for the partnership in question would decrease the likelihood of a negative experience and increase the ability to perform Public Scholarship to its full potential.

Future research needs to locate ways to involve more CPs in the process of learning about new research opportunities. Their time is limited, and they are hesitant to learn about the value of research (or hiking upstream) when they are so busy being lifeguards. Many of the CPs who participated in this research were not familiar with graduate level research. However, many of them were very interested in advancing their own understanding and, perhaps, enrolling in graduate studies themselves. Future research should consider additional methods for incentivizing CPs to participate and creating opportunities for CPs to advance their own understanding of graduate level research on behalf of the communities they serve.
Appendix A: 2015 Survey of Community Partners

1) What is your organization's area of focus?

2) How does your organization define "research?"

3) What is your organization's experience with research?

4) Why is research exciting for your organization / what would make research exciting for your organization?

5) What does your organization see as the biggest challenge to doing good research?

6) Ideally, what would your organization's research accomplish?

2015 Survey of Graduate Students

1) What is your program of study?

2) How do you define "research?"

3) What is your experience with research?

4) Why is research exciting for you / what would make research exciting for you?

5) What do you see as the biggest challenge to doing good research?

6) Ideally, what would your research accomplish?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What organizations were major sponsors of the event?</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you choose to attend this event?</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you like the most about the event?</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you like the least about the event?</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you attend another event like this one in the future?</td>
<td>Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the event met your expectations?</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the event informative and engaging?</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate the quality of the event's content and delivery?</td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel that your time was well spent at the event?</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you pay the admission fee?</td>
<td>Fee Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel that the event's value justified the admission fee?</td>
<td>Fee Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend the event to a friend or colleague?</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think could be improved at future events?</td>
<td>Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What feedback do you have for event organizers?</td>
<td>Organizer Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to attend another event like this one in the future?</td>
<td>Future Attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B: 2015 CP Survey responses**
Appendix C: Community Engagement Grant

Community Engagement Mini-Grant Application

Name of Applicants: Patricia Chantrill & Amber Johnson Title/Department: Associate Professor & Graduate Research Assistant

Phone Number: 509.599.5359 (cell) and 509.951.2949 (cell) Email: pchantrill@ewu.edu and amberjohnson@eagles.ewu.edu

Project Title: Expanding Community Partner Perceptions of Public Scholarship Potential

Project Type: Community Based Research

Proposals must be submitted to the Office of Community Engagement in Showalter 115. No more than 3 pages.

I. Project Plan

II. Connection to EWU Strategic Priorities:

○ Student Success: For example, how many students will this project impact and in what ways? How does this project strengthen connections between students and faculty members?

○ Innovation

○ Community Engagement

○ Visibility

III. Dissemination Plan

IV. Project Timeline (Dates or timeframe of the project)

V. Evaluation Plan: Include project learning outcomes and assessment strategies (pre-post-tests, reflection papers and rubrics)

VI. Budget

Allowable Expenses Include:

○ Travel
○ Student Workers
○ Photocopying Costs
○ Project Materials

- Books and Resource Materials
○ Refreshments for trainings or community meetings lasting ≥ 4 hours

11-02-2015

Applicant’s Signature

Date

Department Chair’s/Academic Leader’s Signature

Date

Dean’s Signature

Date
THE PROCESS:

- **Project Plan**

  The project is designed to establish research-based partnerships with community partners* and collaborate toward innovative, evidenced-based approaches to solving social problems.

  We conducted an online survey during the spring of 2015; the survey of Community Partners (CPs)* revealed that many participants had limited exposure to and experience with the kind of large-scale, problem-solving research that Public Scholarship achieves. While respondents readily articulated the goals of service-learning and volunteerism, their appreciation for the benefits of research extended only as far as “market surveys” and an updated inventory of client needs. With the advent of a robust Public Scholarship program, we believe CPs could begin to imagine using research to solve large-scale, chronic, and systemic problems they confront on a daily basis in their own work.

  This phase of our plan includes conducting a series of focus groups with CPs, divided according to social services or programs aligned with specific demographics (i.e., youth services, food banks, women’s shelters, veterans, etc.) We will design and conduct the focus groups using a pre-test perception instrument, followed by video-based programming, followed by the focused discussion, and concluding with a post-test of perceptions. We will then analyze CP responses for insight into how EWU graduate student research would benefit the community even as it expands CP and graduate student perspectives on the promise of Public Scholarship. This phase will help us to introduce the concept of Public Scholarship and its growth at Eastern Washington University, especially as we hope to offer CPs the opportunity to expand existing perceptions about the role of research in their work.

  Patricia Chantrill is the faculty lead and has conducted a variety of focus groups, both on- and off-campus. She is also responsible for developing the Public Scholarship Certificate at EWU. Amber Johnson is the graduate research assistant; she is also a skilled group leader especially trained in focus group management and evaluation. She has dedicated her thesis research to evaluating CP perceptions of Public Scholarship and promoting the new Certificate. Together, our plan is to help to change the face of and appreciation for Public Scholarship on campus and in our surrounding communities, expanding the role of existing Community Partnerships into fully-fledged research partnerships. Thus, this grant would fund research into a specific Public Scholarship project even as it serves to develop future research opportunities and promote Public Scholarship in the region. We look forward to increasing research-based and mutually beneficial relationships between Eastern Washington University and the community.

  * We understand “Community Partners” (CPs) to be representatives of non-profit and/or government agencies dedicated to serving the needs of diverse populations for social justice and sustainability. Our list of CPs comes from the EWU Office of Community Engagement.

- **Connection to EWU Strategic Priorities:**

  a. **Student Success** For example, how many students will this project impact and in what ways? How does this project strengthen connections between students and faculty members?

    i. **This project will initially impact the students connected to it (research assistant, transcribers, recorders, etc.) After establishing the Public Scholarship Certificate, it will impact all graduate students interested in developing their public scholarship credentials and taking their research skills to the streets. By creating research triads of trained and motivated community partners, graduate students will have a
ready resource to tap when co-designing their public research agenda. This project will lead to sustainable, mutually-beneficial connections between graduate student researchers and the community during and after completion of graduate coursework.

ii. Research also verifies the strengthening of ties between students and faculty who partner on behalf of community-based projects. This project is designed to encourage and develop collaborative research triads consisting of faculty, graduate students, and community partners. The connection between student and faculty will be essential to developing and nurturing the connection with the community partner, each of us bringing our expertise to bear on the problems identified in concert with CPs. Additionally, graduate students who participate in community-based research are more likely to complete their coursework and defend a thesis within a 2 year timeframe.

b. Innovation: This project creates partnerships based on the principle of research-as-service to the community. By returning to the founding principles of Public Education and Public Scholarship at a Public Baccalaureate Institution, we seek to collaborate toward innovative solutions based in rigorous, meaningful research. Community partners, we’ve learned, are very busy people. They haven’t had the time or opportunity to imagine the potential of research in the larger scope of actually solving community-wide problems. This project seeks to expand understanding and deepen commitment to collaborative research for the good of the community. The potential for community benefits are significant, lasting and generative. These partnerships strengthen Eastern’s contribution to the region and offer students, faculty partners, and community members a sense of unity, accomplishment and pride in knowing that we are contributing to a better future for all.

c. Community Engagement: We are encouraging CPs to develop an informed and engaged voice in the process of solving problems through research. Public Scholarship engages all members of the partnership as allies in solving problems. Ultimately, these research-based partnerships will invest also graduate students in their local communities, establish their role as partners-in-scholarship, and help them to envision a community where their research addresses significant and tangible issues.

d. Visibility: Graduate research will enjoy more relevance and visibility off-campus. Graduate students would have the opportunity to use what they’ve learned in their coursework to benefit their community, participating in partnerships that increase the prestige of the institution even as they establish new connections for future projects. This project would help to construct a scholarship bridge from the community to the campus while increasing student competence as scholars and creating professional connections with community leaders. The university would be respected for allocating its graduate research skills and energy for the benefit of stronger, healthier communities.

• Dissemination Plan

• Project Timeline (Dates or time frame of the project)
  ○ Late Fall 2015: Schedule Focus Groups and Contact/confirm participants
    - Currently creating a list of community partners to invite to focus groups
· Forming focus group tasks i.e. pre-test/post-test, video presentation, and discussion prompts
· Recruit and assign recorders and transcribers for focus groups

· Evaluation Plan Include project learning outcomes and assessment strategies (pre-post-tests, reflection papers and rubrics)
  a. Pre-test of perceptions of research among Community Partners
  b. Play research/service learning video
  c. Post-test of perceptions of research among Community Partners
  d. Analyze transcriptions and evaluate findings
  e. Share findings at Community Engagement Institute, with PS certificate faculty members, thesis chair members, and the Office of Community Engagement

· Budget
  1. Five 2-hour focus groups require $30 each ($15 per hour) for student assistance in recording responses, $20 in refreshments for participants, and $10 each in photocopying materials and supplies = $300
  2. Transcription assistance (student workers, 10 hours at $10 an hour) = $100
  3. Travel and parking fees (at Riverpoint Center) = $100

· Allowable Expenses Include:
  a. Travel
  b. Books and Resource Materials
  c. Student Workers
  d. Photocopying Costs
  e. Refreshments for trainings or community meetings lasting 2+ hours
Appendix D: Change of Protocol

Institutional Review Board
for Human Subjects Research
Application for Change of Protocol

Principal Investigator/Title/Department/Address/Phone
Amber Johnson/Masters of Science in Communication (MSC) graduate student
Communication Studies COM 229 (509) 951-2940 (call)

Responsible Project Investigator/Department
(qualified faculty or staff supervisor if PI is a student)
Patricia Lucero Chamtrill/Communication Studies

Title of Project: HS-4829 Community Partner Research Perceptions

Project approval date: 05/21/2015
Anticipated termination date: 08/01/2016

Funding:
Non-funded _ x Internal funding ___ External funding ___
Funding status: proposal in preparation ___ pending agency decision ___ funded ___ x
Funding Agency (if applicable): __________
Grant or Contract Number: __________

EWU Office of Community Engagement Mini Grant ($500) awarded November 20th (award letter attached).

Briefly describe and explain the reason(s) for the change(s) to the protocol.

When we conducted surveys of community partners last spring [HS-4829], we discovered some confusion from our respondents about the nature and objectives of graduate-level research opportunities. We stepped back and reconsidered our objectives for the research, and then we stumbled across a quote from Educator Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970): “We, as human beings, are fundamentally charged with producing and transforming reality together.” This inspired us and helped us to realize that, first, we needed to gather community partners together to exchange ideas about research and conduct a focus group regarding potential research projects related to their non-profit agencies.

Does the new protocol alter the level of risk for the subjects or change the subject population to a more vulnerable one?

This change in protocol—from online surveys to focus groups—does not alter the original design significantly. We will need to ensure participant confidentiality vs. anonymity. We will provide consent forms prior to the focus group and offer all participants the opportunity to decline full participation. We will provide information to all participants regarding who will have access to the data collected, how it will be maintained, when it will be disposed of, and our assurance that data will be protected on a thumb drive owned by the Principal Investigator. We will require all participants to consent to our confidentiality agreement such that everyone will need to agree to keep the discussion and identity of participants in confidence. We do not think the risk to participants is increased, nor is their vulnerability heightened relative to the reward of a successful focus group that generates rich narratives and offers participants a chance to share ideas amongst their peers.

The information provided above is accurate and the project will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal, State and University regulations.

Signature, Principal Investigator: __________________________ Date: 04/01/2016

Recommendations and Action

Faculty Sponsor (for student) ___________________________ Date: 04/01/2016 Approve/Disapprove: APPROVE

Dept Research Committee or Dept Chair ___________________________ ___________________________

Institutional Review Board ___________________________

Subject to the following conditions:

Period of renewed approval from ___________________________ through ___________________________
Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form: 2016 Community Partner Research Development Focus Groups

Principal Investigator: Amber Johnson, Graduate Student, Communication Studies Department, MSC Program. 509.951.2949. Responsible Project Investigator: Patricia Chantrill.

Purpose and Benefits

This focus group is designed to encourage Community Partners of Regional non-profit agencies to discuss and consider a research partnership with Eastern Washington University as part of the Public Scholarship Graduate Certificate.

Procedures

The focus groups (2) involve no more than 5 participants each, last for one hour each. Dates include Tuesday, April 19th from 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday, April 20th from 5:30-6:30pm. A sample of the questions to be asked is attached. Participants are free not to answer any questions which they find objectionable. No audio or video recording is involved. the recorder in the room will not transcribe verbatim conversations. NOTE: Washington State law provides that private conversations may not be recorded, intercepted, or divulged without permission of the individual(s) involved.

Risk, Stress or Discomfort

Risks have been minimized to the extent that no questions involve sensitive or personal topics. Participants may opt out of answering any question without penalty. Should any invasion of privacy occur, participants will be directed to contact the Principal Investigator for help with any concerns.

Other Information

Your participation in this study is confidential (not anonymous), since the Principal Investigators will know your identity. We do ask that you do not reveal the identity of other participants in the Focus Group after the group has concluded. Although we will protect your confidentiality and will direct the other members of the focus group to maintain the confidentiality of the other members, we cannot guarantee they will do so. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions during the focus group you are free to not answer without offering a reason. You are also free to withdraw from participation in the research at any time without penalty.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protection Administrator, at (509) 359-6567 or rgalm@ewu.edu.

The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this activity (study, research, etc. as appropriate). I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I give permission to record, intercept, and/or divulge conversations (as appropriate) in which I participate during this focus group. I understand that by signing this form I am not waiving my legal rights. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this form.

Signature of Participant

Date

spring 2016
Focus Group Questions

1. What comes to mind when I say “service-learning?” “Public Scholarship?” “Partnership?” “Graduate Students”? [WORD ASSOCIATION to warm up]

2. [Worksheet 1] What words/descriptors come to mind regarding “research” for your organization?

3. Watch Hiker Video, take notes on provided paper. What questions/concerns occur to you while watching the video? [See Catholic Charities and the realities of poverty....from lifeguards to hikers by Dr. Rob McCann, Catholic Charities of Spokane. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EQL6OVmgAA]

4. Which of the words on the word cloud (produced from Worksheet 1 responses) refer to “lifesaver” activity? Which refer to “hikers”?

5. What are the top priorities for you in terms of the research resources a partnership with Eastern might offer?

6. What are some of the possible obstacles you might encounter when working with the university to conduct your research?

7. In your view, how would the work of your organization and the research Eastern graduate students could provide enhance/improve our shared community?

8. How can research serve to break down barriers (institutional, organizational, etc.) and encourage collaboration across institutional and organizational boundaries?
FOCUS GROUP WORKSHEET

1. What words/descriptors come to mind regarding "research" for your organization?

2. Watch Hiker Video, take notes below. What questions/concerns/ideas occur to you while watching the video? [See Catholic Charities and the realities of poverty...from lifeguards to hikers Dr. Rob McCann. Catholic Charities of Spokane. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25Q1660VmgA]
References


https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/05/10/colleges-placing-increasing-importance-programs-promoting


Vita

Author: Amber J. Johnson

Place of Birth: Spokane, Washington

Undergraduate Schools Attended: Pfeiffer University Department of Communications
Misenheimer, NC 2009-2011

Eastern Washington University Department of Communication Studies
Cheney, WA 2012-2014

Degrees Awarded: Bachelor of Arts, 2014, Eastern Washington University

Honors and Awards: Certificate of Public Scholarship, 2016, EWU
Office of Community Engagement Mini-Grant Recipient, EWU 2016

Professional Experience: Bodily Injury Specialist II, 2016, Seattle, WA
No Fault Medical Adjuster, 2015, Liberty Lake, WA