



Closing the Loop: Community Engaged Pedagogy in Business Courses

Raven's Den Project
Interim Report

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Executive Summary

Motivated by a desire to learn more about the impact on our community partners of adopting a community service learning approach to pedagogy, this report conveys the results of a follow-up exercise for 45 student projects, covering four semesters. With a relatively small sample size, based on a 49% response rate, our findings need to be considered cautiously. Yet, we believe they provide sufficient insight to merit an interim report.

Through an online survey we asked our community partners to comment on:

- The quality of their experience with our students
- Their thoughts on the quality and content of the final report students prepared
- Whether they considered the experience to be ‘worthwhile’, e.g., good value for their time spent
- Whether any of the recommendations made by our students had been implemented by the company or organization.

Of the 22 partners who responded, only 11 chose to self-identify; that sub-sample was made up of eight for-profit firms (72% of those respondents who chose to self-identify) and the remaining three were not-for-profit organizations.

Community partners’ responses ranged from being disappointed and feeling ‘nothing of value’ was received from their interaction with the students, through expressions of gratitude for the work done by students, to complements on the quality of our undergraduate program. Some firms and organizations had already implemented changes based on the recommendations made by students, while others were planning to implement changes in the near future. One firm had already experienced an increase in sales leads as a result of implementing student recommendations.

In the pages which follow we review the academic literature on the use of community service learning within business schools. We describe our own approach and present the results of our follow-up exercise in more detail. We discuss a number of issues related to using community service learning and make some recommendations, including directing our readers to a template for constructing memoranda of understanding and criteria for screening potential community partners. We emphasize the need for educators to be aware of the additional time requirements of this pedagogical approach and its potential impact on tenure and promotion decisions. Finally, we share some practical tips based on our own experiences.

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Introduction

This study was motivated primarily by a desire to ‘close the loop’ in terms of our learning about and understanding of the impact of using community service learning (CSL) (or community based pedagogy in our home institution’s lexicon) in our undergraduate teaching. Over a number of years and across a variety of courses, we had implemented projects ranging in duration and topic in order to facilitate a ‘practice’ perspective for the students in our Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of International Business programs. We had received lots of feedback from students, in the form of anecdotal accounts and more structured feedback exercises, and we had some feedback from community partners, but mostly the latter was limited to student performance during the actual project and anticipated benefits should the organization adopt the recommendations made by the student teams. We had very little information on the impact our CSL projects made on our community partners over a longer term. This seemed like an important gap – if CSL is truly meant to meet the needs of both parties then we needed to know more about its impact.

As highlighted by the Canadian Association for Community Service Learning (2007, p. 5), “An ideal partnership requires clear, open communication between all parties; clearly defined expectations that are understood by all; and, a willingness to listen and accommodate according to the needs of all those involved. Additionally, partnerships are enhanced by reflective observations shared with all, in a setting where such reflections create the opportunity for understanding and change.” We felt we got a start on this process when we invited community partners to class to hear presentations, but we needed to do more to determine the real impact of CSL on the organizations that work with us. For example, if our students re-design their websites and social media strategies (Hettche & Clayton, 2013), are community organizations able to maintain them? If students implement an online advertising strategy, does it result in new business being generated for a small business? We could find very little previous research that took a short (3 to 6 months) or longer term (1 year or more) approach to assessing the impact of adopting a CSL approach to teaching on community partners.

A proposal was made by the university that the lead author should ‘pitch’ for funding during an event organized to celebrate university-community relations associated with collaborative projects. Adopting the format of the popular *Dragon’s Den* television program on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network, various researchers appealed to a panel of expert judges for seed funding. Subsequent to a successful pitch, the lead author was approached by the Canadian Association for Community Service Learning (CACSL) with an offer to augment that funding and share resources based on previous research efforts. The authors gratefully acknowledge the funding and support offered by both Carleton University and the Canadian Association for Community Service Learning. We hope that the initial results of our research presented here will be of benefit to both organizations, to educators and to future researchers.

In the pages which follow we review the business and broader literatures, identifying the theoretical foundation for CSL pedagogical approaches and highlighting examples of how CSL has been applied within business schools. Then, we discuss the context for our own study and present the results of our research efforts to date. Following the discussion of our results we conclude with some recommendations.

Literature Review

We begin our review of the literature with the definition of terms – what do we mean by ‘community service learning’? We then discuss the theoretical foundation for adopting community service learning as a pedagogical approach and follow this with a discussion of the reasons for adopting CSL in the classroom and benefits that previous research has determined can result.

What is Community Service Learning?

The Canadian Association for Community Service Learning (CACSL) defines community service learning (CSL) as “an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities. Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial” (CACSL, no date). From our review of the literature, it appears as though there are multiple terms used to discuss similar although not completely identical pedagogical approaches to incorporating some form of applied experience within university courses. Our home base, Carleton University, where the term ‘community engaged pedagogy’ tends to be used more than ‘community service learning’, is a prime example of this. At Carleton, the most common forms of community-based experiential learning opportunities are co-operative education placements (30%) and practica (24%), followed by studio/workshop courses (14%) and course projects (14%) (Andrée and Jordan, 2010). Through the university’s Student Experience Office, students may also participate in volunteer activities, many involving only a single day of ‘service’, but still labelled ‘community service learning’ (Carleton University, no date). Thus, within the overall university context, these CSL student experiences include both paid and unpaid work, with community groups, charities, non-profit organizations, various levels of government and private sector businesses both large and small. While laudably offering students a range of opportunities, these multiple and various forms of gaining practical experience make it difficult to conduct research, where the comparison of like with like is preferable.

Although previous researchers have noted that in some applications of CSL students are expected to volunteer an additional 10 to 20 hours with the community partner organization beyond the scope of the CSL project (Cadwallader, Atwong & Lebard, 2013), we would argue along with McIntyre and colleagues (2005) that volunteer opportunities differ from CSL activities. In CSL, the service learning experience is designed to aid in the comprehension of the course material being taught (Davis, 2010), typically incorporates reflection activities (Bingle and Hatcher, 1996, cited by Holtzman, Stewart & Barr, 2008), and facilitates “‘deep learning’ in which students can apply concepts studied in the classroom to real-life situations” (Holtzman, Stewart & Barr, 2008, p. 7). This may not be the case with volunteer opportunities and thus labelling volunteer activities as community service learning can be misleading both for students and researchers. Cadwallader, Atwong and Lebard (2013, p. 138) advocate for ‘community-based learning’, which they suggest might be a more successful application of the CSL idea for business and specifically marketing classes, saying, “We embrace a key component of the traditional CS&SL [community service & service learning] approach that directly applies course concepts and theories to benefit nonprofit organizations (NPOs) but removes the volunteer requirement and the service-learning reflection.” This again is different from the CACSL definition and from what we do. Our students work with small businesses, local franchises, community groups including student groups, sports teams and nonprofit organizations. Further, assignments often include a reflection on ‘what I have learned’, which may elicit responses linked to technical skills (e.g., running Google AdWords campaigns), soft skills (e.g., communicating with a board of directors) and improved industry and career knowledge (e.g., discovering the important of relationship marketing skills in the ‘death care’ industry).

The key characteristics of CSL identified by CACSL which would also apply to our pedagogical approach include:

- *Service links to academic content and standards, and is appropriate to student learning goals.* In our case, the interaction between students and community partners is seen less as ‘service’ and more as a form of consultation. The need to link the experience to academic learning goals is reinforced by the assurance of learning process required for continuing accreditation of the School of Business by AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)¹.
- *Involves collaboration between faculty/staff, students and community organizations to determine and meet real, defined community needs.* In our teaching, we must also ensure that community partner organizations meet the requirements of third-parties with whom we also collaborate to gain access to their learning tools, software and funding (such as the Google Online Marketing Challenge or Hootsuite University).
- *Reciprocal in nature, benefiting both the community and the service providers by combining a service experience with a learning experience.* While our primary focus may be on the benefits which accrue to our students and community partners, we are also concerned with maintaining and augmenting the reputation of the School of Business and the University where we teach.
- *Integrates a strong reflective element in order to maximize meaningful learning.* As mentioned above, our reflective element is often less focused on the need for and benefits of civil society participation and more on how the experience enhanced students’ work-related skills and knowledge.
- *Can be used in any subject or program area so long as it is appropriate to identified learning and/or development goals.* Our experience covers teaching courses with diverse subject matter across the undergraduate program, from second to fourth year.

Thus, when we speak of using community engaged pedagogy or community service learning, what we are referring to is: *an educational approach that incorporates practical, hands-on experience in the community with intentional learning activities designed to meet specific learning objectives.* Depending on the course, project and mix of community partners, CSL may serve to enhance civic responsibility (McIntyre, Webb, Hite, 2005). It may also allow students to develop professional practice standards and values. We agree with Petkus (2000, p. 64) that “The basic spirit of service-learning lies in mutual benefit—not just for the organization served and the students but also for course instructors, the educational institution, and the community at large.” Further, we base our approach on the theoretical foundation explicated in the next section.

Theoretical foundation

Whether CSL is used in a business school, an arts faculty or professional social work program, the theoretical foundation for community service learning is frequently identified as Kolb’s (1981, 1984) experiential learning cycle. Kolb’s work is anchored in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget and the social psychology of Kurt Lewin (Hettche & Clayton, 2013; Petkus, 2000). Petkus (2000, p. 64) illustrates how classroom assignments in business schools, and in particular in marketing courses, can incorporate the four different learning activities that Kolb theorizes

¹ Gallagher and McGorry (2015) provide some guidance for educators working within the AACSB framework. The authors discuss how they used service learning within a capstone course as one method of assessing student learning outcomes.

are required for effective learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Petkus (2000, p. 64-5) explains the learning activities associated with each component of the learning cycle in this manner:

Concrete experience involves sensory and emotional engagement in some activity. Concrete experience evokes feeling. Reflective observation involves watching, listening, recording, discussing, and elaborating on the experience. This phase also involves making connections across experiences – whether service-learning oriented or not – but without necessarily integrating theories and concepts. Abstract conceptualization involves integrating theories and concepts into the overall learning process – this is the in-depth thinking phase of the cycle. Active experimentation is the doing phase, in which the student engages in a trial-and-error process in which the accumulation of sensory experience, reflection, and conceptualization is tested in a particular context. Active experimentation is the doing phase of the cycle.

Regardless of where a student starts, completion of all components is necessary for the most effective learning (cf. Holtzman, Stewart and Barr, 2008; Klink and Athaide, 2004). Thus, as we design CSL experiences for our courses, it is important to ensure that all stages of the cycle are included. Lectures and readings assigned for classroom discussion can provide the foundation for abstract conceptualization. Practical, skills-focused activities undertaken in conjunction with community partners allow for active experimentation and the accrual of concrete sensory experience. Students can “connect the content of their learning with the challenge of a real situation” (Simonet, 2008, p. 4). But as Petkus (2000) notes, it is the opportunity for reflection that links the direct, hands-on learning experience with abstract conceptualization. Through the keeping of individual journals, the use of written feedback exercises and instructor-led informal debriefing sessions in class (Mottner, 2010), students can be helped to consider the relevance of theory to practice and identify how their own understanding has developed. We thus side with Petkus (2000) and other educators who see incorporating reflection activities as an essential component of learning. Reflection is what distinguishes CSL from traditional volunteering (Klink and Athaide, 2004) and from consulting projects. We might further argue that it is reflection which actually helps educators achieve course and program learning objectives.

Reasons for and Benefits of Adopting a CSL Pedagogical Approach

In this section we consider reasons for adopting a CSL approach to pedagogy along with benefits realized. We have organized this discussion with reference to the four constituencies involved in CSL: students, faculty, the educational institute and the community. We do this simply to help organize and clarify, since often the goals associated with CSL span all four groups and the benefits received are a direct result of accomplishing those goals. For example, increased personal and social awareness on the part of students, increased student engagement and improved student retention could be considered both goals and benefits (Davis, 2010).

Students

Educators adopt a CSL approach to teaching for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons found in the literature focus on improving the learning experience of students, others on helping students develop specific skills and still others have more to do with students’ adjustment to the larger community. For example, Andréé and Jordan (2010) focus on the desire to enrich the student classroom experience. Zlotkowski (1996) argues that CSL offers the opportunity to further students’ technical skills, inter-cultural awareness and ethical sensitivity, while Simonet (2008, p. 2) argues that service learning, “enhances content-driven scholarship by focusing upon the application of knowledge to solve complex community problems. Students are able to integrate knowledge with experience.” McIntyre and colleagues (2005) note that all marketing faculty they surveyed, regardless of personal characteristics (e.g., faculty rank, time

tenured, gender, and level of education), university characteristics (e.g., AACSB accredited, size of institution) and whether they adopted a CSL approach, believed that CSL has positive student outcomes.

Andrews (2007, p. 19) notes that CSL is often proposed as a means “to address the perceived moral decline of college students,” and, in fact, this is the reason behind the initiation of ‘Campus Compact’: a coalition of 1,100 colleges and universities, primarily in the USA, focused on educating students for civic and social responsibility (Campus Contact, 2015). Holtzman and colleagues (2008, p. 9) use somewhat more gentle phrasing, suggesting that the goal of CSL is “to promote greater engagement of business students with the external social environment of business and to enhance their preparation in the areas of ethics and social responsibility.” Interestingly, McIntyre and colleagues (2005) suggest the ‘problem’ service learning may help to solve rests with an ‘elitist academy’, not students. Citing critiques of higher education in the US which focus on the “lack of curriculum relevance, lack of faculty commitment to teaching, and lack of responsiveness to broader public needs” (McIntyre, Webb and Hite, 2005, p. 35), they suggest CSL may be one way of overcoming such critiques.

Benefits to students of participating in a course that adopts a CSL approach include an enriched learning experience, greater engagement with their own learning, and the development of personal and interpersonal skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, leadership and communication skills, and the ability to work well with others (Eyler et al., 2001; Simonet, 2008; Zlotkowski, 1996). Students may experience a sense of both personal development (personal efficacy, moral development, leadership and communication skills), and social development (reducing stereotypes, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, social responsibility, commitment to community service, realizing that their knowledge can benefit others) (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda and Yee, 2000; Conway, Amel & Gerwein, 2009 Eyler et al., 2001; O’Hara, 2001).

Davis (2010) notes that previous researchers have argued that “CSL helps students retain more information learned in class, achieve higher course grades, and have greater satisfaction with the course (Astin & Sax, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Strage, 2001).” In reality, this is hard to assess since if we believe it to be true, we can’t ethically restrict the experience to only a few students in our classes in order to collect data and compare ‘participants’ with ‘non-participants’. However, when students are given the chance to choose between ‘live’ and potted cases, anecdotal evidence shows this to be true. Students in our classes who work with ‘real’ clients, rather than base their reports on secondary data sources, tend to achieve higher grades. Whether the result can be attributed to students working harder because they feel a moral obligation to the company/organization they are working with or because of other factors is difficult to say. However, as Simonet (2008, p. 6) contends, “learning is best when it truly matters to the individual, when he/she feels the material is authentic and important (Zull, 2002).” Studying ‘cases’ which summarize situations faced by businesses, a pedagogical approach used in many business classes, can only approximate the complexity of business practice in the real world (Zlotkowski, 1996); CSL gives students the opportunity to develop mastery of the material, link disciplinary constructs to the ‘real world’ and test their skills in the work place (Eyler et al., 2001; Simonet, 2008). Furthermore, “in Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee’s (2000) study of 433 students from 19 American post-secondary institutions, four students out of five (79.9%) students reported that the connections between their service and their course materials enabled them to provide a better quality service, and 82.8% reported that the service experience enhanced their understanding of the academic course material” (Davis, 2010, p. 3).

There is some evidence that CSL has a positive influence on careers after university, since “students have a better understanding of the ‘real world’ and they are better able to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in their university courses to their future careers (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001)” (Davis, 2010, p. 2). Working with community partners allows students to augment their professional networks and may provide valuable job leads and references (McIntyre, Webb, Hite, 2005). In our own experience, we see the opportunity to obtain feedback from industry, not just from faculty, as a major benefit. CSL provides

the opportunity for students to develop client interaction skills: drawing out information essential to problem definition, learning how to ensure mutual understanding and goal setting, project management skills, especially establishing realistic scope and timeline for delivering on promises, presenting to a client and dealing with critical feedback as well as praise. Business students need to learn these skills if they are to be successful in their chosen careers. Simonet (2008, p. 1) suggests that “upon graduation, the most involved students tend to be more confident, socially adept, and versatile in applying creative solutions to complex problems,” concluding that “Many student reports reveal that they found the service-learning experience satisfying and meaningful (Keup, 2005; Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Grey et al., 1998)” (Simonet, 2008, p. 6). With respect to business students in particular, Mottner (2010, p. 242-243) suggests that participation in service learning projects was effective in terms of “determining future career paths, gaining confidence in the student’s ability to interact successfully with a client (partner), appreciation and understanding of other cultures, life-styles, political perspectives, and social conditions besides those they had previously encountered.” Our own experiences support this. In particular, student feedback collected after the completion of CSL projects with a non-profit cemetery indicated that many students had not previously considered careers in the funeral/death-care industry, but at least some students now saw it as a viable career alternative.

Educators

When it came to the benefits to educators of adopting a CSL pedagogical approach, we found very little discussion in the literature. While the ‘downside’ has received some attention (e.g., CSL involves additional work, much of which goes unrecognized and unrewarded), only one study, focused on faculty perceptions of CSL, discussed benefits to educators in any depth. Based on their survey of faculty in the US, McIntyre, Webb and Hite (2005) concluded that faculty motivation to adopt a CSL approach to teaching was first and foremost focused on anticipated benefits for students. While factors such as institutional support for CSL were considered to be ‘facilitators’, faculty did not believe that involvement in CSL would be rewarded by their universities, particularly in terms of being considered during tenure and promotion decisions. Perhaps this is why McIntyre and colleagues (2005) see adopting a CSL approach to teaching to be a form of community service in and of itself. Presumably, teaching more engaged students is more interesting and rewarding. The contacts we make within community partner organizations expand and enrich our own networks. In some instances, this may lead to consulting work, facilitate access to research sites or funding for research, and/or identify new guest speakers for future courses.

Educational Institutions

Simonet (2008, p. 4, 6), in his review of the student retention literature, identifies as a common theme

the notion that socially active and academically alive environments encourage the participation of the students, which in turn, establishes a more inclusive and co-creative curriculum. By being actively involved in their learning experience – as opposed to passively receiving it – the students view the material as relevant, interesting, and absorbing. They develop a sense of competence in using the knowledge and are able to broaden, build, and connect their understanding through application, dialogue, and reflection... By feeling academically competent—either through objective indicators or subjective experiences – the student will be confident in continuing their studies.

To the extent that participating in CSL activities assists students to feel more connected with each other, with faculty, and with their studies, it may assist students to develop greater persistence and lead to improved retention.

This argument is echoed in the response of Carleton’s Community Engaged Pedagogy Group (no date) to the university’s Academic Plan: “Community-engaged pedagogy can contribute to improving the student

experience by making programs more engaging for students. This is likely to lead to improvements in the University's retention rate, and improve our graduation and retention goals. It also contributes the reputation of the University which will facilitate student recruitment." Further, it is often seen as part of the university's mission to "educate students intellectually, morally, and for good citizenship" (Holtzman, Stewart and Barr, 2008, p. 7); CSL is one means used to accomplish these goals.

It was interesting to note that although there is now a fairly extensive literature on the use of CSL within business schools, none of these researchers speak specifically about the benefit to a business school of being more integrated with its community. While in the next section we talk about CSL changing students' stereotypical beliefs, it seems somewhat naïve not to suggest that stereotypes might exist in the larger community about the extent to which the 'profit motive' drives business students and faculty. Having students work to resolve issues faced by charities and non-profit organizations may allow these organizations to experience first-hand the community-orientation and generosity of our students.

Benefits to the larger community and community partners

Community partners benefit from their engagement with CSL students by being able to access skills their organization doesn't possess (often linked to new technology), learning from the efforts of students (e.g., being able to assess the outcome of a Google Adwords campaign), obtaining a fresh approach to solving problems and even from the opportunity to 'try out' potential employees or volunteers. This can be of real benefit to small businesses as well as smaller community agencies, who often lack internal marketing capabilities and may not have the budget to contract these responsibilities out (McIntyre, Webb, Hite, 2005). Davis (2010) noted that, "a survey of the literature finds that CSL increases students' awareness of their community and its needs, helps change stereotypical beliefs, reduces ethnocentrism, and increases understanding of social and cultural diversity (Matthews & Zimmerman, 1999; Borden, 2007; Duffy et al., 2008)." To the extent that the mission of non-profit or charitable organizations aligns with these outcomes, they may see CSL as one means to achieve that mission.

Across a range of studies, service learning has been found to lead to pro-social behaviours including: increased social awareness, volunteerism and civic engagement (Berry and Workman, 2007; Prentice 2007; Walsh, 2002), intention to volunteer (Raman and Pashupati, 2002), intention to found a nonprofit organization (Pearson, 1999), and becoming more socially responsible and engaging in more moral actions (Lester et al, 2005). This would lead us to believe that in addition to the benefits experienced by specific community partners, the larger community benefits from the use of CSL as well.

There can also be a 'downside' for community partners. MacDonald (2009, p. 2) noted that "Many placements and projects are too short to produce significant outcomes or the reflection required in student learning. Consequently the cost to both the organization and the student exceeds the benefits."

How has CSL Been Applied in Business Schools?

The typical starting point for researchers seeking to review the CSL literature within the business discipline is Edward Zlotkowski's 1996 paper in the *Journal of Business Ethics* entitled, "Opportunity for All: Linking Service-Learning and Business Education." The general impression left by Zlotkowski's paper is that not much service learning was occurring within business schools, with the result that students suffered from a lack of awareness of the external environment in which business is conducted. A decade and a half later, Cadwallader, Atwong and Lebard (2013) noted that in the US, while CSL had grown in leaps and bounds, it had gained less traction in business schools. They identified potential reasons for this, such as:

- (1) students perceive CS&SL [community service and service learning] as less attractive than other teaching methods, such as case analyses, discussions, and internships (Karns 2005);
- (2) students

prefer courses that develop specific applied skills as well as interaction with industry representatives (Ainsworth and Morley 1995); (3) students find CS&SL time-consuming because of its requirement that they complete 10–20 hours of volunteer work not directly related to business or marketing (Kohls 1996); (4) students may not see the relevance of the service learning component, which requires individual reflection and journaling of the learning experience, to their education (Kolenko et al. 1996); and (5) faculty tend to choose the path of least resistance given that there is high risk (student rejection or dislike) and little or no reward in terms of promotion and tenure (McIntyre, Webb, and Hite 2005) (Cadwallader et al., 2013, p. 138).

McCarthy and Tucker (1999) similarly report that in spite of some positive perceptions of the benefits of CSL, business students can be less positive about courses that incorporate service learning components.

However, in our own review, we found that the business literature on CSL is now so large that we could focus just on the marketing discipline and still find sufficient guidance for our research. This may be because the marketing discipline offers the most appropriate environment for using service-learning pedagogy, as Easterling and Ruddell (1997) argue. Indeed, a range of marketing courses using CSL is discussed in the literature: social marketing (Domegan and Bringle, 2010), nonprofit marketing (Mottner, 2010) consumer behaviour (Petkus, 2000), personal selling (Hagenbuch, 2006), principles of marketing (Easterling & Ruddell, 1997; Klink and Athaide, 2004; Schwartz and Fontenot, 2007), strategic marketing (Gallagher and McGorry, 2015; Holtzman, Stewart and Barr, 2008), and advertising/promotion (Cook, 2008). In addition, we found very experienced CSL practitioners, such as Klink and Athaide (2004) who between them had supervised 120 CSL projects over a 10 year time period, and educators who had developed new courses specifically to integrate learning through service learning experiences (Metcalf, 2010).

It seems that courses focused on social or non-profit marketing are a ‘natural fit’ for CSL. Mottner (2010) described a service learning assignment from her non-profit marketing course that required student teams to complete a marketing project for a nonprofit community partner. The community partners for her class were described as “serving the common good and often chronically in need of marketing assistance” (Mottner, 2010, p. 232), and included political groups, health services, educational services, environmental causes and small grassroots arts organizations. Mottner (2010, p. 234) argues that one of the reasons CSL seems like a logical fit is that “Nonprofit marketing courses found in business colleges and programs tend to be electives (Mottner, 2005). Many of the students who enroll in these elective courses have self-selected... and are interested and disposed towards community service, serving the common good, or being civically engaged.”

While this may be true, it does not restrict CSL use to courses focused specifically on the non-profit sector. Holtzman and colleagues (2008) discuss how in a marketing capstone course (Strategic Marketing), students similarly worked in the not-for-profit sector, completing a marketing needs assessment for a non-profit economic development organization. Klink and Athaide worked exclusively with non-profit organizations in the Principles of Marketing course, noting that

Relative to for-profit organizations, nonprofit organizations are more receptive to students with limited marketing background because these organizations often are in demand of “volunteer” labor and are run by members that may not have formal marketing training. In short, placement of Principles of Marketing students at a nonprofit provides a significant opportunity for reciprocal learning—a key component of service learning—between the organization and students (2004, p. 145).

These authors called their approach “problem-based service learning, e.g., students serve as consultants solving problems confronting the nonprofits” (Klink and Athaid, 2004, p. 147). Participation in CSL

projects is voluntary, if students don't work with community organization, they evaluate a marketing plan for an existing product or service.

Cleary and Benson (1998, cited in McIntyre, Webb and Hite, 2005, p. 37) have identified five basic models of CSL, including: 1) independent or study group; 2) consulting; 3) partnership; 100% individual placement; and 5) optional placement. McIntyre's, Webb's and Hite's (2005) survey of marketing faculty revealed that the most commonly used CSL activities were independent/group student and consulting projects. "Students participating in the Independent or Group Study model are involved in an individual service experience related to a discipline or topic area... Consulting involves an entire class of students participating in a community project by bringing technical expertise to the community need" (McIntyre, Webb and Hite, 2005, p. 37). Partnership, which involved forming an on-going relationship between the faculty and a community agency, was the third most adopted form, followed by individual placements and optional placements. The researchers report that 81.2% of their respondents said they had participated in at least one of these CSL activities, although they warn that their results should be read with caution, due to the small sample size.

Studies comparing the use of CSL to other pedagogical approaches are few in number. Mottner (2010) compared service learning with other pedagogical tools including the use of case studies, lectures, guest speakers, current readings, textbooks, and class discussions. Student evaluations determined that, overall, service learning was perceived as the best tool for increasing their knowledge of nonprofit marketing (how it differs from for-profit marketing), developing strategies for not-for-profits and using marketing tools.

Cadwallader, Atwong and Lebard (2013) used an experimental design to test students' perceptions of the value and impact of community service and service learning (CS&SL) versus community based learning (CBL). The main difference between the two pedagogical approaches is that CBL did not involve a mandatory volunteer component (e.g., 10 to 20 hours volunteering with the community organization in addition to project-focused meetings) and removed the requirement to complete a reflection journal – both key components of CS&SL. The factors they measured included: perceived benefit of helping the community, self-benefit, self-improvement, prestige to the university, job search advantage and career enhancement. Students at both introductory and advanced curriculum levels found CBL to be superior to CS&SL in terms of perceived benefits. Students in advanced level courses found CBL to be superior to CS&SL and CS&SL to be superior to no form of community project (either SL or CBL). The authors conclude (Cadwallader, Atwong and Lebard 2013, p. 141), "When comparing the CBL with the CS&SL groups, we find that students who participated in CBL perceived a higher level of advantage for job search than those who participated in CS&SL". The authors attribute their results to the administrative hurdles faced and other qualification required (e.g., first aid certification, background checks) in order to meet the requirements to volunteer their time. Student feedback indicated they didn't like the menial work they were asked to do, background checks took too long, they couldn't collect all the hours they needed with one organization and had to try several before they found a fit between the organization's schedule and their own. Some students simply didn't like being 'forced' to do anything.

Thus we observe that business schools have indeed been adopting the use of community service learning across a broad range of course, including some similar to our own courses. Various authors recommend adjusting the additional service and journal-writing components of traditional CSL approaches in order to meet the preferences expressed by their students. We discuss our own experiences in more detail next.

Research Context

Background to our Project

Community service learning has been used in a number of different ways within our faculty, however in almost all cases, students work in teams rather than as individuals. The ‘service’ they perform can most easily be classified as ‘consulting’ under Cleary’s and Benson’s (1998) typology of CSL models. In some courses, the instructor identifies one or two organizations with which all student teams work. In other courses, each student team works with a different community partner. We identify potential partner organizations through our personal contact networks or when they call the school looking for assistance. In many cases, students identify their own community partners, drawing on their volunteer commitments, social networks or working with groups to which they belong (student clubs or sports teams). We also encourage students to consider their family business as a potential collaborator. Parents tend to be doubly motivated to spend time and provide access to student groups – they want their business and their child to succeed. Time spent on projects can range from two to three weeks up to almost the full semester. The kind of projects undertaken by students tends to reflect the course material. Students in Marketing: New Tools have made use of tools provided through Hootsuite University and the Google Online Marketing Challenge to design and implement social media and Google Adwords campaigns. They have helped small businesses learn about content marketing, produced videos, and designed and placed newspaper advertisements. Students in Introduction to Marketing have developed marketing plans, while students in Marketing Communications have developed marketing communications plans. Most recently, students in Arts Marketing collected customer insights for a local gallery by implementing an online survey and conducting secondary research, interviews and focus groups. In each case, the type of projects students worked on was linked to the course’s learning objectives.

Data Collection

We began by creating a master list of student projects that operated with community partners² from all sections of our courses taught over four semesters (Fall 2013, Fall & Winter 2014, Winter 2015). The courses included were Introduction to Marketing (second year, undergraduate) and Marketing: New Tools and Approaches (third year, undergraduate). We also included projects from a colleague’s Masters level class in a complementary program. This course was delivered entirely online and we thought this might give us some additional insights when compared with our typical classroom delivery format. In total, 51 projects were identified. From this list we removed three projects, because the businesses had either closed or been sold to new owners who would not have interacted with our students, and three additional projects that involved interacting with student clubs within our school, reasoning that we should not ask students to evaluate their own or their classmates’ efforts. In the final group of 45 projects, 29 (65 per cent) involved partnerships with businesses, 10 (22 per cent) involved non-profits or community groups and 6 (13 per cent) involved businesses or groups associated with the university (but not with members of the student teams).

We considered using a mail-out survey, but decided it might easily be discarded and could result in too much time being spent entering raw data into statistical software programs. We also considered phoning community partners, but although this would have the advantage of the ‘personal touch’, we realized that scheduling issues would make this very difficult. In the end, we decided to use an online survey to collect the data. Survey questions were designed through discussion between the co-authors (see Appendix 1) and ethics approval was received from the university’s Research Ethics Board. We included a statement to let

² Note that two groups of students resolutely refused to work with community partners – businesses or non-profits. Instead, they completed their assignment using secondary data. Both of these groups placed in the lower half of the class in terms of their final grades. They were not able to access the same quality of information as those groups who had access to a contact person inside a community partner organization.

respondents know that their decision to participate or not participate would not have any bearing on their relationship with us or the university and a second statement to explain that their responses would not impact the students. We offered respondents the opportunity to have their own identity and that of their organization masked through the use of a pseudonym.

Each of the authors contacted the community organizations and businesses with which students in their own courses had worked by email to request their participation and provide the URL for the survey. An undergraduate student research assistant reached out to the contact person in organizations for which we did not have email addresses. He also sent email invitations to the community partners from the course not taught by the authors. After sending follow-up emails to encourage participation, we received 22 completed surveys; close to a 49% participation rate. Of the eleven respondents who self-identified, seven were small or medium-sized businesses, three were community/not-for-profit organizations and one was a business located on our university campus.

Our Results

We have organized this section of our report according to the major questions we had hoped to answer: what was the experience like for community partners, how did they find both the content and format of the final report, was the experience worthwhile for them and had they or were they planning to implement any of the recommendations? In presenting these results we need to draw attention to the fact that only about half of our respondents submitted qualitative comments in response to our questions. Therefore, with such a small sample we can't draw firm conclusions.

How was Your Experience?

Twelve of the 22 respondents chose to answer this question. Overall responses ranged from 'disappointing' through 'fine' and 'good' to 'excellent' and 'fantastic'. Positive responses made reference to similar aspects of the project: hard work and professional conduct on the part of the students (timely response to partner questions, making time to meet outside of school hours), students getting to know the organization, listening to the partner's input and shaping their recommendations to suit the organization's objectives. Students exhibiting a "polite, responsive and respectful" approach was noted by one professional firm with which students worked. The operator of a food truck appreciated that students visited his business to see how it operated and tasted the food. More than one community partner joined the Facebook group that students set up to manage their project – this seemed to really facilitate the sharing of information, with one small business owner noting that he had 'daily' contact with the students since he "saw everything that was going on their Facebook [page]." Email seemed to be the most frequently used mode of on-going communication between student groups and their community partners, with most partners suggesting that this was appropriate and effective.

One small business owner felt the "entire experience was negative, except for the one student who seemed to make an effort. We are sympathetic to his efforts and wish him the best." One of the non-profit organizations involved with students from the online course commented, "We were not contacted directly by any of the students -much to our surprise- and believe it would have been more beneficial to both the students and our organization if there had been more dialogue/communication." A second organization working with the same online course noted that interactions with the students were minimal, even after they made multiple offers to facilitate exchange. These comments underscore the need to remain realistic about CSL – not every project will be a 'success'. Given that our sample size is so small, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions, but there may be limits to how far a CSL approach can be extended – courses offered entirely online may not provide the most appropriate setting.

When asked to provide a numerical rating for their overall experience (7 point scale, 1 = negative and 7 = positive), the vast majority of respondents rated their experience as neutral to positive (average = 5.9/7) with only one partner giving the experience a negative (score = 1) rating.

Reactions to the Final Report

Eleven of the 22 respondents provided qualitative data about the final report submitted by students. In two cases, the community partner felt that the report contained too much ‘filler’ or ‘fluff’ with the same information being repeated multiple times, resulting in a report that was ‘too long’. One small business owner, who self-identified as an engineer, suggested his educational background might have influenced his preference for ‘short and concise’ reports that offer suggestions for improvement. His recommendation was that a firm word limit be implemented for final reports. Other community partners were impressed by the length of the final report, suggesting that it revealed just how much work students had put into the project. Students’ ability to tactfully identify weaknesses was seen as an indicator of their skill level with one partner commenting, “They really had a pretty solid idea of what the weaknesses were of the business. Many I was aware of and don't really remember talking to them about, but they were able to decode.” A community organization remarked, “Wow! We have never had a report about our social media strategies! It is an interesting insight that will make us better for sure.”

Qualitative assessments of the overall report quality ranged from “satisfactory to poor” to “great work. 10/10”. In general, respondents felt the reports were well-organized but a couple noted that they showed signs of being authored by more than one person (lack of writing style continuity) and contained spelling mistakes. One small business owner noted that his name had been misspelled numerous times, which he felt was unprofessional. Two respondents recommended that a template be provided to students to assist with structuring the report and making it more concise. Exactly the opposite advice was given by other respondents – faculty should remove word limits. One respondent noted quite correctly that having the mother of a group member deliver the report was unprofessional and that it was ‘underwhelming’ to have the report presented in a ‘duo-tang from the dollar store.’ On the other hand, the President of a professional health care services firm remarked, “We have paid for marketing consultants to conduct a similar analysis and the quality of their report was far inferior to what was provided by these students.”

When asked to provide a numerical rating for the extent to which they found the report to be professional (7 point scale, 1 = negative and 7 = positive), the vast majority of respondents rated their experience as neutral to positive (average = 5.7/7) with only one partner giving the experience a more negative evaluation (score = 3) rating. This pattern continued across the more specific questions we asked about the final report. The average score for the ideas presented in the report was 5.4/7; for the format and presentation of the report 5.6/7; for the writing of the report 5.8/7 and for the delivery of the report, 5.75/7. The overall score for the extent to which the community partner was satisfied with the report was 5.45/7. It is interesting to note here that lower evaluations were made by one of the partners involved with the online course as well as one of the partners who interacted with a group of students in a ‘regular’ course. Once again, educators need to be prepared for the possibility of ‘failures’.

Was the Experience Worthwhile?

When asked to what extent they felt the project was worthwhile, the majority (10 of 11 respondents who answered this question) rated their experience as neutral to very worthwhile. Only one respondent said it was ‘not at all worthwhile’ (scored 1 out of 7). The same small business that had mentioned negative aspects of the experience in other questions commented, “WE did all the work. They never met with us. They mislead us with the timing and intentions of the project. It was a complete waste of our time.” One of the non-profit organizations working with students in the online course revealed, “Unfortunately, as a relatively new not-for-profit organization we were looking for some perceived expertise, or minimally some creative ideas, from the Master's Students research that just did not manifest... all of the 'ideas' presented had already

been considered or where in place.” Some partners noted benefits to their organizations, for example, getting exposure to social media marketing and having good ideas to build on. Others partners noted benefits experienced by both the students and their organizations. A small business owner remarked that the CSL project, “Helped the business achieve something we simply didn't have time to do. [It] also helped them [the students] realize how hard some stuff is to accomplish in reality vs. simply just being lectured in class on how to do it.” Another small business owner stated that, “the project was worthwhile both for us and the students. The students got to experience on their own what it is like to make a marketing campaign and the collaboration involved [in working] with others.”

When asked if they received sufficient value in return for their time or energy, the majority of community partners responded positively. They noted that the time they invested was minimal compared to the benefits they received and several noted that they would like to work with student teams again in the future. Finally, one comment from the owner of a professional medical services company touched on benefits to the university, when he said, “A very positive experience which can be repeated anytime with this company. Congratulations on the quality of your programs!”

Were Students' Recommendations Implemented?

While we asked a specific question about whether community partners had implemented any of the recommendations contained in the students' final report, survey respondents commented on this as part of answering other questions as well. For example, one respondent noted that the final report, “Brought up some very helpful ideas that I have already put a little into practice and plan to continue referring to until I get through it all.” Another commented, “The ideas [in the final report] were very interesting and in fact several recommendations regarding market strategy have been recently implemented.” Of the eleven survey respondents who answered the specific question on implementation of recommendations, nine said they either had or were planning to implement some of the recommendations. Those who weren't planning to implement any recommendations from the final report said it was because “nothing of value was presented.” One noted that students' ideas regarding how to make their business more accessible to other undergraduate students had already been implemented. Another noted that as a result of re-organizing their sales force to align with students' recommendations they had already received five requests from potential purchasers for product demonstrations. The food truck owner said he planned to continue to use the social media accounts students had set up to promote their business. A local community organization said they had plans to follow the students' recommendations but struggled with finding the time and resources to do the ‘extra things’. Finally, one small business noted that they students had come up with a clever way for them to reach their target market at a lower cost, so they ‘fully expected’ to act on their recommendations in the near future.

The feedback we have received from community partners thus far has been helpful, both in terms of providing encouragement and advice, especially with regard to ways to improve our processes. We plan to continue our research by following up with community partners for courses taught during 2016-2017.

Discussion & Recommendations

Here we discuss recommendations specific to the use of CSL in business schools, including comments related specifically to the Carleton context. While the theoretical foundations and many of the benefits of CSL appear to be similar across disciplines, Andrews (2007) noted that it can be difficult to link learning goals with service learning across an entire major or degree program because business courses are often technically-focused and highly standardized. Designing projects which focus more on developing a sense of civic duty can be difficult in an environment where maintaining accreditation is linked to demonstrating that quite specific technical and disciplinary learning objectives have been achieved. Andrews' (2007) review also highlights the different orientations among business majors. She found that in the US, courses

in information systems, management and marketing had more service-learning applications than did accounting or finance courses. She recommends that service learning may fit best in business courses where “skilled interaction with users is a key learning goal” (Andrews, 2007, p. 19), in other words, in majors where learning how to communicate with and deliver services face-to-face is an important factor in career and business success. However, even when the CSL experience involves providing specific skills or advice to community partners, adopting this pedagogical approach in first or second year courses, such as Introduction to/Principles of Marketing, may be difficult because of students’ limited background and experience (Klink and Athaide, 2004). While third-parties such as Hootsuite and Google can facilitate access to technical skills training materials and in some cases funding, they also specify with which community partners student teams may work³. Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider using CSL in business courses as not entirely a ‘special case’, but rather as a situation that may require slightly different preparation on the part of instructors.

Based on her review of the business literature, Andrews (2007) noted that many service learning initiatives begin with one course. In order for a service learning program to grow, however, institutional support is required. Lamb and colleagues (1998) found that much of the resistance to integrating service learning more fully into the business school program was due to the absence of an appropriate support infrastructure, including: mechanisms for identifying and nurturing agency connections, assistance for faculty to design CSL activities, and financial commitment from the institution. Many successful programs function with the assistance of a ‘service learning office’ that helps to coordinate CSL. For example, Klink and Athaide (2004) had the assistance of a community centre at their school which helped identify agencies and projects (c.f., Holtzman, Stewart and Barr, 2008). Without this kind of centralized function, individual faculty members are often approached by community organizations and must find a way to screen the opportunities to ensure they are appropriate for the course they are planning. The screening criteria developed by Klink and Athaide (2004, p. 148) to determine which projects suited their Introduction to Marketing students may be of some assistance:

1. The service needs to be meaningful for the students and important to the nonprofit agency (Easterling and Rudell, 1997).
2. The service should be directly related to the subject matter (Fleckenstein 1997)—that is, there must be a connection between the project and the topics and skills covered by the course (Gujarathi and McQuade 2002).
3. The service should be doable in the specified time frame given the students’ subject skills.

Preparing an ‘application form’ which potential community partners can complete to provide details of the issue they need resolved or opportunity they can offer could also be of use to instructors. A short description of what faculty expect from community partners in terms of coming to class to present their organization to students (Klink and Athaide, 2004; Mottner, 2010), on-going meetings with students, training and/or supervision that will be provided, attendance in class to hear presentations, assistance with student assessment and/or completing follow-up surveys can be provided to potential partners to help them understand the shared commitment to the CSL process. Projects initiated by instructors can catch community partners off guard. They may welcome the assistance but if they haven’t participated in this

³ For example, the Google Online Marketing Challenge makes a \$250 Google Adwords budget available to student teams, provided they work with “a business or non-profit organization” (<https://www.google.com/onlinechallenge/>), the key selection criteria being that the firm must not have used Adwords within the last six months, must not have been already selected by another team in the current or any previous competition, and must not sell certain specified products. In the case of non-profit organizations, Google provides a list of non-eligible organizations that includes some of those favored by students (e.g., clubs and sports teams) (<https://www.google.com/onlinechallenge/discover/terms.html>).

kind of collaboration before, they may not be aware of what they are committing to and may find the time demands to be too much.

It should come as no surprise that CSL courses often take more time to manage than traditional courses (Andrews, 2007) with faculty considering development grants and course release time as key factors facilitating their involvement (Morton and Troppe, 1996). Klink and Athaide (2004), perhaps the most experienced CSL practitioners we found in our review of the literature, visited the agencies identified by their university's community centre personally and had them identify a contact person who would work with the student teams. They then invited agency contact people into the classroom at the beginning of the semester to 'pitch' the students. They attended the first meeting of the students with their clients, and had the students and non-profit organizations write a memorandum of understanding (MOU)⁴. They noted that the MOU helped them to identify marketing constructs that may need to be covered with student teams outside of class hours, that is, before the topics would typically be covered in class lectures. In addition to this just-in-time and customized instruction, they held regular meetings with student teams. The amount of work taken on by these dedicated educators is commendable but hardly replicable nor advisable for 'scholarly academics'⁵ who are being evaluated by the quantity and quality of their research output.

Furthermore, since "faculty is unlikely to have great control" of the CSL experience (Klink and Athaide, 2004, p. 146), this pedagogical approach may be perceived as risky to attempt pre-tenure – it takes more time and educators cannot be sure of the impact on teaching scores. Although she completed a full-year training course, Mottner (2010) averaged one project per class that was judged to be a 'failure'. She attributed this to a "mismatch of student and project, misunderstandings between the service-learning partner and a student or the teacher or program, or group functionality problems" (Mottner 2010, p. 242). The same reasons for project failure have been identified in previous research in other disciplines (Blouin and Perry, 2009), and echo our own experience based on using CSL across courses and levels of instruction. We note that while access to a collection of shared resources is offered to faculty through Carleton's Educational Development Centre (<http://carleton.ca/edc/faculty-and-instructors/community-engaged-pedagogy/>), none of the other recommended resources (course release, faculty training, financial commitment) are available. Given the potential impact of project 'failures' on teaching evaluation scores, and the critical role that these scores play in tenure decisions, adopting CSL as a pedagogical strategy is risky.

One aspect of student evaluations of teaching that was not addressed in any of the studies we read was whether faculty could expect these evaluations to change over time. The recognition of this gap in the literature crystallized after a discussion the lead author had with a former graduate student who reminded me that my teaching evaluations had been negatively impacted the first time I used a CSL approach in the

⁴ Note that the authors provide a Memorandum of Understanding 'template' in their paper, which could be adapted for use by course instructors across disciplines.

⁵ 'Scholarly Academic' is a term used to denote a certain class of full-time, tenured/tenure-track instructor for AACSB accreditation and reporting purposes. At the Sprott School of Business (2013), "Faculty members are defined as Scholarly Academics (SA) if they have specialized advanced preparation in their field (normally a doctorate degree) augmented by subsequent development activities to assure currency in their field(s)... Faculty members whose advanced preparation in the field (as noted above) is more than five years old must demonstrate currency and relevance in their fields in order to remain as SA. For almost all SAs, this is demonstrated by the production of peer-reviewed journal articles. In particular, faculty are deemed to be scholarly academics on a continuing basis if they publish three or more peer reviewed articles in their substantive field over the previous five (5) year period. At most, one of the three peer reviewed journal articles may be replaced by an edited book, two refereed book chapters or three peer reviewed presentations in conference proceedings, or an appropriate combination of these." In 2016, the faculty adopted a journal quality list, which classifies the level of contribution according to rankings of external agencies. Failure to meet publication targets, through a mixture of quantity and quality, results in additional teaching duties being assigned to faculty.

classroom. The community partner was fully responsive and engaged. The marketing issues on which the students worked were very practical and had potential for the enhancement of skills transferrable to other industries and future employment. I later learned that the community partner had, in fact, implemented some aspects from each of the eleven student teams' reports. From all accounts, the effort was a 'success', and yet my teaching evaluations suffered. Upon reflection, I think there are two ways to explain this: 1) although individual faculty may have collaborated with community organizations over the years, our school didn't really have a tradition of using CSL. Several students felt it required 'too much work' and said they would have been more comfortable writing case study reports – a skill they had had time to perfect. It has now been several years since that first effort, more faculty than ever are using CSL, and students have actually come to expect some element of CSL in many of our courses. My teaching evaluations no longer suffer, in fact, my courses are typically fully subscribed. Our schools culture now supports this form of teaching. 2) students often need time to appreciate the value of what they have experienced. I have stayed in touch with many students from that first CSL class and several of them have told me that when they reflect back, it was a highlight of their time spent at the school. Although no one was hired by the client, several students were able to add elements to their portfolios which aided in their job search efforts. Given the time to mature and gain some professional experience, and they adopt a different perspective.

Looking more specifically at the situation within our own faculty, a combination of market forces (the perception of a weaker economy or downturn in the business cycle tends to increase the number of applicants to business programs), more successful recruitment efforts and tight constraints on hiring has resulted in increased class sizes. With our class sizes now ranging from 60 to 90+ students, it is important to note that business educators who have written about using CSL often had far fewer students to manage. For example, Holtzman and colleagues (2008) had 28 students in their capstone course and Mottner (2005) had an average of 19 students in her Not-for-Profit Marketing course. The shorter Canadian semester (12 weeks versus the American norm of 15 weeks), means fewer weeks of instruction in technical skills and less time to coordinate finding and meeting with community partners. Add to this Carleton's policy of allowing students to register in courses into the third week of classes (effectively missing 25% of scheduled classes), which seriously complicates the formation of student teams. It can seem like faculty attempting to use CSL are placing themselves in a pressure-cooker situation. One possible way to 'scale-up' CSL to larger classes is to work with one community partner. This requires less coordination on the part of the instructor and less time spent teaching the industry context, but means that the partner must have multiple issues amenable to student investigation. It can be of real benefit to the partner if multiple student teams work on the same issue – they receive more than one set of recommendations on how to resolve the problem.

In our application of CSL to undergraduate courses, students may work with community or human service organizations (Zlotkowski, 1996) but they may also work with small businesses, student groups on campus and other community groups (e.g., sports teams). Extending the scope of community partners we work with not only makes it somewhat simpler to find community partners (keeping in mind the need to also meet the requirements of third-parties discussed earlier), but can also result in a wider range of benefits experienced by students. Based on feedback from our students, we note that by working with community organizations, students often gain an appreciation for the role of a board of directors in making decisions, the length of time needed for decision making and the need to gain consensus. This can also be the experience of students working with local franchises or divisional offices of larger firms. From working with private sector firms, especially small and/or owner-operated businesses, students come to understand the need to work within small budgets – not every firm has access to the kinds of marketing dollars spent by the leading brands. However, as we found while conducting this research, allowing the participation of some groups (e.g., student clubs) can complicate follow-up efforts.

Over time we have also learned some things through experience. Although it adds to the administrative burden up front, we recommend that educators implementing a CSL strategy in courses where students find their own community partners bring some kind of 'proof' that they have the organization's commitment

and permission. This would ideally take the form of a short email, addressed to the instructor, but at a minimum the student needs to provide a name and contact information. The necessity for this may not seem immediately apparent to those using CSL for the first time. A student says, “my supervisor provided this information” and it seems like enough until you realize that the student has moved on and you are sending out a follow-up letter with no addressee. Mottner (2010, p. 237) says that the first requirement for student teams in her course was “to deliver a signed document (contract) between each of the students on the team and the service-learning partner as to what specifically would be accomplished and by what date. Student groups also provided three business style memos addressed to the instructor and to the service-learning partner at scheduled times during the term which described what had been accomplished so far on the project and what was yet to be done, as well as how and when those things would be accomplished.” This seems like a very wise practice to us.

Another lesson we have learned is to delay grading the project until the community partner organization confirms that they have received a copy of the final report⁶. The lead author sends an email to the contact person, asking for confirmation that the report has been received and soliciting feedback both on how the students performed and ways that the process could be improved in the future. This parallels the practice of Klink and Athaide (2004), who contacted each non-profit organization their students worked with to ensure they received the final report and to ask for informal feedback on the usefulness of the project and how the CSL experience could be improved. The risk of collecting feedback so soon after the conclusion of the project is that there might be a bit of a ‘halo’ effect and partners are not in a position to assess the impact long-term. However, we found that the likelihood of community partners responding to requests for feedback declined as the period of time since completion of the project lengthened.

Additional, practical recommendations include:

- The importance of teaching ‘professional practice’, e.g., the need to follow up on questions, appropriate time frames for response, maintaining an open communication channel with community partners, visiting the partners’ premises to learn more, and maintaining a respectful attitude.
- Although we emphasize the need to pay attention to detail in preparing the final report – eliminating spelling mistakes, especially in the business/business owner’s name, the need to ‘speak in one voice’ throughout the report – we often wonder if students believe this is important. Sharing the results of this survey may be one way to emphasize that this matters ‘in real life’ and isn’t just an opinion held by the professor.
- Emphasizing that presentation of the final report matters. We suggest that educators allocate a portion of the overall grade to professional presentation and explain what is expected of students in terms of the use of diagrams and colour, paper quality, the need for binding the final report, etc.

In conclusion, we strongly recommend that educators, even those in business schools, retain the reflection element of CSL projects. Davis (2010, p. 3) noted that “Conway, Amel, & Gerwien (2009) who conducted a meta-analysis of 103 different samples of CSL studies occurring between 1968-2006 reported the importance of enhancing CSL through structured reflections in classes. When students are given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, the impact on their learning outcomes is even greater.” Zlotkowski (1996) underlines the need for critical analysis and personal reflection, suggesting this is what sets CSL apart from the typical internship. Although our focus has been on community partners’ reactions,

⁶ When the lead author first began using CSL, she assumed that students would follow-through on providing a copy of their final report to community partners. When following up with partners several weeks after the course ended and grades had been submitted she discovered this was not always the case. She now incorporates the requirement to deliver a copy of the final report into the hands of the community partner into the grading rubric; failure to submit a report copy to the community partner carries a large penalty.

and thus we have not discussed student reflections in this report, we would simply state that in addition to the benefits of reflection for students, reading a student's learning journal or their comments in the 'what I learned' section of their report reinforces for instructors that their efforts have not been in vain.

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Appendix 1: Survey Questions

The survey landing page contained the Letter of Information required by the Research Ethics Board. Respondents indicated their consent by clicking a button to proceed to the survey.

Survey Question	Answer Format
First, we'd like to hear a bit more about your experience with the students over the course of the project:	
Generally speaking, how was your experience with the students over the course of the project?	Open-ended text box
How was the experience with regards to the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of your interactions with students? • The frequency of your interactions with students? • The professionalism of the students with whom you interacted? 	Open-ended text boxes
Overall, how would you rate the experience?	Likert-type scale of 0 to 7, anchored by negative/positive
Do you have any suggestions about how to improve your experience with the students?	Open-ended text box
Overall, how would you rate the conduct of the students?	Likert-type scale of 0 to 7, anchored by negative/positive
Do you have any suggestions about their conduct could have been improved?	Open-ended text box
Now, we'd like to hear a bit more about the REPORT that the students developed regarding your organization.	
Did you receive a copy of the final report from the students	Radio buttons: Yes, I did receive a copy of the report No, I did NOT receive a copy of the report
What were your initial thoughts on and reactions to the report?	Open-ended text box
Overall, how did you find the quality of the report?	Open-ended text box
To what extent did you find the report professional?	Likert-type scale of 0 -7, anchored by 'Not at all' and 'Very much so'
How would assess the professionalism of the report in terms of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IDEAS presented in the report? • The FORMAT and PRESENTATION of the report? • The WRITING of the report? • The DELIVERY of the report? 	Likert-type scales of 0 -7, anchored by 'Not at all professional' and 'Highly professional'
Overall, to what extent were you satisfied with the report?	Likert-type scale of 0 – 7, anchored by 'not at all satisfied' and 'very satisfied'
Do you have any suggestions about how the report could have been improved?	Open-ended text box

Next, we'd like know whether experience ADDED VALUE to your organization.	
To what extent did you find the project worthwhile?	Likert-type scale of 0 -7, anchored by 'Not at all worthwhile' and 'Very worthwhile'
Based on your response to the previous questions, why was the project worthwhile/not worthwhile?	Open-ended text box
Do you feel that you received sufficient value in return for your time/energy? Why or why not?	Open-ended text box
Do you have suggestions of how the experience might bring greater value to you and your organization?	Open-ended text box
Has the organization implemented any of the suggestions/recommendations made by the students, or are there plans to do so going forward?	Radio buttons: Yes No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, please tell us a little bit more (e.g., which idea(s), why, did they add value to the organization)? • If no, why not? 	Open-ended text box
And, just a few more final details:	
What is the name of your organization?	Open-ended text box
What is your role with the organization?	Open-ended text box
To the best of your memory in what term did you work with the student group?	Radio buttons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2013 • Fall 2014 • Winter 2015 • I don't recall
To the best of your memory, what project were the students working on?	Radio buttons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Social Media Plan (for their Marketing: New Tools and Approaches class) • A Marketing Plan (for their Introduction to Marketing course) • I don't recall
Before we wrap up, is there anything else you'd like to tell us about or feel that we should know about your experience with the students?	Open-ended text box