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Community Service-Learning in Canadian Higher Education

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Main messages

Curricular community service-learning (CSL) integrates learning through service in the community with intentional course-based learning activities. While CSL programs have been part of higher education in the US since the early 1970s, most of the growth in Canadian programs has taken place since the 1990s. Like the US, CSL programs in Canada have diverse aims and approaches. They tend to include a mix of experiential education, action research, critical theory, progressive education, adult education, social justice education, constructivism, community-based research, multicultural education, and undergraduate research.

How can service learning enhance student engagement and outcomes? The literature discusses elements to consider in designing CSL activities, including the quantity and quality of reflective activities, duration and intensity of service, diversity of service, meaningful integration of classroom and community learning, involvement of community partners in designing student activities/projects, and preparation of students for these projects. But importantly, CSL design is related to aims of programs, which vary from “technical” goals to more “transformative” goals. Therefore, clarity about aims as well as about differences in the learning theories underpinning particular approaches to CSL is important. Further, developing reciprocal relationships between university and community means responding to community priorities too.

How does CSL contribute to new ways of learning? Writers tend to agree that CSL initiatives can promote critical thinking and civic responsibility if they are carefully organized, have clarity of purpose, are relevant to students’ professional futures, address the emotional dimensions of students’ learning, and provide guided reflection. The complexity of university-community partnerships must also be acknowledged. Innovative approaches discussed in studies include establishing interdisciplinary student teams, using art and poetry to promote learning, promoting dialogical relationships with community, and adopting asset-based approaches in community.

What are promising practices to addressing student diversity through CSL? Existing literature suggests that CSL instructors need to recognize student diversity, particularly the positions of students in relation to community members. Acknowledging diversity can help educators engage students from various backgrounds and circulate healthy, safe dialogues that bridge classroom theory with CSL praxis.

What institutional structures and supports are necessary for CSL to flourish? CSL requires visionary leadership at all levels, resources, and coordination. It is important for those involved to consider how organizational structures impact the ability of service learning to meet educational goals; and how the work of CSL is to be organized and implemented.

Our review of the literature suggests more Canadian research on CSL in higher education is needed to inform the design of CSL programs and activities.

Executive summary

Background

This report focuses on community service-learning as a response to the question, “What new ways of learning in higher education (HE) will Canadians need to thrive in an evolving society and labour market?” The Association of American Colleges and Universities describes curricular service learning as a “high-impact” educational practice. Service learning is a method in which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, are integrated into students’ academic curriculum, and enhance classroom learning with learning in the community.

Although CSL has been around in the US since the early 1970s, the service learning course had become the dominant form by the early 1990. In the past fifteen years, there has been significant growth of CSL within Canadian universities and colleges. But programs tend to be small in terms of staffing, resources, and student numbers. This report helps address the need for information to guide Canadian CSL programs in higher education as well as identifying gaps in the research literature.

Conceptual influences on service learning include the educational theories of John Dewey, David Kolb and Paulo Freire. But service learning is not a coherent pedagogical strategy; rather, it is an amalgam of experiential education, action research, critical theory, progressive education, adult education, social justice education, constructivism, community-based research, multicultural education and undergraduate research (Butin, 2006). Further, literature on the role, benefits, structures, intentions, and impacts of service learning experiences in higher education is in its infancy compared with other learning-related literature.

Guiding questions and implications

Our review of the CSL literature is organized around the following four questions:

- A. How can service learning be delivered in universities and colleges to enhance student engagement and outcomes?
- B. How does CSL contribute to new ways of fostering greater knowledge and competency in critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, civic responsibility, and understanding of diversity?
- C. What are promising practices to ensure access to and/or mobility within Canadian education for a diverse student body including persons with disabilities, adult learners, international students and immigrants? And finally,
- D. What institutional structures and supports are necessary for CSL to flourish?

This report is directed towards service learning participants (instructors, students, community partners), higher education and community leaders, and policy-makers.

Approach

A keyword search of the entire Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) database identified 4,030 references that contained a descriptor “service learning.” Most of these studies were published in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *Journal of Experiential Education*, and *Teaching Sociology*. The five countries with the highest number of items related to service learning included (in order) the US, UK, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

Our selection of items from databases was based on questions A to D above. During the initial phases, two research assistants independently reviewed and reorganized the research team’s existing collection of CSL literature and undertook a further comprehensive literature search. All members of the research team were involved during the second phase of literature review, which consisted of title, keyword and abstract review. Items identified as highly relevant by multiple team members were then assessed in greater depth by the three research assistants who completed summary templates for these items. The summaries helped identify items to be read by multiple team members for the final stage of this knowledge synthesis.

Results

A. The Delivery and Outcomes of Service Learning: The US National Service Learning Cooperative identified elements in effective CSL that include: the alignment of service learning programs with curriculum and academic program goals; allowing students to choose which issues to address in their SL projects; community input into the desired elements and goals of service projects; and opportunities for student reflection.

Other characteristics of effective service learning include the meaningful integration of classroom and community learning; projects that match the skill levels of students; preparation of students for community engagement; community partner involvement in planning, design and delivery of activities; initiatives that blur lines between teaching, research, and service; more deliberate power sharing at each step of the collaboration with community; and the development of ongoing community partnerships with strong relationships.

Some CSL activities aim to promote transformative learning for students while others are more pragmatically focused. However, most writers agree that the benefits for students include: reflective and collaborative learning; greater awareness of the links between theory and practice; development of multicultural competencies; commitment to social justice; increased commitment to community engagement; development of professional identity; learning about self in relation to others; and increased self-confidence regarding content knowledge.

B. The Contribution of CSL to New Ways of Learning: There was a general consensus that CSL can promote critical thinking and civic responsibility if they are carefully organized, have clarity of purpose, are relevant to students’ professional futures, address the emotional dimensions of students’ learning, and provide opportunities for ongoing student reflections,

guided by faculty who understand students' levels of understanding about social problems. Activities where students engage with unfamiliar communities are strongly associated with developing deeper understandings about diversity and are of particular interest in professional education. How CSL can lead to students' increased civic mindedness is a recurring theme in CSL studies.

C. Addressing Student Diversity Through CSL: The review of literature revealed that some research has focused on the effects of CSL on diverse student populations from varying social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Writers suggest there is a need to design a CSL framework that empowers diverse communities; is informed by critical pedagogy; is situated in learning theory; and promotes a focus on the assets of community members. Most writers also agree that there is a need to address the positionality of students in relation to the communities in which they are working. For example, white middle-class university students “serving” in racialized communities are positioned differently than “first generation” racialized students. The literature suggests that acknowledging difference helps educators engage students from various backgrounds and create healthy, safe dialogues that extend classroom theory to CSL praxis.

D. Institutional Structures and Supports Required for CSL

A number of authors discuss the kind of institutional supports necessary for successful CSL and community-university engagement more generally. Recommendations include: academic leaders engaging in strategic planning around service learning; developing a centralized office to address the needs of different participants; increasing budget commitments to programs; ensuring service learning is guided by academic leadership; enlisting faculty or administrative champions; creating and utilizing advisory boards; promoting the program both internally and externally; and building assessment instruments to evaluate programs.

Additional resources: Developing this report has yielded several databases related to each of our focal questions, housed in both Zotero and Endnote. These have been merged into an annotated bibliography which we plan to make available on the UBC Centre for Community-Engaged Learning website.

Gaps and further research

Our review suggests the need for research that uses mixed-methods; is longitudinal; addresses the structures and supports are needed for CSL programs to flourish; addresses differences related to different CSL models; focuses on all participants; documents students' actual behaviours; and explores the CSL experiences of diverse groups of students.

Community Service-Learning in Canadian Higher Education

KEY FINDINGS

1. CONTEXT

Universities and colleges around the world are grappling with the question, “what will learners need to thrive in an evolving society and succeed in labour markets”? There is growing awareness that to respond effectively to changes in society, higher education (HE) institutions must become more responsive to and engaged with communities. Themes at the 2014 Talloires Network¹ Leaders Conference included educating global citizens, measuring the impact of work with communities, and providing more community-based opportunities for students. In Canada, discussion about HE reform has focused on how to smooth education-to-work transitions for youth (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2014), but also on how to develop engaged citizens who can contribute to building communities (cf. Council of Ontario Universities, 2014, 2015). Addressing both economic and social needs, university and colleges have introduced more experiential learning opportunities, such as community service-learning (CSL), internships, and cooperative education (e.g., Sattler & Peters, 2013).² All three are known to enhance student engagement and improve post-graduation outcomes. However, this report focuses on curricular CSL (also known as community-based learning or community-engaged learning) as the innovation that, in our view, most effectively addresses the complementary goals of civic engagement and student career transitions. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) describes service learning as a “high impact” educational practice, along with academic learning communities, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, and capstone courses/experiences (Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015).

Definitions of service learning

Curricular CSL³ is a pedagogical approach that integrates learning through service⁴ in the community with intentional formal course-based learning activities. A more elaborated

¹ The Talloires Network is an international association of institutions committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education. The December 2014 issue of *University World News* (www.universityworldnews.com) reported on this conference.

² Sattler and Peters (2013) wrote a report about work-integrated learning in Ontario colleges and universities for the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, which found that fewer students participated in service learning compared to cooperative education, practicum, field placement and internship. In addition to the satisfaction gained from helping others, college students saw service learning as helping them to clarify their career goals and improve their interview and job-seeking skills, and university students saw it as enhancing their resumes. Over half of the university students surveyed who participated in service learning were from social sciences while almost half of college students were from health, social and community services.

³ Co-curricular CSL is experiential learning that occurs outside of an academic course. This report focuses primarily on curricular CSL.

⁴ The word “service” is not uncontested in the literature. For example, Maas-Weigert (1998) suggests that it carries some negative messages and recommends the phrase “community-based learning,” to acknowledge the need to develop more reciprocal relationships among the partners.

definition is provided in Furco (1996) as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences, which meet actual community needs, are integrated into students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for reflection, and enhance what is taught in the classroom by extending student learning into the community.

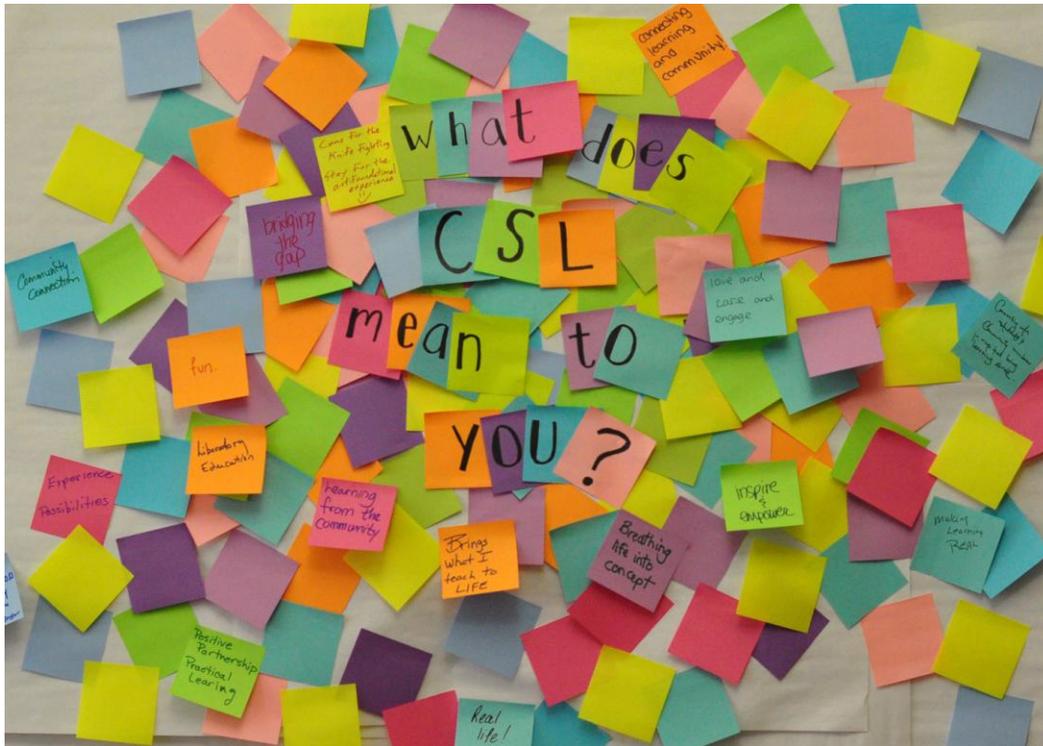


Image Courtesy of Community Service-Learning, University of Alberta, 2014.

Service learning programs aim to equally benefit the provider and recipient of the service (Furco, 1996). This balance between community service and student learning is what distinguishes service learning from internships (where the focus is primarily on student learning) or field education or cooperative education (where the off-campus learning/work experience is usually less integrated with course content). However, as discussed below, how the balance between service and learning is achieved (and the meaning of “service”) is debated in the literature. Maas-Weigert (1998) identifies elements that help differentiate service learning from voluntarism, community service, and other forms of experiential education:

On the community side: the student provides some meaningful service (work) that meets a need or goal that is defined by a community (or some of its members). On the campus side: the service provided by the student flows from and into course objectives, is integrated into the course by means of assignments that require some form of reflection on the service in light of course objectives, and the assignment is assessed and evaluated accordingly. (p. 5)

Service learning takes a variety of forms, involves a variety of types of community partners, and can take place in a variety of sites. The multiple and intersecting forms of service learning can include front-line placements, project-based learning, and community-based

research. Service learning also differs from internships and cooperative education in its measures of success, which include social responsibility and community outreach as well as the development of students' employability skills. Service learning is often less defined than internships in terms of location, goals, activities, and progress (Mason, 2014). In addition, partners usually include not-for-profit, schools, and government rather than private sector companies. While some of the assumptions and aims of service learning are similar to other forms of experiential learning—particularly the assumption that off-campus experiences help students develop employability skills that are difficult to develop in classrooms (Council of Ontario Universities, 2014)—aims related to civic engagement are unique to CSL.



Community partner from VIVO Media Arts Centre and instructor, UBC
Image Courtesy of Centre for Community Engaged Learning, UBC.

Most service learning involves local communities although international service-learning (ISL) is a key part of some Canadian programs (e.g., St. Francis Xavier University). ISL brings together service learning, study abroad, and international education (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011) in an international context. The goals include an increase in “participants’ global awareness and development of humane values, building intercultural understanding and communication, and enhancing civic mindedness and leadership skills” (Crabtree, 2008, p.18). The majority of ISL programs aim to build reciprocal relations across the North-South divide (Grusky, 2000). This report focuses primarily on CSL since ISL involves additional considerations that are beyond the scope of this report (May, 2015), for example, confronting issues related to neo-colonialism in a global context (cf. Abdi, Shultz & Pillay, 2015). The term “community” is ubiquitous to CSL discourse but it is often romanticized or undefined, and communities are seen as homogeneous entities. Ibàñez-Carrasco and Riaño-Alcalá (2009, p. 2) argue the term is “nearly bankrupt” because it is “currently applied to almost any gathering of persons, ideas, and products to add a patina of authenticity.”

Overview of CSL in the US

Service learning appeared initially in the mid-1960s in the US, when there was expansion in higher education and a focus on anti-poverty and social reform programs. One of the guiding themes was the perceived need for students to get out and connect with the social realities of the real world. The *National Center for Public Service Internship Programs* was established in 1971, and the *Society for Field Experience Education* in 1972, as the main practitioner associations connected to the emerging service learning field. These two organizations merged in 1979, forming the *National Society for Internships and Experiential Education* (NSIEE), which became the central practitioner association involved in the development of service learning over the next two decades. There was also federal government support for service learning through The *National Student Volunteer Program* (NSVP) created in 1969 by President Nixon to encourage student involvement in the anti-poverty effort. The NSVP, which changed its name in 1979 to the *National Center for Service Learning*, provided professional development for the field. For most of the 1970s, the federal program, University Year for ACTION, invested approximately \$6 million annually in service learning programs, funding full-year, full-credit opportunities for students to engage in anti-poverty work in their communities (Lounsbury & Pollack, 2001).

The service learning internship program became the dominant programmatic model, and by 1979, CSL programs existed throughout higher education (Lounsbury & Pollack, 2001). Internships emphasized a learner-centered and directed learning process, and usually involved students working significant hours in the community agency instead of taking classroom-based courses. With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and retrenchment of HE, a different model of service learning began to emerge that emphasized its pedagogical value. The growth of organizations like *Campus Compact*⁵ and *Campus Opportunity Outreach League* (COOL) in the late 1980s responded to concerns about curricular irrelevance and the desire to create meaningful undergraduate experiences (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001).

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 defined service learning as a pedagogical method that is integrated into students' academic curriculum, rather than a type of anti-poverty program (Lounsbury & Pollack, 2001). Service learning thus came to be constructed as an "educational reform strategy that complemented the traditional discipline-based curriculum and emphasized students' cognitive development" (ibid. p. 332). The dominant form became the service-learning course, a credit-bearing academic course with a typical syllabus (with required readings and texts) along with a related community service component. Community-university engagement in the US more generally was given a boost when the Carnegie Foundation⁶ established an elective classification for HE institutions to be recognized as community engaged institutions.

Overview of CSL in Canada

Canada has learned much from the US experience and early programs looked to the US for models. However, there are differences in systems of HE and CSL development in the two

⁵ Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 1,100 college and university presidents, which aims to make civic and community engagement an institutional priority in higher education. It has developed extensive practitioner-oriented resources (see website: <http://www.compact.org>).

⁶ See website for Carnegie Community Engagement classification: http://nerche.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=341&Itemid=92

countries. For example, the HE system in Canada is more public and less stratified and the Canadian federal government has played a less prominent role in CSL compared to the US.

Although most literature is US-based, there has been significant growth of CSL within Canadian universities and colleges in the past fifteen years. The growth in university programs was partly stimulated by the JW McConnell Family Foundation, which granted \$9,500,000 to ten Canadian universities between 2004 and 2011 to support the initiation or expansion of CSL programming. The McConnell foundation also provided funding to support the establishment of the *Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning* (CACSL) in 2004 to strengthen and promote community service learning across campuses. The CACSL website⁷ identifies 37 higher education institutions (including 30 universities) across Canada with curricular and co-curricular CSL programs but this list is far from exhaustive. For example, an *Ontario CSL Network* formed in 2009 currently includes approximately 24 universities and 8 colleges. This group was established to provide a space (virtual and physical) for community-engaged learning practitioners in HE institutions to network, share ideas, problem solve and collaborate.⁸ A CSL community of practice is also being established through the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS). In 2014, the University of Saskatchewan launched a new Canadian journal called the *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community Engaged Research, Teaching and Learning*.⁹

Still, Canada lacks the coordination evident in the US. A survey of curricular and co-curricular CSL practitioners and community agency networks conducted for CACSL about a decade ago concluded that CACSL has important work ahead in connecting practitioners, developing resources, helping to develop research on CSL, and linking national, provincial, and local organizations and associations (Hayes, 2006). This is still the case in Canada.

Canadian higher education institutions have relied on funding from foundations, the private sector, and provincial government allocations to their institutions to fund CSL programs. Programs tend to be small in terms of staffing, resources, and the number of students involved as a proportion of the student population overall. For example, although student engagement in service learning has grown to over 5,100 students in 2014-15 at the UBC Vancouver campus, this represents just 10% of total student enrollment (Personal communication, Director, Community Learning Initiative, October 2015). The UBC program currently works with approximately 480 partners including non-profit organizations, government, schools and post-secondary education, for profit/business, and health services. Like the US, the dominant form is service-learning courses. However, several universities and colleges also offer co-curricular experiences for students (Hayes, 2006) and some offer ISL. Unfortunately, no central up-to-date repository of data about Canadian CSL programs in HE exists. This report contributes toward addressing the need for further action and research. Although still quite limited, the Canadian academic research literature about CSL is growing. CSL units within universities have also developed resources to support students, instructors, and community partners. Sharing these resources is another part of our plan for knowledge synthesis.

⁷ This information can be found on the CACSL website: <http://communityservicelearning.ca/csl-network/csl-and-community-engagement-programs-across-canada/>

⁸ This group includes around 90 professionals as members. They hold 3 or 4 meetings each year hosted at different member institutions (Personal communication, Janet Doner, October 2015).

⁹ See website: <http://www.usask.ca/engagedscholar/about-us.php>

Conceptual thinking about CSL

In his 2009 article, Tony Chambers comments, “few, if any, conceptual models have been developed to guide Canadian experiences with service learning” (p. 78). Such models are useful in establishing a sense of the range of forms CSL can and cannot take, as well as the potential impact of these forms for each institution and its community partners. Chambers presents a multi-level conceptual framework intended to guide initiatives in Canadian educational institutions, which links different CSL approaches to a continuum of aims for programs ranging from philanthropy to social transformation. His proposed model included four theoretical clusters:

- CSL as *experiential education*, where the goal is the conscious and intentional integration of students’ experiences into the formal curriculum; influences include John Dewey and David Kolb.
- CSL as *social learning*, which assumes that people learn through observing others’ behaviours and attitudes and the outcomes of those behaviours and attitudes; Albert Bandura has been influential.
- CSL as *student development*, which tends to focus on understanding the impact of CSL on students’ cognitive, social, and cultural growth and development within post-secondary institutions. Influences include Alexander Astin, Vincent Tinto, Robert Pace, and David Kolb.
- CSL as *liberatory education*, where the development of critical consciousness for social change is the main goal; Paulo Freire has been influential.

Clearly, there are diverse approaches to CSL with different assumptions and aims. References to the conceptual influences of Kolb (1984), Dewey (1916) and Freire (1970) are common (Chambers, 2009). Social psychologist, David Kolb’s characterization of experiential education as a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience informs the idea of CSL as a learning approach that requires both action and reflection.

John Dewey is also seen as a key contributor to service learning theory because of his pragmatic philosophy, his concerns about democratic participation, and his student-centered educational theory (Deans, 1999; Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Dewey’s work has been inspirational for service learning because of his focus on students moving beyond the bounds of traditional information transmission in classrooms through “learning by doing” within the community environment (VanWynsberghe & Andruske, 2007).

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire’s ideas about liberatory education have also provided a theoretical anchor for many service learning programs and courses (Chovanec et al. 2012; Kajner et al., 2013). Freire advocated for learning situations that are collaborative, active, community oriented, and grounded in the culture of the student (Deans, 1999). Both Dewey and Freire emphasized the importance of citizenship education as a way of ensuring that political and economic systems benefit as many people as possible (Abdi, Shultz & Pillay, 2015). But although the aim of citizenship education/civic engagement is commonly expressed in the CSL literature, authors seldom define what they mean by the “good citizen” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).¹⁰

¹⁰ Westheimer and Kahne (2004) discuss three distinct conceptions of the “good citizen,” which embody different beliefs about the capacities and commitments citizens need for democracy to flourish. For example, their study of different educational programs in the US found that some fostered the ability

In addition to Kolb, Dewey and Freire, Taylor (2014) suggests that Vygotsky and activity theory, with a strong focus on the historical, political, and cultural aspects of processes of learning and development, can inform CSL theorizing and practice. Feminist approaches to CSL can make major contributions too, given their roots in critical analysis of oppressions and orientation to social justice and equality (Iverson & James, 2014).

Other models of community engagement and CSL developed in the US (e.g., Butin, 2007; Mitchell, 2008) have influenced thinking in Canada. Mitchell (2008) distinguishes between traditional and critical models of service learning. While the traditional approach is described as emphasizing service without attention to systems of inequality, a critical approach aims to “dismantle structures of injustice” (p. 50). Similar to Chambers’ (2009) approach, Dan Butin (2007) describes four types of community engagement that include *technical*, *cultural*, *political* and *anti-foundational* approaches. The “technical” conception focuses on the pedagogical effectiveness of CSL; a “cultural” conceptualization considers the meanings of the practice for the individuals and institutions involved; and the “political” conceptualization aims to empower historically marginalized groups in society. Finally, an “anti-foundational” approach aims to foster a state of doubt in students as a prerequisite for thoughtful deliberation.

Butin’s (2007) types are not intended to be mutually exclusive and normative, but rather address the various ways CSL can be approached and the limitations of each. This discussion, as well as another article by Butin (2006), suggests that service learning is not a coherent pedagogical strategy; rather, the CSL movement is an “amalgam of, among other things, experiential education, action research, critical theory, progressive education, adult education, social justice education, constructivism, community-based research, multicultural education and undergraduate research” (p. 490). Thus, there is a plurality of perspectives about what service learning is and should be, and ironically, much of the literature is not very reflective about its underlying epistemological assumptions. Further, the literature on the role, benefits, structures, intentions, and impacts of service learning experiences in higher education is in its infancy compared with other learning-related literature (Maynes, Hatt, & Wideman, 2013). In addition to considering what the literature says, we therefore attend also to gaps in the literature and areas for future research in section 6 below.

2. IMPLICATIONS

Service learning is widely seen as an effective approach to teaching and learning in HE; as noted above, the Association of American Colleges and Universities sees it as one of ten “high impact” practices. CSL participants offer different views of the kind of knowledge and learning outcomes needed to support and sustain an innovative, resilient and diverse society. But most would agree that active, collaborative student learning involving off-campus experiences is valuable. Participants engaged in professional education tend to be especially interested in the role of learning outside the classroom in the formation of professional identity. Other participants highlight the importance of universities and colleges as places for cultivating students’ civic engagement.

This report looks more closely at assumptions and outcomes of service learning practitioners in order to inform debates about effective methods of teaching and learning in

for youth *to participate* while others prompted *critical analysis* focused on macro structural issues, interest groups, power and social justice.

Canadian HE. In particular, we focus on the kind of pedagogical practices that are associated with service learning and evidence of their impact. This information will be of interest to service learning participants (instructors, students, community partners), higher education and community leaders, and policy makers.

3. APPROACH

This report provides a synthesis of selected literature about community service-learning in Canadian higher education. The first part of this section presents the results of a keyword analysis of service learning literature, which provides an overview of the field. The second part discusses our process in selecting articles to include in this review.

General overview of service learning literature: Keyword analysis

A keyword search of the entire Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database identified 4,030 references that contain a descriptor “service learning.” Two-thirds of the identified references were scholarly journals (66%), followed by other sources (16%), reports (11%), and books and dissertations (6%). Among studies identified in the ERIC database, two-thirds (N=2,667) were peer-reviewed, and this subset of studies is included in this keyword analysis. The development of CSL as a research field is indicated by the number of articles included in the ERIC database over time. Growth occurred during the early 1990s and by 1997/1998 the number of published, peer-reviewed articles reached a plateau with approximately 100 new articles per year. After 2005, the number of articles increased again and has reached close to 200 per year in the last few years. A similar trend is evident in SCOPUS and Web of Science databases, used to check the ERIC database trend.

Most of the studies selected for our keyword analysis from ERIC were published in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* (229, 9.5%), *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* (2.9%), *Journal of Experiential Education* (2.3%) and *Teaching Sociology* (1.5%). More than two thirds (69%) were conducted in the US and 4% were Canadian. The five countries with the highest number of items related to service learning included (in order) the US, UK, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

The most frequent **participants** in CSL studies were college¹¹ (477), undergraduate students (221) and pre-service teachers (138). Younger participants, high (104), middle (53) and elementary school students (78) were often included in this type of study while graduate students (80) and older adults (68) were less frequently involved. Also, faculty members (175) and teachers (116) were often cited as participants in CSL studies while mentors (75) and practitioners (61) were less frequently included.

The analysis also shows that the most frequent **research areas** in this domain are teaching methods (17.8%), experiential learning (13.6%), citizenship education (8.5%), citizen participation (8.1%) social justice (6.0%), and citizenship or citizenship responsibility (6.9%). Less frequent research areas of CSL are multicultural education (2.4%), democracy (2.4%), adult education (2.1%) and community education (2.1%). This report addresses some of the identified knowledge gaps.

A relatively large number of studies are focused on an exploration of **the outcomes of CSL**. Most frequently, CSL studies examine the impact of CSL on student attitudes (15.5%) and

¹¹ Note that, in the US, students in 4-year university programs are referred to as “college students.”

attitude change (3.1%), student participation (8.8%), student learning (6.2%) and overall experience (3.0%), as well as their academic achievement (3.9%). A considerable number of studies also examine student cultural awareness (3.8%), cultural pluralism (3.0%) and consciousness-raising (3.5%). A considerable number of CSL studies examine reflection. Our analysis of the selected group of articles found that 172 (6.4%) articles contain keywords related to reflection while a search through abstracts found that 427 (16%) of articles contain the term “reflection.” Overall, approximately one out of five peer-reviewed studies explores issues related to reflection, reflection process or reflective practice. In contrast, a proportionally smaller number of studies examine other outcomes of CSL, for example problem solving (2.2%), critical thinking (2.2%) motivation (2.1%) and skill development (2.7%).

A relatively small number of studies provide information about **research methods**. Our keyword analysis shows that empirical CSL studies most frequently use case studies (178) or describe programs (227) or courses (80). Also, CSL studies frequently use qualitative research methods (112), interviews (167) and focus groups (60). Considerably less frequently, CSL studies use quantitative methods based on questionnaires (90), surveys (85) or mixed methods studies (18). Comparative analyses (77) are also frequently used but action (42) and participatory research (25) are rarely used.

Selection of literature for this report

From the large number of articles written about service learning noted in our keyword analysis, our selection of literature for review focused on the following questions:

- A. How can service learning be delivered in universities and colleges to enhance student engagement and outcomes?
- B. How does CSL contribute to new ways of fostering greater knowledge and competency in critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, civic responsibility, and understanding of diversity?
- C. What are promising practices to ensure access to and/or mobility within Canadian education for a diverse student body including persons with disabilities, adult learners, international students and immigrants? And finally,
- D. What institutional structures and supports are necessary for CSL to flourish?

During the initial phases, two research assistants independently reviewed and reorganized the research team’s existing collection of CSL literature. The 760 items in this collection were initially categorized into groups pertaining to evaluation, reflection, and research on CSL in Canada. Research assistants then added the results of a new comprehensive literature search.

Based on the initial phase of this study, databases were chosen to represent a cross-section of disciplines of CSL. Among the several databases searched, ERIC and EBSCO yielded the most relevant scholarly material. Other databases (Proquest, Medline, UBC Library, Scopus, First Nations Periodical Index, JStore) were used as additional sources, mainly for the identification of full-text articles and an additional more focused literature search. During this project, Zotero and EndNote were used as the citation management tools.

The search terms included combinations of “community service-learning” and “service learning” with terms such as “evaluation,” “reflection” and a variety of other keywords related to the main research questions, including “experiential learning,” “problem solving,” “race and ethnicity” and “diversity.” This search amassed an additional 461 references for further analysis.

Our initial literature search regarding diverse student bodies in CSL found that studies on Indigenous students as well as Indigenous pedagogical and methodological approaches were not well represented within the literature. We therefore conducted an additional search to fill this gap using terms such as: “Indigenous,” “Canadian Aboriginal,” “First Nations,” “experiential learning,” “community participatory approach,” “community-based research,” and “field study.” This effort amassed 202 articles. We expanded our search from Canada-specific texts to include studies from New Zealand, Australia and the US. Many of these articles, particularly empirical studies involving Indigenous participants from New Zealand and Australia, were included in the final selection for our systematic review. Our efforts also yielded other international items, including articles about the South African context.

All members of the research team were involved during the second phase of literature review, which consisted of title, keyword and abstract review. Items identified as highly relevant by multiple team members were then assessed in greater depth by the three research assistants who completed summary templates for these items. The summaries helped identify items to be read by multiple team members for the writing stage of this knowledge synthesis. Specific information about the number of articles read for in-depth review is given in the Results section below.

4. RESULTS

This section synthesizes the CSL literature in higher education including promising policies and practices, gaps and future research. Many of the articles cited are about US programs but we specifically focus on articles about CSL in Canadian HE as well.

To recap, our review of the CSL literature was organized around four questions related to its delivery; contributions to new ways of learning in specific areas; promising practices related to enhancing mobility for a diverse student body, and finally, the structures and supports needed for CSL to flourish. Sub-sections A to D below consider how the literature informs these questions.

A. The Delivery and Outcomes of Service Learning

From the 149 articles in our database on this topic, 24 items were selected for in-depth review. Of these 24, seven focused on Canadian higher education¹²; four articles addressed interdisciplinary/trans-disciplinary/inter-professional endeavors; two articles highlighted experiences within community colleges; three articles emphasized community impact; and two articles addressed skills and employability. Three items were “meta-analyses,” which synthesized the findings in other CSL research studies (Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011; McMenamain, 2014; Stallwood & Groh, 2011). Articles addressed diverse fields of study in HE including: art and design, education, landscape architecture, nursing, medicine, social work, sociology, and women’s studies.

Our review suggests that a variety of pedagogical approaches were combined with service learning, including: project-based learning (Butler & Christofili, 2014), inter-professional learning (Charles, Alexander & Oliver, 2014), narrative inquiry (Mitton-Kükner,

¹² Canadian articles include: Charles, Alexander & Oliver (2014), MacLellan (2009), Mason (2014), Maynes, Hatt & Wideman (2013), Mitton-Kukner, Nelson & Desrochers (2010), Sipos (2009), VanWynsberghe & Andruske (2007) and Zapata (2011).

Nelson, & Desrochers, 2010), reflexive photography (Amerson & Livingston, 2014), community-based research (Giles, 2014; Lewis, 2004; VanWynsberghe & Andruske, 2007), simulations (Jenkins, 2010), asset-based community development (Marullo, Moayed and Cooke, 2009), “place-based” service learning (Lewis, 2004), feminist service learning (Williams & Ferber, 2008), e-service learning (Guthrie & McCracken, 2014), and arts-based CSL (Mason, 2014; Power & Bennett, 2015).

Key ideas from literature

Assumptions about effective SL

Elements in effective CSL identified by the US National Service Learning Cooperative include: the alignment of service learning programs with curriculum and academic program goals; allowing students to choose which issues to address in their SL projects;¹³ community input into the desired elements and goals of service projects; and opportunities for student reflection (cited in Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011). Eyler et al. (2001) created an extensive annotated bibliography of articles related to CSL (mostly US), which was examined in terms of how program characteristics influenced students and student outcomes. Elements identified as impacting students’ experiences include placement quality, quantity and quality of reflective activities, duration and intensity of service, and diversity of service.

Empirical studies identify other characteristics of effective service learning including:

- The meaningful integration of classroom and community learning (Butler & Christofili, 2014; Van Wynsberghe and Andruske, 2007);
- Projects that match the skill levels of students (Mason, 2014; Zapata, 2011);
- Preparation of students for community engagement (Williams & Ferber, 2008; Marullo, Moayed, & Cooke, 2009);
- Community partner involvement in planning, design and delivery of activities (Charles, Alexander & Oliver 2014);
- Initiatives that blur lines between teaching, research, and service (Galal et al., 2014);
- More deliberate power sharing at each step of the collaboration with community (Marullo, Moayed, & Cooke, 2009);
- The importance of reflection as the mechanism for learning (Ash, Clayton & Atkinson 2005); and
- The development of ongoing community partnerships with strong relationships (Haddix, 2015¹⁴).

Debates in the CSL literature

Given that service learning has been taken up across university faculties and programs, and is informed by different ideas about learning, it is not surprising that different writers espouse

¹³ Writers disagree on the question of how much involvement students should have in selecting placements and choosing which issues to address. For example, Giles (2014) argues that if students choose partners and issues, they are less likely to select those whose values differ from their own.

¹⁴ In her article, Haddix (2015) distinguishes between service learning, which she characterizes as involving brief stints in the community, and community engagement, involving more sustained long term relationships.

different aims. For example, a common way of framing differences is whether CSL activities aim to promote transformative learning for students (Giles & Sherry, 2014) or develop practical work skills (Galal et al., 2014). Lewis (2014) describes efforts on the part of faculty at her small liberal arts college in the US to move from a “charity” to a “social justice” model, with a charity model described as rooted in a consensus view of society while a social justice model is rooted in a conflict model. A charity model constructs community as the subject while a social justice model sees it as a partner. As noted above, other writers distinguish between a *traditional* approach to service learning—described as emphasizing service without attention to systems of inequality—and a *critical* approach, which aims to “dismantle structures of injustice” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). The appropriate aims of CSL are therefore debated.

Models presented by Chambers and Butin (above) are helpful in this regard. In Butin’s (2007) terms, the critical-traditional dichotomy may be seen as the difference between *political* and *technical* approaches to CSL; in Chambers’ (2009), it might be described as the difference between *liberatory* and *experiential* approaches. However, the realities of programming are more complex than these dichotomies suggest. The main point we take from this discussion is that **the design of service learning programs matters**. It is therefore important to ask how the underlying assumptions, aims, and designs of CSL impact processes and outcomes. In particular:

1. What do programs assume about students and their learning needs?
2. What do programs assume about community partners?
3. What do programs assume about learning?

Students: Studies often highlight the privilege of university students and the need for pedagogical activities to disrupt this privilege (Muzak, 2011). For example, Haddix (2015) observes that students in the pre-service teacher program at her university tend to be white, middle-class, monolingual students. She writes, “some of my pre-service teachers assume that their career plans will not require them to be grounded in inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogies or to be prepared to work with students from cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from their own” (p. 64). Similarly, in the Canadian context, Maynes, Hatt and Wideman (2013) aspire to provide a “liberatory” CSL experience for pre-service teachers because of its potential for “social transformation for the student and potentially for the long-range goals of the community” (p. 82).

In professional education programs, challenging students’ worldviews is described as part of developing a particular kind of professional identity in students. For example, CSL is seen as a way of addressing the perceived disconnection of social work education from the communities it serves (Charles, Alexander & Oliver 2014). It was also seen as a vehicle for promoting inter-professional learning. Similarly, a survey of articles about international CSL in health-related fields argues that today’s professionals need to be socially responsive and willing to act as “enlightened change agents” in diverse contexts and communities (McMenamin et al., 2014).

But professional education programs may adopt service learning for other purposes too. For example, Galal et al. (2014) describe an initiative where pharmacy students provided health services to the community while gaining knowledge in a particular content area, confidence working with clients, and hours toward professional certification as well as university credit.

CSL was intended to allow students to practice and refine their skills (arguably a “technical” approach), although community benefits are also emphasized:

Pharmacy students and faculty members conducted 59 outreach events in 15 different cities, and assisted 2,224 beneficiaries with their Part D plans.¹⁵ The estimated total out-of-pocket savings to beneficiaries as a result of student Part D plan interventions since the program’s inception was nearly \$1.6 million. (Galal et al., p. 4)

There is little doubt that differences in program aims affect the kind of outcomes that are possible. However, it may be too simple to say that programs with liberatory aims have greater benefit for students and communities than those with more pragmatic aims; rather, as Butin suggests, there are possibilities and limitations associated with all approaches. Since most literature focuses on a particular CSL model or approach, larger-scale research is needed to explore differences across CSL approaches.

Community partners: Assumptions about community members are also important for the aims and design of CSL activities. The majority of CSL literature focuses on student learning with scant attention to community partners (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Debates related to community partners tend to focus on how much the aims and designs of programs reflect their priorities vis-à-vis those of university participants.

Most writers who address the community emphasize the need for strong reciprocal relationships between academic participants and community partners (e.g., Donahue, Bowyer & Rosenberg, 2003). Reciprocity means CSL activities are driven by both intellectual questions and community needs (cf. Lewis, 2004). One way of ensuring this is to involve community partners in the planning, design and delivery of programs (Charles, Alexander & Oliver, 2014). Another is for instructors and community partners to develop long-term, sustained relationships (Haddix, 2015).

As noted above, the adoption of CSL in professional education programs (e.g., teaching and social work) is seen as a way to ensure more respectful relationships between future professionals and their “clients.” For example, writers emphasize the need to shift student perspectives from a focus on community deficits to a focus on community assets and structural challenges (Haddix, 2015; Charles, Alexander & Oliver 2014). It is generally assumed that privileged CSL students end up working with marginalized members of the community and the agencies that support them in their placements.

But some CSL initiatives involve partnerships that appear to be more power balanced. For example, a small art and design university in eastern Canada responded to a range of community requests calling for artistic expertise (Mason, 2014). A course with Spanish language learners worked with community partners in a range of activities with the goal of increasing students’ cultural understanding and linguistic confidence while helping community organizations with day-to-day work (Zapata, 2011). A sociology course enlisted a variety of partners (including campus groups) to increase students’ understanding about sustainability (VanWynsberghe & Andruske, 2007). Reciprocity was assumed in these cases.

In sum, the diversity of instructors, students and community partners means that preconceptions about how to balance priorities may be problematic. Rather, the literature suggests it is important for the aims and designs of CSL to be co-determined by instructors,

¹⁵ The aim of the service learning was for students to assist Medicare beneficiaries with plan selection. Consistent with this technical approach, community benefits were quantified.

students, and community partners. In particular, designers of CSL activities need to be conscious of and responsive to potential power dynamics between students, instructors, community partners, and their clients.

Assumptions about learning

The literature reflects different assumptions about what constitutes valuable learning outcomes. Eylar et al. (2001) suggest categories of positive CSL student outcomes that include personal, social, and learning outcomes; career development; and a stronger relationship with their institutions. Reported benefits for CSL students in the studies we examined include:

- Reflective and collaborative learning (Guthrie & McCracken, 2014);
- Greater awareness of the links between theory and practice (VanWynsberge & Andruske, 2007);
- Developing multicultural competencies (Williams & Ferber, 2008);
- Commitment to social justice (Charles, Alexander & Oliver, 2014; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Maynes, Hatt & Wideman, 2013);
- Increased commitment to community engagement (VanWynsberge & Andruske, 2007);
- Development of professional identity (Charles, Alexander & Oliver, 2014; Haddix, 2015; Mitton-Kukner, Nelson & Desrochers, 2010);
- Learning about self in relation to others (Mitton-Kukner, Nelson & Desrochers, 2010); and
- Increased self-confidence regarding content knowledge (Zapata, 2011).

Perhaps because of the wide range of outcomes (planned and unplanned), there were divergent assumptions about how to assess CSL activities. Surveys of CSL literature (McMenamin, 2014; Stallwood & Groh, 2011), which were both focused on the adoption of CSL in health-care education, suggest that quantitative evaluation of CSL activities and outcomes is both possible and desirable. For example, based on their review of 27 articles about CSL in undergraduate nursing education between 2000 and 2008, Stallwood and Groh (2011) expressed concern that there was “no consistency in measured concepts and instruments used in the implementation of service learning, constraining rigorous research.” McMenamin et al. (2014) add that the reliance on self-report data in the majority of 53 papers surveyed suggests “objective assessment of student learning outcomes” is lacking (p. 301). Of the 53 papers reviewed by McMenamin and co-authors, 31 used quantitative methods, and 26 were quasi-experimental with pre- and post-questionnaires as the primary data collection tool (p. 293). The quest for standardized assessment of activities that tend to be quite diverse is noteworthy.

Concerns no doubt arise from the priority given to evidence-based research in health sciences but also from the predominance of CSL research by instructors studying their own classes (usually with small samples) using a variety of methods and measures. Outcomes of service learning for students are also acknowledged to be difficult to measure, especially in the short term. For example, in her project engaging pre-service teachers in community, Haddix (2015) aimed to provide “consciousness raising experiences” that would affect the kind of teachers students become. Yet, longitudinal CSL studies are lacking (see Taylor and Raykov, 2014 for an exception).

In sum, in addition to some areas of consensus over promising practices in CSL, there is debate over aims, processes, and evaluation. Some of these debates are rooted in ideological differences while others are related to gaps and weaknesses in the literature.

B. The Contribution of CSL to New Ways of Learning

The second question framing our review of the CSL literature focuses on how experiential and community-based learning fosters greater knowledge and competency in critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, communication of complex ideas and data, social advocacy, and civic responsibility. A total of 115 articles were linked to this focus, and 18 articles were given in-depth review. Fourteen were oriented to the US and four were Canadian, including one that examined CSL in a community college system. The remainder of the articles focused on universities. Hall (2009) mapped developments in various Canadian institutions, calling attention to how Continuing Studies units of universities have long histories of university-community engagement. The studies examined CSL within diverse fields: engineering, sociology, teacher education, heritage education, nursing, nutritional science, physical education, athletic studies, and dentistry; most of the CSL programs examined were associated with professional schools.

Key Ideas from the Literature

Although there was variance with respect to what critical thinking and civic responsibility meant, there was a general consensus that CSL can achieve these learning outcomes if they are carefully organized, have clarity of purpose, are relevant to students' professional futures, address the emotional dimensions of students' learning, and provide opportunities for ongoing student reflections guided by faculty who understand students' levels of understanding about social problems. Online forums have great potential, as do interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaborations. Strong partnerships and buy-in from all stakeholders (students, staff, faculty and community members) are needed. The institutional culture and its leaders, not just specific programs, must walk the talk; that is, community engagement must be integrated into the core of HE. Dualistic thinking such as the division between knowing and doing are thought of as barriers to realizing the full potential of CSL, as are structures that separate research, teaching and service (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Finally, the complexity of university-community partnerships must be acknowledged. Scaling up of CSL activities and large classes create challenges.

Development of Critical Thinking Skills

Nelson and Crow (2014) offer a useful overview of various definitions of critical thinking (CT), noting how Bloom's taxonomy continues to inform many studies; they argue that because CSL stimulates cognition within a relevant context, it is quite effective. Students also learn that they can be wrong and to make adjustments. They compared two groups of pre-service education students and found CT skills were enhanced when it was considered relevant to the professional futures of these students.

CSL can enhance CT when it is interdisciplinary and collaborative and when students are provided with online forums for reflections and discussion (Guthrie & McCracken, 2014). This approach enables students to be exposed to a "pluralistic learning ecology" (p. 239) where they learn from several different disciplinary areas. Students in this project (N=192) were enrolled in different service learning activities over three semesters; they came together online and had opportunities to hear others' views and perspectives on solving social problems such as poverty and homelessness.

Connecting to community and the development of reciprocal relationships amongst students, faculty and community was central to the development of dentistry students' CT skills (Brondani, Clark, Russolf, & Alekksejuniene, 2008). At the University of British Columbia, students took the required Professional and Community Service (PACS) course which ran each year for four years, during which time they learned to build partnerships, conduct needs assessments, create and evaluate health promotion activities. The authors drew attention to the importance of co-learning, an alternative to the traditional one-way approach; one of the community partnerships developed was with the LGBTQ community.

In another study, CT was associated with the ability to see links between local problems and structural inequalities. In a nutrition program (Huye, 2015), instructors used art and poetry to encourage nutrition science students (N=14) to think differently about hunger and food security. Students' journals captured their interpretations of the art and poetry they encountered in the classroom and their engagement with staff at the local food pantry. Findings showed that students deepened their understanding of food security and structural inequalities, recognizing that food insecurity is more than an economic problem. They also developed stronger links between class content and social issues and changed their approach to relaying nutrition information.

Difference

Activities where students engage with unfamiliar communities are strongly associated with developing deeper understandings about diversity and are of particular concern within professional education, for example, for pre-service teachers. Bell, Horn and Roxas (2007) examined two different CSL experiences for pre-service teachers: group A of pre-service teachers (n=19) mentored students both within and outside a school, and group B (n=21) provided one-to-one tutoring to students within a school. Using Paine's (1989) categories of how difference is understood: individual (psychological and biological origins), categorical (behaviours associated with gender, race, class, etc.), contextual (differences are socially constructed), and pedagogical (differences have pedagogical significance), they found that Group A had more contextual and pedagogical orientations to difference than Group B students. Group A students were involved in non-traditional and dialogical relations with more community connections and opportunities to learn from students, families and the wider community, while Group B students tended to occupy the more traditional role of teacher as expert. While those in Group B developed some categorical understandings of difference, their contextual or pedagogical orientations to difference were low.

Pre-service teachers' understanding of diversity was also the focus of Middleton's (2003) study, which, like Bell et al. (2007), found that CSL placements that involved dialogical relations between students, teacher, and community enhanced students' understanding of multiculturalism. She compared students' learning from two different approaches to a course on multicultural education and social change. In the first version, the mostly white and relatively privileged students remained on campus, had occasional field visits, community visitors came to class, and students' CSL activities took place outside of the curriculum. In the subsequent course, students spent considerable time in an ethnically diverse Professional Development School (PDS) oriented to meeting the learning needs of pre-service teachers, students, the wider community and teaching staff, where they had more opportunities to connect with teachers and the wider community.

The significance of co-learning from and with community was also the focus of a study of nursing education involving an international immersion experience in Honduras that explored

students' cultural competence, defined as "the awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for providing quality care to diverse populations" (Smit & Tremethick, 2013, p. 132). The first immersion involved a partnership with an international mission with limited community connections; a subsequent program partnered with a local expert and with community members, and involved students learning advocacy skills needed to build a medical centre. Surveys of students indicated they developed 1) greater sense of self-efficacy, 2) appreciation for their own privilege, which they had taken for granted, and 3) appreciation of the strength of Honduran families and the community.

Nursing students' orientation to diversity, particularly their responsibilities with respect to the care of vulnerable populations was the focus of a study of a Canadian project that involved a partnership with an Afro-Canadian community of mostly elderly residents who wanted an early screening program for cardiac problems (Gillis & MacLellan, 2010). Like other studies, the collaboration with community members and learning from local and Indigenous knowledges was critical to students' developing understanding of health as a political and structural issue, not just the responsibility of individuals. In contrast, a study of a CSL project involving engineering students working in teams to design a personal vehicle for a person with a disability, reported that while learning about teamwork was a significant outcome as was designing prototypes, few reported learning anything about working with people with disabilities (Pierrakos, Nagel, Nagel, Moran & Barrella, 2014).

CSL initiatives where students are learning about cultural and economic differences are emotional journeys, as they often require students to confront their privilege and assumptions and to engage with difficult knowledge. Critical emotion studies have much to contribute, as outlined by Langstradd and Bowon's (2011) study of how CSL involves students' developing empathy for the "other." The authors suggest that this is not always a good outcome because empathy can mask inequalities and does not necessarily lead to action. Nussbaum's (2001) explorations of different emotions directed attention to compassion and its potential as a more fully social and political emotion because it involves students not only identifying with others, but also evaluating injustice and suffering and engaging in ethical actions. Compassion can be a risky emotion as well, as it too can mask unequal power relations and reproduce a sense of moral superiority by those expressing compassion.

In a closely related discussion, Hollis (2004) examined how CSL experiences impact students' assignment of blame for inequalities. Blame can be attributed to the individual, the culture, and the larger system. Other studies point to how CSL can reinforce victim blaming and the associated opposition to social programs. Hollis compared a structured and unstructured CSL program. In the unstructured program, students had a list of agencies and were told to make their own connections and complete 20 hours of service; their assignments involved following the textbook and keeping weekly journals. The structured approach involved students partnering with a local agency running after-school programs; social problems were in discussed class and students also kept weekly journals. Findings pointed to a tendency for those students in the unstructured group to blame staff of the agencies, while students in the structured group placed blame on a lack of funding. Students in the structured CSL experience also became less optimistic and more despairing as they recognized the structural conditions of social problems.

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

How CSL leads to students' increased civic mindedness is a recurring theme in CSL studies. Community-based research (CBR) and cross-institutional collaborations were found to be

particularly important in a study by Marullo, Moayed and Cooke (2009) that examined two sociology CSL programs in two urban universities, including a large elite university with mainly white students and a small minority-serving university. Students from both institutions conducted CBR across several semesters in response to a community agency's concern about the unequal distribution of political and economic resources in a poor Latino community. The exchange of both institutional and community-based knowledge led to significant outcomes including the development of an asset map of community services, the development of increased voice in municipal policies for the Latino community, and a change in multiculturalism education.

Collaboration was also the focus of Guthrie and McCracken's (2014) research into an CSL program where students from different disciplines enrolled in nine service learning sections over three semesters and came together online to share their CSL experiences. Students reported that being exposed to the multiple perspectives of students from other disciplines was valuable to the development of their notions of civic responsibility.

Vaknin and Bresciani (2013) reported on a project in northern Canada that responded to the community's desire to be more involved in historical research. The Tungatsivvik Archaeological Project, located near Iqualuit, involved close cooperation between the local community, students at Arctic College, and community elders. Through field exercises, lab analyses, and community reporting, both students' and community members' research skills were developed. The archeological project has become a major source of artifacts dating back to prehistoric.

While many studies, as noted above, have suggested curricular CSL is the most effective approach, Whitley and Yoder (2015) found the opposite, i.e., extracurricular CSL had more potential to impact students' attitudes and behaviours towards social responsibility. They compared curricular civic engagement, extracurricular civic engagement, and participation in a living-learning community of students attending the Michigan State University. All three approaches increased students' civic engagement attitudes and behaviours, but extra-curricular engagement, because of its voluntary nature, had greater impact.

The necessity of having institutional commitment to and a culture of civic engagement, not just programs, was the conclusion of Billings and Terkla's (2014) nine-year longitudinal study of students' in the College of Citizenship and Service at Tufts University. Students' values, beliefs, and civic activities were examined, and a positive relationship between campus culture and students' civic values and their activity was identified. There were no gender or race differences. The authors noted that students' sense of self-efficacy, leadership activities and connections to community mediated these relationships.

Students' civic mindedness and orientation to philanthropy, defined as "voluntary action that advances a vision for the public good" (p. 12), was the focus of Hatcher and Morgan's study (2015). When students had a choice of where they worked, their understanding of the non-profit sector, of social issues, and their willingness to volunteer increased. The authors emphasized that CSL must be about the development of *partnerships*, not finding placements.

C. Addressing Student Diversity Through CSL

This section considers the results of a literature search focused on promising practices to ensure access to and/or mobility within Canadian education for a diverse student body. Of the 70 titles and abstracts reviewed, 15 were selected for in-depth reading and analysis. From this analysis, four items were about Indigenous student experiences; five items addressed race in broad terms;

one article addressed students with disabilities, and one article focused on immigrants and refugees. Our search also yielded one article for each of the following themes: whiteness (as an issue in CSL), first generation students, ESL students, and Latino students. Three items were oriented toward Canadian experiences and the remainder was written about CSL experiences in the US.

The review of literature revealed that some research has focused on the effects of CSL on diverse student populations from varying social, economic and cultural backgrounds (Shadduck-Hernández, 2006; McKay & Estrella, 2008; Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012). For example, Coles (1999) and McKay and Estrella (2008) look at the role of CSL programs on diverse students' success and retention in higher education. In addition, a number of studies addressed the impact of the predominance of white faculty and students on marginalized students' experiences in CSL courses (e.g., Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012). Bussert-Webb (2009) and Shadduck-Hernández (2006) emphasize the powerful significance of ethnic similarity in student-community relationships and the consequent impact on students' experiences in CSL.

Expanding our search

Our team searched for literature about the CSL experiences of diverse students, including racialized students, immigrants and refugees, international and ESL students, first-generation students, learners from low-income families, differently-abled students, and studies on women. In searching Canadian CSL literature for items about increasing access to and mobility for a diverse student body, we found that literature related to Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) students was particularly limited.

As noted in the Approaches section (above), we expanded our search terms to provide a stronger representation of literature on Indigenous scholarship and experiences within CSL. We then came across articles such as Pence, Anglin and Hunt-Jinnouchi (2010), which addresses the First Nations Partnership Program (FNPP), an educational partnership between First Nations communities and a Canadian university. This article contributes to discourses around space, inclusion and the possible benefits of community projects that evolve “in the borderland of the university” (p. 60). The political notion of borderlands signifies both marginalization and “places of creative intercourse, yielding directions and ideas not conceivable within established centres of power, nor possible either, in remote, undisturbed locations” (p. 58). Being located on the borderlands of the university allowed for greater development of community participation and influence; a location in which project participants could be “truer to their partners” (p. 60). Had the project been more geographically centered within the campus, it would have been “more fundamentally influenced by the voice of academia” (p. 60). This article models the depth, respect for relationship building, creativity and critical thinking necessary in envisioning and facilitating projects that can engage and maintain diverse students, given its potential to develop their sense of safety within the academy.

Promising practices

Efforts to address increasing diversity in Canadian HE can be seen in policies and practices by several institutions across the country. For example, some studies referred to the importance of place-based education for creating more democratic spaces for diverse groups of students and communities involved (Anderson, Pakula, Smye, Peters (Siyamex), & Schroeder, 2011; Battiste, Bell, Findlay, Findlay, & Henderson, 2005; Power & Bennett, 2015). However, there is still

work to be done in order to reach a more accessible and equitable space for various groups of students. The impacts of colonization, exclusive policies and homogenizing practices have impeded access and mobility for many groups. For example, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' participation and success rates in the academy led the Canadian governments (federal, provincial and Indigenous) to address barriers to Indigenous students in higher education (Pidgeon, Archibald, Hawley, 2014). Despite these efforts, issues around access to education persist.¹⁶ Pidgeon, et al. (2014) suggest lack of Indigenous peer and faculty support leads to lower student retention rates. Support, along with acceptance, sharing and awareness were recurring themes in the literature (Young, 1999; Pidgeon, et al. 2014; Pence, et al., 2010). Some solution-oriented collaborative projects are addressed below.

Although the partnership mentioned above (Pence, et al., 2010) was initially created for the purpose of promoting Indigenous early-childhood education, it inspired other community-university engaged programs at the University of Victoria. Like Haddix (2015) cited above, authors place an emphasis on “authentic relationships” rather than short-term programs in communities. Pidgeon et al. (2014) provided an examination of how a culturally relevant peer and faculty support program “works to create spaces within the academy for Indigenous scholars” (p. 4). Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) initiative, designed to support peer and faculty mentoring for Indigenous graduate students, was a project performed in a collaboration involving five universities in British Columbia¹⁷. Project findings suggest that the relationships established in SAGE helped develop a sense of belonging, provided networking opportunities, and fostered students' self-accountability within academic environments.

Both American and Canadian practitioners and researchers frequently look to writings about experiential learning and critical pedagogy (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970) to rethink diversity in higher education. For example, Shaddock-Hernández (2006) sees a need to design a CSL framework that empowers diverse communities; is informed by critical pedagogy; is situated in learning theory; and promotes the concept of funds of knowledge.¹⁸ She calls for CSL programs that offer “alternative and creative spaces of critique and possibility” (p. 67).

Challenges

Literature on American colleges and universities suggest CSL can be a pedagogical tool to tackle issues of diversity. Roadblocks to increasing access to and mobility within the CSL context for diverse students include: 1) white privilege and racial inequality (Chesler and

¹⁶ In Canada “less than 8% of Aboriginal peoples ages 15 to 64 have university credential[s] compared to 24% of non-Aboriginal peoples in the same age group... (see Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2008).” Moreover, “faculty demographic data published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2008) ... reports that in 2006 approximately 1% (377) of faculty self-identified as Aboriginals” (Pidgeon, et al., 2014, p. 3).

¹⁷ The five universities are University of British Columbia (Vancouver), University of British Columbia (Okanagan), Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, and University of Northern British Columbia.

¹⁸ The idea of “funds of knowledge” comes partly out of the work of US researcher Luis Moll (1992), who argued that bilingual literacy researchers need to consider the hidden home and community resources (knowledge and networks) of their students as a way of challenging pervasive deficit thinking.

Scalera, 2000; Coles, 1999; Mitchell, 2012; Novick, Seider, and Huguley, 2011; Pickron-Davis, 1999; Seider, Huguley, Novick 2013); 2) Eurocentric models of education, highly individualized and competitive education systems (Shaddock-Hernández, 2006); and 3) a lack of sensitivity to the experiences of ESL and first-generation students (Crossman & Kite, 2007; Pelco, Ball & Lockeman, 2014; Yeh, 2010).

CSL and the pedagogy of whiteness: Community service learning programs tend to involve courses taught mostly by “white faculty members ... [with] mostly white students at predominantly white institutions to serve mostly poor individuals and mostly people of color” (Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012, p. 612). The resulting centering of white privilege and power in CSL programs has been found to 1) dissuade racialized students from engaging in CSL courses; 2) negatively impact the experiences of racialized students who do engage in CSL programs; and 3) exclude more critical perspectives often brought forward by racialized staff (Verjee & Butterwick 2014). For example, Seider, Huguley, & Novick (2013) compare white students with racialized students in a CSL program at a US university. Their study suggests that compared to their white peers, racialized students feel a weaker sense of community in the CSL classroom and were mainly silent during “the discussions in which diverse perspectives would catalyze student learning and growth” (p. 35). This study corroborates Pickron-Davis’ (1999) findings that in CSL courses there was an “internalized silent oppression” which impeded the discussion around race and cultural differences because of white students’ standards for communication. She argues that the discourse of whiteness impedes learning for racialized students, as they cannot fully engage in class activities and conversations. Michelle et al. (2012) argued that service learning programs and projects based on a pedagogy of whiteness have very little positive impact on community outcomes and result in “mis-educative experiences for students, such as unchallenged racism for White students and isolating experiences for racialized students, and missed opportunities for educators to make their own instruction more transformative” (p. 613).

Similarities in student-community dyad: Shaddock-Hernández’s 2006 study examines a CSL program in which immigrant and refugee students mentored youth from similar ethno-cultural backgrounds. She posits that placing marginalized students in service with their community positions them in a comfort zone where they can use their own experiences of racism, sexism and classism to inform their work. Furthermore, Shaddock-Hernández espouses that serving a familiar community with cultural/ethnic similarities establishes a sense of trust for both students and community members, which helps improve experiences and reinforces students’ identity work. Bussert-Webb (2009) affirms Shaddock-Hernández’s findings through an examination of sixteen Latino student teachers who tutored children from similar ethnic/cultural backgrounds. Bussert-Webb challenges the discourse of power where white-middle class students believe that they have a mission to “save” disadvantaged communities. Similarly, Shumer (2001) challenges the practices of CSL programs in which able-bodied students serve differently-abled individuals and communities, arguing that pairing differently-abled students with a similar community allows students to learn more from their CSL experiences while providing beneficial outcomes for the communities.

Diverse student retention and success: McKay and Estrella (2008) examine the role of CSL on first-generation students’ retention and success in school. They argue that while the statistics

related to first-generation student attrition is alarming, CSL programs offer first-generation students the opportunity to experience academic and social integration, which leads to greater academic success. Their study also highlights the importance of interactions between instructor and learner in CSL courses because such interactions positively impact students' abilities and motivation to reach their academic goals.

Coles (1999) found that racialized students attending a US university were less likely to enroll in CSL courses because they were: more likely to also be working full-time; already participating in service activities in their own communities (outside of school); more likely to be first-generation college students seeking professional degrees; and already had exposure to marginalized people and did not see a need for service learning experiences. When the author implemented pedagogical changes, including allowing students to be placed at a community organization they already knew and increasing the grade value allocated to service learning, participation of these students increased significantly.

To conclude, existing literature suggests that CSL instructors need to recognize differences in their students and be aware of the positionality of students in relation to community members. Acknowledgement of difference is a steppingstone to helping educators engage students from various backgrounds and circulate healthy, safe dialogues that bridge classroom theory with CSL praxis.

D. Institutional Structures and Supports required for CSL

The above discussion focuses on the potential of CSL for students and other participants to achieve their goals, assuming that institutional supports are in place. This section directly addresses the question of what kind of structures and supports are needed for CSL¹⁹ programs to flourish. As noted above, CSL is relatively new in Canadian HE, and is in the process of becoming institutionalized in many universities and colleges. A “scan” of CSL programs in 39 universities and three colleges across Canada found that CSL units have different names and locations across institutions (Baloy, 2014). Programs vary in terms of the kinds and levels of support provided to participants; for example, eight universities had developed “faculty toolkits” and nine had developed “resource repositories.”

A number of articles, mostly by US authors, discuss the kind of institutional supports necessary for successful CSL and community-university engagement more generally. For example, Bringle and Hatcher (2000) suggest that college leaders should engage in strategic planning around service learning, develop a centralized office to address the needs of different participants, increase budget commitments to programs, and ensure service learning is guided by academic leadership in order to integrate it into the academic core of institutions. Similarly, Sandmann et al. (2008) suggest, “for the scholarship of engagement to become a core institutional practice, it will have to be advanced at the level of second-order changes—changes that move beyond programs, structures, and rhetorical positioning to involve institutional culture and underlying policy” (p. 50). In particular, Billings and Terkla (2014) argue that commitment to citizen development must be integrated into campus core values, beliefs, and practices.

Based on their experience of implementing academic service learning at Northern Michigan University, Duby, Ganzert and Bonsall (2014) reinforce the importance of providing infrastructure for the program and tying it to the organization's mission. Their recommendations for other universities also include:

¹⁹ Recalling the diversity of approaches to CSL discussed throughout this report, a related question is around what type/s of CSL should be supported.

- Enlisting faculty or administrative champions;
- Creating and utilizing advisory boards;
- Promoting the program both internally and externally; and
- Building assessment instruments as the program is developed. (pp. 75-76)

In the Canadian context, the few articles that address institutional supports tend to focus on community- university engagement (CUE). For example, Jackson (2008) identifies three parts to CUE: community-based experiential learning, community-based continuing education, and community-based research. He argues that universities are more likely to participate in social innovation if there is a “robust, diversified, and effectively coordinated approach to community engagement through service learning, field practicums, co-operative placements, community-based research, continuing education and volunteering” (p. 3). Hall (2009) adds that Continuing Education leaders should initiate and/or play an active role in university-wide discussions, task forces, or committees on university-community engagement or civic engagement. In his view, community-based research and community-service learning “add to the rich and varied resources, skills, capacities, and imagination already present in the field of continuing education in Canada” (p. 21).

The main point to take from writings about institutionalizing CSL is that—like other activities directed toward developing sustainable and rewarding partnerships—CSL requires visionary leadership at all levels, resources, and coordination. As noted above, the underlying assumptions, aims, and designs of CSL programs (about participants and about learning) affect both processes and probable outcomes. Therefore, agreement on a vision for CSL is a first step.

While there is currently a lack of consensus on a CSL vision across Canadian higher education, an article by Kezar and Rhoads (2001) is helpful in identifying important questions that could provide a starting point for discussion. In addition to questioning the desired outcomes of CSL, these authors ask:

1. How do organizational structures impact the ability of service learning to meet educational goals?
2. How is the work of CSL organized? And,
3. How is CSL to be implemented?

Question 1 considers the implications of how CSL is located institutionally. For example, is it housed in Student Services or in an academic unit, and what difference does that make? A scan of CSL programs in 42 universities and colleges (Baloy, 2014), as well as interviews with CSL leaders in nine Canadian universities (Kahlke & Taylor, 2015), suggest that there is a great deal of variation in the locations of CSL programs, including within Research, Academic, and Student Affairs portfolios. Kezar and Rhoads (2001) suggest that the placement of CSL programs is difficult partly because it challenges existing divisions within universities, for example, between formal and informal learning, and between research, teaching, and service. Therefore, it does not fit neatly into one portfolio.

The research-teaching-service divisions are relevant also for Question 2 (how CSL work is to be organized), since reward structures in universities often fail to acknowledge and value the work required for faculty to plan and implement a service component in a course. In addition, evaluation research on service learning conducted by instructors is not always valued. But when CSL is housed in Student Affairs, it may be seen to lack legitimacy (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). The organization of CSL work therefore requires challenging existing boundaries.

The third question about how to implement CSL raises the familiar issue of how to engage community members and university representatives in a democratic process of identifying needs and determining how they will be met. As noted earlier, questions about how to address power imbalances between the university and community are key to this discussion (Marullo, Moayed, & Cooke, 2009). Kezar and Rhoads (2001) suggest engaging in deliberate power-sharing practices in each step of the collaboration from initially defining projects, to shared teaching roles and grading, to developing mutual accountabilities for outcomes. Of course, this response assumes that universities are willing to shift away from one-way “charity” models of CSL.

5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Our process of developing this report has yielded several databases related to each of our focal questions, housed in both Zotero and Endnote. These have been merged into an annotated bibliography which we plan to make available on the UBC CCEL website.

A second phase of this project is still underway. It includes collecting and sharing practitioner-oriented resources in a central site that can be shared, perhaps on the CACSL website, and linked to CSL websites of individual institutions.

6. GAPS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Our review of the literature suggests there is some consensus about effective practices, such as: aligning service learning with academic as well as community organization goals, helping students to integrate their classroom and community learning, and providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. However, further research is needed. In large quantitative studies and surveys of the literature, differences in the aims and implementation of the various service learning initiatives presents a problem for interpreting research findings. Thus, although large scale studies and meta-analyses of the CSL literature studies can provide a sense of patterns and trends, “service learning” is not a homogeneous practice and therefore efforts to generalize findings must be treated with caution. At the same time, the transferability of the results of small-scale qualitative studies is limited; studies often reflect instructors’ unique experiences with service learning and involve approaches to research that are quite diverse. Addressing these limitations could involve mixed-methods research (e.g., combining surveys with interviews, focus groups, and/or observations)(cf., Taylor and Raykov, 2014) and studies of programs offered in multiple sites (e.g., Smart Girl program discussed in Williams and Ferber, 2008).

CSL is relatively new in Canadian HE, and is in the process of becoming institutionalized in many universities and colleges. There is a lack of Canadian articles that address the kind of structures and supports are needed for CSL programs to flourish in HE. Further, much of the literature focuses on programs in universities rather than colleges. In addition to an overall need for more institutional discussion of CSL, discussion about institutionalizing CSL must acknowledge the diverse goals and assumptions that underpin programs. In other words, institutional arrangements will depend to a great extent on the vision for CSL that is developed. Context-sensitive studies are therefore needed.

In addition, case studies comparing the practices and outcomes of different models of service learning would make an important contribution to debates over the aims, processes, and evaluation of CSL. Such case studies could address a common shortcoming of the literature, which is that most studies focus on one group of participants—students, or instructors, or community partners. In particular, the majority of CSL literature focuses on student learning with scant attention to community partners, although the literature in this area is growing. More case studies of the interactions among all participants is needed given that service learning outcomes are critically dependent on relationships and collaborative work.

As with the problem of different purposes of CSL outlined above, there are diverse orientations and studies about how CSL contributes to critical thinking (CT) and civic responsibility. Many studies rely on students' self-reporting. Our understanding of the potential of CSL in relation to these particular skills and dispositions could be deepened if more research involved the documentation of students' actual behaviours (perhaps through ethnographic case studies). Careful consideration of what counts as evidence of CT and civic mindedness beyond counting students' and graduates' volunteer activities is needed, which could involve input from community partners and the constituents they serve. More longitudinal studies would also strengthen claims about the impact of CSL activities over time; for example, we found little research that focuses on how CSL impacts students' further education and careers.²⁰

Future research could expand discourses on difference and diversity within Canadian higher education and CSL. Additionally, Canadian studies exploring the ability of CSL to provide meaningful educational experiences for Indigenous, first generation, international and racialized²¹ and differently-abled students would make a strong contribution to the literature. Research into the relationship between student positionality and experiences in communities is also needed. For example, we did not find literature that investigates whether women participating in CSL courses in male-dominated fields such as engineering encounter barriers.

7. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Throughout our process, we have liaised with the Centre for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) at UBC. A member of staff attended relevant team meetings and the Director, Susan Grossman provided feedback on our draft report. We also invited and incorporated feedback from members of the Ontario CSL Network, CACSL, and the Executive Director of the Edmonton Community Foundation.

Following the release of this report, we plan to present our report at the upcoming CACSL conference in Calgary in May 2016. We will also develop a book chapter from the report. We are exploring the possibility of conducting a webinar for the CACUSS Community Engagement Community of Practice.

We plan to work with CCEL to house our annotated bibliography of research literature and will work with CACSL and the Ontario CSL Network to identify and collect practitioner-oriented resources, which can be shared on the CACSL website.

²⁰ Taylor and Raykov's (2014) longitudinal study of former CSL students from the University of Alberta provides some insight into the impact of service learning on students' subsequent education, career plans, and community-based activities.

²¹ Most studies of CSL and racialized students were conducted in the US.

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University of British Columbia
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