

**Title: Revising Abnormal Psychology Course**

**Personal Engagement**

My involvement in the Community Engagement Fellowship started just as I shifted roles from an adjunct instructor to a full-time tenure-track position. Joining the program at this time helped me step outside the daily tasks of preparing classes and grading papers to consider the reciprocal effects my students, myself, and our community have on one another. This combined with student requests in my Abnormal Psychology course for more experiences in which they could apply their understanding of psychological disorders, their treatment, and relevant issues and led to my decision to redesign that course for my project.

By far, the greatest benefit of the fellowship was meeting other professionals from such a variety of contexts – other academic disciplines, government, law, community and student resources, and more. The opportunity to hear the major concerns of these community activists broadened my ideas about the relevance of this course for students, beyond the clinical applications and self-awareness I was limited to seeing. Hearing the methods and feedback of my cohort members fueled my sorely bogged down creativity, left smoldering beneath the pressure of my first full-time year.

I took the leap and tried new methods in the classroom, attended events off campus, used art to represent ideas, and required service learning as a component of another class. As I reached out to other community organizations and campus resources, I found myself feeling more grounded and supported, and in a better position to connect to students. Seeing them thrive as they became more engaged, I developed a deeper appreciation for the benefits of students

Community Engagement Fellows Project Report

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learning outside the classroom and their ability to share their newfound knowledge and experiences with one another.

These changes have not all gone smoothly or as I pictured them. Students struggled, I struggled, and it meant more work for those who agreed to support me in this journey. I have the good fortune, however, to be in a discipline centered on the human experience. These challenges presented opportunities to apply all we are learning about diversity, resilience, and the need for strong community connections and to deepen our genuine understanding of these concepts in ways my perspective alone cannot teach. I have certainly tempered my goals along the way and learned to be satisfied with a longer-term approach to revising my class. My list of resources will continue to grow and I will slowly incorporate changes each time I teach the course. This shift in perspective has allowed me to make time to stop, reach out, and listen in the classroom and all other contexts of my life.

I was very concerned about devoting time to a project “off campus” this year, but I found it was a better use of time than I could have imagined. I looked forward to every meeting and appreciated the flexibility of the program when other obligations took priority. I am grateful that the connections, comradery, and creativity that I found here will continue to grow and deepen throughout my life.