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Seeing Community Engagement as We Are: Student Perceptions of Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship Education

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The purpose of the research was to more deeply understand undergraduate students' perceptions of service-learning (SL) and social entrepreneurship education (SE) by examining ways in which the gender of students and their prior experiences in community engagement might shape those perceptions. We designed, administered, and analyzed the results of a survey completed by 382 undergraduate students. Results indicated that, regardless of whether the students had experiences in SL or SE, they shared similar views of the values and practices associated with each approach. However, the disaggregated data by gender showed that self-identified female students more strongly endorsed certain aspects of the community-engaged approaches in comparison with self-identified male students. These findings further emerging critiques of community engagement learning experiences that have explored how positionality impacts students' understanding of, and approach to, community engagement.

Keywords: *civic engagement, community engagement, service-learning, social change, social entrepreneurship*

Viendo el compromiso comunitario como lo que es: Percepciones de los estudiantes acerca del Aprendizaje en Servicio y la Educación del Empresariado Social

El propósito de la investigación era entender mejor la percepción de los estudiantes de pregrado acerca del aprendizaje en servicio (SL) y de la educación del empresariado social (SE), indagando en cómo el género de los estudiantes y sus experiencias previas en participación comunitaria podrían haber configurado esa percepción. Hemos diseñado, administrado y analizado los resultados de una encuesta a 382 estudiantes de pregrado. Los resultados indicaron que, independientemente de que los estudiantes tuvieran experiencias en SL o SE o no, compartían puntos de vista similares acerca de los valores y prácticas asociadas con cada enfoque. Sin embargo, los datos correspondientes a género mostraron que las estudiantes que se identificaron a sí mismas como mujeres apoyaban mucho más ciertos aspectos de la participación comunitaria que los estudiantes varones que se identificaron a sí mismos como hombres. Estos hallazgos conllevan a nuevas críticas a este tipo de experiencias, centradas en analizar la manera en que el posicionamiento de los estudiantes impacta su comprensión y perspectiva acerca de la participación comunitaria.

Palabras clave: *participación cívica, participación comunitaria, aprendizaje en servicio, cambio social, empresariado social.*

Editors' Note: Translation by **Yamilet Hernandez**
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Increasingly, questions are being raised interrogating the differences among the various pedagogical approaches utilized in higher education to promote the development of engaged citizens (McBride & Mlyn, 2020). This emerging critique, as well as a provocative conference presentation by Scobey (2015) and Enos' seminal work, *Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship in Higher Education: A Pedagogy of Social Change* (2015), motivated us to design a study to examine how students see these issues in order to better understand enrollment patterns, student behaviors, and best practices. The primary purpose of the research was to understand college students' perceptions of two approaches to academic course-based community engagement commonly utilized in higher education—service-learning pedagogy (SL) and social entrepreneurship education (SE)—by comparing the approaches through a survey. A secondary purpose of the research, motivated by our own observations and the documented differences by gender in enrollment patterns in course-based community engagement, was to examine the relationship between students' gender and their perceptions of these two community engagement approaches.

The following literature review will develop (1) a general comparison between SL and SE pedagogies and (2) a summary of research literature documenting the influence of gender in the participation of and perceptions about SL and SE.

Comparison of SL and SE Pedagogies

The survey was designed to align with five themes identified within SL and SE research literature. The five themes were (1) the starting point for community engagement; (2) notions of how social change occurs; (3) the overall effectiveness of each approach; (4) attitudes toward community; and (5) the role of critical reflection in community engagement.

The first two themes of the starting point for community engagement for the participant and notions of how social change occurs within the two frameworks were drawn from Scobey (2015, 2020) and Enos (2015), who suggested that social entrepreneurship and civic engagement (including service-learning) represent two forms of community engagement that are often associated with different starting points, values, and core beliefs. Scobey claimed that SL was frequently associated with taking a relationship-based approach, viewing community as co-creator and partner, prioritizing collaboration and reciprocity, seeing the student as an apprentice, and emphasizing humility. In comparison, Scobey associated the following characteristics with SE: starting from the idea that the world presents problems to be solved or innovated upon, taking a project-based approach, viewing the community often as a client in need, prioritizing innovation and design thinking, viewing the student often as a hero or dynamic leader, and extolling hutzpah. McBride and Mlyn (2016) similarly identified the range of characteristics associated with these two community-engaged frameworks as “proprietor versus partner, savior versus carpenter, problem solver versus community partner, and capital versus compassion” (p. 5), which clearly underscore the different strategies and attitudes associated with each approach. Enos (2015) associated SL with collaboration and solutions grounded in policy-making while SE was associated with individualism and market-based approaches to social problems (pp. 16–17).

Student perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the approaches was the third foundational theme for our survey. Scobey (2020) commented on the effectiveness of the frameworks, stating that “[t]hese differences—results versus relationships, students as apprentice citizens versus students as daring entrepreneurs—tend also to produce different scales and speeds of public work” (p. 23). He provided models that suggested that social innovation pedagogy “generally yields shorter, more compact interventions” while the civic engagement framework is “slow cooked, unfolding over several years,” and can generate further ventures beyond the initial project (p. 23). Enos (2015) suggested that service-learning did not emphasize the assessment of program impact to the same degree as SE. Enos (2015) and Scobey (2015, 2020) underscored that each approach was successful in supporting particular learning outcomes parallel to the attitudes identified previously with the first two themes. For example, SL promoted more alignment with community relationships (Enos, 2015, p. 80) and existing structures while SE encouraged innovative new approaches to solving problems without fully understanding the community context (Enos,

2015, p. 9). Both experts identified the importance of collaboration between the different civic engagement frameworks in order to evolve the most effective practices in both approaches.

The fourth theme was the student's attitudes toward community—specifically the attitudes and beliefs that individuals bring to their work with communities. Numerous researchers have asserted that the building of authentic, ethical, generative, and reciprocal relationships with communities is a significant component of the engagement process and leads to desirable outcomes (Butin, 2010; Cipolle, 2010; Dostilio et al., 2012; Enos & Morton, 2003; Jacoby, 2003; Stoecker, 2012, 2016). Studies have revealed that the assumptions they bring with them to their work with communities range greatly—for example, positioning the community as representing a deficit, working as an outsider and failing to take in account community perspectives, and not recognizing the need for cultural competency (Baldwin et al., 2007; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Enos, 2015; Raddon & Harrison, 2015; Scobey, 2020; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Some community-engaged scholars have problematized the imposition of the outsider perspective, with “heroic” solutions not informed by the voices of members of communities (Enos, 2015; Jones et al., 2010; Scobey, 2020; Zietsma & Tuck, 2012). Researchers have indicated that students' assumptions about the starting point for community engagement—as well as the ways students understand their motivation and relationship to the community—are often grounded in students' beliefs about community engagement as an altruistic, moral, or political act. In other words, students tend to see community engagement as primarily being charitable activity, moral behavior, or political action (Eliasoph, 2011; Harker, 2016; King, 2004; Wang & Jackson, 2005).

The last theme was the role of critical reflection in the community engagement frameworks. As a way to evolve beyond traditional service-learning with its “colonialist implications ... that posited white, middle-class college students going ‘out there’ to benefit working-class communities of color” (Scobey, 2020, p. 18), practitioners have made critical reflection a cornerstone of critical service-learning, recognizing that “[e]ngaging in critical reflection requires questioning assumptions and values, and paying attention to the impacts and implications of our community work” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 61). Mitchell (2008) explained that

Critical service-learning pedagogy fosters a critical consciousness, allowing students to combine action and reflection in classroom and community to examine both the historical precedents of the social problems addressed in their service placements and the impact of their personal action/inaction in maintaining and transforming those problems. (p. 54)

According to Enos (2015), this commitment to critical consciousness is not as explicit within SE; “there is little accountability for critical views in the materials used by social entrepreneurship professors” and “[a] broader and deeper awareness of the social context and environments within which change is proposed takes a back stage to showcasing the change agent as a heroic individual” (p. 63). Scobey (2020), however, suggested that the two frameworks were moving in the same direction and that “they have been bracingly interventionist in critiquing and challenging powerful institutions, policies, and regimes of knowledge” (p. 28).

Significance of This Research

The foundational research on the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that individuals bring to their work with communities (outlined above) informed the current study of how students perceive SL and SE. Further research on student perceptions is important because previous studies of students' views of community engagement have suggested that student-learning outcomes are significantly impacted by student perceptions and by students' characterizations of their community-engaged experiences (Soria & Mitchell, 2016). This notion that students' perceptions, prior knowledge, and existing beliefs—as well as aspects of students' identities—inform their thinking and behavior before, during, and after any learning experience is a well-established principle of educational psychology (Ambrose et al., 2010; American Psychological Association [APA], 2016; Faircloth, 2012; Madsen et al., 2015; Pearl & Christensen, 2017; Tobias, 1994). When scholars and practitioners of community engagement understand how students see and think about

community engagement, they are in a better position to shape theory and practice by disrupting inaccurate assumptions and by creating more impactful educational experiences (Stewart & Webster, 2010).

Since the mid-20th century, psychologists have argued that comprehension and understanding are significantly impacted by one's existing perceptions, assumptions, and biases (Caverni et al., 1990; Clark & Clark, 1947; Festinger, 1957; Lewin, 1938; Steele, 1988). Scholars have provided insights into the ways that aspects of students' identities (race, gender, socio-economic status) serve as filters that can shape how students see and respond to their learning experiences (Mayhew et al., 2016). In addition to identity, students' prior knowledge—the information and assumptions that they bring with them to the classroom—exerts significant influence over what students end up learning (APA, 2016). As Lucariello (2014) indicated, “Students’ misconceptions can really impede learning for several reasons. First, students generally are unaware that the knowledge they have is wrong. Moreover, misconceptions can be very entrenched in student thinking ... [S]tudents interpret new experiences through these erroneous understandings” (p. 1). College students are not blank slates in terms of the lenses through which they see community engagement and the discourses that structure their expectations and understandings of the possibilities and problematics for the impacts that this engagement produces.

Role of Gender in Community Engagement

Our study also examined ways that gender might shape students' perceptions about SL and SE. A growing body of research indicates that gender plays a significant role in informing student participation in and thinking about community-engaged learning. A review of the participation rates in service-oriented activities on college campuses indicated that undergraduate women participated at significantly higher rates than men in most community-oriented experiences (Enos, 2015; Miller, 1994; Trudeau & Devlin, 1996). Other noted gender differences include that female students tended to volunteer in relational activities, such as tutoring and mentoring, whereas male students were more likely to be involved in political and exercise-related community-based opportunities (Rockenbach et al., 2014). Similarly, Raykov and Taylor (2014) found significant gender differences among SL course preferences, generally reflecting gendered occupational differences, with women demonstrating more interest in courses related to education, psychology, sociology, or nursing, whereas men preferred those related to math, politics, economics, and research. Studies have also found that, compared to male students, females had higher levels of motivation to volunteer (Pearl & Christensen, 2017); more positive attitudes toward service (Webster & Worrell, 2008); more positive views of school public service requirements (Miller, 1994; Moely & Ilustre, 2011); and higher self-perceptions of civic responsibility, valuing of community engagement, social justice, cultural awareness, and interpersonal skills compared to male students (Moely & Ilustre, 2011). For example, Caspersz and Olaru (2015) found that “personal development (as in practical and interpersonal skills) is of importance to females” and in comparison, “the opportunity to network with community interests in these learning programs is important to males” (p. 12).

These contemporary realities concerning the impact of gender on students' participation in and perceptions of community engagement reflect historical circumstances of females being socialized towards perspectives of affiliation, caring, and interpersonal relationships (Gilligan, 1982). The work by Baxter-Magolda (1992) on gender identity-related patterns of knowing asserted that females tend toward an inter-individual pattern of thinking, which attempts to balance the perspectives of others with their own. Males, on the other hand, tend toward a more individual pattern of knowing, which prioritizes their own perspectives over those of others. In more recent research, the notion of women being more likely than men to take a relationship-based approach to learning and to engaging with others is addressed in the literature on the ethics of care (Held, 2008; Slote, 2007). Hamington (2004) noted that the ethics of care “denotes an approach to personal and social morality that shifts ethical consideration to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can only be fully understood if care's embodied dimension is recognized” (p. 3). Scholars in this area have explored the claim that women may be positioned differently than men in terms of approaching engagement with others through an ethic of care, social relationships, and empathy (Engster, 2007; Held, 2006; Jaggar, 1991; Noddings, 1984; Slote, 2007; Toussaint & Webb,

2005; Tronto, 2006), but the lack of attention to intersectionality must be acknowledged as a major critique of much of this literature.

The research outlined above concerning the relationship of gender and affiliative engagement informed our current study—particularly the notion that valuing the relational qualities of community engagement might increase rates of female participation in service-related opportunities (Jenkins, 2005). On the contrary, research on the relationship of gender and entrepreneurship offers different insights relevant to our study. Gomez and Korine (2008) stated that the entrepreneur was often framed as a “warrior”—a characterization that invoked a masculinized space and norms. Furthermore, an emphasis on risk tolerance as an important skill in SE may privilege male students—an assertion that is being explored within entrepreneurial literature (Jones, 2014; Jones & Warhuus, 2014; Vukovic et al., 2015). Of significance for our study, Jones (2014) concluded that the discourse of SE consisted largely of male scholars writing about male entrepreneurs. The language around entrepreneurship (use of imagery, metaphors, exemplars), according to Jones (2014), was highly masculinized and, in general, the entrepreneurship learning experiences within higher education were often unwelcoming to female students.

The research literature in entrepreneurship education has also focused on social role theory (Eagly et al., 2000) and stereotype threat (Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Riebe, 2012; Steele, 2011) as ways to explain trends in different levels of participation according to gender within entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Social role theory provides the “agency-communion paradigm” (Koenig et al., 2011, p. 617) that associates agency with “masculine” traits such as competence, instrumentality, independence, assertiveness, confidence, competitiveness, creativity, and risk-taking (Gupta et al., 2019; Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019; Jones, 2014). Communal or “feminine” traits include teamwork, loyalty, dedication to or concern for others, nurturance, and warmth (Gupta et al., 2019; Hmieleski & Sheppard, 2019). This paradigm, however, was called into question by researchers who underscored that for entrepreneurs to be successful, they must operate in both spheres (Jakob et al., 2019). The paradigm is also contrary to the findings of Caspersz and Olaru (cited above), which demonstrated that in the context of SL, males value networking with communities. Also, researchers who have examined social entrepreneurship, in contrast to more traditional entrepreneurship, have suggested that SE was “viewed androgynously (consistent with both masculine and feminine characteristics), albeit still higher on agency than communality” (Gupta et al., 2019, p. 147). Within the field of SE, researchers have indicated that, while gender gaps are closing, SE as an approach to community engagement may be more appealing to female students than other entrepreneurial approaches (Petridou et al., 2009; Teasdale et al., 2011). Tedmanson et al. (2012) asserted that more critical approaches that “question and critique gendered power relations within entrepreneurial contexts” would allow for the flourishing of other entrepreneurial subjectivities beyond those that traditionally privilege the archetypical white male entrepreneur. A primary goal of our study is to contribute to this emerging critical body of research on gender and community engagement. To this end, we aim to answer the following questions: How do students’ perceptions about service-learning and social entrepreneurship differ based on (1) prior service-learning or social entrepreneurship exposure and (2) respondents’ gender?

Institutional Context

The context for this data was a highly selective, Tier 1 research institution in the southeast. Institutional support for SL and SE education is strong but distinctive for each approach. The institution's SL office has one full- and four part-time staff members, and in 2015–2016 supported 66 undergraduate courses and a certificate program. Service-learning courses at this university are not required and most often were elective rather than core courses in majors. Most service-learning courses are offered through departments that focus on education, language learning, and social sciences. Service-learning components of courses are about evenly split between placement-based and project-based service components. Faculty are trained in service-learning through a robust faculty fellows program, workshop series, and annual service-learning retreats.

A broader entrepreneurship initiative at the institution, one of whose themes includes SE, has 27 full- and part-time staff members, two of whom are dedicated primarily to SE. This broader entrepreneurship

unit supports over 100 undergraduate and graduate courses and a certificate program. Faculty are trained in social entrepreneurship through a workshop series and the fellows program. Social entrepreneurship courses are almost exclusively in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department rather than housed in other disciplines.

Methods

Participants

The study was conducted over three academic semesters (Fall 2015, Spring 2016, and Spring 2017) with a total of 2,174 undergraduates contacted, resulting in a total of 382 survey respondents, a response rate of 17.5%. In Table 1, the demographics of the respondents, the sample, and the college within the university from which the sample was pulled are compared. This includes gender, affiliation with underrepresented minority groups (URM), and first-generation status.

Table 1

Demography of Population, Sampling Frame, and Respondents

	Respondents	Sampling frame	Undergraduate population
Female	71.20%	58.33%	50.20%
Male	28.80%	41.67%	49.80%
URM	52.88%	54.19%	50.91%
Non-URM	47.12%	45.81%	48.90%
First Generation	8.90%	9.40%	8.40%
Non-First Generation	91.09%	90.60%	91.60%

Procedure

The Institutional Review Board reviewed and provided approval for the study. Students were contacted by email and asked to participate voluntarily in the survey. The survey was administered online using the data collection software, Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT, USA). Informed consent was obtained at the start of the survey. SL students were identified and contacted using course rosters from SL courses taught during the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 academic years. SE students were identified and contacted by reviewing the following groups: rosters of students who had taken one or more courses focused on SE; members of the listserv for SE events; and attendance records of SE focused events. Students were not required to have prior enrollment in SE courses to be included in the sampling frame—only exposure to SE related activities outlined here. Respondents who completed the survey were removed from future administrations. In the first administration, respondents were offered a chance to win a \$200 airfare voucher. During the second and third administrations, a \$5 donation to the United Way was offered for the first 200 completed surveys. Participants were tracked using a confidential identifier available only to the college’s institutional research group. The participants’ IDs were then used by institutional research to connect responses to available institutional data on self-identified gender identity before ultimately removing the participant ID.

Survey design. The survey instrument is composed of open-ended questions asking respondents to define SL and SE in their own words; a series of questions asking respondents to rate both SL and SE separately on Likert-scales as to the degree which statements were representative of each approach; and a word association task, where students had to choose between the two approaches as to which the word was associated with. The statements and words to which students responded were designed to track student perceptions of the ways in which five themes related to each approach (SL or SE): (1) the starting point for

community engagement; (2) attitudes toward community embedded with an approach; (3) notions of how social change occurs; (4) the role of critical reflection in community engagement; and (5) perceived overall effectiveness of an approach. The design of the survey as well as the selection of these five themes was based on the works of Scobey (2015) and Enos (2015), which explored the beliefs, values, motivations, and outcomes associated with SL and SE.

Piloting of the instrument utilized cognitive interviewing across two separate focus groups of five students each. These students had previous experience with either SL or SE. At the beginning of each focus group session, students were asked to complete the survey instrument to the best of their ability. Following these sessions, participants were asked for feedback regarding clarity of the questions within the survey as well as the underlying themes of the instrument. This feedback supported the relevance of the five themes and resulted in minor wording changes to clarify the focus of the individual questions.

Data Analysis

These analyses represent differences in the strength of endorsement of each statement when the independent perspectives of each approach were compared. To account for the multiple comparisons made within these analyses, we used the Benjamini and Hochberg correction to avoid Type I errors (false positive results). All significant results reported meet this more stringent criterion.

Results

When examining the entire sample of students who had participated in SL and SE, the test of each statement's association with an approach demonstrated that 22 of the 25 statements were significantly higher for one approach than the other ($p < .05$). In Table 2 we identify the approach for which the statements were most closely associated. All statements marked with an asterisk are significant at the $p < .0001$ level.

Influence of SL and SE Participation on Perceptions of the Two Approaches

Results from students who had participated in SL were compared with results from students who had participated in SE courses to determine perceptions and statement associations for each group. When the associations made by the respondents who had participated in SL and SE courses were compared, there was no statistically significant difference in perspectives between the two groups ($p < .05$). With respect to the statements provided in Table 2, the populations who participated in SL courses and those who participated in SE courses shared a highly similar perspective of the characteristics associated with each approach.

Influence of Gender on Perceptions of the Two Approaches

When the data were examined based on self-identified cohorts by gender, there were some differences. When the data are disaggregated by gender, there are certain statements (approaches) with which females significantly associate more strongly than males. The following statements were more significantly associated with SL by females:

1. Integrating critical reflection into the experience
2. Being concerned with ethical dimensions of community engagement
3. Building in time for all participants to reflect on the experience of community engagement
4. The idea that the starting point of the experience is relationships
5. Reciprocity between you and the community
6. University-supported participation by college students

Similarly, with social entrepreneurship there were statements (approaches) that females associated significantly more strongly with than did males.

1. Integrating critical reflection into the experience
2. Being concerned with ethical dimensions of community engagement
3. Building in time for all participants to reflect on the experience of community engagement
4. Perceiving the community as your partner
5. Gaining its effectiveness from the power of partnerships
6. Gaining its effectiveness from innovative action
7. Being a co-worker with the community
8. Fostering the development of civic responsibility

Some statements were more strongly endorsed by females for both SL and SE; these clustered around themes of critical reflection, communalism, and affiliation.

Table 2

Statements Significantly Associated With SL or SE by All Respondents

Service-Learning	Social Entrepreneurship
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completing community-generated projects* 2. The idea that the starting point of the experience is relationships* 3. Perceiving the community as your partner* 4. Creating relationships* 5. Reciprocity between you and the community* 6. Being a co-worker with the community* 7. Humility* 8. Integrating critical reflection into the experience* 9. Fostering the development of civic responsibility* 10. Being concerned with ethical dimensions of community engagement* 11. Building in time for all participants to reflect on the experience of community engagement* 12. University-supported participation by college students* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completing consultant-generated projects* 2. The idea that the starting point of the experience is to solve a problem* 3. Perceiving the community as your client* 4. Seeing the community as the recipient of services* 5. Being an innovative approach to social change* 6. Gaining its effectiveness from innovative action* 7. Developing strategies for solving a problem* 8. Being a dynamic leader in the community* 9. Positioning you as being viewed more favorably by potential employers* 10. Being a highly effective approach to addressing social problems*
Non-Significant Statements	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaining its effectiveness from the power of partnerships 2. Making impact on societal level 3. Being an up-to-date approach to community engagement 	

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of gender and previous experience with community engagement on students' perceptions of SL and SE. This study was one aspect of a larger research project that examined perceptions of SL and SE from a nationwide sample of college students. The complete results of the research project can be found in Clifford et al.'s (2020) "Exploratory Study on Students' Perceptions About Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship" in the book, *Connecting Civic Engagement and Social Innovation: Toward Higher Education's Democratic Promise*. For the purposes of this article, we limit our discussion to data and findings more closely connected to our examination of the ways in which gender and prior experiences in community engagement shape student perceptions of SL and SE.

This study resulted in six key findings that, for the purposes of discussion, we group into two categories: findings associated with pedagogical approach and findings associated with gender. We discuss the six findings in terms of their relationship with the existing literature as we explore the implications of the findings for practitioners of SL and SE. We attempt to relate the findings to our research question: How do students' perceptions of SL and SE differ based on prior experience with the two pedagogical approaches and based on the respondents' gender?

The following key findings were associated with pedagogical approach:

- Regardless of gender or previous SL or SE enrollment history, respondents perceived SL as being based on reciprocal relationships, highly collaborative, valuing humility, emphasizing ethical reflection, and less innovative than SE.
- Regardless of gender or previous SL or SE enrollment history, respondents perceived SE as highly innovative, based on a need to solve a problem, viewing the community partner as a client, concern with impact, and emphasizing the leadership qualities of the entrepreneur.
- Regardless of gender or previous SL or SE enrollment history, the respondents believed that neither SL nor SE lack one particular characteristic or another—simply that one approach can be more strongly associated with a particular feature than the other approach.

This study revealed that students clearly saw SL and SE as two very distinct forms of community-engaged pedagogy. They may be "kissing cousins," as some scholars have described forms of community and civic engagement (Scobey, 2020), but they are "distant cousins" that are recognized by students as having very distinctive characteristics. For example, students agreed that SL is more about creating relationships and *being with* communities while SE is more about solving problems and *doing for* communities. Students believed that SL positions communities as "our partners" while SE positions communities as "our clients."

What does our language reveal about the ways we are framing our engagement with communities? As we have noted, the scholarship on teaching and learning suggests that students bring assumptions and prior knowledge to their learning experiences that dramatically shape new learning. It is important for practitioners of SL and SE to understand how the preexisting perceptions and (mis)conceptions students bring with them to their classes and community experiences serve as frameworks for their interpretation of the meaning of those experiences. The implication for community-engaged pedagogy is that high-quality community engagement practice must include intentional efforts aimed at exposing students' shared but often hidden perceptions of community engagement. Perceptions of the community as "a problem in need of a solution" and perceptions of the "community as a deficit" may be widespread among students in both SL and SE. These kinds of perceptions must be made visible, problematized, and addressed.

The study revealed that students had strong, well-established views of what SL is and is not. Regardless of gender or prior exposure, students see SL as being based on reciprocal relationships, highly collaborative, valuing humility, emphasizing ethical reflection, and less innovative than SE. The findings of this study align well with previous scholarship that suggests that SL is viewed as a reciprocal, partnership-based form of engagement that incorporates ongoing critical reflection. In fact, many of the published definitions of SL found in the literature explicitly include reference to reciprocity, partnership, and reflection. While the students seemed to perceive correctly many of the key features of SL, many of them do not appear to share

the belief that SL is cutting edge or innovative. Instead, they viewed SL as a more outdated approach to community engagement, compared to SE. The implication of this finding is that those of us who utilize SL as a pedagogical approach must be mindful and intentional about making these prevailing but often-hidden student perceptions visible. Some college students may think of innovation as occurring solely when a dynamic leader creates a novel intervention based on doing something to or with the community. Instructors need to lift up ways that authenticity, listening to, working alongside, and being in deep reciprocal relationships with communities can be powerful and innovative. To alter these views that SL as “outdated,” practitioners must move beyond charity-oriented models of SL and incorporate into their work an examination of the systemic and structural issues that underlie the need for all this service in the first place.

Faculty can make SL more current, cutting edge, and relevant by engaging students in emerging forms of critical service-learning and project-based service-learning that move away from charity models and incorporate collaborative inquiry, collective impact, and critical race theory. By framing traditional models of SL more as critical service-learning, practitioners can push students’ existing perceptions that tend to reinforce privilege and existing power relationships. By interrupting students’ perceptions of SL and SE, we help students build alternative ways of reimagining how we relate to and can be with communities—new ways of being, seeing, and doing that transform the conditions under which the service happens (Mitchell & Latta, 2020).

Similar to our need to problematize students’ views of SL, practitioners must work to trouble students’ perceptions of SE. Instructors must question and disrupt commonly held views that SE is highly innovative, based on a need to solve a problem, sees the community partner as a client, is concerned only with impact, and prioritizes the leadership qualities of the entrepreneur over the assets of the community. The findings of this study provide empirical data that support the observations by Scobey (2015) and others that SE is perceived to be a problem-based, client-oriented, cutting-edge practice that is concerned with impact over relationships. The implications of this are significant—namely, that faculty must expose and make visible the way students’ perceptions of SE may shape their attitudes toward and their behavior in those communities that are the recipients of their entrepreneurial actions. Seeing oneself as a hero who holds the solutions to a community’s challenges may deepen divides, accentuate power differentials, and create more harm than public good. High-quality SL and SE practice must intentionally address ways that both SL and SE may reinforce stereotyping, privilege, and power differentials.

Although respondents shared very similar perceptions of the specific distinctive features of SL and SE, the data did not indicate that the respondents believed that either SL or SE completely lacked one particular characteristic or another. Students simply believed that one approach was more strongly associated with a particular feature than the other approach. Both SL and SE have some degree of every specific characteristic of community engagement that we asked respondents to reflect on. While at first glance this finding may seem to lack importance, this finding may provide the greatest pedagogical opportunity for faculty and staff who utilize SL and/or SE. Because students appear to perceive neither SL nor SE as wholly lacking a characteristic of the other approach, we have an opportunity to invite students into an exploration of the common ground shared by the two approaches. Perhaps SL students can be encouraged to have more concern for innovation, impact, scalability, and systemic problem-solving. Perhaps SE students can be invited to consider more deeply their positionality, to exercise humility, and to practice ongoing critical, ethical reflection. In fact, faculty who utilize any form of community-engaged pedagogy might consider providing—prior to students’ engagement with communities—an overview or taxonomy of community-engaged pedagogies so that students can contextualize the approach that they are utilizing. In this way, students can have discussions of the shared and distinctive features of various approaches. In our own teaching, we have found useful tools such as the social change wheel, Stanford’s pathways of public service model, Sigmon’s typology, and Furco’s work on students’ preferences for different kinds of community engagement (Furco, 1996; Moely et al., 2008; Schnaubelt & Schwartz-Coffey, 2016).

Of the six key findings, three can be associated with ways in which students’ perceptions of SL and SE differed based on gender:

- Female respondents perceived that critical reflection on ethical aspects of community engagement is a more central feature of both SL and SE than did male respondents.

- Female respondents associated certain survey statements more strongly with SE than did male respondents. These statements included that SE is an approach based on “projects created by an outsider to the community”; “the idea that the starting point of the SE experience is to solve a problem”; and that SE represents an approach that values “being a dynamic leader in the community.”
- Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to strongly endorse the communal, affiliative, and relationship aspects of both SL and SE.

In our study, students self-identified gender, allowing for disaggregation of the data. When disaggregated by gender, analysis of the data revealed that female respondents perceived that critical reflection on ethical aspects of community engagement as a more central feature of both SL and SE than did male respondents. We had anticipated that females—more so than males—would associate ethical reflection with SL. However, given the action-oriented, entrepreneurial aspects of SE, we did not anticipate that females, more than males, would associate ethical reflection with SE. Yet, females appear to strongly associate ethical reflection with both forms of community engagement. Our findings reinforce a long history of research on gender differences that suggests that females are concerned with issues of ethical reflection—more so than males. The implications of this finding are numerous and include the notion that we need to be more intentional and thoughtful about gender as we engage in critical reflection with students. We need to provide deeper opportunities, or perhaps differently designed opportunities, for male students to sit still with themselves as they consider the ways that they are thinking about community engagement. It could be that bringing together small groups of male students to explore notions of masculinity as they relate to community engagement would be beneficial. At our university we have created a student-faculty working group on community engagement and masculinity. This group has raised awareness of our need to address issues such as lower enrollment of males in civic engagement initiatives and the tendency of male-identifying students to favor “doing for” over “being with” communities. Practitioners in general need to discuss with students the ways that community engagement is genderized—disrupting notions that women are the primary reflectors and men are the primary doers.

For practitioners of SE, our study suggests that we must do more with our female-identifying students to encourage them to recognize ways that their perceptions of SE might be barriers to their full participation in SE. Female respondents associated certain statements on the survey more strongly with SE than did male respondents. Three particular statements that females expressed stronger views on stand out: “SE is an approach based on projects created by an outsider to the community”; “the idea that the starting point of the SE experience is to solve a problem”; and “SE represents an approach that values being a dynamic leader in the community.” If females view “starting with the problem as opposed to the relationship” as problematic, they may find SE as a pedagogical approach problematic. This finding is consistent with a growing body of research on gender differences in SE that suggests SE is perceived to be a highly masculinized space. If female students view “being an outsider” to the community as both central to SE and problematic, then perhaps female students may be less likely to thrive in SE. These notions of the outsider and the dynamic hero-leader must be directly exposed and problematized since, as Jones (2014) suggested, the often-masculinized language around entrepreneurship may be unwelcoming to female students. Utilizers of SE as a pedagogical approach need to use language in more intentional ways that do not further marginalize female participants in SE; utilizers of all forms of community-engaged pedagogies must address the gendering of SE and SL head on.

Similarly, practitioners have much work to do around students’ perceptions of the affiliative aspects of both SL and SE. Analysis of the data disaggregated by gender indicated that the communal, affiliative, and relationship aspects of both SL and SE were more likely to be strongly endorsed by females than by male respondents. This finding provides empirical data, yet again, that supports long-standing scholarship in the area of gender differences. Existing research on community-engaged pedagogy contains numerous reports of the ways in which perceptions of community-engagement are often gendered (Chesler & Scalera, 2000). As noted, in our study, students self-identified their gender—and those identifying as female associated strong communal, affiliative, and relationship factors with both SL and SE. One implication of this finding

is that faculty need to be aware of the emotional labor some female students may experience as a result of their perceived higher levels of affiliation. Indeed, faculty need to be intentional in attending to the social-emotional learning of all students—throughout the gender continuum—as they engage in community-based learning. Understanding the role of affiliative relationships when engaging with communities can be challenging for all students—perhaps more so for our male-identifying students. Making these gender differences in service-learning and community engagement more visible to our students should be a goal for all practitioners.

We should note that, in this study, students were asked on the survey to denote gender as male or female. We must acknowledge the critique of this binary framing of gender. As the SL and SE fields move forward within and beyond institutions of higher education, scholars must develop a nonbinary framework with attention to intersectionality. A deeper, more nuanced understanding of the relationship of the gender continuum with SL and SE might be of significant value to practitioners and theorists of community-engaged pedagogies (Crenshaw, 2017).

In summary, there are significant implications of these six findings for community-engaged pedagogies—for implementation, practice, theory building, and future research. Faculty who teach SL and/or SE courses must do more to help students make visible their current perceptions of SL and SE as well as their implicit attitudes, epistemic beliefs, cognitive biases, and misconceptions. Our study suggests that prior experience with the two pedagogical approaches does not significantly impact students' perceptions of SL and SE—students' views of SL and SE are similar whether or not they have directly experienced one of the pedagogical approaches. This lack of impact of exposure to a particular pedagogical approach suggests that practitioners of SL and SE can do more to raise our students' metacognitive awareness of these pedagogies as instructional processes and methodologies. Students should not complete academic courses designed on and framed around particular pedagogical principles without developing a deeper understanding of the principles undergirding those pedagogical processes.

Attention to student perceptions may also influence the work with community partners and organizations. When made aware of ways that college students' perceptions of SL and SE may be shaping students' thinking and behavior, community partners may help expose students' perceptions and serve as co-educators in interrupting beliefs that need to be challenged. In terms of the impact of gender on students' perceptions of SL and SE, practitioners can work with community partners to become more aware of the different beliefs and values that female and male participants tend to bring to community-engaged experiences, further exploring the role of intersectionality of identities in beliefs and practices. In general, the ways that students perceive and characterize their community engagement experiences are important for multiple reasons, chief among them being the well-established principle in social psychology that perceptions inform a person's ways of making sense of the world as well as a person's behavior (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1985). For practitioners of SL and SE, this may mean that—if SL students see communities from a deficit perspective and SE students see communities as the site of problems in need of solutions—the behavior of these students in their community engagement activities will be shaped by their perceptions. How might we go about altering asset-deficit perspectives? How can we help some males be more communal and affiliative while helping some females take on more entrepreneurial roles? Pearl and Christensen (2017) noted that “[w]hether students act from conscious or unconscious thinking, it is critically important for administrators and instructors tasked with promoting service-learning to acknowledge continuing barriers” (p. 134). By understanding the relationship between student identities and the ways that students perceive SL and SE, we may be able to better target our work with students to achieve our intended outcomes. Effective educators understand that perceptions and identity factors must be considered when designing learning experiences and when helping students make sense of what they are learning. Herein lies the opportunity to create a consciousness of positionality and identity to promote more positive dialogue on multifaceted engagements for social change.

Limitations

The study, which was exploratory in nature, looked at the perceptions of SL and SE courses at only one institution. However, the trends found here were replicated in institutions nationwide, strengthening our belief in the generalizability of our findings (Clifford et al., 2020). The majority of respondents were female; and while this is typical of enrollment in community-engaged academic courses, it remains a limitation in our study. Furthermore, controlling for individual differences from course to course and instructor to instructor—not only between SL- and SE-identified courses but even within the specific departments that offer SL or SE—was not possible, although those differences may impact student perceptions of the fields and their responses to the survey used in this study. It is also important to acknowledge that the binary presentation of gender within our institutional data does not capture the complexities of gender. Finally, future studies may wish to further explore the perceptions of students who have prior experience as students in both SL and SE courses.

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