

Implementation of Community-Based Service Learning in Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs

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ABSTRACT

Community-based service learning (CBSL) is a powerful pedagogical approach for teacher education and other service-oriented training programs that integrates meaningful community engagement with academic learning. Benefits of CBSL include enhancing teacher candidates' ability to connect theory with practice, cultivating reflective practitioners, and strengthening relationships between universities and communities. This article explores how CBSL can be effectively implemented in teacher education programs through three case studies from different institutions. The first case highlights collaboration with community-based partners to offer teacher candidates service-learning experiences that enhance teacher identity development, strengthen awareness of community resources, and allow for collaboration with the community to serve the whole child. The second case illustrates how a teacher education program, along with other service career programs, works with the local special education collaborative to provide space and physical activities for students with high support needs. The third case is a collaborative community-based program hosted by local recreational partners and staffed by graduate special education teacher candidates that provides activities to individuals with autism spectrum disorder, their families, and invited guests in a welcoming and sensory-friendly setting. The article concludes with recommendations for integrating CBSL into teacher education curricula to maximize its benefits.

KEYWORDS

Collaboration, community-based education, high-impact practice, service learning, teacher education, teacher preparation

Experiential learning is a mainstay in teacher education, as the vast majority of Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) require both field experience and student teaching. These experiences allow for teacher candidates to practice their craft while being supervised by a veteran teacher. While field experiences in schools may be beneficial for everyone involved, these experiences alone may not be sufficient for teachers who work with students with disabilities (SWD), who are expected to interact with the local community and students' caregivers regularly. Additionally, students' individual education plans (IEPs) must contain goals and services to develop functional and independent living skills, including using community resources for access to basic needs, education, and/or recreation, whenever students have educational needs in this area (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004).

Knowledge of available resources in the local community, what they provide to students, and how to utilize their services is critical for special educators who may be tasked with coordination between caregivers and these services. Unfortunately, traditional field experiences often focus on instruction within the classroom (O'Brien et al., 2024) and lack experiences to build candidates' proficiency with other responsibilities, such as appropriate inclusion of important transition-related IEP requirements. Further, schools and the community must feel as though they are receiving a beneficial service when partnering with EPPs for learning opportunities.

If community partners perceive that they are providing more services than they are receiving, they may feel resentful or, worse, exploited for free education (Bortolin, 2011; Cronley et al., 2015; Eby, 1998). It is crucial that a balance is found between the benefits to teacher candidates and the local community, which can be achieved through collaborative, deliberately crafted community-based service learning.

DEFINING COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE LEARNING

Community-based service learning (CBSL) is a powerful pedagogical approach for teacher education and other service-oriented training programs that integrates community engagement with academic learning (Coffey, 2010). The foundation of service learning was laid by John Dewey (1938), who asserted that “all genuine education comes about through experience” (p. 25). This is a long-held truth for teacher education, which values classroom experience for application of content knowledge. The Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching (2015) describes community engagement as “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (p. 2). Further, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has designated community-based learning as a high-impact practice for higher education based on evidence of effectiveness for college students, institutions of higher education, and community partners (Chittum et al., 2022; Kuh et al., 2008). Field experiences are generally not considered CBSL, as they are designed specifically to aid the teacher candidate to either witness or practice content they have learned in courses and do not often include intentionally planned mutuality. Although

PK-12 schools may gain some incidental benefit of hosting teacher candidates, that is not the goal of field experience. This issue can be addressed through the use of CBSL by EPPs.

Each of the three case studies shared in this article incorporated four basic elements of effective service learning in the model proposed by Chambers and Lavery (2012) to develop and implement their CBSL programs. This model posits that university students must be engaged in meaningful, active service that addresses a community need, and the service and learning goals are of equal importance. In other words, the benefit of the service to the community must be commensurate to the practical learning gained by the teacher candidates. This ensures that the EPP is not simply planning a practicum project to provide learning for their candidates. There is also reciprocity between the EPP and those receiving the service, with the community having control of identifying the service tasks. This allows the community to direct the program to the most acceptable undertakings. Finally, the program is implemented in four interdependent stages: preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration (see Figure 1).

During the preparation stage, a need is identified, investigated, and analyzed, and then a plan of action is formulated. Time must be taken during this step to ensure that all groups engaged in the planning process have a thorough understanding of the factors contributing to the need and how the EPP can best be of service. Explicit responsibilities and goals, as well as benefits to all parties involved, should be established. The action stage is the direct result of the preparation stage and includes active university student engagement in the service tasks. During the reflection stage, teacher candidates examine how the experience relates to their own lives, their future careers as teachers, and their

FIGURE 1:
Stages of Effective CBSL



communities. This can happen through reflective journaling and is enhanced through class discussions with instructors and peers who are also participating. The action and reflection stages should happen together, as candidate learning will grow the most if they can act, reflect, and adjust. Lastly, the demonstration stage provides opportunities for teacher candidates to showcase their learning through public and/or class presentations or written products based on their experiences in the first three stages. Although evidence of effectiveness in EPPs is scarce, several benefits for participants have been demonstrated.

BENEFITS OF CBSL TEACHER CANDIDATES

In addition to special education teacher candidates learning the basics of how to teach through coursework and practicing teaching through traditional field experiences, incorporating CBSL can promote critical thinking, help teacher candidates understand the social context of disability, and build reflective teaching (Mayhew & Welch, 2001). The opportunity to work in communities provides teacher candidates the space to witness that worthwhile education happens in community spaces, not just in schools, and allows them to connect content knowledge with applications

beyond the classroom (Tinkler et al., 2019). Only when they become active participants in the community can teacher candidates determine how their actions, and those of other entities, affect community members. These experiences can then support improved cultural understanding and practice (Lund & Lee, 2015) and prepare future teachers to work with families (Korzekwa Hampshire et al., 2015). Once teacher candidates have a better understanding of the community in which they may teach, CBSL can help them to develop civic knowledge, skills, and motivation (Mayhew et al., 2016) that they can use to advocate for students and their caregivers. Anderson (1998) notes that, within teacher education, service learning “reflects the belief that education should develop social responsibility and prepare teacher candidates to be involved citizens in democratic life” (p. 1). In addition to enriching the learning and professional growth of teacher candidates, CBSL also generates important benefits for the communities it serves.

Community Partners

CBSL programs are different from other methods of experiential education, including traditional field experiences and student teaching, because they aim to equally benefit teacher candidates and the community, focusing both on the service being provided and the learning that is occurring (Furco & Billig, 2002). When engaging in CBSL, there can be a tendency to form a “bias toward student outcomes” (Stoecker et al., 2009, p. 4), meaning the learning of the teacher candidate is prioritized above meeting the needs of the community (Lewis, 2004). This must be circumvented by more fully understanding the local culture of the community to consider goals that benefit them (Tinkler et al., 2014). As Tinkler and Tinkler (2020) point out, CBSL has the potential to build social capital with-

in and across communities, leading to “stronger, more resilient, and connected communities” (p. 55). Although benefits to teacher candidates and community participants may be more evident, faculty can also benefit from CBSL.

Teacher Education Faculty

Though CBSL may not be specifically designed to benefit faculty, they also find professional benefits in research, pedagogy, and real-world application through their participation. Faculty can utilize CBSL to conduct action research to test theories in practical settings with their own students (Darby & Newman, 2014). For faculty pursuing tenure, participating in CBSL provides a valuable opportunity to advance the scholarship of teaching through research, reflection, and scholarly dissemination. Additionally, faculty can practice new pedagogies, leading to improved teaching practices (Able et al., 2014). Faculty are able to facilitate learning in real-world scenarios, enabling them to connect course content to practical settings (Lasen et al., 2015). In the following case examples, many of these benefits for teacher candidates, community partners, and faculty participants are exhibited in various ways.

CASE STUDIES IN CBSL

Case Example 1: Texas A&M University Community Partnership Experience Day

As part of an early field pre-service teacher course on family engagement and empowerment at Texas A&M University (TAMU), teacher candidates are provided the opportunity to participate in a community partnership experience day (CPED; e.g., creating food backpacks at a food bank, organizing a clothing closet at a nonprofit, and tending a garden at a center for independent living). Participants in this program typically include sophomore-level undergraduate students pursuing a career in education. Most stu-

dents are pre-service special education students, while a handful are pre-service bilingual education students, human development and family science majors, or psychology majors. The course focuses on equipping the teacher candidates with the skills necessary to work with diverse types of families, including identifying the importance of collaboration with caregivers, schools, and community service providers, as well as locating school-based and community resources that serve children and their families within their community.

Within the preparation stage of designing this CPED program, the course instructor and graduate assistant (GA) looked to create a program that connects students to local community resources. Research indicates that educators should strive to understand and connect their teaching to the community, thereby facilitating rapport-building with their students (Hollinsworth et al., 2024; Sherfinski, 2023). However, there is also evidence to demonstrate that educators struggle to make connections to the community in which they teach because they are underprepared to incorporate students’ communities into their teaching (Autti & Bæk, 2019; Hollingsworth et al., 2024). The goal of the CPED was to provide teacher candidates with a hands-on learning experience with local community partners who serve families in need within the community, thereby providing students with knowledge of local, regional, state, and national resources and the skills needed to make connections to those resources, regardless of where they end up teaching.

Since its inception, CPED has evolved each semester based on teacher candidate and community partner feedback, as well as instructor and GA reflection. At the end of each CPED, students and community partners are asked to provide written feedback. The goal of gathering feedback is to build on what works well

and identify areas that need refinement. The first CPED occurred in the Fall of 2023. Five community partners were carefully selected as “stops” throughout the day. The duration of time spent at each partner location was approximately 45 minutes. This time allowed for a tour and an informational presentation delivered by one of the partner members. Information typically included the organization’s background, who they serve and how, and the community with which they work to support those in need. Through written feedback and reflection by the instructor and GA, this program has evolved over four semesters. Program changes have included a) reducing the number of stops from five to three, b) increasing the amount of time at each stop, c) varying the community partners, and d) adjusting the beginning and end time of the program.

The instructor and GA have recognized the need to incorporate different community partner focus areas (i.e., supporting low-income families, supporting families with individuals with disabilities) and dedicate a greater amount of time at each stop. Therefore, based on a review of written teacher candidates reflective feedback, attempts are made each semester to visit different community partners while maintaining one or two of the most impactful stops. The most recent CPED iteration included three community partners. Based on written feedback, the duration of each stop was extended from one hour to up to two hours, depending on the stop (i.e., the local food bank required a minimum of two hours to volunteer). The extended time at each stop allowed for informational presentations, tours, and additional volunteer time. In addition to adjustments to the logistical aspects of the program, the instructor and GA refined the program’s curriculum to facilitate deeper connections between the community partners and teacher candidates.

Program adjustments will continue each semester in response to partner and candidate needs and feedback. Additional community partners will be added, and likely, an alternation of current community partners will occur to ensure teacher candidates get to experience, understand, and make connections with the various community partners that serve those in need. Such collaborative community partnerships can help teacher candidates enhance their professional development as future educators and potentially make meaningful connections in the communities they will serve.

Ensuring that partnerships offered reciprocal impact remains essential (Baldwin et al., 2007; Jacoby & Associates, 2003). As part of CPED planning and implementation, instructors facilitated opportunities for faculty and teacher candidates to engage with community organizations in ways that allowed for mutual interaction and potential contributions from the university. Through the reciprocal nature of the program, community partners became educators by sharing their program’s mission, efforts, and needs, while the instructor and GA became learners alongside the teacher candidates, engaging in a level of learning that extended beyond the four walls of a classroom. By equipping the teacher candidates with knowledge of the organization’s mission and services, the potential for them to share information and increase the foot traffic for the organizations increased. Community partners received task-specific support from many students during a given time, such as organizing clothing closets and food pantries, packaging food bags for backpack programs for food-insecure families, and creating inspirational murals; such efforts serve as a benefit for the community partners (Buchanan et al., 2002).

The benefits of this CBSL program have been many. Many teacher candidates found the experience so impactful

that they shared the volunteer information with their university organizations, church groups, and friends for future volunteer opportunities. Additionally, the benefits were demonstrated through their practicum reflection assignment, submitted at the end of the semester. Through this documentation, instructors noticed that candidates’ professional identity as special educators developed further. They had become knowledgeable about community resources and had developed an understanding of how to make referrals and connect caregivers to necessary community resources. They also made academic connections and reflected on their values (Simons & Cleary, 2006). Such growth in relation to identity development is documented in the research, highlighting that when teacher candidates engage in the community, their professional identity as educators emerges (Williams & Lee, 2020).

Faculty and graduate assistants in teaching were provided real-time feedback on the impact of the experiences. Through real-time observations, instructors had the opportunity to witness connections being made between concepts taught in class and real-world applications. As a result of the chosen community partners, the field experiences complemented class lessons, lending themselves to candidates’ higher-order thinking and engagement. Most importantly, instructors were able to bring stories from the field back into the classroom to highlight lessons taught. Continued planning and refinement of CPED are essential, as is maintaining partnership relationships. All parties benefit when the faculty shows responsiveness to community needs and seek to establish and grow reciprocal relationships.

Case example 2: Western Illinois University Adaptive Activities for All (AAfA)

The Adapted Activities for All (AAfA)

TABLE 1: Different Program Majors and Why They Were Included in AAfA

Program Major	Reason for Inclusion in AAfA
Physical Education Teacher Education, Exercise Science, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration	Understand adapted recreation activities
Speech Pathology and Audiology	Understand how motor activities can enhance speech and language skills
Special and Elementary Education	Link classroom expertise to physical activities
Music Therapy	Incorporate music and rhythm in non-clinical settings
School Psychology	Learn fitness activities to incorporate into their sessions
Social Work	Observe behavior and environment

Note. AAfA = Adaptive Activities for All

motor clinic at Western Illinois University (WIU) is a multidisciplinary collaborative program with a three-fold purpose: (a) provide motor instruction for students with disabilities from the West Central Illinois Special Education Cooperative (WCISEC), (b) serve as pre-professional practica for various majors at WIU, and (c) promote education and advocacy for students with disabilities while serving as a resource for the WIU campus. Each semester, WIU hosts eight Friday morning sessions for WCISEC students in a campus gym. During sessions, WCISEC students receive a session of music therapy and two sessions of physical instruction, pre-planned by WIU students, with specific individualized adaptations. WCISEC students range in age from 4 to 21 years old, the majority of whom have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with mild to extensive support needs. WIU students from various majors participate in AAfA to meet program needs. Table 1 provides a list of program majors and their purpose for participating in AAfA. Regardless of program, the AAfA program supports WIU students in learning skills that align with their university program learning goals and transfer to their future careers.

During the preparation stage, a team of WIU faculty WCISEC staff are identified to plan the logistics of the program, including scheduling sessions, assessing equipment needs, and leading orientation activities. Orientation activities include introducing sample lesson plans, leading games and activities for WIU teacher candidates to understand how to work with WCISEC students, and introducing teacher candidates to WCISEC students by reviewing disability, communication, and behavior characteristics of each student. Gaining an understanding of the purpose of the clinic, adapting lessons to respond to the individual strengths and needs of students with disabilities, and working to co-create lessons with peers they have just met are critical components to a successful semester.

During the action phase, faculty and staff informally observe AAfA sessions, give feedback, support the environment, and suggest adaptations. After each session, WIU teacher candidates and faculty participate in reflection time, allowing for adjustment of future lesson plans based on feedback and their own experiences working directly with WCISEC students. Historically, reflections and feedback have been informal; howev-

er, formal data collection from WIU students, WIU faculty, and WCISEC staff is planned for the future to inform the program's design to fit the needs of all involved. The demonstration phase varies for each WIU university student depending on academic program, but all participate in some form of demonstration through writing papers, sharing information informally with peers, or giving formal presentations.

The AAfA program began in the mid-to-late 1990s as an experience for pre-professional physical education teachers to receive direct experience with students with disabilities. In the early 2000s, WCISEC sought to reinvest in Adapted Physical Education for their students by initiating the relationship with WIU. In 2013, the cross-disciplinary nature was added as the Speech Pathology and Audiology (SPA) program was introduced to AAfA. Seeing the benefits for students in both the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) and SPA programs was the catalyst for seeking more collaborative options from different programs across campus. This ensured that WCISEC students were well supported for their motor activities and could receive one-on-one instruction and support. The goal

is to support 45 to 60 WCISEC students, while also connecting the experience to coursework and professional activities for WIU students.

Informal observation and assessment of the benefits of AAfA for WIU students drove the decision to include more programs from across the university, including the Special Education (SPED) program. The inclusion of SPED in AAfA has enhanced the degree program to allow teacher candidates to practice collaboration in authentic situations. The AAfA program has evolved over time, and will continue to evolve, to meet the educational needs of WIU teacher candidates and to serve the WCISEC student population. As such, it has also evolved to align with CBSL principles. Ensuring the needs of both WIU teacher candidates and WCISEC students speaks to the reciprocal nature of the program, and allowing WIU teacher candidates to serve as role models and educators to WCISEC students highlights civic engagement opportunities. Likewise, participation of WIU teacher candidates in orientation and learning-through-doing serves as a unique form of professional development while working alongside other education related disciplines.

For WCISEC students, five key benefits have been identified: (a) engagement in physical activity, (b) introduction to a new learning environment, (c) participation and learning in skills not otherwise available in their schools or extracurricular activities, (d) attainment of independence and transition skills, and (e) discovery of personal strengths and weaknesses. Observations show WCISEC students have gained prerequisite skills for other activities, such as music and sports, in an environment rich with color, fun, and engaging leaders. WCISEC students also practice appropriate transitions between activities and work on communicating their needs,

both non-verbal and verbal, to people who are new to them. WCISEC students also receive continuous positive reinforcement, which encourages them to persevere on new activities that might be outside of their comfort zone.

For WIU teacher candidates, three professional readiness benefits have emerged: (a) gaining teamwork skills, participating in new experiences, and adapting to situational or student needs. The interdisciplinary nature of AAfA leads to teamwork skills, while teacher candidates learn to adapt under pressure in cases when one of their teammates misses a session due to illness, or an unanticipated WCISEC student support need is revealed. They learn communication skills for engaging with diverse learners that include beginning sign language or use of alternative communication devices- techniques and equipment that they may not have access to otherwise. Teacher candidates also learn flexibility in instructional delivery as they “think on the fly” in order to adjust to student needs or new situations as they arise. Adapting skills in the moment is an important component of professional life for all of these candidates.

Reciprocity is a benefit and a highlight of AAfA, as everyone interacts in an environment not available to either entity outside of the program. WIU fills an important partnership role as they provide opportunities for WCISEC students to learn, grow, practice independence, communicate, meet new people, collaborate, and learn prerequisite skills with increased support and positive reinforcement. Both WIU and WCISEC students practice new skills, in a new environment, using a teamwork model. While WIU teacher candidates practice delivering positive reinforcement, WCISEC students discover new strengths and skills. As WIU teacher candidates experience opportunities for real-time adaptation, WCISEC students

receive individualized instruction that leads to new skills. Both sets of students are experience authentic interactions and leave the gym each Friday with a shared sense of purpose and achievement.

Case example 3: SUNY Buffalo State University AuSome Programming

AuSome events were launched in 2010, guided by Chambers and Lavery’s (2012) four elements of effective service and CBSL: preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration. These events were developed collaboratively with community partners to provide inclusive, welcoming, and judgment-free recreational experiences for children with ASD or sensory regulation challenges.

A professor from SUNY Buffalo State’s Exceptional Education department and a program developer for individuals with ASD partnered with venues willing to offer sensory-friendly public experiences. The professor secured site agreements and provided training to staff at each venue to create autism-friendly environments. These events are now embedded in graduate special education coursework and highlight the value of CBSL to teacher candidates. Regularly scheduled programs include monthly events like *AuSome Evenings at the Museum*, semesterly events such as *AuSome Adventures at the Aquarium*, and annual gatherings like a summer picnic.

Program volunteers include graduate-level in-service teacher candidates. Program participants include children with ASD or sensory needs, their caregivers, neurotypical peers, guests, and community partners. Events typically draw 100–300 attendees and are supported by 6–15 graduate students and a faculty member. Events are specifically tailored to sensory needs, with accommodations like reduced guest capacity (25–50%), private access to venues, muted lighting and noise, and quiet

spaces for self-regulation. These measures reduce overstimulation and are key to the success of the events.

The most impactful element of AuSome events is the involvement of trained graduate students. These candidates are in a special education master's program and are pursuing certification. Their coursework includes service-learning components that provide hands-on training in making accommodations and activity modifications that promote participation and enjoyment, effectively linking theory to practice.

Graduate candidates play a vital role in all stages of the events. While venues offer space and a willingness to engage with neurodiverse populations, staff at these venues often lack training in behavioral and educational supports. The graduate students fill this gap by collaborating with the venue staff and families—encouraging communication, social interactions, and play, modeling strategies for caregivers who rarely witness these interactions firsthand. The events also provide a low-pressure setting for teacher candidates to practice caregiver engagement, building confidence for future interactions during conferences or IEP meetings.

As part of their coursework, candidates create supplementary materials such as choice boards, communication cards, visual schedules, social narratives, task analyses for crafts, rules with graphics, and color-coded maps. These visual supports foster communication, reduce anxiety, and increase understanding of rules and routines. Developing these materials strengthens candidates' ability to provide classroom accommodations and apply event-tested strategies in their own P–12 classrooms.

Reflection is a core component of CBSL. After each event, candidates participate in structured reflection sessions both on-site and during class. They respond to questions like “What

surprised you?” or “What was your key takeaway?” In addition, they complete individual and group written reflections and present summary slides in the final class. Candidates also complete surveys featuring both Likert-scale and open-ended questions to inform program assessment.

Initial AuSome programming was informed by collaborating with caregivers to conduct focus groups. Concurrently, the university professor completed training in service-learning pedagogy, emphasizing reflective practice. From a modest start, the program quickly expanded to a monthly calendar of events across varied venues and activities, including yoga, sensory story times, and visits to cultural institutions. The initiative has grown with support from grants, donations, and partnerships, and its model is easily replicable by other universities. Since 2010, AuSome events have evolved to match available funding, partner growth, and participant feedback, strengthening sustainability and outreach while maintaining robust impact on current and future teachers.

AuSome's growing list of community partners includes museums, aquariums, theaters, libraries, farms, and organizations offering activities like swimming, yoga, music, and art. These partners are mission-driven, promoting accessibility and inclusion. As part of the collaboration, they help with outreach and provide safe spaces for families who may otherwise avoid overstimulating environments. Partners appreciate the professional training provided by graduate students and reflect regularly with faculty to ensure events are mutually beneficial. Their feedback informs program improvements and supports ongoing development.

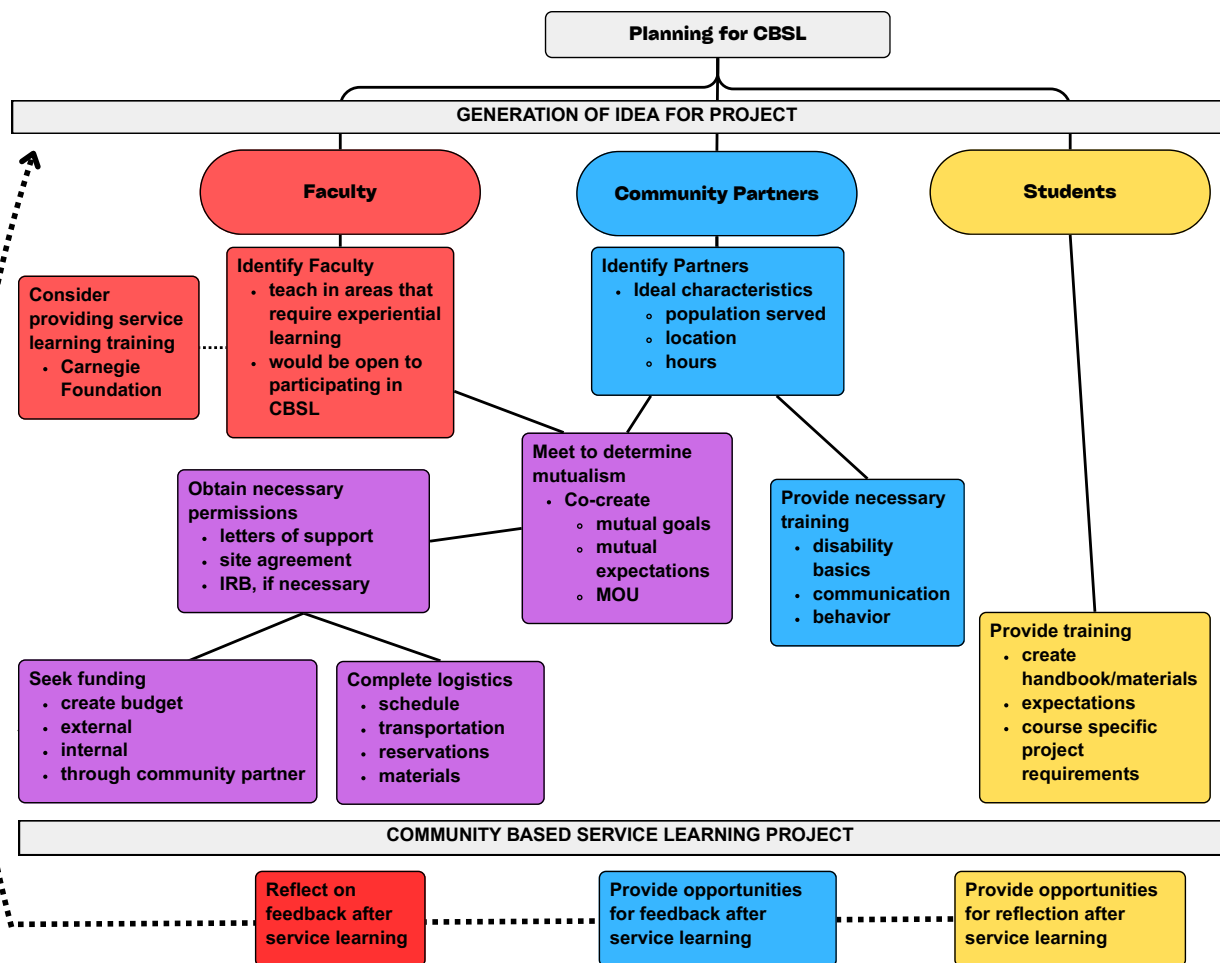
The collaborative experiences brought about through AuSome events offer significant benefits. For teacher candidates, they provide authentic experience with

neurodivergent children in non-classroom settings, build confidence in communicating with families, and sharpen collaboration skills. For children, the events offer safe, supportive recreational activities where they are welcomed and respected. For caregivers, the events reduce isolation and offer shared enjoyment with all family members. For faculty, AuSome events enrich curriculum with experiential learning, provide insight into student-teacher interactions in real-world contexts, foster community ties, and fulfill professional standards set by organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children.

APPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Collaboration with community-based partners offers teacher candidates useful service-learning experiences. CBSL is distinct and separate from traditional clinical pre-service teaching experiences (Williams & Lee, 2020). Such experiences enhance special education educator preparation as they lead to teacher candidate identity development, awareness of community resources, and willingness to collaborate with the community to serve the whole child. Faculty and community partners also realize the benefits of participating in CBSL, which makes it a reasonable and effective method for teaching in educator preparation programs.

In Figure 2 below, the authors have illustrated possible steps and considerations for implementing CBSL, based on the Effective Stages of DBSL (see Figure 1). This flowchart can be utilized as a template for programs and faculty who are interested in beginning a project in their own contexts. Each of the three case examples followed similar planning steps, while having different progressions and methods. To identify faculty participants, the CPED program utilized those faculty who were leading

FIGURE 2: Planning Model for CBSL Implementation in Special Education Teacher Preparation

practicum courses, while the AuSome program had a faculty member who was trained to offer service-learning coursework. Both the CPED and AAfA programs chose community partners based on their proximity to the university, as well as the roles those organizations already had in serving children with disabilities in the community. To ensure mutuality, the AAfA program provides the teacher candidates with important experiential learning in person with students with disabilities. In return, the university provides the partner agency with a free service of high-quality motor activities, which they would normally need to contract and pay for.

As pointed out via these three case examples, there are many logistical

items that must be considered prior to the actual CBSL activities taking place. Items such as creating memoranda of understanding (MOU), producing schedules, arranging transportation, reserving necessary equipment and/or spaces, obtaining permissions from organizations and the university, and budgeting and seeking/obtaining funding are all considerations that can take considerable amounts of time and require significant collaboration. For the CPED case example, scheduling partnerships each semester begins with a short conversation to determine how the university can best support the partner organization and discuss what the volunteerism can look like at the current time. Some programs, like the AAfA case example, find that planning

logistics as a team effort with faculty, student participants, and representation from the community agency is beneficial to maintaining mutual benefit for all entities involved. While this may be beneficial, it can also take longer than simply having a faculty member do it alone. Each project will have different logistical needs, so it is best to begin planning early and be thorough.

Another critical aspect of CBSL is providing training to individuals or organizations that require it. This can present as explicit teaching about disabilities, as in the AuSome program's autism training that is provided to all employees in partner agencies, to training candidates in content or organization-specific requirements. For example, in the CPED program, each

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community partner provides tours of their facilities, informational presentations, and training on how they support community needs. While the AAfA program does not contain explicit training, teacher candidates participate in an orientation that includes sample lesson plans, practice leading activities that are appropriate for the student population with which they will work, and learn the disability, behavior, and communication characteristics of the students.

Reflection that is completed by all participating teacher candidates, community partners, and faculty is the final critical piece in the cycle of CBSL. Teacher candidates should be given the opportunity to reflect often throughout the project, as these opportunities help them develop their skills and relate the experience to their own background knowledge and their future careers as teachers (Chamber & Lavery, 2012). Culminating projects, such as AuSome's written reflections and slideshow presentations of their experiences, not only help teacher candidates contextualize what they have learned but also provide feedback regarding the project as a whole. It is also vital to solicit reflective feedback from community partners upon completion of the project so that it can be used to determine strengths and areas for improvement in the next iteration. All the case examples use either in-person meetings or electronic surveys to gather feedback at the conclusion of each project.

Community-based Service Learning has many benefits for aspiring teachers, teacher educators, and the communities in which they live and work. The collaborative case examples and information presented here demonstrate that CBSL is not only effective for teacher preparation, but it is also achievable within the confines of teacher education programming in higher education. Hopefully, readers are inspired to take the next steps toward undertaking a project within their contexts that will meet the needs of their teacher candidates and community

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