

Transformative Social Impact

A Journal of Community-Based Teaching & Research

eISSN: 3066-8239

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025

Volume 2, Issue 1

February 2026



TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

A Journal of Community-Based Teaching & Research

Volume 2, Issue 1

eISSN: 3066-8239 (online)

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.1.2

Date of Publication: February 2026

Editor's Note

February 24, 2026

As we present Volume 2, Issue 1 of *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching & Research*, I am struck by the depth and breadth of scholarship that continues to define this publication. This issue brings together nine remarkable contributions that collectively illuminate the evolving landscape of community-engaged education, research, and practice.

The articles in this volume reflect a fundamental conviction: that meaningful social transformation emerges from authentic partnerships, reciprocal relationships, and sustained commitment to equity. From elementary classrooms in rural Pennsylvania to nutrition education programs in Chicago, from policy analysis affecting the social work profession to frameworks reimagining business school-community collaboration, our authors demonstrate how theory and practice converge to address pressing social challenges.

Harris, Schoonover, and Jones-Lewis open our collection by articulating three foundational tenets of community-engaged scholarship—humility, mutual benefit, and authentic partnership—drawing from the transformative work of the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Virginia. Their framework provides essential guidance for researchers navigating the complexities of community-driven inquiry.

Kho, Gankin, and Pine present an innovative approach to health equity through their Nourish Chicago program, demonstrating how the oral-gut axis can serve as a translational anchor for nutrition education in underserved communities. Their conceptual framework offers a replicable model for addressing health literacy barriers in low-resource environments.

Boudreaux contributes a compelling pedagogical case study exploring photovoice methodology in medical sociology education, showing how visual reflection assignments can bridge the distance between abstract sociological concepts and lived experience while maintaining ethical boundaries and student agency.

Struloeff and MacDonald examine how Pennsylvania's culturally relevant and sustaining education competencies function as guideposts for equity work, revealing both the promise and limitations of policy tools when integrated into structured improvement communities. Their white paper offers critical insights for educators seeking to translate policy intent into equitable practice.

Sanders provides a timely policy analysis of proposed federal student loan reforms that would reclassify MSW and DSW degrees, examining the potential cascading effects on educational access, workforce sustainability, and behavioral health service delivery. This work underscores how seemingly technical policy decisions carry profound equity implications.

Bonner and Evans offer practitioner-ready guidance through their phenomenological study of trauma-informed practice implementation in rural elementary schools, demonstrating how connection-first approaches can transform school climate while maintaining academic rigor.

The final three articles examine business education's civic role and community engagement potential. These pieces collectively argue that business schools can serve as bridges between market systems and community needs, moving beyond traditional consulting models toward reciprocal partnerships that advance both educational outcomes and public purpose.

Together, these contributions reflect the multidisciplinary, practice-grounded scholarship that distinguishes *Transformative Social Impact*. Our authors work across institutional types, geographic contexts, and methodological traditions, yet they share a commitment to research and teaching that serves communities as genuine partners rather than passive subjects or beneficiaries.

As we move further into 2026, the urgency of community-engaged scholarship only intensifies. Educational institutions face mounting pressure to demonstrate relevance and impact beyond conventional metrics. Communities navigate complex challenges requiring collaborative, evidence-informed responses. The scholarship in this issue offers both theoretical grounding and practical wisdom for these efforts.

I extend my deep gratitude to our authors for their contributions, our reviewers for their careful attention and constructive feedback, and our readers for engaging with this work. The collaborative spirit that animates these articles reflects the reciprocal relationships our journal seeks to advance.

I invite you to read, reflect, and consider how these insights might inform your own community-engaged scholarship and practice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jonathan H. Westover
Editor-in-Chief
Transformative Social Impact Journal

TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

A Journal of Community-Based Teaching & Research

Volume 2, Issue 1

eISSN: 3066-8239 (online)

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1

Date of Publication: February 2026

Submission Guidelines:

- **[Author Guidelines](#)**: Instructions for preparing and submitting manuscripts.
 - **[Peer Review Process](#)**: Information about the journal's peer review process.
 - **[Publication Ethics](#)**: The journal's policies on plagiarism, authorship, and conflicts of interest.
-

Contact Information:

- **[About the Journal and Editorial Team](#)**
 - **[Publisher](#)**: HCI Academic Press
-

Disclaimer: *The views and opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the journal or its publisher.*

Table of Contents

Articles:

1. [Embracing Community-Engaged Scholarship: Principles and Practices from the Center for Community Partnerships at UVA](#) by Jessica M. Harris, Nina R. Schoonover, and Sherica Jones-Lewis, University of Virginia
2. [Increasing Oral-Gut Axis Health Literacy in Underserved Communities with Community-Involved, Pantry-Accessible Nutrition Education: A Conceptual Framework and Program](#) by Audrey Kho, Yinon Gankin, Polina Pine, Loyola University Chicago and Glenbrook South High School
3. [Photovoice in a Medical Sociology Classroom: A Case Study on Experiential and Ethical Engagement](#) by JoAnna Boudreaux, University of Memphis
4. [Equity Policy as a Guidepost: Using the PA Common Ground Framework to Complement Efforts to Improve Student Belonging](#) by Katrina Struloeff and Megan MacDonald, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education
5. [Threatening the Social Work Pipeline: A Policy Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's Proposals to Reclassify MSW & DSW Degrees](#) by Ashley Sanders, Saginaw Valley State University
6. [Elementary Educators' Experiences Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices: Process, Integration, and System Change in Rural Pennsylvania Schools](#) by Thomas Bonner, Jr. and Elana M. Evans, Blue Mountain Elementary West
7. [Building Bridges Between Business Schools and Communities: A Framework for Reciprocal Engagement](#) by Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University
8. [High-Impact Practices as Organizational Change Strategy: A Framework for Institutional Transformation and Community Engagement](#) by Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University
9. [Strategic Stakeholder Integration: Reimagining Business School-Community Partnerships Beyond the Consulting Model](#) by Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Article Abstracts

Embracing Community-Engaged Scholarship: Principles and Practices from the Center for Community Partnerships at UVA

Authors: Jessica M. Harris, Nina R. Schoonover, and Sherica Jones-Lewis, University of Virginia

Abstract: *Researchers across disciplines are moving towards embracing community-engaged scholarship. This article presents three key tenets that help define the principles of community-engaged scholarship: 1) practicing humility, 2) pursuing mutual benefit, and 3) building authentic partnerships. These are offered to foster reflections on practice and highlight successes and challenges researchers face when engaging in this work. The authors draw from their experiences at the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Virginia, an organization created to transform university communities through humanizing research practices. The article provides examples from The Center as they conduct research that is community-driven. It also takes care to discuss challenges related to community-engaged research and how individuals and small university entities might work to overcome them in their own contexts.*

Keywords: community-engaged scholarship, research partnerships, mutual benefit, humility in research, authentic partnerships, community-driven research, university-community collaboration, humanizing research practices, Center for Community Partnerships, participatory research

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.9

Received April 16, 2025; Accepted for publication February 22, 2026; Published Early Access February 24, 2026

Suggested Citation:

Harris, J.M., Schoonover, N.R., & Jones-Lewis, S. (2026). Embracing Community-Engaged Scholarship: Principles and Practices from the Center for Community Partnerships at UVA. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.9

Increasing Oral-Gut Axis Health Literacy in Underserved Communities with Community-Involved, Pantry-Accessible Nutrition Education: A Conceptual Framework and Program

Authors: Audrey Kho, Yinon Gankin, Polina Pine, Loyola University Chicago and Glenbrook South High School

Abstract: *In metropolitan U.S. areas, health inequities caused by socioeconomic disparity continue to influence oral health, nutritional status, and the risk of chronic diseases. Diets heavy in added sugars and poor in fiber and vital micronutrients are especially harmful to the oral-gut axis, which connects diet, microbial balance, inflammation, and systemic and neurological health. Due to institutional hurdles to health literacy, limited access to preventive health education, and food poverty, these eating habits are more common among low-income individuals. Only 36% of low-income parents in Chicago report being in good health, compared to 75% of parents with better incomes, underscoring the need for easily accessible, neighborhood-based health education programs. By converting nutrition science and the oral-gut axis into useful, low-barrier educational programs, Nourish Chicago, a community-engaged health literacy project, aims to close these gaps. Instead of measuring health outcomes, this article offers a conceptual framework and program design. Nourish Chicago places a strong emphasis on skill-based learning, immersive training, and delivery in familiar neighborhood settings. It is built on the principles of critical health literacy and community-engaged education. The program uses the oral-gut axis as a translation anchor to connect everyday food choices, such as sugar frequency, fiber intake, protein pairing, and snack timing, to oral and digestive health through simplified, biologically grounded explanations. Educational modules incorporate short demonstrations, hands-on activities, guided discussion, and bilingual take-home materials designed for pantry-accessible contexts. The framework outlines a structured science translation pipeline, core design principles, and adaptable module architecture intended for low-resource environments. By centering usability, prevention, and feasibility, this design-focused manuscript offers a replicable model for educators and community partners seeking to strengthen practical health literacy while acknowledging structural constraints faced by underserved populations.*

Keywords: community-engaged learning, health equity, critical health literacy, nutrition education, microbiome literacy, culturally responsive pedagogy, preventive public health, underserved urban communities

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.8

Received December 10, 2025; Accepted for publication December 29, 2025; Published Early Access January 2, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Kho, A., Gankin, Y., & Pine, P. (2026). Increasing Oral-Gut Axis Health Literacy in Underserved Communities with Community-Involved, Pantry-Accessible Nutrition Education: A Conceptual Framework and Programs. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.8

Photovoice in a Medical Sociology Classroom: A Case Study on Experiential and Ethical Engagement

Authors: JoAnna Boudreaux, University of Memphis

Abstract: *Medical Sociology courses often require students to engage with complex and emotionally charged issues such as health inequities, structural violence, and access to care. For many undergraduates, these topics may feel distant and abstract, while for others they may feel uncomfortably close to personal experience. This pedagogical case study describes the design and implementation of a photovoice assignment in an undergraduate Medical Sociology course to address this tension. Using a structured visual reflection assignment guided by the SHOWeD method, students photographed everyday environments and objects to connect sociological concepts to lived and observed realities while maintaining control over personal disclosure. Drawing on instructional reflection and analysis of student photovoice submissions and peer thematic work, the case illustrates how students engaged with recurring themes related to food inequality, chronic illness and caregiving, environmental and infrastructural conditions, and collective responsibility. Rather than offering generalizable outcomes, this case highlights how photovoice functioned as an experiential pedagogical strategy that supported participation, sociological reasoning, and ethical engagement within a single course context. The case study offers a practical and adaptable model for instructors seeking to incorporate visually grounded experiential learning into courses addressing health, inequality, and social structure.*

Keywords: Medical Sociology, photovoice, undergraduate education, health inequities, experiential learning, SHOWeD method, pedagogy, structural violence, visual methods, health disparities

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.7

Received December 10, 2025; Accepted for publication December 29, 2025; Published Early Access January 2, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Boudreaux, J. (2026). Photovoice in a Medical Sociology Classroom: A Case Study on Experiential and Ethical Engagement. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.7

Equity Policy as a Guidepost: Using the PA Common Ground Framework to Complement Efforts to Improve Student Belonging

Authors: Katrina Struloeff and Megan MacDonald, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

Abstract: *This white paper examines how equity-centered policy tools can function as guideposts for advancing student belonging when integrated into structured improvement work. Drawing on a qualitative action research study of an Equity in Student Belonging Inquiry Community convened by Catalyst @ Penn GSE, the paper explores how educators interpreted and enacted Pennsylvania's Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CR-SE) competencies within their local contexts. Framed by critical conceptualizations of belonging as relational, political, and structurally produced, the study situates continuous improvement as a promising yet insufficient approach for equity work unless paired with explicit attention to power, identity, and systemic inequity. Data sources included observations of inquiry community meetings, semi-structured interviews with ten experienced school and district leaders, and artifacts documenting shifts in policy and practice. Findings*

indicate that participants used the CR-SE competencies to establish shared language, legitimize equity-focused work, and strengthen collective accountability. Educators described how the competencies supported deeper inquiry into belonging, informed professional learning and curriculum decisions, and provided justification for equity-oriented initiatives. At the same time, participants highlighted challenges related to uneven implementation, policy instability, and the risk of superficial compliance when equity tools are not embedded in sustained learning structures. The paper argues that policy alone is insufficient to drive equitable change and that improvement work must be intentionally designed to surface structural inequities and elevate practitioner and student voice. By examining the Catalyst Inquiry Community Model, this study offers insight into how equity-centered improvement communities can support educators in translating policy intent into practice. Implications are offered for educators, leaders, policymakers, and researchers seeking to align equity policy, collaborative inquiry, and systemic efforts to improve student belonging.

Keywords: equity-centered policy, student belonging, culturally relevant and sustaining education, continuous improvement, structural inequity, practitioner voice, collaborative inquiry, implementation challenges, educational equity, systemic change

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.6

Received December 10, 2025; Accepted for publication December 20, 2025; Published Early Access December 22, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Struloeff, K. and MacDonald, M. (2026). Equity Policy as a Guidepost: Using the PA Common Ground Framework to Complement Efforts to Improve Student Belonging. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.6

Threatening the Social Work Pipeline: A Policy Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's Proposals to Reclassify MSW & DSW Degrees

Authors: Ashley Sanders, Saginaw Valley State University

Abstract: Recent federal student loan reforms proposed under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) would redefine "professional degree programs" for purposes of federal borrowing limits, excluding Master of Social Work (MSW) and Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degrees from eligibility for higher loan caps. This policy analysis examines the potential consequences of reclassifying social work degrees as non-professional, with particular attention to educational access, workforce sustainability, and equity. Guided by a normative, advocacy-oriented evaluative framework and an ecological lens, the analysis draws on federal rulemaking documents, workforce projections, accreditation standards, and existing research on student debt and enrollment behavior. Findings suggest that reduced federal loan access may suppress MSW and DSW enrollment, disproportionately affect first-generation, low-income, and BIPOC students, and exacerbate behavioral health workforce shortages. The analysis concludes that the proposed reclassification risks undermining both social work education infrastructure and community well-being, and it offers policy-relevant considerations to better align loan reform with workforce and equity priorities.

Keywords: social work education, graduate student loan policy, behavioral health workforce, education access and equity, professional degree classification, MSW/DSW reclassification

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.5

Received December 10, 2025; Accepted for publication December 20, 2025; Published Early Access December 22, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Sanders, A. (2026). Threatening the Social Work Pipeline: A Policy Analysis of the U.S. Department of Education's Proposals to Reclassify MSW & DSW Degrees. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.5

Elementary Educators' Experiences Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices: Process, Integration, and System Change in Rural Pennsylvania Schools

Authors: Thomas Bonner, Jr. and Elana M. Evans, Blue Mountain Elementary West

Abstract: *This qualitative phenomenological study examined how elementary educators in two rural east-central Pennsylvania counties perceive the implementation of trauma-informed practices (TIPs). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 participants (3 administrators; 10 teachers) who implemented TIPs for at least one year. Analysis followed a hybrid coding approach (deductive alignment to SAMHSA's principles with inductive codes for emergent ideas) and second-cycle thematic synthesis. Findings, organized by three research questions (implementation process; curricular integration; system-level change), showed (a) Implementation as transformation, driven by leadership modeling, peer coaching, and a shift from consequence-first to connection-first; (b) Curricular integration through safety, voice, and choice, with teachers embedding predictable routines, brief regulation breaks, and options for task response; and (c) System shifts, including reframed walkthroughs, strengthened staff coherence, and early evidence within the first year of calmer classrooms and improved relationships. Nine teachers described initial challenges balancing instruction with decoding trauma responses; all three administrators emphasized coaching and consistency. Implications include phased rollouts, coaching structures, and observable indicators that align TIPs with pacing and standards. Limitations include a single-region sample and self-report data. The study contributes practitioner-ready guidance for sustainable TIP implementation in K-6 settings.*

Keywords: trauma-informed practices, elementary education, SAMHSA principles, qualitative phenomenology, rural schools

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.4

Received November 24, 2025; Accepted for publication December 17, 2025; Published Early Access December 19, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Bonner, T & Evans, LM (2026). Elementary Educators' Experiences Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices: Process, Integration, and System Change in Rural Pennsylvania Schools. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.4

Building Bridges Between Business Schools and Communities: A Framework for Reciprocal Engagement

Authors: Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Abstract: *Business schools increasingly recognize their responsibility to serve communities beyond producing graduates and research. This article examines emerging models of reciprocal community engagement in business education, where universities and community organizations collaborate as genuine partners rather than following traditional service-provider relationships. Drawing on service-learning scholarship and organizational partnership literature, the analysis explores the landscape of university-community collaboration, organizational and community impacts of engagement initiatives, and evidence-based approaches to building sustainable partnerships. The article synthesizes research on reciprocal engagement strategies including collaborative project design, capacity-building exchanges, and sustained relationship infrastructure. Forward-looking recommendations address institutional commitment frameworks, partnership governance models, and systems for continuous learning. The synthesis offers practical guidance for business school administrators, faculty, and community organizations seeking to develop mutually beneficial relationships that enhance educational outcomes while addressing authentic community needs.*

Keywords: reciprocal engagement, community partnerships, service-learning, business education, university-community collaboration, mutual benefit, civic engagement, partnership governance

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.1

Received October 10, 2025; Accepted for publication November 9, 2025; Published Early Access November 11, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2026). Building Bridges Between Business Schools and Communities: A Framework for Reciprocal

High-Impact Practices as Organizational Change Strategy: A Framework for Institutional Transformation and Community Engagement

Authors: Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Abstract: *High-impact practices (HIPs)—structured educational experiences characterized by active learning, faculty mentorship, peer collaboration, and authentic application—have demonstrated effectiveness in improving student retention, learning outcomes, and degree completion. While early HIP scholarship focused primarily on individual student benefits, this conceptual framework positions HIPs as comprehensive organizational change strategies that reshape institutional cultures, resource allocations, faculty reward structures, and community partnerships. Drawing on foundational student development theory, meta-institutional empirical studies, and organizational change scholarship, this framework examines how systematic HIP implementation catalyzes transformation across multiple institutional dimensions simultaneously. The analysis synthesizes evidence on HIP design principles, organizational consequences, and implementation strategies, with particular attention to equity considerations often marginalized in educational innovation discourse. Rather than claiming comprehensive literature coverage, this framework offers a bounded synthesis connecting student success research, organizational theory, and civic engagement scholarship to illuminate HIPs' multidimensional transformative potential. The framework concludes that institutions treating HIPs as isolated pedagogical techniques miss their fuller capacity to advance educational quality, equity, and public purpose simultaneously—but that realizing this potential requires structural commitments extending far beyond curricular additions.*

Keywords: high-impact practices, organizational change, student engagement, educational equity, community partnerships, undergraduate retention, institutional transformation, experiential learning

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.2

Received October 20, 2025; Accepted for publication November 10, 2025; Published Early Access November 12, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2026). High-Impact Practices as Organizational Change Strategy: A Framework for Institutional Transformation and Community Engagement. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.2

Strategic Stakeholder Integration: Reimagining Business School-Community Partnerships Beyond the Consulting Model

Authors: Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Abstract: *Business education confronts a pedagogical paradox: widespread endorsement of stakeholder capitalism rhetoric alongside curricula that rarely provide authentic stakeholder integration experience. This article examines how reciprocal university-community partnerships can serve as pedagogy for stakeholder management—teaching students to navigate complex stakeholder environments by operating within them rather than analyzing them abstractly. Drawing on stakeholder theory, organizational partnership scholarship, and social value creation frameworks, the analysis develops a business school-specific model distinguishing reciprocal engagement from the extractive consulting paradigm that shapes student expectations. The framework synthesizes evidence on partnership approaches across business disciplines (accounting, finance, marketing, operations, entrepreneurship), revealing how each creates distinctive value propositions for community organizations while developing domain-specific competencies. Organizational implementation strategies address tensions unique to business schools: managing corporate and community partnerships simultaneously, navigating capitalism critiques, leveraging alumni networks and executive education as partnership infrastructure, and measuring multidimensional value in analytically rigorous ways. The article positions business schools as civic economic development actors whose community partnerships can demonstrate stakeholder capitalism in practice while building regional prosperity, challenging the assumption that business education must choose between academic rigor and public purpose.*

Keywords: stakeholder capitalism, community partnerships, business education, social value creation, reciprocal engagement, civic economic development, stakeholder integration, business pedagogy

doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.3

Received October 30, 2025; Accepted for publication November 15, 2025; Published Early Access November 17, 2025

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2026). Strategic Stakeholder Integration: Reimagining Business School-Community Partnerships Beyond the Consulting Model. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 2(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.2.1.3

Disclaimer: *The views and opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the journal or its publisher.*
