

# Critical Online Service-Learning: Connecting with Communities in Online Education

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Center for Teaching  
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# Critical Online Service-Learning: Connecting with Communities in Online Education

Presenters:

Tyler Derreth, PhD

Maggie Wear, PhD

# What We'll Cover



The Basics—Blending Service-Learning Approaches

Traditional Service-Learning  
Online Service-Learning  
Critical Service-Learning



Critical Online Service-Learning Model



A Conversation with Dr. Maggie Wear on teaching with COSL

## Service-Learning Landscape

### Traditional S-L

- Peak in the 1990s

### Online S-L

- Early 2000's-present

### Critical S-L

- Watershed article in 2008
- Continuing rise in use

# What Does Traditional Online Service-Learning Look Like?

OSL stems from traditional charity and consultative models

Four main types: I, II, III, and IV (or Extreme Online Service-Learning)

I, II, and III are all hybrid online/in-person formats

Type IV is completely virtual and has usually been labeled the most limited type

- A number of scholars note that this type is the most consultant-centric model of service-learning



# The Problem

Online S-L models are limited

Not many theories or frameworks	Largely "consumer" and "client" based	Very individualized and independent	Limited structures for reflection
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Essentially, how do we create an online service-learning pedagogy that is based in *critical service-learning*?



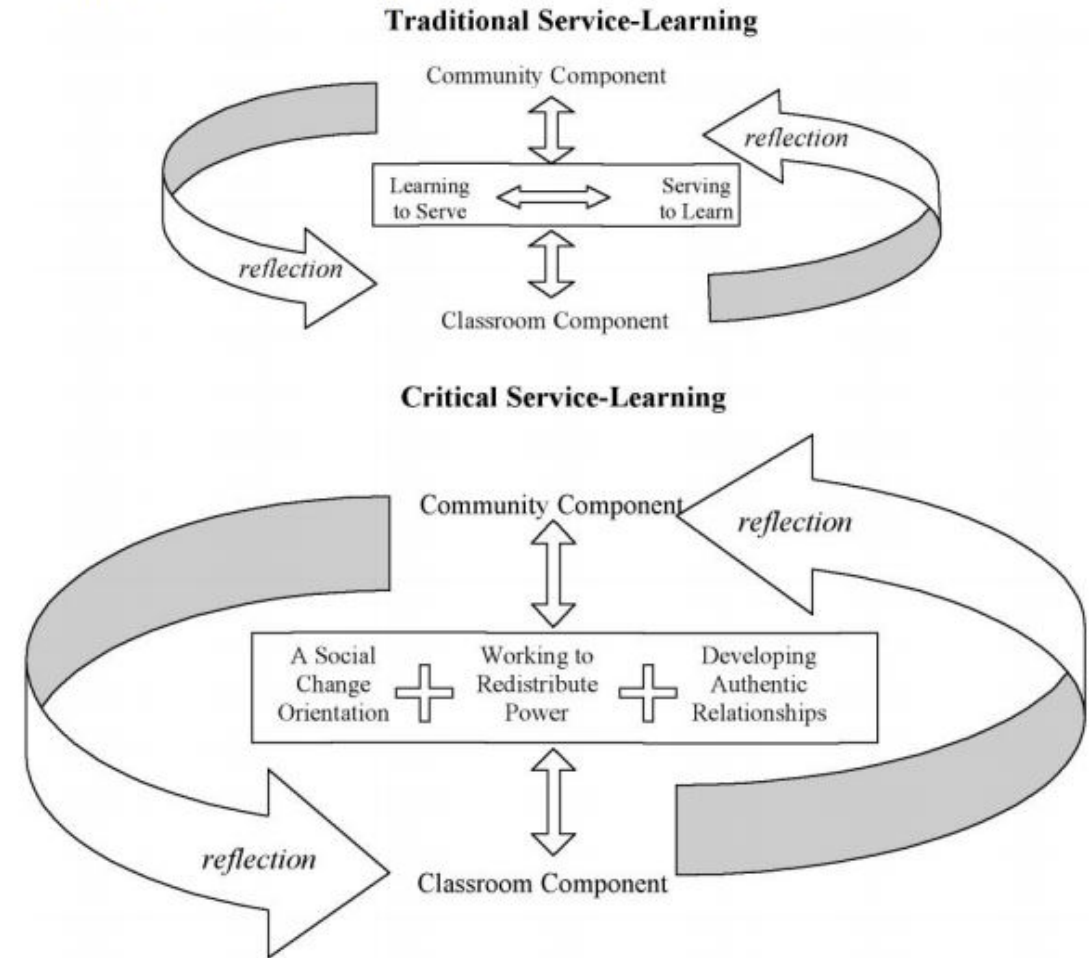
# Critical Service-Learning

*“An academic experience with a social justice orientation”*

- Working to **redistribute power** amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship
- **Build authentic relationships** in the classroom and in the community
- Working from a **social change** perspective

*Mitchell, 2008*

Figure 1.  
*Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning*



## Dialogic Communication

Podcast-style conversations on challenging topics like racism, equality, and justice encourage *Social Change*.

Encouraging various types of communication allows for *Authentic Relationship* develop between students, student:CBO, and student:professor

Breaking down the authority structures leading to interaction biases begins the process of *Redistribution of Power*.

## Cross-Contextual Reflections

Students examine how their community is similar/different than Baltimore; *changing perspectives* about Baltimore.

Students experience their own community in a new way by examining how it compares to Baltimore *changes student relationships* with their communities

As students reflect on the effects of authority, like police, in their community and in Baltimore they see how *sources of power have molded the communities they experience*.

## Positioning oneself as an Ally

Podcast-like conversations explore investment/disinvestment in underserved communities enabling students to see how they play a role in *Social Change*.

Having conversations with CBO leaders, students not only connect with the community, but *develop a collaborative relationship with stakeholders* in that community.

Students and CBOs collaborate to develop evaluation tools, thereby putting both in *positions of authority*.



# Aims of Our Critical OSL Framework



To facilitate transformative learning experiences over transactional ones



To reform online service-learning pedagogies by centering justice and acknowledging the diversity of our students and communities



To invite students across the world to collaborate with our home communities in Baltimore



To learn from and with each other to advance equity and justice through our collaborative work

# Course Development Team

- **Mindi Levin**, Health, Behavior and Society, JHSPH (SOURCE Director)
- **Gundula Bosch**, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology , JHSPH (R3 Director)
- **R. Tyler Derreth**, Health, Behavior and Society, JHSPH (SOURCE Associate Director)
- **Maggie Wear**, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, JHSPH (Instructor, R3 program)
- **Kathy Gresh**, Center for Teaching and Learning, JHSPH
- **Mia Lamm**, Center for Teaching and Learning, JHSPH



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# Teaching Team



- **R. Tyler Derreth**, Co-Instructor
- **Maggie Wear**, Co-Instructor
- **Elise Thompson**, Teaching Assistant
- **Alex Warrick-Adams**, Executive Director, ELEV8
- **Melodie Cunningham**, Director of Research Development and Marketing, GEDCO



Community-Based Practice  
Through Civic Engagement  
Projects: An online service-  
learning course

Issue: How do we elevate communication?



Virtual Introductions



VoiceThread "Conversations"



Conversational Interviews



Discussion Forum Prompts



Zoom meetings

Issue: How do we connect culturally and interpersonally?

## The three elements of reflection

What?

So  
what?

Now  
what?

### Reflection Assignment:

- Comparison between hometown and Baltimore
- Consider the shared justice issue
- Both written and video/presentation

# Issue: How do we engage as a cohesive group?

- Design “sharing” checkpoints
- Co-develop space for community leadership and vision
  - Community partner-led meetings
- Elevate experiential knowledge alongside theoretical knowledge
  - Design assignments and activities around the value of both
- Prioritize humility
- Rebuild roles
  - What does it mean to be a “student,” “teacher,” or “community partner”

Questions?





Contact SOURCE for more information on **service-learning support**

[SOURCE@jhu.edu](mailto:SOURCE@jhu.edu)

Contact CTL for more information on **online learning support**

[CTLhelp@jhu.edu](mailto:CTLhelp@jhu.edu)

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# Thank you and CTL Resources

- ▶ Thank you to today's presenters!
- ▶ [CTL Help](#) — Technology questions/issues or to ask for instructional designer consultation
- ▶ [Toolkit](#) — Strategies
- ▶ [Event recordings](#) — Best practices
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