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Community Engaged Learning Assessment and evaluation



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Community Engaged Learning (CEL) is experiential education that involves reciprocity and collaboration between multiple stakeholders (teachers, students, societal partners) as well as self-reflection. Assessment and evaluation may not always be straightforward. This tool aims to provide inspiration and examples of practical guidelines and strategies for assessment and course evaluation for CEL.

ASSESSMENT VERSUS EVALUATION

This tool addresses assessment and evaluation in the context of CEL. Assessment refers to student assessment. This includes formative assessment, such as feedback, and summative assessment, such as grading a student's performance. Reflection plays a central role in CEL, particularly when providing feedback in the learning process (**see also the CEL reflection toolkit**). Evaluation refers to the evaluation of the course as a whole. Course evaluation is important to continuously improve educational practice.

Part 1: Assessment

STARTING CEL ASSESSMENT WITH THREE CENTRAL QUESTIONS

Three central questions that can be considered when defining an assessment procedure of any CEL course are:¹

1. How has the course content strengthened the student's understanding of the CEL experience?
2. How has the CEL experience affected students' understanding of course content?
3. How has the student demonstrated, through reflecting on their CEL experience, the ability to integrate theory and practice?

DESIGNING A CEL ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Designing a CEL assessment strategy is about determining how students can demonstrate achievement of learning in the CEL course. The assessment strategy depends on the learning goals and the teaching and learning activities. According to the principle of constructive alignment (see also toolkit CEL learning goals), all three need to be well-aligned. When choosing an assessment strategy, the following questions can be relevant:







- **When (re)designing a CEL course, does this require a different assessment method for your course or could an existing assessment be revised?**
- **Which different assessment methods could you use?** Common examples of CEL assessment methods include reports, presentations, active participation, and reflection.
- **How many different methods do you want to use?** Often multiple assessment methods are selected to assess the various aspects of the course. It can be useful to provide multiple forms of assessment (for instance 2 to 3 different methods) to capture different learning achievements, but too many may also be distracting and overwhelming for the students.
- **What is the timing of the assessment in relation to the course?** Most courses (CEL or not) incorporate frequent feedback moments, and have at least one midway assessment so that students can know how they are progressing. This way the students can reflect, learn, and adapt.
- **What is the respective weighing of each of the methods?** The same principle applies as regular courses; the weighing needs to match the learning activities and learning goals. Some examples from UU CEL course assessment methods and weighing can be found later on in this tool.








- **Is there (numerical) grading involved in the assessment of the student learning?**
Depending on the learning that is being assessed, you could choose to include grading or not. Methods such as a written report and presentations are usually graded on a numerical scale, with grading guidelines defined in a rubric. Other methods of assessments in CEL may include grading in a non-numerical way, by for instance working with a sufficient/insufficient or go/no go, in combination with more specific feedback on what went well and points for improvement.
- **Are there specific community criteria incorporated?** Working in a community project may require different skills and outcomes. Teachers could ask the community partner for input and incorporate specific community criteria in the assessment. For example, assessing the student communication and collaboration with the community partner or assessing the relevance of the final product for the community.








WHO IS ASSESING WHO?

In CEL, collaboration takes place between three parties: community, students, and teachers, and assessment can be designed in many ways. Although the teacher has the leading role in the assessment process, being the formal examiner, input on the assessment can be provided by the community partner, students, or other relevant party. The different stakeholders are able to provide feedback on various aspects of the CEL course, which can offer a more holistic assessment. For instance, the **community partner** can provide the student with feedback on their community engagement, the **teacher** could focus on classroom-based learning and academic rigor, **a student's peers** can give feedback on teamwork, leadership and other components of their collaboration, and the students themselves can reflect on their own learning and growth in the course through **self-assessment**. Furthermore, students can be assessed based on their individual performance, as a group, or both. CEL is a learning process for everyone involved. Therefore, it is common to not only assess the student's performance, but also the collaboration process between all parties involved. This can also be part of a more elaborate CEL course evaluation, which will be discussed below.



 Course	LEARNING LAB LUNETTEN
 Coordinators	Irina van Aalst, Stef Dingemans, and Gery Nijenhuis
 Level	3
 Description	In 9 weeks, students and senior citizens in Lunetten work together on mapping the (spatial) relationship between the elderly and students, in which all steps of the participatory research cycle are followed. Students have to identify the problem or themes themselves, in consultation with local residents and teachers - requiring some creativity.
 Learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have knowledge of different participatory research methods and are able to apply them in a socio-spatial context. • Students have an understanding of the tools used for reflection and are able to critically reflect on the added value and shortcomings of participatory research methods for geographers and planners. • Students have insight into the different ways in which “stakeholders” can be involved in research. • Students can share research results with other users in a clear and concise manner. • Students have insight into effective collaboration with different actors in the neighborhoods, they are able to reflect on the role of and collaboration with different stakeholders in the research process and their own position in it.
 Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual reflection report (30%) Participation and process – Vlog (30%) • Community and problem identification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tabula rasa (submit week 1 – go/no go) - Community safari (submit week 1 – go/no go) - Problem identification / community scan (Presentation week 3 – go/no go) • Plan of action – (presentation week 4 - go/no go) • Final product and creative presentation (40%)

	Course	GLOBAL HEALTH PRACTICE: APPLYING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
	Coordinators	Judith van de Kamp & Joyce Browne
	Level	3rd year Bachelor students, University College Utrecht
	Description	In this course, students work together with global health (GH) experts on developing interdisciplinary solutions to real-world global health (equity) challenges. During the first half of the course, students are being introduced to various concepts crucial to achieving equitable global health impact. Students learn how these concepts work in various intervention studies conducted in various countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and Asia, in collaboration with the UMC Utrecht. Projects representatives from across the globe join online sessions weekly for several weeks. In these sessions, the students present their ideas on recommendations for various aspects of GH practice to these project experts, followed by a conversation on how this works (or could work) in practice. The idea is that students learn from GH practice by gaining insights into real-world projects and that the projects can also take some of the recommendations from the students to implement in these projects.
	Learning goals	At the end of this course, students are able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse global health challenges and identify underlying causes. • Apply disciplinary knowledge to global health challenges. • Apply an interdisciplinary approach to propose solutions for global health challenges. • Apply an 'equity' lens on global health practice. • Critically assess proposed solutions to global health challenges. • Reflect on the contribution of their field of expertise to address these global health challenges, their own role in an interdisciplinary collaborative process, as well as the expertise and role of others in these processes.
	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active class engagement (10%) • Individual paper (30%) • Student-led class (10%) • Presentation (30%) • Reflective portfolio (20%)
	More info	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1N3Nr0d_keU&feature=youtu.be

	Course	CREATING SOCIETAL IMPACT
	Coordinators	Gerard van der Ree and Esh Ramsali
	Level	3, curriculum enrichment course, University College Utrecht
	Description	In this course, students learn how to engage with our world in terms of systemic transformation in a practical manner, by initiating small-scale interventions. Through reflexive community engaged learning, students discover how they can lead to long-term and deep forms of change. The first part of the course will introduce key concepts, explore societal needs as well as our personal interests in them, and invite the participants to initiate small-scale 'micro-interventions' as a way of learning the basics of social innovation. In the second part of the course the participants will embark on iterative journeys that intervene in social ecosystems. The course will end with a public exhibition.
	Learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To invite societal and existential transformations in times of climate change. • To rethink social innovation and create new imaginaries of change making. • Learn about the main theories of public value creation and societal impact of science. • Learn interdisciplinary cooperation and problem solving. • Learn how to work in interdisciplinary teams on wicked social problems.
	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual participation (10%) • Reflection log, in which students consistently reflect on the learnings of their course, their own personal growth as well as on the developments of their projects (40%) • Final project, graded by the students together with the teachers based on progress reports in the form of 'quality maps' (50%)
	About quality mapping	Quality mapping is a tool that allows to assess the quality of an open-ended project that may take many different forms. Quality mapping works by allowing students to map-out the strong and weak areas of their projects. Students set up their own criteria for their projects, which they consider relevant and useful to the project. Then for each criterion they discuss regularly (in this course every week) how well they are doing on a scale from 1-10. They conclude what is going well and what they want to work on the upcoming period. As the project evolves, so can the criteria. Hence, every time a map is created, the criteria can change even though it is about the same project. In addition, students choose how they want to proceed with the project based on the mapping. So, while several issues might come up, not all have to be addressed immediately.

Part 2: CEL course evaluation

STARTING WITH CEL EVALUATION

Course evaluation is important to continuously improve educational practice. While many teachers incorporating CEL in their curricula already collect data that can be used for course evaluation (e.g., journals, surveys, observations), not all teachers systematically document their findings, or collaborate with colleagues for evaluation across courses or curricula. More systematic examination of the data, and increased discussion with colleagues about the results, can inform improvements that can be shared with other CEL practitioners and researchers. Below you can read more about some examples of course evaluation as well as an example of a framework for more elaborate evaluation.

TIP: The UU Centre for Academic Teaching has grants available for support with education evaluations: <https://www.uu.nl/onderwijs/centre-for-academic-teaching-0/sotl-grants>

WHAT ASPECTS OF CEL ARE EVALUATED?

CEL is a complex approach to teaching and learning, as it involves many different aspects (e.g., reciprocity, reflection, experiential education) and collaboration between multiple stakeholders (teachers, students, community partners). Often, evaluation tries to capture this complexity. A combination of methods can be applied to achieve this.

For instance, Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model can help to systematically guide the conception, design, implementation, and assessment of CEL courses, and provide feedback on the project's effectiveness for continuous improvement.² The model emphasizes 'learning-by-doing', and therefore makes it very suitable to evaluate emergent projects in a dynamic context like CEL. It describes four elements for evaluation: the context, the input, the process, and the product.

1. The CEL **context** evaluation is about community needs and assessing assets and opportunities for addressing the needs. At the start of the CEL course, goals are identified for the course based on a needs analysis of both the students and the community partner. Evaluation can help establish how well the needs analysis takes place in the community at the start of the course and whether the course goals and activities align well with these needs.
2. The CEL **input** evaluation is about designing mutually beneficial courses. A CEL course can require much planning, including activities, coordination, and resources. Evaluation can help identify strategies for implementation and points for improvement.
3. The CEL **process** evaluation is about identifying potential facilitators and barriers in an ongoing course. Evaluation of the process includes assessing the extent to which the planned activities are carried out, and monitoring whether changes to the course are necessary. This is valuable because it can provide timely information to make on-site adjustments and fosters a reflective learning cycle amongst all stakeholders in the course.
4. The CEL **product** evaluation is about meeting the desired outcomes for all parties involved. Evaluation of the product is about measuring and interpreting the course outcomes and impact for both the students, the community partner, and the teachers. It can measure the immediate outcomes as to whether the objectives were met, provide improvements that can be considered for a next time and it can also offer insight into the impact and sustainability of the project in the longer term.

CEL EVALUATION METHODS

From a systematic perspective, collecting information from various resources, and in collaboration with all communities involved is an ideal, yet sometimes impracticable, goal. Of course ethical research considerations apply when conducting a CEL evaluation. There are various methods that can be used for CEL evaluation, some examples are:

- logs and diaries;
- interviews with stakeholders;
- case studies;
- focus groups;
- CEL-specific questionnaires (see separate box);
- document/records retrieval and analysis;
- analysis of photographic records;
- assessment results;
- trend analysis of longitudinal data;
- longitudinal or cross-sectional cohort comparisons; and
- cost-benefit analysis.

Example instruments published to measure CEL outcomes for students, community, and faculty.³⁻⁸

- Service LEarning Benefit (SELEB) scale (Toncar et al., 2006)
- Global citizenship scale (Morais and Ogden, 2011)
- Civic competence scale (ten Dam et al., 2011)
- Civic minded graduate (Hatcher, 2011)
- Community Impact Scale (Srinivas et al., 2015)
- Web-based Faculty Service-Learning Beliefs Inventory (wFSLBI; Hou, 2010)

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Resources

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