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Community Engaged Learning Learning goals



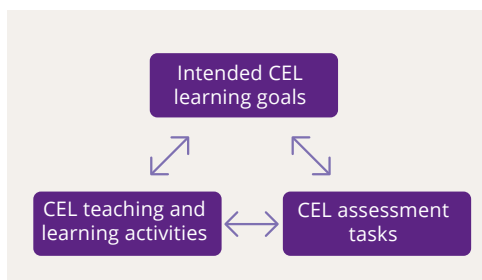
Community Engaged Learning

Learning goals

Setting priorities for learning helps students focus on intended learning goals, which is at least as important for Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses as for any other course. What might these learning goals be in a CEL course? Based on teacher's past experiences, this tool covers considerations for formulating CEL learning goals, selecting predefined and/or flexible learning goals, developmental considerations, and concrete examples from UU courses. This tool aims to help and inspire teachers in structuring courses in ways that work best for them and for their students.

Constructive alignment

Learning goals should not be considered in isolation. According to the principle of constructive alignment, the intended learning goals are integrated with teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks.¹ The same principles apply to CEL.



- **CEL Learning goals:** CEL learning goals can be described in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. CEL knowledge can for instance refer to knowledge of specific societal challenges, knowledge of communities or knowledge of the self. Skills can for instance refer to communication and collaboration skills, reflection, or empathy. Values and attitudes can include responsibility, an open and humble attitude, and valuing cultural diversity.
- **CEL Teaching and learning activities:** CEL learning goals can inform CEL teaching and learning activities and vice versa. CEL teaching and learning activities have been described by Furco and colleagues (2019) as an integration between classroom-based learning activities and community-based service activities.² This integration implies that classroom-based activities are designed to generate learning experiences that better prepare students to perform the community-based engagement activities, and community-based engagement activities are intentionally organized to influence and enhance students' learning in classroom-based learning activities. CEL learning goals can also capture this integration, for instance when referring to goals like 'transferring classroom knowledge to the real world' or the other way around to 'placing societal problems in a theoretical context' and integration thereof by 'reflection on the learning process'. Reflection can be a helpful tool, particularly in CEL, to strengthen the learning based on experiences.
- **CEL Assessment:** 'CEL' is experiential education that involves reciprocity and collaboration between multiple stakeholders (teachers, students, societal partners) as well as self-reflection. Assessment can play a key role in capturing this complexity and the learning outcomes for the students specifically. This can be done both through graded assessments as well as by providing (regular) feedback and incorporating reflection to enhance the learning experience in the CEL process.

More information on CEL Assessment?

Check out the **CEL resource on Assessment and Evaluation**.

Questions to 'reflect on' when designing CEL learning goals

- What is the added value of the community engagement in the course?
- What can students learn from the interaction with the community partner?
- What should your students be able to know/do/understand/experience after your course in relation to your societal topic/external partner?
- What distinguishes students who participated in the CEL project from those who did not?
- What would you like your students to share afterwards about what they learned in your CEL project?

Predefined learning goals

Learning goals can include knowledge outcomes, but also development of skills and specific values and/or attitudes.³ The selection of the learning goals will be dependent on the specific context of the course, such as the field of study or relevant societal partner. Various student learning outcomes for CEL have been described in literature,^{4,5,6} ranging from academic, social, personal, and civic outcomes. Please find below some examples of categories of learning goals from literature often associated with CEL.

Examples of categories of CEL learning goals from literature ^{4,5,6}

- Adaptability and flexibility
- Awareness and insights in complex societal challenges
- Awareness of oneself in terms of strengths and weaknesses
- Building and maintaining relationships / networking
- Career development
- Civic responsibility
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Cultural competence / awareness and sensitivity
- Empathy
- Ethical and moral values and decision making
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- Openness to other views and beliefs
- Problem solving
- Project planning
- Reflecting on a person's own values and skills
- Research skills
- Self-efficacy

"Competence is the integrated set of competencies, (or capabilities) consisting of clusters of knowledge, skills and attitudes, necessarily conditional for task performance and problem solving and for being able to function effectively (according to certain expectations or standards) in a certain profession, organization, job, role and situation." (Mulder et al., 2009, p. 757⁷)

LEARNING GOALS FRAMEWORKS

Learning goals can be described individually or in broader clusters or groups of outcomes. There are several competency frameworks that describe a set of integrated outcomes often associated with courses in which students engage with societal partners. These frameworks could provide further inspiration when formulating learning goals for CEL courses. Five examples:

- **Citizen scholars.** This framework by Arvanitakis and Hornsby,⁸ consists of creativity and innovation; resilience; working across teams and across experiences; and design thinking.
- **Transformative competencies.** The OECD defines 'transformative competencies' as the types of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values students need to transform society and shape the future for better lives.⁹ The OECD has identified three transformative competencies that students need to contribute to and thrive in our world, and thereby shape a better future: creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility.
- **Sustainability competencies.** Frisk and Larson (2011)¹⁰ have identified four key sustainability competencies:
 1. Systems Thinking and an Understanding of Interconnectedness;
 2. Long-Term, Foresighted Thinking;
 3. Stakeholder Engagement and Group Collaboration; and
 4. Action-Oriented and Change-Agent Skills.
- **Competences for Democratic Culture.** A framework by the Council of Europe,¹¹ that describes 20 competences that need to be acquired by those living in democratic countries. For example, knowledge and critical thinking of self, respect, empathy and valuing cultural diversity. It also aims at promoting competences that increase a peaceful integration of culturally diverse democratic societies.
- **Civic-Minded Graduate.** Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPIU)¹² has published about a well-researched construct of the Civic-Minded Graduate. The Civic-Minded Framework consists of an integration of three dimensions: civic experiences, educational experiences, and identity. It describes knowledge, skills, behavioral intentions, and dispositions.

Flexible learning goals

The complex and diverse nature of CEL also lends itself to a more flexible approach to teaching and learning. An alternative or complement to predetermined learning goals is personalized learning goals that are designed by or together with the students at the beginning of the course. Students themselves could formulate 1 or 2 (additional) personal learning goals for the CEL course. Students can also indicate when and how they would like to be assessed on this. Furthermore, through CEL, teachers and students often have unintended learning achievements that were not predetermined, which can also be considered valuable outcomes. It could be worth investigating such learning achievements through reflection and/or assessment means.







Developmental considerations







When designing CEL learning goals, it is important to pay attention to developmental considerations. What study year are the students in, what is their theoretical background and which level are their competencies at before starting the course? Have they already done a CEL project previously? The three-phase model of community engaged learning ("service-learning") course design by Howe and colleagues¹³ can provide a helpful guideline in this regard since it lists various considerations and developmental perspectives. Overall, they identified three flexible phases in which CEL projects can be implemented, considering the student's different developmental levels and prior experience in CEL:

1. **Exposure:** The goals of this phase are introducing students to CEL and building initial skills such as reflection and cultural and interpersonal competencies.
2. **Capacity building:** The goals of this phase are increasing the expectations for students to take responsibility in the project and practicing more advanced skills and reflection.
3. **Responsibility:** The goals of this phase are practicing a high level of ownership in the project for students and working towards mastering skills including high-level critical reflective thinking and expression.

Underlying considerations in this model include level of student responsibility (e.g., from participation to full responsibility), the role of the teacher (e.g., from the role of coordinator to coach or consultant), extent of teamwork, intensity and duration of the project (e.g., short vs long term commitment) and community contact (e.g., from no direct contact to students initiating contact with the community and everything in between). Each consideration can be made easier or more advanced, depending on the students' prior experience and teachers' preferences for the course. Besides formulating learning goals at an appropriate developmental level, this may inform any additional classroom activities that can help train specific knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes when needed.

Examples from UU-colleagues

	Course	DA VINCI PROJECT
	Professors	Bert Weckhuysen, Brianne McGonigle Leyh, Appy Sluijs, and Fieke Sluijs (field expert)
	Level	Undergraduate level, to be taken on top of any bachelor's programme (2nd-and 3-rd year students)
	Description	The Da Vinci project is an interdisciplinary honours programme on sustainability. Students will work together in teams on real-life sustainability related challenges with the involvement of important stakeholders. In the Da Vinci Project, students will apply the method of design thinking to unlock creativity and solve problems in an unconventional way. Students will meet people from diverse backgrounds, look across disciplinary boundaries and collaborate outside their comfort zone.
	Learning goals	At the end of this course students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply design thinking methods and tools in a commissioned sustainability challenge. • Create a prototype solution for a commissioned sustainability challenge that attends to the commissioning client's goals and the end users' needs. • Reflect on his or her personal contributions to the result, professional skills, insights, and behaviors towards interdisciplinary problems and his or her own learning process.
	More info	https://students.uu.nl/onderwijs/honours/uu-honours-college/da-vinci-project

	Course	COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES
	Professors	Jocelyn Ballantyne and Berteke Waaldijk
	Level	Master
	Description	This course introduces students from Humanities disciplines to the principles of community-based research: research that is realized in close collaboration with a community outside the circle of scientific researchers. Students learn how to set up research that directly benefits society. All students in the course work on a concrete proposal for a community-based research project. It is the intention that students will execute the proposal after the course.
	Learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students acquire knowledge, insight, and skills about the societal relevance of humanities knowledge. • Students gain insight into the complexity of humanities scientific research that is realized in consultation with clients. • Students gain experience in preparing research for societal partners. • Students learn how to work on a project basis and to deal with the complexity of community-based research. • Students can apply knowledge, research methods and skills from their own field in a broader social context.
	More info	https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/community-based-research-for-the-humanities/about

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Resources

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- 3 OECD. PISA 2018. Global Competence Framework. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm>
- 4 Celio, C. I., Durlak, J., & Dymnicki, A. (2011). *A meta-analysis of the impact of service-learning on students*. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 34(2), 164-181.
- 5 Conway, J. M., Amel, E. L., & Gerwien, D. P. (2009). *Teaching and learning in the social context: A meta-analysis of service learning's effects on academic, personal, social, and citizenship outcomes*. *Teaching of psychology*, 36(4), 233-245.
- 6 Yorio, P. L., & Ye, F. (2012). *A meta-analysis on the effects of service-learning on the social, personal, and cognitive outcomes of learning*. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 11(1), 9-27.
- 7 Mulder, M., Gulikers, J., Biemans, H., & Wesselink, R. (2009). *The new competence concept in higher education: error or enrichment?*. *Journal of European Industrial Training*.
- 8 Arvanitakis, J. and Hornsby, D. (2016), "Are universities redundant?", in Arvanitakis, J. and Hornsby, D. (Eds), *Universities, the Citizen Scholar and the Future of Higher Education*, PalgraveMacmillan, Basingstoke.
- 9 OECD (2019). Transformative competencies for 2030. Consulted via: http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/transformative-competencies/Transformative_Competencies_for_2030_concept_note.pdf
- 10 Frisk, E., & Larson, K. L. (2011). *Educating for sustainability: Competencies & practices for transformative action*. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, 2(1), 1-20.
- 11 Council of Europe. 2016. Competences for democratic culture. <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07>
- 12 IUPUI. Civic Minded Graduate. <https://csl.iupui.edu/teaching-research/tools-instruments/graduate/index.html>
- 13 Howe, C. W., Coleman, K., Hamshaw, K., & Westdijk, K. (2014). *Student development and service-learning: A three-phased model for course design*. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 2(1), 44-62.