

The Tools of Engagement Online Curriculum

University Community Partnerships Brief

The History

A cross unit team within University Outreach and Engagement (UOE) at Michigan State University set out to develop student learning modules on university outreach and engagement. There was considerable interest in developing a series of learning modules on engagement competencies to introduce students to engagement concepts and help instill competent practices needed for community engagement.

The Objectives

- Introduce undergraduate students to the concept of university-community engagement
- Develop their community-based research and engagement skills, and
- Assist with training the next generation of engaged scholars.



The Content

The ToE curriculum is a series of five modules :

- Module 1 – The Engaged Scholar: MSU’s Land-Grant Mission
- Module 2 – Community-Based Engagement: Power and Privilege
- Module 3 – Collaborative Negotiation
- Module 4 – Principles of Engagement: How to Make Groups Work
- Module 5 – Capacity Building

These modules may be used individually or in combination with each other depending on the instructor’s needs. Even if the modules are not being used in a classroom setting all enrolled MSU students, faculty, and staff have online access which allows them to view the module’s and their content.

All of the modules adhere to the following design parameters:

- Modules are designed to be part of a class not the whole class
- Modules are designed so that any component of a module may be exported
- The design pattern is ‘read – do – reflect’. Each module is designed for a 45 minute segment of time.



ToE in Use

The following examples aim to demonstrate the diverse uses of the ToE. The cases presented here range in scope from college wide adoption to individual faculty use.

Example 1: Individual Faculty Adoption for All Undergraduate Students College Wide

The Residential College of Arts and Humanities (RCAH) has a particular interest in academic work for the public good and an emphasis on civic engagement. The ToE curriculum was adopted by a faculty member in RCAH and is now used in two required courses. The tools have been used both to aid in the preparation of students prior to civic engagement work as well as alongside civic engagement immersion activities.

Example 2: College Wide Adoption for Graduate Students

The College of Human Medicine at MSU is also using the ToE. The use in this college is unique because it stems from a new accreditation requirement. The new standard for all medical students is that they must have some exposure to service learning prior to participation in their clinical research training experience. Each year roughly 300 medical students are provided with TOE as a resource.

Example 3: College Wide Adoption of Select Modules

The College of Music at MSU has a new music program in Detroit—The Community Music School (CMS). Engaged students play a critical role in this program with their responsibility to instruct both youth and adults. The ToE curriculum has played a role in this initiative and Module 1 “The Engaged Scholar: MSU’s Land Grant Mission” and Module 2 “Community Based Engagement: Power and Privilege” are used by CMS Detroit as preparation work prior to students’ community engagement experiences.



Example 4: College Wide Adoption of Select Modules through Specific Courses

In the College of Business, the ToE has been used in graduate level purchasing class. This class requires students to work with a non-profit partner in processing and purchasing rather than the typical corporate partner. This emphasis on non-corporate partners makes the ToE curriculum beneficial, especially the material dedicated to both negotiation as a practice. Similarly, the College of Engineering offers a capstone class in applied engineering. Their work experiences typically bring them to work with non-profits in the area that include: food banks, volunteer organizations, and donation centers. The capstone class use TOE in order to give their students a background in the principles of engagement as well as practice in the skills of negotiation and awareness of how power and privilege can affect relationships.

Example 5: Adoption of the Modules by Non-student members of the University Community

The ToE has also been used on campus for non-student groups and clubs. The MSU Community Club, a professional association comprised of both retired faculty and spouses of faculty, are currently using the tools to aid in a reflection component of select Integrative Studies in Social Science classes. The mentors are helping to facilitate reflection circles on experiences that come from student experiences with service-learning projects. The ToE, in particular Module 2, are helping the mentors guide student reflections in more comprehensive and productive ways.

For more information about the Tools of Engagement, please contact:

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