

Community is the Way

Engaged Writing and Designing for
Transformative Change

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
EDUCATOR'S TOOLKIT

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INTRODUCTION

This Educator's Toolkit is crafted for faculty, instructors, and educational facilitators interested in bringing dynamic conversations about equity and co-creation into their classrooms. Designed for use in both graduate and undergraduate courses, the toolkit offers a range of resources—including reading reflection prompts, discussion questions, writing reflection activities, and media worksheets—that can enrich curriculum and foster critical engagement. It supports a deeper understanding and application of the concepts explored in *Community is the Way*, which is available for free through the WAC Clearinghouse (wac.colostate.edu) and its print partner, the University Press of Colorado (upcolorado.com). Whether you're integrating it into faculty reading groups or in-class assignments, this toolkit will help you cultivate meaningful discussions and learning experiences centered around social justice and community engagement. Thank you to everyone who has shared how they are using *Community is the Way* in their teaching practices.

FACULTY DISCUSSION GUIDE

These first prompts aim to foster discussions among faculty members and administrators about the role of community engagement in academic programs, particularly within university writing programs. They are designed to explore best practices, share experiences, and inspire innovative approaches to integrating community-focused initiatives into programs.

By engaging in these discussions, faculty can collaboratively reflect on how to enrich student learning and foster meaningful partnerships with community organizations. This guide serves as a starting point for dialogue and exploration, while advocating for faculty to enhance the impact and relevance of their programs.

Redefining Programs

In what ways can our writing program become a vital resource for communities beyond academic settings? Explore the different strategies and approaches mentioned in the book that can help writing programs serve as agents of social change and community empowerment.

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COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Equity & Reciprocity

Reflect on the principles of equity and reciprocity discussed throughout the book. How can our program ensure that partnerships with community organizations are mutually beneficial and avoid the pitfalls of "drive-by" service-learning projects?

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Community First

How does prioritizing community partners' gains over student learning outcomes transform the traditional goals of writing programs? Discuss the potential long-term impacts on both students and communities when this shift in focus is made.

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Media + Engagement

How can emerging communication technologies be harnessed in programs to promote civic engagement and social change? Discuss examples from the book and/or propose additional ways technology can be integrated into community writing projects.

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Ethical Considerations

What are the ethical considerations and challenges involved in community-engaged writing? How can educators navigate these challenges while fostering a culture of critical reflection and social responsibility among students?

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Design for Justice

Explore the concept of design as both a practice and an outcome in community projects. How can design research and practices be leveraged to fight systemic oppression and promote more equitable futures in our program?

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Sustainable Partnerships

What are the key elements of building sustainable and impactful community partnerships in writing programs? Discuss the importance of intentional infrastructure, long-term commitments, and community-led initiatives.

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Decolonial Approaches

How can our program adopt decolonial approaches to avoid perpetuating systemic oppression and instead support grassroots activism and social change? Reflect on the strategies presented in the book and consider additional methods for decolonizing educational practices.

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Measuring Impact

How can the impact of our community partnerships be effectively measured and assessed? Discuss the methods used in the book and suggest other ways to evaluate the success of these programs in fostering civic agency and social responsibility.

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
FACULTY DISCUSSION

Future Writing Programs

Based on the themes and discussions throughout the book, what is your vision for the future of writing programs in higher education? How can these programs evolve to better serve both students and communities in creating meaningful and lasting social change?

PROMPTS FOR USE IN CLASS
CLASSROOM GUIDE

This set of prompts and assignments supports your teaching by providing practical and structured activities that can be easily integrated into the classroom. The prompts are organized by chapter and include reading reflection prompts, discussion prompts, and writing reflection prompts. They are practical tools that aim to help students connect theory with practice.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

These agreements set the tone for respectful and productive interactions, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Try it on ~ Be open to experimenting with new ideas or methods, even if they are unfamiliar or not your preference.

Practice self-focus ~ Share your own experiences and responses instead of giving advice or making assumptions about others.

Practice presence ~ Give full attention to the class, avoiding distractions such as email, phone, and apps.

Acknowledge we all have biases ~ Practice recognizing and naming biases when they arise. Acknowledgment is the first step toward change.

Understand the difference between intent & impact ~ Focus on the impact of statements rather than intent, as denying impact can be more harmful.

Move up/move back ~ Encourage participation by noting who is speaking and who is not. Adjust your participation accordingly.

Practice mindful listening ~ Listen without planning your response. Be open to learning something new.

Confidentiality ~ Share lessons learned, but do not identify others. Seek permission before following up on something said during a session.

Provide and receive critical feedback constructively ~ Offer feedback with the belief in people's capacity for change and listen to feedback with a willingness to change.

Learn about ableist and harmful language ~ Be aware of and avoid language that perpetuates harm.

READING RESPONSES

Reading responses demonstrate engagement with the materials and encourage connections between the readings and related discussion themes.

Reading responses are pre-class writing activities that demonstrate your engagement with the ideas in the material. An effective response demonstrates that you have thoroughly read and understood the material (or that you ask and attempt to answer compelling questions that reveal careful reading). The responses will develop connections among the material and relevant themes and demonstrate that you have considered the implications of the materials.

Although these are not formal academic papers, they should nevertheless be carefully written and cited. Include direct quotes from the readings that support your integration of the material. Be specific about the works you're discussing, give details to back up any assertions you may make, and include references and page numbers when appropriate. Finally, pay attention to grammar and mechanics. Responses are short answers (typically between 200-300 words)

CLASS DISCUSSION

Facilitate understanding of ideas, issues, and values in the text through group discussion, where participants lead and practice active listening and finding common ground.

Here, we help one another understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the book through a group discussion format. All participants are responsible for taking the lead in facilitating group discussion around the ideas in the text.

Through discussion, participants practice how to listen to one another, make meaning, and find common ground while participating in a conversation. Everyone is responsible for making the discussion work. Use the community agreements to promote good practices.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Post-discussion writing exercises deepen understanding and integrate insights gained from discussions and readings.

Short writing activities are best employed after some engagement with the text, either through class discussion or reading responses. Although these are not formal academic papers, they should nevertheless be carefully written and cited. Include direct quotes from the readings that support your integration of the material. Be specific about the works you're discussing, give details to back up any assertions you may make, and include references and page numbers when appropriate. Finally, pay attention to grammar and mechanics.

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Power & Privilege

Reflect on the incident described in the introduction. How do power and privilege manifest in academic and community settings, even among those committed to social justice? How can we genuinely address systemic oppression if we are part of the system perpetuating it?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Addressing Harm

Consider the author's internal conflict about whether to speak up during the workshop. What responsibilities do individuals have to address harmful comments or actions in professional settings? How might these responsibilities vary based on one's position, identity, and context? Have you ever been in such a situation? What happened?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Emotional Labor

Evaluate the distribution of emotional labor in the described incident. How do racial and gender dynamics influence who is expected to address and rectify harmful comments in academic settings? What are the implications for equity and inclusivity?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Redesigning Systems

The Creative Reaction Lab suggests that systems of oppression can and must be redesigned. What practical steps can individuals and institutions take to consciously redesign mindsets and infrastructures for more equitable outcomes in community partnerships?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Accountability

In this opening anecdote, the author reflects on her unintentional baggage and colonizing behaviors. How can scholars and practitioners in social justice fields hold themselves accountable and continuously reflect on their impact?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Intent vs. Impact

Discuss the difference between intent and impact using the conference presenter's comment as a case study. Why is it important to focus on the impact of our words and actions, regardless of intent, in social justice work? How can we create environments where the impact is prioritized and addressed constructively?

FOREWORD
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Building Bridges

What does it mean to build bridges of understanding and support in community work? How can we ensure our partnerships are genuinely inclusive and just rather than unintentionally perpetuating the status quo?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Role of Universities

Reflect on how universities can act as partners in addressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems. How can community-engaged writing projects contribute to this mission?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Mutuality & Reciprocity

Discuss the concepts of mutuality and reciprocity in community-university partnerships. How might these principles shape the outcomes of collaborative projects?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Ethical Considerations

How can universities ensure their partnerships are genuinely mutually beneficial?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Power Dynamics

Examine the power dynamics at play in community-university collaborations. How can universities avoid privileging their interests over those of the community?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Confirmation Bias

Discuss the concept of confirmation bias as it relates to the success or failure of community-engaged projects. How can this bias hinder progress, and what strategies can be employed to overcome it?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Defining Community

Engage in a discussion about the various definitions of "community" presented in the text. How can the diversity in definitions impact community-university partnerships? What challenges and opportunities arise from these different perspectives?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Co-Creation of Knowledge

Discuss the concept of co-creation of knowledge with community partners. What are some benefits and potential challenges of this approach? How can power dynamics be managed to ensure true collaboration?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Transformative Change

Chapter 1 emphasizes transformative change over transactional relationships. Debate the feasibility of achieving transformative change in community partnerships within the constraints of an academia (such as semesters). What strategies can be implemented to ensure long-term commitment and impact?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Self-Reflection

Reflect on your role as a participant or activist in social justice fields. How can you hold yourself accountable and continuously reflect on your impact in working with communities?

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Community Impact

Draft an evaluation plan for a community-engaged project. Outline the methods you would use to assess the impact on the community, focusing on how you would involve community members in the process (including the evaluation process).

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Case Study Analysis

Analyze a case study of a community-university partnership, using the guiding principles as a framework. Identify strengths and areas for improvement in how the partnership was structured and executed. Provide recommendations for enhancing reciprocity and community impact.

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Design Research Methods

Traditional design research methods may miss crucial elements needed for effective work within communities (such as design thinking). How can equity-based approaches fill these gaps and prevent the perpetuation of oppressive systems?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Framing Inquiry

Framing inquiry around community-identified goals ensures that projects are relevant and beneficial to those they aim to serve. How can researchers and writers effectively align their work with these community-driven goals to promote equity?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Value of Co-Creation

Co-creating knowledge with community partners emphasizes the importance of community-based knowledge and decolonizing research spaces. What are the benefits and challenges of this approach in fostering equitable outcomes?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Power Dynamics

Power dynamics flow through every aspect of the research process. How can researchers and writers critically reflect on their own positionality to engage more ethically and effectively with communities?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Collaborative Inquiry

The design question frames inquiry around community goals and structures the project. What strategies can researchers use to ensure that their inquiries are genuinely collaborative and aligned with the vision of their community partners?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Decolonizing Knowledge

Emphasizing community-based knowledge requires actively decolonizing research spaces. How can researchers and writers navigate this process to ensure that diverse epistemologies are valued and integrated into their work?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Positionality

Consider a time when you engaged in a collaborative project. Reflect on how you addressed issues of positionality, power, and privilege. How did these considerations impact the project's outcomes and your relationship with others?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

North Star

The analogy of the North Star is used to guide community projects towards social justice and transformative change.

How can you apply this guiding principle to your own research or project to ensure that it remains focused on your higher-order goals?

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Building Trust

Building capacity and trust within community-university partnerships is crucial for long-term success. Reflect on a situation where trust was either successfully built or hindered. What strategies can you use to evaluate and enhance these elements in future projects?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Positionality

Reflect on the transformative potential of understanding one's position within social hierarchies of power and privilege. How does this understanding contribute to building empathy in community-engaged writing projects and impact interactions and collaborations with community partners?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Decolonizing Knowledge

Discuss the challenges and potential strategies for decolonizing knowledge within university settings. How can universities, as key players, move beyond their colonial legacies to truly value and integrate community-based knowledge?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Media + Social Justice

What is the potential of emerging media, such as social media platforms, podcasts, and online forums, to amplify the work of grassroots and community organizations in promoting social justice. How can students and faculty harness the power of these digital tools to support these initiatives?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Capacity Building

Evaluate the successes and challenges faced by the Life After Life project. How did the collaborative efforts between the Beautiful Social Research Collaborative and Life After Life build capacity for the community organization? What barriers to project sustainability were identified, and how might they be addressed in future collaborations?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Integrating Social Justice

How can educators effectively integrate social justice perspectives into their curricula? What are some practical approaches and challenges mentioned in the text? Discuss the urgent implications of failing to address diversity and social justice in education.

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Building Empathy

In what ways can community projects foster empathy and understanding among students, teachers, and community partners? Discuss the importance of positionality and critical reflection in this process.

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Sustainability

Sustainability is a recurring challenge in community-university partnerships. Considering the case study of Life After Life, what steps can be taken to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of similar projects? How can both university and community partners contribute to the ongoing development and utilization of project outcomes?

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Case Study Analysis

Write a case study analysis of a community writing project you have been involved in or one you are familiar with. Describe the project's goals, the roles of different participants, the challenges faced, and the outcomes. Reflect on how the project addressed issues of social justice and positionality.

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Project Design

Imagine you are designing a new community project. Outline the project's objectives, the community partner you would collaborate with, and the type of emerging media you would use. Explain how you would integrate social justice principles and decolonial methodologies into the project.

CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Positionality Narrative

Write a narrative describing a personal experience where understanding your positionality helped you engage more empathetically with someone from a different background. Reflect on how recognizing power dynamics influenced your interactions and the outcome of the situation.

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Social Objects

Reflect on a social media platform you frequently use. Identify its primary social object(s) and describe how these objects facilitate interaction and community building among users. How do these objects reflect the platform's goals and values?

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Weak Ties

How do weak ties on social media platforms contribute to knowledge sharing and community building?
Provide an example from your online interactions.

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Storytelling

Consider the role of storytelling in organizational communication. Based on Chapter 4, how can storytelling enhance the relationship between community organizations and their audiences?

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSION PROMPT

Media Platforms

How can students' critical examination of social media platforms lead to meaningful improvements for community partners? What are some potential obstacles students might face?

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSISION PROMPT

Design Question

Examine the process of developing a design question with community partners. How does this collaborative approach benefit both students and partners? What are some strategies for ensuring that the design question is both relevant and impactful for the community organization?

CHAPTER 4
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Social Object Impact

How do different types of social objects (images, videos, status updates) influence the level of engagement and interaction in online communities? Share examples from platforms you use and discuss their effectiveness in creating vibrant online communities.

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Outcomes

Reflect on the outcomes discussed in Chapter 5 regarding the Beautiful Social Research Collaborative. How did these community partnerships inspire students, transforming their attitudes and beliefs about their ability to create change?

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
READING RESPONSE PROMPT

Design Impact

Explore the relationship between design and community impact. How did students' understanding of design evolve through their community partnerships, and what implications does this have for future community-engaged programs?

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Community-First Approaches

This book emphasizes the importance of prioritizing community partners' gains in community-engaged programs. How can we balance the need for student learning outcomes with the crucial goal of community benefit? What strategies are effective in achieving this balance, and how can we ensure our commitment to community benefits?

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Equity-Based Design

In what ways can writing programs incorporate equity-based design principles, which focus on creating fair and just opportunities for all, to support more just and equitable partnerships with community organizations?

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
DISCUSSION PROMPT

Redefining Citizenship

How did students' experiences in community-engaged writing projects change their perceptions of citizenship and their roles in the community? Share your thoughts on how these experiences can empower students to shape future civic engagement and social responsibility, fostering a sense of optimism and empowerment.

CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY IS THE WAY
WRITING PROMPT

Challenges/Opportunities

Consider the challenges and opportunities presented by community writing partnerships as discussed in the chapter. Reflect on how these challenges can be addressed and what opportunities you see for fostering more effective and impactful partnerships in your community or field of study.

MEDIA ACTIVITY ASSIGNMENTS

COMMUNITY IS THE WAY

The media activities from Chapter 4 are designed to be straightforward and user-friendly, with ready-to-use worksheets. These activities guide students through analyzing various media activities, making it easier for them to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. Students can compile their analyses into a community report, which can be shared with a community partner to offer practical insights and recommendations.

Design Question Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

To develop an understanding of framing inquiry around community-identified goals through the creation and analysis of a design question in collaboration with a community partner. This assignment will help you develop the skills necessary to frame design research projects around community-identified goals, fostering meaningful and impactful partnerships.

See pp. 60-63 *Community is the Way*.

DESCRIPTION

You will conduct a Design Question Analysis to frame a research project around a community-identified goal. This analysis will involve understanding the needs and goals of a community partner and developing a clear and actionable design question. This assignment is divided into three parts: Partner Engagement, Question Development, and Analysis.

PART 1: PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

1. Identify a community partner:

- Locate a community partner who is willing to collaborate on a project. For guidance on this process, refer to Appendix C in *Community is the Way: Locating Community Partners*.

2. Initial meeting preparation:

- Before the first meeting, ask the community partner to identify an area of interest or an issue they would like to investigate.

3. Conduct the first meeting:

- During the meeting, ask the community partner to provide an overview of their organization, including its origins, mission, and current activities.
- Discuss the identified issue or area of interest. Ask the partner to explain the issue in detail and what is at stake for their organization.
- Document the conversation and gather as much context as possible to understand the partner's needs and goals.

Design Question Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

PART 2: QUESTION DEVELOPMENT

Drafting the design question:

- Based on the initial meeting, develop a preliminary design question. This question should be a clear statement about a phenomenon of interest, a condition to be improved, an issue to be explored, or a question relevant to the partner's field or organization.

Refining the question:

- Work with the community partner to refine the design question. Ensure that the question is specific, actionable, and aligns with the partner's goals.
- Use the following types of questions as a guide:
 - "What is" questions: Describe a phenomenon or issue.
 - "What works" questions: Seek evidence for the effectiveness of strategies.
 - "What if" questions: Explore new strategies or visions.

PART 3: ANALYSIS

Finalizing the design question:

- Present the revised design question and ensure it is agreed upon by all parties (community partner and student group).
- Provide a clear statement about what the research project will encompass.

Purpose and stakeholders:

- Ask the community partner to elaborate on the purpose behind the project. Document the deeper meaning and goals of the project.
- Identify and discuss potential stakeholders or audiences for the project. Determine who will benefit from the research and how.

Challenges and considerations:

- Discuss foreseeable challenges and considerations for the project. Document any constraints or limitations identified by the community partner.

Summary and takeaways:

- Summarize the key takeaways from the session:
 - What: The final research question. Our design questions is
 - Why: The purpose of pursuing the project. Our purpose for pursuing the project is
 - Who: The potential audiences/stakeholders. Our potential audiences/stakeholders for this issue are

Design Question Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

DELIVERABLES

Report:

- Write a comprehensive 2- to 3-page report documenting the entire process. Include the following sections:
 - Introduction: Overview of the community partner and the identified issue.
 - Partner engagement: Details of the initial meeting and context gathered.
 - Question development: The process of drafting and refining the design question.
 - Analysis: Final design question, purpose, stakeholders, challenges, and key takeaways.

Presentation:

- Prepare a 3-minute presentation summarizing your findings and the design question analysis. Be prepared to discuss the rationale behind the design question and how it aligns with the community partner's goals.

Evaluation criteria:

- Engagement: Active collaboration with the community partner is crucial for understanding their needs and integrating their feedback into the project.
- Clarity: The design question should be easy to understand and directly address the identified issue.
- Relevance: The project should demonstrate a clear connection between the design question and the community partner's goals.
- Comprehensiveness: A thorough analysis includes a detailed exploration of the project's purpose, stakeholders, and potential challenges.
- Presentation: The ability to clearly and effectively communicate your findings is essential for sharing your work with others.

Design Question Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

EVALUATION

Add the scores from each category to get a total of 20. Convert this to a percentage/grade:

- 18-20: 4.0 (A)
- 16-17: 3.0 (B)
- 14-15: 2.0 (C)
- 12-13: 1.0 (D)
- Below 12: 0.0 (F)

CRITERIA	4.0 (EXCELLENT)	3.0 (GOOD)	2.0 (SATISFACTORY)	1.0 (NEEDS IMPROVEMENT)
ENGAGEMENT	Consistently demonstrates proactive engagement and collaboration with the community partner. Actively incorporates partner feedback.	Demonstrates regular engagement and collaboration with the community partner. Incorporates partner feedback.	Demonstrates some engagement and collaboration with the community partner. Partially incorporates partner feedback.	Demonstrates minimal engagement and collaboration with the community partner. Rarely incorporates partner feedback.
CLARITY	Presents a highly clear, concise, and actionable design question.	Presents a clear and actionable design question with minor ambiguities.	Presents a design question that lacks some clarity or is partially actionable.	Presents an unclear or non-actionable design question.
RELEVANCE	Design question is highly relevant and closely aligns with the community partner's goals and needs.	Design question is relevant and aligns with the community partner's goals and needs.	Design question is somewhat relevant but does not fully align with the community partner's goals and needs.	Design question lacks relevance and does not align with the community partner's goals and needs.
COMPREHENSIVENESS	Provides a thorough and detailed analysis, including all key elements: purpose, stakeholders, and challenges.	Provides a detailed analysis, including most key elements: purpose, stakeholders, and challenges.	Provides a basic analysis but lacks depth or misses some key elements.	Provides an incomplete or superficial analysis, missing many key elements.
PRESENTATION	Delivers a highly effective and engaging presentation. Clearly communicates findings and analysis.	Delivers an effective presentation. Communicates findings and analysis with minor issues.	Delivers a somewhat effective presentation. Communicates findings and analysis but lacks engagement or clarity.	Delivers an ineffective presentation. Struggles to communicate findings and analysis clearly.

Social Media Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

Through this exercise, you will develop your writing, rhetorical, and civic participation abilities by critically analyzing the social media presence of a community partner. You will provide an objective evaluation of the community partner's social media presence, laying the groundwork for future media analysis and potential social media campaigns. By understanding the current state of the partner's platforms, you will be able to identify opportunities for enhanced engagement and support. This assignment will enhance your skills in using social media platforms to advocate for and with local community organizations. See pp. 63-66 *Community is the Way*.

DESCRIPTION

Select a Community Partner: Choose a local community organization with active social media platforms (e.g., X, Facebook, Instagram).

Conduct a Social Media Audit:

Examine each social media platform used by your community partner. Take detailed notes on the partner's social media channels, interactions, and metrics. You do not need access to the partner's login information; all necessary data can be gathered through observation.

*Use the provided template for data collection: [Beautiful Social Research Collaborative Template](#). Make a copy or download it as an Excel spreadsheet.

Analyze the Data Evaluate the data both qualitatively and quantitatively, focusing on three key areas:

a. Platform Tactics:

- Number of followers on each platform.
- Frequency and timing of posts.
- Content consistency across platforms.

b. Content:

- Types of posts (informational, promotional, relatable, interactive).
- Media types (video, links, text, image).
- The overall message and its consistency across platforms.

c. Audience Interactions:

- Nature and frequency of audience engagement (replies, retweets, comments).
- Types of interactions (conversations directed at the organization or between audience members).
- Categorization and estimation of interaction types.

Social Media Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

d. Summarize Findings: Write a concise, organized report summarizing your findings. Address the following guiding questions:

- How does the community partner use each platform?
- What kind of Content is shared on each platform?
- What are the engagement metrics on each platform?
- How do the audience interactions differ across platforms?

e. Report Writing Tips:

- Organize your analysis clearly.
- Write in clear, concise, complete sentences.
- Use neutral, objective, and descriptive language.
- Include and caption screenshots or images where applicable.
- Use statistics and data visualizations to illustrate points.

DELIVERABLES

- A comprehensive 2- to 3-page report detailing the current state of your community partner's social media platforms.
- The completed data collection template.

Comparative Media Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

This assignment aims to enhance your understanding of effective media strategies by analyzing exemplary accounts in your community partner's field. By researching mentor accounts, you will identify successful tactics that your community partner can potentially adopt, leading to a more productive project and stronger relationship.

See pp. 66-67 in *Community is the Way*.

DESCRIPTION

Select Mentor Accounts: Locate three to five mentor accounts that exemplify successful media strategies relevant to your community partner. These accounts should be similar to the community partner and use digital media effectively in ways that pertain to your design question.

Consider mentor accounts through:

- Recommendations from your community partner
- Books, articles, and case studies
- Online sources, hashtag searches, and active social media accounts

Conduct the Comparative Media Analysis: For each mentor account, analyze their media strategies focusing on the following areas:

Strategy:

- Discuss each mentor account individually.
- Describe how each account demonstrates the phenomenon of interest (e.g., innovation, audience engagement).
- Detail specific actions and methods used by the account.
- Include screenshots or images to illustrate claims, if necessary.

Effectiveness:

- Explain why the practices are effective.
- Identify the theory used to define effectiveness and provide evidence.
- Cite sources from course readings and other relevant materials to back up your claims.

Summary:

- Summarize initial thoughts on how the community partner could benefit from these strategies.
- Identify three main takeaways that might benefit the community partner.
- Suggest tactics that would be most beneficial for the community partner moving forward.

Comparative Media Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

REPORT YOUR FINDINGS:

Once the analysis is complete, prepare a 3- to 4-page report to share your findings with the community partner. This discussion will help guide the next phase of your project and provide the community partner with inspiration and ideas for effective engagement strategies. Use visuals and screenshots to enhance understanding.

DELIVERABLES:

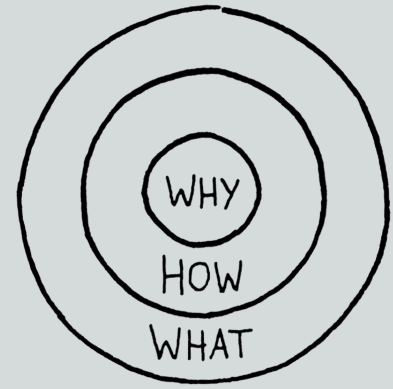
- A comprehensive report detailing the analysis of each mentor account.
- A discussion with the partner summarizing your findings and recommendations.

Golden Circle Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

This assignment aims to help you deeply understand your community partner's core mission, methods, and offerings through Simon Sinek's Golden Circle framework. By identifying your partner organization's why, how, and what, you will gain insights into its fundamental purpose and enhance your ability to support its mission effectively. See pp. 67-70 in *Community is the Way*.



DESCRIPTION

Research and Interviews:

- Begin by researching your community partner's mission statement and available information online.
- Conduct interviews with key members of the organization to gather detailed insights into their purpose, methods, and offerings. Use the following guiding questions to inform your discussions:
 - Why is there a need for this organization to do this work (locally, historically, culturally)?
 - Why do people want or need this organization's content, product, or service?
 - Why do people care?
 - Why does the organization's content, product, or service benefit others?

Analyze the Golden Circle Components:

The Why:

- Why does the organization do what it does?
- What is the purpose, cause, belief, or idea that drives or inspires them?
- What difference do they want to make in the world?

The How:

- How does the organization accomplish its work?
- What methods do they employ?
- What actions set them apart from others?

The What:

- What is the organization's function?
- What content, product, or service do they offer to the world?

Create the Golden Circle Diagram:

- Draw a diagram with three concentric rings: the why in the center, the how in the middle, and the what on the periphery. Use paper or a whiteboard.
- Label each section based on your findings.
- Use design software to create a polished visualization of the Golden Circle that you can include in your analysis report.

Golden Circle Analysis

GROUP ACTIVITY

Brief Presentation:

- Share your Golden Circle diagram with the class, explaining each component.
- Discuss any challenges or revisions made during the process.
- Engage in a class discussion to refine and improve your analysis.

Write the Golden Circle Analysis Summary:

- Summarize your findings in a concise report.
- Discuss how the partner's mission relates to their Golden Circle (why, how, and what).
- Explain the Golden Circle concept in your own words, considering that your community partner might need to become more familiar with it.
- Include and caption the Golden Circle diagram in your report.

Deliverables:

- A 2- to 3-page report detailing the Golden Circle analysis.
- A Golden Circle diagram.

Resources:

- Sinek, S. (2011). *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*.
- Sinek, S. (2017). *Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team*.

Social Object Analysis

MEDIA ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

To understand and analyze what makes an engaging social web experience by examining social objects—what they are, what they do, what they ask users to do, and how they bring people together. This assignment will help you write and design for a more engaging social web experience by understanding the relational dynamics that link people through shared objects.

See pp. 70-78 in *Community is the Way*.

DESCRIPTION

You will choose a social media platform and analyze its primary social object(s). You will then map out the object-oriented practices and relational practices associated with these objects. This analysis will help you understand how social objects facilitate interaction and build communities on the social web.

STEPS

1. Choose a social media platform:
 - Select a social media platform (e.g., Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube).
2. Identify the primary social object(s):
 - Determine the main social object(s) on the platform (e.g., status updates, photos, videos).
3. Attend to the practices:
 - List the actions users perform with or through the social object(s). Create a list of verbs associated with the object(s) on the site (e.g., post, repost, like, share).
4. Label the practices and sub-practices:
 - Identify and label the primary practices and sub-practices associated with the object(s) (e.g., People link to photos, People tag and hashtag).
5. Analyze the effectiveness:
 - Discuss how successful the individual objects are at bringing people together. How does the audience construct knowledge, meaning, and attribute value through these practices? How could more interaction be encouraged? Are there missed opportunities for connection?
6. Report your findings:
 - Summarize your analysis in a brief 2- to 3-page report. Discuss how the platform's social objects facilitate user engagement and community building.

Social Object Analysis

MEDIA ACTIVITY

EVALUATION

Add the scores from each category to get a total of 20. Convert this to a percentage/grade as needed:

- 18-20: 4.0 (A)
- 16-17: 3.0 (B)
- 14-15: 2.0 (C)
- 12-13: 1.0 (D)
- Below 12: 0.0 (F)

CRITERIA	4.0 (EXCELLENT)	3.0 (GOOD)	2.0 (SATISFACTORY)	1.0 (NEEDS IMPROVEMENT)
ENGAGEMENT	Demonstrates thorough engagement with the platform and in-depth exploration of its features.	Demonstrates regular engagement with the platform and exploration of its features.	Demonstrates some engagement with the platform and partial exploration of its features.	Demonstrates minimal engagement with the platform and limited exploration of its features.
CLARITY	Presents a highly clear, concise, and actionable analysis of the social object(s).	Presents a clear and actionable analysis of the social object(s) with minor ambiguities.	Presents an analysis of the social object(s) that lacks some clarity or is partially actionable.	Presents an unclear or non-actionable analysis of the social object(s).
RELEVANCE	Analysis is highly relevant and closely aligns with the goals and needs of understanding social web engagement.	Analysis is relevant and aligns with the goals and needs of understanding social web engagement.	Analysis is somewhat relevant but does not fully align with the goals and needs of understanding social web engagement.	Analysis lacks relevance and does not align with the goals and needs of understanding social web engagement.
COMPREHENSIVENESS	Provides a thorough and detailed analysis, including all key elements: primary practices, sub-practices, and effectiveness.	Provides a detailed analysis, including most key elements: primary practices, sub-practices, and effectiveness.	Provides a basic analysis but lacks depth or misses some key elements.	Provides an incomplete or superficial analysis, missing many key elements.
REPORT	Delivers a highly effective and engaging report. Clearly communicates findings and analysis.	Delivers an effective report. Communicates findings and analysis with minor issues.	Delivers a somewhat effective report. Communicates findings and analysis but lacks engagement or clarity.	Delivers an ineffective report. Struggles to communicate findings and analysis clearly.

Organizational Storytelling Analysis

MEDIA ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

This assignment aims to develop your skills in analyzing and enhancing the storytelling strategies of community partner organizations. You will examine the organization's overarching "capital S" Story and smaller stories, evaluate their effectiveness, and provide recommendations for improvement. By refining the organization's storytelling approach, you contribute to their ability to connect with and inspire their audience, fostering deeper community ties and support. See pp. 78-83 in *Community is the Way*.

DESCRIPTION

Background Research and Interviews:

- Begin by researching your community partner's existing storytelling strategies. Review their website, social media, newsletters, and any other available media.
- Conduct interviews with key personnel to gain insights into the organization's mission, values, and storytelling practices. Focus on understanding their "why," social objects, and how these are communicated through their stories.

Analysis of the "Capital S" Story:

- Identify the "Capital S" Story:
 - What is the organization's core narrative? What story does it tell about its origins, mission, and impact?
 - Where is this story told? (e.g., website, social media, newsletters)
 - How is this story presented? (e.g., text, images, videos)
- Evaluate the Story:
 - Does the Story align with the organization's "why"? Is it coherent and compelling?
 - Does the Story have a clear "moment of change," as described by Lambert (2018)? If so, describe this moment and its significance.
 - How effectively does the Story engage the audience? Does it invite empathy, reflection, or action?
 - Is the Story honest, authentic, and presented in the first person?

Organizational Storytelling Analysis

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Holistic Analysis of Smaller Stories:

- Examine Smaller Stories:
 - What smaller stories does the organization share? (Consider daily social media posts, newsletters, etc.)
 - What media formats are used for these stories? (e.g., video, images, text, audio)
- Evaluate the Smaller Stories:
 - Do these stories reflect the organization's values and mission?
 - How do they contribute to the overall narrative?
 - Are they engaging and relatable to the audience?
 - How is the audience invited to participate or engage with these stories?

Recommendations for Storytelling Strategy:

- Based on your analysis, provide detailed recommendations for enhancing the organization's storytelling strategy. Consider the following:
 - How can the "capital S" Story be refined or expanded to better align with the organization's mission and values?
 - How can the moment of change in the Story be highlighted or made more compelling?
 - What new storytelling formats or media could be used to engage the audience more effectively?
 - How can the organization foster a stronger connection with the audience and encourage participation?

REPORT

- Submit a written report that includes an analysis of the organization's storytelling strategy, supported by examples and insights from your research and interviews. In the final section, detail your findings and recommendations.

Community Partner Report (Compiled)

MEDIA ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

This assignment synthesizes the various media analyses conducted throughout the semester into a comprehensive report for your community partner. The report will provide a detailed overview of the partner's current media presence, comparative insights, and strategic recommendations for enhancing audience engagement through emerging media. Through detailed analysis and thoughtful suggestions, you will support their efforts to connect more deeply with their audience and fulfill their mission.

You are encouraged to build upon and refine the existing content you have already developed in previous assignments. Use your prior analyses, insights, and visuals as a foundation to create a cohesive and polished report for your community partner.

DESCRIPTION

Summary of Overall Web and Social Media Presence (200-400 words):

- Content: Provide a factual summary of the community partner's use of digital platforms, including their website, blog, and social media accounts (X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram).
- Details to Include: Platform usage, posting frequency, follower count, engagement metrics, and posting patterns (days/times).
- Visuals: Include images, data visualizations, and screenshots to illustrate key points.
- Purpose: Offer a clear snapshot of the partner's current digital landscape without critique or judgment.

Comparative Media Analysis (200-800 words):

- Mentor Accounts Identification: Select three mentor accounts that serve as exemplary models for the community partner. Describe the selection criteria (e.g., reputation, influence, similarity in mission).
- Strategy Analysis: Examine the innovative techniques and engagement strategies used by these mentor accounts. Highlight specific practices that could be relevant or beneficial to your partner.
- Effectiveness Evaluation: Assess why these strategies are effective and supported by course readings or external sources.
- Application Summary: Suggest how your community partner can adapt these strategies to enhance their media presence. Be specific in your recommendations.

Community Partner Report (Compiled)

MEDIA ACTIVITY

Golden Circle Analysis (200-400 words):

- Content: Link the partner's mission statement to their "Golden Circle" (Why, How, What).
- Details: Describe the organization's core purpose (Why), methods (How), and actions (What) from their perspective.
- Visuals: Include a graphic illustration of the partner's Golden Circle.
- Purpose: Clarify the alignment between the partner's mission and their communicated message.

Social Object Analysis (200-400 words):

- Content: Analyze the "social objects" (key topics or symbols) that the community partner uses to engage its audience.
- Details: Discuss how these social objects facilitate community and knowledge sharing.
- Purpose: Provide insights into how these objects serve as points of connection among audiences and why this is important.
- Visuals: Include relevant images or data visualizations.

Organizational Storytelling Strategy (200-800 words):

- Content: Summarize the partner's current or proposed storytelling strategy, focusing on the "moment of change" concept.
- Details: Use insights from the organizational storytelling analysis assignment to evaluate and suggest improvements.
- Visuals: Include images, screenshots, or data visualizations that support your analysis.
- Purpose: Assist the partner in refining their narrative to enhance engagement and authenticity.

Conclusions & Suggestions (200-400 words):

- Content: Provide actionable recommendations based on your analyses.
- Examples: Include concrete examples to illustrate each recommendation.
- Visuals: Support your conclusions with images, data visualizations, and screenshots.

Submission:

- Format: The report should be professionally formatted, incorporating visuals and text cohesively.
- Presentation: Prepare to share your findings and recommendations with your community partner in a brief presentation.
- Format: Use APA or MLA style for all citations.